MONASH
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Monique Gringlas graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Industrial Engineering & Engineering Management (Hons); and from The University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Commerce. She joined Bain in 2006 and is based in the Melbourne Office.

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Manoja Josyula is an Associate Consultant who joined Bain in 2011 after graduating from Monash University with a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws (Hons 1).

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 9th edition of the Monash Debating Review. The MDR is a multi-disciplinary, peer reviewed journal that addresses issues of interest to debaters. Our International Editorial Board helped us solicit submissions from across the globe, and we hope that the MDR assists in furthering discussion among the debating community, and provides different perspectives on classic issues.

In this edition, we're exploring the future of university debating as it becomes more and more a truly global enterprise. We start by taking stock of the sheer scope of our inquiry as Nick Bibby offers us an exclusive look at the preliminary findings of the first-ever Global Debating Census. Leela Koenig examines the rise of women's debating tournaments in Europe.

Then, in our feature article, Eric Barnes, Andy Hume, and Steve Johnson tackle one of the major challenges posed by international debating's meteoric expansion, giving us insight, analysis, and hard statistics as they lay out the costs and benefits of different strategies to expand the WUDC break.

As we move from the global to the national, Mirja Hämäläinen, Karen Nelson, Alfred Snider, Maja Nenadovićis, and Megan Harlow offer a detailed look at the growth of debating in Finland, demonstrating that contentious discourse can flourish alongside a political culture which prizes consensus. Reporting on his experiences in Rwanda, Will Jones charts the interaction between formal debating and shifting discursive norms in an emerging democracy. We conclude our round-the-world tour of global debating in Israel, where Mollie Gerver cites the impact of formal debates training upon argumentative practice in non-debating contexts.

We wrap up with a few words of wisdom from veteran debater and economics graduate Harish Natarajan, who offers his advice on tackling some of the hottest topics in contemporary global debating: the credit crunch, sovereign debt, and the global economic slowdown.

Happy reading- and happy debating!

Regards,

The MDR Editorial Team

Doug Cochran: *Editor, Islands of the North Atlantic*
Leela Koenig: *Associate Editor, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa*
Stephen Boyle: *Associate Editor, The Americas*
Victor Finkel: *Associate Editor, Asia and Australasia*

RESEARCH

MONASH
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COMPILING A GLOBAL DEBATING CONSENSUS
Q&A with Nick Bibby

How many people are debating in the world today? Where is debating growing the fastest and why? These are just a few of the questions that the Global Debating Census is seeking to answer.

The Global Debate Census 2011 was conducted between April and September. It was predominantly conducted by email and through online questionnaires. It was conducted in English, Spanish, Russian, French, Chinese, Japanese and German. The critical issue was the standard of proof required. Rather than just taking the existence of a website or the mention of a society at a competition or on the website of a national body as evidence of their existence this required the society itself to confirm their existence and a few basic details. The intention is to repeat the process in five years and see what has changed.

Since he's the man with the numbers, the MDR Editorial Board thought it might be useful to throw a few questions at Nick, just to see if he had the answers. He was keen to stress that his answers are a mix of solid data and educated guesswork.

How does debate breakdown around the world by region and country?

That's actually a more complicated question than it sounds as 'debating geography' is slightly different from that recognised by the rest of the world – in typically contrary fashion. To take one simple example, should Alaska be counted as part of the USA or Canada? It's an American university but does much of its debating in Canada and is a member of CUSID. Equally, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and Austria form a single circuit in competitive terms, should they count as one or four nations?

Moreover, there are some nations where I know the data is incomplete; for example I have one return from Kyrgyzstan but I have good reason to believe that there are 27 societies active there. The same is true in the Middle East and Latin America where I'm fairly confident that this study underestimates the number of

societies quite considerably. However, certain things are clear: North America is the most populous continent, followed by Europe and then Asia.

There are some surprises, Spain for example generated 20 census returns and I get the impression that the actual number of societies could be as many as twice that.

What's the breakdown of the debating community in terms of language?

The easy part of that question to answer is that English remains the dominant language for debate. The next observation is fairly easy as well which is that the dominance of English is far from as great as it once was. With international championships now taking place in Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Mandarin, Worlds will, within the next few years, have to address seriously the issue of whether it is THE World Championship or simply A world championship.

Interestingly, of the world's major languages, French appears to be almost entirely unrepresented. The only exclusively French language societies are in Canada although there are some bilingual societies in Europe and Western Africa that also use the language. This raises a point which I'll cover in more detail in one of your later questions but it's worth noting that one thing this research has uncovered, although I believe only touched on, is that there are entire debate communities out there of which I for one was completely unaware. For example I knew there was some English language debate in the Middle East and spent a frustrating month trying, and failing, to find out how much. As a bi-product of that, I stumbled across Arabic language debate but did so far too late in the research period to give it the attention it deserved and so excluded it from the study.

Perhaps as a result of the study and of these articles we can begin to fill in the gaps.

How many debate competitions are there per year and in which languages?

The honest answer is that I have simply no idea. The utterly unscientific answer is, really quite a lot and in more formats and languages than any of us might guess. I've been working with Colm Flynn on a separate project that relates to this question and we may have some clearer ideas in the next few months.

Where do you think debate is growing the fastest and why?

It's obviously in the nature of a question like this that it's guesswork. However, the purpose of this survey was to provide a benchmark and then repeat the process again in five years. So in the light of that, let me make some guesses and we'll know if I was right somewhere around the end of 2016.

I've already mentioned Latin America and the Middle East and I would stand by those and add China and Russia – or rather the Russian speaking world – into the mix. However there is something that goes beyond that, and I really cannot call it more than a hunch – can you have an educated hunch – there was really nowhere during the course of the census where I did not encounter optimism and enthusiasm about the state of debate. It would be reckless to suggest that there aren't problems, of course there are but generally speaking debate is growing and strengthening. In France the number of societies has increased fourfold in recent years, in sub-Saharan Africa it's blossoming, in much of the Far East debate has been transformed from a past-time based around the occasional random Western academic into a genuinely ingrained tradition.

What is the profile of the typical debater?

When I started my involvement with debating in 1994 there was a good deal of truth in the bray, black-tie wearing image that still surrounds debate (admittedly, St Andrews was not exactly a bastion of diversity then) and I had no problem with that part of the debate community and still don't. However, the simple reality is that it is now a minority and a small one. To be honest though, I could have told you that simply by looking at my diary, it didn't require a global survey – and I'm sure that's true of many of the people reading this.

It is of course unsurprising that English language nations still dominate English language debating – it would be strange if that were not the case. However, the emergence of an increasing number of other language debate traditions and competitions looks set put that in perspective.

We can now prove the role that debate plays in some of the poorest nations on the planet as well as in some of the richest. It is perhaps worth mentioning that one observation, perhaps the most satisfying observation, to come out of this process was simply this: throughout a period of six months I had contact, frequently

prolonged contact, with debaters from around the world. Contact was made with 926 societies where I had good reason to believe there was a debate presence and returns were received from 670 institutions based in 71 nations spanning every inhabited continent. Between them they represent 31, 784 students with around 14,000 described as active.

Regardless of their 'profile' – and it really would be impossible to identify any as typical – I was greeted universally with an enthusiasm, a generosity of spirit and an intelligence that I would challenge anyone to find in any other group so large and disparate. That I would say is the profile of the typical debater.

DEBATING POLICY

MONASH DEBATING
review

THE RISE OF WOMEN'S DEBATING TOURNAMENT IN EUROPE: WHAT WE ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW AND FINALLY ASKED

Leela Koenig, Associate Editor

When Oxford announced its first edition of their Women's Debating Tournament in 2010, Facebook proved its use again to the debating community by facilitating a widespread discussion on the merits of organizing an exclusive women's tournament. Some participants in this discussion who expressed their indignation at the sheer idea of making a tournament's access exclusive to women were referred to the longstanding tradition of organizing women's tournaments in Australia and Canada, where the tournament is praised for its contribution in gathering and helping to train a constant stream of incredibly high quality female debaters.[1] As such, it sounds like a formula for success, and perhaps Europe, where women's participation at the top does not reflect the overall rate of women's participation on the circuit (which itself does not reflect women's presence at universities) should adopt this formula with swiftness and gratitude. Yet, what works in Australia and Canada does not necessarily work on the old continent. The nature of the discussion before, during and after the tournament in 2010 illustrates that Europe was divided about whether exclusive tournaments were the best way to address the under-representation of women in debating, and in fact, Europe was divided about whether the under-representation of women was a problem at all.

Nevertheless, after the 2010 Edition, Oxford organized another tournament in 2011, and the CA and convenors just sent out their invitations for the 2012 edition for which they decided to change the judging pool from being mixed gender, to also be constituted of only women. The activity and the initiatives do not only take place in the UK (Newcastle had a mixed team tournament in 2010, partly as an alternative to the women only formula). In Jena, Germany, a number of debaters organized their own women's tournament, and in Israel, a tournament that specifically addressed gender-themed issues both took place in early 2011.

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[1] This is of course not to say that there is no such quality present in Europe, or anywhere else in the world, but rather that this quality is less represented in the top rooms or delegations to Worlds or Euros (something many participants in the discussion pointed out). This article is, in part, meant to investigate reasons why this might be the case.

The evolution of these tournaments in Europe is very interesting to the current editors of the MDR, and we therefore decided to provide the wider debating community with more information on what motivates the convenors and CA teams to continue to organize these tournaments, and how they experienced being at the center of a controversial matter. I sent out a survey to the organizers and CA teams of the Oxford, German and Israeli tournaments and received great responses from eight organizers and members of CA teams.[2] The main purpose of this article is to share their responses with our readers, and not to argue in favor or against the presence of these tournaments on the debating calendar.

I present you their responses by first discussing what motivated the organizers to go against the grain of the European debating community. I then provide you with a description of the feedback they personally received, before, during and after the tournament. Finally, I want to share their ideas about the future for women's debating. When respondents are quoted, I refer to their background in order to preserve some level of anonymity (which was not their request, but my own policy). This article is closed with some final thoughts.

Before I present the results, I wish to make two preliminary remarks. First, the responses of the eight organizers should not be and will not be presented as being representative for the whole of Europe. Even if they might reflect most people's thoughts and opinions, a sample size of eight is not enough to generalize to the whole population. Second, precisely because it was a controversial issue in Europe, readers might be curious about the opinion of the writer of this article, because it might influence the way in which the results are presented. I can be short on this, I am in favor of these tournaments, and was therefore especially interested in what motivated the organizers and how they see the future of these tournaments and the way in which we can increase the participation rates of female debaters.

Deciding to organize a tournament

When asked about what motivated the respondents to organize their tournaments, one answer was universal from the IONA respondents: the dominance of male debaters in the top rooms and finals. Next to that, five out of the eight respondents also cited that they were concerned with the lower overall participation of

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2   With that note, we would again like to express our sincere gratitude to those who provided us with responses, which not in the least because of their oftentimes very personal nature, were very meaningful and insightful.

women in the debating circuit. Some attributed that to the aggressive sphere at tournaments or the way in which female debaters were approached by male debaters, whilst others worried that the number of debates that they had seen which had arguments that bordered on equity violations against women might have changed the minds of fresher debaters who subsequently decided to spend their extracurricular time elsewhere.

One German respondent was concerned with the number of women who after they had been debating for a while changed to adjudicating or organizing the socials at the tournaments they attended. She reported that many women sometimes felt shy and strange when they were being judged by male adjudicators, a sentiment that is echoed by two of the IONA respondents. One Israeli respondent was surprised with the inability of debaters to adequately discuss gender issues in debates. Key arguments in motions that addressed women's issues were overlooked, misrepresented or, similar to the IONA concern, debaters unleashed mockery upon the female perspective. The choice to organize a gender-themed tournament in Israel, instead of a women only tournament, was based on the wish to discuss gender issues specifically in the company of men, in order to create an educational experience for all.

All respondents reported to have received mixed feedback from the community around them, some hearing more negative remarks than others. The debate about the merits of the tournament was especially heated in Germany where the organizers were accused of having a 'Gaza-strip mentality' and some resorted to calling the tournament a 'pajama party' or 'the debating Paralympics'. One German respondent confessed that the nature of the discussion 'felt like a witch hunt'.

Fierce opposition was not unheard of at the IONA circuit either, although respondents did not report any such derogatory remarks. The feedback they received was more of the concern that this tournament would be patronizing to women and that this tournament would be counterproductive to empowering women to feel comfortable at other tournaments. One Israeli respondent considered the feedback that it would legitimize male-only tournaments and that female exclusivity would not achieve her goal of better discussions of women's issues to be a good reason to organize a gender-themed tournament rather than a women's only tournament, hoping to involve men more in thinking about women's issue.

On the other hand, respondents also received a lot of very positive feedback, not in the least from their sponsors, and felt encouraged to go ahead with their organization. In Germany, many debaters reported to be relieved that this issue was finally taken seriously and similar encouragement came from many in the IONA circuit too. It is not possible for me to give an adequate overview of the balance between positive and negative feedback, but that there was such a heated, polarized debate in Germany and IONA is sufficiently important on its own.

During and after the tournament

Almost all respondents said that one important motivation to organize a tournament was the desire to create a friendly atmosphere in which female debaters could meet each other and form friendships. Some organizers specifically emphasized the importance of senior-junior friendships between female debaters, but all respondents seemed to value the idea that they were creating a level of familiarity amongst female debaters which would benefit them when they would meet again at future tournaments.

When asked about the atmosphere at the tournaments, the organizers unanimously reported that much fun was had by all, and that many freshers said they felt enthusiastic about continuing with debating, especially now that they had so many familiar faces to talk to at future tournaments. More importantly, many participants felt more confident, more listened to and were inspired to debate more at tournaments where before they would have adjudicated.

One IONA respondent also mentioned that participants said they were re-considering the way in which they themselves had normally evaluated female debaters. It would be interesting to find out more about how it is that female debaters are evaluated, even by those who are happy to judge at women's only tournament, but that could be the topic of another article. Overall, the IONA respondents reported that many of those who opposed the tournament had changed their mind after hearing the positive stories from participants and seeing the demand that existed in the community for these tournaments.

The future of these tournaments

When asked whether they thought the tournament should be a fixed item on the agenda, an interesting pattern presented itself. Every respondent answered in the affirmative, and every respondent made the tournament conditional upon the fact that the debating culture would not change any time soon and that the tournament should happen as long as it was necessary. This illustrates the corrective function the respondents assign to the tournament, and that this tournament is anything but an end in itself, but a means to amend the problems the respondents identified as their initial motivation for their initiatives. Some respondents argued that the organization of the women only tournament in Germany and IONA should rotate amongst institutions, not in the least because a regular appearance of this tournament would ensure the best impact. That sais, at which point we can say that those problems are over, is a point we may disagree about, but either way, there exists a firm belief among the organizers that the tournament will contribute to improve the situation for female debaters. Once the problems are over, the tournament need not be a structural appearance on the circuit. One respondent put it nicely when she wrote that 'as a community, the items we fix on our calendar reflect our values'.

We asked respondents to offer suggestions about what else they felt could or should be done to address the issues they had identified. A variety of proposals were made:

I. In the spirit of the Australian circuit, IONA and German respondents suggested there should be quotas for the delegations that were sent to either all tournaments or only to the European and Worlds Championships. One respondent suggested that there should be financial incentives attached to meeting a certain percentage of female debaters in a society's delegation, which certainly is a thought-provoking policy.

II. Two respondents suggested a stronger role for senior female debaters. One proposed a mentoring system where either, similar to the US, senior debaters would be paired up with fresher debaters in a mentor-system. The other suggested more pro-am teams (which can be seen as an encouragement for the Newcastle initiative).

III. Many respondents placed a strong responsibility at the individual institutions to create a better, more welcoming atmosphere to female debaters. Societies have to invest time and effort into finding out why they cannot ensure continued participation by women. One suggestion was that boards should research the way in which interested debaters were approached and treated by senior debaters.

Two respondents, one from Germany and one from Israel, both mentioned that the way in which the society presents itself to their universities matters greatly. Women should be included in promotional material and the boards of the societies that represented the society in the academic community. Furthermore, the way in which the society describes its own activity could also attract more women debaters. When a German society changed the description of debating as a 'competitive' activity to a 'problem-solving' activity, she saw a greater success in attracting the interest of female students.

IV. Respondents from every country argued for an increased open discussion about the under-representation of gender which would serve to an increased realization that this is indeed a problem which the European community must address. Some proposed an increased cooperation with the Australian circuit to learn their best practices, others proposed the creation of a women's forum, similar to the World Championships. Regardless of the format of the discussion, several agenda points for this discussion were raised; the way in which feedback was provided; the way in which we evaluate style and the role it plays in evaluating a male of female speaker, and whether there was a presence of sexism at societies (or not).

<u>Closing remarks</u>

After providing you with the variety of responses we received, I end this article with some closing remarks. The first is that it seems that the women's tournaments are here to stay- at least, as long as they are necessary. Based on the variety of motivations that we recognized in the respondents, what these tournaments will look like in the future cannot be said. The Israeli approach of organizing a gender-themed tournament and attaching a workshop in feminism in debating is a more inclusive approach than the completely women only third edition of

Oxford, although the merit of each deserves recognition. The shape of next year's German tournament is yet unknown. It will boil down to how the organizers believe the problems that women face are best addressed. Where organizer believe that there is a larger concern of sexism which excludes or scares freshers then perhaps a women only tournament is the best remedy. However, if ignorance and a lack of reflection on women's issues are the most important concerns, we all might benefit more from tournaments that increase awareness and invite men to participate in debates that specifically address such issues. Some respondents are explicit in their expectations of senior female debaters, and believe they have a special role in encouraging younger debaters to continue to debate. Although I do believe there is an important role for senior female debaters, we must make sure that all debaters remain concerned about the issue. It should not be the case that other debaters -young or old, male of female- do not feel a duty to oversee the atmosphere in their direct surroundings and stand up against sexism whenever they encounter it, or to encourage a young debater to develop her talents.

The controversy of the issue is understandable, and it is therefore all the more important we stay focused on what lies at the heart of the matter. We must make sure that men are included in discussions on how best to ensure the participation of women, whether that is through the organization of events where they are excluded from or not. An exchange of ideas about the effects of initiatives is of vital importance to track the impact of the events and to ensure the event has the best possible outcome. This article is intended to spread knowledge to each and everyone interested in how initiatives to include women, or other groups for that matter, work out in practice. I hope the experiences of the organizers and their thoughts about the future have provided all of us in equal manner with food for thought. They certainly inspired me.

FEATURE ARTICLE

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EXPANDING THE BREAK: A COMPARISON OF THREE PROPOSALS

R. Eric Barnes, Andrew Hume & Steven Johnson

Worlds Council has endorsed in principle the expansion of the break beyond 32 teams at the WUDC. We propose to first set out the strongest arguments for each of the three main proposals for how to expand the break and then critically analyze their strengths and weaknesses. Briefly, those proposals are: breaking 64 teams, breaking 48 teams and a system whereby all teams on 18 or more break. This essay makes no serious attempt to respond to arguments against any expansion of the break beyond 32 teams. Such a discussion is surely worthwhile, but much has already been said about this, a thorough treatment would need to be more extensive than we have space for, and it is simply not our focus here.

In addressing the specific merits of each of the proposals for expanding the break, there is a central question that needs to be considered: what is the *purpose* of the break and elimination rounds at Worlds? That is, what is it that makes them different from, say, round 9, and so sought-after by competitors? Understanding the reasons why elimination rounds are valuable to the WUDC format is a necessary prerequisite to any discussion of how to change it.

Historical Context

In its early years Worlds was held in differing formats depending on the customs of the host university. By the late 1980s, with the field of teams typically hovering around 100-150, the break had settled at 32.[1] So, the current Worlds break was actually designed for a remarkably different state of affairs to the present, with some 20-25% of the field progressing to elimination rounds.

Some current debaters might understandably assume that the current situation is the natural way of things, but proponents of break expansion (even to 64 teams) are not advocating a radical shift in the nature of Worlds so much as a return to the *status quo ante* in which elimination rounds were open to a much larger proportion

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1 http://worlddebating.blogspot.com/p/history-of-wudc.html [Accessed July 6, 2011]

of the field than now. Furthermore, such a change would bring Worlds more into line with other tournaments. No one hosting a BP competition with 40 teams would dream of breaking directly to a grand final, yet this is (proportionately) what Worlds has done in recent years.

The authors of this paper wholeheartedly agree that the Worlds break should be a significant accomplishment and should never be 'easy' to get into, but this is not at odds with break expansion, as we shall see below. Once again, the history of the tournament suggests that concerns about low standards are overstated. The early World Championships were very different affairs from today's major multinational events, attended almost exclusively by teams from six Anglophone nations for whom the trip to Princeton, Sydney or Glasgow might be one of only three or four competitions that they attended during the year, in contrast to today's well-developed national and international debating circuits.[2] While the field at a contemporary WUDC tournament obviously includes a great many teams who do not realistically have a shot at making the main break, there is little doubt that as the competition has grown, so too has the number of well-drilled, competitive teams who would not be out of place in an octofinal; as has the difficulty of making it that far.

The Purpose of Elimination Rounds

What, then, is the function of elimination rounds at Worlds? The simple answer seems to be that they are a device for sorting teams by quality. Of course, at the end of preliminary rounds, we already have such a list ("the tab"), which we use to decide who breaks. So, if *the sole purpose* of these rounds were sorting, then we would need evidence that a single elimination format does a better job at sorting than four or five more power-paired preliminary rounds.

We are not confident that elimination rounds do a better job at sorting teams for three reasons. First, they start by largely throwing out a lot of relevant evidence from the rounds that have already occurred. Second, if we assume that the seeding for the single elimination bracket (i.e., the tab ordering) is not particularly accurate—which we must assume, or else there is no good reason for additional sorting—then the single elimination format does not even theoretically do a good

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2 For more on the development of Worlds, see Hume, A. (2009). "*Citius, altius, fortius*: the evolution of Worlds debating". *Monash Debating Review*.

job of sorting anyone beyond the best two teams.[3] Third, single elimination is a poor sorting device for even the best team (especially four rounds of it) because even excellent judging is imprecise and even excellent teams can get put in very tough situations (e.g., by another team's bizarre argumentation).

If you think that none of this is a persuasive reason for abandoning single elimination rounds, we agree. However, it does show that there are important functions of the elimination rounds beyond sorting.

These other functions include: A) creating an exciting, high-stakes set of increasingly high quality debates; B) providing a learning opportunity for viewers; C) generating a celebratory culmination of the tournament; D) giving an award *in its own right* for debaters who have performed well; and, E) providing an opportunity to evaluate debaters' performance in front of an audience. All of these are good reasons to keep single elimination rounds, and indeed to expand them.

Elimination rounds are very good at fulfilling function A. They bring an element of uncertainty to the competition, like a sporting event in which top teams may be humbled by underdogs before the final. Some contend that it is somehow unfair for a skilled team to run the risk of being eliminated by a "wrong" decision. Indeed, there are those who would even be happy to see the world champions of debate selected on the basis of the team that topped the tab after 12 or 15 preliminary rounds of debate. But where would be the excitement in that?

Elimination rounds also provide what for many competitors will be a rare opportunity to watch, listen to and learn from the best of their contemporaries (B), and the value of function C is fairly self-explanatory. All three proposals to expand the break will accomplish functions A, B and C to roughly the same degree. The difference between the proposals primarily lies in five things: 1) the practicality of their implementation; 2) the fairness of their implementation; 3) how effective they are at sorting teams, such that the higher quality team are likely to progress further in the tournament; 4) how well they perform function E,

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3   To see why, first consider why a single-elimination bracket in any two contestant event (e.g., tennis) will only be theoretically effective at sorting the single best player if we presume that the initial seedings are not already accurate. It is very possible that the two best players will meet before the finals, so being in finals doesn't reliably indicate that you are one of the two best players, being in semi-finals doesn't reliably indicate that you are one of the four best players, etc. The same problem exists with BP debate, except that each single elimination contest advances two teams. Of course, all this is true even if we grant that judge panels in elimination rounds never make errors. The problem is mathematical, not practical.

evaluating debaters with an audience; and, 5) how well they accomplish function D, distributing a valued award.

Let us briefly consider the function of the break as an award. There are very few trophies given out at Worlds, but being able to say that one "broke at Worlds" is in itself a significant intangible award. The two important most aspects of this award's value are its exclusivity and its fairness. Although giving and getting awards (even intangible ones) is nice, as the percentage of debaters who break increases, the prestige of this award decreases. This is surely one reason we can all agree that breaking 128 out of 350 teams would be a mistake, even if it were practical. But at the same time, breaking only 8 teams would be a mistake because such a distribution is too stingy, even if it were a more reliable sorting method. The point here is that there is some admittedly vague point that is the ideal compromise between being too stingy and excessively devaluing the award of breaking. The most objective means of estimating the prestige of breaking across years is to calculate the percentage of participating teams that break. So, let us look quickly at how these three proposals would have affected these percentages over the last 10 years and with a couple hypothetical larger fields.

Basically, the lower the percentage of the break, the higher the prestige of the award, but the fewer the people who get to enjoy it. The top two lines are included to frame the perspective on what some see as the likely future growth of the tournament. Obviously some of the older data is of limited usefulness, since future tournaments are unlikely to have fewer than 200 teams, but they do provide an important historical perspective. As noted above, in the 1990s there were 32 teams in the break, with only about 150 teams in the field, making the portion of teams breaking over 20%. But, history provides no authoritative guidance on the *correct* percentage of breaking teams.

Proposal 1: Breaking 64 Teams

If the decision to expand the WUDC break is to be implemented, there are several reasons to think that a 64-team break is the most sensible and elegant solution. First, and most obviously, it is the simplest method. Doubling the size

YEAR	FIELD	# OF 18+ TEAMS	% OF FIELD IN 32-BREAK	% OF FIELD IN 18-BREAK	% OF FIELD IN 48-BREAK	# OF 17S IN 48-BREAK	% OF FIELD IN 64-BREAK	# OF 17S/16S IN 64-BREAK
	500		6.4		9.6		12.8	
	450		7.1		10.7		14.2	
2011	316	36	10.1	11.4	15.2	12	20.3	23 / 5
2010	388	46	8.2	11.8	12.4	2	16.5	18 / 0
2009	316	36	10.1	11.4	15.2	12	20.3	21 / 7
2008	396	46	8.1	11.6	12.1	2	16.2	18 / 0
2007	344	41	9.3	11.9	14.0	7	18.6	23 / 0
2006	324	37	9.9	11.4	14.8	11	19.8	23 / 4
2005	312	38	10.3	12.2	15.4	10	20.5	21 / 5
2004	307	35	10.4	11.4	15.6	13	20.8	23 / 6
2003	193	23	16.6	11.9	24.9	9 broke in 32	33.2	13 / 17
2002	228	26	14.0	11.4	21.1	6 broke in 32	28.1	15 / 23

FIGURE ONE

of the break adds an extra round, but leaves the structure of a Worlds tournament otherwise unchanged. Logistically there is no significant problem adding an extra elimination round into a WUDC schedule. Once the organisational obstacles of the first nine rounds have been navigated, the last two days of competition are relatively plain sailing.

A full discussion of whether debating has moved too far away from its origins as an audience-centred activity is beyond the scope of this paper.[4] However, we will say that we see parliamentary debate as primarily audience centered. Audiences in Worlds style are not merely passive spectators but an interactive and sometimes unpredictable element, which can have an indirect effect on the course of the debate. Debates are *different* when there is an audience present, and every seasoned debater knows it. A speaker with good manner draws energy and confidence from a supportive audience; a dull, flat speech sounds more mediocre when received with general indifference. And it is important to stress that this is not a merely incidental feature of elimination rounds, let alone some kind of "problem", but absolutely central to what parliamentary debate is about. The absence of an audience during preliminary rounds is a concession to an unfortunate practical necessity. Ideally, all debates would have an audience.

Because audiences are crucial to its continuing appeal and relevance, then there is reason to prefer breaking 64 teams. Worlds should showcase the best that our discipline has to offer and this cannot be done behind closed doors, away from an audience. Within sensible limits, the more space in the competition format given over to public debate, the better. Although it is currently impractical to arrange for an audience beyond the judges in preliminary rounds, adding double-octofinals would double the current number of debates that have an audience. This would reinforce the importance of the skills required to flourish in front of an audience, thereby incentivizing their development and improving debates beyond Worlds, and perhaps leading adjudicators to consider manner issues more carefully than in the more sterile atmosphere of a preliminary round.

Moreover, because debating before an audience is both different and important, breaking 64 teams actually improve the sorting function of the elimination rounds. Debates without an audience (prelims) are missing a centrally important element, so it is important to include a large number of teams in debates with

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4   If one looks at the history of competitive debating, it is hard to resist the conclusion that when a debating format moves away from being an audience centred performance, that style quickly degenerates into fast and often incomprehensible oral battles filled with jargon and of little interest to public intellectuals or anyone outside itself.

audiences (elimination rounds). Therefore, breaking 64 teams is preferable.

As we have argued above, one of the functions of elimination rounds is giving people an intangible (but very real and coveted) award. Breaking 64 teams gives out many more awards at essentially no cost to anyone. Some will argue that this claim ignores the cost of devaluing others' intangible awards. Though we have already admitted that there is a kernel of truth to this, the claim is overstated. Assuming the same number of competitors, giving 48 identical awards (instead of 64) will result in each award being more valuable, but in fact, the awards are not identical. Right now, if someone says "I broke at Worlds" she almost surely implies that she made it to octo-finals. If she had made it to, say, semi-finals, she would have said that instead. So, if 64 teams break, then the same number of people still get to say that they made it to octofinals, which is as impressive as before, and may even be more impressive. In short, if we look at the vast expansion and improvement in the quality of debating over the past decade, it is clear that giving a place in a break round to the team ranked, say, 60th in the tab is not going to unacceptably devalue Worlds or its intangible awards.

Proposal 2: Breaking 48 Teams

Although Worlds Council has accepted that breaking 32 teams is too few and breaking 64 teams is the next natural step in the arithmetic progression, many people see breaking 64 as impractical and perhaps undesirable. To address this, the tournament could break just 48 teams. There is a simple method of doing this fairly and in a way that is consistent with the principles employed in pairings now. The top 16 teams on the tab after the prelim rounds would break directly to octofinals, while teams ranked 17 to 48 would debate in a double-octofinal round. The winners of this double-octo round are then paired against the teams who broke directly to octofinals, and things proceed as they do now.

Breaking 48 is very practical and its ease of implementation is a major virtue. It requires no additional judges beyond what is needed for the current break, since there are never more than 8 rooms being run in the main finals, just as in the status quo. (Of course, if you think that there are good independent reasons to expand the judge break, then this model would give additional opportunities for more judges to be used in elimination rounds.) Concerning scheduling, there is enough time during the final two days to hold five main elimination rounds, as well as all ESL & EFL elimination rounds. ESL & EFL elimination rounds can be run

concurrently with main elimination rounds. If necessary, these could begin during the main quarterfinals, when more breaking judges are available.

By breaking 48 team, then whenever the total field is fewer than 400 teams, all 18s will likely break. If there are fewer teams than this, then some of the top

Partial Double-Octos		Octos	Quarters
(17, 32, 33, 48)	→	(1, 16, __, __)	
(24, 25, 40, 41)	→	(8, 9, __, __)	
(21, 28, 37, 44)	→	(5, 12, __, __)	
(20, 29, 36, 45)	→	(4, 13, __, __)	Proceed as normal from this point
(19, 30, 35, 46)	→	(3, 14, __, __)	
(22, 27, 38, 43)	→	(6, 11, __, __)	
(23, 26, 39, 42)	→	(7, 10, __, __)	
(18, 31, 34, 47)	→	(2, 15, __, __)	

FIGURE TWO

17 teams will likely break. The chart given earlier (figure one) includes a column listing how many teams on 17 would have broken if 48 teams had broken at recent WUDCs. If you believe that future tournaments are likely to be in the range of 350 to 400 teams and you think that breaking a few of the top 17 point teams is desirable, then breaking 48 will be very appealing. It would then reward 12% – 15% of the field with the main break, which is neither stingy nor exceedingly generous.

Perhaps most importantly, breaking 48 provides a good sorting mechanism, for both the elite teams on 20+ and for teams in the 17 to 19 point range. Team seedings near the top of the tab are generally more accurate, partly because these teams have had much more opportunity to directly compete against each other in the top rooms, but mostly because small errors are amplified in the middle of the bell curve. Adding or subtracting one team point from a team on 21 will only change their rank two or three places, but for a team on 17 it could easily move them fifteen or twenty places on the tab. The point is that we justifiably have much less confidence in the accuracy of the rankings as we go down toward the middle of the tab, but we have much more confidence near the top. Breaking 48 rewards the top 16 "elite" teams (mostly teams on 20+) by having them break directly to octofinals. This avoids exposing this set of teams, which very likely contains the best several teams at the tournament, from being exposed to any additional risk beyond the status quo of being knocked out by a single elimination fluke. Recall Worlds 2009, where all four top seeds were eliminated in octofinals. We want elimination rounds to result in higher quality teams going further, and putting the top 16 teams directly into octofinals will help do this better than a system (like breaking 64) that forced them to compete in double-octos. This is not unfair because their strong record rightly earns them an extra benefit beyond just a seeding position in the bracket. At the same time, breaking 48 recognizes

that the teams ranked 17 to 48 on the tab are likely not as reliably seeded and provides another round to sort these teams out. It is very easy to believe that the top 17 point team in 2010 (ranked 47th) might have deserved to be ranked 28th (adding just one team point). Since we have to believe that better teams are more likely to prevail in this new first break round, we are likely to get higher quality teams into the octofinals by breaking 48 than in the status quo. So, we would likely get better teams into the later elimination rounds too.

Proposal 3: Breaking All Teams on 18 and Above

The first question often asked is how would this system work? A proposal to advance all teams who have 18 points after nine preliminary rounds would rely on an approach similar to breaking 48: a partial double-octo (PDO) round would held in which teams on the low end of the break would contest a limited number of seeds in the octofinal round. Other, higher-breaking teams would receive a bye directly into the octofinal round.

The number of teams contesting the PDO round would vary depending upon the number of teams with an average of at least two points per preliminary round (2+ teams). The goal of the PDO round would be to produce an octofinal field of 32 teams. To accomplish this, teams in the PDO round would contest a number of octofinal seeds equal to the number of 2+ teams beyond 32.

At the 2009 Cork WUDC, for instance, there were 36 teams with a record of 18 or better after nine preliminary rounds. To sort the field of 36 down to 32 octofinal teams, a partial double octofinal round would be held to determine the bottom four seeds in the octofinal round (36-32=4). The lowest eight breaking teams would be paired into two debates; the top two teams in each debate would advance to the octofinal round.

This approach is scalable for a larger break pool. Both the 2008 Assumption and the 2010 Koç WUDC had 46 teams on 2+. In both cases, 14 octofinal seeds (46-32=14) would be contested in seven PDO debates involving the bottom 28 teams from the break. The upper 18 seeds would receive a bye directly into the octofinal round. There are two methods of handling situations where there are an odd number of teams on 2+. Both will be discussed at the end of this section.

The proposal to break all 2+ teams shares many of the motivations and advantages of the other proposals discussed herein. It seeks to honor the sentiment of the 2011 Worlds Council when it voted to expand the break; it seeks a more representative—and potentially a more diverse—break; and it seeks to increase the proportion of breaking teams relative to those who have participated in the championships. This proposal, however, has a number of unique advantages not shared by breaking 48 or 64.

Chief among the advantages of this proposal is its use of a rational delineating line between those teams who break and those that don't. While an argument may be made that this is an inappropriate (some have said "unfair") point at which to distinguish breaking teams from those who won't break, at least the point is grounded in the performance of the teams. Currently, and as would be the case in each of the other proposals mentioned in this paper, the point of distinction between breaking and non-breaking teams is determined by the convenience of the organizers of the tournament: we currently break 32 teams—or would break 48 or 64—because those numbers are evenly divisible by four, thereby making the task of scheduling elimination rounds easier.

Tournament Year	Points separating 32nd from 33rd	Average point differential per round, per team
2002	3	0.3333
2003	5	0.5556
2004	4	0.4444
2005	3	0.3333
2006	2	0.2222
2007	0	0
2008	4	0.4444
2009	4	0.4444
2010	0	0
2011	3	0.3333

FIGURE THREE

This is an unreasonable basis on which to determine which teams may compete for the championship and which may not. Deferring to the convenience of the organizers rather than team performance forces the WUDC to rely on speaker points to break ties between teams. Never has there been a "clean break" between teams 32 and 33, necessitating the use of speaker points to break ties. This results in circumstance where just a few speaker points (or even none!), out of thousands

awarded to a team during nine preliminary rounds, determine who breaks and who doesn't. And, this is typical.

While there may be disagreement about the value of speaker points in measuring a team's quality, several issues are difficult to ignore. First, it is absurd to claim that there is a meaningful difference between a team because one averages one third more speaker point per preliminary round—distributed between both speakers—than the other. Speaker points are notoriously subjective and idiosyncratic; when dealing with a quantum as small as one third or one half speaker point, the distinctions they make are so unreliable that they are practically meaningless. Beyond that, of course, there are circumstances in which there was *no difference* in the number of team or speaker points between the 32nd and 33rd teams, which is even worse.

Second, because speaker points attempt to evaluate teams in absolute terms rather than relative terms, they are less reliable as a measure of quality. Though both speaker points and team points are the product of a subjective assessment of teams' performance, at least in the case of team points that subjectivity is constrained to the limited context of a particular debate round. As team points are the product of teams' rankings within a round, adjudicators rely only on what they have directly observed to distribute them. Speaker points, in contrast, presume a fictitious absolute standard against which to judge teams. Adjudicators are expected to assign speaker points to a particular speaker based on that speaker's performance as compared to all other speakers who have ever spoken.[5] Relative rankings are more reliable. Because their sphere of consideration is limited to only the performance of the debaters before them, judges are more likely to measure accurately the performance of a particular team.[6] Moreover, the available

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5 And, frequently, against those teams who haven't yet spoken. I routinely hear adjudication teams instruct judges at the outset of a tournament that the average for all speakers points should be 75 speaker points, thereby requiring judges to compare speeches they're hearing in round one against speeches they have not yet, but may eventually hear in round 9. This also assumes that an individual adjudicator at a WUDC will see enough speakers at that tournament to understand what the "average" is, a logistic impossibility given that most adjudicators will typically see only about 10% of the speakers at the tournament—assuming that they don't see one team twice—and given that no mechanism exists for ensuring that particular adjudicators see a representative cross-section of the quality of debaters participating at the tournament.

6 For a more thorough treatment of the advantages of relative rankings over absolute ratings, see Goffin, Richard, and James Olson. "Is It All Relative? Comparative Judgments and the Possible Improvement of Self-Ratings and Ratings of Others." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6.1 (2011): 48-60. *Sage Publications*. Web. 13 July 2011.

evaluative gradients are limited when ranking teams, making the determination of those gradients easier: articulating the difference between first and second is far easier than distinguishing between a speaker worthy of 75 speaker points and another who receives 76.

Imperfect though they may be, speaker points do play an important role in seeding teams for the elimination rounds. That said, there's a significant difference between using them for that purpose, which is inclusive, and using them to exclude teams from the opportunity to compete in the elimination rounds.

YEAR	TEAMS PARTICIPATING	% BREAKING TO OCTOFINALS	TEAMS ON 18+	% IF ALL 18+ TEAMS BROKE
2004 Singapore	307	10.4%	35	11.4%
2005 MMU	312	10.3%	38	12.2%
2006 Dublin	324	9.9%	37	11.4%
2007 UBC	338	9.5%	41	12.1%
2008 Assumption	396	8.1%	46	11.6%
2009 Cork	316	10.1%	36	11.4%
2010 Koc	388	8.2%	46	11.9%
2011 Botswana	316	10.1%	36	11.4%

FIGURE FOUR

Advancing all 2+ teams is in line with the rewards structure present in other aspects of the tournament. Accumulating two or more points in each preliminary round of the tournament is a significant accomplishment. In modern incarnations of Worlds (i.e., those in which more than 300 teams participated, which is every Worlds since 2004), the teams breaking to the elimination rounds have needed a minimum of 18 team points to be in contention for the break. Debaters attach significance to being ranked in the "top half" of a round, indicating that this accomplishment is qualitatively more valuable than being in the bottom half of a round. During elimination rounds of a British parliamentary debating tournament, the participants accept that the top two teams from each elimination round will progress to the subsequent elimination round, creating a circumstance in which both the first and second place teams "win" the round. In many ways, accumulating an average of at least two points per preliminary round has meaning.

Another advantage of this proposal is that the size of the break remains consistent relative to the number of participants in the tournament. In all modern incarnations of Worlds, had all teams with 18+ points broken, the percentage of

breaking teams would have been, on average, 11.7%. That contrasts with a range of breaking teams that is, at its lowest, 8.1% at the 2007 Assumption WUDC to a high of 10.3% at the 2005 MMU WUDC.[7]

There are two plausible methods of breaking 18+ when there are an odd number of teams on 18+. In the first method, which we call "*the clean break*", all and only 18+ teams break to partial double-octos. In this case, to select exactly 32 teams to advance to octos, one double-octo room will need to advance 3 teams, with only one team being eliminated. For example, say there are 35 teams on 18+, the clean break method breaks 35 teams and holds two double-octo debates: {28,31,32,35} and {29,30,33,34}. But, the first of these rooms would advance 3 teams to octos, while the other would advance the normal 2 teams. The rationale here is that the debate from which three teams advance is the toughest debate, with the lowest cumulative rankings of teams *who are not the lowest seed in that round* participating. In other words, the cumulative rankings of the teams other than the 35th seed in the first debate is 89; the cumulative rankings of the teams other than the 34th seed in the second is 90, so the first room should be tougher. This is significant because it provides a natural protection for the best seed in the PDO pool; breaking three teams from that round increases the 28th seed's chances of making it to octofinals. Sure, it increases the chances of the 35th seed making octos, too, but if they beat a higher seed, so be it. In the second method, which we call "*the wildcard*", the top team on 17 is added to the double-octo round so that one additional higher seed gets a bye to octos and all the double-octo rooms advance 2 teams to octos. For example, suppose again that there are 35 teams on 18+, the wildcard method breaks 36 teams (including the top team on 17) and holds two PDO debates: {29,32,33,36} & {30,31,34,35}. Each of these advances 2 teams. The 28th seed gets a bye using this method.

Rebuttals & Responses

When considering the three proposals, we see the major question as whether to have a fixed number of teams breaking (48 or 64) or a variable number of teams breaking. We first discuss the objections concerning fixed breaks, then variable breaks.

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7 If one looks further back in WUDC history, an even higher percentage of teams have broken. Consider the 1999 Manila WUDC, in which 173 teams participated and 18.3% of teams broke. As we note elsewhere in this paper, a proportionally larger number of breaking teams was typical at the time the octofinal round was set as the first elimination round for the WUDC.

Problems with Fixed Breaks

Some concerns about breaking 64 have already been addressed, such as the practical problems of scheduling and the concern about diluting the value of the intangible award of breaking. There are two further concerns that apply equally to breaking 48 or 64, along with one major issue dividing these two proposals.

Both fixed number breaking methods (48 and 64) continue to rely heavily on speaker points, a largely capricious measure of the quality of a team's skills. Additionally, both of these methods make it reasonably likely that there will be ties for the final spot in the break, and these ties will need to be broken in some unsatisfying manner. Breaking 18+ largely avoids these problems, which may count as a significant advantage. However, one could respond to that although speaker points are inevitably somewhat imprecise, they are nevertheless meaningful. Imagine a public opinion survey with a margin of error of +/- 3%, in which people preferred A to B by a margin of 2%. Although the results are obviously not "statistically significant" and so are not reliable, if one had to choose based on this evidence alone, it's still true that it's a better bet that people prefer A. Basically, speaker points are weak evidence when they are close, but until we come up with something better, they are nevertheless a justifiable basis for discrimination.

Some have objected that breaking 64 would be impractical because there are not enough qualified judges. Defenders of breaking 64 may respond in several ways. First, double-octofinals would only require 80 judges, using standard 5 judge panels. There is no doubt that there are sufficiently many highly qualified judges to fill these positions. Koc Worlds voluntarily broke 100 judges. Moreover, breaking 64 teams may encourage organisers to expand the adjudicator break, with important positive effects. The best way for up and coming judges to hone their skills is to watch high-quality debates in the company of other, more experienced adjudicators. In preliminary rounds there is precious little time to discuss debates and for chair judges to explain why they may have seen a round in a different way. Judging on a break round panel allows more time for reflection, discussion and feedback. The primary purpose of WUDC is competitive rather than pedagogical, of course, but where the two can co-exist (as with the introduction of oral adjudication in 1999) it is to everyone's benefit. Creating more highly qualified judges is a good thing.

One of the main features of breaking 48 is that the top 16 teams receive a bye to

octo-finals while the other 32 teams contest a double-octo round. This reward for breaking high up on the tab has its attractions, but some would argue that it violates the principle that all teams at a World Championships should receive equal treatment and have an equal chance. If we are looking for the best team in the world, it seems only reasonable that they should have to prove themselves on a level playing field with others; and debaters do not need any extra incentive to finish higher up on the tab at a competition of such importance. According to this objection, breaking 48 is preferable to the status quo, but remains a somewhat unsatisfactory halfway house, accepting the logic of break expansion but failing to carry it through to its conclusion. Of course, this invites the question: Would a sufficient increase in tournament size make the next rational adjustment of the break directly to 128 teams?

Advocates of breaking 48 can respond that their plan provides a fair playing field with equal treatment for all. Top seeded teams *earn* a bye to octofinals by strong performance in prelims, just like sports teams earn automatic spots in the playoffs by doing well during the season. Rewarding high-performing teams with a bye is not different in kind from rewarding them with a good seeding position, which we already do. In fact, some argue that breaking 64 unreasonably puts the highest ranking teams in danger of being knocked out by a fluke, thereby disrupting the major function of the break as a sorting mechanism to get the best teams into the late rounds. Advocates of breaking 64 can respond by arguing that it is very unlikely for one of the top teams to be knocked out in a double-octo round. For example, the team seeded 8th would just need to place first or second in a room with teams seeded 25th, 40th and 57th.

Another potential objection to breaking 48 is that it might become too small if the field of competitors continues to expand. In a field of about 420 teams, we expect that not all teams on 18 would break if only 48 teams broke. If the tournament grew to 500 teams, then breaking 48 would leave us breaking about the same percentage (9.6%) as we have been breaking over the past 3 years (average 9.5%). In this case, we wonder if Worlds Council would need to revisit this issue and again expand the break. Of course, Worlds Council could adopt a policy of automatically increasing the size of the fixed break depending on how many teams competed in a given year, just as happens in determining the size of the ESL and EFL breaks. Indeed, one could argue that any break expansion policy using a fixed size break should include a rule whereby it automatically fluctuates in size along with the tournament size, perhaps in increments of 8 or 16. This would presumably be done in a manner so as to try to maintain a certain percentage of

the total field as breaking.

Problems with Variable Breaks

Moving on to concerns about the breaking 18+, there are some practical concerns and some principled concerns. Practicality objections will obviously depend on whether we adopt the clean break or the wildcard method. Some would argue that clean break method is unacceptable unfair because of the large advantage that it gives all the teams who are in the double-octo room that advances three teams. The rationale for who gets this significant advantage seems thin and insufficient. Moreover, if teams know that they just need to avoid coming in last in that room, it will likely change the dynamics of the debate. Considering that advocates of breaking 18+ have put so much emphasis on the significance of placing in the top two in a room, advancing three teams is inconsistent and troubling. The practicality objections for the wildcard method are less significant. While it is theoretically possible that there would be a tie for the top 17 position, this is extremely unlikely, since speaker points in each team point bracket tend to have a normal (i.e., bell curve) distribution, which makes for bigger gaps at the top and bottom. Some would argue that allowing one team on 17 into the break opens up the door to other 17s to complain that they were excluded, but the answer to this seems just to be "we only needed one team to fill out the bracket". Moreover, as we just said, there will very likely be a significant drop in speaker points at this point on the tab, which helps justify making the break there.

YEAR	FIELD SIZE	NUMBER OF 18+ TEAMS	SPEAKER POINT GAP (TOP 17 – LOW 18)
2011	316	36	47
2010	388	46	93
2009	316	36	64
2008	396	46	122
2007	344	41	100
2006	324	37	106
2005	312	38	72
2004	307	35	66
2003	193	23	75

FIGURE FIVE

Another potential objection to breaking 18+ is that the size of the break would remain too small. Given tournaments the size of those in 2009 and 2011, only 36 teams would break, which some would argue is too meagre an expansion. On average, this method will break 11.7% of the field, regardless of the size of the field. But some may argue that breaking 15% or even 20% is preferable. There seems little more to say about this issue, given what we have said already. People have very different intuitions about it. But, if you are committed to breaking a higher percentage of the field, then you probably will want to advocate for a fixed break system where the size of the break adjusts to the size of the field. Of course, it is also possible to advocate for an analogous system that breaks all 17+ teams (about 18.5%), but we expect that fairly few would advocate for such a system.

The main virtue of breaking 18+ is that it appears to offer a method of drawing a principled line in the tab, not relying on something as imprecise as speaker points (or worse, Article 4.a.iii) to decide who breaks. In making any decision regarding how many to include and exclude from some award, it is ideal to find the point where there is the most precipitous drop in the qualifications curve. The sharper the downturn, the more clearly justified one is in drawing the line at that point. A variable break gives us the chance to break at such an ideal place on the tab. But, what appeared to be the main advantage of breaking 18+ may actually be its greatest problem. That is because the top ranked team with 17 points is almost certainly a higher quality team than the bottom ranked 18 point team, and often by a significant degree. Call this "the discontinuity objection". Consider this data from the tournaments since points were standardized (fig 5). On average, the top 17 point team has 83 more speaker points than the bottom 18 point team. That is more than 4 speaker points per partner in every round. So, it is implausible to say that the one extra team point is better evidence of team quality than this small mountain of speaker points. Although breaking 18+ seems to choose a principled place in the qualifications curve, the curve actually *goes up* at the point where it needs to go down to justify it as a place to draw the line. Consider the following two charts created using the team tab from 2010, which is a typical year.
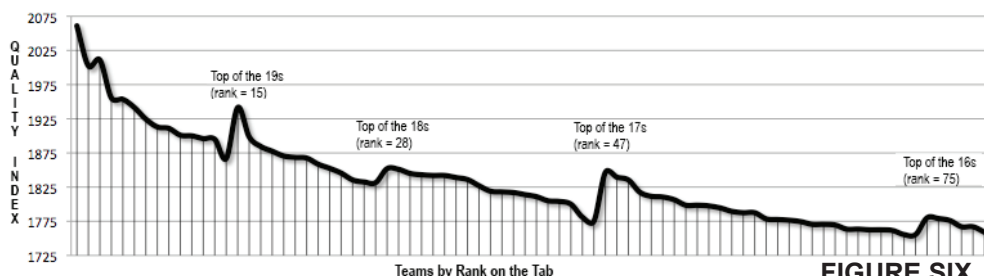

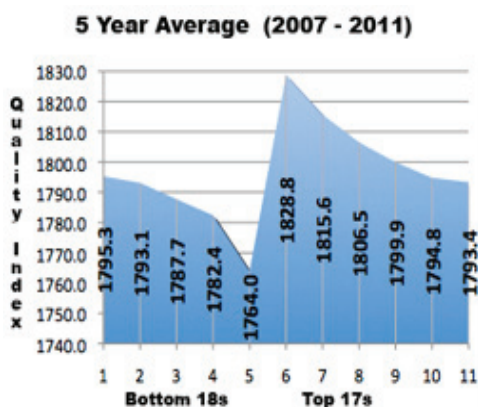**2010 WUDC: Top 80 Teams on the Tab (Field=388)**

FIGURE SIX

5 Year Average (2007 - 2011)

Quality Index values: 1795.3, 1793.1, 1787.7, 1782.4, 1764.0, 1828.8, 1815.6, 1806.5, 1799.9, 1794.8, 1793.4

Bottom 18s (positions 1–5), Top 17s (positions 6–11)

FIGURE SEVEN

In this chart, a "quality index" has been created to give credit to teams who have more *team points*. Each speaker point counts for one quality point and for each team point the team is awarded 21.50 additional quality points.[8] The index is obviously not precise, but it is a more reliable indicator of team strength than the rank ordering on the tab. If the best place to draw the line is a steep dip in the quality curve, then the *worst* place to draw the line is right before one of the steepest upticks in quality (e.g., the top of the 17s). Just for example, in 2007 the top ranked team on 17 was Yale A, who had the fifth highest speaker points at the tournament—above even the top ranked team—and had been favored by many to win the championship, having performed well the Oxford IV and Cambridge IV that fall. Although this incident was more memorable, a look at Worlds tabs over the past 10 years strongly suggests that the top few teams on 17 are typically of very high quality and would have an excellent chance advancing past octofinals. This means that systems like breaking 48 or 64 would provide a better sorting mechanism because they don't consistently set the cut off point such that teams just missing the cut are consistently more skilled than teams just making the cut.

Taking all this into consideration, picking a somewhat arbitrary place elsewhere on the curve based on speaker points seems preferable to breaking 18+. All methods other than breaking 18+ are open to a criticism of unfairness because the team that just misses the break can rightly claim that the speaker points used to make the distinction that excludes them are impossible to standardize with any precision, so that the evidence used to say that their performance was of lower quality than the next team up the tab is extremely weak. But consider the case for unfairness that could be mounted by the team just missing the break under the plan of breaking 18+. They can rightly argue not just that the evidence of their

8 *Quality Index = Total Team Speaker Points + (Team Points × 21.50)* The 21.50 in this formula represents the average difference in total prelim speaker points between teams that are separated by one team point, calculated from the data over the past five years. So, the formula gives exactly this much credit toward the quality index for each team point. Those skeptical of this formula should note that even adding twice as many quality points for each team points would clearly show the same phenomenon. Teams at the top of their team point bracket will almost invariably be stronger than teams at the bottom of the next higher team point bracket.

lower quality debating is weak, but that any reasonable assessment of the evidence actually shows that they are *more* qualified. The latter claim of unfairness seems much more compelling.

The suggestion being made here is *not* that the order in which teams break (i.e., their ranking on the tab) should be changed to match something like a quality index. Such an approach seems fraught with problems, so we seem stuck with a ranking that gives strict (lexicographic) priority to teams with more team points.[9] Rather, the point here is that since we need to work down this list in order, it is best to avoid making the cut-off precisely where there is a significant quality discontinuity in the *wrong* direction.

Since the fairest place to make the cutoff for the break is where the drop off in team quality is steepest, one could modify the breaking 18+ system to also include the top 2 or 3 teams on 17 points. Call this the "Top 17+ plan". Breaking 18+ using the wildcard method already needs to allow in the top team on 17 when the number of 18+ teams is odd, and this Top 17+ plan simply acknowledges that the top teams on 17 are often exceptionally talented and worthy of breaking. More to the point, figure seven shows how there tends to be a precipitous decline in team quality at exactly this point. And, as a bonus, ties in points are unlikely at this point on the curve. Essentially, the point here is that breaking at 32, 48, 64 or any particular number of teams cannot give us good reason to expect the break to coincide with a steep downturn in quality. Breaking after the bottom 18 team all but guarantees that the break coincides with a steep *upturn* in quality. But by including 2 or 3 of the top 17s, we have excellent reason to expect that the break will coincide with a fairly steep decline in team quality, and therefore have maximum justifiability.

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9 At this point, one might think that it is a good idea to discard the traditional lexicographic method of ranking teams on the tab (where speaker points are only considered to break ties in team points) and replace it with a quality index. The problem is how to convert two numbers measuring team skill into a single number. As done in the charts, multiplying the more important number (team points) by some factor can produce a quality index, but unless everyone can agree on what that factor should be, the resulting index would likely lack the legitimacy that is necessary for the very important role of determining the break. The factor used in the above charts is not arbitrary, but then again, no specific awards or privileges are associated with its precise results. (The conceptual point made by the chart would have been supported by any multiplying factor vaguely in the same range.) In short, teams who just missed the break based on a quality index would almost surely perceive the chosen factor as capricious and entirely unfair. Such discontent would not be worth the trouble.

Response to the Discontinuity Objection

A legitimate concern expressed regarding this proposal is that the lowest ranked 18 point team may have significantly fewer speaker points than the top ranked 17 point team, indicating that the bottom 18 point team is of a lower quality than the top 17 point team. Although the manner in which we determine and reward the merit of a team's performance is not without flaw, the argument that the lowest 18 point team is less deserving than the highest 17 point team is troubling.

2008 ASSUMPTION				2009 CORK				2010 KOÇ		
Rank	Team points	Speaker points		Rank	Team points	Speaker points		Rank	Team points	Speaker points
(28th)	19	1416		(21st)	19	1383		(27th)	19	1423
33rd	18	1450		33rd	18	1420		33rd	18	1455
Non-breaking teams with 18 points and more than 1416 speaker points: **11**				Non-breaking teams with 18 points and more than 1383 speaker points: **2**				Non-breaking teams with 18 points and more than 1423 speaker points: **8**		

FIGURE EIGHT

First, we as a community have agreed that team points are more meaningful than speaker points. We use team points to power-pair teams throughout the tournament to test teams against others of similar records. In fact, the power-pair approach of the WUDC deliberately ignores delineations within a particular record bracket, preferring a random match of teams with similar records to one in which the teams with the highest speaker points within a bracket are paired against teams with the lowest speaker points. Moreover, breaking teams are determined first and foremost on their team points records; we rely on speaker points only to seed teams within elimination rounds (and, in the status quo, to determine which teams make the break).

Finally, to criticize this proposal because "lower quality" teams would advance (i.e., that 18 point teams with low speaker points would advance while non-breaking 17 point teams high speaker points would not) ignores that this is the status quo. In three of the last four WUDCs, several non-breaking teams on 18 had more speaker points than the lowest-ranked 19-point team.

Summary

There are legitimate arguments in favor of all the proposals that we have discussed, but in conclusion we would like to quickly survey their major advantages and disadvantages of each according to the standards identified earlier in this essay: 1) the practicality of their implementation; 2) how effectively they emphasize the importance of the audience; 3) how appropriately they distribute highly valued intangible awards; 4) the fairness of their implementation; and, 5) how effective they are at sorting teams, such that the higher quality team are likely to progress further in the tournament.

Regarding practicality, all of the proposals discussed here are entirely feasible. Any differences in ease of use are too minor to base a decision on. One long-term practical consideration deserves a brief discussion. As mentioned earlier, endorsing any new particular fixed size break risks just kicking this same problem down the road to when the tournament expands further (or perhaps contracts). For this reason, we argue that any expansion plan using a fixed size break should build in a rule that automatically adjusts the size of the break to the size of the tournament. Although we make no specific proposal, figure nine would be just one example. This one example is of a system designed to ensure that at least 12.5% of the field breaks (which almost certainly includes all teams on 18+). Such a system could be made finer grained by adjusting the break size by increments of 4 teams, which would keep the maximum break at 14% of the field.

And, of course, these numbers could be adjusted in myriad other ways to accommodate people's beliefs about what the size of the break should be. That the important thing is that once such a *graduated fixed break system* is set, Worlds Council would be unlikely to need to take up this issue again any time in the foreseeable future. The variable size break plans we've discussed (e.g., breaking 18+) will automatically adjust to the size of the tournament.

TEAMS IN FIELD	BREAK SIZE	PERCENT IN BREAK
Under 256	32	12.5% *(min.)*
257 – 320	40	15.6% – 12.5%
321 – 384	48	15.0% – 12.5%
385 – 448	56	14.5% – 12.5%
449 – 512	64	14.3% – 12.5%
Etc.		

FIGURE NINE

Regarding exposing teams to audiences, all we can say for certain is that plans that break a greater percentage of the field are obviously better at increasing the exposure of teams to an audience, and thereby gaining the advantages mentioned earlier that come along with this. So, this consideration seems to favor a graduated fixed break system with higher percentages of teams making the break. The relative importance of this consideration is a matter of considerably more dispute, and we cannot settle that here.

Regarding award distribution, there are advantages and disadvantages to all the systems. A smaller break makes the intangible award of breaking more valuable, so this is a reason to prefer expansion systems that break a smaller percentage of the field. In contrast, it is also desirable to recognize more people's achievement, even if just with an intangible award, which is reason to prefer systems that break a larger percentage. Of course, none of this will change that only 32 teams will be able to say that they "made it to octofinals". Intuitions vary considerably on what percentage of the field at the top of the tab deserves the special recognition of such an intangible award, and we don't see that further discussion here will likely change this for most people. However, although it is only a rough guideline, we agree that plausible proportion of teams deserving such recognition falls in the range of 10% to 20%.

Regarding fairness, none of the proposals is without problems. Critics of fixed break plans argue that these all rely on insignificant differences in unreliable speaker points to make the very important distinction between who breaks and who doesn't. The unfairness here stems from the system's unreliability, and it is even worse in cases where a tie occurs, which is not that unusual. The criticism of variable break plans depends on which method is used. Critics of the clean break method of breaking 18+ will claim both that it gives a major unfair advantage to some teams when an odd number of teams break and that it unfairly makes the cutoff for breaking immediately before a significant increase in team quality. The former claim is of a procedural injustice, while the latter claim is that the proposed system mistakes clarity for justification. Critics of the wildcard method will argue that it is unfair to violate the defining principle of the system of breaking 18+ (by including the top team on 17 in the break) just because an odd number of teams happened to be on 18+. The claim here is that this is unfair because it is inconsistent or capricious. Finally, critics of breaking the top 2 or 3 teams on 17 argue that this is unfair because this method still relies on unreliable speaker points, even though the gaps between teams *tend* to be larger at this point on the tab. Additionally, advocates of the clean break at 18 argue that averaging at

least 2 points per round (i.e., achieving a 'winning average') is itself normatively significant, such that these teams *deserve* to break in a sense that a team on 17 with high speaker points does not deserve to break. In other words, deserving to break is in an important sense not a comparative judgment about how a team placed on the tab compared to how well other teams did.

Regarding sorting teams, we want to make three observations. First, there is a sorting advantage to getting more teams in front of an audience because this is essentially a public event and the most effective way to sort competitors' public debating skills is by seeing them debate *in public*. Second, having a *partial* double-octo round is an effective way to protect and reward top teams who have performed exceptionally in preliminary rounds. More of the most talented teams are likely to make it to *late* elimination rounds if some of the top seeded teams break directly to octofinals. Third, a system that allows some 17 point teams to break will of course allow the top 17 point teams to break, and these are often very high quality teams that may *justifiably* make it into quarters or even later elimination rounds, improving the sorting. Unfortunately, there is also the disadvantage that these high-quality top 17 teams may disrupt the sorting in other ways because their seeding is not commensurate with their skill.[10] The sorting advantage of breaking mid-range 17 point teams is less obvious, but it is possible that some of these teams will flourish in front of an audience.

In the end, as in the beginning, the authors of this paper do not agree on the best approach to expanding the break. However we hope that we have identified the most important considerations that go into making this decision so that future discussions will be better informed and the best decision made more likely.

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10 Of course, this is only a problem if one admits that the skills of the top few teams on 17 are significantly greater than their rank on the tab suggests.

Debating in Finland:
Introducing Clash in a Consensus Country

Mirja Hämäläinen, Karen Nelson, Alfred. Snider, Maja Nenadović, Megan Harlow

In 2003 the European Erasmus teacher exchange brought a British English teacher from the University of Porto, Portugal, to visit the Language Centre of the University of Tampere, Finland. The teacher gave a presentation about debating to the Language Centre teachers. I was one of them and this was probably the first time I, a Finnish teacher of English (with some 25 years of teaching experience), heard of debate happening outside of the English-speaking world. I got interested, googled debate instructions and started using debate as part of the oral English skills classes that I was teaching. The first groups did not see the point of the exercise, in fact, in one group some students protested very loudly and I really had to defend my case: what is the point of making the students argue and defend opinions that they do not believe in? During the first years of introducing debate as an instructional method, when I asked students what they thought 'debating' was, it was quite usual for them to describe it as 'arguing' in the sense of 'quarrelling'. We watched a World Universities Debate Championship debate and the students wondered why the debaters were shouting and angry. These reactions reflect the Finnish speech culture which, although changing, is still in people's minds a culture of consensus. When summarising research on Finns as communicators, Wilkins and Isotalus (2009:12) note that Finns would like to maintain harmony rather than argue directly. In Finnish everyday life, the way most of us Finns experience it, avoiding conflict is considered good manners and therefore debating would seem like quarrelling and bad manners especially if the style is in any way heated or emotional.

In 2009 I participated in the International Debate Academy of Slovenia organised by Bojana Skrt, ZIP, and Professor Alfred Snider, the University of Vermont, USA. This visit opened a whole new world to me. Seeing and experiencing the international debate atmosphere of young people engaging in rigorous study and practice of debate from the early morning till night was something that I thought

Finnish students should also have the right to experience and be challenged with. Coming back from IDAS I was informed that the University of Helsinki has had a Debating Society since 2001. Through a happy coincidence, the University of Tampere had its Debate Society founded in January 2010 and thus was the second university in Finland to have one. The happy coincidence was that Karen Nelson, a Political Science student, happened to spend the spring term as an exchange student at our university and she turned out to be a student of professor Alfred Snider in debating. This is how Karen describes the experience of starting a debate society at a Finnish University:

> What struck me at the time and still holds weight today is the concept that public speaking can be used as a means to reprimand children. This was a huge cultural barrier that I faced coming in to debate classes and eventually co-founding the debate society. This meant that what is considered in the United States to be an exceedingly valuable skill to achieve success in the professional realm, was associated with disdain in Finnish culture. The complexity lied in the fact that a Finnish cultural norm- value was working against a desire to establish a debate society. To overcome a value/norm is not a simple task and the means that we used to try to achieve that was to create a distinctly Finnish debate society. As an American who has lived in the country all but six months of my life this is a concept that I cannot fully explain or even comprehend. Which is why I purposely created a capacity for myself that was simply support and guidance and facilitation of the meetings. To be Finnish is to be Finnish and to be American is to be American, a national identity is a concept and belief that stays with you your entire life. The only complication that can arise from a national identity is when it defines the character of the individual that is associated with the identity. To all of the Finnish students that were required to listen to a 21 year old American student this was not an easy task, but overall they managed.

Karen's interpretation of how the Finnish culture works against debating is interesting. What some students told Karen about their negative experiences of public speaking made Karen think that public speaking had been a way of reprimanding students. Finnish students have traditionally not been encouraged to speak in class. Still, public speaking has not been a way of reprimanding

students but for many it has been very challenging because there have been few opportunities to practice it. This is slowly changing. Teachers here and there in Finland do use debating to teach philosophy or Finnish for instance. The rules are usually very relaxed: students can choose the side they want to argue for/ against and often the debates are one-to-one. There are clear signs that Finland is becoming interested in debating. Just last spring a book on debating as an instructional method appeared edited by Tuukka Tomperi and Leena Kurki and published by the European Society for Philosophy in Tampere, Finland. Five more universities have started debating societies: the universities of Turku, Joensuu, Vaasa, and Oulu with Aalto University joining this new wave just this fall. In addition, the first Finnish University Championship competition is taking place in Helsinki in the beginning of December this year.

After Karen returned to the US, we got another visitor to guide us in debating. In May 2010, Maja Nenadović gave a workshop at the University of Helsinki. In the following, Maja describes her impressions:

"Don't Be Afraid of Silence" or: Teaching Debate in Finland

I was invited to offer an introductory debate workshop at the University of Helsinki, Institute of Speech and Communication, in May 2010. I was looking forward to learning about Finnish communication culture, as I had previously taught debate throughout and across Europe's distinctive cultures. For instance, in the Netherlands, little was considered taboo: in society with decriminalized soft drug use, legalized gay marriage, prostitution and euthanasia, the threshold of what constitutes 'controversial' was elevated compared to most other European countries. Throughout the Western Balkans, however, these same subjects incited heated discussions. At the same time, in these post-conflict countries these topics were not nearly as contentious as debating current political affairs or repercussions of Yugoslavia's bloody breakup.

Some Finns I met on my journey to Helsinki inquired about the reason behind my visit seemed somewhat puzzled with the concept of debate. One woman remarked, "We Finns do not like conflict, so I don't think this debating workshop of yours will be

very interesting to students." Perhaps to comfort me, her husband casually added, "Finns only speak when they have something to say." As a result of these initial encounters, I was somewhat apprehensive and increasingly curious to see how the students would react to the workshop, and to being introduced to debating. To my relief, they turned out to be a very welcoming, interested and engaged group, all of whom seemed eager to learn about debate. Without exception, they all took part in the interactive exercises and debates that filled the day-long workshop. As they were able to receive extra credits for their participation, some of them also opted to write essays reflecting on what they learned about debate and how it connected to their area of study, i.e. speech and communication.

From these essays, and the workshop evaluation forms I received later on, it was clear that students felt debate was a highly useful exercise for improving one's communication skills. One student wrote that, "…every debate is about values and limits, that is what ultimately makes debating possible because there is no such thing as a simple answer to today's challenges." While the workshop evaluation forms resulted in an overall very positive feedback from the students, one of the students played a trick on me (referring to my own earlier made comment to students how they should not be afraid of pauses and silences in their speech, but use them instead to emphasize their arguments). In the section that solicited advice on how to improve the training, this student just wrote, "Don't be afraid of silence!"

The comment "Finns only speak when they have something to say" is a common stereotype that, as is evident from Maja's example, Finns themselves tend to strengthen. Sajavaara and Lehtonen (1997:270) explain this by the observation that Finns consider talkativeness as "an indication of slickness, which serves as a signal of unreliability". Still, this does not mean that all Finns only talk when they have something to say. Finns can be talkative, but the culture does not encourage that at all. All in all, Maja's experience shows that clearly there is a good ground in Finland to start debating. It is just a matter of timing and right circumstances for spreading the word.

After Maja's visit, Professor Alfred Snider gave two workshops at the University

of Tampere; one for Language Centre teachers of Finnish universities and another one to the new UTA Debate Society students. These are his reflections on doing debate training in Finland:

> In September 2010 I was invited to the University of Tampere in Finland to speak at two workshops about debating, one for teachers interested in using debating in the classroom and one for university students interested in debating competition. It was a marvelous experience, and I would say that I learned as much as those I worked with, if not more.
>
> I had done research in advance, as I had heard that there was a Finnish "speech culture." I had learned the saying such as, "A few words can get you into a lot of trouble." Yet, those who had invited me seemed very interested in debating as deployed in an educational setting, so I was very excited about my visit.
>
> My visit went very well, and both of my workshops were enjoyable and seemed productive. From my limited experience, I have drawn several quite tentative conclusions that I would share.
>
> First, it is true that public speaking is something that many Finns have not done that much of. While public speaking is also somewhat unfamiliar (and feared) by many Americans, it seemed to be a bit more so among Finns, especially the adults. Like any public performance you do not do often, it has a tinge of anxiety to it. Creating an open and non-judgmental atmosphere in my classroom seemed to help after a short while.
>
> Second, Finns tend to focus more on the ideas in a debate and not so much on the speakers. It is not so much a contact of "us" against "them" where you "attack" their ideas and "defend" your own, but rather it is an exchange of ideas about areas of disagreement and agreement. It is not necessarily a contest between persons, but rather a contest about ideas. I find this to be a very sophisticated approach that avoids some of the ego-involvement that tends to hinder some students in their debating activities.
>
> Third, I found that younger Finns seemed far more open and willing to embrace debating as opposed to the average Finn I

met and spoke to in the hotel (where I talked about what I was doing in Finland) and even the teachers I worked with. If there is a Finnish "speech culture" it may be changing.

Since returning I have acquired a copy of <u>Speech Culture in Finland</u> edited by Richard Wilkins and Pekka Isotalus (University press of America, Lanham, MD: 2009). I have yet to read more than a few sections of this book, but parts of it have stood out for me, such as the quotation from Penti Holappa, noted author, who said of the communication of Finnish youth today, "Some of them can. They smile more than they did before. That is very good behavior." I saw those smiles in the faces of those I was lucky enough to work with.

I would like to comment on the second conclusion above. The two groups that participated in the training were not totally Finnish but had native English teachers and international students in them. It may also be that the Finns who come to a debate workshop are not the stereotypical ones as Finns generally feel that debate is quarrelling and challenging each other's opinions *is* often taken personally. Sajavaara and Lehtonen (1997:274) point out that argumentation is difficult in Finland as questioning a person's opinions is considered questioning him as a human being. The strategy is to avoid this "quarrelling". A while back one of my students gave an example of this: a high school Finnish teachers had given the students a choice between a debate and a panel. The students opted for a panel, because they considered it a more neutral method to practice public speaking.

While Professor Snider was visiting our university, I had just started my fall term at the University of Vermont as a Fulbright grantee. I followed the Lawrence Debate Union (LDU) debate training and participated in three national debate tournaments as an adjudicator. This was not easy for someone coming from a country where debating practically did not exist. Debating at the LDU has long traditions, it has existed since 1899, which is 18 years longer than the Finnish independence. There are approximately 5 million people who speak Finnish and although the Finnish written language developed in the 16th century and strengthened the language that had only been spoken, it was not until the latter half of the 19th century that the language was made equal alongside Swedish. This is just a short reference to the linguistic history of the country, but it may explain some of the peculiarities of the Finnish speech culture.

In the spring of 2011, through one more lucky coincidence Tampere received an LDU alumni Megan Harlow, to help developing debating at the society and especially as an instructional method in the Debating course. These are Megan's observations:

In the spring of 2011 I found myself in Tampere, Finland where I had the opportunity to teach with Mirja. I attended her English course that used debating as an instructional method. I also participated in the debate society and helped judge some practice debates between the Finnish students. First I must say that it will be hard for me to garner an opinion on "Finnish" students, as the class was incredibly diverse. Second, I am wary to make any generalizing statements that can be taken as a judgment of the Finnish character, yet I will say a few comments that should not be taken as a definitive judgment, just an account of my experience.

Students seemed to really enjoy the opportunity to debate in class – the interactive time and the freedom to participate instead of listen to a lecture is generally always appreciated in particularly classes aimed at speech and language instruction. It did seem strange to me the way some the debaters I met with one evening rejected a number of ideas, stating that Finns will just not participate in debating, we are a consensus seeking society. I heard this consensus concept a number of times. But in the streets, the pubs and the rest of society it did not seem uncommon to see Finns in active disagreement, yet compared to Americans I did feel a sort of shyness, or a lack of desire for Finns to go out of their way to speak to strangers. This feeling may have also been due to my own perceptions and fears as a foreigner, and of course the fact that I could not speak Finnish probably increased my feelings of isolation within the environment.

Overall I would say I saw a great deal of improvement amongst the Finnish students in their ability to use English, their confidence with the language and the environment within the classroom seemed to be one where the teacher did not simply pour information into the students expecting them to regurgitate it. Instead the classroom became a truly unique place where teacher and students were both co-creators of a learning experience.

Analysing communication and interaction between people is complicated and Megan seems to make the same observation that Sajavaara and Lehtonen make in their article on the silent Finn: "Finns may be less liable to intervene in public meetings and in classrooms but participate with vigour in pubs, at marketplaces , or in the sauna." (Sajavaara and Lehtonen 1977:189). Another important thing to keep in mind is that when considering the way Finns participate in discussions in intercultural contexts, the situations involve speaking a foreign language and that, too, most probably affects the way they behave in those situations.

For those who are interested in the Finnish culture, the article by Sajavaara and Lehtonen (1997) and the book on Finnish speech culture edited by Wilkins and Isotalus (2009) give a good starting point. Isotalus (2009:204) describes Finnish televised elections debates and contends that they are not debates at all but discussions where the participants express agreements and disagreements. Isotalus states that this is due to the fact that Finland has a multi-party system where parties are aware that they will need to be able to co-operate with one or more parties in the government. The other explanation that Isotalus offers is the so-called Paasikivi-Kekkonen foreign policy that was prevalent for 40 years until 1991. This foreign policy was related to Finland's relations with the Soviet Union. Times have changed since then. The internal policy is being challenged by the True Finn party which was a winner in 2011 elections. This party is EU-critical and it has been defined as a protest party. Finland clearly needs to learn how to debate now.

Compared to the strong traditions and the long history of speech culture in the US and the rest of the English-speaking world with the overwhelming number of native speakers, Finns are newcomers in the debating world in many respects. Some active students are already joining the international competitive debating world, but there are probably many more who although interested in debating still think like this student in my *Debating for Academic Purposes* class: "I can see the game aspect of debating, but I'm not sure if I like it and if I'm up to it.". As Finland and other Nordic countries have so far had a different approach to finding solutions than debating, i.e. consensus orientation, the question could be whether global debate could change and become a function where debate would include dialogue and the competitive aspect would not be so prominent anymore. Would the game element then be lost?

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What I Did On My Holidays, or: The Use of Debating in Rwandan Civic Education

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We need debates at least three times a year to help Rwandan citizens to understand about the genocide …it will make us prepare for the new generation

This debate competition has given me a way to participate in dialogues with others. To me it is part of democracy.

-Rwandan students

Speech is what makes man a political being

-Hannah Arendt

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In July 2009, 30 university students (15 from 5 Rwandan universities and 15 from the University of Melbourne, Australia) met for a human rights workshop in Kigali. None of the Rwandan participants were aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which Rwanda is a signatory, and only a few had vague ideas about the existence and the provisions of Rwanda's 2003 Constitution and the specific laws and policies that were enacted to address human rights in the country. Rwandan youth participants in similar workshops organized in 2006, 2007, and 2008 also lacked a basic understanding of human rights.[1] It should be stressed that Rwandans of this age that are able to go to university and participate in English-speaking events will be some of the most privileged in this country, and as those attending such events will have self-selected, it is not unreasonable to assume that these were some of the most politicised (and, one would think, politically aware) young Rwandans in the country. If a democracy is only as robust as its citizens, Rwanda is in trouble.

The purpose of this piece is to review the creation and promulgation of a debating programme which evolved in response to this sort of worrying finding. Debating is used in Rwanda as part of a broader programme of civic awareness and advocacy

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1 Author's fieldnotes

conducted by a Rwandan NGO, Never Again Rwanda (hereafter NAR) from March 2011. This work is based on fieldwork conducted by the author (shown in fig. 1) in Rwanda in spring of 2010 (when the programme was devised) and spring 2011 (when I was fortunate enough to be present for the inaugural Rwandan Schools' Debating Championships).

A superficial assessment of this programme indicates that it has had some success. Since March 2011, NAR has trained 93 students and teachers and hosted 3 debate competitions, reaching 21 Secondary Schools in Kigali, Bugesera, and Nyagatare (as fig. 2 indicates, this is a not inconsiderable geographical spread for a project this young). These trained students and teachers are now, in the parlance of donor organisations taking 'ownership over' debate. After each training and competition, schools have organized their own competitions. Lycee de Kigali, Riviera High School, and FAWE Girls in Kigali have hosted competitions, as have Nyamata High School in Bugesera and SOPEM in Nyagatare. Finally, teachers from 10 secondary schools in Kigali have formed a Teacher Association for Debate and organised a further competition for Kigali Schools in October 2011. All this proves, however, is that debating is happening, and likely to continue. The purpose of this article is, firstly, to briefly review the case for debating in Rwanda, not just as something to do for fun, but as part of a broader peace-building agenda, secondly, to give more detail on the specifics of the programme, and thirdly, to try and evaluate what, if anything, can be learned from Rwanda's experience at this early stage.

Why Debating? Why in Rwanda?

The academic evidence for the benefits of debating is compelling[2], if somewhat fragmentary: these include examining both sides of issues in a thorough and fair manner[3], promoting gender equality and advancing feminist perspectives[4],

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2 And I am indebted to Sam Greenland for helping me encounter it. To the extent that debating in Rwanda practised any best practices learnt from elsewhere, he takes credit.

3 See Ingalls, Z. (1985), May 8. Resolved, that competition in college debate is as fierce as in a basketball playoff game. *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* pp. 13-14., and Mooney, C. J. (1991), March 13. Foes share a classroom to help students examine both sides of the abortion debate. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. A15, A18.

4 See Bruschke, J. and A. Johnson. (1994). An analysis of differences in success rates of male and female debaters. *Argumentation and Advocacy* 30:162-173, Elliot, L. B. (1993). 'Using debates to teach the psychology of women.' *Teaching of Psychology* 20:35-38, and Haffey, D. B. (1993), April. A problem-solving analysis of women in debate. Paper presented at the 1993 joint meetings of the SSCA & the CSCA. Lexington, KY.

promoting liberal values in the curriculum[5], improving student communication skills[6], helping students to overcome their fears[7], increasing active student involvement in the learning process[8], advancing critical thinking skills to new levels which likely could not be achieved via other methods[9], and empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning, rather than being instructor dependent[10]. These, it is suggested, are the skills of democratic citizens: debating is supposed to free students by helping them to think for themselves, and communicate that to others. As such, it is an ideal activity to foster democratic citizenship.

Although debating is widely practiced in American and European universities as an intellectual game, several organisations have recently begun to use debate to build democratic citizenship, civic engagement, and social capital in fragile democracies, and post-conflict environments. Za in Prodi Slovenia and the Nansen Dialogue Centre[11] have an extensive programme using debate in the former Yugoslavia to promote the growth of a democratic citizenry. These projects educate youth about politics, give them the skills to be able to engage in peaceful

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5   See Rohrer, D. M. (1987). 'Debate as a liberal art.' in *Advanced debate: Readings in theory, practice, & teaching 3rd ed.*, ed. D. Thomas and J. Hart, chap. 2. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

6 See Garrett, M., L. Hood, and L. Schoener. (1996). 'Debate: A teaching strategy to improve verbal communication and critical-thinking skills'. *Nurse Educator* 21:37-40.

7 See Gersten, K. (1995). 'Debating the research paper.' *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 39:71-72.

8 See Crone, J. A. (1997). 'Using panel debates to increase student involvement in the introductory sociology class.' *Teaching Sociology* 25:214-218.

9 See Colbert, K. and T. Biggers. (1987). 'Why should we support debate?' in *Advanced debate: readings in theory, practice, & teaching* 3rd ed., ed. D. Thomas and J. Hart, Chap. 1. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co.

10 See Frederick, P. J. (1987). 'Student involvement: Active learning in large classes'. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 32:45-56.

11 See www.zainproti.com/english/what-is-pro-et-contra and www.nansen-dialog.net

civic activism, and foster liberal values. Similarly, IraqDebate and QatarDebate[12] have been using debate to promote respect for human rights and democracy in the Gulf.

All these programmes, broadly speaking, share the same inter-related goals:

1. *Debating teaches the skills of active citizens.* Through active learning, debaters gain critical thinking skills, knowledge of political and social problems, and their potential institutional remedies. They develop skills in research and documentation, and the generation of ideas, convincing arguments, and solutions to social problems. Furthermore, debaters learn to understand different points of view, how to engage with those they disagree with using reason and logic, and to respect those opinions. They also develop skills in public speaking, collaboration with others, and the presentation of their opinions and desires in a reasoned and compelling manner.

2. *Debating is a source of social capital.* A nationwide debating circuit is a platform and structure through which youth can openly express their views and concerns. It creates and reinforces social relations between participants, giving them opportunities to meet and work together with youth from a diversity of backgrounds, with a diversity of experience and knowledge. This encourages socio-cultural exchange among participants. Furthermore, a functioning debating league establishes a collaborative structure within the organisation which youth can use as a forum to foster further civic education, tolerance, and conflict resolution.

3. *Debating fosters civic engagement.* Debating amounts to an education in the politics and governance of the contemporary world. Throughout debating, participants will be required to learn about the institutions of their country, and the wider world; how they work, what problems they may have, and how they may be resolved. Secondly, debating demands an engagement with the arguments concerning human rights, justice, democracy, equality, and so on. In so doing, it fosters a respect for peaceful dispute, the rule of law, tolerance, and constructive civic action. Thirdly, the debating tournaments offer a unique opportunity for youth to present their opinions to representatives of the media and government.

12 See www.iraqdebate.org and www.qatardebate.org

These goals are precisely the priorities identified by other youth intervention projects in post-conflict settings.[13] The key principles of Fischer's recommendations for civic education in Bosnia-Herzegovina (the need for opportunities for networking across social cleavages, giving youth the resources to articulate their needs, and integrating youth into a civic polity) lie at the heart of debating.

The need to take up this task is particularly urgent in Rwanda. During the post-colonial era, Rwandan youth suffered from deliberate Rwandan government policies that denied citizens their human rights, democratic institutions, and a peaceful co-existence. The Rwandan government of the time openly promoted divisions based on one's ethnic background, religion or region of origin. They led the country using fear and violence which led to massacres that started in the late 1950s and culminated with the 1994 Tutsi genocide. The Rwandan youth played a big part in carrying out these atrocities. These youth, often under-educated or not educated at all, and lacking freedom of expression or choice, were easily manipulated by those in power and turned into killers – the *Interahamwe militia*. They were used to torture and brutally kill their victims, to rape women and girls, to loot or destroy property, and to commit other horrific acts that are well documented.

After the events of 1994, the new Government of Rwanda embarked on the most challenging task of reconstructing a country and a society destroyed by these events. The Government has put in place the necessary laws and policies to support good governance, build democracy, protect equal rights of all citizens. The official discourse unceasingly emphasises the unity of the people who must therefore work together as Rwandans in the reconstruction and economic development of their country. The efforts made by the post-genocide Government of Rwanda with the support of its development partners are largely working. The country is now enjoying peace, and there is visible evidence of economic development. However, the consolidation of democracy and human rights within Rwanda remains an unfinished and fragile project. Increasing government restrictions on political space and individual freedoms, and growing intolerance of criticism of state policies[14], have led to concerns of heightened repression among human

13 Fischer, M. (2006) 'The Need for Multi-Dimensional Youth Work: Education, Interethnic Networking and Income Generation', in *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*, ed. M. Fischer, Lit Verlag, Münster

14 See www.eastafricapress.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id =232:kagame-tops-media&catid=80:latest-news, and www.newtimes.co.rw/index. php?issue=14196&article=26801

rights groups and several international donors[15]. Preparations for the 2010 presidential election raised fears of intimidation and violence within local communities and led to a handful of arrests of individuals supporting the formation of new political parties.[16] This is a time when supporting human rights and democracy in Rwanda is as urgent as ever. Furthermore, the Government of Rwanda's reforms and initiatives are largely meaningless in the absence of an active, politically informed community of citizens with the skills and knowledge to engage with their government.

This conviction is not based on merely anecdotal evidence. An emerging academic and practitioner consensus[17] suggests that a crucial component of successful democratic consolidation is the presence of a 'democratic citizenry'; a populace informed about their rights, conversant with democratic institutions and politics, and equipped with the skills to engage with their co-citizens and their state effectively. Put more simply, the best defenders of citizens' rights and freedoms are citizens themselves. Youth are particularly significant with regards to this goal, not only because they make up 60 per cent of the population, but for three other reasons:

> Firstly, high unemployment, poverty, ethnic tensions, few educational opportunities, and scarcity of land have a disproportionately negative impact on young people.

> Secondly, at the present time Rwandan youth lack basic knowledge of their rights, or how their democracy works, including universities students

15 See www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119019.htm , www.hrw.org/en/world-report-2010/rwanda, and www.rsf.org/en-rapport38-Rwanda.html

16 See http://africannewsanalysis.blogspot.com/2010/03/green-meps-demand-eu-action-to-end.html or www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/rwanda-intimidation-opposition-parties-must-end-20100218

17 The literature on this is vast, but a few selected examples might include: Ake, C (2000) *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N. *(*1997*) Democratic experiments in Africa : regime transitions in comparative perspective,* Hyslop, J., Othman, S. and Williams, G. (1999) *African democracy in the era of globalisation,* Putnam, R (1993) *Making Democracy Work* and Whitehead, L (2002) *Democratisation: Theory and Experience*

who have the greatest access to information. As future national leaders of Rwanda or community peace-builders, it is critical that youth have a strong foundation in human rights, and an understanding of democratic institutions, so they can work to promote and protect them.

Thirdly, Rwandan youth also lack the capacity or even the opportunities to express their concerns through few official forums which exist in Rwanda. Traditional cultural practices and norms discourage youth from openly voicing their concerns (even more than they do everyone else), and there are powerful social taboos around criticising unjust laws and policies or to even offer constructive ideas. The lack of youth empowerment and involvement undermines Rwanda's efforts to build a democratic and peaceful nation that ensures the equal rights of all citizens.

Finally, debating is not new to Rwanda. NAR has hosted debate trainings and competitions since 2004, and several other organisations, such as *Tuvuge Twiyubaka*, and *Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle*, have also been involved in debating. The problem is that these efforts were piecemeal, uncoordinated, implemented with very meagre resources, and conducted without any commonly agreed upon structure. Without an institutionalised common format and structure for debate, there was continual retraining and lost capacity. The purpose of NAR's 2011 debating programme was to create an institutional structure capable of surviving without direct support. The basic idea of the programme was to use debating as a medium for effecting tangible change in the character of the youth, thereby promoting of political pluralism, human rights, and a more open, democratic society.

Who is Never Again Rwanda? What was the programme?

NAR was founded by 3 students at the National University of Rwanda in 2002. They believed that young people in particular were used to destroy Rwanda leading up to and during the 1994 Tutsi genocide.[18] Even as a post-conflict society, they observed that divisions continued to exist between young Rwandans based on ethnicity (Hutu vs. Tutsi), spoken foreign language (Anglophones vs.

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18   A conviction in the fundamental importance of youth is shared by several in the academy: see McDoom, O. (2005) 'Rwanda's Ordinary Killers: Interpreting Popular Participation in the Genocide', *Occasional Paper Series,* London School of Economics, and Sommers, M (2006) 'Fearing Africa's Young Men: The Case of Rwanda' *Social Development Papers No. 32,* Centre for Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction, World Bank

Francophones), history of residency in Rwanda (returnees vs. non-returnees), and returnees' previous residence (Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, DRC, etc.). Their vision was one of a nation where young people are agents of positive change and work together towards unity and sustainable peace. To that end, the idea of NAR is to enhance youth's capacity to analyse the root causes of past conflicts, and facilitate dialogue among peers in order to generate ideas and activities that work towards conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Within that, they have six specific goals[19]

1. To educate youth in Rwanda and around the world about Rwandan history, including the 1994 Tutsi genocide and its causes, in a fair, balanced and accurate way.

2. To create in Rwanda a culture of dialogue by creating safe spaces where youth can learn how to discuss ideas and share experiences in an understanding and respectful way.

3. To create a culture of critical thinking among youth in Rwanda.

4. To empower Rwandan youth to engage with and participate in decision making processes.

5. To seek creative and effective (non-violent) means of preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Rwanda and around the world.

6. To create local and international networks in which youth can discuss and act on issues related to conflict prevention and resolution.

Since 2004, NAR youth members have organized themselves into clubs and associations. These clubs and associations are supposed to empower young people through youth-led activities and projects that engage their intellect and ideas, develop their capacities as leaders, and positively contribute to building sustainable peace in their communities and nation. Currently, NAR has over 27 Youth Clubs in secondary schools and universities and 5 Youth Associations of non-schooling youth. These clubs and associations operate in 7 districts within Kigali City and the Northern, Western and Southern Provinces (Kicukiro, Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Huye, Nyabihu, Ngororero and Rutsiro). NAR supports these clubs and associations through activities such as seminars and workshops in human rights, theatre performance, youth-run radio stations, and conflict

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19 Much of this text is taken from the Organisational Overview of NAR. Author's fieldnotes.

mitigation, and events such as sporting tournaments, conferences, and so on. They also operate a Peace-building Centre (PbC) located in Kigali. The PbC offers space for youth meetings and activities and the multimedia resource library consists of books, DVDs, and other materials available to NAR youth members on a loan basis. This should be understood as an extraordinary amount of activity given NAR's extremely small size and it's even smaller funding.

NAR's debating project had five components:

1. A Unified Debating Curriculum for Rwanda (completed by April 2010). A comprehensive set of teaching materials on debating for debaters, judges, coaches, and tournament organisers. These materials fall under two categories:

a) One part of the materials introduce youth to the basics of debating, and the processes involved in reasoning, building arguments, researching issues, and thinking about politics, including the nature of human rights, and democratic institutions. These materials follow the World Schools debating format[20], so that NAR is able to take advantage of the global debating community's support and expertise in future

b) The other part covers the organisational aspect of debating: how to set up debating within a school, how to coach debaters in order to develop skills most effectively, how to host a debate, how to judge debates such as to make them pedagogically useful, and how to set up inter-school debates in their locality.

The idea is to equip clubs to run debating by themselves, for themselves. They were made available online, for free, for any school or association to use. These materials were also printed and disseminated in hard copy to the entire network of participating clubs across Rwanda.

2. Debate Training Sessions (November 2010). NAR ran a series of training events for teachers and students to be coaches in their school clubs. The point of this training was to provide the initial impetus to set up an institutionalised tradition of debating in these schools. It focused on the basics of debating, how to research a topic, how to set up and run a debating club within their school,

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20   See www.schooldebate.com for more details

and how to participate in inter-school debating competitions. This training was conducted by NAR's staff, who have experience running such events, and were trained in the use of these materials by the author. All training sessions followed the same format:

a) An introductory three-day training session focussing on teaching participants [i] the basics of debating, [ii] how to use the curriculum materials, and [iii] how to set up debating successfully in their school. During this session, participants plan a schedule of activities in the following months which they can do to promote debating.

b) A follow-up two-day training session a month later in which participants [i] consolidate the skills learnt at the previous session, [ii] report back on the success of setting up debating in their school, and work on ways to improve that (particularly with reference to inter-club collaboration). In addition, participants were given [iii] the requisite materials to prepare for participation in our tournaments, [iv] additional material on coaching a team for participation in these tournaments, and [v] advice and support on setting up networks within their region for the promotion of debating independently of NAR organised events.

3. Support for Autonomous Club Organisation of Debating (2010 – 2011). Debate training sessions (see point 2 above) encouraged NAR youth clubs to conduct internal debates within their school, and 'friendly' debates with other clubs in close proximity to them, which they organise themselves. The aspiration is, as far as possible, to have the topics, priorities, and structure of debating within Rwanda driven by youth themselves. As such, the training included encouraging coaches to form a plan for a future schedule of activities in which they work together, selecting their own debating topics, and running their own debates

4. The National Debating Championships (March 2011). NAR organised and hosted a one-day debating competition in March, in Kigali, for 8 secondary schools, each fielding a team of three students (i.e. 48 participants in total), with topics focussing on human rights and strengthening democracy. Motions included debates on population controls, compulsory voting, and free speech.

5. The Autumn Tournaments (August to October 2011) Survey respondents after debating events in Rwanda have frequently commented that events do not happen often or regularly enough to ensure that skills are consolidated and retained beyond the initial event. This reasoning is supported by the evaluations of the English Speaking Union and *Za in Prodi*, both of whom emphasise the importance of repeated events to create a civic debating culture, as opposed to simply having one tournament. With that in view, NAR ran a second set of tournaments (in Kigali, Bugesera, and Nyagatare in Autumn mirroring the Spring tournaments. This gave youth clubs something to work towards across the summer, and was a strong incentive to the clubs to continue developing the skills and acquiring knowledge.

To conclude this section, I want to make three observations. Firstly, the programme which ended up being run was astonishingly productive if measured on a purely quantitative basis: tournaments were run; students did form debating clubs, etc. Secondly, this was conducted with almost no money whatsoever (in stark comparison to many programmes which rely on flying in 'star debaters' from various parts of the world), and with an unrelenting focus on capacity-building and harmonisation across clubs and interested parties as a result: if NAR close down tomorrow, debating in Rwanda is not over.[21]

But so what?

Trying to assess, what, if anything, the real impact of such programmes runs into three ubiquitous problems common to almost any citizenship intervention in post-conflict settings. Firstly, selection bias: the students which engage in debating do so voluntarily. It does not stretch the imagination, therefore, to assume that those are the students most receptive to engaging as citizens and informing themselves in any case. This is compounded by the reasonable desire of NGOs to place their events where running costs are low, where experienced individuals will be willing to help out, and where you can persuade government officials and other grandees to turn up (essential if you ever want to be refunded). In Rwanda, this means Kigali. NAR take enormous credit for running events in rural Rwanda, but even there the bias will be for schools organised and enthusiastic enough to respond

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21 Some readers may think I am underselling my contribution here. Not so. This programme could (and largely did) happen without me.

actively to the services NAR offers.

The second problem is one of over-determination. Some post-conflict settings are 'sexy' (Sierra Leone and East Timor spring to mind): they are gifted with a well-publicised story which can be packaged into a simple moral narrative of 'saviours and survivors'[22], the bars are good, and they're not too far away from beaches. Rwanda easily fits this description. The consequence is that Rwanda groans under the weight of innumerable NGOs all bent on the modern version of civilising the native whilst the tragedies of places like the Central African Republic go largely ignored. In the crowded NGO scene of Rwanda, enthusiastic youth will be bundled through the doors of countless 'active citizen programmes', 'youth interventions', and 'empowerment platforms'. In such a context, who's to say what effect debating has on a community?

The third problem simply concerns what, if anything, we are (or could or should be) measuring. The laudable donor aim of being able to work out whether or not things actually *do anything* has a couple of perverse consequences. In general, this creates a bias towards doing things where impact is immediate and quantitatively measurable. This is pretty unfortunate for education in general (which is simply never going to be able to compete with vaccination programmes as long as this is the metric), but death for programmes like debating, where the outcome is (a) long-term, (b) open-ended (people do not learn specific facts in debating, but different ones depending on who their judges, coaches, and co-debaters are), (c) skill-based (it is always easier to assess whether or not 'facts have been imbibed' rather than an ability to do something, and, finally, (d) directed to the particularly inchoate set of skills encapsulated in the idea of an 'active citizen' (how, for example, do you even begin to try and assess increases in the capacity to critically analyse the statements of their leaders?).

All of this makes me deeply cautious about saying anything definitive about the success of this programme. In these circumstances, NGOs fall back on two things: 'people through the door'/'money out the door' (i.e. 'we spend this much money, and this many people participated'), and anecdote. The former doesn't work: it gives us no means to distinguish between something truly game-changing, and an event which merely takes up a weekend before everyone goes back to their lives as before. In evaluations written after the event (such as those quoted in the opening) participants have always been glowing about debating, but we shouldn't be unduly impressed that well-brought up students are polite.

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22 Mamdani, M. (2010). *Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*.

Which brings us back to anecdote. The final of the championships held in Kigali was between Riviera High School and FAWE Girls school. The motion was 'That this House would abolish all laws restricting freedom of speech in Rwanda'. In the Rwandan context, this is immediately read as a motion about the 'genocide ideology' laws, which amount to an expansive and somewhat under-specified variant of Germany and France's holocaust denial laws. These, it is argued by critics of the regime, hand huge unconstrained power to the executive to shut down debate and criminalise opposition by selectively reinterpreting political criticism as in some way reinvoking the 'ideology of genocide'. Indeed, the government of Rwanda has repeatedly closed down newspapers, arrested opposition politicians, and banned political parties using these laws. The effect of this is to dampen political discourse in Rwanda. On that day though, six Rwandan students stood

up and openly spoke about censorship in modern Rwanda. They did it politely, reasonably, without ever suggesting that the other side of the argument was *in advance* unacceptable because of the historical memory of the genocide, and *with a government representative in the room*. My claim here is threefold: firstly, I cannot name a single other context in which Rwandan youth could do that – not in their schools, or in the multiple other NGO 'youth interventions' (many of which talk about the genocide, many of which teach them to recite the constitution, *not one* of which encourage youth themselves to develop their own thoughts on contemporary political realities). Secondly, if six students can stand up and publicly have a debate about the merits and demerits of Rwanda's genocide ideology laws, as they did in this final, then the discourse they are engaging in is already *substantially* freer than that of the mainstream Rwandan media, or the Rwandan parliament, where those laws cannot be discussed: anecdotal this evidence may be, but it would astonish many of Rwanda's critics. Thirdly, this is the only youth programme I have ever seen which teaches that most democratic and anti-genocidal of values: disrespect. If there is actually something which merits the title of genocide ideology, a key

part of it is deference. Rwandan youth almost never talk back to their elders, and certainly not to a government representative in a large public forum. They did that day. If one of the best ways to build the anti-genocidal democracy is to create space for reasoned, civil discussion in which truth can be spoken to power without it being seen as a threatening and subversive act, then this programme has already succeeded, not just for the six students in that final, but the *five hundred* who watched and now know such an act to be possible. Now to find some way to put that in a quantitative evaluation.

DEBATERS DEBATING OUTSIDE DEBATES: ISRAEL AS A CASE STUDY CONSIDERING THE IMPACT OF FORMAL DEBATE TRAINING ON INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF CONTROVERSIAL POLICIES

Mollie Gerver

Giving a debate speech in front of a panel of judges requires a certain level of self-confidence to express a stance, an ability to muster arguments logically, and a certain level of critical thinking to refute an opponent's points. Rules against interrupting- and the necessity of listening- mean that there is a particular culture of discourse during debates. It is less obvious if these cultural characteristics exist outside of formal debate settings. Because of this, one may ask the question, "How do debaters and non-debate university students use argumentation and personal experiences when freely discussing controversial policies, and what is the culture of discussion in this discourse?"

In Israel there are two major debate formats: the World Schools debate format for high schoolers, where two teams compete against each other, and the British Parliamentary format, with two teams on the proposing side and two teams opposing. The latter is meant to loosely mirror multiple parties in parliament who agree to support or oppose a bill, but for different reasons. Both formats will be considered in this paper. The main argument presented is that the skills and tendencies developed by formal debating manifest themselves during informal policy discussions among debaters, and that the competitiveness inherent in debate activities may also affect the style and substance of arguments in non-debating discourse. This argument will explore the existing theory on the topic before presenting new qualitative research in the form of three focus groups.

Theoretical Framework

It is widely accepted that formal debating transforms the way in which debaters think. A 1987 study by Colbert found that debaters did better on critical thinking tests on two tests handed to them before and after training, and that debaters also increased their scores by a greater amount than the non-debaters. [1] Colbert used

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[1] Kent Colbert, "The Effects of CEDA and NDT debate training on Critical Thinking ability." *Journal of the American Forensic Association*. Vol. 23 (Spring 1987) pp. 194-201.

the model of critical thinking defined by Edward Glaser in 1941, which involves knowledge of logical inquiry and the ability to apply such logic.[2]

Moreover, in all areas of life where individuals' opinions differ to their peers, according to Pearce and Littlejohn, individuals must choose whether to engage in debate and disagreement, or to suppress their differences. Unlike in debate tournaments, where one needs to express an opinion and where one is assigned a side that is not necessarily one's own, debate outside of tournaments is- at least to an extent- a choice engage rather than suppress. Pearce and Littlejohn argue against the conventional wisdom that communicating can prevent conflict by claiming that it can create and maintain conflict, and only sometimes resolve conflict. They found that rationalism and intelligence was pronounced when political speakers from the American religious right and the "humanist secularists" addressed those who already agreed with them, but that little rational argument arose when they addressed each other in political discussions and debates.[3]

Furthermore, literature on the actual and perceived effects of debate coaching has observed a potential conflict between debaters' desires to 'win at all costs' and the ability of debating to provide educational benefits its participants. Burnett, Brand and Meister argue that the competitive element of debate detracts from the educational element by putting greater emphasis on "unwritten rules" which must be adhered to in order to win. [4] Swanson points out that some of these "unwritten rules" are valued only by those within the forensic and debating community, but not in wider society. [5]

According to Hinck, there are both "intrinsic" skills which are only beneficial in debate tournaments, and "extrinsic" skills which are of benefit outside of tournaments and therefore educational. He distinguishes between "artificial engagement" – engagement that only persuades judges in a debate and no outsiders, or does not persuade anyone—and "authentic engagement" that would persuade audience members outside of official debate tournaments. Hinck is against speakers being both "forensic virtuosos" who only can please tournament judges, as well as demagogues who appeal only to the wider public.

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2 Edward M. Glaser, *An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking*, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1941
3 W. Barnett Pearce and Stephen W. Littlejohn, *Moral Conflict: When social worlds collide*, USA: Sage Publications (1997) p. 12
4 Ann Burnett, Jeff Brand, and Mark Meister, "Winning is Everything: Education as Myth in Forensics." *The National Forensic Journal.* 21(1) (Spring 2003). Pp. 12-23
5 D. Swanson. Introduction. *National Forensic Journal.* (10). Pp. 49-50

Hink distinguishes between formulaic models for argumentation and the more creative argumentation skills that cannot be learned from a book.[6] This creativity may service a speaker outside of debate tournaments by allowing him to tailor arguments for a specific crowd, thereby creating authentic argumentation.

In sum, the existing academic literature addresses debate clubs and training, examining the motivations and skills gained from debate instruction, as well as the repercussions of disagreement in non-formal policy discussions. However, such studies do not check to see if critical thinking is applied verbally by debaters in the absence of the strict rules of debating or test-taking, nor does it explore the conflicts that may arise when debaters state their real, and not assigned, position. In addition, existing studies lack an examination of the general rhetorical norms and culture of discussion applied when official tournament rules and codes of ethics are not forced on participants.

Qualitative Framework

Three focus groups—two made up of debaters and one of non-debating students—met to speak about policy subjects chosen for their controversial nature. The debaters met at schools and the non-debaters in an apartment. The aspects observed included types of argumentation and logic, the use of personal experiences and examples, and the culture of discussion, including how often participants interrupted and listened to each other. The focus of the study was on the quality of rhetoric and argumentation, not the opinions themselves.

The first three topics discussed were "What should the Israeli government do regarding Gilad Shalit?", "What is your opinion regarding Free Trade, including tariffs, regulations, and subsidies?", and "Should gay couples be allowed to adopt?". The high school debaters, who spoke less on free trade, also were asked to consider "Should euthanasia be legal". "Should there be a minimum body-mass index (BMI) for models?" was also given to the university students.

The six high school debaters, who spoke in English, were all members of the Jerusalem after-school debating club *Siah VaSig* – The Israel Debating Society, and had been debating between one to four years.[7] The eight university debaters, who

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6   Edward A. Hinck, "Managing the Dialectic Tension between Winning and Education in Forensics: A response to Burnett, Brand, and Meister." *National Forensic Journal.* (2003) 21(3) PP. 60-75

7   Students came from four schools—the Pelech School, The Hartmen High School, and the Hartmen High School for Girls, and Rosh Tzpirim School.

spoke and understood both English and Hebrew, were all members of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Debating Society, and had been debating anywhere from half a year to almost ten years. The eight non-debaters had no interest in debating and were students from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, including both the main university and the Rothberg International School.

Argumentation: Logical explanations and personal experiences

In the discussion on Gilad Shalit, the high school debaters initially made statements with little explanation, such as Miriam's statement, "a soldier must give up his basic right to life in order to protect the country" and Ayelet's statement that giving up terrorists for Shalit is "reversing the natural order of things." Explanations for statements slightly improved in the second topic of free trade, but there were very weak logical links throughout. For example, Yishai stated that subsidies and tariffs hurt free trade, which is bad because free trade and no subsidies can lead to a lower price. Miriam made the most logically backed statement that fixed prices can happen without subsidies through companies agreeing on prices between themselves, and that at least with subsidies the government can fix a lower price. Rather than refute this argument, Yishai responded that laws could prevent this, and Mellissa responded that loopholes in laws would still allow companies to set prices between themselves. Even though the refutation was not directly refuting the assumptions made, they still "refuted the refutation" and even "refuted the refutation to the refutation" which was more logically defended than initial statements. With euthanasia, the harms of suffering versus society viewing death as immoral was analyzed and backed up with logic as the discussion progressed. There was not a single argument based solely on personal experience. The only argument that used the first person in the Gay Adoption discussion was done by Yishai who said that, "If I don't help someone with their homework it will hurt them" but that he should still not be forced to help someone with homework— so to, he argued, a child should not be forced to be raised by a gay couple just because the gay couple will suffer if they are childless.

In the focus group with university debaters, there were concrete justifications for statements from the onset, and also more personal examples. Tomer started with a non-personal argument that freeing prisoners could encourage more kidnappings and then discussed his own experiences in the power troopers unit to show that soldiers know the risks. Dikla spoke of the issue of public morale, because

the public wants him home at the price of freeing prisoners, which was lightly tautological as the discussion at the time had been on if the public *should* want him home at this expense. Shira gave the first appeal based on personal emotions of individuals, saying they should "wear the shoes of the family, of the friends, of the soldier that is kidnapped" but then proceeded to the more logical argument that a soldier knows the risks and expects the country save him when going into a military campaign. Hayah refuted this, saying, in slightly less clear words, that soldiers still went into the army even when death was a risk, so fear of kidnapping and not being saved shouldn't deter them.

In the free trade discussion, Channan made a non-personal logical statement that taxes at the border were good because they could be invested in infrastructure. Hayah said that trade blocks either pull regions out of poverty or don't "depending on what side of the debate you are on" with no logical explanation. Tomer made the argument of comparative advantage in a bit of a formulaic manner, and Caylee also used a somewhat formulaic argument that free trade hurts countries who must compete against richer countries who themselves have subsidies. Hannan made an assumption that outsourcing non-service related sectors lead to countries being only service-sector oriented and made another assumption that this was something bad, without backing either assumption up. All except for Tomer built arguments on the assumption that tariffs are good for the local producer and bad for the consumer. In the gay adoption discussion, all except for Tomer were supportive of gay couples adopting and made simple arguments about the importance of the best home. Racheli assumed that a right to have children existed and did not back this up. Tomer agreed that in principle gays adopting was fine, but that the harm of the child should be taken into account, thereby making a clear distinction between his principled versus practical stance. As a whole, the university debaters did not refute as much as the high school debaters, used slightly more personal examples, and also used more logic from the onset.

The final group, those of non-debaters, were far more likely to use personal examples as sole justifications for their opinions. Yitz began the Gilad Shalit discussion with, "As a person who did the army and knows what it's like to be away from home and be in a situation like that…." In the gay adoption debate, Aaron stated that because he, as a gay person, did not want children and did not like children, he was neutral about what policy should exist. As the discussion continued, more logical and non-personal arguments arose, such as the fact that adoption is preferential to foster homes. However, Ben and Aaron, who disagreed

with each other, both responded to this argument with personal experiences of friends raised by gay couples. In the discussion on free trade, Aaron began his justification with saying the absurdity of his paying high prices for imported tennis rackets. Others argued that his personal need to tennis rackets should not override other needs. When discussing requiring minimum BMI for models, Linda spoke of her younger sister who struggled with her weight and self-esteem. All participants supported a law to create a minimum BMI. None questioned the assumption, or defended the assumption, that models were a major cause of anorexia. The euthanasia debate had the most personal justifications for stances to the point that the first three speakers began with stories of family members who suffered before death but who still chose not to use euthanasia. There were some participants who were persuaded to change their mind on the BMI and gay adoption debate.

Culture of Discussion: Interrupting and sensitivity

In all three focus groups, interrupting was minimal. When it did occur in the group with university debaters, others in the group intervened to create order and prevent interrupting. In the high school debating group and the non-debating university group, many requested to speak rather than interrupt, and the other group members gave them permission. Or, alternatively, participants waited for a pause in the conversation in order to comment. In the high school debate group Yishai initially dominated the discussion, but later others, especially Miriam, began to speak with as much conviction and for as long as Yishai. While the non-debaters never interrupted each other, the non-debaters also had two participants who did not speak at all on two of the topics.

The most potent example of personal sensitivity to others not being offended was in the non-debating group. One participant said nothing in the gay adoption discussion until very near the end, at which point she gave a very long introduction saying her opinion offended many people, and that she did not want to offend anyone, and then proceeded to say that, for religious reasons, she was against gay adoption. Aaron, who did not agree with her, responded that she made "complete sense", and that is why he was not offended at all. Linda replied that she was incredibly grateful for his response, and that she would normally not offered this opinion in other forums. This can be contrasted with the university debate group where many responded relatively angrily to Tomer, who was against gay adoption

due to practical considerations harms on the child. None responded to Linda, who admitted beforehand that she only wanted to not deeply offend anyone and never expected to actually persuade anyone.

Stating opinions, apologizing for ignorance, and use of humor

The non-debating group had more participants who chose not to state their opinions on multiple occasions, specifically two participants, Trey and Sarah. However, they listened intently. In the other two groups, participants who did not have opinions stated this within the discussion, rather than stay quite. When a quite person did eventually speak up in the non-debaters, they at times were apologetic beforehand. Linda, for example, said that she was speaking "from an American perspective," though her logic, that soldiers should expect their country to save them when they enlist, could have been applicable universally. Ilyah in the Shalit discussion and Aaron in the free trade discussion both said they knew very little about the topics before saying their opinion. While a lack of confidence in the subject of free trade was common in all three groups, confidence to refute other's unconfident statements was common among the debaters. Even refutation was missing with the non-debaters, with four not saying anything.

In all three groups there was one participant that made jokes throughout the discussion, though there were far more jokes among the non-debaters. At times these jokes were meant to half persuade others, as when Aaron mocked those who think gays cannot raise children by saying, "You kidding me?! A bunch of queens trying to raise a child? Oh goodness girl!" With the university debaters, the occasional joke was meant to strengthen the argument. Haya, for example, said that Israeli soldiers knew the risks of being recruited, including the risks of death and kidnapping, "unlike Canadian soldiers who sometimes shovel snow."

A theoretical framework for understanding the impact of debate training in Israel

The intrinsic and extrinsic skills discussed by Hinck and Swanson suggest that certain rhetorical methods are relevant outside of a formal debate (extrinsic) while others are not (intrinsic). The "personalized communication" that Swanson argues is more effective outside of forensic communities seems to have been applied more

with the non-debaters, who made personalized arguments that would not have been relevant to all in a formal debate. Linda's religious justification, however, was personalized for herself and her religious community, not for the other members. Nor was her statement meant to persuade any in the room, merely to present her opinion in a way that others could understand it, or at least not be completely offended by it. Even with her position being very contrary to all others, she still managed to gauge a supportive response from Aaron.

If Swanson is correct to say that personalized communication is often more affective outside of formal debate judging panels, this may be consistent with the fact that participants in the non-debating focus group were persuaded to change their mind or at least alter their opinions when personal examples were utilized. High school debaters, who perhaps have less experience applying "extrinsic skills", used no personal examples, while the university students, who would have had more non-academic life experiences, and where the majority only began debating at a later stage in life, were more likely to include personal examples. However, another reason for the lack of persuasion in the debate groups may be that the debaters felt that they were in a type of competition and were motivated to win against an actual or abstract third party, rather than to directly persuade each other, which is impossible in a debate. Even if Hill empirically showed that education was a greater motivator than winning for why students join debate clubs, winning was still one motivation, and the educational benefits, according to Wood, arise because one is motivated to gain educational skills in order to win.

Critical thinking skills in refutation, prominent in the high school debate group, were not widely used with the non-debaters, which is consistent with Colbert's tests. Interestingly, the university debaters also used critical thinking, but tended to weave personal stories and jokes into their points, perhaps exemplifying Hinck's objection to being entirely a demagogue or a "forensic virtuoso." Because the high school debaters refuted refutation, as opposed to only refuting initial arguments, they were far more likely to use the "creating argumentation" that Hinck discusses. Their exploration of very complex questions of the differences in depression from terminal illness and other types of depression only arose because all were eager to reply to others statements, rather than settle on remaining quite because they had already had their turn to speak. While they had flaws in their logic, their arguments were not formulaic.

Pearce and Littlejohn's claim that disagreements lead to irrational arguments was not shown. Linda's introduction to why she felt gay adoption was wrong from

a religious standpoint was logically consistent, and was meant to respond to a group she knew disagreed with her. Indeed, total *agreement* in the BMI discussion, and therefore no refutation, also had almost only personal examples in place of logical argumentation. Rational responses were only apparent when refutation to refutation occurred, suggesting, perhaps, that open disagreements can be expressed rationally when participants are creative enough to think of new, non-formulaic responses, rather than simply moving on when others respond to them.

Pearce and Littlejohn also point out that disagreements in a discussion can lead to a lack of listening, which was not seen in the groups, most pronounced by the disagreement between Linda and Aaron, but also seen when the university debaters disagreed on Gilad Shalit yet listened to each other's opinions and responded, and the disagreement that occurred on euthanasia with the high school debaters. However, the conflicts that Pearce and Littlejohn describe did arise in the gay adoption discussion when only one speaker had argued a particular side against all others, as was the case in the university debaters and the non-debaters, until Linda spoke up as a second anti-gay-adoption voice. The high school debaters were by far the most likely to truly listen to each other even when extreme differences arose, and even when a single debater took a unique stance no one else held.

The ability of the university debate group participants to prevent interrupting is perhaps a skill gained from debates themselves, where debaters must take turns serving as judges to keep order. In this sense, perhaps experience with moderating and judging debates serves as an "extrinsic" skill as defined by Hinck. Or, alternatively, the types of people who join debate are the types who prefer formal order and equal speaking time.

Confidence to state opinions was far more common among the debaters, which is similar to what Mazur claims about the ideals of debate training. Many of the non-debaters had opinions, but were hesitant to share them unless pressed by others or, after long pauses, by the moderator who assured that none would be judged. The common use of humor with the non-debaters, and the use of humor as a substitute for a logical argument, is more closely related to Hinck's "authentic argumentation" and Voth and Smith's argument that politics—where debates take place without formal debate rules—increasingly uses humor in place of an argument.

One of the major potential influences on the high school and university groups was their knowledge that other participants were club members, perhaps leading

them to use fewer personal examples out of knowledge that these examples would serve little in persuading others. A focus group with mixed debaters would have assisted in perhaps limiting this reflexive cause. In addition, the job of the moderator could have been viewed partially as a judge, also affecting the types of arguments used. In addition, acquaintance with the moderator in the high school club, and partially in the university group, could have lead to fewer explanations with particular arguments, out of an assumption that the moderator understood the logical links, and there was no point in explaining them. The use of both English and Hebrew in the university debate group may have affected the flow of conversation and therefore other elements, such as interruption, refutation, and even argumentation. The fact that only the non-debating group had students from abroad may have affected the type of rhetoric they used, and been one reason for the differences seen between them and the debaters. Finally, debaters may have felt they were in a debate because the discussions took part in a classroom close by debate practices in the university and the high school.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Hinck's separation of intrinsic and extrinsic skills does not take into account that intrinsic skills may become extrinsic if all are debaters, in a forum outside of an actual debate. Many of the members of the focus groups had received only limited training in debating, perhaps the equivalent of what many middle and high school students receive as part of the educational curriculum in Australia. Yet, they still were more likely to give less personalized arguments. If more receive even limited debate training, then perhaps more logical and homogeneous arguments will become more accepted, and they will not only be relevant for those in debate clubs. Whether logical arguments are preferred, however, is itself up for debate.

Hinck's "creative argumentation" was not seen in initial statements in all three groups—formulaic argumentation was the norm at the beginning of discussions, even to the point where logical links were not explained, perhaps out of an assumption that all had heard the argument before. However, high school debaters, who had been trained from an earlier age, had shown remarkable creativity in responding to others. The format of high school debating requires that one team give four speeches, with fewer constructive arguments, and more time for refutation. This forces speakers to refute refutation and refute the refutation to the

refutation, etc. Creativity is perhaps necessary and formulaic arguments difficult, because responses must be more pin-pointed to a specific issue that the team happens to chose to attack. This creativity in refutation, while still being fairly logical, also fits in with the critical thinking which Colbert found to be common among high school debaters.

The use of humor and sensitivity of the non-debaters reflect Voth and Chris's analyses of humor in political discussion, and also a type of non-competitive element. However, the mutual respect to hear out others' opinions, and the surprising lack of interrupting in all three groups, expresses a generally tolerant culture of discussion, regardless of debate membership. However, the nature of what debaters said within this culture of discussion clearly presents potentially unique elements of the type of discourse that arises among debaters, even when the strict rules and motivation to win are taken away, and when speakers can freely express opinions.

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The Global Financial Crisis: Debating Debt, Austerity and Bailouts

Harish Natarajan

Introduction

The economic crisis that started in 2008 is still ongoing. The crisis has affected economic and political systems across the globe. Currencies like the Euro have been destabilized. Violent protests have broken out throughout the world. Scenes of chaos in Athens and Rome suggest that the economic crisis has profound political implications. Protestors have not only opposed particular policy, but often critique the capitalist dominated political system.

It is unsurprising that the financial crisis has lead to an increased focus on macroeconomics in debating. One indication is the incidence of topics on the subject. For example the motion *This house believes that central banks should set limits on government spending* was set at Botswana Worlds 2011; *This House would Abolish the Euro* was set at WUPID 2010; *This house believes Eurozone countries should bail out other Eurozone countries who would otherwise default on their sovereign debt* was set at the LSE Open in 2010; and *This house believes that Barack Obama should have vetoed any debt deal that did not increase taxation* at EUDC 2011.

Debating is ill-suited to discussing economics. Theories can be used to justify both sides of most debates. Instead economics requires empirical evidence to justify which theory is correct, and the complexity of the conditioning variable involved is not accessible to the majority of participants. Only basic observations can be made, and complex theories must be relegated to a few sentences. Nonetheless, the topicality of macroeconomics makes it hard for most Adjudications teams to avoid.

Any debater preparing to speak at a major competition would be advised to research the financial crisis and the issues it has created. This article does not provide an academic look at the crisis. Plenty of other sources and academics have written in depth about the problems, and potential solutions. This article focuses on providing a background to the crisis and ways of thinking about

macroeconomics in debates. It focuses on ways of effectively deploying economic theory to a debating audience.

Why Economics Matters?

In political discourse benefits to the economy is often considered an overriding good in itself. Showing that a particular policy helps economic growth is often a silver-bullet in justifying a particular policy. Not so in competitive debates. Competitive debating forces its participants to consider why economic growth is good. This is one of the strengths and weaknesses of the activity. It is a strength as it forces us to explain what we often take as a premise. It is a weakness in that it divorces debating further from the political process.

Take the example of ceding control of fiscal policy to a Central Bank. It is possible that an opposition team could concede that a Central Bank setting fiscal policy could lead to better decision making, yet still successfully claim that the principles of democracy are sacrosanct and determine that such fiscal decisions should not be taken away from elected representatives. Similarly financial cost and economic gain is often a dominated argument. The financial cost of a policy is regularly considered unimportant against any other benefit or costs claimed.

It is useful that teams try to explain why the economy gains or losses are important. Even if an entire debate assumes that economics matters, elevating the importance of economic claims can strengthen arguments against indirect attacks.

One way of explaining why the economic system matters is by transforming claims from the economic to the emotive. The language of economics is dispassionate. It is often hard for an audience to appreciate why negative economic growth matters in itself. For example, you could describe a recession as two negative quarters of economic growth. While accurate, that has little power in front of an audience. Former US President Roland Reagan expressed a recession more emotively: 'Recession is when your neighbour loses his job. Depression is when you lose yours.' Describing a recession in this way makes it seem more important and far easier for an (intelligent) audience to understand.

Another way of expressing the human impact of a crisis is to take a global approach. The World Bank predicted that the 2001 economic downturn would push 10 million people below the $1 a day poverty line. Up to 40,000 children died of

malnutrition. A single country crisis still leads to hundreds of thousands of people without jobs and income. Areas of unemployment can grow, and unemployment can last a generation.

On a more general level, one of the most important skills in any economics debate is the ability to explain why economic concepts matter. Experts in economics will often find themselves speaking with the assumption that it is obvious as to why their arguments matter, yet it will often need to be argued rather than assumed.

Debt Crises

One of the more popular debates on macroeconomics focuses on high levels of government debt. Debt Crises have spread throughout the Western World. The US has unprecedented levels of government debt, forcing it to increase the debt ceiling. Many Eurozone countries face high levels of government debt, resulting in measures to reduce spending and thus debt in the long run (these are known as 'austerity measures').

Debt crises exist when governments have borrowed heavily for years and are struggling to pay the interest on what they have borrowed. Greece, for example, has faced a debt crisis - as it struggles to pay interest on its new debt. Other countries fear that they will struggle to pay the interest on their debt (or that financial markets will believe that), and respond by cutting spending. The UK, for example, is not facing an immediate debt crisis, but has acted to reduce the rest through austerity cuts.

Debates on the topic focus on how countries can institute reforms to prevent future debt crises, how to reverse the buildup of debt and how to manage a debt crisis. Non-economists cannot be expected to fully understand the economics of debt crisis, but a few of the points below should help understand how to make the most of what knowledge you do have.

First, the buildup of debt has a strong political logic to it. A rising debt ratio is caused by persistent government deficits. Governments have incentives to spend now through borrowing. High spending and low taxes are popular, as the costs of current spending can be differed to future governments.

Debt buildup is thus often caused because of politics rather than economics.

Attempts to overcome this political logic include ceding control of total spending to bodies that do not apply to same political calculus. For example, Central Banks' decisions may be less politically determined. Further, external bodies can formally limit the deficits countries run. While all these measures reduce the power of democratic bodies, they can be justified as reducing the chance of crisis.

Second, while the underlying amount of debt a country has is important, financial markets confidence matters. The interest rate that countries have to pay depends on the apparent risk of lending to that country. If markets believe there is an increased chance of default, then they demand an increase the interest rate associated with holding that currency. The irony is that the loss in market confidence can vindicate itself. If market participants feel that there is an increased risk of default, they can cause that very default that they feared. Thus policies that signal to financial markets that they are likely to be repaid often are more important than actually repaying debt. For example, UK austerity measures have showed markets that the government is willing to take tough political decisions to repay debt. This increases the credibility that the government will pay back debt.

Third, the total amount of debt matters far less than the debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio. GDP is the amount a country produces, and most debt figures you read will be expressed as a percentage of GDP. It stands to sense that a country with a higher GDP should be able to pay a greater amount of interest and correspondingly have a high absolute amount of debt. As a country grows richer (its GDP increases), it can service greater absolute amounts of debt. This is important to recognize as it suggests that one way of getting out of a debt crisis is economic growth. Thus policies that aim to reduce spending (or increase taxes) to overcome debt problems can be self-defeating. These policies can harm total growth, and in doing so make debt harder to service.

There is, of course, a lot more that is relevant to the debates on debt buildup and debt crises (see Eichengreen's *Towards a New Financial Architecture* for example) - however understanding the basics is sufficient for most debates.

Bailouts

Bailouts have become an increasingly topical issue. Banking bailouts have generated political backlash (see the Occupy Walls Street Protests). Sovereign bailouts have received similar negative attention. Packages to bailout Greece (providing Greece

funds to pay off some of its existing debt), has led to the German public in particular (the majority funders of any such deal) to question their support of such measures.

In many debates the question of whether a country should default arises. Bailouts are an alternative to defaulting on debt. The relative benefits and costs of defaulting on debt (compared to bailouts) are complex and economically technical. Yet again, a few comments on the relative merits of defaulting on debt are worth considering.

First, defaulting on debt passes costs on to lenders. Lenders face substantial losses when they cannot get repaid. These lenders are often domestic banks. Losses to these banks risks that these banks will collapse and general depositors (those who lend to banks) potentially suffer a loss of their entire savings. Second, defaulting often means that it becomes harder to borrow in future. In the immediate term a country will still (likely) need to borrow to cover its immediate spending needs. However, few can trust that a country that has just defaulted will pay back future debt - and will thus only be willing to lend at very high interest rates. Hence, following a default, countries are forced into rapidly cutting spending (or increasing taxes). This explains why countries that default often have sharp economic downturns in the immediate aftermath. While both of the previous costs may be preferable to having to pay back billions in debt (and pay the service costs for years to come), it should suggest that defaulting is not a simple option.

Bailouts are often necessary to prevent harsher economic contractions. They are often also necessary to prevent a crisis from spreading. For example, the collapse of Italy would likely hit banks worldwide. Banks everywhere hold Italian debt, or debt from other financial firms that hold Italian debt. This provides a rationale for other countries to bailout failing economies.

However, bailouts are only stopgaps. Bailouts will rarely allow a country to retire all of its debt. They tend to provide funds at lower interest rates for the immediate term. They also help convince the markets that debt will be repaid, and thus reduces the cost of private borrowing. Measures will still be required to prevent debt from increasing. Greece, for example, still needs to cut spending in order to remain solvent even after it has received bailout packages. If a bailout is not met with the political will to cut the deficit, it will do little but delay the eventual crisis.

Further, bailouts lead to moral hazard problems. A country may be more likely to

engage in risky and imprudent behavior if it knows that others will shield itself from the worst excesses of its financial profligacy. A bailout is that shield from the worst consequences. While any government that accepts a bailout is likely to suffer political damage and conditions associated with the bailout will mitigate the effect of moral hazard further, it still remains possible that bailouts increase the chance of debt crises reoccurring.

Conclusions

This article has provided some of the basics that all debaters need when debating macroeconomic issues. It has not provided a full academic discussion of the topic. Competitive debating requires that experts temper their knowledge for their audience - failing to do so could result in losing debates to those who are just better able to explain why their arguments are correct and why they are important.

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The club has had a rich history of success in tournaments across the world. In January 2011, MAD was crowned World Debating Champions, defeating teams from Oxford, Harvard and Cambridge Universities. MAD has been Champions of the Australasian Debating Championships (Australs) eight times in the last fifteen years, and is the only club other than Oxford University to win the World Championships (Worlds) in consecutive years.

The Association has a strong commitment to innovation that we apply to all of our initiatives. We are proud to be the club that created the world's only academic journal on debating, the MDR; the only club to run a comprehensive international debating training program- the Monash Asia Tour- and the first club to implement equity policies which ensure diverse participation at international tournaments

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