Spring 1973

An Analysis of Critic Consistency in Evaluating the Comparative Advantage Affirmative Debate Case

Peter L. Settle
Marquette University

Follow this and additional works at: http://epublications.marquette.edu/theses

Part of the Communication Commons

Recommended Citation
AN ANALYSIS OF
CRITIC CONSISTENCY IN EVALUATING
THE
COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE AFFIRMATIVE DEBATE CASE
by
Peter L. Settle, B.S.

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School, Marquette University, in
Partial Fulfillment of the Re­
quirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
May, 1973
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Navigating the sometimes difficult stream of higher education can often be frustrating and very discouraging without the unselfish aid and cooperation of others. This researcher extends his most sincere appreciation to all who provided such aid and cooperation and most particularly to the following:

Mr. Gerald Sargent, who, as Thesis advisor, gave uncountable hours of his time and energy to help insure the completion of this project.

Mr. Michael Price, who always stood ready to cajole or flog a failing spirit.

Dean Alfred J. Sokolnicki, who, despite the requirements of his responsibilities as Dean, always took time to be helpful in many ways.

Ms. Karen Gritzacher, who shared the trials of professional and graduate life with this researcher.

My wife, Jan, who, despite her own duties as a teacher shared with me the good and bad of graduate education with a perpetual smile and a critical eye.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER
I. INTRODUCTION................................................. 1
   Review of literature........................................... 2
   Statement of the problem..................................... 17
   Definitions..................................................... 17
II. METHODS AND PROCEDURES................................. 18
   Identification of key issues................................ 19
   Questionnaire.................................................. 20
   Collection of data.............................................. 26
   Processing of data.............................................. 28
III. RESULTS......................................................... 29
IV. DISCUSSION.................................................... 34
   Analysis of critic responses................................ 35
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS................................. 49
   Results.......................................................... 50
   Conclusions.................................................... 52
   Suggestions for further research............................ 54

BIBLIOGRAPHY.................................................... 56

APPENDIXES
   A. Questionnaire Statements and Cover Letter............. 59

THESIS APPROVAL................................................ 61
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 Frequency counts......................30
2 Percentage response-statements position......31
3 Comparison percentage-statements I and IV......32
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

For many years the options for affirmative case analysis in academic competitive debate included only minor variations of the traditional inherency-harm type of analysis. The affirmative was restricted to indicting specific harms inherent in the Status Quo. These harms were then used as a justification for adopting the resolution. The introduction of comparative advantage analysis in the early 1960's provided the affirmative debater greater latitude in his choice of argumentation. He could now choose from a greater number of arguments and techniques. The problem the affirmative debater now faces is not one of latitude but of certainty.

The responsibilities of the affirmative team in the traditional case were widely understood and clearly stated. There has been no corresponding effort to clarify the specific criteria used by debate critics in their evaluations of the comparative advantage case. The comparative advantage affirmative debater cannot be certain that consistent criteria will be used to
evaluate his efforts. This review of the literature of comparative advantage debate will attempt to discover the responsibilities of the affirmative team in comparative advantage analysis.

Review of Literature.

The use of comparative advantage analysis is fairly new in competitive debate. There is evidence to suggest that Musgrave first considered comparative advantage cases as early as 1945.¹ Musgrave believed that certain conditions arising in the Status Quo suggested substantial improvements over the present policy system, even though no inherent harm was implicit in the Status Quo.² Comparative advantage cases were not widely used in tournament competition until the 1960's.³ Zarefsky indicates that national level debate tournament champions for the past few years have consistently employed comparative advantage analysis.⁴

²Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
Yaremchuk suggests that comparative advantage debate is now in extensive use. "During the past few years, the comparative advantage case has become the standard case for most experienced college debaters."\(^5\) Despite the widespread use of comparative advantage cases, a series of articles and counter articles by Marsh, Newman, Kruger and others, in Speaker and Gavel and The Journal of the American Forensic Association revealed the controversy over the nature and responsibilities of the comparative advantage case.

Before examining that controversy, a comparison of the basic assumptions of the traditional inherency-harm and comparative advantage analysis will save confusion. In Reason in Controversy, Glen Mills describes the comparative advantage approach. "The general idea of this approach is the comparison of the Status Quo with the affirmative plan on the basis of results for the predicting of improvements."\(^6\) The


affirmative team reasons that change is justified when some substantial improvement is realized by the adoption of the resolution. The comparative advantage case is in sharp contrast with the inherency-harm case. "The traditional 'inherency-harm' case affirmative is built on the conservative philosophy that there is no reason to change the present situation until it has been demonstrated that serious evils exist in the present system." 7 The inherency-harm analysis reasons that serious harm must inherently exist in the Status Quo for change to be necessary or desireable. In contrast, the comparative advantage case claims not that serious harm is present, but that significant improvements or advantages will accrue from accepting the resolution.

The basic issue of the comparative advantage controversy centered on the ability of the case to offer sufficient justification for change. Patrick O. Marsh was among those who questioned the necessity of showing inherent harms in the Status Quo as a necessary adjunct to affirmative case development.

Marsh indicated that, under certain circumstances, the affirmative was justified in advocating change when the Status Quo is outdated or no longer needed.\textsuperscript{8} Robert Newman indicated that the inherent harm analysis was simply unrealistic as an effective measure of policy.\textsuperscript{9} Both Marsh and Newman saw sufficient justification in comparative advantage cases based on the belief that significant improvements are a desirable and satisfactory condition for change.

Arthur Kruger opposed the position of Marsh and Newman by defending the inherency-harm position and by attempting to minimize the comparative advantage approach. Kruger argued that since the change advocated is of such major importance, only serious, harmful and inherent problems should be accepted as justification for the resolution.\textsuperscript{10} Kruger attempted to minimize the comparative advantage approach by contending that comparative advantage is essentially an attempt


to circumvent the need issue. 11 Kruger’s position is that lack of advantage in the Status Quo is undeniably a "specious" argument. 12 His conclusions indicate that comparative advantage analysis does not offer sufficient justification for a policy change.

Debate textbooks, with the exception of Musgrave, did not recognize the comparative advantage alternative until the 1960’s. Arthur Miller and Remo P. Fausti gave a brief explanation of comparative advantage analysis in their 1961 text. 13 In 1964, McBurney and Mills offered only a slightly expanded examination of the techniques of comparative advantage analysis. 14 Until comparative advantage cases were widely used in tournament competition, textbooks tended to treat comparative advantage only briefly. 15

12 Ibid.
In 1966, an examination of comparative advantage by Otto F. Bauer in his text, *Fundamentals of Debate: Theory and Practice*, roughly marks the start of thorough treatment of comparative advantage case analysis.\(^{16}\) Bauer points out that comparative advantage analysis carries sufficient justification for change even though no inherent harms are present in the Status Quo. Bauer argued that comparative advantages should be a reasonable means of justifying the resolution.

It should be clear that a properly formulated comparative advantage case is a prima facie case; if substantial advantages can be achieved from a new proposal, it is logical to change from the present system to that proposal.\(^{17}\)

Eugene Moulton also developed an advantages approach and defined it as a legitimate and valuable part of affirmative case development.\(^{18}\) Virtually all major textbooks in debate now indicate marginal expansion of their examinations of comparative advantage analysis.\(^{19}\)


\(^{17}\) Ibid.


\(^{19}\) Chesbro discusses the problem in *The Comparative Advantage Case,* in some detail.
Bernard Brock contributed what is perhaps the single most comprehensive statement on comparative advantage case analysis in *Speech Teacher* in 1967. Brock felt that much of the objection to comparative advantage debate arose from the lack of a clear statement of what responsibilities of development are sufficient to establish proper justification.

Part of Brock’s purpose was to describe a set of criteria the affirmative debater could use in constructing a comparative advantage case. In order to fulfill that purpose Brock examined the criteria normally applied to the traditional inherency-harm case and determined that these criteria, when applied to the comparative advantage position, resulted in a number of potential obligations for the affirmative team.

After preliminary discussion, in which Brock indicates variance among many available theoretical positions, he indicates that it is necessary to determine the acceptability, obligations and strategies of comparative advantage debating.

---

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Brook determines four obligations for the affirmative in comparative advantage debate.

The advantages affirmative accepts four obligations: first, it must accept the goals and basic assumptions of present policies; second, it must present a plan which is basically compatible with the present system; third, it must be prepared to prove that these goals will be achieved to a significantly greater degree than under present conditions; fourth, it must be prepared to show that conditions would improve more by adopting the affirmative plan than they would by implementing any other action which is precluded by the affirmative proposal.

Brook concluded, "The advantages affirmative asserts its freedom from proving a traditional need." 25

Brock's article stimulated new interest in comparative advantage theory. L. Dean Fadely offered further considerations for comparative advantage theory when he contended that a properly formulated comparative advantage case does offer a desirable reason for change. 26

In a 1968 article, Vernon Cronen discussed the confusion surrounding comparative advantage cases.

24 Ibid, 120.
25 Ibid.
"Few terms in the vocabulary of the academic debater have received as much attention in the past few years as the term 'comparative advantage'."\(^{27}\) Cronen went on to express some reservations with comparative advantage theory. At the core of the comparative advantage analysis, Cronen argues, the affirmative must demonstrate a limitation in the Status Quo that prevents advantage accrual.\(^{28}\) Cronen states that the affirmative comparative advantage case eventually must make an inverse statement of evils in the Status Quo.\(^{29}\) Cronen considers that the affirmative must indicate the scope and import of the lack of advantage in the Status Quo.\(^{30}\)

Cronen's objection to the use of comparative advantage analysis can be challenged in two areas. First, present conditions may indeed be such that no significant evil inherently exists, but change would allow potential advantageous gain. Brock offers the example of a man changing from a perfectly acceptable employment to one that potentially


\(^{28}\) Ibid, 244.

\(^{29}\) Ibid, 248.

\(^{30}\) Ibid.
offers greater gain. If one argues the term 'harm' to include the absence of potential gain, then most policy systems would seem to include a degree of 'harm'. The advantage analysis, contrary to Cronen's position, does not seem to imply an inverted statement of evils.

Cronen's objection to the format of comparative advantage analysis can be analyzed in a second area. In outlining four types of comparative advantage cases, Cronen offers at least two types of analysis which are essentially peripheral to the harm concept; unwarranted procedures and immanent choice. Cronen claims that it would be advantageous to change when anachronistic or unwarranted procedures exist and when a choice will soon be made anyway.

Consideration of the theoretical justification of comparative advantage cases leaves no conclusive evidence of a widely accepted position on why or why not comparative advantage cases would be acceptable. Zarefsky points out that because the comparative advantage approach is in such widespread use, it may be inferred that debate critics

\[3^{1}\text{Ibid, 247.}\]
\[3^{2}\text{Ibid, 245.}\]
consistently find sufficient merit in comparative advantage analysis to vote for the affirmative.\textsuperscript{33} Glen Mills describes the present situation, "The position of this work is that the comparative advantage debate is valid, although there is some difference of opinion as to why."\textsuperscript{34}

The practical problem for the affirmative debater is functional. He has no locus of opinion, other than perhaps the concept that critics will accept comparative advantage cases, upon which to develop his efforts. Mills states that, "There is almost as much difference of opinion on how the case should be structured as there is on its theoretical legitimacy."\textsuperscript{35} Despite the apparent widespread usage and acceptance of the general concept of comparative advantage debate, the affirmative debater has little assurance that his case will be uniformly evaluated.

Brock contends that there are four obligations which the affirmative must fulfill in order to

\textsuperscript{33} Zarefsky, V.
\textsuperscript{34} Mills, 237.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 235.
establish their case. The affirmative must start by accepting the goals and basic assumptions of the present system.\textsuperscript{36} The affirmative is thus placed within the value system of the Status Quo. Brock indicates that this insure an adequate degree of comparability in the debate.\textsuperscript{37} Wood believes that the claimed advantages must be clearly related to desirable policy goals of the Status Quo.\textsuperscript{38}

There appears to be general agreement that the affirmative must be within the goals and basic assumptions of the Status Quo to insure a comparative value base.

Brock's second obligation is that the plan must be compatible with the present system.\textsuperscript{39} The plan must be in accord with related policy systems in the Status Quo. It would be inconsistent and difficult to attempt policy revision in one major area that required major revision of peripheral areas as well.

The third obligation outlined by Brock is that of significance. This obligation roughly

\textsuperscript{36}Brock, 120.
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38}Wood, 84.
\textsuperscript{39}Brock, 120.
parallels that of the traditional inherency-harm analysis in showing the degree to which evils exist in the present situation. The affirmative, in comparative advantage, must show significant, widespread benefits. "If the proposed advantage is not significant, there is not reason to alter policy."\(^\text{40}\) Or, in Brock's words, "The advantages affirmative overcomes the presumption only by providing strong proof of future improvements."\(^\text{41}\)

The fourth obligation outlined by Brock is the concept of uniqueness. The advantages must be achieved as a result of unique affirmative action.\(^\text{42}\) Zarefsky indicates that the advantages must be inherent in the affirmative advantages relationship to the proposal.\(^\text{43}\) If the Status Quo can achieve the claimed advantages in the degree demonstrated by the affirmative, there is no justification for the specific affirmative proposal.

In addition to Brock's four obligations, there appears to be general agreement that the affirmative plan must be essentially free from disadvantages.

\(^{40}\)Cronen, 248.
\(^{41}\)Brock, 120.
\(^{42}\)Brock, 121.
\(^{43}\)Zarefsky, 124.
The benefits to be derived from adoption of the plan must be significantly greater than any potential disadvantages which may come about from adoption of the plan.

The most consistent pattern that is uncovered in examining the literature of comparative advantage debate is the lack of a consistent approach to evaluating the case. Brock offers four obligations of development that would fulfill his assumptions of comparative advantage debating. Cronen, however, offers a somewhat different set of assumptions. As Zarefsky points out, "It should be clear by this point that the writers who have used the term 'comparative advantage' have by no means been consistent in their definitions. Indeed, it is possible to discern at least seven different interpretations of the same term."44

The confusion and controversy over the introduction of comparative advantage affirmative case analysis into the tournament situation has created

44Zarefsky, iv.
an ambiguous position for the affirmative and the negative debater and their coach. The debater has no consistent guide to follow in formulating a justification for the resolution. The debate coach may justifiably contend that the comparative advantage case is acceptable, but he cannot offer a method of development that will consistently obtain critic agreement.

This analysis of comparative advantage debate will attempt to determine the consistency with which critics agree on what should be the basic, fundamental issues of comparative advantage case development.

Based on the review of the literature of comparative advantage case construction, an examination of debate critic criterion for judging comparative advantage contest debates appears necessary. Formal theory does not appear to provide consistent guidelines for evaluation, but evaluation occurs in every contest setting. Examination of the criterion used by critics in the contest setting could provide a more consistent guide to affirmative comparative advantage case construction than the literature appears to indicate.
Statement of the problem.

This research will therefore be concerned with the general task of determining: What are the criterion necessary for the establishment of a prima facie case by the affirmative team in comparative advantage debate?

Definition of Terms.

The definition of the following terms should clarify the discussion of the specific questions for research:

1. necessary criterion - operationally defined as critic responses to a questionnaire on the fundamental issues of comparative advantage debate.

2. establishment of a prima facie case - operationally defined as a case which initially fulfills the affirmative burden of proof. Literally, "on first appearance."

3. comparative advantage debate - operationally defined as a proposed course of action by the affirmative team in a contest debate which attempts to establish the premise that favorable results will be realized from adoption of the affirmative course of action.
CHAPTER II

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In order to answer the general question: What are the necessary criterion for the establishment of a prima facie case by the affirmative team in comparative advantage debate?, the following areas must be considered:

1. Do intercollegiate debate critics make a distinction between comparative advantage analysis and the traditional inherency-harm method of analysis?

2. What issues do intercollegiate debate critics identify as crucial to comparative advantage analysis?

3. How do intercollegiate debate critics view the concept of 'harm' in the comparative advantage affirmative case?

The following steps were used in attempting to examine these areas: First, identification of probable key issues by a panel of experts; Second, explication and formulation of the key issues in a questionnaire; Third, collection of the data; Fourth, processing of the data.
Identification of key issues.

A panel of five debate critics, all of whom were familiar with the concept of comparative advantage analysis, were selected from the faculty of the School of Speech, Marquette University. The panel was asked to identify the probable key issues of comparative advantage analysis. The panel concluded that the primary areas of consideration included the role of inherency, the justification for change, the ability of the plan to produce the claimed advantages, the advantage-disadvantage relationship, and the significance of the advantages. A combination of the input of the panel and the theoretical positions determined by the review of literature, resulted in the determination of the following basic issues in comparative advantage analysis:

1. Comparative advantage is a unique form of case justification of the resolution.

2. Inherency plays a role in comparative advantage case justification of the resolution.

3. The adoption of the affirmative plan must produce the advantages as an inevitable consequent of the affirmative plan of action.
4. The inherent lack of advantage in the Status Quo is distinct from an inherent development of 'harm'.

5. The advantages claimed by the affirmative team must be of significant proportion to the total resolution.

6. The affirmative plan must be unique in its ability to produce the claimed advantages.

7. The affirmative plan must produce a significantly greater benefit than disadvantage.

A panel of experts was used to determine the possible areas of consideration for the formulation of basic issues crucial to comparative advantage debate. The input of the panel and the theory of the review of literature combined to provide seven basic areas of consideration. Information was thus sought concerning intercollegiate debate critics acceptance of the key issues of comparative advantage debate.

**Formulation of the Questionnaire.**

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information concerning the acceptance or rejection of the key issues selected by the panel of experts. One of the primary areas of controversy in the theoretical formulation of comparative advantage
cases was the differentiation of comparative advantage analysis from the traditional inherency-harm concept. The first statement on the questionnaire was designed to uncover critic acceptance of comparative advantage analysis as distinct from the traditional case. The issue is important for two reasons. First, if debate critics disagree on the separate utilization of the two types of cases, the affirmative debater lacks a base upon which to choose potential arguments in favor of the resolution. The affirmative debater is thus severely limited in his choice of argumentation more by the variance in theoretical posture than by force of argument. Second, if critic acceptance of comparative advantage analysis is not consistent, the debate coach and critic has an insufficient locus from which to determine the efficacy of a specific affirmative proposal.

It is crucial to comparative advantage development to ascertain whether debate critics require the comparative advantage case to show inherent compelling harms of the type required by the traditional method of case development. The questionnaire thus contains the statement: The comparative
advantage case must show inherent harmful evils of the type required by the traditional "inherency-harm" case.

The placement of inherency in the comparative advantage case also is important. Research indicates that this objective in comparative advantage analysis roughly parallels that of the traditional case. In the traditional case, the affirmative is required to demonstrate that an inherent process of the Status Quo has an observable relation to a harmful product. Preliminary indications are that the comparative advantage case is free from showing that particular relationship. Comparative advantage, however, must show that the advantages claimed by the affirmative team are inherently precluded from attainment by the process of the Status Quo. If the critic makes no distinction between traditional and comparative advantage methods of analysis, the comparative advantage case is perceived as being essentially the same concept as the traditional case. This is apparent particularly in the area of harm inherency.

46 Brock, 120.
Should the critic not make the distinction, the comparative advantage case would not only have to show that an advantage was inherently precluded by the policy options of the Status Quo, but also, that the lack of advantage in the Status Quo was harmful. The subject is thus presented with two statements; first, The comparative advantage case must show inherent barriers preventing the achievement of the advantage in the Status Quo; second, In the comparative advantage case, the affirmative must prove that the absence of their advantage in the Status Quo is, in effect, an inherent harmful evil.

A third area of concern relates to the traditional obligation of the affirmative team to demonstrate that their plan of action will result in the desired objective. Based on that obligation, the affirmative must show that the course of action they support is the primary causal agent for the benefit. The subject is thus presented with the statement; Each advantage claimed by the affirmative team must result directly from the affirmative plan of action.

A fourth area of concern stems from the unique
nature of the competitive debate situation. It is commonly argued that since the magnitude of change required by the resolution is great, so must the reason for change be of a significant nature. In the comparative advantage situation, this indicates that the resolution is justified only when significant benefits will be obtained from adoption of the affirmative plan of action. The subject is thus presented with the statement; The affirmative must be able to demonstrate the significance of the claimed advantages.

A corollary to the significance statement is the concept of sufficiency. A common negative attack in comparative advantage debate is that the affirmative fails to sufficiently signify the advantages. The negative most commonly calls for the affirmative to quantify the advantages. While it may be argued that the basis of the approach is actually only a challenge to the demonstration of significance, the problem of sufficient quantification, the numerical identification of significance, remains

47Ibid.

a difficult one. In order to determine critic acceptance of the necessity for quantification, the subject is presented with the statement; The only acceptable means of demonstrating significance is through quantification.

One of the traditional obligations of the affirmative is to show that the plan of action will not produce undesirable side effects, or disadvantages. In the comparative advantage case the crucial question is the relationship of advantages to disadvantages. Brock, for example, contends that the affirmative plan should be substantially free from disadvantages. In order to determine the position of the comparative advantage debate critic in evaluating this relationship, the subject is presented with the statement; The affirmative plan must be free from disadvantages.

The questionnaire is thus compiled from the theoretical positions outlined in the review of literature and is designed to obtain information on the key issues of comparative advantage analysis. In addition to the statements, space was provided for the critic to include additional items he may feel are critical to the comparative advantage case.

49 Brock, 122.
In order to insure a degree of consistency, the questions used terminology common to the theoretical positions found in the review of literature. The subjects were asked to respond on a five position polar scale which ranged from strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, to strongly disagree. The final questionnaire was submitted to the panel of experts in order to insure all critical agreement issues were selected and also that the statements provided presented the issues clearly. This re-examination by the panel was accomplished to help insure the validity of the measure presented to the debate critic.

Collection of the data.

The mail survey method was selected for the collection of data. This particular method provided the researcher with maximum amounts of descriptive data concerning present practices in comparative advantage debate with a minimum of physical access to the respondent. The researcher also felt that the mail survey method best suited his personal resources of time and financial ability. Since the determination of a broad base of opinions was critical to the examination of critic consistency in comparative
advantage debate, the mail survey method was best suited to the demands of the study.

The survey data was collected from the membership of the District IV enrollment of the National Debate Tournament. Marquette University is a member of that District. This particular group provided a base that the researcher was familiar with. The list included the States of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The District IV list provides a complete listing of those institutions which participate, at least potentially, in intercollegiate debate within that geographical area.

The questionnaire, along with a cover letter, were sent by first class postage to the Director of Debate to all 91 institutions listed as included in District IV. Since the Director of Debate also commonly functions as a critic in the competitive situation, this method was chosen to most accurately reach the target population. A self addressed, stamped, return envelope was included in the package to help insure a high rate of return. All questionnaires had been inconspicuously coded to help identify the respondent for potential follow-up letters and to expedite the requests for results. The compilation of data showed the study to be based on a 58.3% return.
Processing of the data.

Data was primarily processed by means of obtaining frequency counts of the positions indicated by subject per item on the scales provided. The frequency counts on a total n of 51 (two responses indicated no answers) were then calculated for percentage response for each position on the scale per statement.

This method allowed the researcher to gain a gross index of critic responses to each statement in the questionnaire and to interpret the data between critics on each item. In addition, comparisons of questions were also made within a subject's response to a statement. When comparison was warranted, a subject's response to a statement was labeled by position and compared with his response to another statement.

This process allowed the researcher to carefully examine the overall patterns of critic response to particular statements and to evaluate inter-critic and inter-statement consistencies. The results of the data were also augmented when written input was provided.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

A final response of 53 of 91 questionnaires provided a 58.3% base for the determination of results. The results were tabulated by frequency counts of the response to each statement of the polar scale. See table 1. In addition, percentages of response for each of the five positions on the polar scale were determined for each of the eight statements. Two returns of the 53 total were not counted in the final tabulation of results. Both responses were returned with the information that those institutions no longer participated in intercollegiate debate and could not adequately take part in the study. The percentage results are therefore tabulated from a base of 51. See table 2.

In order to determine whether critics were consistent with one-another in the manner in which they responded to the statements, a frequency count of subject response by item was made. This would reveal if the apparent inconsistency of the literature resulted in between subject differences.
TABLE 1

Frequency Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Response by polar position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would appear that there is some difference of response in the manner in which judges reply to the statements pertaining to affirmative case development. This is particularly true in regard to items four and six. These items pertain to the general question of harm and the ability of the plan to produce the advantages uniquely.

To allow greater insight into the gross responses by frequency count, the data was further broken down into the percentages of response, by statement, for each polar position.
### TABLE 2
Percentage by Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage by polar position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In statements number I and IV, further examination of the critic responses on the questionnaire was accomplished by a comparison of within subject responses to each statement. Both statements were designed to discover critic understanding of the relationship of harm to the comparative advantage case analysis. The polar responses on the statements were compared to examine a possible relationship. The data was grouped positive, negative, and neutral with all possible combinations considered. see table 3
TABLE 3
Comparison of Statements I and IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ +</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>n +</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ -</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>- +</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>n -</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ n</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>- n</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>n n</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appears that several critics are apparently inconsistent within their own systems in the manner in which they respond to statements I and IV. The data indicates that in a number of cases, intercollegiate debate critics express variance between themselves as well as within their own systems.

Before considering the implications of the data relative to the question for research, it is important to note that this study is undertaken as a descriptive investigation of critic judgements on selected key areas of comparative advantage analysis. The processing of data is therefore primarily descriptive because it seeks to obtain information and not necessarily to establish a specific hypothesis. The nature of the study requires careful consideration of subject position as opposed to simple quantification. In order to maintain this spirit of inquiry, written
input by the respondents was encouraged and received. Since the nature of written input does not allow for tabulation, it will be introduced when appropriate to the issue being discussed.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The results presented in the preceding portion of this study indicate problems which justify an examination of between critic consistency in comparative advantage debating as well as single critic consistency on selected areas. The original questions for research could not be answered from the available literature in the field. Information had to be obtained from debate critics on key issues surrounding comparative advantage analysis. A questionnaire was sent to a sample of debate critics to obtain their input on the major issues of comparative advantage case development. The descriptive nature of the study did not lend itself to the manipulation of variables in an experimental study situation. To maintain the spirit of inquiry, the data obtained from the questionnaire will be examined in a manner consistent with the purposes of the study and which will help formulate conclusions on the questions for research. This discussion seeks to encourage further research on comparative advantage debate.
based on the implications found in the discussion of results. The study is somewhat limited by the small number of subjects in the sample, but should allow for development of an analysis of critic consistency within those limits.

Analysis of critic responses on the traditional case-comparative advantage case relationship.

Statements number one and number four were specifically designed to determine critic opinion on the traditional case-comparative advantage case relationship. Statement number one was oriented toward the key issue of harm in the traditional case as a requirement in comparative advantage case debating. Statement four was oriented toward the more general concept of harm necessity in the comparative advantage case. A comparison of critic responses to both questions was justified by the extension of within critic responses on statement number one.

In response to statement number one, three critics, or 5.8% of the respondents, indicated that the comparative advantage case must show harm of the type required by the traditional inherency-harm case by indicating strong agreement with the statement. An additional 1.9% of the respondents expressed agreement.
with the statement. A total of 82.7% of the respondents took the opposite polar positions. The indication is that the clear majority of debate critics do not require the comparative advantage case to show harm of the type required by the traditional case.

Despite the clear indication of critics on the harm relationship, 7.7% of the respondents do not make such a distinction. The implication for the debater is important. When the responses from the neutral group are added into the figures, almost one critic in six potentially requires the demonstration of harm as in the traditional case. The affirmative debater may have to justify his comparative advantage case in the same manner as a traditional case in one of every six rounds of competitive debate. When the critic responses are viewed in terms of the competitive situation, a 17.6% minority indicates a problem in theoretical consistency that effects the affirmative debater.

It would appear that generally, intercollegiate debate critics agree that the comparative advantage case is not required to demonstrate harm of the type required by the traditional case. However, not all critics feel that way, and the normal contest is decided by a single critic. The extensions of that
analysis requires examination of the data to determine if critics require harm of any nature to be shown. Statement four was designed to uncover that information.

In the development of his objections to the comparative advantage case, Kruger argues that the affirmative team circumvents the harm issue by inverting the traditional harm analysis. The analysis indicates that the demonstration of a limitation in the Status Quo precludes the attainment of an advantage and by its nature must be fundamentally related to the harm concept. Statement number four asked the critic to indicate his opinion on the necessity for the affirmative to show that the absence of an advantage in the Status Quo is, in effect, an inherent, harmful evil. Critic response to the statement was widely dispersed.

As in statement number one, critics generally did not require the affirmative to demonstrate a harm. The degree of difference was considerably less however. A total of 56.8% of the respondents did not require the affirmative to demonstrate harm as opposed to a majority of 82.7% on statement one. A total of 29.4% responded positively to the statement thus indicating that the affirmative was responsible for

---

50 Kruger, Presumption, 2-17.
the demonstration of an inherent, harmful evil.

Statement four also had a large percentage of neutral returns with 13.7% responding in that manner.

The impact for the affirmative debater appears in two areas. First, the affirmative debater is faced with a situation in which over one third of the critics he will face, may apply different criterion. Second, the affirmative debater who opts for building his case for the minority of critics runs the risk of losing two thirds of his debates on a theoretical objection to the development of his case or he takes on an unnecessary burden. It would appear that between and within critic consistency places an undue burden on the development of the comparative advantage case.

Both statements one and four are directed to the crucial consideration of the role of harm in the affirmative case. A comparison and analysis of critic responses by polar position demonstrates that many critics are apparently inconsistent within their approaches to the issue of harm in the comparative advantage case. A slight majority of respondents, 50.7%, disagreed with statement one and with statement four. An additional 7.8% agreed with both statements, and are consistent within an opposite position from the majority. At most, 58.5% of the critics were
consistent between the statements. The indication is that a large number of critics do require the demonstration of a type of harm distinct from the type required by the traditional case.

Further breakdowns of the data for statements one and four partially illuminates within critic inconsistency. It is interesting to note that no respondents indicated an agree response on statement one and disagreed or were neutral on statement four. Those critics who agreed with statement one, that harm is a requirement as in the traditional case, were entirely consistent on statement four. A total of 35.2% of the respondents who took negative positions on statement one changed to either positive or neutral positions on statement four. Two things become apparent. First, those who require harm in the comparative advantage case are consistent in their positions. Second, many of those who do not require harm of the traditional type, do require harm of some type. Precisely what they require in terms of harm cannot be determined from the data gathered in this study.

Critics apparently have a considerable range of interpretation on the crucial area of harm in comparative advantage development. The results for the affirmative debater can only be imprecision and
and difficulty. He has no consistent locus of opinion upon which to build an affirmative comparative advantage case, particularly in the crucial area of harm, that will satisfy critics in all rounds of debate.

The results of the study are far from conclusive on the issue of harm analysis in comparative advantage case development. A majority of the respondents do not require the affirmative to demonstrate a harm of any nature. However, a sizeable number of critics require the demonstration of some form of harm other than that found in the traditional inherency-harm analysis.

Statement number two was designed to uncover a second concept found in the traditional case; inherency. The respondent was asked to indicate his opinion on the necessity for the comparative advantage case to show the existence of inherent barriers precluding the achievement of the advantages. A total of 84.3% of the respondents agree that the affirmative team must show the existence of inherent barriers which preclude the Status Quo from achieving the advantages. A total of 15.7% of the respondents indicated that they did not require the affirmative to show that relationship. No respondents took the neutral position.
The implications of these responses are critical for the negative debater also. A traditional negative option has been for a defense of the Status Quo in terms of its ability to meet what problems are presented. If critics are inconsistent in their judgements of the requirements of inherency, in almost one of six rounds, the negative debater who indicates that the Status Quo has the capability to attain the advantage claimed by the affirmative will not have a viable argument for this special type of critic. See table 1 Since one of six critics does not require the affirmative to show that the Status Quo inherently cannot achieve the advantages, the negative team does not offer sufficient reason for rejection of the case by showing that the Status Quo can achieve the advantages.

The traditional concept of inherency seems to be rejected in comparative advantage case development by a number of critics. This places the affirmative debater in a rather confusing position. He may be required to demonstrate an undefined type of harm by some critics. Yet other, or possibly the same, critics, will not require the affirmative to show that the Status Quo is inherently precluded from solving the problem. Critic inconsistency provides an almost
impossible situation for the affirmative team in comparative advantage case construction.

The comparative advantage debater may indeed be more limited by the theoretical posture of an individual critic than by the force of his argument. Written input on one return points out the problem, "Debate judges are super subjective. There is no consensus for the debater."

Statement number three was concerned with the ability of the affirmative's proposed course of action to produce the advantages. The respondent was asked to indicate his opinion on the statement; Each advantage claimed by the affirmative must result directly from the proposed course of action. As indicated earlier, this obligation roughly parallels the plan-meet-need function of the traditional case. Statement number three contained a high degree of consistency. Only 5.8% of the critics responded that the affirmative advantages need not be an inevitable consequent of the plan. It would appear that there is a minimum of inconsistency with regard to this function. At worst, one debate critic in twenty would not require the affirmative to show that the plan does produce the advantages.

Statement number five received virtually unanimous
agreement among the debate critics. The statement sought opinion on the necessity for the affirmative to show that the advantages obtained are significant. A total of 98.1% of the respondents took positive positions on the statement. One critic, representing the remaining 1.9%, took a neutral position and no critics took negative positions. At least on the issues of significance and the ability of the plan to produce the advantages, debate critics appear to be reasonably consistent.

The concept of significance appeared to lead to the question of determining at what point an advantage becomes significant enough to justify adoption of the resolution. While this study cannot entirely answer that question, statement number seven was designed to obtain critic opinion on the necessity of quantification in order to show the significance of the advantages.

The greatest number of critics did not require the affirmative to support the numerical significance of the claimed advantages. Written input on statement number seven clearly indicated that the majority of critics will accept qualitative evidence for the demonstration of significance. While the data does not provide a complete answer to the problem, it
does indicate two things. First, it indicates that debate critics will accept significance on grounds other than quantification of at least some advantages. Second, while other types of significance indications may be used, it appears that quantification is the most preferred method.

As pointed out in reviewing the literature of comparative advantage, Brock's concept of uniqueness developed considerable controversy. In order to determine debate critics acceptance of this obligation, the respondent was asked to indicate his position on whether the affirmative plan must be the only plan capable of producing the claimed advantages.

A slight majority of the critics, 52.9%, rejected the concept by indicating a negative position on the statement. However, a large minority of 37.2% agreed that the affirmative must be able to show that the specific course of action is the only plan capable of producing the advantages. A total of 11.7% of the critics took a neutral position. Consistency does not appear in the acceptance of Brock's concept of uniqueness.

The impact for the comparative advantage affirmative is important. In well over one of every three rounds,
the affirmative plan will be required to be unique in its ability to produce the claimed advantages. In at least four cases where the concept of uniqueness was rejected, additional clarification by written input showed that the critic restricted other alternatives to those attacks introduced by the negative as repairs to the Status Quo.

Requiring an affirmative plan to be unique in its ability to produce the claimed advantages does not appear to be widely accepted. Critics generally require only that the Status Quo is not able to produce the advantages which the affirmative plan offers. Critics indicated that for uniqueness to become a viable issue, the negative must be able to develop an alternative to the affirmative policy option.

The relationship of adverse effects which may occur when adopting an affirmative course of action and the potential benefits of the advantages was sought by statement number eight. Critics were asked to indicate their opinion on the necessity for the affirmative plan to be free from disadvantages.

Almost one critic in five, 17.6%, responded that the affirmative case must be free from disadvantages. A total of 60.7% of the critics did not require the
case to be free from disadvantages. While 21.5% of the critics took a neutral position. Written input helped clarify the scale responses to this statement.

On six of the eleven neutral returns, written input indicated that the critic could accept some disadvantages, but the total relationship of advantages to disadvantages must clearly be in favor of the affirmative. The determination of the degree to which an unfavorable relationship could exist and still be carried by the affirmative could not be determined by this study.

Written additions to the eight statements presented to debate critics provides other additional insight into the comparative advantages case. The fundamental issue of the relationship of the comparative advantage case to the traditional case received the most comment.

Critic comment indicated that perhaps much of the original controversy over comparative advantage case development has not been resolved. One critic responded that he rejects the fundamental concept of comparative advantage: "The comparative advantage case is ridiculous. It is a semantic game. To prove significance the Status Quo must/should be indicted." Another critic indicted the lack of a specific format in debate,
"What most cases are now are prima-facie-stock-issues-comparative-advantages...no real format left anymore."

Other critics respond that, "The flap over comparative advantage is a tempest in a teapot. The criteria of all affirmatives are the same...," and another critic replies, "I see no essential difference between comparative advantage and the traditional case except in organization." Another critic agreed with that position by stating, "A comparative advantage case is a matter of structure, not burden...its that simple." It appears that for all debate critics, comparative advantage does not exist as a separate entity apart from the traditional method of case development.

The "need" issue in comparative advantage also received comment. One critic replies, "I guess I don't like 'evils' in comparative advantage, and I have some reservations about inherency." Another critic states, "At times I have had the feeling that the 'need' issue in comparative advantage cases was a matter of semantics." Other critics indicate that many comparative advantage cases structurally go about showing inherent harms and then claim an advantage to eliminating the harm. The indication in at least two responses was that the confusion was
not in the mind of the critic but exists in the minds of other coaches.

It appears that possibly, much of the inconsistency surrounding comparative advantage debate may be a result of adverse effects from the early controversy concerning the acceptability of comparative advantage cases as a legitimate affirnnative technique. This is partially reflected in the confusion which was discovered by the researcher in his analysis of the literature. The debater and debate coach may indeed seek to overcome the problems of theoretical acceptance by modifying comparative advantage theory to at least partially conform to potential critic bias. The result appears to be what one critic termed a "lack of format." It appears that debate critics are by no means consistent in their theoretical acceptance of the basic issues of comparative advantage case construction. This inconsistency appears between critics as well as within individual critics when issues relating to comparative advantage are considered.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research was undertaken to determine the consistency of intercollegiate debate critics opinion on the fundamental issues of comparative advantage affirmative case development. The research was divided into four parts: (a) examination of the literature of comparative advantage debate to determine the status of current opinion, (b) selection of the fundamental issues by a panel of experts, (c) construction of a questionnaire to obtain critic opinion, (d) analysis of critic responses on the key issues of comparative advantage case analysis.

In examining the literature of comparative advantage, it was determined that there was a considerable range of theoretical position on the fundamental issues of comparative advantage that had a potential impact on affirmative case development. Analysis of articles by people such as Brock and Kruger indicated that consistency of theoretical position was not available. Research also indicated that no attempt to obtain critic responses on the fundamental issues of
comparative advantage case analysis had been attempted. In order to study the consistency of the debate critic, a panel of experts selected probable key issues of comparative advantage debating for the purpose of formulating a questionnaire.

After a questionnaire was formulated and validated, it was sent to a number of debate critics (n=91) to obtain their opinions. The subjects were selected from institutions within the geographical boundaries of District IV of the American Forensic Association National Debate Tournament. A response of 53 subjects provided a 58.3% return base for the analysis of results.

Results.

In response to the issue of the necessity for the comparative advantage case to show harm of the type required by the traditional case, a majority of the subjects indicated that they did not require the affirmative to show that relationship. A minority of the subjects did require the demonstration of harm as in the traditional case. Differences between critics on this statement occurred in less than 10.0% of all cases.

The majority of critics did not require the
comparative advantage affirmative case to show harm in the absence of a claimed advantage. A minority of over 30.0% did require harm of a nature distinct from the traditional case. The inconsistency of responses for critics within statement one as compared to statement four occurred in slightly less than 30.0% of the cases.

Results indicated that on statement number two, the relationship of inherency to the comparative advantage case, critics do require the affirmative to demonstrate the inherent preclusion of the claimed advantages in the Status Quo. The minority in disagreement with statement two was less than 15.0%.

Almost 94.0% of the critics indicated that the advantages claimed in the affirmative case must result directly from the affirmative plan of action. The minority on statement three formed 5.8% of the responses.

Critics were almost unanimous in indicating that the affirmative advantages must be shown to be significant. 98.1% of the critics responded that significance was a firm obligation. No critics indicated disagreement with the statement. One critic responded in the neutral position.
Statement number six, concerning the concept of uniqueness, received highly inconsistent results. A majority of 52.9% did not require the affirmative advantages to be unique to the proposal. Over one third of the critics required the affirmative to be unique in its ability to produce the advantages.

Results on statement number seven indicate that almost 70.0% of debate critics do not require the quantification of the significance of the advantages in all cases. A minority of 11.7% of critics responding indicated that quantification is an obligation of the affirmative. A total of 15.6% of the critics chose the neutral position.

The relationship of disadvantages to the claimed advantages was indicated in statement number eight. Critics responded in the majority (59.6%) that the affirmative case does not have to be free from disadvantages. Written input on the questionnaire indicated that on balance, the advantages must be more significant than the disadvantages.

Conclusions.

The following conclusions appear to be justified on the basis of results obtained from the study. In each case the conclusions are based on issues which
were identified by a panel of experts as well as considerations of the literature which were crucial to this study. Since the contest situation involves both affirmative and negative teams, the implications for the affirmative team have a corresponding importance to the negative team as well:

1. Intercollegiate debate critics do not generally require the demonstration of harm in the traditional manner in the comparative advantage case.

2. Intercollegiate debate critics will require the demonstration of an undefined form of harm in one third of the cases examined.

3. The comparative advantage case is usually required to demonstrate inherent barriers precluding achievement of the advantage by the Status Quo, but critics vary greatly in this requirement.

4. Intercollegiate debate critics are 95.0% consistent in requiring the comparative advantage case to show results as an inevitable consequent of the plan of action.

5. Intercollegiate debate critics consistently agree that the advantages claimed by the affirmative team must be significant.

6. Almost 40.0% of intercollegiate debate critics require the affirmative case to be unique in producing the advantages.
7. Intercollegiate debate critics consistently accept methods other than quantification for the demonstration of the significance of the advantages.

8. Intercollegiate debate critics indicate that the affirmative advantages must be more significant than potential disadvantages which might occur from adoption of the plan.

9. Inconsistent approaches are recognized by some critics in regard to the manner in which some competitive teams develop their comparative advantage analysis.

Suggestions for further research.

The results of this study indicate that there are many areas of potential further research. The following areas may be considered to help direct that research:

1. An attempt should be made to identify what type of harm critics require in comparative advantage case analysis.

2. Research on the parameters of significance both for affirmative advantages and negative disadvantages issues should be attempted.

3. Research on the necessity and preference for quantification in comparative advantage analysis
should be attempted.

4. Research on the parameters of the relationship of advantages to disadvantages should be attempted.

5. Further examination of the concept of inherency in comparative advantage is necessary.

6. Research on methods to achieve and maintain critic consistency should be encouraged and attempted.

7. Research on methods to achieve greater case development consistency in comparative advantage should be encouraged and attempted.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Books


B. Articles


APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENTS

AND COVER LETTER
Dear Director of Debate,

The advent of comparative advantage cases in the 1960's caused considerable confusion and controversy in competitive debate. Today, however, the comparative advantage case is certainly one of the most commonly heard forms of affirmative analysis.

Enclosed you will find a short questionnaire. This survey is attempting to determine the method by which debate critics evaluate comparative advantage case development.

In essence, it seeks to evaluate the "stock issues" critics find useful in evaluating comparative advantage debate. Should you wish to obtain more information or a copy of the results, please feel free to request them.

Please respond to all items in the survey. Any additional items you may feel are critical to comparative advantage may be entered in the spaces provided. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Peter L. Settle
BEFORE BEGINNING: Please respond to all items in the survey. Please do not consult with others in formulating your answers. Any additional items you may feel are important may be included in the spaces provided.

SA - I agree with the statement strongly.
A - I agree (but less strongly than SA)
N - Neutral or No Opinion.
D - I disagree with the statement.
SD - I strongly disagree with the statement.

I. The comparative advantage case must show inherent harmful evils of the type required by the traditional "inherency-harm" case.

SA A N D SD

II. The comparative advantage case must show inherent barriers preventing the achievement of the advantage by the Status Quo.

SA A N D SD

III. Each advantage claimed by the affirmative must result directly from the affirmative plan of action.

SA A N D SD

IV. In the comparative advantage case, the affirmative must prove that the absence of their advantage in the Status Quo is, in effect, an inherent, harmful evil.

SA A N D SD

V. The affirmative must be able to demonstrate the significance of the advantages.

SA A N D SD

VI. The affirmative plan must be the only plan capable of producing the advantage.

SA A N D SD

VII. The only acceptable means of demonstrating significance is through quantification.

SA A N D SD

VIII. The affirmative plan must be free from disadvantages.

SA A N D SD