

Hello, My name is Rich Weisbach. I debated for Brandeis from 2009-2013. Then I coached the Columbia University debate team for two years after that. Some people thought I was good at this activity, others... well... you get the picture. Anyways I was asked to write up my thoughts on a debate round online for the novice mentor committee and so thats what I'm going to do BUT i'm not going to it in a normal way because I think this is a good time to model one of the activities I did to practice debate strategy. I am going to break this round down speech by speech. When watching the round you should pause after each speech finishes and think about what you would do if you were speaking next. I'll write what I'd do after my analysis of the speech and we can go from there. RFD and speaks will be after. I will also post copies of my flows so that if you want flowing practice you can use this round for that as well.

The round I chose is a classic, Nats finals from 2003 at of course, Brandeis. The round featured UVA A on gov vs. Yale CW. As a fun fact this was UVA A's seventh gov of the tournament and they had run out of cases in semis. When Yale CW found out that UVA did not have any cases they offered to take Gov (despite the major disadvantage) and them previously flipping opp. It was a nice gesture but UVA rejected them and led to this round.

The link to the round is here: <http://videos.apdawebsite.org/?p=297>

PMC:

My thoughts: PMC is fairly standard. Three independent points etc. She took three POIs which isn't as kosher now as it probably was when the round actually took place. There are a few key things that I think are worth highlighting. The first of which is that there is a large amount of defense in this PMC or at least arguments that haven't turned into offense. The only two really offensive arguments in this speech so far are that the relative utility of donation is much higher and that this gives a personal connection to the guy which is uniquely valuable. There's a little more offense in the case but I don't think its very compelling Arguments such as well philanthropy is good (which by the way probably needs a better warrant than everyone says so, or shelters aren't for everyone are pretty defensive which is odd given this is PMC and thus theres very little to defend since opp hasn't started yet. Those arguments (especially the third independent point) would probably be more valuable in the MG speech

As the LO (or opp in general): The key to LOing is identifying the assumptions inherent in the case. These assumptions are generally unsaid but critical in order for gov to win the round. This case has a massive assumption: that you're going to go buy the soda with the money and not do more good with it. Opp did a good job of flagging this argument at the top of PMC (usually if you know what the assumption of the case is, its a good thing to do to ask a POI about it) and I would make my off case about that. The other key LOing skill that is very valuable is identifying RFD's. As mentioned earlier this case has two arguments that I think could be blown up pretty largely in PMR. Those arguments are the only two really that you need to make sure you hit oncase.

My Flow:

C1 Increasing relative effectiveness of the money.
It means much more to him than to you
The money is insignificant to you but:
1. He knows what he wants
2. He has much more agency over himself and what he wants
Relative Utility Skyrockets
Maybe he can eat some food or get energy
Your Util increases too --> you're paying for the feeling he gets
You may be purchasing the ability to do something else to get money
C2 Philanthropy should be a personal obligation
Look to religion to philosophy to progressivism say that we should help others
State hasn't helped this guy
Wrong to say this guy def deserved it because theres no way to know
Philanthropy as a human connection
When you hand him this change you show him that someone cared about him. Shows you care about him
Charity is good in other ways too: Have a charity budget but this connection is uniquely valuable
C3 Shelters aren't for all
He's chosen not to be in a shelter b/c they're a bad atmosphere
After they close the mental hospitals the percentage of those who are homeless skyrocket. Mentally ill get kicked out
Not the only way to help people. There's some reason to be different

LOC:

My Thoughts: The style of LOCs have changed a good deal in the twelve years since this round has happened. Thus a lot of my criticism of the LOC has to deal with stylistic differences that occur here. I would have liked to see more time off case developing and impacting the off case arguments than time on case. The reason for this strategically is that as an opp team your off case is where you win the round and thus the more time you spend talking about arguments that win you the round the more likely you are to win. This is especially true with a case like the one that we had here which isn't so dense and does not have a lot of winners. I especially think that especially in small scale hypotheticals like this round it is important to impact the claims you make. The LO does that kind of when he talks about how the money could be more efficacious by giving to Oxfam but he could have been much clearer in that he could have talked about exactly what that did and weighed that against the arguments like making this one guy happy means that opp would be winning utility far more clearly at this point. I thought that tying the likelihood of the money being efficacious to being in a shelter was quite clever as it gives the judge a reason to believe beyond mere assertion that this money will be used poorly. Finally, a lot of the impacts in the off case are kinda silly (encouraging aggressive begging???)

As the MG: Its important to remember where your winners are and what opp's winners are when you're MGing the round. Opp has really only taken one tack a utilitarian one, namely the money won't be used well or could be used better. Thus the arguments that you need to win are your two winners the utility point (theres direct clash) and the personal benefit to the guy from donating (another unique RFD for you). This means above all else you have to win the oxfam point otherwise you're losing utility. You could do this by saying that you're unlikely to donate by the case construct (and squirreling a bit), or saying that these organizations are somewhat inefficient (some of the costs go to things like administration which means that the money that comes to the organization isn't actually the full dollar you donated so you're better to help here. The personal benenfit point is kind of undercovered here they just say you can be more helpful. Blow this up, they conceded the warrant and only are trying to outweigh. Talk about stuff like how this guy is likely downtrodden and lots of people help out at shelters but few help this old guy. They say its valuable and thats a major winner for you. Finally you have to hit the shelters point pretty hard and talk about why either a) this guy won't use it for drugs or b) why that doesn't matter (there are pretty compelling arguments to say that you shouldn't get to decide what some other person buys). Opp's using that as the key to showing why this donation won't be high utility and if you win this opp has very little ground.

My flows:

Offcase

OV: Not claiming that Charity is bad. Charity is good but you need to carry out your charity well. Give this to a better organization

C1 Government designed mechanisms for basic care

There are things that exist for these people. There are reasons why people who are refusing these things may be wanting to do so for some nefarious reason

Go to the government

C2 Need to seek help

Homeless people need help. The longer they're able to subsist in this kind of living the longer they'll be able to live that life

Need to do whats best in the LT. Money hurts here because it keeps them in this lifestyle

C3 Probability

No knowledge of why this person is there

Lots with psych problems or drug addictions --> wont do whats best for them

C4 Arbitrariness

Giving money to that one person is benefitting that person and that's arbitrary

Use your charity in a way that helps everyone equally.

If you don't do that you reward aggressiveness among homeless people rather than being prosocial

On Case

C1 Increasing relative effectiveness of the money. It means much more to him than to you	
The money is insignificant to you but:	It means something to you if theres other uses of the money. Even if you cant do it here thre are better choices
1. He knows what he wants	You don't know what the homeless person will use it well. He could use it on drugs
2. He has much more agency over himself and what he wants	Ought to act out of concern for society
	Better to send the message that charity and governmental institutions are valuable
Relative Utility Skyrockets	
Maybe he can eat some food or get energy	
Your Util increases too --> you're paying for the feeling he gets	If bad consequences such as bad effects for the homeless person then the feeling is good
You may be purchasing the ability to do something else to get money	Not independent reason to take action. May do illegal things means that they need help. You don't help him
C2 Philanthropy should be a personal obligation	
Look to religion to philosophy to progressivism say that we should help others	This exists but why to this person? Give out equally
State hasn't helped this guy	
Wrong to say this guy def deserved it because theres no way to know	Could be: more likely those good people will be in shelters. Those who can't stay are the least likely to use it well
Philanthropy as a human connection	
When you hand him this change you show him that someone cared about him. Shows you care about him	Get human dimension by working in homeless shelter Can work to make these shelters better
Charity is good in other ways too: Have a charity budget but this connection is uniquely valuable	Money still matters even in this conquest. Better ways to do it
C3 Shelters arent for all	
He's chosen not to be in a shelter b/c they're a bad atmosphere	The more effort you put into it the better you'll make shelters
After they close the mental hospitals the percentage of those who are homeless skyrocket. Mentally ill get kicked out	Those groups of people are those who are least likely to be able to spend this money Mentally ill people are not automatically kicked out they try to help. Giving money who can't spend it well is not a good way to help out
Not the only way to help people. Theres some reason to be different	

MG

My Thoughts: So far this has been the best speech in the round. It provided real impacting as to what your decision would and would not do and clearly was driving at the recognizing this individual's humanity RFD. The one nice thing it did was it also made recognizing humanity into a utilitarian good which has to be weighed against what else can be done with the money. The other interesting part of this speech was her overview. I am not sure how much I like conceding that this is a risky investment (especially when she makes arguments further down the flow about how even if the person is going to buy drugs thats still ok) but I do like the analogy to a stock portfolio especially when she shows the unique impacts of helping this one person. The rest of her off case coverage was quite good as well as she does a good job demolishing lots of the silly arguments opp makes. The one thing I would have liked to see is more analysis on her conception of the state argument she makes on case.

As the MO: Now you're behind in the round. Gov seems to be hitting you hard on this humanity point and you don't have a whole lot to build from. Here you have to go for broke on the hard utility RFD. This means you need impacts as to what exactly your money does on both sides of the house as well as reasons why this outweighs any "interpersonal" benefits that come from giving this guy the money. The weighing out of the MG's risk analysis is pretty valuable here which is her risk analysis could be used against her. If something is a risky investment that yields the same as a low risk investment you always pick the low risk thing because the payout is better. If you hit hard at that RFD you stand a pretty solid shot at winning the round.

My Flow:

Off Case:

OV: Not claiming that Charity is bad. Charity is good but you need to carry out your charity well. Give this to a better organization	Give money to charities on either side of the house. Not saying this at all. High risk and low risk investments exist in this. This thing is high risk and the right portfolio has both high and low risk
C1 Government designed mechanisms for basic care There are things that exist for these people. There are reasons why people who are refusing these things may be wanting to do so for some nefarious reason	No mandate that says if you're homeless you have to go to a shelter. You have a right to be on the streets No alternative in SQ to force them into a homeless shelter. Don't treat them as irrational just as a human
Go to the government	
C2 Need to seek help Homeless people need help. The longer they're able to subsist in this kind of living the longer they'll be able to live that life	Don't believe the dollar is a meaningful tipping point
Need to do whats best in the LT. Money hurts here because it keeps them in this lifestyle	In this situation they're already incentivized to no longer be homeless. The way this money can change things is with the interaction. Show that individual human beings value them
C3 Probability No knowledge of why this person is there	This money isn't the reason they'll make a decision in a good or bad way For every person who refuses to give them money theres a massive societal incentive to make these bad decisions
Lots with psych problems or drug addictions --> wont do whats best for them	Nothing immoral to choose this money on alcohol or drugs. Some people will always slip through the cracks and they have a right to try to escape. No right to judge whether or not this decision is good or bad
C4 Arbitrariness Giving money to that one person is benefitting that person and that's arbitrary	Do lots of things. The question is how much can you do with this money
Use your charity in a way that helps everyone equally. If you don't do that you reward aggressiveness among homeless people rather than being prosocial	For every person who doesn't consider this person as a human being theres a harm done No. We only know hes made a few choices. He hasn't begged aggressively. You're rewarding and reinforcing the non violent non intrusive things

On Case:

C1 Increasing relative effectiveness of the money. It means much more to him than to you		
The money is insignificant to you but:	It means something to you if theres other uses of the money. Even if you cant do it here there are better choices	Fine but we're not donating the money to society overall. If you don't give the money to an individual then you're not going to donate it at all
1. He knows what he wants	You don't know what the homeless person will use it well. He could use it on drugs	
2. He has much more agency over himself and what he wants	Ought to act out of concern for society	Societal benefit when individuals are good to one another.
Relative Utility Skyrockets Maybe he can eat some food or get energy	Better to send the message that charity and governmental institutions are valuable	
Your Util increases too --> you're paying for the feeling he gets	If bad consequences such as bad effects for the homeless person then the feeling is good	
You may be purchasing the ability to do something else to get money	Not independent reason to take action. May do illegal things means that they need help. You don't help him	Reward socially concious begging and his good actions
C2 Philanthropy should be a personal obligation Look to religion to philosophy to progressivism say that we should help others	This exists but why to this person? Give out equally	Not for anyone who has difficulty in a loud chaotic environment for some of these people the best kind of life is not one in a shelter
State hasn't helped this guy		State is the institution of all of our best selves. Sometimes the state fails but you can make up for something that is currently lacking
Wrong to say this guy def deserved it because theres no way to know	Could be: more likely those good people will be in shelters. Those who can't stay are the least likely to use it well	
Philanthropy as a human connection When you hand him this change you show him that someone cared about him. Shows you care about him	Get human dimension by working in homeless shelter Can work to make these shelters better	
Charity is good in other ways too: Have a charity budget but this connection is uniquely valuable	Money still matters even in this conquest. Better ways to do it	Already addressed
C3 Shelters arent for all He's chosen not to be in a shelter b/c they're a bad atmosphere After they close the mental hospitals the percentage of those who are homeless skyrocket. Mentally ill get kicked out	The more effort you put into it the better you'll make shelters Those groups of people are those who are least likely to be able to spend this money Mentally ill people are not automatically kicked out they try to help. Giving money who can't spend it well is not a good way to help out	Can do all of that on our side of the house You need to be compassionate and recognize the humanity of others.
Not the only way to help people. Theres some reason to be different		

MO:

My Thoughts: This was exactly the kind of speech opp needed. It hit really hard on the utilitarianism point providing real impacts as to what it means to vote opp and donate this. It also makes the contrast stark (especially when gov says do both) by making it clear that the money is zero sum. More than that the MO also smartly realized what gov's other RFD was (the compassion and the connection point) by not only negating the point and pointing out that throwing money at a guy isn't a good way to build a personal connection as well as by outweighing it and saying that funding social workers is probably better. While there's a tad bit of tension between this and the donate it to Africa argument he makes this still is incredibly compelling.

As the LO: You as the opp team have one real RFD: that giving this money to the guy is ineffective and that giving to charity is far better and more impactful. Thus I'd structure your rebuttal in this way to really hit on that rfd. Your first question should be along the lines of "what ought you care about" where you talk about why the outcomes of this action matter and why this is more valuable than you feeling good or the personal connection you create. Then as your second question you ask which side has better outcomes and compare the impacts on both sides of the house where yours clearly outweigh.

My Flow (note that because the MO started on case my flow is kind of messy here:

Offcase:

<p>OV: Not claiming that Charity is bad. Charity is good but you need to carry out your charity well. Give this to a better organization</p>	<p>Give money to charities on either side of the house. Not saying this at all. High risk and low risk investments exist in this. This thing is high risk and the right portfolio has both high and low risk</p>	<p>Even if you have this charity budget: Lots of incredibly good causes that can be helped with little bits of money. People are starving in africa right now, to buy a bowl of rice costs about five cents The impacts here are massive The fact that your budget is finite here matters. You have relative effectiveness of the money and you need to do whats important even if it doesn't make you feel good The only reason its good is to have high risk investments is because they have a higher yield. Here this is more important</p>
<p>C1 Government designed mechanisms for basic care</p> <p>There are things that exist for these people. There are reasons why people who are refusing these things may be wanting to do so for some nefarious reason</p> <p>Go to the government</p>	<p>No mandate that says if you're homeless you have to go to a shelter. You have a right to be on the streets No alternative in SQ to force them into a homeless shelter. Don't treat them as irrational just as a human</p>	<p>In general paternalism isn't hot but in the case of really insane people paternalism is ok. The idea that we can't mandate is based on individuals being able to rationally evaluate their actions</p>
<p>C2 Need to seek help</p> <p>Homeless people need help. The longer they're able to subsist in this kind of living the longer they'll be able to live that life</p> <p>Need to do whats best in the LT. Money hurts here because it keeps them in this lifestyle</p>	<p>Don't believe the dollar is a meaningful tipping point In this situation they're already incentivized to no longer be homeless. The way this money can change things is with the interaction. Show that individual human beings value them</p>	
<p>C3 Probability</p> <p>No knowledge of why this person is there</p> <p>Lots with psych problems or drug addictions -> wont do whats best for them</p>	<p>This money isn't the reason they'll make a decision in a good or bad way For every person who refuses to give them money theres a massive societal incentive to make these bad decisions Nothing immoral to choose this money on alcohol or drugs. Some people will always slip through the cracks and they have a right to try to escape. No right to judge whether or not this decision is good or bad</p>	<p>If you give the money to UNICEF you know its not going to crack Will likely do more harm than good. Feeling good isn't valuable Sometimes these things can come too far. Smoking crack is prolly bad. You can't be rational while being on drugs</p>
<p>C4 Arbitrariness</p> <p>Giving money to that one person is benefitting that person and that's arbitrary</p> <p>Use your charity in a way that helps everyone equally. If you don't do that you reward aggressiveness among homeless people rather than being prosocial</p>	<p>Do lots of things. The question is how much can you do with this money For every person who doesn't consider this person as a human being theres a harm done No. We only know has made a few choices. He hasn't begged aggressively. You're rewarding and reinforcing the non violent non intrusive things</p>	<p>The people we should help most are those who need it most -> starving people need aid. They don't have the option of going to a shelter Giving it to a shelter employee means you don't make a connection</p>

Oncase:

<p>C1 Increasing relative effectiveness of the money. It means much more to him than to you</p> <p>The money is insignificant to you but:</p> <p>1. He knows what he wants 2. He has much more agency over himself and what he wants</p> <p>Relative Utility Skyrockets Maybe he can eat some food or get energy</p> <p>Your Util increases too -> you're paying for the feeling he gets</p> <p>You may be purchasing the ability to do something else to get money</p>	<p>It means something to you if theres other uses of the money. Even if you cant do it here there are better choices You don't know what the homeless person will use it well. He could use it on drugs Ought to act out of concern for society Better to send the message that charity and governmental institutions are valuable</p> <p>If bad consequences such as bad effects for the homeless person then the feeling is good</p> <p>Not independent reason to take action. May do illegal things means that they need help. You don't help him</p>	<p>Fine but we're not donating the money to society overall. If you don't give the money to an individual then you're not going to donate it at all Societal benefit when individuals are good to one another.</p>	<p>Money to donate is zero sum do more help</p>
<p>C2 Philanthropy should be a personal obligation Look to religion to philosophy to progressivism say that we should help others</p> <p>State hasn't helped this guy</p> <p>Wrong to say this guy def deserved it because theres no way to know</p> <p>Philanthropy as a human connection When you hand him this change you show him that someone cared about him. Shows you care about him</p> <p>Charity is good in other ways too: Have a charity budget but this connection is uniquely valuable</p>	<p>This exists but why to this person? Give out equally Could be: more likely those good people will be in shelters. Those who can't stay are the least likely to use it well Get human dimension by working in homeless shelter Can work to make those shelters better Money still matters even in this conquest. Better ways to do it</p>	<p>Not for anyone who has difficulty in a loud chaotic environment for some of these people the best kind of life is not one in a shelter State is the institution of all of our best selves. Sometimes the state fails but you can make up for something that is currently lacking</p>	<p>you're giving someone the means to the problem then you're perpetuating the harm Not a deep connection. You can help fund a social worker which is even better here</p>
<p>C3 Shelters arent for all He's chosen not to be in a shelter b/c they're a bad atmosphere After they close the mental hospitals the percentage of those who are homeless skyrocket. Mentally ill get kicked out</p> <p>Not the only way to help people. Theres some reason to be different</p>	<p>The more effort you put into it the better you'll make shelters Those groups of people are those who are least likely to be able to spend this money Mentally ill people are not automatically kicked out they try to help. Giving money who can't spend it well is not a good way to help out</p>	<p>Can do all of that on our side of the house You need to be compassionate and recognize the humanity of others.</p>	<p>Shelters are better than the street Good things to do with the money is to help them</p>

LOR (As a note: I don't "flow" rebuttals I just take notes during them. I'll post it at the end)

My thoughts: Pretty standard albiet a tad messy LOR. It didn't detract from a super strong MO but also did not add any new weighing or reasons to vote for this. It did do a bit of the comparative that is needed to vote opp but I would have liked to see much more.

As the PM: You HAVE to outweigh MO. This means proving the interaction is meaningful and impactful to this person in a way that the impersonal interaction won't be. PMR needs to hit on

PM	LO	MG	MO
25.75/4	26/3	26.5/2	26.5/1

If you have any questions about this or debate in general please feel free to email me at rweisbac [at] gmail [dot] com