

# Rebuttal and Engagement



# Structure of this workshop

## Principles of Engagement

### Practical Concerns

- listening
- prioritisation
- placement
- structure
- execution

## Points of Information





# Principles of Engagement

HOW SHOULD YOU THINK ABOUT REBUTTAL

- rebuttal is not just a 'secondary' content to your substantive to get through at the start of your speech → can be a **potentially winning material**
- all rebuttal must be **tied to your case** and contribute to 'tipping the scales' in the judge's mind
  - do not undermine your own case with your rebuttal (e.g. lowering your impacts, etc.) / *victims identity debate*  
*example*
- rebuttal **does not exist as a binary** between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful'
- '**charitable reading**' & 'neutral state' principle
  - combat the instinct to immediately dismiss/rebut in your mind
  - do not immerse yourself in their case and don't start 'buying it'



# Practical Concerns

## Listening

- you cannot rebut things that you **have not heard**
  - immersing yourself in writing, whispering or texting your partner
  - sometimes you actually **cannot listen** → make sure to **communicate** with your partner!
- listen to your own partner's analysis to be able to respond to responses and use your partner's constructive in the rebuttal for the other side

## Prioritisation

- different parts of a case/arguments are worth different amount of engagement → do not '**passion rebut**' or spend time on low hanging fruits
  - prioritise material that **explicitly or implicitly interacts** with your case (e.g. characterisations about actors/context that might undermine your own plausibility)
  - prioritise teams to engage with based on your **strategy**
  - rebuttal can also be **derivative** - do not waste your time!
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# Practical Concerns II

## Placement

### - **pre-emptive rebuttal**

- be careful about what you include - if not sure, leave it for deputy
- be sneaky about it - no 'they might say X'

### - **external X integrated rebuttal**

- depends whether the point clashes with your material and makes logical sense to integrate - do what is comfortable
  - do not repeat the same rebuttal twice
  - if integrating, leave enough space on your papers - must be easy to navigate!
  - if member, only do the **essential rebuttal** for your case to be runnable, let the whip take care of the rest!
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# Practical Concerns III

## Structure

- *what they said* → *tiered responses* → *implication*
- **what they said**
  - be **clear and concise** - make it clear what you're referring to, but do not give them free airtime
  - '**charitable reading principle**' matters here → do not strawman/misrepresent
- **tiered responses**
  - not true, even if true - not important - even if - then weigh etc.
  - multiple responses that **back each other up** that are hard to be taken down
- **implication**
  - always explain **what your rebuttal achieved** - did you successfully mitigate? Taken down an assumption their entire point was predicated upon, so none of it is likely anymore?
  - do not leave it up to the judges to interpret!

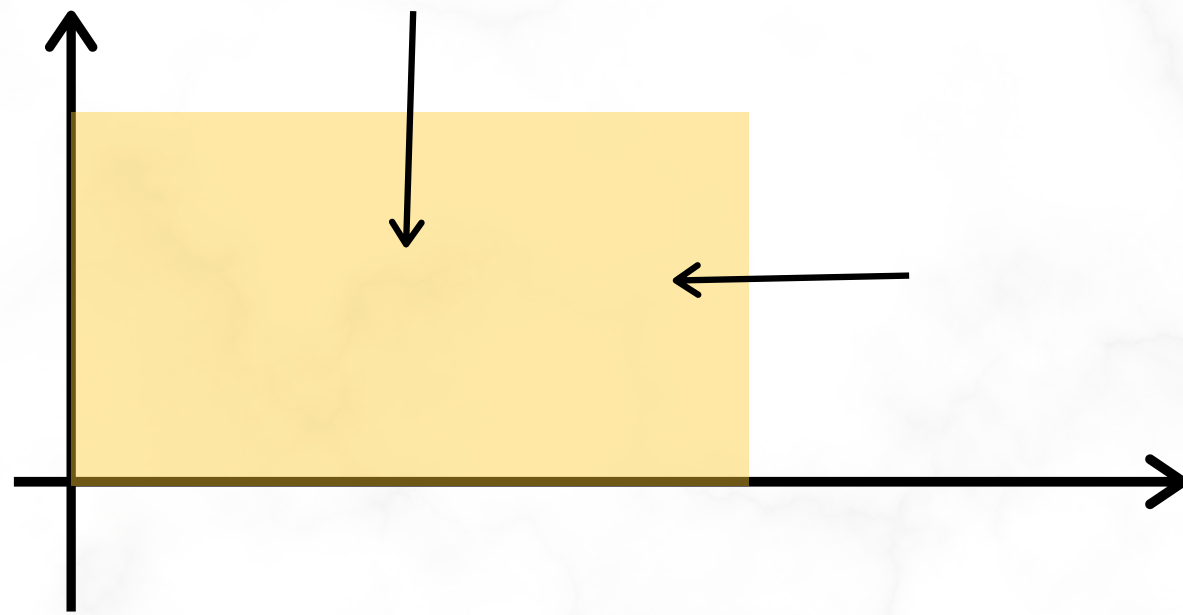




# Practical Concerns IV

## Execution

- likelihood x importance



## - rebuttal toolbox

- counterframing (often pre-emptive)
- rebutting unproven assumption (e.g. a lot of bodily autonomy/privacy/etc. debates)
- rebutting mechanisms
- rebutting impacts (question whether the impacts actually are negative?)
- co-opting arguments = making it symmetrical



# Practical Concerns V

- **contradictory vs. alternative rebuttal**

- contradictory: explaining why what the other side is untrue
- alternative: explaining why something other than what they said is true

**e.g. TH opposes attempts of the feminist movement to redefine roles and behaviours traditionally associated with women (e.g. wearing make-up, trying to be a housewife) as empowering**

→ *you are OO and you want to run the argument that many women will be alienated from the feminist movement as a result, which will compromise your ability to campaign for other things (e.g. equal pay)*

- **PM:** these behaviours and roles are forced on women by the society, and they have no way of opting out of them - most women resent these behaviours and roles, which is why the feminist movement needs to establish a culture where it is acceptable to opt out of these behaviours, which is compromised by celebrating them as empowering

→ *what kind of responses could you provide?*

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# Practical Concerns VI

- **alternative rebuttal**

many women opt into and hold these behaviours dear (e.g. women in beauty careers, women who celebrate their contributions as housewives, many women choose these as valuable in their lives, not forced

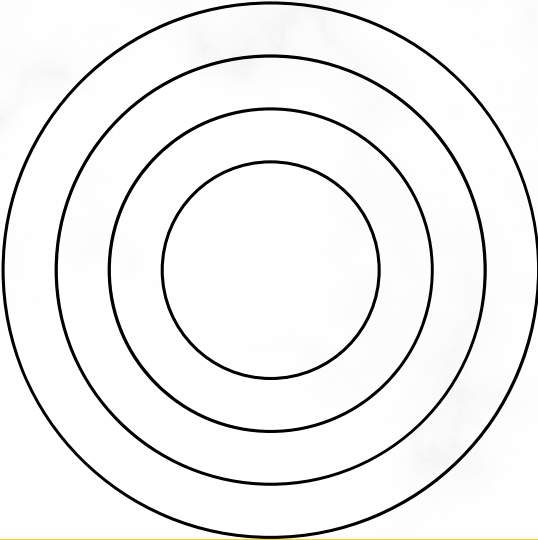
- **contradictory rebuttal**

there are no clear mechanisms for exactly women could be forced into these behaviours - there might be soft societal pressure, but opt-out is ultimately possible, which is why we see many women not wearing make-up or actively pursuing their careers - therefore, many women ultimately buy into these norms and consider them valuable for themselves

- both of these should be used **complementing** each other  
→ forward contradictory rebuttal first, then alternative analysis!







# POIs

## - giving POIs

- do not be reactive - these POIs will usually not be effective
- instead, write your POI in detail down (word by word recommended!), check with your partner with your strategic plan in mind
- can target different teams, not just the speaker currently speaking

## - types of POIs

- '**trap/binding POI**' - do you also support XYZ / why do you think XYZ happens
- **rebuttal POI** - 'your material on XYZ is untrue because ABC' - BUT you must be concise AND never POI 'you did not prove X'
- **reminder POI** - 'please engage'
- **weighing POI** - your material on XYZ is less important than ours because ABC





# POIs II

## - taking POIs

- earlier than 5:45 can be advantageous - more time to respond in depth & they have less information
- always take clarifications
- accept POIs from diagonals and from stronger teams

## - how to respond when you do not have a response

- traps: be vague enough and do not bind yourself - example responses for when you have no idea what they are alluding to
- make it irrelevant
- weigh your own material over it
- if it was confusing, it might have been confusing for the judge too - do not get stuck!
- 'I am just about to address it'



# Exercise - Prioritisation

THW require all legal guardians to prove their competency in raising a child to the state

AS OPP WHIP, WHAT WOULD YOU PRIORITISE

OG

- Mechanism: Minimum baseline of parental competency and skill (e.g. child nutrition, discipline, hygiene and healthcare, etc.) needs to be proven to a government official specialised in child rearing before they raise a family
- Prevents instances of child abuse and neglect before harms accrue (i.e. different from when child services take children away when harm has already happened)

OO

- infringes upon rights of individuals to have children
- these barriers are likely going to be set too high. Too few couples will be approved for having a child.
- Children will be torn from their parents, or birth rates will plummet

CG

- more preparedness for childcare
- providing them with a checklist of requirements will help prepare them for unexpected challenges (e.g. sex education)
- better familial bonds. Parents learn how to communicate and nurture children when they have more guidelines about what is unacceptable (e.g. shouting at small children)

CO

- It is likely that government officials are mostly white. There is the potential for cultural minorities who have valid methods of child rearing to be discriminated simply because they are alien