

Judging

MDU Advanced Training Sessions // Week 10



session structure

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- **principles** of judging
 - non-intervention
 - comparative judging
 - how to assess arguments
- **process** of judging
 - note taking
 - panel discussion
 - being a good wing
 - being a good chair
 - oral adjudications

principles of judging: non-intervention

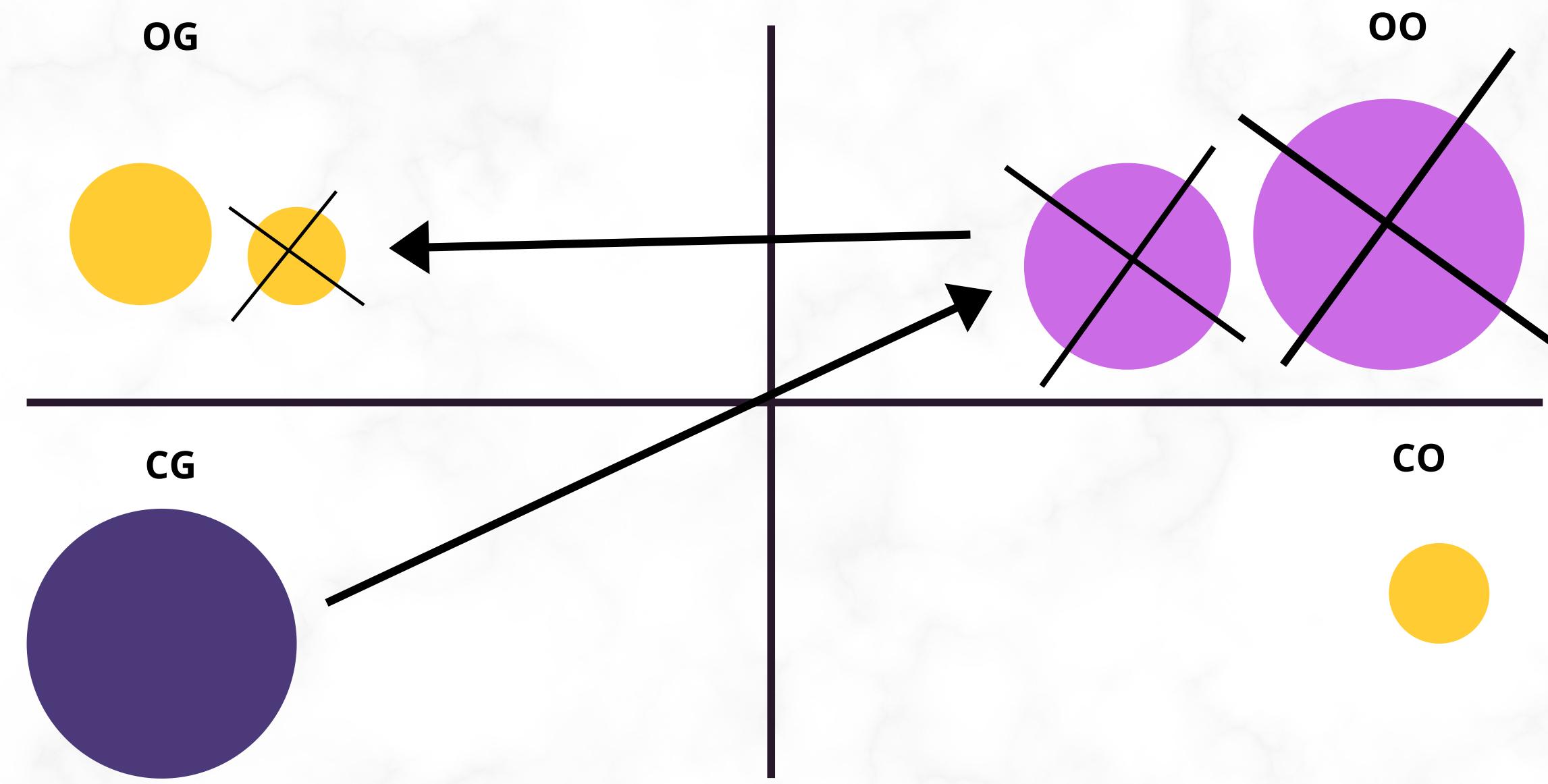
- 'non-intervention' and 'the average intelligent voter'
 - all judges will have some biases - debate related (e.g. what arguments we enjoy running) or in general (our background or political leaning) → these should be **minimised**
 - **'average intelligent voter'**
 - is assumed to be informed about global issues (not in depth) → able to accept commonly known premises - e.g. 'North Korea is not a democracy'
 - is not familiar with very specific information (e.g. 'the voter turnout in Georgia has been getting increasingly low') → if contested, need to evaluate which claim is better analysed
 - is able to follow explanations of complex concepts
 - you are not expect to know complex concepts about finance if they are just thrown at you by teams, but you should be able to understand them if they explain them
 - **do not insert yourself** in the debate
 - do not discredit arguments based on their headlines (e.g. backlash, Marxist arguments, free speech etc.) → allow teams to develop them
 - do not punish teams for missing 'the obvious argument you would've run' and do not rebut their cases
 - do not insert/have preferences for certain premises - e.g. utilitarianism



principles of judging: debating is comparative



- how you comparing each team to another – arguments are not just 'good' but must be 'better' than others
- imagine each team is in three separate debates (e.g. CG with OG / CG with OO / CG with CO)
- how each comparison is credited is only influenced by the two teams in that comparison and actions of a third team should not have any impact





assessing arguments i

- **some mistakes in argument crediting**

- you should not be crediting things like style, structure or time allocation → these are useful mechanisms of persuasion and can strengthen arguments, but cannot be double credited
- number of arguments, originality of arguments, time spent on an argument should not be in and of itself relevant
 - 'they only said it at 6:30' - an argument can be well proven even in a limited amount of time
- do not over-credit teams for 'trying harder'
 - 'I felt the motion was opp weighed and their arguments were a low hanging fruit, so OG should be credited more because they had to do more'
- do not assert your own metrics
 - metrics change depending on the debate and depending on what teams justify the metrics to be

assessing arguments ii

importance

likelihood

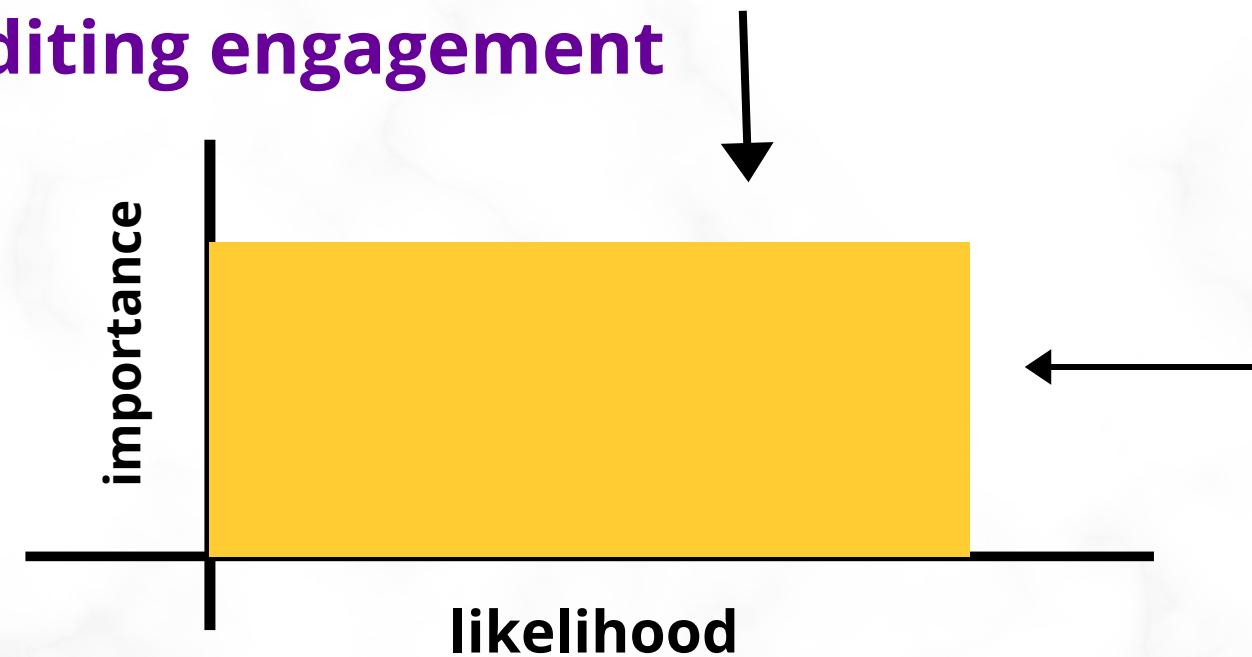
- when assessing arguments, you should not be inserting your own rebuttal, but you should be critically evaluating to what extent teams are in fact proving their arguments
 - you can acknowledge when a team does not prove an important burden in their case
 - if teams provide you reasons/mechanisms in their argument, you should not be thinking of independent reasons as to why you do not believe these to be true
- there is no binary between 'proven' and 'not proven at all' → spectrum
- read between the lines - sometimes teams fail to prove what they set themselves to prove, but achieve a smaller burden that is still creditable



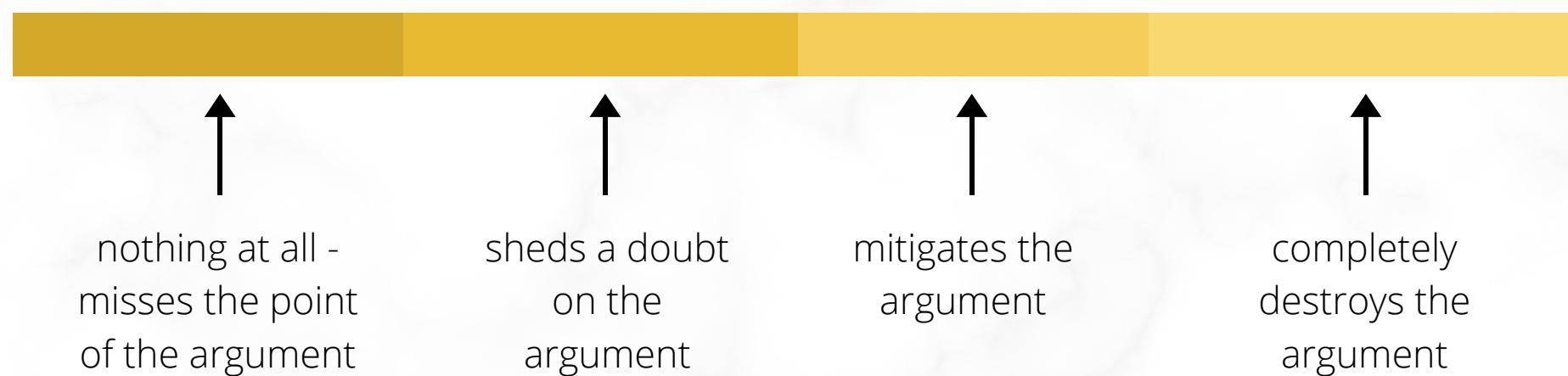


assessing arguments iii

- **crediting engagement**



- make sure you track engagement and responses
- engagement can do different things - also a spectrum



- teams should not be double penalised for not rebutting an argument
- diagonal engagement / backloading
 - teams that cannot directly engage should be given an opportunity through POIs - what to do if this does not happen?

assessing arguments iv

- **what not to credit and when**

- **whip speeches**

- not allowed to run completely new arguments - no one can't respond
 - to what extent could you expect this development after the extension speech?
 - can add new examples, new characterisation, new impacting
 - new rebuttal is also permitted - but watch out for rebuttal that is actually just a sneaked-in substantive (**thin line!**)
 - if a whip speaker brings new material, they should not be penalised - instead treat it as if they said nothing at all

- **contradictions**

- if two arguments are in tension but do not fully contradict each other, they only weaken each other
 - if two arguments are fully contradictory (i.e. one cannot be true if the other is), the rule of thumb is to credit the one that came earlier
 - exceptions: if the speaker clearly misspoke or the entire debate agreed to accept the second argument
 - **contradictions on a bench** - teams can marginalise their opening, but should not falsify

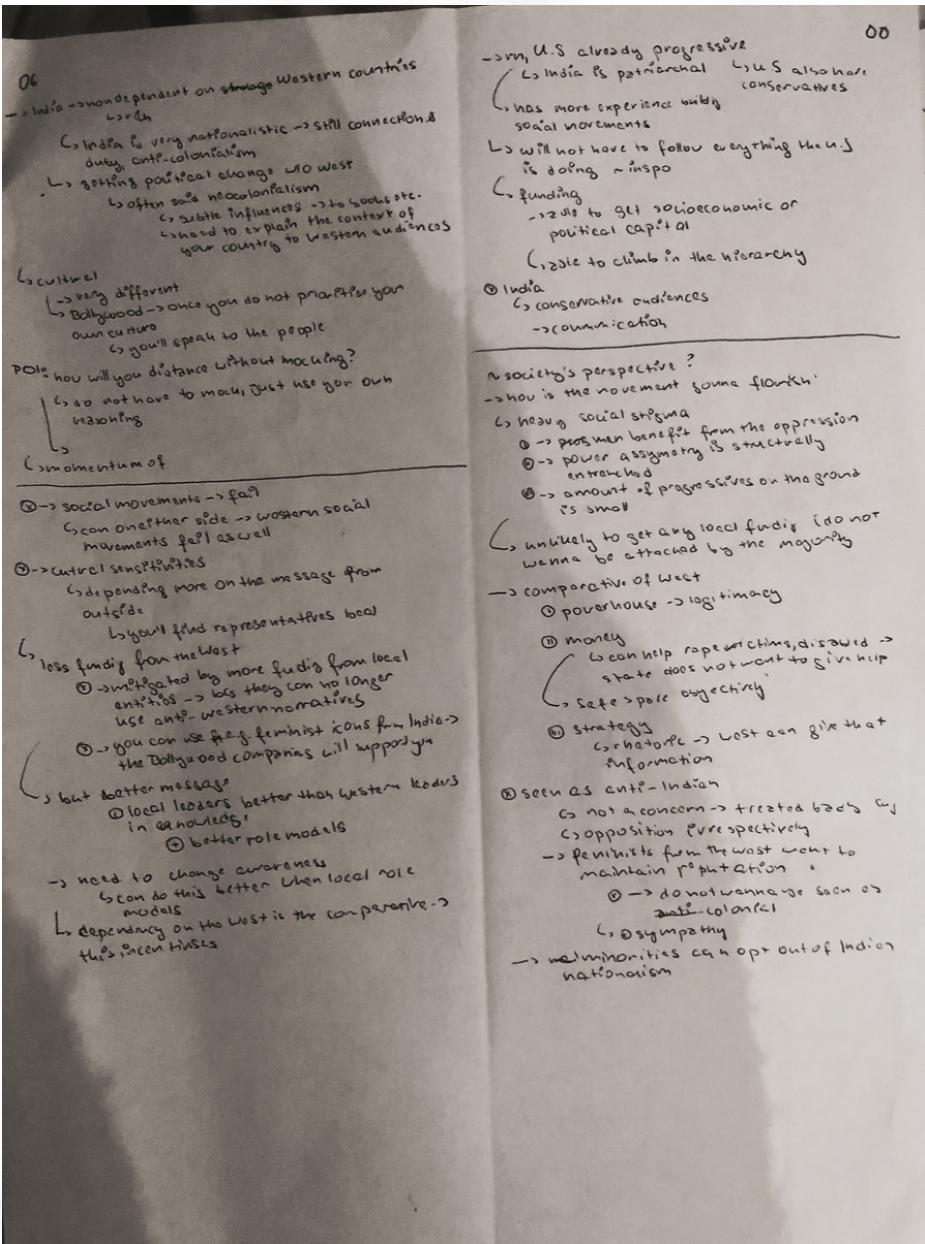




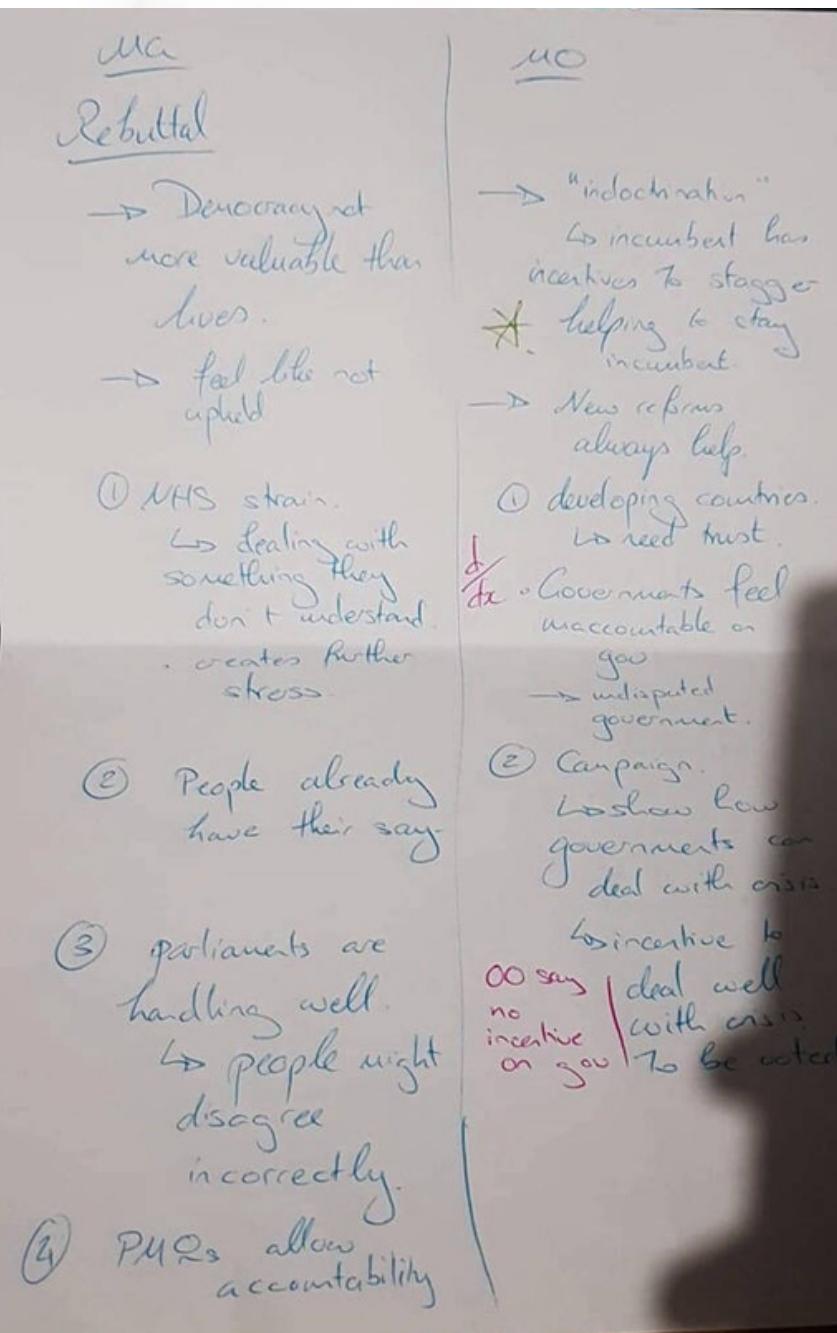
process of judging - note taking

- write clear notes that you are able to navigate - *examples on the next slide*
- find a balance between writing too much and too little - you should not be transcribing the entire speech, but also should not miss out on nuances
- always have a **master sheet** that includes
 - **bottom lines** of teams' arguments (these do not necessarily correspond to what the teams flagged) or important points (e.g. crucial characterisations)
 - your **conclusion** (e.g. to what extent this was proven)
 - most crucial responses
 - can also include notes on weighing you intend to present during deliberation/OA
- to avoid not factoring third teams into bilateral comparisons, judge throughout the debate (e.g. you should have a decision on top half after top half finishes speaking)

debate notes examples

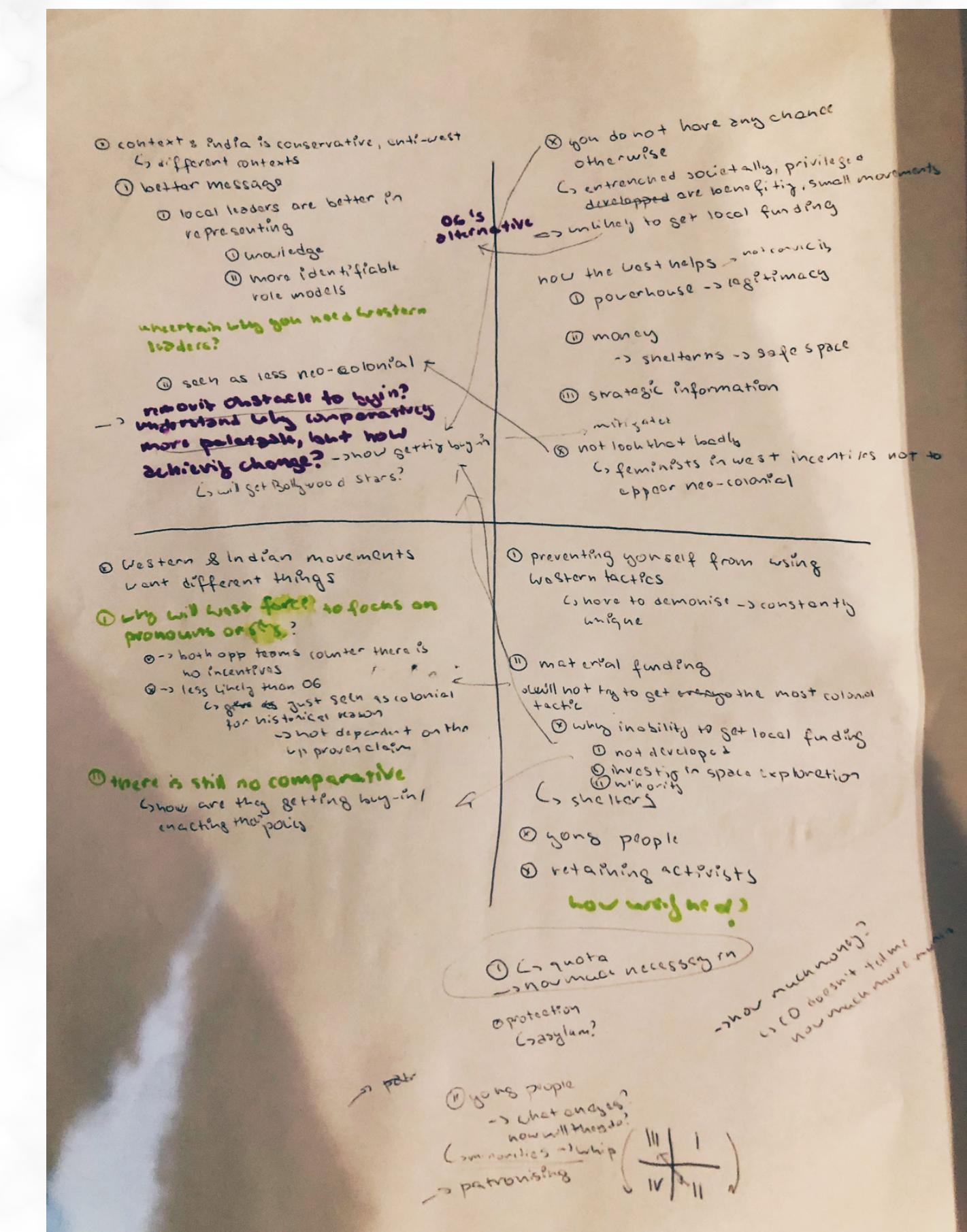


two speeches per page example



two teams per page example

master sheet example



process of judging - deliberation

- being a **good wing**
 - be concise and concrete in your justifications
 - **common mistake:** 'being too narrative-y' and repeating the teams' speeches
 - focus on the contentions that made you give it to one team or the other
 - **common mistake:** vague phrases such as 'more convincing' or 'more persuasive' → what is the specific analysis teams did and how it impacted the debate?
 - focus on the comparative given to you by the chair
 - do not be afraid to change your mind
 - initial calls are not binding - people get commonly swayed even on top levels
 - justify why you are swapping / why you are splitting (e.g. no 'I get this but I still kind of disagree')
- being a **good chair**
 - allow your panellists to give their calls first
 - based on disagreements, structure the discussion
 - everyone agrees - still confirm (devil's advocate)
 - one disagreement - start with that comparative
 - total mess - go chronologically
 - allow minority opinions to speak first





process of judging - oral adjudication & personal feedback

- use your **master sheet** to pre-structure your OA
- different **types of structures** → **chronological** tends to be the most used and the clearest
 - make sure you walk the teams through **all the six comparatives** (OG - OO / CG - OG / CG - OO / CO - OG / CO - OO / CO - CG)
 - example of bilateral comparison structure (OG's substantive → OO's responses → OO's substantive → OG's responses → final weigh up)
- your **OA** should be clear and concise, but comprehensive
 - address the major points teams flagged (if a major point ended up being irrelevant, explain why it was irrelevant, do not just ignore it)
 - address points that were not flagged, but were important to the rationale
- **personal feedback**
 - can include things that do not factor into the rationale (e.g. structure, time allocation, 'what you could've run')