

27/10/2022

Expert Consultation Questions to Prof. Jacobs

By the ADAB team

1- In your OSSA 2020 Paper, you argue that debate models cannot do without the notion of (propositional) truth. You write that “deciding the status of propositions and the quality of arguments for and against propositions are just what debate aims to do” and warn against the “circularity that comes from substituting acceptability for truth as a satisfaction condition on assertion”. In the following pages, though, you insist on the dialectical procedure for testing the status of propositions. All the six obligations you identify have to do with the *process* between parties competing to maintain the contested presumptions. It thus seems as if the truth of a proposition relies on its acceptability “created” by one of the parties on the other side. With that said, can you elaborate on the problem you see with acceptability in debate models?

Since “debate models kick inferential problems upstairs to the meta-level”, is it not at this level that also the truth/acceptability of the propositions tested? If so, at this upstairs level, how would you consider the notion of “concerns” of each party as constitutive of the intersubjective process, especially in the policy debate? Can “concerns” be useful to replace notions such as truth and/or intentions?

2- What can be solutions to ‘spreading’ (Jacobs, 2020, p. 13) and the ‘double drop’ (p. 14) problems that you discuss in your OSSA paper? While this is an open-ended question, we would like to reiterate our proposal: as discussed in our Zoom meeting, a design may limit the debaters not by time but by the number of moves. What would be the benefits and drawbacks of move-limitation as a guiding principle?

3- What procedural innovations would better encourage the critical and reflective depth of arguments? If you were to change three things (or any most important things) in the American Tournament Debate procedure, what would they be?