

argument that might have been raised. Media intrusion into the private lives of individuals is not an unexpected argument in this sort of debate, and the Opposition needed to be able to counter it. Unlike the Proposition in the semi-final debate mentioned, the Proposition here has defined the motion at the correct level of abstraction: 'the media' and 'powerful' are not being interpreted in an unexpected or unduly narrow manner. The Proposition has not arbitrarily declared the debate is only about television media or that it is restricted to the western world.

The Proposition's case in the 2002 Grand Final became muddled when it failed to set out clear criteria for assessing 'too powerful', simply linking this with the media's intrusion into individuals' private lives. The Proposition said its 'model' was to restrict the media to reporting on individuals' private lives when this impacted on their jobs. In terms of the discussion of models and criteria above, this being a 'judgement' rather than a 'change' debate, the Proposition should have focused on setting out criteria for judging when the media's power became excessive rather than providing a model for how to change this.

The Opposition in turn misread the debate when it attempted to 'broaden' the definition so as to include the sort of arguments it had been expecting (which it could then rebut by pointing to regulatory schemes that inhibited ownership concentration and news distortion, and an educated populace able to deal with the same). In addition to questioning whether the media had gone too far in its coverage of individuals' private lives, the Opposition may have fared better by coming back to the overall question posed and establishing a framework for assessing whether the media was 'too powerful'. Media intrusion into individuals' private lives was, at the end of the day, only *one* argument towards proving the media was 'too powerful' and it could be contended that, even conceding some unjustifiable media intrusion into individuals' private lives, this was outweighed by the controls on the media and the media's lack of power in a host of other significant areas (thus introducing the arguments the Opposition wanted to make about mechanisms preventing media distortion and the like).

Whereas an unduly restrictive *definition* (such as limiting a general motion to a single example) is illegitimate and can be challenged or broadened, a Proposition that runs a restrictive *case* (limiting itself to a single argument) acts legitimately and cannot be challenged for doing so, but runs the risk of the Opposition being able to more easily counter that case (by disproving that one argument and/or by raising other arguments that disprove the motion, as defined).

The moral of the story is as mentioned at the outset. To debate the motion set. There are dangers in trying to run restricted definitions or restricted cases at the World Schools Championships, where teams are expected to take the obvious meaning of a motion and to debate the issue posed. Sometimes motions will be extremely specific, at other times they will be very general, and the Proposition's definition is expected to follow suit. Specific motions should be defined specifically and general motions generally. Good debating involves an effective blend of argument, rebuttal, speaking ability and teamwork. It means displaying the best material, presentation and strategy on the motion set, not seeking to handicap the Opposition before the debate begins or confounding the reasonable expectations of audiences and adjudicators who have come to watch an exchange of ideas and arguments for and against a particular motion.