

CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS TO SUPPORT A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT RELATIONSHIP

As stated earlier, developing an affirmative case using causal argument first requires a description of the suspected cause. This is followed by an explanation of the effect. The final step is vital in proving the affirmative's case. Here, the affirmative must demonstrate that the relationship between the cause and effect is causal rather than coincidental.

Let's consider three practical examples of how you could use the cause-and-effect arguments to create affirmative cases for the resolution "the separation of public and private is detrimental to women's rights." Each of these examples illustrates the three elements essential to constructing a cause-and-effect argument: describing features of the cause (the private and public spheres), demonstrating the effect (the detriment to women's rights), and demonstrating a causal relationship. Our examples are not researched carefully enough to constitute a solid argument for the proposition. In each case, debaters using such arguments would have to present solid evidence relevant to each of the three elements.

EXAMPLE ONE: GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION

One example of how an affirmative debater could argue that the separation of private and public spheres is detrimental to women's rights would be in the area of government participation.

DESCRIBING FEATURES OF THE CAUSE

The government functions as a part of the public sector, whereas the individual family unit is in the private sphere. Many societies and traditions consider women the caretakers of the family—only men participate in government affairs. Thus, in these societies, the public sphere and the private sphere are considered separate.

DEMONSTRATING THE EFFECT

This separation results in few women holding seats in legislatures. With men dominating these bodies, legislation supporting equality or women's rights is not a high priority. Lack of women's participation therefore can be seen as a sufficient cause for the failure to address and secure women's rights. Without women present to bring such issues to light, the chance that they would be considered is small.

DEMONSTRATING A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP

Using method by agreement, you could give various examples where a separation between private and public spheres in terms of government activities has been detrimental to women's rights. We can see this in many societies, including the United States, where only a handful of women hold seats in the 535-member Congress. Because women do not participate in government, male-dominated political systems fail to address women's issues adequately or at all.