

**IN HONOR OF THE LOUISVILLE PROJECT: ALLYING INSTEAD OF
ALLYSHIP TO SUPPORT MINORITY DEBATERS**

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Allyship has been a common topic of discussion among social justice and social work advocates (Edwards, 2006; Ostrove & Brown, 2017; Gibson, 2014), communication and rhetorical studies scholars (DeTurk, 2011; Lawless, 2016), and debaters and debate coaches. Yet, we know little about what an ally is or does. In this article we critique allyship as a deeply problematic way of expressing oneself. We do so for several reasons: allyship is about status and box-checking more than assistance and support, it allows backsliding and defensive responses instead of reflection and critical engagement, and it focuses more on the person claiming to be an ally than the people with whom this person claims to ally. As such, we argue *allying* is a better term because it emphasizes the constant action, indeed the praxis necessary, to truly assist and support minority populations, specifically black populations, given systemic anti-black racism and an increasingly overtly racist public sphere. To honor the Louisville Project, debate activity participants must practice allying and not allyship.

Keywords: Anti-Blackness, policy debate, allying, social justice, academic debate, University of Louisville.

Introduction

It is common to describe members of dominant groups who help minority populations as *allies*, but the language of *ally* and *allyship* deserves further examination given society's systemic racism. We focus on allyship in the policy debate activity, a form of interscholastic debate where two-person teams take opposing sides on a resolution that suggests the United States federal government do some action. For example, the 2015-2016 Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA)/National Debate Tournament (NDT) resolution was: "Resolved: The United States should significantly reduce its military presence in one or more of the following: the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, the Greater Horn of Africa, Northeast Asia." We focus on policy debate because of its ubiquity in communication departments, its well-documented rhetorical nature (Sciullo, 2019), and this genre of debate's status as the birthplace of what has been called the Louisville Project, a series of speech acts that centered blackness in policy debate and cast policy debate's critical orientation on its own racialization (Reid-Brinkley, 2019).

As such this argument may be understood as a continued investigation of the debate activity's engagement with race, participation, and performance (Sciullo, 2019). While the authors have benefited from dominant identities, one of us (Sciullo) more than the other (Christie), we recognize that allyship presents several problems for maintaining a robust orientation toward black and marginalized populations' empowerment and may, in fact, enable allies to backslide into their dominant behaviors. As at least one commentator has pointed out, non-black people of color also engage in racist behaviors under the banner of allyship (Odemns, 2017).

In order to appreciate the many positive impacts the University of Louisville's Malcolm X Debate Society has had on not only all levels and types of debate, but also for countless people who have come into contact with and read about the program, we argue that the best way for dominant groups to acknowledge racism and systemic oppression is to do away with allyship. To do so requires a movement towards a more critical understanding of people as interested in, practitioners and students of, and concerned about justice. This understanding will better support the enormity of Louisville's influence on debate, argumentation, and political action. Such a

move demands that allying is work and not mere feel-good rhetoric by those not concerned with supporting minority students and debaters.

Presently, *ally* is utilized both as a verb describing the actions of individuals working towards a common goal (to ally with other people or to ally with a movement), and as a noun describing, “a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle” (Merriam Webster Dictionary, n.d.). The concern with utilizing ally as a noun is that allyship can become an identity or status that can be achieved rather than engaging in the continuous practice of allying. In other words, one becomes comfortable as an ally and then no longer engages in allying once one has checked the ally box. The failure to think about allyship as a process results in bad praxis; it reduces allying to retweets, laptop stickers, and kind words. We argue that not only is *allyship* poorly defined and explained, but also that it allows people who disempower minority populations to become more dominant all the while claiming to help those same groups.

Selective Allyship

“You are the ally that thinks believing in systemic oppression is an option.”

- J Mase III (2014)

One issue with allyship is that allies seem to be able to turn their allyship on and off when convenient, which not only highlights their fundamental difference with the minoritized individuals with whom they ally, but also expresses a lack of commitment to these people and their needs. So, allyship becomes a tool of expression and individualization rather than a commitment to solidarity. It becomes an easy choice not an endless struggle. One may define themselves as an ally to gain social capital in minority social circles, while remaining silent against racism in socially-dominant spaces. The ally’s privileged status allows them to abandon the fight when necessary or even when not, as they need not oppose oppressive systems or individuals’ actions to go about their day. This practice degrades both those with whom the allies ally and the participation of allies in movements meant to dismantle such systems, as these actions are oriented not at supporting marginalized groups but more toward providing the already privileged ally with the social status or internal gratification of the ally label (Ostrove & Brown, 2017). One need only scroll through Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter for a few minutes to find

aggressive claims of allyship paired with ambiguous photos, inspirational quotations, and confusing statements in support of some version of social justice followed by a week's worth of silence about the issue.

Allyship allows privileged populations to attempt to cleanse themselves of guilt for participating in oppressive systems while failing to require any action to dismantle that system or the necessary reflexivity important in social justice praxis. At present, one can claim the identity of ally to allow themselves to feel participatory affiliation in movements while never actually participating in protests, boycotts, picket lines, or for that matter activist writing and presenting in the academy and community. It is easy to be an ally in one's Twitter profile and by reposting on Facebook, but much harder allying oneself through engagement. Slacktivism has become a status symbol online and in college dorms, assuaging guilt, but doing little to assist or support minority populations advocating for and realizing change.

To be sure, allying takes time, emotion, energy, and even money. Being an ally does not mean one does not suffer from various forms of precarity, or that one is not a part of minority groups as well. We do not suggest people who only post on Twitter because traveling to rallies is financially impossible nor the people unable to stand on a picket line nor the assistant professor who is fearful of not earning tenure are allying improperly; we simply argue if allying becomes what one yells in a debate round to avoid a certain argument or what one hashtags on Twitter without actually posting supportive messages and relaying news and arguments supporting minority groups, then one is not allying. Allyship is not all rallies and book publishing, it is also the unnoticed acts that bring comfort and support to marginalized people who may have nowhere to turn or who may simply need someone to talk to. This work is important, too.

Dominant Population Control of Allyship

“You are the kind of ally that wants to take pictures together just for advertising purposes.”

-J Mase III (2014)

Allies often use their allyship to control minorities under the guise of beneficent allyship (Owens, 2017). This results in the replication of oppression within movements, with dominant

allies crowding out oppressed people who both want to and should lead movements to address their concerns. The danger is that vocal allies, empowered by their vociferous allyship, often crowd out the participation of the oppressed people with whom they seek to ally. This majoritarian control of minority opposition manifests in instances of non-minority-identifying allies calling upon oppressed populations to tailor their resistance techniques to be more digestible to socially dominant identities (in debate this often looks like: “read a plan text,” “speak differently,” “don’t be angry,” etc.) to either attract more allies or to not alienate allies. Allies love *acceptable* protests, rhetorics, and other political actions.

This exemplifies the dangers of allyship in prioritizing the comfort of the majority over the pursuit of rights and freedoms, support and empowerment of minority groups. In short, minority groups should not need to appeal to majoritarians for their political projects, their fears and worries, their danger to matter. While support from power-wielding groups is often instrumental to the success of a movement, we argue that individuals with greater access to resources (meaning privileged economically, socially, or politically) should regularly check their own motivations to ensure that they are not modifying the desires of the movement to the benefit of the majority. Majoritarian policing of minorities’ (black, queer, Islamic, economically poor) bodies and movements is antithetical to the supposed purpose of allyship. When minority individuals’ interests and passions are co-opted by majoritarian comfort, the result is a politics inauthentic to both the majoritarian commitment and the minority individuals’ desire. That is, allyship can become more about the ally than those with whom allies ally, which produces a politically disempowering space for minority groups and allies alike.

Other Critiques of Allyship

“You are the ally that never has to progress, because you have already proclaimed yourself to be.”

- J Mase III (2014)

The issues as described in this article have manifested in the toxicity and failure of many organizations and movements. One example of the dangers of allyship is the bad allyship of Judy C. Morelock, a University of Tennessee professor who mocked a student who identified as a “queer, Black, fed-up feminist” for disagreeing with her about a basic issue of black history

(Patton, 2017). At issue was Morelock's teaching that slavery did not break up black families and that it in fact kept families together (Patton, 2017). That, of course will strike many scholars of slavery or black history as a dubious (at best) conclusion, but Morelock based her interpretation on the work of several other scholars. What was perhaps most troubling was the way Morelock bullied and insulted the student who questioned their teaching online after their disagreement. Morelock claimed to always be "fighting for minorities" and also argued, "You're talking to someone who has spent their entire life fighting for people of diversity and marched with my Black brothers and sisters" (Patton, 2017). So, it often happens, when reasonable questions are asked, and the bad allies convinced of their excellence strike out on the defensive. Unfortunately, Morelock seemed more content to rest on past actions and shut down inquiry because she was, according to her, an ally.

Another common example of a bad ally is popular political commentator Bill Maher who touts his progressive and liberal beliefs while at the same time engaging in rampant sexism and racism (Patton, 2017). The problem is not declaring oneself to be progressive, but rather convincing oneself that this is all one has to do. Maher has profited from his heavy self-marketing as an ally while doing little to demonstrate his allying especially when giving white supremacists a platform on his HBO television series and describing himself as a "house n_____" (Patton, 2017).

Allyship is easy to claim, but allying is hard to do. Fischer (2018) argued, mostly in the context of advocating for and supporting trans people, that for those who are benefiting from publishing works aligning with certain causes and people, it is important to advocate for these causes beyond publication utilizing one's privilege/standing with the university to advocate for minority populations on campus, utilize minority voices within syllabi, and demand that fairly compensated speakers be invited to relevant events. Fisher's (2018) call to encourage academics to reflect upon their commitment and role in serving these communities, can also be combined with prescriptions for the personal development of privileged persons in understanding the implications of their own identity. For these reasons Sciullo has supported, often working against university administrations, gender and women's studies programs, black student unions, campus Pride communities, international student organizations, and other groups because writing and speaking is not enough.

Allying requires one to first understand their privilege before they advocate for minority populations and develop an anti-racist white identity, which can evolve into two varieties of behavior, one of true support and the other involving, “overidentification with a minority group, romanticizing aspects of the minority culture, adopting paternalistic attitudes, and attempting to provide assistance based on a Euro-centric perspective” (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994, p. 140). In debate, this often looks like white-identifying debaters agreeing with the issues affecting black people, but requiring these black debaters to debate in a way that relies on state action and white saviorism. This is done when debate teams do little work to engage with the critical (kritikal) arguments made by the team reading antiblackness literature, but shift the discussion of the debate to framework, a category of debate arguments that claim that a team has violated a rule, and is commonly an indict of teams that do not affirm the resolution or utilize the United States Federal Government as the actor of the advocacy of the Affirmative team. These arguments claim that such teams must advocate in an *acceptable* way under penalty of losing the debate. These arguments crowd out space in the debate for conversations about the material conditions of oppressed groups in favor of arbitrary claims of rule-breaking (Smith, 2013). The Louisville Project was instrumental in awakening many debate activity participants to their privilege, which is a necessary first step in allying. University of Louisville debaters, along with other debaters advancing specific marginalized populations’ projects also counseled judges to stop writing niceties on ballots and applauding song or poetry choices, echoing Rowe, et al.’s (1994) work. Of course, opposition to recognizing privilege has been strong, as many scholars have found that white people frequently resist the acceptance of privilege and open discussion of race out of anxiety and guilt (Feenstra, 2017). As such, it can be difficult for an ally to reflect on their actions rendering their allyship suspect at best, such as a debate judge failing to identify their own position of privilege or recognize their limited perspective when weighing identity arguments for groups they do not belong to or are unfamiliar with the literature on.

Allyship as a Verb, Reworking Allying

“You are the ally that celebrates don’t ask don’t tell because kids that look like you will never be forced to cross seas to bomb kids that look like them just so they can have some of your fictitious ‘freedom’.”

- J Mase III (2014)

We must emphasize allyship as a verb, as something active, requiring commitment and pursuit (Sue, 2017). Allying is a process that can fail, be corrected, and improve, which is why reflection and stressing allying are so important to critical engagement (Ghabra & Calafell, 2018). It is far too easy to declare ally status and do nothing about it. We must reject laptop stickers, retweets, and t-shirts as sufficient indicators of allyship (DeVita & Anders, 2018). One need not spend much time around the debate activity or even the last faculty meeting to observe a range of paraphernalia denoting support for various causes. Students and scholars have buttons on their jackets and stickers on their laptops, but one only needs to purchase or ask for a sticker to acquire one. There is no standard for who gets to stick a Safe Zone, Black Lives Matter (BLM), Coexist, or other sticker on their laptop (or in days now mostly gone from policy debate on one's Rubbermaid tub full of printed evidence). It is easy to affix the stickers that one thinks will make one friends, persuade others to be favorable to them, and avoid confrontation. There is no activity more common than policy debate where one might observe dozens of stickers on any given four debaters' laptops in a round.

The University of Louisville's Malcolm X Debate Society did not pass out stickers to radically change debate from an activity that assumed the normalcy of almost exclusive white, upper-middle class participation. It did not ask white people what they should do to challenge exclusionary practices that rejected seemingly all notions of black voice, black bodily comportment, and black vernacular rhetorics. Ally too easily becomes something one need not worry about, ignoring the tremendous worrying minority communities must do every day. Likewise, allyship sounds great, but reduces support, counsel, friendship, and assistance to an ephemeral position requiring little. One can claim allyship like a merit badge or a participation certificate while doing little more than clicking through (like many computerized faculty professional development seminars that purport to teach allying) the process. The better terminology is that of *allying* or *to ally*—to make allying active, requiring commitment. This emphasizes action and commitment through an on-going process. It places emphasis not on the person or the thing, but on the process of interacting, helping, supporting, and listening. This challenges the passivity of ally and allyship in favor of an active engagement with minority populations and a commitment to not turn off one's energy when the going gets tough.

If we, debate activity participants and communication studies scholars, focus our energy on allying, on actively engaging people, then we can change the passive social-capital-collecting

of being an ally. If allyship involves doing little more than asserting one is an ally, the supposed benefits of allyship are unlikely to reach either the dominant or minority community. That is, an ally cannot actually benefit from supporting, listening to, or understanding the desires of a minority group without doing the work necessary to improve and deepen intercultural understanding (Johnson & Smith, 2018). One is unlikely to benefit from claiming to be good at basketball, knitting, or reading, if one talks about them but does not engage in them.

The debate activity has seen similar efforts in verbiage changes in years past, although they never seem to have caught on. It was somewhat common for directors of debate and debate coaches to reject the label of *debate* in favor of *debating*, emphasizing the action of the activity, the community, and the political. This change in emphasis focused on the research, the travel, the clash, the self-betterment, and not simply the status of “in charge of an activity.” Likewise, debate coaches and scholars have lectured on *kritiking* (the practice of making arguments based in continental philosophy) as opposed to the *kritik* (the arguments based in continental philosophy), emphasizing the importance of engaging in critical thinking and critiquing systems of domination not simply name-dropping the *scholar de jure*. These efforts sought to emphasize action and production rather than the product or the producer. As such, they emphasized value in the intellectual labor of directing, debating, and kritiking. We make a similar argument here to focus on the process rather than the product, to focus on the work necessary in *allying* rather than the achievement of the label *ally*.

Furthermore, allying emphasizes support rather than saviorism (Miller, 2018). Productive allying understands that the ally is not the center or focus of the allying, and that they might best support minority groups by getting out of the way (Miller, 2018). Allying is not about knowing more or better than someone, and it certainly is not about saving someone. Allies should frame their allying in terms of *support* rather than *help*. *Support* deemphasizes the ally, instead focusing on what the minority group or individual needs or desires. *Support* assists people in living their own lives and pursuing their own path. *Help* assumes the person is not able to do what they need to do to get by. This lexical change helps challenge the savior complex of white liberals who are always helping (non-human animals, the poor, starving children, their neighbors, *black people*), but not providing much in the way of support like an open heart, a critical mind, an open ear, inbox, or office. Allying reframes majoritarian participation as complementary to marginalized agendas and not as replacements for them or lessons in appropriate political action.

Allying in Policy Debate

“You are the ally that calls my family’s neighborhood up and coming but would never want to bring up the word gentrification.”

- J Mase III (2014)

Through participation in and observation of the policy debate activity as both a participant and a coach, we have observed that allyship often comes up in kritikal debate rounds, rounds where a kritik is run as a centerpiece of a team’s strategy, as well as in what have problematically been described as *performance debates* (Sciullo, 2019) when debate partners have different identities, debate teams represent different identities, or a dominant-identity debater or debate team invokes arguments about minority groups in order to claim some benefit from that advocacy in a debate argument (kritik, counter-kritik, framework, solvency turns, author indicts, etc.). Allying serves a strategic function in debate, apart from its general benefits of supporting minoritized individuals regardless of their participation in debate, allowing debaters to present more cohesive arguments, garner additional advantages or solvency, and answer competing arguments robustly.

Yet, claims of allyship or being an ally often seem unreflective. Debate activity participants must reflect on their actions if they are to truly ally with minority populations (Spainerman & Smith, 2017). If allyship is only a strategy, a way to win rounds, or a way to not feel bad about how one acts at debate tournaments or back on one’s campus or what arguments one reads, then debaters are not allying with anyone. Debate activity participants should make changes, and indeed can do so without risking losing; although many of debate’s benefits have nothing to do with winning and losing, we understand that many debate activity participants think winning is important. Such new practices may entail majoritarian debaters giving up some rhetorical ground, listening better, and knowing when to be quiet. Majoritarian debaters who do not experience this oppression should, then, defer to their marginalized debate partners rather than dominant-splaining their partner’s experience for them. Practically this may involve changes in speaking order or speech-time allocation as well as involving minority debaters, coaches, and judges more, or having them lead case and speech writing as well as block and rebuttal writing.

Some activists have urged using accomplice as a replacement for ally (Indigenous Action, 2014; Jackson, 2016), yet we find this move problematic for several reasons. First, it does not implicitly address the praxis issue (Ponder, 2018). One can still claim to be an accomplice, just as one can be an ally, while doing nothing. To be sure, one may meet with criticism (as some who claim allyship do), but one can continue to claim status as an accomplice without any involvement in praxis. Second, accomplice carries with it negative connotations of criminality (Chauhan, 2018) that may 1) dissuade those interested in acting in support of black people and other people of color from acting (of course this may be an appropriate litmus test for commitment to action, but such a critique is beyond the scope of this article), and 2) may further associate criminality with black people and other people of color. As such, accomplice seems a rather imperfect solution to the problem of allyship as do many of the nouns suggested to replace ally (Ponder, 2018).

Another action that could change the way allying functions in debate is for debaters to stop using ally status as link defense on critical/kritikal arguments. As explained earlier, the kritik is an argument that can be made by either team in which the resolution provided by the topic committee or the advocacy of the other team will be indicted as problematic because of its underlying assumptions. Link defense refers to a team's answer to the other team's claim that they did a bad thing with an argument that takes the form of "no we didn't." If a team is being criticized for being problematic (racist, sexist, Islamophobic), teams can claim the ally label to argue that they do not link into the argument, meaning that the argument does not apply to them or the actions being cited as wrong. This sort of argument makes allying a strategic argument and not a committed practice. It is a way to avoid criticism and to not think more deeply about criticism. If allying is only link defense, this devalues the kritikal arguer by stating that they have "just misunderstood" or that the debater or debate team is "the *good ones* of the dominant identity." Of course, teams can still make other link defense arguments ("the evidence doesn't make that argument," "that's not what this card means," "I didn't say that," etc.). Using allyship as link defense allows teams to mask their whiteness or privilege by dodging criticism and bolstering their own identity as a non-offending ally incapable of wrong. Not using allyship as an answer also forces teams to make other answers, which has the potential to increase engagement with arguments rather than rely on a defensive (both in terms of debate's offense-defense paradigm and psychological) no-link wall (a large number of no-link arguments usually read at once), or pre-written set of responses to respond to such arguments.

White and majoritarian judges must also understand their limitations in evaluating marginalized populations' emancipatory strategies, as a judge's job is not to evaluate the emancipatory strategy as such, but rather to assess whether there is a compelling reason to vote for that strategy in the round. This means drawing a line between deciding whether or not a strategy will work and whether or not it was well-argued. Judges should focus on the latter and not the former. If white and majoritarian judges act as gatekeepers, preferring their strategies and scholarship to those of minority debaters, judges become uniquely disempowering educators in a space most participants think is empowering for any number of diverse reasons (critical to policy-making, public speaking, political training). This call for judges to not act as gate-keepers policing the types of rhetoric in which debaters engage is essential in making a debate activity that is open to multiple methods of persuasion and is not content to simply applaud the same tired arguments. Practically, it means debate tournaments must continue to work toward more diverse judging pools and elimination round judging panels. What constitutes diverse judges is of course open for debate, but may include an emphasis on judging opportunities for minoritized judges as well as those traditionally marginalized in academia like adjuncts, graduate students, and others.

Possible steps toward addressing this problem can build upon already existing models such as those employed by the Wake Forest Debate program at the ADA Fall Championship to account for the identities of debaters and judges when evaluating judge preferences (prefs) and judging panel construction. Debate tournaments may also require not just a set number of debate rounds be covered by schools providing a certain number of judges, but also that some notion of difference be covered. Small and underfunded programs may not have to abide by such rules, but programs bringing four or more teams, perhaps, should have to provide judges with different identities, experiences, and ideas such that debate tournaments are not decided by a relatively consistent cabal of the same 15 judges.

It is easy to dismiss such suggestions as too much work when "debate is dying" or too burdensome to administer at a regional tournament, yet these criticisms ignore the evidence to the contrary. As debaters and debate professionals rightly worry about the future of policy debate, it does appear that there are successful efforts at work like the ADA Fall Championship. The tournament, held in conjunction with Wake Forest University's Shirley Debates has continually had significant competition (2015 (Wake): 24 novice, 26 open, 42 judges; 2016 (Clarion): 9

novice, 10 open, 17 judges; 2017 (Wake): 15 novice, 21 junior varsity, 36 judges; 2018 (Wake): 18 novice, 15 junior varsity, 35 judges). Pairing competitive regional tournaments with larger national tournaments may make it easier for teams to bring more and different debaters and judges. Shared judging pools, then, can provide opportunities for more diverse judging and judging panels.

From speaking with fellow debaters and debate coaches, the emphasis on kritikal-debate-friendly-judging and diversity in judging have attracted participation in debate greater than had these ideas not been emphasized. Contrary to anecdotal evidence that theory, kritikal/critical, and *performance debates* are hurting the activity, there is robust anecdotal evidence supporting these types of arguments as making debate more accessible and interesting. Debate must evolve its norms and incentivize difference if it is to attract the best scholars and debaters, as well as if it is to be a place where marginalized populations can thrive in a university environment that often seems to work against their well-being. Although criticisms of debate as a white, male, upper economic class activity have been present for some time, efforts that embrace difference open up opportunities for enlivening the activity. The debate activity improves by examining its assumptions and making changes to adapt to new understandings of identity, argument, the public sphere, and the role of student-scholars in academic spaces.

Why Debate? Because of Louisville

The Louisville Project focused our attention on racial inequality and discrimination, and attuned us to the violent racial politics of debate, rhetoric, and argumentation (Reid-Brinkley, 2019). And, it is for these reasons that we must make sure allies are not disregarding the progress made nor worsening a racialized academic space. The Project inspires many debaters and debate coaches to work hard at being more responsible rhetors and participants, to find their voice, and to attempt to support others. It encouraged black students to participate and discuss issues that mattered to them in ways that resonated with their unique experiences. It encouraged white majoritarian liberals to try to support such efforts to varying degrees of success. It also inspired racist backlash, separatist movements, and anger. This article has argued that to honor the Louisville Project, to prove the last 20 years have not been for naught, we must rethink and ultimately change how individuals with dominant identities engage individuals and groups with

minority status in the debate activity. An important step would be to do away with allyship and instead focusing on allying.

We identify allyship's troubled practice, ways to challenge supporters to better support minorities, and the elimination of the ally identity and its attempt to mask or forgive whiteness and majoritarian bias and violence as crucial steps toward a more just, interculturally aware, and supportive debate activity. Allyship is a poor way to honor and acknowledge the work and struggle that debaters from Louisville, Long Beach, Towson, Emporia State, Kansas, Liberty, Rutgers, and Oklahoma have experienced and continue to experience. It is imperative that debate participants undergo this critical reflection so that policy debate can be an activity that encourages difference and critical thinking, that supports marginalized peoples, that trains people to go out into the world and support minority groups, and that grows in participant numbers. Empirical evidence has shown that policy debate participants go on to positions with the potential to change the world as educators, activists, lawyers, and policy-makers (Parcher, 1998). But, if debate only churns out ironic t-shirt-wearing and sticker-pasting sycophants, then the activity has done little to embrace its radical potential and bring new voices, ideas, and commitments into an especially empowering space. Policy debate is an excellent forum to establish new norms and understandings of allying's best and worst practices, hopefully paving the way for meaningful allying instead of counterproductive allies, and in turn continuing to recognize the important work of all the debaters and coaches who fueled the Louisville Project, and challenged debate activity participants to be better debaters, scholars, students, teachers, and activists.

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