

Judges Ballots 2005 Northwestern (Josh Branson & Tristan Morales) vs. Cal-Berkeley (Stacey Nathan & Criag Wickersham)

Ed Lee, University of Alabama

Congratulations to UC-Berkeley NW and Northwestern BM for an outstanding year. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the final round.

I also want to thank Michigan State HV, West Georgia KT, Wake CH, and Texas AM for allowing me hang out in some the more intellectually stimulating and hilarious debates I have seen in a long time. Hanging out with you folks was way cooler than my initial plan to spend Tuesday in downtown Spokane. I guess I should thank Eric Doxtader, Cate Palczewski, and Mike Davis for changing my mind.

The Issues

Stacey 2NR consist of an Extra Topicality argument that questions the legitimacy of the AFF specifying their replacement energy and the States Counterplan with a Disad to the “Do Both” permutation.

The Counterplan

The Aff is controlling the framing of this discussion. There are a couple of critical arguments that are unanswered by the 2NR that creates a sizable solvency deficit for the Counterplan. First, Stacey concedes that the counterplan’s exclusion of US territories creates a solvency deficit for the counterplan that is ethically distinct from the Aff’s specification of non-governmental. Additionally, Tristin does an excellent job of framing the Aff’s Cruzman evidence that speaks to “federal action” as critical to solving the harms of AFF.

Extra-T

This was a close debate. The 2NC/2NR argument that the Topicality debate should be evaluated as one of “competing interpretations” is not contested. There are 5 sets of arguments that I see as germane to the question of which side has the best interpretation.

(1) Aff’s “Energy Policy” definition by Harry Waxman vs. the Neg’s definition of “Energy Policy” as regulation – There is a lack comparative assessment on both sides. Neither makes an argument for why their interpretation of “Energy Policy” is superior to the others. The Aff’s argument that the Waxman evidence should be privileged because his congressional experience makes him knowledgeable about the issue is conceded. However, the Neg’s argument that the Waxman evidence is NOT written in the context of the resolution’s demand that the Energy Policy decrease consumption is also conceded. I conclude that the context question is more damning considering that the Neg’s definition of “Energy Policy as regulation” are not responded to except for the 1AR’s challenge that it does not account for the Aff’s argument that “require mandates replacement.”



(2) Aff's "require mandates replacement" Canada News evidence – The evidence is bad. It is not written in the literature on Energy Policy or Renewables. It is specific to Hitachi's decision to replace a particular assembly part to fulfill a managerial requirement. The definition fails to speak to the resolitional question. The AFF's charge that "We are the only people with ev." Is not persuasive considering the poor quality of the evidence. While the 2NC/2NR indictment of the evidence conclude have been more forceful, I find her arguments persuasive after my reading of the evidence.

(3) Aff's "we expand your DA and K ground" – This argument is not in the 1AR. Additionally, there is not an explanation of why this is the case. Examples of the types of the arguments that the Aff's interpretation provides the Negative would have helpful.

(4) Aff's "No right to specific links" – This argument does not get beyond the tagline and the negative is doing a better job of articulating the bennies of their interpretation. Some of which are not predicated on link specificity. Those include a) the advantages are not predictable because of the lack of a stable direction of the plan. b) The fact that replacements change the way the market and political institutions read the plan means the negative would never have a stable link argument. c) The negative has a right to solvency debates that fiatng replacements denies.

(5) Aff's "the ability to counterplan out of the Extra Topical portion solve the abuse" – This part of the debate was the most difficult to reconcile. I believe that the CP solves some of the reasons the extra topical portion is illegit but not all. The residual abuse claims include: a) the right to stable links to the Disads that are not compromised by the Aff's support for a replacement and b) right to solvency debate and replacement disads. Both are compromised when the Aff gets to fiat their replacement.

Finally, the negative makes it extremely difficult for the AFF to generate offense with the argument that "most if not all of the same advantages could be claimed in a world in which the Aff presents transition solvency evidence." I conclude that the replacement is NOT mandated by the resolution and allowing it provides only a marginal benefit to the AFF while compromising the NEG's Link and solvency ground.

edlee

Jonathan McCartney

Without a doubt, this was the closest debate round that I have ever judged. From the many coaches and judges whom I talked to after the announcement of the decision, they all agreed that the 2005 NDT finals was one of the closest final rounds in recent NDT history.

TOPICALITY

COMPETING INTERPRETATIONS: REDUCE = REPLACE

There is a serious problem with the fact that there is a lack of clash or evidence that counter-defines several critical words in the resolution. The affirmative defines energy policy as “generating, using, conserving”, the neg defines requiring as “to command”, the affirmative defines reduction as “replacement”, and the negative defines fossil fuel consumption as reduction of emissions through combustion of fossil fuels. The main point of definitional contention was in what an energy policy consisted of. The negative definition of energy policy is a lack of regulation. However, this dispute over the form of regulations was largely rendered moot because the only definition read in the debate of the word REDUCE was that it was REPLACEMENT. The negative’s primary answer to this evidence is that is in the context of the computer industry (Hitachi) instead of being specific to energy policy. The affirmatives counter to this was to set up a preference for competing interpretations, with the 1ar/2ar assessment that if there was only one definition of a word then that definition should be controlling. While I agree the quality of the affirmative evidence on reduce means to replace is mediocre at best, I do believe that the affirmative wins their “absent a competing interpretation – prefer any definition to no definition” standard. I think this because the primary neg argument against this definition, that it refers to a separate industry and is thus not applicable, does not engage the larger question of how to frame the meaning of the word REDUCE without any definition. The affirmative’s reasoning that without a definition of the word reduce, the cumulative meaning of the resolution cannot be accurately decided is persuasive, and without either a robust indictment of this standard for application of definitions or a counter definition the affirmative argument dictates that reduce means replace.



The crucial significance of “reduce” meaning “replace” is that it functionally denies access to the negative extra topicality argument. Without being able to prove the decentralized solar energy replacement portion of the plan extra topical, the negative loses access to their persuasive reasons why extra topicality should be a voting issue.

CONTROLLING THE IMPACT FRAMEWORK – AND ITS IMPACTS ON TOPICALITY:

Another pivotal ground assessment argument is how the concession of the affirmative discursive/ethical framework mitigates the desirability of the policy ground the negative is arguing to preserve. This is an argument that is a theme of the affirmatives entire approach to the debate, even though it only occupies a relatively small portion of the line-by line directly on the topicality flow in the affirmative rebuttals and is flagged as an intersection that implicates the ground being discussed. The affirmative consistently argues that their interpretation is superior for kritk link ground from the 2ac forward. While the warrant that replacement with a new technology is more kritkable is not well developed, it is not strongly rebutted by the negative. The negative ground arguments primarily center on policy disads and counterplans that would be jeopardized by the aff interpretation. However, the negative concession of the discursive/ethical framework of the affirmative means that it is preferable to evaluate the ground

arguments from the perspective of which interpretation provides for the best critical link ground, instead of what arguments provides for the best policy link ground. In this regard the affirmative did a better job of ground comparison, thus winning that the affirmative topicality interpretation either allows superior negative kritik ground or that the type of ground the negative is arguing in favor of doesn't make sense in the context of the discursive framework established thus minimizing its persuasive authority.

STANDARDS FOR VOTING

The main emphasis of the negative argument is that the replacement of fossil fuels with solar energy is extra topical and that this adversely affects their ground, with a great deal of discussion about what consequences this has for the negatives plan-inclusive counterplan ground. While there is some discussion of limits and the potential burden on a negative to prepare for all the potential energy replacements early on, it does not constitute a substantial portion of the rationale for the voting issues discussed in the 2nr. Many of the negative's limits arguments blur into the broader thrust of their ground arguments and are difficult to delineate.

The PICs discussion is the main lens through which all the ground and limits arguments are viewed. The affirmative contends that much of the replacement energy ground discussed is inevitable, because either it's in the affirmative plan text or it is debated out as to what the energy market would fill in with. This also creeps into some of what the negative argument is, because they contend that the negative has a right to debate about energy market fill in disads/solvency arguments. The affirmative contention is that by specifying the replacement energy in the plan text, it creates more stable link ground and increases negative plan inclusive ground by making the PICs to exclude energy replacement textually competitive. The negative counters this by arguing that the affirmative interpretation would force the negative to counterplan out of the energy replacement portion of the plan, and enable the affirmative to gain cumulative advantages from the specification of what energy would be replaced with. Overall, the negative wins that their ground would probably be slightly better under their interpretation but it is hard to quantify how much more ground they are afforded based on the specific examples discussed in the rebuttals. The ground examples of energy market and business confidence disads that are briefly discussed by both teams seem to exist under both the affirmative and negative interpretation. Significantly, there doesn't seem to be a distinction like magnitude/uniqueness of links to these positions under the two interpretations that can decisively create a genuine situation of inequity. The instances of inround abuse that the negative points to stem more from the affirmative's use of the discursive/ethical framework and not directly from the solar energy replacement portions of the plan and how it affects the link ground to their disads. Thus, the abstract idea of how much ground is lost under the affirmative interpretation is not sufficiently established by any specific examples of potential ground loss or actual ground loss in the debate, and certainly not enough to justify voting on topicality.

STATES COUNTER PLAN:

AFFIRMATIVE FRAMEWORK'S EFFECTS ON IMPACT CALCULUS

The concession of the affirmative's discursive/ethical framework enables the affirmative to control access to impacts relating to the states counterplan. In the 2nr, the negative does not extend any of the underpinning fiat theory, definitions of federal government or utilitarianism/realism evidence to support a policy making impact assessment framework. In the 2ar the affirmative extends their ethical/imaginative framework directly supported by the Scheer evidence and emphasizes the value of imagining a solar society beyond the destruction of fossil fuels to outweigh other values/impacts in the debate. This is critical to how all following impacts and consequences are evaluated, because it dictates that whichever advocacy better achieves the goal of imagining a solar society is preferable.

SOLVENCY DEFICIT

First, The Scheer 2k2 evidence somewhat supports the solvency gap argument, that it is not justifiable to allow pockets of federal or territorial jurisdiction to be excluded from the solar society. This solvency gap argument is primarily the analytical argument of exclusion juxtaposed with the argument supported by the evidence that there should be no conditions or exceptions to the ethical call to transition to a solar society. Because the states cp text only says the 50 states, it creates exceptions to the demand which undermine the strength of the call. Secondly, the Scheer 2k4 evidence stresses the importance of the call to the national government for raising public awareness on the issues surrounding the imagination of a solar society. While the Scheer evidence is sometimes abstract, it does strongly support an overall conclusion that a demand on the federal government is preferable for establishing a national consciousness for the need for a solar society, thus producing a quantifiable solvency deficit.

CENTRALIZATION BAD NET BENEFIT

The 1ar does undercover directly the centralization bad net benefit evidence, but framework arguments and evidence read on the counterplan are certainly legitimate when evaluating how they shape the evaluation of the net benefit versus the solvency deficit. When evaluating the negative Sale 91 evidence concerning the impacts of national centralization, the negative does not frame how the centralization bad arguments apply within the affirmative ethical/imaginative framework, whereas the affirmative argumentation supported by their Scheer evidence supports the claim that the effective advocacy/imagination of a solar society should be the prioritized above other impacts. The mediocre quality of the negative Sale 91 evidence undermines the persuasiveness of the impact claim, and does not support an assessment within the imaginative/ethical framework of the affirmative. Additionally, the 1ar reads a piece of Krouzman evidence that supports the affirmative claim that the plan is a challenge to centralization/authoritarianism creating a risk of offense against the Sale 91 net benefit evidence. Because the affirmative controls the framework, the solvency deficit to the counterplan outweighs any risk of the centralization net benefit that the negative might win.

I vote affirmative.

Jonathan McCartney

Charles Olney

Before I get into the decision, I wanted to make a couple of quick comments.

Is there any team classier than Harvard KT? These guys are two of the best debaters on the face of the planet, and two of the nicest as well. Joking, singing a little "Sweet Caroline," gracious in victory or defeat, there to help out LM on Monday when no one in the world would have blamed them for being gone... No offense to Tristan and Josh meant, but I'll take KT as the best team in the country any day of the week and twice on Sunday. Hope y'all are having a good time in Jamaica right now.

There's a lot of seniors. I don't think I could list them all, maybe I'll try later, but I just wanted to quickly say how glad I was to see Beth, Maggie, Christine, and Stacey finish up their careers in style on Monday. You're some of the best examples of what's great about this activity that I know.

Hardy and Vanhorn. You singlehandedly knocked KT to second, you came with great strategies all year, you played the game the way it's meant to be played.

Congrats to Josh and Tristan. Didn't really think you won, but you're two of the best debaters I've ever seen.

Congrats to Stace and Wicky. Closest anyone has ever come to winning both tournaments. Couldn't have happened to nicer people.

And congrats to everyone at the NDT and Ceda Nats. It's been a great year. I'm glad I got the chance to participate and watch as many debates as I did.

With no further ado...

I started by evaluating the counterplan as I thought Berkeley was probably ahead here. Northwestern's arguments:

1. The "exemption" argument.

The main problem here for me is that I just don't understand the distinction between the counterplan exemption of territories and the plan's exemption of governmental fossil fuel consumption. There is no explanation of the difference between "ethical" and "procedural" exemptions. It smells like an artificial distinction created by Northwestern.

The aff's evidence on this question is not nearly as good as was promised. The Scheer evidence does speak to the need to believe that renewable energies can fully replace fossil fuels, but hardly makes the claim that any exemption = zero solvency. I guess that the affirmative wins something of a solvency



deficit here, but the degree to which they win is approaching infinitesimally small.

Berkeley could have been much stronger here. I would have been very persuaded by an argument that the exclusion of a few territories is an insignificant difference which would not, in my mind, even come close to allowing the "myth of indispensability" to continue. My reading is that Scheer is concerned with systemic change. Both the plan and counterplan would easily achieve such change. They are both equally a leap of faith that the modern economy can survive the transition, which is all that Scheer really wants.

Northwestern could have done more, too. The counterplan contains the same non-governmental exemption, which means that if the only choices in the debate are the plan and the counterplan, the choice which creates LESS of an exemption is still the plan. If the framework is "don't perpetuate the myth of indispensability at any cost," you can still probably win this as offense.

2. Must call on the Federal Government

The aff's evidence on this question is not particularly good. The Scheer evidence says national governments are key because they "create the legal frameworks." Stacey's argument that this doesn't assume uniform action by subnational actors seems to resolve this concern. The Krouzman evidence is a little better, though I'm torn about its applicability. On one hand, it certainly states that the problem with movements in Europe in the 20s and 30s were problematic because they lost faith in the federal government. On the other hand, I don't think this argument is placed in the context of the states at all. In fact, the evidence suggests that the problem is endemic to the entire political system from the national government down to local school boards. To put it another way, loss of faith in the national government is a symptom of the Left losing faith in the possibility of a just and sustainable political system. I do not think this evidence supports the argument that the solution to this problem is to call on the federal government. Rather, Krouzman says the necessary change must be for us to "demand that our institutions become more just and sustainable." I think the counterplan achieves this goal, probably better than the aff.

I would be willing to give the aff some benefit of doubt on the way I should read this evidence had their spin begun earlier. However, the 2AR is really quite new here. The Krouzman evidence is in the same ballpark as the 2AR on this question, but only barely. Given that the affirmative's argument in all other parts of the debate is that centralization is bad, the finesse necessary to make this argument really has to be earlier in the debate.

3. "We solve – the plan causes the transition"

The plan probably solves. But maybe it doesn't. The negative's evidence on "centralization bad" (the two Sale cards) isn't particularly good. They say centralized governments are bad, a claim which I think a lot

of the evidence from the 1AC would support, but don't go much further. It certainly isn't written in the context of comparing demands on the state v. federal governments. At the same time, I'm with the 2NR that the aff-case does very little to explain why there isn't a link to this arg. The 1AR literally says nothing more than "voting aff solves centralization. We = transition."

No one's evidence in this debate assumes a world where I am comparing the plan and counterplan. This makes an ultimate resolution extremely difficult.

I see two potential tiebreakers:

First, the counterplan solves faster. Stacey makes an argument in the 2NR that the states solve faster since they're closer. I'm not sure what the impact to this is, or how to apply it, but the 2AR doesn't answer it.

Second, presumption. Everyone agrees centralization is bad. Given this, the path of least resistance is decentralized action (i.e. – the counterplan). So, it seems like I need to find a proactive reason to call on the more centralized actor. I don't think it quite comes to this, but this means I would probably shift presumption, in the context of this debate. So, the aff, I think, would have to win that the counterplan is worse than the plan—the tie goes neg. Don't get me wrong. I recognize that this argument is not really in the debate. But I don't feel too uncomfortable sorting this out myself, since neither team does much of anything to resolve this for me. Even a quick 2AR statement that "presumption goes aff when there's a CP – it's a rule, judge" would probably be enough. But absent any guiding statement for evaluation, I need to figure out SOME way to assess the differences, and the general agreement on centralization being the only relevant impact in the debate points me in this direction.

Neither of these is enough to assure me that the counterplan is a better option. If I had to vote here, I think there's a chance the negative is ahead, but honestly, I'd probably still be thinking about it now, trying to decide.

However, the topicality debate ended up being easier to resolve than I expected.

I think Northwestern's only hope on the interpretations is to win that they are the only ones defining a word. This would enable them to access their "resolution more important than arbitrary ground" argument, which I think they are ahead on. However, I don't think they win that they are the only ones to define words. Berkeley has an interpretation of energy policy which provides an effective counter-interpretation to both of the terms Northwestern defines. If "energy policy" means regulations, then affs are allowed to regulate fossil fuel consumption and nothing else. This interpretation creates a topic with the limited set of cases they list as legitimate (cap and trade, cap, carbon tax, etc.) There is a resolitional basis for this interpretation.

Energy Policy – even if Northwestern wins that an energy policy can theoretically contain a whole host of things, Berkeley has established a baseline for what must be contained in an energy policy: the regulation of fossil fuel consumption. So, an energy policy could theoretically include a lot of things, but many of them (drilling for oil, for example), wouldn't be topical. Similarly, energy policies can obviously include promotion of renewable energy, but under Berkeley's interpretation of the topic, those would go beyond the scope of regulation.

Reduction – I'm fairly persuaded that this evidence is, to put it as nicely as possible, pretty crappy. I do really wish Stacey had done more work here (for example, pointing out that it says "achieve a substantial reduction in costs by replacing internal systems" and is therefore obviously not applicable since reducing costs by fixing systems and reducing fossil fuel consumption by mandating solar power are not even close to analogous), but she does say that the ev is terrible, which it is. Also, she suggests that the interpretation of energy policy as purely regulations prevents this reading of the word "reduction." So, maybe you can theoretically achieve a reduction by replacement, but the term "energy policy" in the resolution forecloses that option because, as stated above, energy policies are regulations.

Short version: these interpretations fold into each other. Berkeley has established a minimum standard for topical affs. They must regulate consumption.

Northwestern also has an interpretation of the topic which is internally consistent. Energy policies can be broad, and reductions can happen through replacement.

So, the only question is: which interpretation is better?

Northwestern does have an argument that their interpretation is better because it's from a Congressional source, but I don't think they respond to the criticism that it's not a definition with intent to define but rather is just political rhetoric. In any case, I don't think the qualifications of the Waxman evidence are strong (or weak) enough to affect my decision significantly.

So the real issue is which interpretation is better for ground, limits, etc. I honestly don't think it's very close on this. Northwestern has no offensive reason to prefer the broader interpretation, and their defensive arguments are not particularly strong.

Arguments like "debating alternative energies inevitable" are non-starters. The whole point of Berkeley's argument is that such debates are important, but that the negative should have the ability to engage in the link level of that debate. If the neg can win what the replacement energy would be, they can direct the debate in that direction.

Most of the rest of Northwestern's arguments amount to "extra T is good because you get more ground." Those are tough to win in any circumstance. And those args are particularly hard to win given that Berkeley has done a lot more work the argument that it's not more ground. As explained above, debates

about replacement energy are inevitable, but if the aff doesn't get to specify, the neg has equal opportunity to control the debate. If the aff can specify, they can direct the debate in whichever direction they want. The only other ground argument is that the neg gets a built-in CP to exclude one part. This is also problematic. It forces the negative to read the CP, and it doesn't account for the interactions the aff can generate by combining a cap with a replacement.

Northwestern's final argument amounts to: "come on, our aff is really big." However, the aff at no point in the debate does any work on reasonability. A rigorous defense of "evaluate this debate, not what we justify" would certainly have been enough to sway my decision, but that doesn't happen at all.

Short version: the aff has no offense. The version of the topic they allow creates an unmanageable research burden for the negative. A more limited topic still enables a number of perfectly good cases with reasonable ground on both sides.

Charles

Kip Brar, Final Round Ballot

I'd like to start by thanking our host, the Gonzaga Debate team for a fine NDT. Frapp and Slusher did an excellent job making sure everything ran smoothly, while also finding time to hang out and make everyone feel relaxed. Sarah Holbrooke was amazing as hospitality host and deserves endless thanks. Congratulations to all the teams who qualified for the big dance and to all the teams clearing. I'd like to give a quick shot out to Texas and Dartmouth for clearing 3 teams. I'd also like to give a quick shot out to Alex More and Sara Apel, both former partners of mine, for having an incredible season and even better NDT. Alex you earned it with all the work you did over your 4 years, and Sara your talents could have accomplished nothing less. Lastly, I'd like to congratulate the final round participants from Northwestern and Berkeley, and thank them for letting me be part of a great debate.

Now the debate –

As everyone who watched could clearly tell this debate was extremely close. Each team was really in depth and exceptional on their own arguments, while being sparse on each other's arguments; thus, making the debate very hard to resolve. Nevertheless, below are my attempts at resolving the two issues in the debate – the States Counter-plan and Extra-Topicality.

The Counter-plan:

I decided there was a solvency deficit to the counter-plan. Although the negative's Energy Compass, McKinstry, and New York Times evidence was good on the question of states serving as "laboratories" for federal policy, they were not good enough to overcome the barriers to implementation at the federal

level as per the affirmative's Sheer evidence. The Sheer evidence was pretty good on the importance of a "total commitment" to a solar economy/society. Not only does the Sheer evidence indicate that federal action is necessary for a universal framework for implementation, it was also really good describing the multitude of barriers to a solar society and how ANY gap would be used to justify the status quo fossil fuel economy. I bought the affirmative's argument that the counterplan cannot "access the universal" with exceptions like federal territories. Although a lame argument in the end, I don't have a very good answer to it besides the extension of the "federal government models the states" evidence mentioned above. Additionally, the Sheer evidence was pretty decent on impacting a solvency deficit by indicating only a "complete substitution" with a solar economy can we "free our minds" and give "courage" to ending our dependence on fossil fuels. The 2NR's argument that the aff excludes governmental consumption of fossil fuels also applies to the counterplan text, and was a new 2NR argument to a 2AC argument. The difference for me was territories.

Though the affirmative won a solvency deficit to the counterplan, the 2AR was pretty shallow in comparing the deficit to the net benefit of state centralization. I believe the negative won their Sale evidence that state centralization causes wars, fascism, and ultimately genocide. However, the affirmative's Krouzman evidence served as an internal link turn to these argument, while also providing another reason to start at the federal level. The Krouzman evidence indicated that without addressing the fascism at the national level it would ultimately direct all our policy leading to a myriad of impacts (genocide, nuclear war, etc), while also monopolizing all decentralized/state/local power. Thus, by the affirmative starting at the federal level it would help dislodge centralized control and allow for a solar society, while also avoiding the disads to centralized states by "reigning" in the federal government to public control.

Lastly, the 2AR won their extension of their framework for analyzing impacts. The affirmative was able to posit that the advocacy/imagination of a solar society should be prioritized over other impacts in a sort of "ethic of imagination" framework. The negative did not provide a lens towards evaluating their impacts within this framework, and in the 2NR did not extend any of their framework arguments like utilitarianism or realism. This made it difficult to weigh their net benefit against the affirmative, while also allowing the affirmative to capture/access all of their Sheer and Krouzman evidence.

Extra-Topicality:

The affirmative Waxman evidence indicates "energy policy" includes plans for "generating, using, and conserving energy" while also consisting of all issues of "how we get [energy] and how we use it." The debate over this evidence mostly focused on qualifications, which I felt the affirmative was ahead that congressional definitions are better b/c they come from those making policy. While I do agree with the negative that this evidence is not written with intent of making energy policy, I do not find the negative's one-line Miller definitions much better in terms of context. The negative's interpretation that "energy policy" consists of regulations was put into context with their definition of "requiring" as "to command." Functionally, the negative interpretation limited the topic to legislative regulations that reduce fossil fuel

use. However, the problem for me was the lack of a negative interpretation/definition of “reduce.” Much of the debate over the form of regulation was less important to me when the affirmative defines “reduce” with “replacement.” Thus, the affirmative’s interpretation boils down to a regulation that reduces fossil fuel use by replacing it with an alternate form of energy, allowing for a debate about generating, using, conserving, and obtaining energy. Now the affirmative’s Canada Newswire evidence that defined reduce with replacement wasn’t great, it was the only evidence in the debate. Also, it wasn’t as bad as the 2NR would lead the judges to believe. The evidence did indicate that when their needs to be a similar end output (in this case energy) there must be a replacement or substitution rather than a mere cut. It was in the context of a computer industry, but again, I bought the affirmative’s standard that “absent a competing interpretation” I should “prefer any definition to no definition.” Thus, the affirmative’s interpretation of reduce largely renders the xtra-topicality debate moot.

The negative’s rebut to this argument is that regulations could include caps, taxes, and permits. However, there wasn’t evidence to put this argument into context, but also it did not address the key tenet of the aff’s Waxman evidence that we must discuss how and where we get our energy in energy policy. Furthermore, the most persuasive affirmative argument was that it renders the topic procedural in nature, rather than proactive, which I felt the negative did not have an answer to “proactive topics are essential for affirmative critical ground.” Indeed, I felt the negative was probably better at framing the debate in terms of fair/predictable negative ground, but no-where in the debate addressed affirmative ground.



Overall, I do buy the negative argument that the affirmative’s interpretation allows them to fiat their way to an alternative energy form instead of debating the link level, I am also persuaded by the affirmative argument that by placing it in their plan text creates predictable, stable, and textual ground for the negative in a debate that is inevitable. This insulates the negative from the aff argument “no we don’t lead to X energy – we lead to Y energy,” providing predictability, but also gives the negative stable, textual counter-plan ground. I understood this argument to mean both types of counter-plans: A) increase solar, but don’t decrease current fossil fuel use and B) decrease fossil fuel use, but with X energy instead of solar. Both of these counter-plans have textual competition, while under the negatives interpretation the affirmative would be able to skirt the link.

Lastly, though brief, I do not have a negative answer to the affirmative’s discussion of “type of ground.” Under the affirmative’s framework argument – ethic of imagination – the type of ground the negative loses would largely be irrelevant anyway. Also, the negative’s mention of in round abuse on the topicality debate is really a result of the framework debate and not the extra topicality debate.

Conclusively, I felt the negative probably did a better job proving the affirmative’s interpretation is bad, but lacked a counter-interpretation to a significant part of the resolution. Moreover, though I think the

negative may be ahead on discussing the “negative ground lost” the affirmative at least had substantial defense to this part of the debate, while I felt the negative had no answer to the affirmative’s argument that the aff’s interpretation is key to aff ground. Though this part of the debate was extremely hard to weigh out, a sort of clincher for me was the aff’s discussion of type of ground (as mentioned above).

Great debate.....I vote affirmative.

Kip Brar