

RESTORING INHERENCY

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On the semi-national circuit that I debate, it seems inherency is dead. This, I believe, is attributable to at least two factors.

First, a good inherency strategy takes substantially more library time than the seemingly standard, Topicality screen, Disadvantage strategy. This is because in order to run an inherency strategy well, one must do case-specific research on every conceivable affirmative case under any given topic. This stops many debaters for actively trying to achieve a working strategy. Also, in order to overcome the case inherency card(s), a negative must have multiple cards, further increasing their research burden.

Second, the increased use of the policy paradigm seems to be contributing to the demise of inherency. Since inherency is a "defensive argument," that is, it can only mitigate case, not win alone; under a policy paradigm, it needs a net-benefit, and with disadvantages, mostly when nonuniqued, when inherency is run this may, be difficult to procure.

However, the advantages of debating inherency are great. First, most affirmatives are completely unused to this issue, since it is nearing demise. Second, most paradigms, excluding policy maker, see it as an independent voter. Third, many huge inherency holes.

William Bennett in *Varsity Debate*, gives us one solution to the inherency problem, incremental inherency. This approach

allows the negative to run disadvantages with inherency¹. However, problems with this approach are not small. **First** some theorists say incrementalism must take on the full burdens of a counterplan. **Second**, even Bennett admits that incrementalism will inherently have a longer timeframe and smaller solvency than the affirmative case.

However, another avenue lays open to affirmatives wishing to run inherency, the minor repair. This attack can be run in three ways. **First**, the negative may claim that case is only a minor repair, and is therefore encroaching on negative ground. This attack, although very strong, applies to a very narrow range of case options.

Second, the negative may find evidence that the agent of action has an already existing program that could solve for at least part of affirmative harms. The advantages of this approach are also large. The first is that if the affirmative's solvency authors are already exploring this field, with this agent of action in mind, there is a great possibility that the status quo has some under-funded or under-manned, program that would solve the harms of the affirmative well if it were only expanded. The second advantage of this approach is that the negative can claim immediate and at least case equal solvency, arguably without destroying the ability to run disadvantages.

Third, the negative may offer a minor repair with an alternate actor. This is the first time that this idea is being proposed. So, allow me to offer a definition of this attack. The negative would advocate that a small change in the policy of a body, other than the one named in the resolution, would be superior to the affirmative plan. An example of this for last year's resolution would be advocating that the companies that already have R & D programs in the affirmative's chosen plan area would increase funding to these areas.

This new idea deserves theory discussion. The key premise that the negative must defend in order to make this attack work is that it is the negative's duty to advocate the status quo, anywhere, e.g. the status quo of NGO in the renewable energy field. This is a simple premise to defend, since it is usually accepted by both teams (unless the negative runs a counterplan.)

The theory problems posed by this approach to inherency is that it may seem that it is just running a counterplan without accepting the full burdens of one. However, this attack is destroyed when counterplan theory is examined.

When a negative team runs a counterplan, they are advocating change, and therefore must take on all of the normal counterplan burdens (competitiveness, nontopicality, and net benefit). On the other hand, the alternate agent minor repair is advocating the status quo and therefore does not take on the same burdens, although with a policy judge, the negative must still prove a net benefit.

A third possible criticism of the alternate agency minor repair is that it would unfairly reduce affirmative ground, by forcing them to research every small country's small policies. This attack falls, however when one realizes that all countries or international bodies that have small policies toward the resolution will have agent counterplans written about them, and therefore the research burden on the affirmative will not unfairly increase. Also, the affirmative will only have to research minor repairs applicable to their case, and if they are a truly competitive team they will have all of that material ready anyway. Thirdly, the negative is by definition using a smaller agent of action than the affirmative is, so there should be no complaints.

The advantages of this kind of minor repair are significant. First they avoid disadvantage links to your policy position. Secondly, they allow for real policy discussion, without the FIAT problems inherent in running counterplan. Since the negative is using a smaller actor, and only making small changes, they will be able to claim FIAT rather readily. Also, minor repairs usually do not need to claim FIAT, it is assumed that since their advocacy is so small, that no one will oppose their plan.

Inherency should not be a thing of the past, and if we institute these actions, we can make it a more formidable issue than ever.

¹Michael Pfau, *Director of Forensics, Augustana (SD), JAF, Fall 1982.*