### 2AC AT: Neolib K

#### Framework—the role of the ballot should be to weigh the costs and benefits of a topical plan against a competitive alternative. This interpretation of debate is best—key middle ground, they get their alternative but can’t moot 8 minutes of 1ac speech time. Any other interpretation is unfair because it sets the affirmative one speech behind—their framework could shift the focus of the debate to a critique of any word, phrase, sentence of the 1ac, or even a top chef competition

#### Reject their K prior claims – without comparing to available options, their alternative can’t distinguish between Bush and Carter.

**Sikkink 8**

Kathryn, Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. “The Role of Consequences, Comparison, and Counterfactuals in Constructivist

Ethical Thought” 2008 http://www.polisci.umn.edu/centers/theory/pdf/sikkink.pdf

Ethical arguments of these different types are ubiquitous and necessary. But because they are also slippery and open to manipulation and misuse, we also need to be very careful and precise about how we go about using them. I would recommend that first we distinguish very carefully between the comparison to ideals and historical empirical comparison. I believe that many critical constructivist accounts rely on the comparison to the ideal or to the conditions of possibility counterfactual argument. In almost every critical constructivist work there is an implicit ideal ethical argument. This argument is implicit because it is rarely clearly stated, but it is found in the nature of the 36 critique. So, for example, in her discussion of U.S. human rights policy, Roxanne Doty critiques a human rights policy carried out by actors who sometimes use it for their own self aggrandizement and to denigrate others. 42 The implicit ideal this presents is a human rights policy that is not used for denigration or surveillance or othering those it criticizes or conversely, of elevating those who advocate it. What would be examples of such a policy? The book does not provide examples. We do not know if examples exist in the world. So the implicit comparison is a comparison to an ideal – a never fully stated ideal, but one present in the critique of what is wrong with the policies discussed. Nicolas Guilhot makes a similar argument in his recent book. The promotion of democracy and human rights, he argues, are increasingly used in order to extend the power they were meant to limit. “The promotion of democracy and human rights defines new forms of administration on a global scale and generates a new political science.” He historically examines how progressive movements for democracy and human rights have become hegemonic because they “systematically managed to integrate emancipatory and progressive forces in the construction of imperial policies.” But once again, **the book offers no alternative political scenario.** In the final sentence of the book, the author clarifies that “this book has no other ambition than to contribute to the democratic critique of democracy.” 43 In the introduction, he clarifies, “This book does not provide answers to these dilemmas. At most, its only ambition is to highlight them, in the hope that a proper understanding constitutes a first step toward the invention of new courses of action.”44 Ethically, I believe this is a cop-out. Politically and intellectually, I find it too comfortable and too easy. This critique has a crucial role to play in pointing to hypocrisy (as Price highlights in the introduction). It could also serve as a catalyst for policy change in the direction of policy that would include less surveillance or less cooptation of human rights discourse. **But it is unlikely to serve as a catalyst for new action or policy change unless it ventures something more than pure critique, unless it risks a political or ethical proposal**. Without that, it has the impact of delegitimizing any human rights policy without suggesting any alternative. Any policy to promote human rights of democracy policy is shown to be deeply flawed or even pernicious. It is portrayed as part of the problem, certainly not as offering any kind of solution. Human rights policy appears to make the situation worse, not better. The critique has the effect of telling us clearly what we do not want, what we can not support—human rights policies by imperfect and hypocritical actors like the U.S. In its historical comparisons, it also lumps human rights policy together with colonialism and does not provide any elements to distinguish between one policy of surveillance and other. All are equally flawed. The ethical effect is to remove normative support from existing policies without producing any alternatives. This is similar to what Price means when he says that “critical accounts which do not in fact offer constructive normative theorizing to follow critique ironically lend themselves to being complicit with the conservative agenda opposing erstwhile progressive change in world politics.” Neither Doty nor Guilhot, for example, contrast two human rights policies to give examples of policies that are more of less hypocritical or where there has been more or 44 Guilhot, p. 14. 38 less surveillance. **They don’t contrast human rights policies or democracy promotion policies to previous policies that were also hypocritical and self aggrandizing, but more pernicious** – e.g. national security ideology and support for authoritarian regimes in the third world. By presenting no contrasts, **the critique would appear to say that there is no ethical or political difference between a policy that supports coups and funds repressive military regimes and a policy that critiques coups and cuts military aid to repressive regimes.** These policies would appear to be ethically indistinguishable. Indeed, by these standards, a realist policy (a la Kissinger) might be preferable. Kissinger didn’t denigrate his authoritarianism allies. He took regimes as they were. He treated them as valuable allies. He didn’t lecture them on how they should change. He also, in doing so, encouraged, in some cases, coups and mass murder. **But at least he didn’t “Other”.** Doty and Guilhot give me no ethical criteria to distinguish between the policies of the Kissinger administration, the Carter administration, and current Bush administration policy. Because the comparison is an implicit ideal, never an empirical real world example, the critique is very telling and can delegitimize the critiqued policy. But nothing is put in its place. So, **it demobilizes any support we might have for any human rights policy**. **It puts the analyst in an ethically comfortable position, but by not proposing any explicit comparison, it demobilizes the reader**. We learn what to oppose, to critique, but we don’t learn explicitly what to support in its stead. **The result can be political paralysis.** One finds it difficult to act.

#### Perm do the plan and “endorse solidarity against neoliberalism”

#### Perm solves best: Latin American leftists should cooperate with non-leftists for long term economic sustainability.

Steve **ELLNER** Int’l and Public Affairs @ Columbia **‘4** “Leftist Goals and the Debate over Anti-Neoliberal Strategy in Latin America” *Science & Society* 68 (1) p. 29-30

Petras' celebration of grass-roots struggles and his criticisms of globalization concepts place him at the opposite extreme from the defensive strategies of Castañeda and Harnecker. Petras takes issue with the tendency of the globalization paradigm to view national actors as locked into internationally imposed relations and to posit limited op- tions (Ellner, 2002, 78). Far from characterizing relations between developed nations as harmonious, as globalization writers do, Petras stresses inter-imperialist rivalry, which he claims has intensified since September 11, 2001. In addition to objective factors, Petras takes issue with globalization writers who downplay social struggle and dissolve the issue of class altogether (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001, 78). In arguing that subjective conditions are ripe to produce radical change in Latin America, Petras is at odds with another tendency of globalization writers: to write off subjective factors as irrelevant in light of the inevitability of the emerging structures brought on by globalization. Petras' anti-determinist view is carried to an extreme by other writers who are opposed to Castañeda's and Harnecker's defensive strategies. Venezuelan leftist activist Toby Valderrama, for instance, questions Harnecker's argument that the left needs to put off far- reaching change due to the lack of international support by saying: "No revolution - and this is a law - has ever been initiated under favorable conditions for the revolutionaries; on the contrary, they always act [in these circumstances] in the face of desperate condi- tions." Valderrama points out that Fidel Castro's attempted seizure of power on July 26, 1953 occurred against all odds, but that the revolution's triumph (as Che Guevara pointed out) refuted the no- tion held by orthodox Communists of the impossibility of a revolu- tion just 90 miles from U. S. shores (Valderrama, 2002). Indeed, Valderrama's vanguardist argument could also be applied to the quixotic coup staged by Hugo Chavez on February 4, 1992. In short, Petras and others who raise the possibility of far-reaching change in the current stage emphasize the importance of subjective factors per se, and are optimistic in their assessment of those condi- tions. At the other extreme, Castañeda belittles the effectivenes social movements (as he did at the time of the Zapatista uprsing in 1994) and instead favors negotiations from above, an approach that militant, autonomous social movements could undermine. Harnecker occupies a middle space on the optimist-pessimist spectrum. On the one hand, she considers that conditions are not ripe for adopting an anti-imperialist strategy. On the other hand, she considers the left sufficiently strong to be able to play a dominant role in anti-neoliberal alliances with groups to its right. The recent events discussed in this article are helpful in assess- ing the viability of the three strategies. Thus, the left's political fiasco in Argentina under de la Rua, and the failure of the governments of Fox, Caldera and (to a lesser extent) Lagos to follow an anti-neoliberal course, place in doubt the effectiveness of Castañeda's approach. In the second place, Bush's foreign policy puts the lie to the claim that the United States has turned its back on its imperialistic past in favor of the defense of a grandiose "global" order. These developments may indicate that the proclamation of the end of anti-imperialist revolu- tions by Sandinista leaders, which influenced Harnecker in the for- mulation of her anti-neoliberal strategy, may have been premature, to say the least. Finally, the Chavez and Lula phenomena point to the advantages and even necessity of alliances with organizations representing non- leftists, at least at an initial stage, contrary to Petras' approach. In the case of Venezuela, the non-leftists who supported Chavez (MAS and the followers of Luis Miquilena) unceremoniously left the government coalition prior to the April 2002 coup. However, Chavez's rise to power might not have occurred in the first place - nor might the Chavista constitution of 1999 have been promulgated - had it not been for the support and participation of these non-leftists at the time. Simi- larly, Lula's electoral agreement with the Liberal Party, which led to his embrace of free-market reforms, may not be a "sell-out," as Petras claims. An alliance between Lula and President Néstor Kirchner of Argentina (joined by Alan Garcia of Peru at a future date) may pro- vide an arena for the formulation of anti-neoliberal positions that would ease pressure on Venezuela's Chavez. These stands may include collective negotiation of the foreign debt and South American tariff agreements prior to the establishment of the FTAA. Thus Petras' rejection of the organizational support of non-leftists - like Trotsky's position before him - deprives the left of allies, which, while not reli- able for achieving long-term goals, are useful in the struggle against neoliberalism.

#### Case outweighs—removing the Cuban embargo isn’t the perfect solution, but it still resolves anti-Americanism which allows Latin American relations to address problems like prolif and warming, the impact is extinction—that’s Zedillo, Tickell, and Horowitz

#### You should reject their impact framing. The terminology of “neoliberalism” encourages fake radicalism, oversimplification, and greater levels of cooptation.

Clive **BARNETT** Faculty of the Social Sciences @ Open University (UK) **‘5** “The Consolations of ‘Neoliberalism’” *Geoforum* 36 (1) p. Science Dirct

3. There is no such thing as neoliberalism! The blind-spot in theories of neoliberalism—whether neo-Marxist and Foucauldian—comes with trying to account for how top-down initiatives ‘take’ in everyday situations. So perhaps **the best thing to do is to stop thinking of “neoliberalism” as a coherent “hegemonic” project altogether**. For all its apparent critical force, the vocabulary of “neoliberalism” and “neoliberalization” in fact provides a double consolation for leftist academics: it supplies us with plentiful opportunities for unveiling the real workings of hegemonic ideologies in a characteristic gesture of revelation; and in so doing, it invites us to align our own professional roles with the activities of various actors “out there”, who are **always framed as engaging in resistance** or contestation. The conceptualization of “neoliberalism” as a “hegemonic” project does not need refining by adding a splash of Foucault. Perhaps we should try to do without the concept of “neoliberalism” altogether, because it might actually compound rather than aid in the task of figuring out how the world works and how it changes. One reason for this is that, between an overly economistic derivation of political economy and an overly statist rendition of governmentality, stories about “neoliberalism” manage to reduce the understanding of social relations to a residual effect of hegemonic projects and/or governmental programmes of rule (see Clarke, 2004a). Stories about “neoliberalism” pay little attention to the pro-active role of socio-cultural processes in provoking changes in modes of governance, policy, and regulation. Consider the example of the restructuring of public services such as health care, education, and criminal justice in the UK over the last two or three decades. This can easily be thought of in terms of a “hegemonic” project of “neoliberalization”, and certainly one dimension of this process has been a form of anti-statism that has rhetorically contrasted market provision against the rigidities of the state. But in fact these ongoing changes in the terms of public-policy debate involve a combination of different factors that add up to a much more dispersed populist reorientation in policy, politics, and culture. These factors include changing consumer expectations, involving shifts in expectations towards public entitlements which follow from the generalization of consumerism; the decline of deference, involving shifts in conventions and hierarchies of taste, trust, access, and expertise; and the refusals of the subordinated, referring to the emergence of anti-paternalist attitudes found in, for example, women’s health movements or anti-psychiatry movements. They include also the development of the politics of difference, involving the emergence of discourses of institutional discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, and disability. This has disrupted the ways in which welfare agencies think about inequality, helping to generate the emergence of contested inequalities, in which policies aimed at addressing inequalities of class and income develop an ever more expansive dynamic of expectation that public services should address other kinds of inequality as well (see Clarke, 2004b J. Clark, Dissolving the public realm? The logics and limits of neo-liberalism, Journal of Social Policy 33 (2004), pp. 27–48.Clarke, 2004b). None of these populist tendencies is simply an expression of a singular “hegemonic” project of “neoliberalization”. They are effects of much longer rhythms of socio-cultural change that emanate from the bottom-up. It seems just as plausible to suppose that what we have come to recognise as “hegemonic neoliberalism” is a muddled set of ad hoc, opportunistic accommodations to these unstable dynamics of social change as it is to think of it as the outcome of highly coherent political-ideological projects. Processes of **privatization, market liberalization**, and de-regulation have often followed an **ironic pattern** in so far as they have **been triggered by citizens’ movements arguing from the left of the political spectrum against the rigidities of statist forms of social policy** and welfare provision in the name of greater autonomy, equality, and participation (e.g. Horwitz, 1989). The political re-alignments of the last three or four decades cannot therefore be adequately understood in terms of a straightforward shift from the left to the right, from values of collectivism to values of individualism, or as a re-imposition of class power. The emergence and generalization of this populist ethos has much longer, deeper, and wider roots than those ascribed to “hegemonic neoliberalism”. And it also points towards the extent to which easily the most widely resonant political rationality in the world today is not right-wing market liberalism at all, but is, rather, the polyvalent discourse of “democracy” (see Barnett and Low, 2004). Recent theories of “neoliberalism” have retreated from the appreciation of the long-term rhythms of socio-cultural change, which Stuart Hall once developed in his influential account of Thatcherism as a variant of authoritarian populism. Instead, they favour elite-focused analyses of state bureaucracies, policy networks, and the like. One consequence of the residualization of the social is that theories of “neoliberalism” have great difficulty accounting for, or indeed even in recognizing, new forms of “individualized collective-action” (Marchetti, 2003) that have emerged in tandem with the apparent ascendancy of “neoliberal hegemony”: **environmental politics and the politics of sustainability**; new forms of consumer activism oriented by an ethics of assistance and global solidarity; the identity politics of sexuality related to demands for changes in modes of health care provision, and so on (see Norris, 2002). All of these might be thought of as variants of what we might want to call bottom-up governmentality. This refers to the notion that non-state and non-corporate actors are also engaged in trying to govern various fields of activity, both by acting on the conduct and contexts of ordinary everyday life, but also by acting on the conduct of state and corporate actors as well. Rose (1999, pp. 281–284) hints at the outlines of such an analysis, at the very end of his paradigmatic account of governmentality, but investigation of this phenomenon is poorly developed at present. Instead, the trouble-free amalgamation of Foucault’s ideas into the Marxist narrative of “neoliberalism” sets up a simplistic image of the world divided between the forces of hegemony and the spirits of subversion (see Sedgwick, 2003, pp. 11–12). And **clinging to this image only makes it all the more difficult to acknowledge the possibility of positive political action** that does not conform to a **romanticized picture of rebellion**, contestation, or protest against domination (see Touraine, 2001). Theories of “neoliberalism” are unable to recognize the emergence of new and innovative forms of individualized collective action because their critical imagination turns on a simple evaluative opposition between individualism and collectivism, the private and the public. The radical academic discourse of “neoliberalism” frames the relationship between collective action and individualism simplistically as an opposition between the good and the bad. In confirming a narrow account of liberalism, understood primarily as an economic doctrine of free markets and individual choice, there is a peculiar convergence between the radical academic left and the right-wing interpretation of liberal thought exemplified by Hayekian conservatism. By obliterating the political origins of modern liberalism—understood as answering the problem of how to live freely in societies divided by interminable conflicts of value, interest, and faith—the discourse of “neoliberalism” reiterates a longer problem for radical academic theory of being unable to account for its own normative priorities in a compelling way. And by denigrating the value of individualism as just an ideological ploy by the right, the pejorative vocabulary of “neoliberalism” invites us to take solace in an image of collective decision-making as a practically and normatively unproblematic procedure. The recurrent problem for theories of “neoliberalism” and “neoliberalization” is their two-dimensional view of both political power and of geographical space. They can only account for the relationship between top-down initiatives and bottom-up developments by recourse to the language of centres, peripheries, diffusion, and contingent realizations; and by displacing the conceptualization of social relations with a flurry of implied subject-effects. The turn to an overly systematized theory of governmentality, derived from Foucault, only compounds the theoretical limitations of economistic conceptualizations of “neoliberalism”. The task for social theory today remains a quite classical one, namely to try to specify “the recurrent causal processes that govern the intersections between abstract, centrally promoted plans and social life on the small scale” (Tilly, 2003, p. 345). Neither neoliberalism-as-hegemony nor neoliberalism-as-governmentality is really able to help in this task, not least because both invest in a deeply embedded picture of subject-formation as a process of “getting-at” ordinary people in order to make them believe in things against their best interests. With respect to the problem of accounting for how “hegemonic” projects of “neoliberalism” win wider consensual legitimacy, Foucault’s ideas on governmentality seem to promise an account of how people come to acquire what Ivison (1997) calls the “freedom to be formed and normed”. Over time, Foucault’s own work moved steadily away from an emphasis on the forming-and-norming end of this formulation towards an emphasis on the freedom end. This shift was itself a reflection of the realization that the circularities of poststructuralist theories of subjectivity can only be broken by developing an account of the active receptivity of people to being directed. But, in the last instance, neither the story of neoliberalism-as-hegemony or of neoliberalism-as-governmentality can account for the forms of receptivity, pro-activity, and generativity that might help to explain how the rhythms of the everyday are able to produce effects on macro-scale processes, and vice versa. So, rather than finding convenient synergies between what are already closely related theoretical traditions, perhaps it is better to keep open those tiresome debates about the degree of coherence between them, at the same time as trying to broaden the horizons of our theoretical curiosity a little more widely.

#### Revolutionary politics generates atrocities. History of 20th century revolutions proves we should choose liberal reformism.

Fred **HALLIDAY** IR @ London School of Economics **‘3** “Finding the Revolutionary in Revolution” in *The Future of Revolutions* ed. John Foran p 306-309

A second issue central to discussion of revolution today is that of the historic legacy of revolutions. Writers on revolution like to invoke Marx's observation about the weight of past generations lying on the minds of the present; it has been often stated that all revolutions invoke symbols and claims derived from the past, real or imagined. The revolutionaries of the twentieth century all looked, in some degree, backwards: Lenin and Trotsky to 1789, Mao and Ho to I9I7, Castro to the 1890s, Khomeini to the seventh century. The present discussion of revolution seems, at first sight, not to do this. Political sociologists do look at earlier revolutions, but this is without practical import. Discussion of the possibility of change, particularly that linked to the anti-globalization movement, seems to be curiously ahistorical. The price of this is, however, that not only is inspiration from the past muted but, equally, lessons are not learnt. Here something curious seems to have happened since the collapse of communism: the amnesia of neoliberal discussion, which consigns all that was associated with the communist experiment to the dustbin, seems to be replicated in the case of the radical movements of today. But to do this is questionable. In this latter respect, there are dangers, of an amnesia that is **long on enthusiasm but short on responsibility and realism**. For the fact is that the history of revolution in modern times is one not only of resistance, heroism and idealism, but also of terrible suffering and human disaster, of chaos and incompetence under the guise of revolutionary transformation, of the distortion of the finest ideals by corrupt and murderous leaders, and of the creation of societies that are far more oppressive and inefficient than those they seek to overthrow. The anti-globalization movement makes much of revolutionary internationalism: tills is not some benign panacea, but a complex, often abused, transnational practice (Halliday I999). All of this entails confronting something that revolutionaries have always assumed but too often failed to discuss: the **ethics** of revolution. **Denunciation of the given and invocations of an ideal other are not enough** (Geras 1989). To grasp this involves a shift beyond the political sociology of revolutions, an academic pursuit that focuses in large measure on the incidence of revolutions, to an analysis of the **consequences** and **longerterm records of revolutionary states**. In the course of recent years, in writing my own work on revolutions, I have had reason to visit a number of cities that had served as the centers of world revolution and, if not revolution, anti-imperialist radicalism: Beijing, Havana, Tripoli, Tehran. These were the culminations of upheavals that had produced revolutionary regimes by some strange numerical consistency in, respectively, I949, I959, I969, I979· In every case, one could still discern the outlines of the original revolutionary project: a rejection of exploitation, foreign and domestic, a comnlitment to the transformation of society, internationalist support in rhetoric and deed for those resisting oppression elsewhere. But in the 1990S this had all **faded**: these were not the wave of the future. Whatever else, it could not be said that the initial revolutionary project was in good shape: few in these countries now believed in the ideological project that had initiated the revolution; corruption and inefficiency were widespread; there was a **pervasive desire for** change, towards a more open, **liberal, society**; the initial internationalist appeals had faded. Revolution had, in effect, become tired. It was indeed capitalism, not revolutionary socialism and third-worldism, which in the 1990S formed the global vision of the future. This haphazard and impressionistic response has, however, to be compounded by a reflection on the overall legacy of the century of revolutions: neither form of amnesia - counterrevolutionary or revolutionary - is acceptable. Indeed, amnesia invites the repetition of another common saying with regard to revolutions, that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. Here perhaps is one of the most worrying aspects of the contemporary radical movement, be it in its national or internationalist forms: the failure to reflect, critically, on the past record of revolutionary movements. This pertains to models of alternative political and social orders. It pertains to the dangers inherent in any utopian, radicalized, mass movement that **lacks clear forms of authority and decision-making**. It also involves the espousal, spirited but onlinous, of alternative social orders that could work only if imposed by an **authoritarian state.** A pertinent contemporary example is that of radical environmentalism: the program of de-industrialization, and restricted consumption and travel, entailed by such ideas could only be established, and maintained, by a coercive state. In the international sphere, the simple invocation of solidarity may too often conceal interests of power, and manipulation. In the days of authoritarian Communist Parties, but equally in that of national and communal movements today, unconditional solidarity with repressive organizations may be at odds with any commitment to emancipatory values. Such a critical reflection has to apply, too, to the individuals often invoked for contemporary purposes: Lenin was a visionary, but also a cruel, pompous bigot; Che was a man of heroism and solidarity, but his econonlic programs were a disaster and his austere romanticism at times led to cruelty; Mao freed a quarter of mankind from imperialism, but also repeatedly plunged his society into barbarous conflict and socialexperimentation; Khomeini overthrew the Shah, but his social and political program was reactionary and repressive. A similar pause in romanticization might be applicable to some of the supposed components of the anti-globalization front today: few might defend Saddam Hussein, Kim Jong-il or Ayatollah Khamenei, but there is perhaps too little questioning of the commitment to emancipatory values of the PKK in Turkey, Sendero Luminoso, the FARC in Colombia, the Chechen rebels, to name but some. The Zapatista movement has become for many an icon of hope: but, as contributors to this volume make clear, it is not always itself a model of democratic practice. More importantly, one has to ask if this is the most important experience in the Latin America of the I990S to study: it is part of, but only one part of, a broader crisis of the authoritarian PRI regime that beset Mexico and resulted in the rise on the one hand of the PRD and on the other of the election of Fox in 2000. An open assessment of challenges to authoritarian, and neoliberal, policies in Latin America in the I990S would also examine **democratization in Brazil and Chile**, and the experience of social movements, be they of women, workers or indigenous peoples, who engaged with **reformist states**. This need for a critical retrospective on the historical legacy of revolutions is, however, linked to another, perhaps even more pressing, issue, one that pervades the pages of this book, namely the relation of revolution to liberal democracy as a whole. Several contributors point out that where liberal democracy is established revolution is off the agenda. But this reflection may be taken further to ask the question of whether, faced with the alternative, one or other outcome is preferable. The implication of much 'revolutionary' writing over the past century has been that liberal democracy is to be denounced, and those who engage with and in it are reformists, dupes, or, in older language, 'class traitors'. Such a view lives on, in some of the contributions to this book, as in parts of the left. Yet this contrast of reform with revolution is not some eternal polarity. It too needs to be set in historical context, and seen for what it is, a product of the particular context of the twentieth century, starting with the split between the moderate and revolutionary factions of the socialist movement in I9I4. The costs of this division are evident enough, and it would be desirable, in the aftermath of the collapse of the revolutionary socialist models, to re-examine it (Therborn I989). Part of this re-examination would involve a questioning of the automatic antinomy of reform and revolution present in much contemporary and recent writing, and of the assumed contradictory relation of revolutionary ideas to those of another critical, and internationalist, trend produced by modernity: liberalism. This has immediate implications for the discussion in this book. In particular, it relates to an issue that is widely present in contemporary academic and political discussion, but that writers on revolution tend to avoid, namely the question of rights. The language of rights was long denounced by the left, and its revolutionary part, as a bourgeois myth, except where it was for tactical reasons deemed pertinent to use it, as with regard to workers' rights, or the right of nations to selfdetermination. The record of the revolutionary tradition, once it came to power, is a very mixed one: a strong commitment to certain social and economic rights, whose abolition by neoliberal policies many in the former Communist states regret; and a sustained, cruel and dogmatic denial of political rights, collective and individual. Yet the program of rights embodied in national, regional and international codes is, as much as any flamboyant radicalism, both a critique and a program that confronts the contemporary world. Faced with the record of the Communist tradition on rights on the one hand, and the aspirations of liberalism on the other, this disdain for rights, and the related adherence to a denunciation of reformism and liberalism, should be questioned. Invocations of a romanticized I968, of the nicer cases of armed struggle, or of Seattle may be fine for mobilization: they are not a serious answer to the problems of the contemporary world.

#### Pragmatic solutions are key, the alt can’t solve—policymakers should privilege prudence above other values. Weighing of concrete policy possibilities is a prerequisite for any ethical assessment.

Stefano **RECCHIA** IR Grad Student @ Columbia **‘7** “Restraining Imperial Hubris: The Ethical Bases of Realist International Relations Theory” *Constellations* 14 (4)

The content of this ethics of lesser evil – or ethics of responsibility – becomes further clarified in the emphasis put by several realist scholars on the concept of prudence as a guideline for responsible statecraft. Morgenthau called prudence "the supreme virtue in politics."47 In a first approximation, prudence can be seen as stressing the consequentialist aspect of realist IR theory; prudence first of all implies a careful weighting of the consequences of alternative political actions. However, it would be wrong to reduce the concept of realist prudence to a mere consideration of "what is possible" in international relations, implying a dispassionate strategic calculus aimed at selecting the most appropriate means to achieve some given end. Rather, it appears that in most traditional realist scholarship, "means are matched to ends within a context in which the choice of means and ends alike is constrained by ethical principles."48 This suggests that the entire notion of political ethics underpinning American realism is quite heavily influenced, not by Machiavellian raison d'état, but by the older Thomistic notion of prudent statecraft, which itself has deep roots in the Aristotelian conception of practical wisdom. It was Reinhold Niebuhr, the Protestant theologian and an important realist figure in his own right, who combined Augustine's utter pessimism about human nature with the Thomistic notion of prudent self-restraint. Niebuhr thus established a coherent and deeply moral political theory that seems to have had great appeal for secular scholars such as Morgenthau and Wolfers. Niebuhr crucially believed that individuals and nations alike are largely driven by egoism and pride, which he saw as resulting in an inherent "will-to-power" and domination. Yet he also laid the foundations for the ethical outlook that was to characterize subsequent generations of realist scholars, emphasizing that "even the collective behavior of men stands under some inner moral checks;" and in the mid-twentieth century more than ever "the peace of the world require[d] that these checks be strengthened."49 In many regards, Morgenthau did little more than reformulate Niebuhr's Christian universalism and his ethics of lesser evil for a secular audience of foreign-policy experts. The realists' absorption of the Aristotelian/Thomistic view of practical wisdom can be seen as one of the main reasons why they did not accept that international relations can be a fully rule-governed activity. If international relations were fully moralized and specific rules governed each individual foreign-policy decision, this would presumably eliminate the need to engage in complex moral trade-offs when state survival is believed to be at stake. However, once again, political realists believed that this would be impossible and probably undesirable. The uncertain nature of international politics, with unexpected feedback-loops resulting from **complex patterns of strategic interaction**, necessarily requires sustained political and moral judgment by the actual **policy maker**. As Robert Tucker adequately put it, "whether prudence permits the observance of restraints, and if so what restraints, are dependent upon circumstance and cannot be answered in the abstract."50 Hence the central role of the morally responsible statesman in realist international relations theory; someone who is allowed substantial discretion in deciding what morality requires under particular circumstances and when conditions of "supreme necessity" apply.

Notwithstanding their pessimistic outlook on human affairs, most traditional American realists recognized that "survival" is not always immediately at stake in international relations. As Arnold Wolfers put it in his famous analogy: even in the darkest days of the Cold War international relations did not fully resemble a "house on fire," which would have left individual statesmen with no room for deliberation, simply compelling them to run towards the exit. Rather, the appropriate analogy was that of a house merely "overheated," thus leaving sufficient room for moral and political choice although the temperature was not always comfortable.51 The traditional American realists all seem to have agreed – either explicitly, or more implicitly in the context of their broader theory – that whenever national survival is not unequivocally at stake, responsible statecraft cannot be simply reduced to a matter of choosing the lesser evil among available policy options. In slightly different terms: whenever international systemic imperatives are not compelling, responsible foreign policy makers ought to choose the most effective policy actually compatible with the moral good, with the latter defined by universal standards. Morgenthau himself came to stress in some of his later writings that whenever survival is not at stake, morality should be seen as proscribing any deviation from the moral code altogether:Morality is not just another branch of human activity, co-ordinate to the substantive branches, such as politics or economics. Quite to the contrary, it is superimposed upon them, limiting the choice of ends and means and delineating the legitimate sphere of a particular branch of action altogether. This latter function is particularly vital in the political sphere."52Notwithstanding the almost Kantian overtones of this latter quote, it seems that for Morgenthau and his fellow American realists, the possibilities for moral behavior in international relations depend almost entirely on the qualities of the statesman; i.e. essentially his moral and political wisdom. Morgenthau is representative of much realist thinking, when he argues that politics is an art, not a science, and that what is required for its mastery is "the wisdom and the moral strength of the statesman."53 What the scholar can do is to illuminate the inherent tensions between the moral code and the empirical constraints that influence the determination of foreign policy, and this the traditional American realists attempted to do throughout their academic careers.