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**The future of the left: from Galtung's
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correct* ideology of post-modernity**

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The future of the left: from Galtung's modern constructivism to the *politically correct* ideology of post-modernity

Fabio Fossati*

Introduction

The objective of this essay is to analyze the evolution of the political culture of the moderate left in the last decades. The starting point is the focus on values and strategies affecting domestic and foreign policy of the left in the phase of “modernity”: that is, during the Cold War. Johan Galtung has been the intellectual leader of the “constructivist” wing of political sociology, emphasizing values like peace, non-violence, participatory democracy, welfare state... After 1989, the left has partially modified its political strategies. The West was living a transition process from modern to post-modern societies. The left has chosen multi-culturalism as its core value in the decision-making processes over migration flows and conflict management among different nations. The *politically correct* ideology has become the new leftist “anchor” to post-modernity, and has played the role of “prevailing” (but not dominating) political culture in the West. This essay will evaluate if the political strategies of constructivist and politically correct lefts are compatible, starting from the teachings of Johan Galtung.

Models are the analytic instrument to study political cultures. They represent the so-called Weber's “ideal types”, and they aim at analyzing reality according to the criteria of simplicity and coherence. Political cultures have been defined as those ideas that are (in different ways) linked to interests. One of them usually becomes the prevailing culture. Four diplomatic models had been identified, according to the four democratic political cultures: conservatism, liberalism, social-democracy, socialism (Fossati 2006). The communist and nazi-fascist ideologies, together with the “hybrids” in between those models (the green, the radical, the Christian democrat), will not be analyzed in this essay.

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Conservatism privileges interests (like the promotion of the security of the citizens), and then also promotes values, like moderate nationalism. Liberalism first aims at satisfying values (democracy, human rights, free market, national self-determination), and then also promotes interests: of business sector, of NGOs on human rights... The leftist political cultures are two: the moderate social-democrat and the radical socialist. The latter has always emphasized the Manichaeic values: anti-market, anti-West, anti-American, Third-Worldist, with binary cosmologies: good/evil, black/white... After the 2008 crisis, socialism was substituted by left-wing populism (Fossati 2017).

The division among traditional, modern and post-modern societies is typical of sociology. Traditional societies were based on rural work and patriarchy. Modernization has been favored by industrialization, urbanization, secularization, and democratization processes. Post-modernity started in 1968, and was based on criticism to rationality and to the values of Western civilization (Lyotard 1979).

1. Galtung's constructivism of the 'modern' left

The cornerstone of Galtung's thought (1977) was "constructivism". According to Galtung, human scientists had to behave like physicians and "cure" societies from their sicknesses: violence, conflicts, wars, under-development, authoritarianism. It was a challenge to modern social and political science, based on the totem of Weber's evaluativeness. Constructivism consisted in a collective effort of human scientists to build a better society, promoting social change thanks to values like non-violence, peace, economic development, welfare state, democracy, human rights, environment protection...

The second principle of Galtung's (1985) thought was "holism", that was emphasized in competition to the priority of contemporary sciences towards specialization, typical of American and British scholars. According to Johan, world politics could be better understood only by studying all its main sub-sectors, avoiding specialization on a single policy. For example, conflicts and war can be understood only if we analyze civilizations and nations, economic globalization, political regimes... In the 1960s, Galtung has been the leader of the European *Peace Research*. In those years, Johan defined the concepts of peace, violence, civilization, security..., and then he focused more and more his research on conflict resolution (Fossati 2024).

This evolution can be understood if we comprehend the intellectual climate of those years. After the Second World War, Western societies lived a period of strong optimism, linked to peace, liberal democracy and economic development, guaranteed by free market and welfare state. The left promoted 'positivist' and illuminist visions of society and politics, and carried on its mobilizations on workers' rights and pacifism at both domestic and international level.

1968 represented an important critical juncture that led to social and political change. Societies started a transition process from modern to post-modern societies, that was very gradual and probably became more mature after 1989. After 1968, rationality was not considered anymore as the foundation of human actions. Thus, the left changed the main values of his political culture and diplomatic strategies. In the West, democracy was consolidated, as well peace, especially after the fall of communism in 1989. In economy, the European left successfully applied *welfare state*, and elections were often won by labor or center parties. During the Cold War, the only real right in Europe has been the British conservative party of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. Socialism had been neutralized by social-democrats, as a fully centralized economy was incompatible with economic and political freedoms of democracies. Anti-democratic and violent communism has been supported only by anti-regime terrorist groups like the Red Brigades in Italy. This article precisely aims at identifying political strategies of the moderate left: from modern constructivism to post-modern political correctness.

In the following sections, the values and strategies of Galtung's "modern" and constructivist left will be compared with the post-modern evolution of political correctness. In fact, the next step will be defining the *politically correct* ideology.

2. The *politically correct* ideology of the post-modern left

The *politically correct* ideology is going to be defined according to the methodology of social and political sciences, subtracting it to the polemical debates of the *pamphlets*. This ideology has characterized the left in the phase of post-modernity, that is after 1968 and especially since the 1980s. This has occurred in the public policies that have been influenced by multi-culturalism: first those linked to migration flows, then those linked to conflict management among different nations, and finally in foreign policy (Fossati 2006).

After 1989, the main “anchor” of post-modern moderate left has been *political correctness*. The postulates of such ideology are two: making equal what is different and not criticizing or penalizing the weak actors (the “underdogs”). The supporters of *political correctness* cannot discriminate between different realities. Homosexuals must be treated like heterosexuals; so, they can marry themselves or adopt children. The same happens to human beings and animals, to handicapped and ‘normal’ people, to native and immigrant citizens, to old and young generations. All those underdogs cannot be criticized with the language or penalized with political behaviors. No one can say ugly, bad, mean, fat, low, bald... All these categories of people have been criticized or even bullied in the past by the most intolerant actors of our societies. Thanks to *political correctness*, none can say that sexual violence is especially committed by immigrants, and that women are often killed by men of southern Italy. Other slogans are that fundamentalists exist in all religions (and instead most of them are in Islam), or that mafia is spread all over Italy. And the involuntary accidents to horses at Palio of Siena are compared to the intentional killings of bulls in Spain.

The starting point of *political correctness* was the regulation of migration flows. In politics, that ideology consolidated after the increase of communication flows that was typical of globalization processes. Post-modernity emphasized criticism to rationality, and cultural relativism substituted the modern cosmologies that considered the West as the core of the world and the source of civilization and order: thanks to the promotion of values like peace, democracy and the market.

During modernity, liberals promoted freedom of movement of individuals, while conservatives wanted to limit migration flows with protectionism. Multi-cultural *political correctness* wanted to make equal what is different: native and migrant people. The left promoted the liberalization of the flows of individuals, trying to regulate the relations with migrants. Liberalism was based on reciprocity. During colonialism, benefits to migrants in Europe were conditioned to similar treatments of Western citizens in the Third World. This was the typical exchange between empires and colonies, based on reciprocity, that continued after independence. Migrants had to respect the Western laws and integrate for example in European cultures. Instead, *political correctness* was based on asymmetric and preferential treatment of migrants, thanks to the value of cultural relativism. Thus, immigrants in the West could enjoy all the freedoms (like the religious one), while

Christians were persecuted (and often killed) in countries of some civilizations, that deny the religious freedom principle. The post-modern left has allowed migrants to refuse integration, by not complying with Western laws. Thus, the weak actors could never be criticized (second principle of *political correctness*). The post-modern left promoted an asymmetric integration of migrants, that led to the formation of cultural ghettos (with high levels of crime) in many European towns.

In immigration policies, there has been a convergence between conservatives and the left, based on an exchange. The right defined the protectionist outcomes, that is how many migrants could enter the West: the “European fortress” (Geddes 1999). The left regulated the processes, that is the asymmetrical integration, abandoning the reciprocity principle of liberalism. That exchange has been criticized by modern and liberal intellectuals (Sartori 2000, Fallaci 2001) after 9/11, when second generation migrants, not integrated in the West, organized Islamic Jihadist attacks. In immigration policies, leftist leaders and parties have been very orthodox, and applied *political correctness*, without criticizing (for example) cultural ghettos in the European towns. In fact, weak actors or underdogs can never be criticized with either language or political behaviors.

Political correctness has become the prevailing (but not dominating) political culture of our societies. In democracies there is pluralism; dominant cultures only exist in autocracies (Foucault 1980). Prevailing ideologies are those considered as the most legitimate in the public opinion by intellectuals. That role has been played by rightist conservatism before 1968, and by leftist *political correctness* since the 1980s. Before 1968, conservatism was spread in societies and in the diplomacies, but today it is marginalized in the periphery of the West: the country-side or little towns. *Political correctness* has become the prevailing ideology in the cultural and political elite of the West, and has been promoted by the post-modern left. But it is not shared by the lowly educated individuals of the left. One could quote several examples (the prohibition of crucifixes or of popular Catholic songs...) of traditions that West is abandoning in order not to disturb the “intolerant” immigrants (Fossati 2006). Another example is that in festivals of cinema, only *politically correct* movies on gays, handicapped people, immigrants win the prizes. But prevailing ideologies generate hostility in the silent majorities and the xenophobic minorities. Oriana Fallaci (2001) criticized the tedious conformism of *political correctness*.

3. Conflict resolution with *politically correct* pluri-national states

Galtung (2008) had elaborated a typology on conflict resolution models, that is the best contribute in the literature, even if it is ignored by American and Italian political scientists (Fossati 2008, Fossati 2024). He suggested some symmetric solutions like transcendence, territorial compromise, confederation, exchange, integration with federalism or consensus pacts, pluri or single-nation separation. Instead, according to Johan, asymmetric conflict resolution models should be avoided: dominion, ethnic cleansing, asymmetric integration with administrative autonomy. Transcendence occurs when the aims of all the actors are satisfied; thus, it is very rare. It is usually linked to the democratization process. Galtung never excluded single or pluri-national separations from conflict resolution attempts.

The postulates of *political correctness* on conflict resolution process were two. First, only pluri-national resolution models, anchored to multi-culturalism, have been promoted by the post-modern left, with the objective of “making equal what is different”. Single-nation separations have always been avoided, because they are politically incorrect; they have always been labeled as forms of “neo-apartheid”, especially if carried on through referendums. The post-modern left has always criticized national identities. Radical supporters of political correctness have supported the ‘anthropological correct’ thesis that races and ethnic groups do not exist. Instead, modern scholars like Galtung have always considered cultural identities as the real ‘structure’ of world politics. Johan often repeated: *‘it’s nice to have a flag!’* Galtung never criticized nationalisms, if they were not radical. According to Johan, individuals have the right to form their polities with other citizens of the same nationality. His classification of civilizations (Galtung 1981) would have been incompatible with *political correctness*, as he identified the highest level of identity, superior to that of nations. Thus, the differences among civilizations have been emphasized (and not made equal), and the weak actors remained weak. This Galtung’s theory has been ignored by leftist scholars, precisely because it was politically incorrect. They preferred to criticize another more famous (similar to Johan’s) theory of civilizations: that of Huntington (1996).

The supporters of *political correctness* on conflict resolution lived two phases. In the 1990s and early 2000s, they promoted moderate positions, for example by accepting federalism (in Bosnia and Iraq). Instead, after 2010, they have radicalized, by supporting asymmetric (and unfair) conflict resolution processes based on centralized states and administrative

autonomy, like at Minsk with Ukrainians, that did not guarantee the rights of Russian minorities of the East.

In the 1990s, Western governments started to promote the “new world order” (Fossati 2017). World order consisted in the process in which compliance was stabilized toward values that remained permanent in time. In post-1989 order, *governance* has been channeled to some values, that represented the unity of measure, the stable criteria of politics. In the modern past, Western countries had realized a liberal domestic order, based on the following four permanent values: self-determination in the cultural arena leading to single-nation states, free market in the economic arena, democracy in the political arena, peace in the military arena. But in the post-1989 world order, only three (and not four) values have been promoted: thus, it has been a ‘quasi’ liberal world order. Western governments avoided pursuing the value of self-determination that could have led to ‘ordered’ single nation states. In fact, the leftist supporters of political correctness pushed towards the promotion of only pluri-national states in conflict resolution processes, following the model of the Dayton peace agreement. Thus, in the cultural arena, there was disordered governance and not order, with the exceptions of single-nation states, like Slovenia, Eritrea, East Timor and South Sudan. Popular referendum could have led to secessions of single nations states, but they were avoided by the left, because they were politically incorrect forms of neo-apartheid. Thus, after 1989, there was a “near” and “quasi liberal” world order (Fossati 2017). There was order in three economic, political, military arenas: with market, democracy and peace, but not in the cultural arena. Pluri-national states prevailed through either integration - with old states that remained united (like in Afghanistan, Iraq...) - or pluri-national separations (like in former Yugoslavia). But there is also a third scenario, with neither governance nor order. It materializes when the main powers do not (politically or militarily) intervene, and anarchy is followed: like in Chechnya, Tibet, Kurdistan, Sri Lanka... (Fossati 2006; 2017).

In Bosnia, European Western governments rejected the referendum that could have led to a neo-apartheid. The 1995 Dayton peace agreement promoted a pluri-national state, appreciated by the European left, and that formula has been applied in other conflicts of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. But the liberal president of the Usa, Clinton, pushed toward the application of federalism; thus it was a symmetric integration that emphasized cultural pluralism much more than consensus pacts especially applied in Africa. Thus, in

Dayton there was a convergence between the promoters of leftist and liberal political cultures. And that happened also in Iraq, thanks to the neo-con diplomacy of Bush jr. The European left has only supported the secessions that led to pluri-national states, like in Kosovo. With national self-determination, Kosovo could have been divided into two polities: one Albanian and independent in the South, and the little portion of the north that could have chosen to become part of Serbia.

In the last years, the radical version of *politically correct* diplomacies has been promoted by Biden and the European left with Zelensky. The Ukrainian state has remained centralized, and Zelensky has given only the “crumbles” (asymmetric integration with administrative autonomy) to the Russian minorities of the east: at Minsk I-II in 2015-16. The first principle of *political correctness*, making equal what is different (Ukrainians and Russians), has been applied. Kiev’s parliament declared federalism as illegal, and prohibited negotiations with Russia. Both decisions were highly illiberal, and no Western government criticized Zelensky because it was the “weak actor”: the second principle of *politically correct* diplomacies (Fossati 2023). According to Galtung, if conflicts are resolved by asymmetric integrations, democracies remain illiberal and elections lead to the dominion of the majority against the minorities. In Ukraine, Biden and leftist European governments never criticized Zelensky, a rightist ultra-nationalist, that was considered the “weak” against the strong Putin. He always ex-communicated who-ever criticized him. That happened also to Trump or Kissinger, that had suggested an exchange between Donbass to Ukraine and Crimea to Russia.

Galtung (2008) had often emphasized that administrative autonomy is always refused in poor and pre-modern countries of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. It is only accepted in the post-modern and richer West: in Scotland, Catalunya, Sud Tirol... If illiberal governments only give the ‘crumbles’ (administrative autonomy) to the “excluded” minorities, their reaction is violence: see Hamas after Oslo (in 1994), or Putin after Minsk (in 2022). But the same happened when asymmetric integration has been proposed to ethnic minorities in Africa, to Ira in Ulster, to Sahrawis in Western Sahara, to Tamils in Sri Lanka, to Kurds in several Islamic countries. And other countries have often declared war to protect “their” minorities: Arab states against Israel, Pakistan against India in Kashmir, Turkey against Greeks in north Cyprus, Nato against Serbia in Bosnia and Kosovo, or more recently Russia against Ukraine in Crimea and Novorossiya.

In the years of world order, Clinton and Blair had promoted federalism in Bosnia, like Bush jr in Iraq. Without federalism, those two wars would have never ended. In Bosnia, Croats and Muslims (allied to the West) did not want federalism, but Clinton coerced them to accept it. Obama, Biden and Trump have forgot federalism, weakening world order (Fossati 2019). In 2014, the Russian foreign minister Lavrov promoted federalism in Ukraine, but no Western government accepted that liberal proposal, otherwise they would have been labeled as “pro-Russian”.

In 1997, the EU postponed enlargement negotiations with Slovakia because of Meciar’s rightist nationalist government, that was much less radical than Zelensky. Western governments sold many armaments to Ukraine with the idealist objective of defeating Putin. *Political correctness* influenced the Western public opinion, in order to defend the weak actor (the Ukrainian state) against the strong one (Russian minorities of the east). In Middle East, the left has always defended the weak Palestinian minorities against the strong Israel’s state. Also Israel granted only the crumbs (administrative autonomy) to Palestinians with the Oslo agreement of 1994. The supporters of *political correctness* asked for the “two people, two states” solution in Palestine, but not in Ukraine, where the principle is “two people, one state”: that of Kiev. They applied the second principle of political correctness: not criticizing weak actors like Zelensky and Hamas. Thus, the post-modern left has abandoned pacifism, and has supported the *politically correct* ‘war of the others’ in Ukraine (Fossati 2023).

In the 1990s, a not-written pact of *real Politik* had been reached by Nato and Eltsin, for a new geo-political division of Europe: a sort of “Yalta 2”. Ukraine had remained a satellite of Russia, and Kiev governments had not been even admitted as candidates to the European Union. After the Orange revolution of 2004, Kiev rejected Yalta 2 and asked to enter Nato. Obama and Biden (but not Trump) supported that request. Then, Putin attacked Ukraine, and Zelensky probably wanted that precise outcome, to bypass EU’s opposition to enlargement and to support Kiev’s request to enter Nato, against the “absolute evil”: Putin. However, Trump has recently clarified that Ukraine will not enter Nato.

Galtung gave the responsibility of the Ukrainian war especially to the USA (Fossati 2024). Biden and Zelensky have applied the radical version of political correctness. Obama and Biden followed cultural relativism and could not imagine solving conflicts in the world anymore. They also renounced to the project of world order, that was *politically incorrect*.

Biden criticized whoever proposed negotiations with the absolute evil Putin. The US diplomacy was ineffective and Biden has lost any capacity to promote a *grand strategy* in foreign policy. The USA of Obama, Biden and Trump are not a great power anymore (Fossati 2019).

The compliance of the left in favor of pluri-national solutions to conflicts has been deep and permanent. The support of “modern” leftist intellectuals to peace in Ukraine has been shy, except some Italian journalists like Sansonetti, Santoro...

4. Humanitarian interventions, or better, *politically correct* wars

The military arena concerns decisions over wars or peace-keeping missions.

Galtung (1996) had supported the so-called “humanitarian interventions” of the 1990s, in which wars were admitted, but when only a “weak” actor had to be protected. Those wars had also to respect the principle of time linearity, that is to say violence could only stop other violence; thus, it should have followed a fast decision-making process. Ex-post retaliations were not admitted. Galtung quoted Gandhi’s “active” conception of non-violence. If a man was going to kill other people, it was legitimate to stop him with violence. Instead, Tolstoj’s conception of non-violence refused any kind of violence: also in an *extrema ratio* scenario. Expressions like ‘*responsibility to protect*’ have also been used by the Pope.

In the 1990s, leftist European parties supported the use of force in Bosnia and Kosovo, but (for example) not in Croatia. Radical leftist Manichaeian parties, like Rifondazione Comunista, criticized those wars, just because they had been organized by Nato. Then, the European leftist leader strongly criticized US wars in Iraq and Libya, because the West attacked “weak” actors like Saddam Hussein or Gaddafi (Fossati 2006; 2017). Why only two humanitarian interventions have been decided by the West? Why there have been no wars in Rwanda, in order to defend Tutsis from Hutus, or in Darfur, to protect African Islamic people from Arab Islamic troops of Sudan? These humanitarian interventions were rejected because of the ‘politically correct’ ideology. Wars cannot be organized, if the aggressor pertains to the Third World; thus, it is a weak actor, even if it attacks a “weaker” actor (like in the two above mentioned genocides). The West can attack Serbia, that

pertains to the Christian civilization, but not an African or Arab government. And “weak” actors like Muslims of Bosnia and Kosovo could be protected, but not Catholic Croats. In sum, humanitarian interventions (anchored to universal values) were forgotten, while only “politically correct” (anchored to cultural relativism) wars were decided. After 1989, there could have been too many humanitarian interventions: probably around 50, or even more.

Finally, military interventions against a medium power, for example to defend Chechnya from Russia, Tibet from China, or Kurdistan from Turkey, were avoided. There could have been a risky escalation, also with a nuclear war. But this last scenario has evolved with the war in Ukraine. In this case, Western countries gave an indirect military support to Zelensky; it was a “war of the others”. It was a politically correct war, because Ukraine was the “weak actor”, and Russia was a member of the Christian civilization. A direct military intervention of Nato has been avoided, because it could have caused a risky escalation.

The objections of leftist European leaders to politically correct wars were limited. Only Wojtyla pope and Pannella had asked to defend Croats at Vukovar. After Nato’s war in Libya in 2011, Obama, Biden and Trump almost stopped US wars. Galtung had appreciated that change, and remained deceived by the Ukrainian war, and he blamed US Biden government for his indirect support to that conflict. In sum, the acceptance of only *politically correct* wars led to the proliferation of genocides, and whichever mass murder in eastern Europe and Third World. *Political correctness* totally erased Galtung’s constructivism, because of the principle of cultural relativism. It was a very sad defeat for all humanity.

5. *Politically correct* promotion of democracy through rewards

Galtung (1996) has always emphasized the importance of participatory democracy, as a foundation of positive peace. Authoritarian regimes often lead to the increase of violence. In the 1990s, Western governments favored the diffusion of democracy, within the project of the “quasi” liberal world order and the fourth wave of democratization. The international processes to promote democracy are four: non-intentional contagion of conservatism, control through military interventions of the neo-cons, liberal political conditionality, rewards to democracy applied by post-modern and *politically correct* left (Fossati 2017).

Contagion is based on the diffusion of democracy through emulation, like in the democratization waves: see the third one from Spain to Latin America in the 1970s. Conservative diplomacies have always supported contagion/emulation. Military control has only been suggested by neo-conservatives: see Iraq in 2003. Political conditionality leads to an asymmetric relation in which the most powerful actor links a decision of foreign policy (development aid, trade preferences, or EU enlargement) to the respect of some political criteria (respect of human rights and implementation of democracy) by the dependent actor. For example, at the beginning of the 1990s, foreign aid has been cut when democratic principles were violated. Political conditionality is a liberal strategy of foreign policy; negative sanctions are *politically incorrect* diplomatic strategies; “bad” actors are punished. Rewards to democracy are three: democratic assistance (funds to support democratic participation of NGOs, free press, independent web sites or to monitor elections), the increase of economic aid to democratic countries, and diplomatic pressure, with foreign ministries’ visits or declarations to support local democratic candidates. The post-modern left has always promoted those rewards to democratization, because they are *politically correct* diplomatic strategies; ‘good’ actors are rewarded, because they are democratic (Fossati 2017).

What balance can be done of democracy promotion? In the world order phase of the 1990s, Western governments had the courage to apply political conditionality, with more success in EU enlargement and much less in foreign aid. The latter diplomacy had failed especially because many Western governments (France, Spain, Italy, Scandinavian countries...) did not apply those priorities, and thus negative sanctions of liberal governments (USA, UK, Netherlands...) failed. The post-modern left thought that negative sanctions against authoritarian states were *politically incorrect* (Fossati 2017). Then, Western governments only applied *politically correct* rewards to democratizing governments of the Third World or Eastern Europe: for example, Serbia and Croatia, Ukraine and Georgia; and finally some Islamic governments (Egypt and Tunisia) after the Arab Spring. But those rewards only worked in relation to EU enlargement, while they failed in the other cases (Fossati & Chiarini 2019). And those rewards were much lower than the economic support of autocracies (Venezuela, Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, China...) to their allied countries (Fossati 2022).

The impact of *politically correct* diplomacies in the political arena was awful. Western rewards were lower than the support through autocracy promotion. Authoritarian regimes did not improve their political performance, and hybrid regimes remained as such or even worsened. In post-modernity, democracies were weakened. *Politically correct* Western diplomacies only used the carrot, but not the stick. Autocracies exploited both, and they won. The constructivist and modern values of the left, that scholars like Galtung promoted, have been totally defeated. With cultural relativism and *political correctness* of the post modern left, autocracies won. Thus, violence and repression increased all over the world

6. *Political correctness* and economic globalization

Ideologies have always had a strong influence on economy, also before 1989 (Esping-Andersen 1990). In that arena, the “modern” left had conditioned the main economic decisions in the 1950s and 1960s: for example by defending workers’ wages and salaries or by increasing their right to strike. Thus, weak actors have also been protected in the phase of modernity. But the left had also fought for the welfare state, that benefited all the population and not only its weakest sectors. Thus, the promotion of welfare state was not only a *politically correct* mobilization.

In foreign economic diplomacy, the efforts of the modern left were channeled through higher flows of foreign aid to poor countries by Scandinavian social-democrat governments. Those were *politically correct* diplomacies, in order to favor the weakest actors of world economy. However, these policies remained quite ineffective, because the north-south gap remained too high.

Galtung (1996), being Norwegian, had highly supported European *welfare state*, but had also appreciated a lot the economic policies of the “fourth world”: Confucian countries like Japan, China, Taiwan and South Korea.

The post-modern left has approached economic globalization, especially by supporting some global regimes in defense of the weakest sectors of society: the workers of the poorest countries of Third World and the immigrates. But lobbying of the left has been lowly effective, and those regimes did not consolidate in world economy. Then, the post-modern left fought for global regimes in order to limit the power of Multinationals,

through *Multilateral Agreement on Investments* based on anti-trust global rules, and environment regimes. The former remained ineffective, instead of the latter. In fact, many global environment regimes have been approved, with some “troubles” in some of them, like the Kyoto protocol.

The post-modern left was not only *politically correct* in economy, that is in favor of weak actors, but it has also maintained a modern approach, benefiting all domestic citizens in Europe, thanks to *welfare state*, and all the people of the world, because of global environment regimes. The balance of the impact of the left in economy is more positive, as the ‘damages’ of political correctness have been lower. At the same time, the effects of the radical Manichaeic left, with its Third-Worldist, globophobic and neo-populist values, have remained negative.

Has the moderate left moderated its positions, precisely for fear of the aggressive reactions of the radical left (Fossati 2006)? Social-democrats would like to reinforce global institutions (like Mai); but no global movements would surely fight against them. Thus, if the moderate left strengthens his proposal on economic globalization, the radical left will surely increase its opposition (Fossati 2017).

7. The *politically correct* support to moderate Islamic fundamentalists

US president Obama implemented the most coherent *politically correct* diplomacy, through the support to moderate Islamic fundamentalists.

Western conservative diplomacies towards the Middle East (Kissinger's *real-politik*) had always privileged the “lesser evil” against Islamic fundamentalists: both military (in Algeria) and personalistic (Persian Gulf monarchies) regimes. But many lesser evils have been abandoned by the USA after 2001: Hussein, Mubarak, Ben Ali, Saleh, Gaddafi. Liberals and neo-cons (in Iraq in 2003) hoped that secular leaders could emerge in Islam thanks to elections, but they have never prevailed. Conservatives and liberals have never trusted moderate or radical fundamentalists, that both apply the *taqiyya* (dissimulation) principle towards “infidels”. According to the promoters of *political correctness*, this option is “Islamophobic”. Obama decided to never criticize moderate fundamentalists, precisely in order not to appear as Islamophobic, and applied the second principle of political

correctness: never penalizing the weak actors. Obama rewarded the Ayatollah in Iran (with the nuclear agreement of 2015), Erdogan, Egyptian and Libyan Muslim Brothers, Houthis in Yemen... (Fossati 2019). Moderate fundamentalists seemed the only one to be able to defeat the radical ones: Isis and al Qaeda. But that strategy failed in Egypt, after al Sisi's military coup in 2013. Instead, Persian Gulf monarchies, Morocco and Jordan have always preferred military leaders or personalistic dictators to moderate fundamentalists.

After Trump's first administration, Biden returned to *politically correctness*, leaving Kabul to Talibans, because they had become moderate and thus could defeat the Afghan Isis. Instead, Trump stopped to support moderate fundamentalists, and returned to the priority towards Saudi Arabia, and developing a conflict with Iran. In fact, in June 2025 Trump bombed three nuclear sites of Iran, even if he avoided escalation.

What was Johan Galtung (1996) thinking of fundamentalism? He linked it to the cosmologies of knowledge, and to the Aristotle's principle of "*tertium non datur*", that has influenced all the three Western civilizations: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The outcome were the crusades, the conquests of the Ottoman empire in Europe, Nazi-fascism with Shoah, the intractable conflict between Palestinians and Israel, Islamic Jihadist terrorism. Instead, Eastern civilizations (Buddhist, Sinic, Nipponic) have been characterized by the *yin-yang* Taoist principle, anchored to a flexible knowledge principle. Hindus were both Aristotelian and Taoist; in fact, Hindu Tamil Tigers became fundamentalist and terrorist. Huntington (1996), another scholar deeply anchored to modernity, had suggested that the West should stop to export its values in order to fight fundamentalists all over the world. And that is what Trump is trying to do in his foreign policy.

However, the political correct support of moderate Islamic fundamentalists has probably been less pervasive in international relations. For example, the European left was less involved in this priority, but had promoted the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran. This diplomacy has been weakened especially by Trump.

Conclusion

The objective of this essay was to link Galtung's modern constructivist proposals to the post-modern evolution of political correctness in leftist diplomacies.

Political correctness has been constantly applied by leftist governments in the 2000s. But there has been no analytical effort in human sciences to theorize it. This happened for two reasons. First, American social and political scientists are not expert in the study of political doctrines. Their history is shorter and their philosophical background is weaker. They have a binary (Republicans vs Democrats) vision of politics, and for example they confuse *political correctness* with liberalism. Second, *political correctness* has become the prevailing ideology of post-modern societies, even if those who apply these ideas are not always conscious to do that. It is impossible not only to criticize it, but also to conceptualize it, as it is the new collective conformism. Those who pronounce the *politically correct* word are invited not to even use this concept, that instead is commonly used in daily language. Those who theorize *political correctness* are intellectually ex-communicated and marginalized by the community of political and social scientist, 90% of which are deeply *politically correct* themselves.

Before 1989, the first political behaviors anchored to *political correctness* were the formation of cultural ghettos in the European towns after the increase of migration flows, and the higher foreign aid that was channeled by Scandinavian governments to the poorest countries of the world. Then, in the 1990s, *political correctness* was applied to the rewards (instead of the negative sanctions of political conditionality) to Third World democratizing countries; thus, autocracies and repression increased. *Politically correct* wars (in Bosnia e Kosovo) erased the principles of humanitarian interventions, and thus 'very' weak actors in Rwanda and Darfur have not been defended. *Politically correct* conflict resolution processes promoted pluri-national states, based more on consensus pacts than on federalism. Single-nation separations based on referenda were excluded, as they were considered as a neo-apartheid. In the 1990 there was the moderate version of political correctness. But recently the radical version has materialized, like in Ukraine, where the different pro-West and pro-Russia citizens have been made equal, and the weak actor (Zelensky) has never been criticized.

The influence of *political correctness* in economy has been lower, as the welfare state and global environment regimes favor all the citizens and not only the weak actors. Politically *correct* economic diplomacies towards international "weak" actors (workers of the third world, immigrants...) have been less effective.

Obama has been the first American president to put *political correctness* at the center of his diplomacy. The core of this foreign policy was the priority to moderate Islamic fundamentalism: Iran's Ayatollah and Muslim brotherhood in Egypt and Libya. In fact, he could not punish them like liberal and conservative leaders, otherwise he would have appeared as Islamophobic. Biden has also supported the "moderate" Taliban in Afghanistan (Fossati 2017, Fossati 2019).

However, the objectors of the "modern" left to post-modern *political correctness* have been rare and very "shy": in all the arenas of international relations.

In sum, the post-modern left has largely neutralized the constructivist efforts of the modern left. Galtung suggested that all the scholars behave like physicians, to cure the diseases of society and politics. Instead, the *politically correct* left has made his choices in the name of cultural relativism and the guilt complexes of Western post-modern intellectuals. *Politically correct* diplomacies have been highly ineffective, and marked the political decline of the West (both the leftist constructivism of the Cold War and the project of "quasi" liberal world order of the 1990s) and the success of autocracies. First, political correctness influenced migration flows, thanks to multi-culturalism, and asymmetric integration favored the proliferation of cultural ghettos in many European towns. Then, leftist European parties erased the value of national self-determination leading to single-nation states in order to avoid "neo-apartheid".

Galtung had proposed symmetric solutions to conflicts, that have been forgotten in both Ukraine and Palestine, where catastrophic asymmetric integration has been promoted at Oslo and Minsk. In economy, the left remained more constructivist and less politically correct; its effects have been also positive and not only negative. Humanitarian interventions against Third World violent government have been avoided, and thus many genocides and massacres have been committed in Africa (in Rwanda and Darfur) and Asia. Political conditionality against authoritarian regimes has been avoided, and rewards to democratizing Third World state have had a limited impact. The West used only the carrot and not the stick. Autocracies exploited both positive and negative sanctions and won the competition in political regimes. Then, Obama and Biden also favored 'moderate' Islamic fundamentalist regimes (Iran and Muslim Brotherhood), that were highly authoritarian as well. But this priority has been reset by Trump, and it had a lower influence in international relations. All these autocracies, killing many people in wars and

repressing their citizens in politics, proliferated in both military and political arenas, thanks to cultural relativism of *political correctness*. In sum, the positive contributions of Galtung's modern constructivist left have been "erased" by post-modern *politically correct* left: in conflict resolution, wars and in domestic political regime. The only exception was economy, where the constructivist nature of the left has survived.

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