

WHICH THEORY OF COMMUNICATION IS “POLITICAL CORRECTNESS”?

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on „political correctness”, which has become a late 20th century catch-phrase in Western European and North American liberal democracies but also has found currency in the political climate of the Asian and Eastern countries. A historical and multi-cultural review is intended as an introduction to a broader philosophical analysis of the Marxist **backgrounds** of political correctness and its neo-Marxist theoretical **correctives** in Jürgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action. My aim is to draw out both the educational and cultural implications of laying out the ethos of contemporary discourse on the foundations of the evolving dynamics of the rhetoric of political correctness.

Key words: Cultural Marxism, 68-er Bewegung, kyriarchy, Gutmensch, politiquement correcte, Kotobagari, Allan Bloom, McCarthyism, Mao Zedong, Max Horkheimer, Jürgen Habermas.

INTRODUCTION

The thrust of my paper is tailored towards a philosophical analysis of the educational and socio-cultural **implications** of laying out the ethos of contemporary cultures on the pattern of ‘policies’ and laws influenced by political correctness. The paper also aims at calling our attention to the *challenges* of coping with the contemporary pluralism of interests which characterize various ethico-political strands of the *rhetoric* of “political correctness” in the socio-cultural and politico-economic domains of liberal democratic societies today.

In its outlay, this article will provide a historical background intended to project “political correctness” as theoretically embedded in the communicative skills of the ancient sophists. Without prejudice to this ancient sources, I intend to argue for the thread of developments of this phenomenon which found its roots in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Marxist ideologies. Marxism as the paper proposes, accounts for the underlying sources and dynamics of the new fad of public speech-making which consists in the penchant to be perceived as *politically correct*. Of significant interest for me

however is the rebirth of a theoretical accommodation of this trend of social communicative action in the nineteenth century Frankfurt critical theorists culminating in its contemporary reformulations by Jürgen Habermas' critical theory of communicative action. I shall indicate the sources of in-text citations following the abridged APA system leaving out the details of a full reference list till the end of the discussion.

This discussion is timely as it highlights the lived-experience of most students and professors today. In this perspective therefore, it is underscored that the administrative structures of most universities reflect significant undercurrents of political correctness, ideologically grafted into the policies made by the government for higher educational institutions. The claim of the paper is to assert that a more **positive** reappraisal of the dynamics of 'political correctness' can be found in the remedial **corrective** insights of Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action.

It is my aim to stimulate a critical reappraisal of the apparent class-struggle motifs of the rhetoric of political correctness that has been already infused into the community of the academia. From the 1960s, the Frankfurt Critical School of Marxism in Germany began an educational curricula that later found currents in American Universities. The theoretical basis of Marxism was initially intended for economic emancipation but it gradually became a cultural revolution that impacted irreversibly on the idea and structural networks of university educational systems in most European and North America countries. The 1968 Cultural Revolution in Europe and America was essentially incubated in the universities (Lind, 2000). It is significant to note as well that this rhetoric has been marketed to the wider public as ideological infiltration into cultures and societies.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS: A PANOPLY OF THEORIES FOR MODELS OF RHETORIC?

My first consideration is to clarify the *senses*, in which the title of the paper, - which refers to a 'theory of communication' with respect to *political correctness*, - can be understood. I shall eventually present Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action as an instructive but the historical point of departure of the paper will engage my audience through an overview of how Habermas fits into the overall analysis.

As early as the late 18th century, we find instances of inadequate conflation of references with regard to the State and the citizens even within the hallowed chambers of the legal institutions. This **innocuous** conflation of reference was first described as being '**politically incorrect**' in a U.S Supreme Court session (*Chisholm vs State of Georgia*, 2 US: 2 Dall., 419, 1973).

More so, within the curriculum of studies in institutions of higher learning, we note that while there are traces of academic interests in communica-

tion studies before the 20th century, it is a significantly recent field of study. In a contemporary handbook on communication studies, the editors significantly remarked as follows: "Communication study is very much a modern discipline; yet it also has a long tradition and deep roots in philosophy and rhetoric. It was only in the twentieth century that it developed into an organized field with its own institutional history, its own appointed professors and academic journals. At this point, 'communication science' developed out of several traditions, including those of the also recently developing psychology and sociology" (Schultz, & Cobley, 2013).

Being still a developing field of study, various attempts are suggestive of its definitive subject matter and formal object. As such it is usual to consider some etymological references to the notion of communication. Scholars have continued to make traces to certain Latin roots: 'communication' is variously linked to *communicare*- 'to share' or 'to be in relation with'; or as connoting the English *socio-political* nuances of 'common', 'commune' and 'community'; or perhaps, suggesting an act of 'bringing together' (Cobley, 2008; Rosengren, 2000; Schement, 1993; Beattie, 1981). The Latin *communicatio* - a 'sharing' or 'imparting', arguably makes lesser reference to *union* or *unity* but more frequent in relation to another Latin term *munus*. In this sense, the English connotations -office, duty, gift - evokes the root senses of having to do with change, exchange, and goods possessed by a number of people (Peters, 2008; Peters, 1996; Craig, 2000; Schulz, 2013).

Moreover, the relationship between rhetoric, public speech, communication and politics is obviously an interesting discourse for ancient thinkers especially the Greek philosophers who considered the speech-faculty is the primordial natural potential for social encounter. In the 5th Century BC Greek tradition of public speech was linked with the sophists and the rhetoricians dating as far back as Isocrates (436-338 BC), Lysias (450-378), and the Protagoras (480-410 BC). A theory of "political correctness" in the Greek culture may be traced to this tradition of the sophists especially within the context of the democratic *agora*. The Roman **Senate** during the time of the Roman Republic can in fact be considered as the successor of the Greek **Agora** just as Hitler's "state of the union" address of the Third Reich can be spoken of as the German **Reichstag** version of the Roman Senate speeches. However, contemporary notions of theories of communications do not share many of the features that characterized the Greek tradition (Greco-Roman-Germanic) of public speech which were aimed at winning arguments whereas in our societies today, public speech even as rhetoric and sophistry, do not aim at winning arguments as much as it aims at winning or maintaining political alliances. This argument for the Greek ancestry of the rhetoric of political correctness as evident in the sophists' theory of political speech is however counter-balanced by the Platonic-Aristotelian traditions. This counter current is already highlighted by one of the most-quoted sections from Aristotle's *Politics*, Book 1, is 1253a: where he lays the foundations of his political theory on the natural communicative skills of the human being:

“δε πολιτικον ο άνθρωπος...μάτην η φύσις ποιειλόγονδεμόνονάνθρωπος εχειτωνζώων... η μενοῦνφωνητοῦλυπηροῦ και ηδέοξεστισημεῖον...ο δελόγοξεπι τωδηλοῦνεστιτοσυμφερον και το βλαβερον, ὡστε και τοδικαιον και το αδικον...ή δετούτωνκοινωνία ποιειοικιαν και πόλιν” [man is by nature a political animal...for nature... does nothing without purpose: and man alone of the animals possesses speech. The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure...but speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; ...and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state].

In the same vein, Plato’s most celebrated theory of the ideal state is deduced from his analogy of justice in one man and justice in the city-state as found in *Republic*, book 2, section 368e-369a-c wherein he speaks of the state as “man writ-large”: “ἐντη περιτοδικαιον...δικαιοσύνη, φαμέν, ἐστιμεν ανδροξενοῦ, ἐστιδὲ που και ὅλης πόλεως; ...οὔκοῦνμειζον πόλιξενοῦ ανδροῦ, μειζον, ἐφηῖσως πλείωνάνδικαιοσύνη ἐντωμειζονιενεῖν και ράων καταμαθειν” [what analogy do you detect in the inquiry about justice?...there is a justice of one man, we say, and I suppose, also of an entire city....Is not the city larger than the man?...Then perhaps, there would be more justice in the larger object and more easy to apprehend].

In spite of the above ancient insights, what accounts for the theories and models of public-speech making in our contemporary society are largely taken from the 19th and 20th new scientific developments and innovations in information and communication technologies (ICT).

Be that as it may, within the specifically philosophical disciplines of metaphysics, anthropology, psychology or epistemology, ethics and political philosophy, the notion of communication is considered in terms of broader and more fundamental questions associated with the *theory of language*. A philosophical approach certainly expands the scope of concentration to the relationships between thought, word and object as well as to the cognitive inferences and logical rules of rational exchange between intersubjective agents of cognition. What more? A philosophical interest in communication studies also harps on the *theory of meaning* especially in a logically mediated viewpoint which attempts to relate such domains as language use as the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels.

From the axiological fields of considerations, there developed certain theories of communication into which we can categorize the *rhetoric* of political correctness. In this respect, we find Miller Katherine’s treatment of *values* quite instructive. Miller considers three levels of approach to the question of values in the formulation of theories of communication: the first approach emphasizes the values operative in the background cultures from which the theorist constructs his or her hypothesis; the second approach considers the contextualization of theories within value-systems of the society while the third axiological approach insists that value-systems are part and parcel of scientific theories at every stage of its construction, application and reconstruction hence theories embrace their values and work to

reproduce those same values at every stage of research, application and development. This third approach fits well with my appraisal of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School in this paper. In point of fact, recent scholarship is acknowledging that the role of communication theory is to identify oppression and produce social change (Craig, 1999; Miller, 2004; Simphal, & Rogers, 2011).

It should be underscored that at the beginning the 20th century, new philosophical currents (traditions) emerged, amongst which are those that considered the analysis of our use of language as essential to understanding philosophical problems. In this tradition are included most analytic philosophers, prominent amongst which we speak of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's "*Sprachspiel* [language game]" hypothesis has become a buzz-word for contemporary philosophers. Another of such names is Michael Dummett, who has made significant contributions to the theory of meaning (see: Dummett's 1996 *The Seas of Language*). As the progression of interests in logical analysis of language moved from syntax to semantics and finally to pragmatics, philosophical considerations on the use of language moved further and further away from the ancient Aristotelian models, thus we may speak of a certain discontinuity even within a historical line of a tradition of philosophical interests in language that dates back to ancient Greek and Roman systems of rhetoric and public speech.

Notably, in discussing the question of political correctness as a theory of communication, this paper will draw many inferences from the Frankfurt Critical School of the early 20th century rather than the aforementioned tradition of analytic philosophy which contributed immensely to the philosophy of language. The choice of this Frankfurt tradition over the Analytic tradition is purposeful, namely to highlight Jürgen Habermas' contributions to the contemporary debates on theories of communication especially in relation to his theories of communicative action, communicative competence and the principle of rational discourse. Secondly, Habermas links us most fittingly to the historical origins of the use of *political correctness* as a tool of propaganda by the Marxist political leaders, who experimented with communism at the turn of the 20th century. The paper projects the Frankfurt Critical School to which Habermas belongs as a neo-Marxist research center whose project is to correct the perceived theoretical gaps of the earlier Marxist ideologies.

THE MARXIST BACKGROUND TO THE CONTEMPORARY PROCLIVITY TO 'POLITICAL CORRECTNESS'

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the socio-cultural context of the Industrial Revolution had already divided society into the class of workers and the class of capitalists (i.e. the "proletariat" and the "bourgeoisie"). Karl Marx had published his *Das Kapital* in 1867. Karl Marx had writ-

ten *Das Kapital* as an analysis of the dialectical degeneration of the capitalist system which eventually give way to the revolution of the proletariat. The class-conflict motifs upon which this work was constructed not only vilified the capitalist bourgeoisie and aristocrats but it also predicted that this same class-struggle was to reach a point when it would become the 'seed of the revolution'. Unfortunately, events in Great Britain and Germany, where the Industrial Revolution was at its peak did not happen as Karl Marx predicted. Notably, it was precisely during the inter-war period (i.e. between WW1 and WW2) that the already abhorrent class-differences degenerated into a class-conflicts. The need to respond to the socio-economic questions became more urgent with the depressive ravages of the First World War most evident in the Great Economic Depression of the 1929 and 1930s. This scenario was aptly captured in two papal encyclicals of that period published by two different popes: "For towards the close of the nineteenth century, the new kind of economic life that had arisen and the new developments of industry had gone to the point in most countries that human society was clearly becoming divided more and more into two classes. ... Men were without question sincerely seeking an immediate remedy for this lamentable disorganization of states and a secure safeguard against worse dangers" (Pope Pius XI, 1931).

"That the spirit of revolutionary change, ..., should have passed beyond the sphere of **politics** and made its influence felt in the cognate sphere of practical **economics** is not surprising. The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable, ...; in the changed relations between **masters** and **workmen**; ..., as also, finally, in the prevailing **moral** degeneracy. The momentous gravity of the state of things now obtaining fills every mind with painful apprehension; **wise men are discussing it; practical men are proposing schemes; popular meetings, legislatures, and rulers of nations** are all busied with it – actually **there is no question which has taken deeper hold on the public mind**" (Pope Leo XIII, 1891).

More significant is the fact that since 1848 when the *Communist Manifesto* was published, various strands of Marxist experiments had spread across many European countries. Thus, the pluralist tenor of contemporary Marxist-ideological culture of *political correctness* dates back to the Communist era of the late 19th and early 20th century. At the time, to be "correct" in a number of varied senses, connoted the attitude or disposition of being in support or in line with the Communist political agenda; and so invariably to be "incorrect" would mean to be a Socialist. This synonymy of "political correctness" "with the "Communist ideology" gradually became a 'dogma' to be promoted according to the model laid out in the theoretical principles of communism deduced from the Manifesto of the Communist Party. Thus a proper review of our contemporary notion of political correctness has to begin with an overview of the political programme of communist Marxism of the late 1800s up to the 20th century neo-Marxist theories of the Frankfurt Critical School in Germany. It was the neo-Marxists, who laid the

foundations for subsequent proliferations of the Marxist-liberalist cultural revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. The massive proliferation of its ideologies has been the key to the sweeping reception which characterized Marxism from its earliest days indicated in the following editorial noted: "The "Manifesto of the Communist Party" was written by Marx and Engels.... The first edition of the Manifesto was a 23-page pamphlet in a dark green cover.... Between March and July 1848 the *Manifesto* was printed in the *Deutsche Londoner Zeitung*,.... A Danish, a Polish (in Paris) and Swedish... editions appeared in 1848. ...the first English translation, made by Helen Macfarlane, was not published until two years later, between June and November 1850,....The growing emancipation struggle of the proletariat in the '60s and 70s of the 19th century led to new editions of the *Manifesto*.... In 1872, the *Manifesto* was first published in America in *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*. The first Russian edition of the *Manifesto*, ... appeared in Geneva in 1869 [and] in the 1882 edition (translation by Georgi Plekhanov),... Marx and Engels, who attributed great significance to the dissemination of Marxism in Russia, had written a special preface....In 1885, the newspaper *Le Socialiste* published the French translation of the *Manifesto* made by Marx's daughter Laura Lafargue and read by Engels" (Marx and Engels, 1848 [1969 edition])

The above cited information presents us with the earliest ideological dissemination of dogmatic and revolutionary [thus hypocritically anti-dogmatic] curricula designed for an emancipation movement that is fundamentally enmeshed in the dynamics of class-struggle between proletariats and bourgeoisie. Within this context of polarization of society into *proletariats* and *bourgeoisie* classes by the *ironically classless agenda* of the Marxists, there developed the tendencies to extend the hitherto *scientific* norms and values of *correctness* to the *political* domain in the second half of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century. Michel Foucault's observations and misgivings about the neo-Marxist theorists of the late 1960s is very revealing in this regard. When asked about his attitude towards action and politics [Comment pourrait-on définir votre à l'égard de l'action et de la politique?], he responded as follows: "La gauche française a vécu sur le mythe d'une ignorance sacrée. Ce qui change, c'est l'idée qu'une pensée politique ne peut être **politiquement correcte** que si elle est **scientifiquement rigoureuse**. Et, dans cette mesure, je pense que tout l'effort qui est fait actuellement dans un groupe d'intellectuels communistes pour réévaluer les concepts de Marx, enfin pour les reprendre à la racine, pour les analyser, pour définir l'usage que l'on peut et qu'on doit en faire, il me semble que tout cet effort est un effort à la fois **politique et scientifique**. Et l'idée que c'est se détourner de la politique que de se vouer, comme nous le faisons maintenant, à des activités proprement théoriques et spéculatives, je crois que cette idée est complètement fautive. Ce n'est pas parce que nous nous détournons de la politique que nous nous occupons de problèmes théoriques si étroits et si méticuleux, c'est parce qu'on se rend compte maintenant que toute forme d'action politique ne

peut que s'articuler de la manière la plus étroite sur une réflexion théorique rigoureuse" (Foucault, 1968)¹.

It is thus very problematic to justify this *sense* of "correctness" as an *ideologically sound* attitude when a politically dogmatic position resorts exclusively to unprincipled political activism advocating as it were, *boorish* politics as the decisive measure of scientific appropriateness (correctness). Such conflicts of interests are not only manifest in the political domain but they are also expressly obvious when scientific theories are formulated to serve economic ends. It is however not controverted that its political currency served the 'party-line' ideologies thus as Herbert Kohl had observed: "The term 'politically correct' was used disparagingly, to refer to someone whose loyalty to the Communist Party line overrode compassion, and led to bad politics. It was used by Socialists against Communists, and was meant to separate out Socialists who believed in egalitarian moral ideas from dogmatic Communists who would advocate and defend party positions regardless of their moral substance" (Kohl, 1992).

Marxism in practice did not only become a tool of political hegemony but it also turned out to be a tool of economic colonization of the proletariat for which it had proclaimed itself as an emancipator. The collapse of the political experiments with Marxist communism did not however lead to the total abandonment of the ideological foundations upon which its theoretical dogmas were constructed. As early as the 1920s, when the German neo-Marxists began a new project of expanding the frontiers of the Marxist ideology beyond the economic context. Their new target was "culture" in its entirety hence **Cultural Marxism** was the motivation of the neo-Marxists as they reworked the essentials of what they considered to be the true spirit of Marxism. This new project became rooted at the Critical School in Frankfurt.

HOW MARXISM SPREAD FROM EUROPE TO THE UNITED STATES: FROM FRANKFURT TO NEW YORK

The socio-political utopian hopes and enthusiasm expressed about the Russian-Bolshevik experiment with communism (i.e. the Soviet socialism), which were still popular among the left-wing (communist politicians), had begun to wane at the beginning of the 20th century. Among the Marxists academia, scholars and theorists in Germany, there was the common impression that a

1 English translation: [The French left has lived on the myth of a sacred ignorance. What changes is the idea that a political thought can be politically correct only if it is scientifically rigorous. And to that extent, I think all the effort that is being done in a group of communist intellectuals to reassess the concepts of Marx, finally to resume at the root, to analyze, to determine the use that we can and must do, it seems to me that all this effort is an effort both political and scientific. And the idea is to turn away from the policy of devoting themselves, as we do now, to strictly theoretical and speculative activities, I believe that this idea is completely false. This is not because we turn away from the policy we are dealing with theoretical problems so narrow and so meticulous, it is because we now realize that any form of political action can only articulate the most closely on a rigorous theoretical reflection].

lot of Bolshevik aberrations had been introduced into the original ideas of Karl Marx concerning social change. In the same vein, they also felt great despondency with regard to Mao's Communist China and Hitler's Nazi government in Germany, all of which rose to power as a result of the Marxist revolutionary ideological propaganda. More disturbing is the fact that the original predictions of Karl Marx were not corroborated by historical events and perhaps a new hypothesis is needed to correct the short-falls and fill in the gaps of the model using the same framework that was provided by Karl Marx. In Germany particularly, the predictions of Karl Marx with regard to the revolution of the proletariat did not really take place despite the rising competition of the capitalist industrialists which was part of the dialectical routes of the revolution as predicted in Karl Marx's 1867 work *Das Kapital*. Marx predicted that as capitalist competitions continue, the number of the members of the class of bourgeoisie will reduce since the 'logic of greed' engendered by the competition will put many of the rich out of business. In contrast to this prediction, more and more middle sized businesses prospered and the class of bourgeoisie and aristocrats did not experience such a diminishing of its population.

In the meantime, more and more people were experiencing the post-first world war hardship, the search for adequate answers to the *social question* became quite expedient as to provide a fodder for any category of *Gutmensch*²(i.e. a naive "do-gooder"). It was therefore not surprising that the first Marxist-oriented research center was established in this period of a search for new answers to the social question. An important personality, who fits into such a category of *Gutmensch* (i.e. understood in context of this quest for social change) is Felix Weil, a German student of political science, who organized and financed the *Erste Marxistische Arbeitswoche* [First Marxist Work Week in Ilmenau, Germany]. That event gave birth in the following year to the *Institut für Sozialforschung*[The Institute for Social Research], founded by Carl Grunberg, a Marxist legal and political professor at the University of Vienna (Corradetti, 2012).

The primary aim of this social research center was to bring the various Marxist alternative models together so as to harmonize the Marxist tradition into a school of thought that will accommodate a synthesis of the **critical** philosophy of Kant, the **psycho-sexual** psychology of Sigmund Freud and the **dialectical** history of Hegel. The initial steps were the "political revision" (in 1923) of the implications of historical-Marxist insights from Gyorgy Lukacs, one of the attendants of the First Marxist Work Week. So also was the pressure on the philosophical-Marxist ideas of Karl Korsh, who published Felix Weil's doctoral thesis as well as wrote a monograph on *Marxism and Philosophy* (Held, 1980; Finlayson, 2005).

This Institute for Social Research was popularized by one of its later directors, namely Max Horkheimer, who took over the Institute in 1930 publishing in the same year *Marx's Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* and *The German Ideology*. He was also responsible for the publication in the United States, of their

2 The word *Gutmensch* refers to "do-gooder" i.e. person or group of persons who may have good intentions - *Gutseinwollens* - but who are so zealous as to advocate utopian solutions.

journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* renamed later as *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, with which they gained a wider audience, popularity and favourable reception within America and the English academia. Hence Horkheimer is prominently significant in sowing the seeds of Marxist species of political correctness in the United States (Held, 1980). Robert M Seiler presents a corroborative narrative of the checkered history of this tradition of neo-Marxist theorists in the United States as follows: “In the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, we see one of the longest and the most famous traditions of Marxism ... [that] grew out of the Institute of Social Research, which was founded in 1923 at the University of Frankfurt by Felix Weil, One of the major purposes of the institute was to study (and eventually explain) the dynamics of social change. Carl Grunberg (political scientist) served as director for the years 1923-1929, stressing the **historical** context to research, Max Horkheimer stressed the **interdisciplinary** nature of the institute’s research programme. His collaborators included Theodor Adorno (philosopher, sociologist and musicologist), Erich Fromm (psychologist), Franz Neumann (political scientist), and Friedrich Pollock (economist). Over the years, many celebrated thinkers such as Herbert Marcuse (philosopher), Walter Benjamin (essayist and literary critic) and Leo Lowenthal (literary critic) were associated with the group. When National Socialism came to power, the institute fled (in 1933) to Geneva and then (in 1935) to New York, being attached to the Department of Sociology at Columbia University. In 1941, the Institute relocated to California. During WW II, then, members of the Institute settled in various parts of the United States. [Nonetheless, from various parts of the US, they were synergistically coordinated as showcased in their 1944 publication of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, under the leadership of Horkheimer]. In 1949, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Pollock returned to Germany, and in 1951, they re-established the Institute for Social Research, with Horkheimer as director. Marcuse and Lowenthal among other members remained in the United States. The institute disbanded in 1969, but its influence continued in the work of Jürgen Habermas, representing the second wave of Critical Theory” (Seiler, 2016).

It is little wonder then why decades after the Second World War, and precisely from the 1960s onwards, *political correctness* blossomed in America in a new rhetoric of class struggle. Of notable significance in this regards is the remarks of Roger Kimball (February 8th, 1990)³, who himself is impressed by the tradition of such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Max Scheler,

3 Roger Kimball (February 8th, 1990), maintained these views in an interview granted to Mr. Brian Lamb of the BOOKTV STATION - “How Politics has corrupted Higher Education: College/University Humanities Program”, -to promote his book *Tenured Radicals*, as following the lines of argument contained in Allan Bloom’s *Closing of the American Mind*. He explains that the title -*Tenured Radical* - refers to academic professors whose tenure/contract are guaranteed but who ironically undermine the very institutions they are supposed to protect. He also makes clarifications on his key terms including ‘humanist’ ‘nihilism’ and ‘deconstruction’ in reference to his assertions that “language is an imperfect means of communication which never really reaches reality and is self-referential in its deepest essence”. Kimball also holds that “we cannot understand ourselves, our civilization, unless we understand what made us, where we came from, the large part of which is the Greco-Roman tradition” (See: retrieved March, 10, 2015, from:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWGgD8XF0G8>).

William Shakespeare and Dante. Kimball maintains that the background to his critique of America's higher institutions cultural crisis is traceable to his school days in the 1960s with the institutionalization of radical feminism and the reshaping of the educational curricula towards the radical ideologies (Kimball, 1990). This new rhetoric supplied by Herbert Marcuse's Freudian **psycho-sexual** interpretations of Marxism, which had replaced the **economic** interpretations of the Marxist proletariat-bourgeoisie divide (Marcuse, 1955). With a new ideological re-inforcement of this '*sub-strata*' by the liberal-conservative (republican-democrat) divides, it subsequently devolved into other **cultural** forms of class-divides such as **gender and race**, taking the center stage of public debates in the 1990s. As at 1987, Allan Bloom had published *The Closing of the American Mind*, to which a number of responses flooded the media and reviews in academic journals (Schulz, 1993; Peter, 1997; Sally, 2000). With Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals* (1990), more reactions were noted (Schulz, 1993; Wilson, 1995; Peter, 1997) and so also was the reception to D'Souza's 1991 *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (Whitney et al, 1992; Schulz, 1993). These **cultural** re-alignments in the universities culminated in the LGBT (i.e. Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders) demonstrations witnessed in many universities in America at the turn of this 21st century. Perhaps, the most contemporary representational image of this neo-Marxist influenced culture of political correctness in the United States of America is **McCarthyism**. Between 1947 and 1957, Joseph Raymond McCarthy served as a Republican Senator of Wisconsin and he had become the most visible public face of the tensions of the Cold War Era in relation to the widespread Communist subversions. In reference to McCarthy's practice of making unsubstantiated claims in order to whip up anti-Communist sentiments (i.e. the Red Scare – fear of a potential rise of communism or radical leftism in the USA), the term McCarthyism became popularized in the 1950s. A more philosophical icon of cultural Marxism in America is Thomas McCarthy, a third generation neo-Marxist, whose 1981 *Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* embodies the contemporary continuation of the tradition of the Frankfurt Critical School in an even more cogent perspectives that is attuned to a perceptive interpretation of consequences and implications of various theories of public discourse.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN ASIA: MAO ZEDONG'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION OF THE 1960S AND THE LEFT-RIGHT DIVIDE

The connotation of the term 'political correctness' with the *Left-Wing* Political Parties is not exclusive to the Western Liberal Democracies. The history of the Great Leap Economic Policy by Mao, a former Chinese Head of State is one of the classical illustrations of the Marxist-Communist Utopias. In 1958, after China's first Five-Year Plan, Mao called for "grassroots socialism" in order to accelerate his plans for turning China into a modern industrial-

ized state. In this spirit, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward, established the People's Communes in the countryside, and began mass mobilization of the people into collectives. Many communities were assigned production of a single commodity – steel. Mao vowed to increase agricultural production to twice 1957 levels. Unfortunately, the Great Leap was an economic failure. The steel produced was low quality and largely useless. In the meantime, chaos in the collectives, bad weather, and exports of food necessary to secure hard currency resulted in the Great Chinese Famine. The famine caused the deaths of millions of people and reduced Mao's prestige within the Communist Party. In 1959, the Chinese Minister of Defense, Marshal Peng Dehuai, did attend a conference convened by the Communist Party Leaders to discuss how to save China's economy following the colossal failure of Mao Zedong's *The Great Leap Forward Economic Policy* (Worden, 1987). After the conference Peng wrote Mao Zedong a private letter wherein he moderately cautioned against "elevating political dogma over the laws of economics" (Worden, 1987). Mao Zedong (1893-1976), as Head of State responded by having Peng removed from his posts, and accused him of being a "**right-opportunist**". It was precisely in the 1960s that the **economic** undertones of the original Marxist depiction of class-struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was replaced by China's Maoism with a **political** undercurrent of class-struggle between the left-wing and the right-wing. The precipitate of Mao's ideological justification for the Cultural Revolution, is contained in one of the most celebrated historical propaganda of the **rhetorics of political correctness**, now known as the May 16 Notification of 1966. The text of this "Notification" implied in unflinching cues that right-wingers or even perceived supporters of right-wing ideologies are enemies to be staunchly opposed: "Those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the government, the army, and the various spheres of culture are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once conditions are ripe, they will seize political power and turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Some of them we have already seen through; others we have not. Some are still trusted by us and are being trained as our successors, persons like Khrushchev, for example, who are still nestling beside us" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution).

Given the aura of **kyriachy**⁴ (i.e. domination, intimidation, oppression and submission) surrounding Mao's growing personality-cult amongst the teem-

4 Kyriachy refers to a social system or set of connecting social systems built around domination, intimidation, oppression, and submission. The term was coined by Elisabeth SchusslerFiorenza in 1992 to describe her theory of interconnected, interacting, and self-extending systems of domination and submission in which a single individual might be oppressed in some relationships and privileged in others. I use the term here to refer to the gradual institutionalization of Mao's ambivalent enigma of fortunes and woes for the Chinese nation during the decade of Cultural Revolution in China (1966-1976). In a more broad sense, the term kyriachy can be employed as a referent umbrella term that encompasses sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, economic injustice, colonialism, ethnocentrism, militarism and other forms of dominating hierarchies in which the subordination of one person or group to another is internalized and institutionalized.

ing population of Chinese Youth, whose only tool of political discourse is the “telescope and microscope of Mao Zedong’s Thought”, the other eight **non-communist** parties in China were alarmed as to the meaning of what sacrifices it would entail to continue to maintain and promote *politically incorrect* (i.e. non-communist) ideologies. Such a warning sounded in audacious tones, also sent signals within the leadership of the Communist Party, to the effect that an anti-Maoist impression would as well be interpreted as *politically incorrect*. (Scruton, 2014). The unfolding events of the following weeks and months culminated in the “Sixteen Points” of August 8th 1966, an excerpt of which reads as follows: “Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds, and stage a comeback. The proletariat must do just the opposite: It must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie [...] to change the outlook of society. Currently our objective is to struggle against and crush those people in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois **academic** “authorities” and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to **transform education, literature and art**, and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system” (Central Committee of the Cultural Revolution Group, 1966).

No one was left in doubt concerning the ultimate direction of the Cultural Revolution in Mao’s China. It came to a climax with the campaign for the destruction of the ‘Four Olds’, namely: old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas (Nianyi, 1999; Mactarquhar, et al, 2006). The Red Guards themselves lead the episodic vandalism and destruction of significant cultural and religious monuments in a brazen manner that smacks of **cultural xenocentrism** (i.e a repudiation of one’s culture in preference to a foreign culture). At Beijing Normal University for instance, they desecrated and damaged the burial place of Confucius (551-479 BC), the historically acclaimed Chinese Ancient thinker and founder of the Ru School of Chinese philosophy. Temples, churches, mosques, monasteries (over 6,000 Buddhist monasteries at Tibet) and cemeteries were closed down, looted and destroyed. More so, Buddhism was depicted by the Marxist propaganda as superstition and religion was looked upon as a means of hostile foreign infiltration and the instrument of the ruling class (Smyer, 2007).

In effect, being **politically correct** in Mao’s Communist **logocracy** (i.e. $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ + $\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ government by words) during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) became synonymous with what the Japanese referred to as 言葉狩り, *kotobagari* which literally means “word-hunting”. The Japanese also use the term **kotobagari** in reference to the reluctance to use or even insinuate the mention of words that are considered to be **politically incorrect**. Thus, Mao Zedong began a campaign of what was referred to as the 文斗, *wendou* i.e. the **verbal struggle** using 大字报, *dazibaoli*. i.e. big character posters, slogans and rhetoric such as: “strike the enemy down on the floor and step on him with

a foot"; "long live the red terror!"; "Those who are against Chairman Mao will have their dog skulls smashed into pieces"; or perhaps similar slogans as 造反有理, *zàofǎnyǒulǐ* i.e. to rebel is justified (Shaorong, 2000).

It was a 'virtue' of political correctness to use these slogans intended primarily as a "save-your-life" **astute** leverage of supporting the Chinese Communist Septuagenarian (Mao Zedong) and his Cultural Revolution. The propaganda of words made the people to believe that it was "no big deal" if Red Guards were beating "bad people" to death (MacFarquhar, & Shoenhals, 2006). Among other cultural consequences of this revolutionary ethos of political correctness was the virtual halt of China's educational system as schools were closed. Up till the early 1970s all universities did not reopen and only very few universities could begin their academic session as at 1972 (Andreas, 2009).

A NEW RHETORIC FROM JÜRGEN HABERMAS: FOR OR AGAINST POLITICAL CORRECTNESS?

From its earliest beginnings in the 1920s, the goal of the Frankfurt Critical School has been to expand the economic underpinnings of Marxism to other aspects of culture and as such we may speak of the beginnings of Cultural Marxism in the Critical Social Theories of the Frankfurt School. This Cultural Marxism is intended to serve as a corrective to the perceived deficiencies of the Marxist ideology. An improved theoretical base, in the mind of the neo-Marxists, would more effectively deal with the social pathologies of the economic structures in the capitalist system. It can be said that this project of the critical theorists was constantly being updated by successive leaders of the Frankfurt 'critical' thinkers in tandem with the transformations of the cultural structures of societies over the years. We can in fact speak of the first generation of the Frankfurt Critical theorists as those who were identified with this neo-Marxist project from Felix Weil's 1922 *Erste Marxistische Arbeitswoche* [First Marxist Work Week] until 1968 when the students' activists movements swept through the majority of European and American universities. The 1968 recorded a "harvest" of college students' revolts as most students had embraced the New Leftist radicalistic movements characterized by socialist leanings and distrust of authorities. These include the January 1968 demonstrations of the 300 student protesters from the University of Warsaw, Poland; the February protests by professors from the German University of Bonn, demanding the resignation of university's president due to his involvement in building of concentration camps during the war; same February, students from Harvard, Radcliffe and Boston University held a four-day anti-Vietnamese War hunger strike; In March, the battle of battle of Giulia took place between students and polish in the faculty of architecture in the Sapienza University of Rome; Martin Luther King Jr's assassination in April 4th sparked violent protests in more than 115 American cities and

students from Columbia University protested the school's allegedly racist policies, taking three school officials hostage for 24 hours; 1968 the Summer Olympics featured the issue of Apartheid and subsequently South African team was banned, bringing the Black Movement into public view; May 1968 saw the protests of students over university reforms in France and in Stockholm Sweden, students occupied the Student Union Building for three days; In Sorbonne University in Paris, students also protested against the threatened expulsion of several students of Nanterre. In June protesting students demonstrated in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. In August, the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia began. In the same month, the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago was disrupted by protesters and so also there was in Russia the Red Square Demonstration in Moscow, In September the Feminist movement gained international recognition through the Women's Liberation Movement demonstrations at the 1968 Miss America beauty pageant event; In October, the occupation of the central campus of the National Autonomous University by the army sparked off a students demonstration in Tlatelolco Plaza in Mexico City with police, paratroopers and paramilitary units firing on students and killing over a hundred persons. The environmental movement also saw to the formation of the "Club of Rome" in 1968 and in Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands, students and activist groups protested against hydroelectric plans and pollution related issues. Jürgen Habermas aptly captured the cultural worldview of the generation of German students in 1968 i.e. *the 68-er Bewegung*: "die 68-er Generation war wohl in Deutschland wirklich die erste, die sich nicht gescheut hat face to face Erklärungen zu fordern - von den Eltern, den Älteren überhaupt in der Familie, vorm Fernseher" (Habermas, 1990). "These 1968 generation of students were probably in fact the first in Germany that did not shy away from demanding explanations face to face - from their parents, from adults in general, within the family, [and from the media] while watching television" (Gassert, & Steinweis, 2006).

What is notable here is that Jürgen Habermas, who in 1964 had returned to Frankfurt to take over the chair of philosophy and sociology at the Institute for Social Research (and the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main), can be said to belong rather to the second generation of the Frankfurt neo-Marxist critical theorists. This classification assumes that the first generation of the Frankfurt theorists are such thinkers as Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), Frederick Pollock (1894-1970), Leo Lowenthal (1890-1993), and Eric Fromm (1900-1980). Hence, with a conviction that the Frankfurt Critical Tradition under Horkheimer had been paralyzed by political skepticism and disdain for modern culture, Habermas began to search for a new methodology for reviving the Frankfurt project of responding to the constantly changing social questions (Calhoun, et al, 2002). The shift of theoretical emphasis in the Frankfurt school in the last three decades has been rooted in Habermasian insights with an effective preference to the under-

standing of the conditions of **action coordination** through the underpinnings of the **conditions of validity for speech-acts**.

In the following paragraphs, I shall sample out two of such Habermasian insights with a view to a philosophical analysis of its possible implications for a rational discourse on the meaning of 'political correctness'. It is my hope that such an analysis will clarify the source of the 'uncanny' feeling of **incorrectness** inherent in our cynical use of the buzz-phrase *political correctness*. This cynical use of 'correctness' is embedded in the reference to political sensitivities that is intended to accommodate 'new-leftist' attitudes on the one hand while at the same time suffocating 'right-conservatist' values.

In 1989, Habermas published his habilitation thesis *-Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit; Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie Bürgerlichen der Gesellschaft* [The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: Reflections on the Category of Bourgeoisie Society] which was originally written at the University of Marburg in 1962. That publication coincided with the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. As from the 1990s a new approach to the social question within the Frankfurt tradition was ushered in by a robust series of Habermasian hypotheses, two of which we shall analyze in the following lines. We intend to draw out what implications they entail for a philosophical interpretation of "political correctness" and to accentuate that rational validity and/or invalidity is the key to a compatible discourse principle for political correctness in the context of Habermas's theory of communicative action.

THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

A two-volume monograph titled *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* appeared in 1981, in which Jürgen Habermas laid out the two-tier levels of his social critical theory. Habermas merges the functionalist interdependent units of social institutions (i.e. religion, education, politics, economy etc) with the organic consensual grounds for the validity of social values. As a result, the Habermasian theory is on the one hand, based on strategic or instrumental action which locates the validity of normative rationality within the existing social structures; on the other hand, Habermas draws on the validity of practical reason which is based on consensual co-ordination of communicative action. In this way he guarantees the autonomy, identity and responsible-agency of different interest groups from different spheres of the public social units (i.e. political, moral or religious). He was keen to note that one of the basic features of the contemporary nuance of 'political correctness' is tied to the class struggle which condenses into institutions and structures after a while. The opposition divides are transformed into new forms of 'bourgeoisie-proletariat' structures and categories which is characteristic of the Marxist "dualist" systems. Habermas' main interest is to "bridge" this divide.

We note that in the public sphere 'political correctness' is understood as a cynical catch-phrase conveying a negative connotation. This sarcasm is due to

the conspicuous lack of a common platform of discourse at the *substrata* of the class struggle motifs irrespective of its variegated forms (i.e. 'proletariat', 'feminism', LGBT, racism, leftist, socialist-communist, liberalism-conservatism, democrat-republican etc). In this respect, Habermas (1985) advocates a "philosophical discourse of modernity" in a search for a common *substrata* of practical **rationality**[for compatibility] which is shared by all human beings. He intends the outcome of such a discourse principle to serve as a corrective platform to dialogically engage all classes of participants in a "politically correct" route of arriving at a compatibility consensus of interests. This *substrata* of rationality is the basic ingredient in his theory of communicative action: "Habermas's hallmark concept of communicative action refers to the linguistically mediated interaction of social agents oriented towards reaching **mutual understanding**. The notions of validity and inter-subjectivity play a central role in this account. Habermas argues that in order to understand one another's utterances, we must know what makes them acceptable. That is we must understand the reasons that would be garnered to make good on the claims we raise, explicitly or implicitly, in what we say. In this way **rationality** is embodied in linguistic communication" (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas>).

To preserve rationality of compatible consensus in the various types of discourse and to maintain the relationship between the two-levels of strategic action and communicative action, Habermas draws from Talcott Parson's contributions to the Social Action Theory and so insists that a social "act" involves an **agent** (whether proletariat or bourgeoisie), who has an **interest**, which is differentiated from the **context** or the state of affairs (political, religious, moral, economic, etc) within which it (i.e. asocial action) is performed (Gratoff, 1978). The **compatibly** valid conditions obtainable for the practical rationality of communicative action (*political* correctness, *economic* correctness, *moral* correctness) depends on the particular social context under review hence Habermas differentiates the various **types of discourses** at play in his theory of communicative action by means of a transcendent (overarching) principle of rational discourse.

PRINCIPLE OF RATIONAL DISCOURSE AND VALIDITY CRITERIA FOR COMPATIBILITY IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

In his work *Faktizität und Geltung [Between Facts and Norms]*, published in 1992, Habermas seeks for a *neutral* principle that can guarantee an impartial assessment of what should account for **correctness** with reference to *action norms* in general irrespective of whether we are in the context of politics, morality, legality, or democracy (i.e. political correctness, moral correctness, legal correctness, etc). He was convinced that such a principle should be "a parsimonious **discourse principle** expressing the meaning of post-conventional requirements of justification" (Habermas, 1992). These post-conventional requirements of justifications are expressed aptly by E. W. Böckenforde,

who avers that “Das modern Recht verschiebt die normative Zumutungen vom moralisch entlasteten Einzelnen auf die Gesetze, die die **Kompatibilität** der Handlungsfreiheit sichern [Modern laws shifts the normative impositions from morally relevant details to the laws that ensure **compatibility** of liberties]” (Böckenförde, 1991). Hence, Habermas defines the discourse principle as follows: “**D**: Gültig sind genau die Handlungsnormen, denen alle möglichst weitestgehend Betroffenen als Teilnehmer an rationaler Diskursen zustimmen könnten. Definition: Just those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourse” (Habermas, 1992).

This definition highlights certain categories that need to be specified. For instance, Habermas makes a distinction between categories of ‘affected persons’: In a moral discourse, we may speak of affected persons as all moral agents whereas in a political discourse (liberal democracy for instance), we are **limited** to speak of affected persons only as citizens of a democratic society as defined legally by constitutional provisions.

Interpreting the difference of this limited **political** context from the more inclusive **moral** context, Habermas evokes a **legal** model of practical rationality. This difference is illustrated with a Kantian approach to the use of moral and legal concepts and intuitions. Habermas explains that whenever we ‘switch’ from moral to legal contexts, the former moral concepts undergo certain operational inversions of *practical* rationality in the new (latter) context of legal discourse. Essentially this implicates that certain **limitations** are imposed on those moral concepts by the validity norms of “rationality-discourse” which are **compatibly** redefined by legal principles: “In seiner *Einleitung in die Metaphysik der Sitten*, Kant (1785) geht vom Grundbegriff des moralischen Freiheitsgesetzes aus und gewinnt daraus die juristischen Gesetze durch *Einschränkung*. Die Moraltheorie liefert die Oberbegriffe: **Wille** und Willkür, Handlung und **Triebfeder**, Pflicht und **Neigung**, Gesetz und Gesetzgebung dienen zunächst zu Bestimmung des moralischen Rechts und Handelns. In der Rechtslehre erfahren diese moralischen Grundbegriffe Einschränkungen in **drei** Dimensionen. Nach Kant bezieht sich der Begriff des Rechts nicht primär auf den freien Willen, sondern auf die Adressaten, erst recht sich ferner auf das *äußere Verhältnis* einer Person gegen eine andere und schlussendlich mit jener *Zwangsbefugnis* ausgestattet, die der eine gegenüber dem anderen im Falle eines Übergriffes auszuüben berechtigt ist. Das Rechtsprinzip schränkt unter diesen drei Gesichtspunkten das Moralprinzip ein” (Habermas, 1992).⁵

5 English translation: [In his *Introduction to the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant (1785) starts with the basic concept of the moral law and obtains juridical laws from it by way of limitation. Moral theory supplies the overarching concepts “**will** and free choice, action and incentive [**internal** motivations], duty and **inclinations** [personal **habits** deontological considered], law and legislation serve in the first place to characterize moral judgements and action. In the legal theory, these basic concepts under **limitations** in **three** dimensions. According to Kant, the concept of law does not refer primarily to free will but to the free **choice** of the addressees; furthermore, it pertains to the **external** relations of one person to another; finally, it is furnished with the **coercive** power that one person is entitled to exercise with respect to another in the case of infringement. Under these three aspects, the principle of law sets the limits on the moral principle].

Among other of such new insights, Habermas develops his arguments for '**deliberative** democracy' (rather than **liberal** democracy) in the logic of a rational discourse that fits compatibly into a "critical" analysis of what sense of "correctness" is obtainable when we invoke the expression "*to be politically correct*". In comparison to moral discourse, the political discourse of a deliberative democracy is (should be) governed by the principle of legitimate law-making oriented towards arriving at a compatible consensus of **all citizens** belonging to a legally constituted political community.

In order to navigate through the 'almost impossible *democratic* utopia' (i.e. achieving the consensus of **all** citizens even with the extensive distribution of political franchise), Habermas proposes the institutionalization of the ethos of rational discourse by means of a system of rights that ensures the access to equal political participation for all. The dynamics of political autonomy and how rights institutionalize the ideals of equality, reciprocity, and inclusion derives from his theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1992). This dynamics, which is akin to what obtained in the ancient Greek Agora-debates, is coordinated through an impartial application of the principle of rational discourse to public discourse. In its Habermasian sense, a "**consensus** of political correctness" does not seek to impose a lop-sided ideology of any perceived dominant group neither does it seek to appease the sensitivities of any perceived oppressed group but it is guided only by those **limitations** which the legal principle sets on the norms and values of other domains especially on the domain of morality.

Notably, a fundamental problem in this model is created when the existing legal structures are themselves skewed to favour one of the contending interest groups but if we consider a 'control experiment' for an ideal deliberative democracy in this Habermasian theory of communicative action, we shall certainly hope for a closer approximation to the authentic expression of political correctness as a social value. Since subjects of communicative action are **rationally accountable** in interactions, it should not really matter if the context is a moral discourse of persons or a political discourse of citizens. In the Habermasian model, **political correctness** is so-valued to the extent that there is no undue deference to any particular interest group or party. The only "transmission belt" which ensures validity-claims [Geltungsanspruch] for the compatible engagement of the different groups in a communicative (as well as a functional) form of social integration is the rationality principle of discourse. Practical rationality alone adjudicates the legitimacy and compatibility of contesting norms in a pluralistic model of social action. Therefore, the Habermasian theory of communicative action and the principle of rational discourse entails that "oppositions between interests require a rational balancing of competing values, orientations and interest positions" (Habermas, 1992).

CONCLUSION

The relationship between the legal and political structures of our contemporary liberal democratic societies is most evident in Habermasian theory of communicative action which rightly highlights the Kantian **limitation** of the moral sphere by the legal principle. The implication is obvious since the political principle of rational discourse is dependent on the legal foundations upon which the institutionalization of social consensus is realized. The new social realities of our time is no longer those of dualistic or even 'triadistic' collective stratifications but they are factually pluralistic and as such highly fragmented. In this respect, therefore, it is notable that: "A pluralism in the ways of reading fundamentally ambivalent traditions has sparked a growing number of debates over the collective identities of nations, states, cultures, and other groups. Such discussions make it clear that the disputing parties are expected to consciously choose the continuities they want to live out of, which traditions they want to break off or continue. To the extent that collective identities can develop only in the fragile, dynamic, and fuzzy shape of a decentered ever fragmented public consciousness, ethical-political discussions that reach into the depths have become both possible and unavoidable" (Habermas, 1992).

These realities of our time does not make moral values redundant nor do they imply that the sense in which Jürgen Habermas interprets the Kantian legal *limitation* of the moral sphere [i.e. the shrinking of the kingdom of moral consciousness in the public arena] translates into the *replacement* of morality by legality: "To be sure, moral and legal questions refer to the same problems: how interpersonal relations can be legitimately ordered and actions coordinated with one another through justified norms, how action conflicts can be consensually resolved against the background of intersubjectively recognized normative principles and rules. But they refer to these same problems in different ways. Despite the common reference point, morality and law differ *prima facie* in as much as post traditional morality represents only a form of cultural *knowledge*, whereas law has, in addition to this, a binding character at the institutional level. Law is not only a symbolic system but an action system as well" (Habermas, 1992).

The pluralistic realities of our time exposes the fragile nature of our **liberal** democratic societies. Liberal democracy cannot be preserved at the institutional level on the statutory *substrata* of the legal system except with the incorporation of deliberative principles (i.e. what Habermas calls the "discourse principle"). While the legal *substrata* is capable of institutionalizing democratic principles, it is only within a "**deliberative** democracy" that both *compatibility* norms of politics and *rational* values of 'correctness' can be established. This is the case since the democratic principle itself is based on the principle of **unqualified** majority rather than on the principle of a **privileged** majority. A privileged majority even when legally institutionalized by universal suffrage (or extensive franchise) proves to be a porous foundation for 'political correctness' simply because it constantly sways from one social

group to another according to **demographic** variables. The validity conditions of compatibility for rational discourse rests on deliberative democracy.

Therefore, if **political correctness** is to be effectively realized as a **social value**, it has to be critically re-modelled on the foundations of rational accountability as proposed by Habermas in his **theory of communicative action**. This is interpreted in the light of his definition of the **discourse principle** such that “practical reason” guarantees the social values of both **political compatibility** and rational **correctness**. In other words, *political compatibility* and **rational correctness** in such a Habermasian model transcends both the legal and the moral considerations as much as it is socio-culturally contextualized. This is possible by virtue of its impartial delineation of compatibility for socio-political participants (moral persons or political citizens) who engage in each type of discourse. It also ensures that the political sense of *correctness* is rationally compatible with the already specified socio-cultural composition of the contesting interest groups. Finally, it guarantees the protection of the interests of rationally non-privileged groups since rational accountability is expected of the privileged participants. In this way, a Habermasian model of political correctness encompasses ‘all possibly affected persons [allemögliche Betroffenen], without infringing upon the legitimate autonomy, integrity, and identity of any interest group (Habermas, 1992).

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