Imagined Multiculturalism, Racialized Whiteness

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Abstract

This essay probes into the critique of multiculturalism paired with notions of racialization of whiteness. The introduction situates the reader providing a concise review of the historical facts that lead critics to predict the end of the multicultural model that emerged after World War II. This is followed by a discussion of the criticisms that this model receives to structure society in a globalized world. Lastly, the essay examines the political-cultural turn of whiteness toward skepticism about the multicultural model, where I argue that much of the discontent is due to the simultaneous of racialization of whiteness as well as the clash between two paradigms with opposing cosmogonies: the liberal and illiberal.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Imagined Multiculturalism, Whiteness, Hispanic Whiteness, Racialized Whiteness, Migrations, Borders.

Resumen
Multiculturalismo imaginado, blanquitud racializada

Este ensayo investiga la crítica al multiculturalismo puesto en relación con nociones de racialización de la blanquitud. La introducción sitúa al lector brindando una revisión concisa de los hechos históricos que llevan a los críticos a predecir el fin del modelo multicultural surgido después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. A ello le sigue una discusión sobre las críticas que dicho modelo recibe para estructurar la sociedad en un mundo globalizado. Por último, se examina el giro político-cultural de la blanquitud hacia un escepticismo sobre el modelo multicultural, donde sostengo que gran parte del descontento se debe a la sazón a los procesos de racialización de la blanquitud y la pugna entre dos paradigmas con cosmogonías contrapuestos: el liberal y el iliberal.

Palabras clave: multiculturalismo, multiculturalismo imaginado, blanquitud, blanquitud hispana, blanquitud racializada, migraciones, fronteras.

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Introduction: Why Do They Call It Crisis, When They Mean 'New Normalcy'

Something may have been broken. After more than half a century of implementation and with the subsequent demographic shift, the socio-cultural structures of multicultural political philosophy that resulted from the World War II (1939-1945) seem to show today signs of exhaustion.[2] Given the rejection it awakens in wide segments of the population in liberal democracies, multiculturalism is undergoing after two decades of the twenty-first century either revisionism –in the best of cases– or abandonment.[3] Paul Gilroy warned of this 'counter-multiculturalist' drift as soon as the early 2000s in the introduction to his book *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2004), when he stated:

Multicultural society seems to have been abandoned at birth. Judged unviable and left to fend itself, its death by neglect is being loudly proclaimed on all sides.[4]

Such an abandonment of multiculturalism to its fate added, paraphrasing Verena Stolcke, to the rise of a sentiment of cultural fundamentalism that advocates national tradition and greater socio-cultural homogeneity.[5] Nonetheless, since Canada –as a way of fitting in and controlling the situation of French-speaking Quebec– and Australia officially adopted the multicultural State model in the 1970s –which would gradually be followed by the entire Anglosphere and, later, much of northern, central and Mediterranean Europe– discourses against multiculturalism were kept in marginal redoubts by the political correctness' dam of containment developed in liberal democracies. In fact, as I argued elsewhere, under the post-war multiculturalist moral imperative:

...white guilt and shame became the basis for the new paradigm replacing white supremacy in the multicultural society. The combination of white guilt and shame established a new social morality which rejected racial prejudice and made discrimination illegal. Consequently, traditional biologically based ideas regarding race and race relations grew into taboos, conservative political discourses concerning immigration and cultural difference were stigmatised as bigoted views, and their divergent cultural propositions were often ridiculed.[6]

Yet, two historical events of the early twenty-first century exposed the internal contradictions of multiculturalism in plain sight of the majority groups of liberal democracies: the collapse of the World Trade Center in 2001 and the financial crisis of

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[2] Consider reading the introduction to this special issue on multiculturalism and diversity management (Aixelà-Cabré, Yolanda and JM. Persánch, *Procesos históricos*, 2022) to contextualize this essay in the historical trajectory of the rise and deterioration of the post-war multicultural model in liberal democracies.

[3] Consider Eduardo's study "La valoración social del multiculturalismo y del monoculturalismo en Europa" de Eduardo Bericat Alastuey (*Papers*, 94, 2004, pp.79-111), where – taking on Verena Stolcke's thesis regarding the rejection of immigration– an analysis is carried out around the rise of cultural fundamentalism; Likewise, for the South American region, consider the publication of Claudia Zapata Silva *Crisis del multiculturalismo en América Latina*. (Calas, 2019).

[4] Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melacholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. p.1.

[5] See Stolcke, Verena. "Talking culture: New Boundaries, New Rhetorics of Exclusion in Europe." *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 36, No. 1, (1995): 1-24.

[6] See Persánch, JM. "Towards the End of the White Guilt Era? The Rise of Nostalgic Whiteness and Magical Populism" (*Kairos*, 2020), where I explore the West's discursive turn to inform of the conflation of populism and nostalgia emerging in liberal democracies as a result of what I clam to be the end of the World War II's white guilt era, and subsequent rise of what I termed "magical populism:" a racial desire of the white West to rewind globalization in an effort to restore the sense of lost home and security.

2008. The first of these –given the United States and NATO's focus on *the War on Terror* and jihadist Islamism– gave rise to the questioning of cultural relativism, breaking through both the hegemony of postmodern thinking and the multiculturalist moral imperative as well as the white guilt that imposed in the West after World War II. [7] Seen in retrospect, as Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir rightly pointed out, there is consensus that:

The steady rise of multiculturalism was halted by the events of 9/11, which, as well as raising the specter of domestic terrorism, triggered the 'war on terror' and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.[8]

The second of these major events not only shook the foundations of the relatively economic stability of Western liberal societies, but also contributed to dismembering the multicultural fabric by putting the effects of globalism associated with immigration on the spot. Said differently:

The financial crisis of 2008 and after awakened millions of citizens around the world to the limitations of the dominant grand ideas of our time . . . As the economic downturn deepened and unemployment rose, the long-standing and pervasive myth of the inherent value of migration –for migrants and receiving societies alike– was called into question.[9]

With these precedents in mind, it could be assumed that the post-war multiculturalist moral imperative based on white guilt –which led the United States and spread through multiculturalism to liberal democracies– remained hegemonic and unquestionable until 2016 with the electoral victory of Donald J. Trump in the United States. Note that, as counter speech, on one flank, Trump pivoted in opposition to political correctness for assuming a corset to freedom of speech; on another, he confronted immigration placing it within the context of a globalist multiculturalism. His discursive rupture with the white guilt mindset also meant a turning point regarding the assumption of multiculturalism as an ideal praxis and marked the beginning of the culture war, led by US and Anglocentric discourses, which found rapid spread throughout Europe and South America.

All the above exponentially exacerbated through social media as well as through the proliferation of digital media that transferred political incorrectness from the public space to the private sphere, bumping into a reaction-wave of deranged, suffocating and neo-Puritan social hypercorrection. Trump's premises and methods –as well as the reaction against them– would become the mold that others in the West will follow to shape theirs, opening an ideological fault line in the model of WWII's multicultural society.

Along with the growth of migratory flows, humanitarian crises, and the accelerated increase in numbers of the immigrant population in the West in the course

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[7] I am aware that "West" as an analytical category has been widely questioned since Edward Said –Palestinian-American thinker, literary critic, and political activist concerned with the imperial projects of England and France as well as with the resulting postcolonial societies in Asia and Africa– problematized it in *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978) as an ideological construct based on the orientalization –the construction of mythologies and cultural, spatial and visual stereotypes of the "East" connected with geopolitical ideologies and imperial institutions– for its domination. Hereafter I use it in geographical terms identifying it with the historical processes within cultures of Judeo-Christian tradition that turned into societies governed by liberal democracies.
[8] Ashcroft, Richard T. y Mark Bevir. "What is Postwar Multiculturalism in Theory and Practice?" en *Multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth. Comparative Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. 1-21. Eds. Ashcroft, Richard T. y Mark Bevir. University of California Press, 2019. p. 6
[9] Ibidem. p. 4

of just half a century (see appendix included in this essay on the 'Percentual evolution of the immigrant population between 1990 and 2019'), it is also true that an endless number of issues –all interrelated and the outcome of the processes of globalization– are combined prescribing the alleged change of historical paradigm. Barely a decade after the financial meltdown and when the world was still trying to recover socially and economically, the Covid-19 pandemic (officially declared on March 11, 2020) unleashed. Hence just two decades of the century passed, a crisis of security and geopolitical stability joined with two others of economic and health in nature. Likewise, since 2021, an energy crisis could be adding up to another of discontinuity in the supply chain of goods and services. In addition to all this and the persistent threat of jihadism, as occurred during the Cold War (1947-1989), the world is again as multipolar as it is unstable due to the accelerated rise of China and Russia.

In such a context of quasi-permanent crisis and profound transformation of the world order –and given that multicultural societies require greater effort and social dialogue, cultural accommodation, and provision of resources– the West seems to be rethinking a change of paradigm with respect to multiculturalism. In any case, it could be stated that the revisionism of the multicultural model is placed in this transnational context of geopolitical new ordering, maximization of resources, and extreme border securitization policies. In this sense, the policies of Donald J. Trump –later replicated in other countries– continued by his successor Joe Biden, the resolution of Brexit, and the rise of populist, patriotic and identity movements, seem to reveal clear symptoms of the multicultural fate.

In what follows, this essay probes into the criticism to multiculturalism paired with notions of racialization of whiteness. Having contextualized the readers in this introduction with a concise review of the historical events that led critics to predict the end of the multicultural society model that emerged after the World War II, a discussion is provided on the criticisms that said model receives to structure society in a globalized world. As such, this essay contributes to the study of the growing rejection of multiculturalism announced, among others, by Paul Gilroy and Verena Stolcke two decades ago.

Then, the essay examines whiteness' political-cultural turn to skepticism of the multicultural model where I argue that a large part of the discontent –together with the quasi-permanent economic uncertainty since the beginning of the twenty-first century– is due to the simultaneous processes of racialization of whiteness as well as amid the clash between two paradigms with opposing cosmogony: the liberal and illiberal. In short, my essay is presented in order to reflect on the progressive rejection of multicultural policies in the West, moving through the multicultural rift in an effort to anticipate and discern plausible scenarios of both current and future conflict.

Imagined Multiculturalism, Racialized Whiteness

Just as all the above undoubtedly marks the future of the twenty-first century, the colossal disruption of the internet and new communication technologies should not be overlooked due to their overflow of the local with the global. In addition, these have led to identity Manichaeism becoming the guideline for sociocultural and political relations in liberal democracies, where simplistic and reiterative ideas –hence the success of populisms– and the power of the image –of which Memes are the

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epitome par excellence– have ended up disorienting, polarizing and infantilizing societies.[10]

Engulfed in a ritualistic of deafness and blindness, individuals dispose themselves in antagonistic ideological identities where difference has to be rebuked and dissent 'canceled.' In such a society difference is expelled, sameness is rewarded, *ad ominen* attacks replace arguments and the exchange of insults replace the exchange of ideas: abstract monsters –for virtual ones and for feeding vague generalizations– devour at once the truth and the notion of reality. In such a society –for Manichean, for childish, for biased, for ideologizing, for intolerant, for simplistic, for *buenista* and naïve– we transit again, as happened in the twentieth century before the World War II, on an easily manipulative mental framework of good and evil, where, of course, evil is always to be found in "others."

In the twenty-first century, however, this "other" imbricates the paradox –partly explaining discontent with multicultural society– of the otherization not only of minorities but also of white majorities that, simultaneously, –as we will see later– face two paradigms with opposing cosmogonies: the liberal, based on the equal rights of individuals before the law, and the illiberal, reasoned from the premises of granting group rights and seeking equality through the law (the case of postcolonial societies may differ substantially, see the argumentation on this matter of Darién J. Davis's essay included in this special issue).

In addition, considering the background cited in the introduction, the growing racialization of whiteness is framed in parallel with the rise of an imagined multiculturalism of a globalist nature, as well as with a twenty-first century that continues to witness the accelerated dismantling of the welfare state and increase of inequality in liberal democracies as a result of the chaining of various crises. Likewise, caused by multiculturalism and globalization, whiteness is immersed in the perception of the loss of the nation as a synonym for home and security, while fostering the reemergence of populisms and identity movements which demand a different use of resources and borders. At the same time, among other discontents, the 'majority society' also rebels against the deterioration of the cornerstone of liberal democracies, denouncing, on the one hand, the erosion in freedom of speech and, on the other, questioning the illiberal replacement of some individual rights for group rights.

Two areas, at least, are identifiable in this purely Western phenomenon of otherization of the majorities: one, the questioning of traditional sociocultural structures in favor of inclusion and diversity *when they become egalitarianism*; and two, the disruption to social cohesion that involves granting illiberal rights to minority groups in liberal societies governed by equal rights and duties of individuals before the law. That is why the dialectic around multiculturalism between majorities and minorities entails the echo of a broader discursive logic about two opposing social systems:

Multiculturalism therefore poses particularly acute problems for liberal democracies, highlighting tensions that straddle political philosophy and practice, between, for example, sameness and difference, public and private, local and central, individual and community, and particular and universal.[11]

In this sense we come across a discrepancy in premises regarding the treatment of minorities and the management of cultural diversity, while having to rethink the

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[10] Consider reading Rodríguez, Delia. *Memecracia: the virals that govern us*. Barcelona: Gestión 2000, 2013.
[11] Opt. Cit. Ashcroft, Richard T. y Mark Bevir. p.4

role of majorities and whiteness in the construction of a shared social model. On the one hand, we find a moral and political liberalism that advocates rights for individuals by implementing "politics of indifference" –which I would call politics of indistinction–, and that would be more akin, for example, to universal approaches rather than group ones.

Faced with the liberal postulate, an illiberal philosophical activism emerged claiming rights for groups promoting "politics of recognition" –which I would see as more appropriate to designate as politics of distinction–,[12] and that would advocate for an accommodation of difference, thus as well as highlighting the local and particularities in the face of shared values by the majority society. Paradoxically, these policies of recognition (or distinction) become –as we will return to later– in processes of racialization and self-referentiality that atrophy social integration and mobility for the sake of supposedly cultural preservation. In their text "Democracy and Multiculturalism," concerned with establishing a liberal framework for the inclusion of minorities, Will Kymlicka and Raphael Cohen-Almagor explained how:

...liberal democracies have hoped that the protection of basic individual rights would be sufficient to accommodate ethnocultural minorities (...) However, it is increasingly accepted that these common rights of citizenship are not sufficient to accommodate all forms of ethnocultural diversity. In some cases, certain 'collective' or 'group-differentiated' rights are also required. And indeed, there is a clear trend within liberal democracies toward the greater recognition of such group-differentiated rights. Yet this trend raises a number of important issues, both theoretical and practical.[13]

It should be noted that, in his conception of granting group rights, Kymlicka refers to "national minorities" and not to "poly-ethnic groups:" immigrants who come to the country voluntarily, acquiring, in principle, the responsibility of integrating into the norms, traditions and laws of the nation.[14] Despite this distinction between national and poly-ethnic minority groups, another opposing side in which Brian Barry integrates understands that the premises of Kymplicka's theoretical framework are not liberal at all as he suggests since:

...they are not universalist in nature and that they allow for cultural relativism . . . posing a false choice between liberalism as autonomy and liberalism as tolerance, further asserting that claims for cultural rights and for equality of treatment are incompatible.[15]

For this reason, Kymlicka nuances that because:

The basic principles of liberalism, of course, are principles of individual freedom. Liberals can only endorse minority rights in so far as they are consistent with respect for the freedom or autonomy of individuals.[16]

In response, Chandran Kukathas –advocate of the minimum interference of the State in favor of the maximum freedom of the individual– upholds that liberalism should not deal with granting group rights with politics of recognition (or distinction)

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[12] For politics of indiference and politics of recognition, see Kukathas, Uma. *Personal Liberty*. Farmington Hills, Mich: Greenhaven Press, 2009.

[13] Kymlicka, Will y Raphael Cohen-Almagor. "Democracy and Multiculturalism," in *Challenges to Democracy: Essays in Honour and Memory of Isaiah Berlin*. 89-118. Ed. Raphael Cohen-Almagor. London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000. p.89

[14] See Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford: Clarendon press, 1995.

[15] Barry, Brian. *Culture and Equality*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. p.148

[16] Opt. Cit. Kymlicka, Will. p.75.

given that said system is already in itself a multicultural, plural and diverse practice based on the ideas of respect for difference and protection of the right of individuals to freedom of association.[17] In contrast, as Jaap Kooijman reminds us, Paul Scheffer published an influential essay in the Netherlands in 2000 where he disqualified the multicultural project for its segregationist effects:

The 'multicultural drama' has become the catchphrase in the Dutch political discourse on multiculturalism and the alleged failure of ethnic integration policy . . . Scheffer argues that the Dutch policy of multiculturalism has resulted in ethnic segregation and the exclusion of ethnic minorities from a collective Dutch history and identity.[18]

Just one year later, in 2001, the Italian political commentator Giovani Sartori would advance a critique of multiculturalism as an ideological model, affirming that some immigrant communities are not integrable even through the acquisition of citizenship.[19] A Pew Global Attitudes survey collected in *The World Today Series 2020-2022. Western Europe* would underpin this trend suggested by Sartori by reporting that

...81% of British Muslims considered themselves Muslims first and Britons second. That is stunningly high when compared to France, where only 42% considered themselves Muslim first.[20]

This, in the words of Patrick Hyder Patterson, highlights how the American and European multicultural models operate from different premises and consequently produce divergent results:

The American model of multiculturalism, and in particular its distinctive handling of religious pluralism in the context of church-state separation, has thus far not proven especially appealing to Europeans. France permits far less latitude for the personal expression of religiosity in the public sphere, while the rest of Europe, and with it even France to a great extent, generally seeks to engage, sponsor, and control religion, and to protect religious sensibilities and social order.[21]

However, despite the obvious differences in religious treatment in public life in the United States and Europe, both face similar difficulties regarding, for example, the construction of a stable subject or national identity, where the sense of belonging is successful in incorporating different stories –perhaps even opposing views– in spaces and structures that have traditionally been associated with whiteness and embedded in a Judeo-Christian worldview. In this sense, both the United States and Europe, despite their divergent treatments of religion in the public sphere, could share a collective imaginary of transnational tropes that problematize groups outside the national imagination –such as Islam– and their traditional sense of belonging. In this

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[17] See Kukathas, Chandran. *The Liberal Archipelago. A Theory of Diversity and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[18] Kooijman, Jaap. "Are We All Americans? 9/11 and Discourses of Multiculturalism in the Netherlands," in *American Multiculturalism After 9/11: Transatlantic Perspectives*. 181-190. Eds. Derek Rubin, y Jaap Verheul Hotels. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009. p.181

[19] See Sartori, Giovani. *The multi-ethnic society. Pluralism, multiculturalism and foreigners*. Madrid: Taurus, 2001.

[20] Thompson, Wayne C. *The World Today Series 2020-2022. Western Europe*. 39th edition. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2021. p.74

[21] Patterson, Patrick Hyder. "A Kinder, Gentler Europe? Islam, Christianity, and the Divergent Multiculturalisms of the New West," in *American Multiculturalism After 9/11: Transatlantic Perspectives*. 147-164. Eds. Derek Rubin, y Jaap Verheul Hotels. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009. pp.158; 160.

way, the construction of Islam in the debates on multiculturalism as a non-integrable group in liberal democracies, for example, due to its approaches to the rights of women and homosexuals have been recurrent. This has been noted, among others, by Peter Hervik, referencing to how even small individual acts can turn into great political symbols of grievances when they are involved in metanarratives that develop the idea of a "nation in danger."[22] Three decades later, and despite the fact that the degrees of application and time lapses vary between Western countries, the idea of the failure of the multicultural model seems to consolidate as a very widespread stance.[23]

With the turn of the century, political leaders of all stripes from Europe, North America, and Australia deny the benefits of a multicultural society. Although they never acted in congruence, as early as 2010 and 2011, respectively, Angela Merkel in Germany and Nicolás Sarkozy in France publicly proclaimed the failure of multiculturalism.[24] [25] In the case of the German Chancellor, criticism of multicultural society has been reiterated, even cataloging it as a sham in 2015.[26] Even more visceral and eschatological would be, five years later, the claims of Santiago Abascal in a parliamentary session of the Congreso de los Diputados de España, who, to show his rejection of a globalist multicultural society, referred to it as "multicultural dunghills:"

...no nos van a imponer una tiranía progre y globalista y los españoles no van a estar solos porque en toda Europa hay un despertar que gana terreno en defensa de su soberanía y en defensa de su identidad occidental que reclama el Estado-nación comunidad irremplazable y como espacio supremo de la democracia . . . por suerte, en todas partes de Europa y en muchos lugares del mundo occidental están creciendo fuerzas y movimientos patrióticos que no se van a quedar de brazos cruzados mientras unas oligarquías de generadas convierten naciones enteras en estercoleros multiculturales.[27]

Statements against the multicultural model come even from the most unsuspected personalities, such as those made by the Dalai Lama in which he defended to "Keep Europe for Europeans."[28] With this all said –as unpleasant as it can get– the words expressed by Luc Rivet –General Secretary at the European Lift Component Association– in a television debate about the failure of the multicultural model and the need to control immigration have been an ever-growing open secret that resonates since the beginning of the twenty-first century among the majority populations of Western liberal societies:

...the melting pot, which is the dream of America, doesn't function in Europe ... nobody tries to segregate communities in Europe, they do it themselves ... we have some parts of the population that refuses it and that they want to impose their culture in the public space. Islam for example ... And the fake news is not what people think, it is hiding it ... we import misery at my expense, at your expense, at the

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[22] Hervik, Peter. "Denmark's Blond Vision and the Fractal Logics of a Nation in Danger." *Identities*, Vol. 26, No. 5, (2019): 529-545. p. 524

[23] Consider reading Lentin, Alana, y Gavan Titley. *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age* (Zed Books Ltd., 2011), who focusing on the notion of a "multiculturalism in crisis" point out how this became a framework device for Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

[24] Gram, Too. "Angela Merkel explained 'Multicultural' for failed." *DW*. October 16, 2010. https://www.dw.com/de/merkel-erkl%C3%A4rt-multikulti-f%C3%BCr-gescheitert/a-6118143

[25] News Wires. "Sarkozy declares multiculturalism 'a failure.'" *France 24*. February 11, 2011. <https://www.france24.com/en/20110210-multiculturalism-failed-immigration-sarkozy-live-broadcast-tf1-france-public-questions>.

[26] Noack, Rick. "Multiculturalism is a sham, says Angela Merkel." *The Washington Post*. 14 of December of 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/14/angela-merkel-multiculturalism-is-a-sham/

[27] El HuffPost. "'Estercoleros multiculturales,' la frase más polémica de Abascal en la moción de censura." *YouTube, Huffington Post*. 21 oct. 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0tasCaRRN0>.

[28] BBC News. "Interview with the Dalai Lama - BBC News." *YouTube, BBC*. 19 Jul. 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXSlpy7Ku9c

expense of the people who live in Europe. That's what the people don't want. They don't want to pay eternally for imported misery. No one listens to the poor in Europe, nobody, especially the socialists, and they should because the revolution is on in a certain way and populists appeared everywhere … minorities are welcomed when they are minorities, when it is real invasion in the millions, they say no … so, really there is grassroots feeling we should preserve our culture and our identity[29]

The points raised by Rivet on cultural self-segregation or population ghettoization, on conflict among traditions and interests in public space, on silencing in the media of the opinions and organizational desires of the majority society, and on the disagreement with the budget spending on the integration of immigrants and accommodation of minorities are just some of the critiques that have been made against multiculturalism from the roots for distaste and rejection.[30]

Among other criticisms made to multicultural society, we could mention both the continuous politicization of collectivized minorities and the cultural objectification to which they are subjected to, which establish distorted social expectations that reduce the autonomy of the individual and result in stereotyped intercultural and interracial relationships obstructing integration and social mobility. The non-integration of minorities in a tradition based on an alleged unrestricted respect of majorities for cultural difference, condemns them to a vicious circle of exclusion, marginalization and failure. For this reason, Thomas Sowell criticizes the policies of non-intervention and preservation of cultural differences as erroneous because they do not contribute to the improvement of the situation of minorities:

You can't find any fault on any group that is less fortunate, there are no behaviours they need to change in order to advance. Society needs to accept them *as they are*. The causes remain the same and the results ought to change. And if the effects don't change, then is society's fault.[31] (Original emphasis)

In the same way, a common criticism –related to or derived from the previous one– is that multiculturalism works to the detriment of social cohesion and enhances the fragmentation of national identity. This, according to Ana Scalcău, comprises the great paradox of multiculturalism:

One of the paradoxes of multiculturalism lies in the fact that it does not bring people together; it separates them because it rejects the idea of universal human values which can transcend a particular race, class or gender. Moreover, multiculturalism seems to completely ignore the fact that most of the other cultures are not as liberated as the Western one. In fact, many of them condemn Western values (social equality, feminism or gay rights) and still have practices such as: stoning, wife burning or even genital mutilation.[32]

In this regard, in his book *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity* (2008), Ted Cantle pointed out that the cohesion of a community must bring together a common vision and sense of belonging of all communities, including minorities, where difference is appreciated and valued, and equal opportunities are

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[29] Rivet, Luc. "Do peaceful multicultural societies exist? (DEBATE)." *YouTube, RT*. 20 Jul. 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASoZP9HJOl4

[30] About the cultural self-segregation or populational ghettoization, see Bissoondath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994.

[31] Sowell, Thomas. "Thomas Sowell discusses his newest book, Intellectuals and Race." *YouTube, Hoover Institution*. 13 May 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6ImP-gJvas

[32] Scalcău, Ana. "The Paradoxes of Political Correctness." *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management*, Vol. 15, No. 4, (2020): 53-59. p.57

offered to different life projects. To achieve this, as a cornerstone, Cantle explained that a framework of fair relationships must be predisposed:

…the lack of any real sense of fairness in community relations would, in itself, threaten the common vision and sense of belonging and undermine the idea that different backgrounds are appreciated and valued . . . bonds will be all stronger if the national common sense of belonging is limited . . . with justice and fairness at its heart and where diversity is seen as enriching and positive experience for all faiths and cultures, including for the majority community.[33]

Nonetheless, Cantle's approach does not seem to consider that in liberal democracies 'fairness' is replaced by law and legality. In other words, how is this 'fair' framework established? Who decides what is fair 'enough'"? For this reason, Cantle's theoretical premise is as well-intentioned as it is *buenista* as he seems to overlook that multiculturalism forces mediation on opposing interests, and that all national identity requires a certain coherence and a dose of homogeneity.

In this sense, Robert D. Putnam disagrees with Cantle marking a separation between the effects of immigration and cultural diversity in the short and long term. According to his study, in the short term, the presence of immigration and cultural diversity tends to reduce solidarity and social capital. In the same way, his results show that the levels of trust, altruism and community cooperation decrease even within the own group. On the other hand, in the long term, the study claims that societies that overcome such fragmentation receive important cultural, economic, fiscal and social development benefits.[34] On the contrary, Sowell denies any benefits:

…Sweeping claims for the benefits of demographic and cultural diversity in innumerable institutions and circumstances have prevailed without a speck of evidence being asked for or given. It is one of the purest examples of arguments without arguments, and of the force of sheer repetition, insistence and intimidation.[35]

As Sowell, due to the weakening of social cohesion and the fragmentation of national identity, other thinkers such as Charles Taylor in his essay "The Politics of Recognition" advocates complete integration and greater sociocultural homogeneity, because he understands that there is no moral obligation of the majority society to guarantee the life of a cultural community for countless future generations.[36] Jan Willem Duyvendak and Justus Uitermark share Taylor's concern with cultural integration, stating that minorities should not be encouraged to cultivate their own values separate from institutions but instead should be integrated into society with full awareness of that, in the process, they will lose some of their cultural peculiarities.[37]

Jürguen Habermas takes it further opposing to the artificial preservation of cultures that are not viable under the conditions of late modernity and that hurt society

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[33] Cantle, Ted. *Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. pp. 10-11, 172.

[34] See Putnam, Robert D. Putnam, Robert D. "*E Pluribus Unum*: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century. The 2006 Johan Skytte prize lecture." *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (2007): 137-174.

[35] Sowell, Thomas. *Intellectuals and Race*. New York: Basic Books, 2013. p.104

[36] Taylor, Charles. "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. 25-74. Ed. Amy Gutman. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

[37] Willem Duyvendak, Jan and Justus Uitermark. "When Ideologies Bounce Back: The Problematic Translation of PostMulticultural Ideologies and Policies into Professional Practices." *People and the New Professional. De-Professionalisation and Re-Professionalisation in Care and Welfare*. 64-77. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006. p.66

with unviable cultural accommodations.[38] Arguments such as those cited above led Bhikhu C. Parekh –a British politician of Indian origin and a member of the Labor Party in the House of Lords– to promote a pluralistic vision of cultural diversity, considering that:

Multicultural societies throw up problems that have no parallel in history. They need to find ways of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity, achieving political unity without cultural uniformity, being inclusive without being assimilationist, cultivating among their citizens a common sense of belonging while respecting their cultural differences, and cherishing plural cultural identities without weakening the shared and precious identity of shared citizenship.[39]

Given the apparent impossibility of achieving –or the enormous efforts and use of resources to attaining– the harmonization of the elements proposed by Parekh, Pieter Bevelander and Raymond Taras pointed out that:

Citizenship, not multiculturalism, is becoming the barometer of successful state management of diversity as well as of immigrant integration attainment.[40]

This shift towards the notion of citizenship, as a form of dismantling the framework of multiculturalism, underlines the distrust that exists towards the multicultural model as a guarantor of individual freedoms in a context of globalism and complex, messy national identities; as well as increasingly deranged polarized societies and redundant disjuncts in the decrease of social cohesion. Thus, the shift towards the notion of citizenship as a guarantor of a successful management of diversity and integration of the immigrant population shows how whiteness is not based so much on the presence and reaffirmation of their practices as on the absence, or neutralization, of voices whose *loci* are located outside of it. Whiteness, in these terms – as I have already shown elsewhere– is "la suma de ausencias" (the sum of absences).[41] On the contrary, the strong presence of the immigrant population creates "nuevos signos definitorios –racializan– la idea de homogeneidad en la sociedad articulando a su vez una nueva hibridez cultural a nivel global."[42] This cultural dislocation partly deactivates the racialization of minorities as a coercive process of integration, or incorporation, into the practices of whiteness. On the contrary, the steady intensification of multicultural heterogeneity acts as a mirror forcing an uncomfortable process of introspection in white majorities who become a racialized identity, too, in what they understand to be 'their own society:'

The underpinning association between minority groups and immigrants with demographic shift and power allegedly resulting in a dysfunctional society is, of course, far from being truly about dysfunctionality. Rather, it is about the disruption of a white-majority mindset ill-rooted in the sentiment of white loss of entitlement and invisibility because the more multicultural a society becomes

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[38] As cited in Jonker, Ed. "Coherence, Difference, and Citizenship: A Genealogy of Multiculturalism," in *American Multiculturalism After 9/11: Transatlantic Perspectives*. 51-63. Eds. Derek Rubin, y Jaap Verheul Hotels. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009. p.59 (See Habermas, Jürguen. "Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State." Translation of Shierry Weber Nicholsen. In *Multiculturalism*: *Examining the Politics of Recognition*. 107-148. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[39] Parekh, Bhikhu C. *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. Harvard University press, 2000. p. 343.

[40] Bevelander, Pieter y Raymond Taras. "The Twilight of Multiculturalism? Findings From Across Europe," en *Challenging Multiculturalism: European Models of Diversity*. Ed. Taras, Raymond. 3-24. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2004. p.11

[41] Persánch, JM. Blancura situacional e imperio español en su historia, cine y literatura (S.XIX-XX). *Theses and Dissertations--Hispanic Studies*. *26*. https://uknowledge.uky.edu/hisp_etds/26 p. 82

[42] Corbalán, Ana, Santiago Juan-Navarro and Joan Torres-Pou. *New approaches to cinema hispánico: Temporary, textual and ethnic migrations in the bicentenary of the Ibero-American independences (1810-2010)*. Barcelona: Promociones Publicaciones Universitarias, 2011. p.195

the more whites must reflect upon their whiteness and justify their place in society. In other words, white Westerners become more uncomfortable with the ideal of multiculturalism as whiteness gradually becomes more visible and racially marked straying away from what it had been the norm in Western societies for centuries. This process of racialisation of the white body has sparked fears producing a disoriented self, which in conjunction with the loss of all economic certainties traditionally associated with whiteness, opened an avenue for nostalgia.[43]

This increasing racialization of whiteness through the rise of an imagined multiculturalism as synonym for failure would explain, in part, the rise of identity and patriotic populisms that rally in defense of the nation, tradition and the sovereignty of the borders through the political and sociocultural weaponization of nostalgia against multiculturalism to restore the origins, in this case, of the return to a time when whiteness, its political practices, and sociocultural structures were neither problematized nor racialized.

Conclusions: Every End Entails a New Beginning

This essay has wielded how the collapse of the World Trade Center in 2001 and the financial crisis of 2008 represent two events that accelerated the dissatisfaction with multiculturalism, which aggravated by a myriad of issues –all interrelated and the result of globalization processes– are combined prescribing the apparent change of historical paradigm. In addition, the migratory flow, far from being contained, continues to intensify under the long shadow of a Brexit that put the recovery of border sovereignty and immigration at the center of the debate and that was considered a plebiscite on the migration policies of the European Union as well as for the multicultural society model.

Overall, the critical debate around multiculturalism warns of a change in trend in liberal democracies that could lead to a drastic turn, both in migration policies and with respect to the political philosophy of multiculturalism, to stop and reverse migration flows. The theoretical compilation of criticisms from within the multicultural rift makes explicit the growing sociocultural and political polarization between entrenched defenders and detractors of the multicultural society model that emerged after World War II.

For its critics, multiculturalism –in its contemporary illiberal and globalist aspect– politicizes minorities by subjugating their autonomy and stereotyping their intercultural relations, while generating self-referential cultural self-segregation which condemns themselves to marginality, undermines social cohesion, and allows for the fragmentation of national identity.

Similarly, it has been pointed out how the increasing racialization of whiteness in the twenty-first century, understood as the otherization of the culture and tradition of the majority in liberal democracies (and whose case may vary substantially in postcolonial societies).

In this sense, two areas that are recognizable in this purely Western phenomenon of otherization of the majorities were discussed: on the one hand, the questioning of the traditional sociocultural structures in favor of the inclusion of diversity and its cultural conservation; on the other hand, the disruption caused by the granting of illiberal rights to minority groups in liberal societies governed by equal rights and duties of individuals before the law.

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[43] On. Cit. Persánch, 2020. p. 129.

Ultimately, the shift towards the notion of citizenship as a measure of integration –or incorporation– of minorities into the structures of the nation that is not merely multicultural confirms one of the conclusions of my 2019 essay "The Rest in the White West: After the Empire is Buried*, Shadows of Your Black Memory* Are *Born,*" published in an excellent collection of critical social science essays entitled *The Rest Write Back (Discourse and Decolonization)*, and with which though in an unorthodox fashion I would like to close now inviting the readers to reflection:

...the White West is looking for a formula that would enable them to morph again, thus retaking control over the growing Rest.[44]

Whether that is fully attained or not by the West, or whether a neomulticulturalism of globalist spirit would emerge and consolidate, only time will judge.

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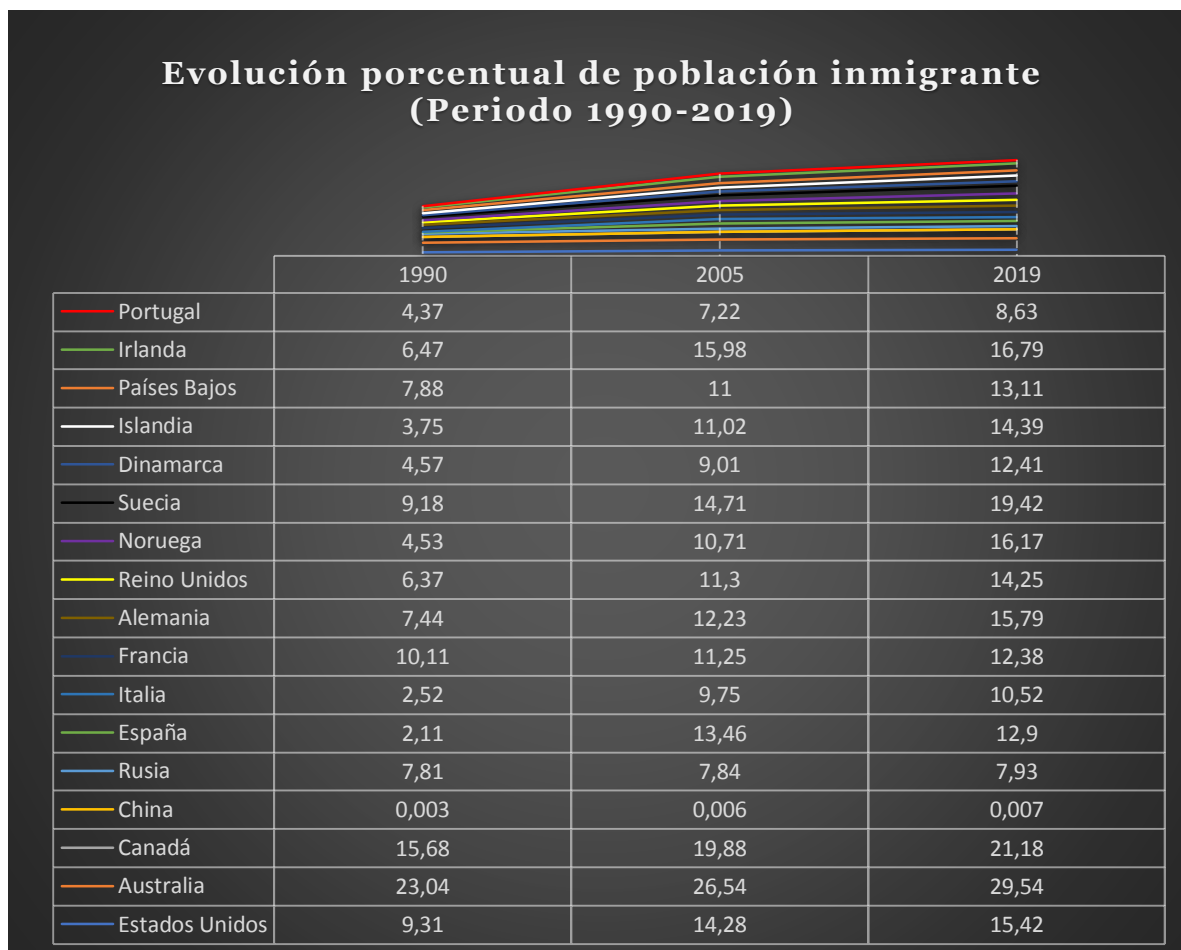
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44 Persánch, JM. "The Rest in the White West: After the Empire is Buried, *Shadows of Your Black Memory Are Born*," in *The Rest Write Back: Discourses and Decolonization*. 179-202. Ed. Esmaeil Zeiny. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019. p. 200

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Appendix. Percentage evolution of the immigrant population between 1990 and 2019. (Source for elaboration: Expansion, Datos Macro with attribution to the UN Data Base).[45]

Evolución porcentual de población inmigrante (Periodo 1990-2019)

	1990	2005	2019
Portugal	4,37	7,22	8,63
Irlanda	6,47	15,98	16,79
Países Bajos	7,88	11	13,11
Islandia	3,75	11,02	14,39
Dinamarca	4,57	9,01	12,41
Suecia	9,18	14,71	19,42
Noruega	4,53	10,71	16,17
Reino Unidos	6,37	11,3	14,25
Alemania	7,44	12,23	15,79
Francia	10,11	11,25	12,38
Italia	2,52	9,75	10,52
España	2,11	13,46	12,9
Rusia	7,81	7,84	7,93
China	0,003	0,006	0,007
Canadá	15,68	19,88	21,18
Australia	23,04	26,54	29,54
Estados Unidos	9,31	14,28	15,42

With regard to migratory flows, in its articles 13 and 14 respectively, the UN will include rights both of free movement of individuals and with respect to the status of asylee. In its literality, according to these articles:

Article 13
1. Everyone has the right to move freely and to choose his residence in the territory of a State.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.
Article 14
1. In the event of persecution, everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum in any country.
2. This right may not be invoked against legal action actually arising from ordinary crimes or acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.[46]

Such a human right to free movement subjugated by the UN should not be confused either with a non-existent right to migrate outside legal processes or with the right to settle in another country without a residence permit, since the articles explicitly allude to the "right to

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[45] See Expansion, Macro Data. Immigration Section – Total percentage of immigrants. <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/demografia/migracion/inmigracion>.
[46] United Nations. "The Declaration of Human Rights." December 10, 1948. <https://www.un.org/es/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

leave ... *and to return."* In this regard, in order to expand migrant rights, the UN General Assembly will sign in 1990 an International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, as well as Members of Their Families, with the aim of ensuring safe migration.

However, this resolution – which does not enter into force until 2003 – will be ratified by only 39 countries: most of which are African and Latin American, and rejected by the United States, Canada, Australia, China, Russia and all member countries of the European Union (including the United Kingdom at the time). Moreover, contrary to the un's purposes, in October 2004, the Council of the European Union established FRONTEX: an agency to strengthen the security of the EU's external and coastal borders against migration.[47] [48]

With the exception of China and Russia – whose immigrant population rates remain almost unchanged in three decades – in the rest of the countries that reject the agreement of the UN Assembly on the rights of migrant workers – those that from 1970 will adopt the political philosophy of multiculturalism – there is an average percentage increase of around 8% in the population of immigrants between 1990 and 2019. Thus, for example, in southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece) the boom will be from 4.27% in 1990 to 10.85% in 2019; in North-Western Europe (France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland) it will go from 7.65% in 1990 to 14.46% in 2019; in Nordic and Scandinavian countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland) it will go from 5.5% in 1990 to 15.59% in 2019; for its part, the average variation in the United States and Canada will be from 12.49% in 1990 to 18.3% in 2019. Australia stands out as the country where one of the largest segments of the immigrant population will settle, going from 23.04% in 1990 to 29.54% in 2019%.[49]

While it is true that migratory flows do not only occur in and to the West, the regions of South America, Central America and Africa – signatories of the UN agreement – do not support – with some exceptions – significant migratory pressure. In South America, the immigrant population ranges from 0.29% from Peru to 8.18% from Suriname, with most countries in the region showing an immigrant population density below 3%. The trend is repeated in Central America, where it ranges from 0.41% in Honduras to 15.46% in Belize, with five countries below 1% of the immigrant population. On the African continent, the lowest rates of immigrant population are found in Madagascar and Morocco with 0.17% and 0.27% respectively; at the other extreme we find Libya, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea that place their index above 12%, giving the maximum influx in Equatorial Guinea with 17.58%. However, due to the high cross-border movement that is inferred from arrivals to Europe, the above figures should be taken with caution because of the precariousness of resources for their count in the region.[50]

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[47] See ratification text of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "The International Convention on Migrant Workers and its Committee." Human rights. Information leaflet No. 24 (Rev.1), Switzerland, UN, 2003.
[48] See FRONTEX "Our Mission." European Border and Coast Guard Agency. <https://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/our-mission/>.
[49] See the complete information in Appendix 1, where I show the percentage evolution of the immigrant population individually in countries that did not ratify the agreement of the UN convention. Source for elaboration: Expansion, Macro Data based on the UN data dump. Immigration Section – Total percentage of immigrants. <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/demografia/migracion/inmigracion>.
[50] Ibid.