The motives and rationalizations of the European right-wing discourse on immigrants. Shifts in multiculturalism?

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Abstract

Mainstream parties in Europe (especially the Western part of Europe that is currently dealing with an increased migration flux in comparison with the rest of the European countries) seem to have intensified their concern with immigration in the last two decades (even more so since the 2008 financial crisis). Right-wing parties are the most radical in their anti-immigration discourse, and public displays of such argumentations reflect not only shifts in the public's political sympathies post-crisis, but may also reflect shifts in the (still) dominant paradigm of multiculturalism. This paper analyses some examples from various right-wing discourses (Switzerland, Germany, United Kingdom, to name a few) and from political discourses on the nature and future of multiculturalism in order to understand the way political actors rationalize such positions. This analysis can help further understand not only how the rhetorics of political justifications and rationalizations work, but also to sketch some plausible future dynamics of migration in European context (the main target of the paper being the discourses towards Eastern-European immigrants) and the possible shifts in multiculturalism as well.

Keywords
Immigrant, right-wing discourse, rationalization, multiculturalism, transient other, Eastern European immigrants.

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The two moments that fueled the anti-immigrant rhetoric (and a little historical context)

An immigration-opposed discourse is traditionally associated with the right-wing parties in the political sphere. Such discourses have become more prominent in Western Europe after two recent turning points, in our opinion: first of all, the post-2000 enlargement waves of the European Union (EU) (namely, the 2004 accession of Central European countries and the 2007 accession of Eastern Balkan countries); and secondly, the 2008 financial crisis. The enlargement of the European Union has made work migration very easy from eastern European countries to western ones, thus creating immigration waves of unprecedented size; while the financial crisis has made even the low-skilled jobs usually targeted by immigrants very sought out, creating thus more discontent towards the immigrants' positioning on the unemployment-ridden job market.

Our paper is aiming to answer – or at least to further deepen – two main questions in regard to these problems: how do political actors with a right-wing background rationalize and argue for their anti-immigrant discourse; and what is currently happening with multiculturalism? Our focus will be identifying the kind of motives given in the anti-immigrant rhetoric and analyzing their construction, on one hand, and sketching possible future changes of perspective towards and within the broader paradigm of multiculturalism.

As shown in Van der Valk (2003) and Faist (1994), the anti-immigrant discourse was already mainstreaming back in the 90s and is not solely a post-2000s political trend based on the two key-moments we suggested above. According to the works referenced above – that come from a critical discourse studies perspective which can be useful to sociology and anthropology if they are to understand the more subtle implications of the thought movements that fuel popular unrest – the rhetoric on immigration was either avoided on purpose in some countries and regions (Germany, namely), almost like a taboo that once uttered would despoil the official image of the so-defined-local or ethnic society, (Faist, 1994), either already very much present in the public discourse of politicians with its negative representations of the other and otherness (Van der Valk, 2003); and all this all throughout the 80s and 90s. Therefore, we can reasonably affirm that the tendency to negatively present the others as immigrants is a classic – possibly as old as human society itself defined as a large group of people that see themselves as a "we" opposed to one or multiple "they"s, with mini-groups within larger groups, the obvious and inevitable multiple overlappings and so on – and within the European context it was definitely already present before the recent turn of millennia. The times that followed after 2000 didn't change the way immigrants are seen and portrayed in any significant way, they just intensified the concern with them, bringing their problematic more into the focus of the mainstream lens.

Even at an institutional level, works that analyze the European legal framework for immigration from the 90s state that the matter was already cause for serious contestations and tensions, going as far as naming the negotiation and intergovernmental institutional arrangements and processes a cacophony (Helga Leitner,

1997). Things were already heated in the cultural geography of western states at a time when the EU enlargement made them face (and construct) one of their greatest fears: the immigrant invasion. The failure to build a coherent supranational framework for dealing with immigration (which Leitner's analysis points out) came not only from bureaucratic complications and the difficulties that usually arise from vast paperwork, but also from the confusion that is posed by a fear that strikes different countries on uneven levels. Also, as we'll argue below in this paper, dealing with the concept of the immigrant imposes a quite uncomfortable level of ambivalence. Of course the matter couldn't be settled among the countries forming the EU as well as some other matters which seemed to be settled in return. Still, the fact that a big fuss was already being made about immigrants in the 90s only proves our point further: the way these others were seen hasn't changed and was always problematic, but the post 2000s enlargement of the EU and the 2008 economic crisis were two key moments that intensified these concerns, making a more palpable and present threat out of the idea of an immigrant.

Of course, matters of a perceived superiority of the west (shared by both the west and the east in its inferiority complex, at least at an European scale) can be brought into account to further justify these strong reactions to the idea of immigration. But since the issue is such a classic and self-evident concept that it became a commonplace (an idea which was practically summarized in the first part of Roger Scruton's work from 2003, though centered at a global scale, thus including the Americas and the Middle East and focusing on their dynamic), we feel that any explanation based on this cultural bias would be too facile and self-sufficient. Such cultural politics and tendencies are of course ever present and involved in how immigration is perceived both in the west and the east of Europe (according to Seidman, 1994, the thesis of western superiority over the rest is a direct consequence of the Enlightment and lies at the very core of European and American civilization), but our proposed analysis chooses to focus on other, less obvious aspects of these dynamics, in order to have a chance to produce a somewhat fresh perspective on these matters.

So what exactly happened at and after the two turning points we suggested above and how did it directly impact the way eastern immigrants are perceived in the west? First of all, and predictably so, the enlargement of the European Union brought about larger immigration waves in the more economically developed western countries, and along with these new masses of people came reactions in these countries political display of discourse. As anxieties arose about these foreigners coming in unprecedented numbers, the political right wing was ready to comprise and voice these anxieties in a way targeted at gathering more supporters (and, of course, targeted at discrediting and delegitimizing the immigrants' perceived allies, the political left, as stated also by Van der Valk, 2003). Thus, predictably, the discourse on immigrants focusing on negative and anxious messages intensified after the western countries suddenly became open to new waves of immigrants from eastern countries, following the successive enlargements of the EU. Sadly, the negative representations and anxieties on the topic of eastern immigrants did not remain solely at a discursive level, but took dubious practical forms in embodying regulations - which called for stronger border enforcements - and ambivalent

policies and practices of the European Union. From this point of view, the EU paints itself the curious and not very coherent portrait of a structure which on one hand preaches multiculturalism and/or inclusion, and on the other hand sets restrictions for work migration and, most of all, financially supports eastern governments to set boundaries for their citizens targeted at discouraging them from leaving the country in order to head West (as shown by Henk van Houtom and Roos Pijpers, 2005).

In a self-contradicting manner, the Western European authorities can't seem to make up their minds: on one hand they belong to this grand communitarian project, they embody it more or less being bureaucrats of this legal meta-structure (the EU), on the other hand they completely dislike and try to prevent its consequences when those consequences are the free workforce flow within the enlarged community borders. Are they just trying to respond to populist pressure, to satisfy the voters' demands by pleasing both the side that welcomes the inclusion, both the right-wing inclined citizens worried about the immigrants that are coming? Or does this ambivalence show a rather deeper shift and confusion not only in policies and at a technical level, but also at a meta level of philosophy, namely within the paradigm of multiculturalism? We are inclined towards the latter, and believe that the concept is currently struggling with itself as people are faced more and more with the reality of what it means to apply it. The following course of events can only clarify how exactly will multiculturalism shift: will it become useless, a shell of a political idea with no actual back up, eventually dying out (less likely, in our opinion), or will it shift and adapt in order to survive in a somewhat alleviated form (more probable)? These questions – which can only be highly rhetorical at this point – will get sorted out in the following unwinding of events, as the consequences of the economic crisis and of the great EU enlargement will continue to play themselves out. The possible future of multiculturalism will also be discusses in more detail in the last section of the paper.

To be fair, we should detail further the two schematically mentioned 'sides' of the debate, in order to avoid the impression that the two are somewhat homogenous. Behind the multiculturalist side of the debate, the one which encourages immigration (often not necessarily stemming from a deep conviction or righteousness concerning the multiculturalist values), lies a variety of voices, from the hippie-like discourses preaching inclusion and peace to the pragmatic interests of corporations that welcome immigrants for their new and cheap flow of labor, consumer markets and so on. To this we could add the political interests of various groups derived from external pressure (like needing more permissive immigration policies in order to qualify for certain funding or to gather more voters), the NGOs that focus specifically on improving the so-called integration of immigrants and so on. All these fragments of interests advocating the liberal free flow and migration are then represented in public discourse by the liberal and neoliberal oriented parties (which may also include leftist interests as opposed to the right-wing discourse), but this representation hardly means that the represented mass is homogenous even at the slightest. It's hard to pinpoint the exact ingredients that are comprised in the pro-immigration mass, due to the complexity of the matter; but what is interesting is that the opposing side, the so-called right, seems to be a bit more

homogenous. As detailed above and throughout the rest of the paper, the right's motivations towards wariness against immigrants are focused on very similar key points: either fear of the negative effects of migration on the national economy, or the negative effects of migration on the local identity, or the threat posed by the immigrants to citizen's security (expressed through the criminalization of the immigrant). All these will be detailed in the following sections of the paper.

For theoretical variety purposes, it should be noted though that there are voices who argue against our current assumption that the anti-immigrant rhetoric has intensified not only as a result of the economic crisis, but also as a result of higher immigration rates. As an example, Thränhardt (1995) proposes an otherwise valuable analysis that points out an independence of xenophobic discourses relative to the actual number of immigrants, based on a collection of data from England, France and Germany. This independence of racist political discourses regarding migration of the numbers of immigrants the country is faced with is actually a key issue in Thränhardt's paper, but this conclusion is attained mainly through comparison between the three countries. In other words, he reaches this conclusion noting that immigration rates between the three countries differ greatly and still they all experience xenophobia as a political discourse strategy, with ups and downs over the years. In our opinion, differences in numbers shouldn't be enough to draw that conclusion, as specific cultural differences should also be taken into account. Just because a country is faced with few immigrants and still arbors xenophobic discourse doesn't mean that the immigration wave, small as it was, wasn't the trigger for this intensification of hate-speech. Maybe in the case of some countries, with their own constellation of specific cultural characteristics, it takes a smaller spark to fire up a bonfire of anti-immigrant rhetoric. We can't be sure of the opposite of what Thränhardt is arguing for, but we wouldn't draw a conclusion mainly based on numeric facts (acknowledging our bias towards qualitative approaches, of course, while not desconsidering the valuable work of Thränhardt's analysis and data collection).

Meanwhile, in the symbolic economy of this paper, our assumption and thesis will remain that the two key moments that sparked up an intensification of anti-immigrant discourse in the Western countries were the post-2000 European Union enlargement waves and the economic crisis of 2008 (and an analysis performed below on the motives offered by Western xenophobic rhetorics will reveal why we believe this). Works like Joppke (2004) also argue that initial multucultural poicies were met with great civic tension, which made maintaining such policies highly problematic for the countries which harboured them in the first place. We believe that it was precisely these tensions that were a bit later confiscated and harnessed by right-wing parties in order to raise civic support to their own political agendas.

The creation of motives and rationalizations

Classic psychology states that decisions and opinions are formed emotionally, while the rationalizations and motives that back them up are a second-stage act, somewhat artificially constructed, that comes to justify something already settled otherwise. In this view, offering motives for one's actions and opinions is merely a way to reduce one's internal cognitive dissonance, giving others (and self) the impression of reason and logical judgment. In the words of Elliot Aronson, the father of cognitive dissonance studies, "Man likes to think of himself as a rational animal. However, it is truer that man is a *rationalizing* animal, that he attempts to appear reasonable to himself and to others. Albert Camus even said that man is a creature who spends his entire life in an attempt to convince himself that he is not absurd" (from *Psychology* Today magazine, May 1973, reprinted in Leavitt, Pondy and Boje, 1989, p 134). This statement – and the theoretical view it embodies – was generally accepted in studies that deal with the way we think and continues to be the dominant paradigm today.

Thus, when we speak of motives given to justify a political position – like the propaganda against immigration – we should keep in mind that although political positions may seem (and want to seem) logical and based on cold hard facts and objective necessities, psychology tells us that most probably the justifications offered are but mere rationalizations to back up an otherwise emotional state of mind. The very concept of "emotional state of mind" might seem like a paradox, but thought science says that it defines the mental reality for the whole of humanity. The political arena is of course no exception, it may even be a place where various passions are even more employed and expressed than in and through other mediums.

Our hypothesis on the matter at stake here is that the right-wing anti-immigrant discourse is simply an elaborate rationalizing justification of a strong emotional reaction to outsiders (territoriality, anxiety, fear, xenophobia and so on).

Moving on to exactly how rationalizations and motives are formed, it should be taken into account that there are multiple ways through which people construct their motives and through which they present they motives. One very important such path is narrative thought, where a story line is used both for justifying the position assumed and for presenting those motives to an implied audience for persuasion purposes. As previously shown by Cihodariu (2012), narratives as mental constructs are one of the main ways of defining and socially constructing one's reality (by which it is to be understood something of a similar acception to the classic concept of *Lebenswelt*), in ways that go beyond classic story-lines, semiotics or linguistics. In the case of anti-immigrant discourses, the narratives employed are usually either the ones that criminalize the immigrant, the transient other, either the ones that victimize the native, the local (who will be either outnumbered and replaced culturally and eventually biologically, either left without a job by the immigrant willing to work for a miserable wage). But more on such scenarios and the way they're presented below, at the discourse analysis section.

Not least, we should consider how motives are given, especially in the context of political discourses and attitudes which interests us here. Obviously, motives are never presented outside the intension to persuade, to convince an auditory of the righteousness of the cause defended and sustained; and this statement couldn't be truer than in a political context, where persuasion is the main purpose of any public speech or display. Although, as stated above, motives are *born* as a secondary rationalization of pre-existing emotions, they are *presented* in order to convince, to convert, to seduce, to bring over to the presenter's position. This is especially intensified in politics where the pressure to gain votes and public sustainers is higher than in any other context of public life (but one should also bear in mind that, as we will further detail below, this propensity for persuasion goes beyond the conscious intent of this or that political actor and is intrinsic to language itself).

Of course, the next question that arises from here is whether the anti-immigrant emotionality exists in the political leaders and they rationalize it, convince more followers and so on; or this emotionality exists actually in the voters who in consequence become more inclined to radical positions, and since demand creates offer in capitalistic and democratic systems, the politicians who can respond to this demand are thus created and promoted. In other words, who was immigrant-wary first: the right-wing in its more abstract form, or the people looking for a political direction to shield them from their perceived threats (the waves of immigration)? As interesting as this matter might be (and intuitively our bet would be that the answer to this question is most probably somewhere in the middle), it is less relevant today, when the masses of right-wing supporters are pretty compact and the anti-immigrant rhetoric quite established in the Western European which are countries facing high immigration rates.

A few case studies and examples (discourse analysis)

The disparate example we are about to present here in an effort to back our statements with empirical data are not part of some large-scale research systematically done on political discourses, but only examples that illustrate the trends of political thought and civic tensions that we described. The selection of data was based on relevance for our paper's main theme, as well as the size of the debate which was sparked by the right-wing discourse we analyzed. The bigger the debate and the better known the campaign in the general European (especially West-European) political landscape, the more likely we were to discuss it here.

One of the political campaigns that most negatively impressed the supporters of a multiculturalist view was the anti-immigrant campaign led by the conservative SVP party from Switzerland in 2011, when the country was preparing for a EU-induced wave of immigration. The motives offered by the party that initiated this campaign (going as far as including a gathering of signatures for organizing a national referendum targeted at stopping mass immigration coming via the EU) were the following: "overfilled streets and trains, exploding rents and land prices, salaries under pressure, misuse of asylum and

an increase in foreign criminality"[3], all being consequences of uncontrolled migration, allegedly. The ideas employed in these motives are that immigrants are a threat to the local comfort (because apparently they'll come in such numbers as to flood the streets and the trains), a threat to the local economy (their demand making the land and rent prices go up), a threat to the local job system (being implied that they're willing to work more for less, endangering the salarization level of the natives), a potential source of fraud and cheating (misuse of asylum) and a threat to the society itself since the immigrants are a source of criminality. All these motives are both accusations (equating immigrant with criminal, for example) and narratives, since they create story-like scenarios (the streets will be crowded, the rent and land prices will go up etc).

In March 2013, the German interior minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich, spoke out against immigrants coming from Eastern Europe, expressing yet again the country's opposition of Romania and Bulgaria being included in the Schengen agreement. This attitude of disapproval of immigration from these two countries to the West has received support from the French and Dutch governments as well. The motives offered by the German officials to justify this stand are the following: free circulation would cause a surge of "economic refugees" intending to live on the welfare state[4], a wave of briberies from individuals attempting to enter western countries in corrupt ways, Romanian and Bulgarian immigrants in some cities (like Duisburg, as its mayor agued) caused a spike in robberies, prostitution, gang-violence and "mountains of rubbish"[5] and so on. Again, the motives offered are both accusations regarding what these eastern people are in the present (criminals and parasites) and narratives regarding what they will also be in the future (projecting the same panic-inducing scenarios).

An interesting example is also provided by the recent British campaign that was considered by the government as part of an effort to keep Romanians and Bulgarians out of the country for next year (2014) when the work restrictions are set to expire. The motives that would be offered by the British officials were targeted not at their citizens, but directly at the potential immigrants: messages like "don't come to Britain, the jobs are scarce and low-paid" were considered to keep the immigrants at bay[6]. But even formulated in this reverse rhetoric, the scenarios are not hard to distinguish and look very similar to the scenarios the rest of the western countries: when the last wall falls, the people from the East side of Europe are going to assault us with waves of economic migration; we must halt their quest for our money. The same "under siege" feeling of

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[3] According to the Swiss News Portal "The Local", "Swiss conservatives split by immigration campaign" online story, accessed April 27th 2013, at the following link:
http://www.thelocal.ch/page/view/791#.UYr6FEpqgjg

[4] According to World Socialist Website, online story, accessed April 25th 2013, at the following link:
http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2013/03/11/immi-m11.html

[5] According to The Dailymail news portal, online story, accessed April 27th 2013, at the following link:
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2287852/Romania-Bulgaria-WONT-join-EU-passport-free-zone-Germany-vows-veto-Schengen-bid-corruption-fears.html

[6] According to The Guardian news portal, online story, accessed April 27th 2013, at the following link:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/jan/27/uk-immigration-romania-bulgaria-ministers

Western populations and their representatives is perceptible every such campaign and political stand on the matter of immigration.

What all of these examples have in common is the criminalization of the immigrant and the victimization of the native (who has to stand by helplessly and watch how a horde of nomadic barbarians come and rampage through their country, with EU's permission). This is the main narrative and scenario that stands at the base of all anti-immigrant discourses of West European countries that seem to feel under siege. Since the fears that come up almost obsessively in such campaigns are mostly on financial nature (they will take our jobs, they will live on our welfare, they will cause prices to go up) and only second of all regarding criminality, we can safely argue that the rejection of immigrants intensified not only because the free internal migration within EU caused greater numbers of people coming to the West, but also because of the 2008 financial crisis that suddenly made things seem scarce even for the citizen of the rich occidental countries.

The irony is that while the European Union's enlargement has caused a radicalization of the right-wing discourse in the West (since those countries were faced with greater immigration waves, stirring their potential for xenophobia and rattling their anxieties on the matter), it caused quite the opposite in the East: according to Vachudova (2008), accession to the EU induced an at least temporary moderation in the political agendas and discourses of all major parties in candidate states. In the particular case of right-wing parties that were known to casually sport ultra-nationalist and xenophobic messages, the years around the accession brought a tempering down of the radical discourses of such parties in Eastern Europe. The pressure to comply to European standards in order to make the country look good enough just before official accession is, obviously, the main factor of this sudden calm. The 2008 financial crisis unfortunately caused a revival of far right tendencies in those countries (especially in Hungary with its Jobbik movement which is now the country's third largest party, eliminating their liberal completion in 2009[7]), but overall eastern countries still can't afford the chauvinistic discourse their western counterparts display more and more daringly as they're faced with increasing dread towards immigration waves.

Offering motives against the transient other (the immigrant)

Kenneth Burke, a classic critic and author on the rhetoric of motives, claimed that any human activity, language-expressed or not (but especially true in case of linguistic acts), is not only a symbolic affair, but also one of persuasion. His concept of "symbolic action" defined the human being as a creature that employs symbols (especially linguistic means of expression) – using and sometimes misusing them – in order to persuade, to mystify, to convince and to seduce a present or absent auditory (Burke, 1969). In his view, any human act – speech most of all, obviously – is specifically targeted and designed to persuade, and most often than not this target is a conscious one. His views couldn't find

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[7] According to the European Elections Database,
http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/country/hungary/parliamentary_elections.html

more truthfulness than in the sphere of political discourse. Considering that Burke's background was mainly in semiotics, the bluntness of his views on the purposefulness and omnipresence of persuasion within any discourse (and any human act, actually) gives considerable weight to the implications of his studies. In the case of this paper's focus, such implications of Burke's work are the following: offering motives to justify anti-immigrant positions and actions is specifically targeted to persuade, but in deeper ways than one might expect at a first glance. The persuasion intended does not just mean to justify actions, to convince of the truthfulness of one's proposed political agenda or legal measures (as we could expect when we first think of offering motives), but to persuade at a deeper level, something closer to the meaning of education rather than simple persuasion. Such speeches that offer motives against the immigrant don't just mean to justify measures against the immigrant, they mean to teach the population to hate or at least dislike the immigrant.

We realize that this might sound ridiculously close to conspiracy theories, but our intended meaning is far from it. We didn't claim the political actor's intention is to reeducate the listeners into developing strong negative emotions towards the immigrant. No, we claimed that was the discourse's purpose, beyond any intentionality one could attribute to the political actor and political people themselves. As postmodern critical theory has shown, language does have an autonomy and intentionality of its own (see especially Derrida's works commented in Mckenna, 1992). The impulse to that kind of deeper persuasion which we equated to a form of education (as any culturally significant act is prone to do, actually) resides in language itself and its "symbolic action" nature, as Burke would put it. Offering motives for anti-immigrant attitudes and measures is not only a battle for deciding immediate action, as things are usually put; it's a battle for shaping views on the matter of immigration and views on the social world in general (a battle for shaping a specific *Lebenswelt*, in other words), whether the actors making use of the language are conscious of this or not. And this is even more true considering the psychological tensions involved in such a delicate matter as how to feel about the immigrant, an issue to which a society's attitude is automatically a confused and mixed range of competing internal tendencies.

Though most of the reasons offered against immigration do harbor a cloak of pragmatic explanations, related to concern about the economy, the internal market, the wages and growth of the internal country and other number and figures-backed rationalizations (as for example see Friedberg and Hunt, 1995), they all seem to conceal a deep-seated unrest and fear of the immigrant other. Sometimes, this fear takes the uglier discourse form of criminalizing the other through over-generalizations and downright xenophobic examples from the present or close past and concerns about the immediate future. What seems to be the constant in all this is that all the rationalizations offered against immigrants are based on a strange mix of various fears, even when cloaked in apparent practical reason. When that meets the motives offered by the same practical reason in favor of immigration (the need for either lowly skilled or highly skilled workers, or workers for a specific sector which is uncovered by the local workforce etc.), the result seems to be a strange discursive ambivalence.

The western attitude towards the eastern migrant cannot but be an ambivalent one. One of the direct consequences of this intrinsic ambivalence is the increased amount of tension and controversy caused by expressing statements on the matter if immigration, either in support or against. The conflicts and struggles and controversies always take place internally: within the country's public sphere, within the political party that initiated the campaign against immigration (like the 2011 Swiss campaign of the country's conservatives, for instance), within the self, actually. Andrew Geddes (2003) pinpoints how this ambivalence is actually inherent to the self-structure and the very foundation of Western European nation-states: on one hand liberal, on the other hand quite chauvinistic and ethno-centrist. This duality then reflects especially in the incoherence of policies regarding immigration (according to Geddes, 2003, p 22-23).

In this issue of ambivalence towards immigration, what makes matters even more emotionally difficult is the specific otherness of this specific other, the immigrant. Classic anthropology shows how difficult is to relate and show empathy to the other *per* se, but in the case of the eastern immigrant, matters are subtly more complicated, we would say. First of all, the other who comes from Eastern Europe isn't that much of a foreigner, he's still European after all (the media often employs the metaphor of the "poor cousins from the East" to describe them or their countries, accentuating this distant relation character). Thus, this other has a sort of dimmed otherness about him that makes him difficult to really fear and hate without feeling conflicted about it. But on the other hand (second of all), this other isn't a representative of alterity that necessarily comes to stay, he is perceived as on the move – we hear the phrase "mobile people in a mobile world" at every corner when talking about migration – which makes him less worthy of being taken into consideration than an other one actually has to live with. The migrant isn't the permanent neighbor who for some reason is different in matters of sexual orientation, color or religion, making him "the other". No, the migrant is the other who is passing by continuously, one towards whom no efforts of getting accustomed with are required, since he'll move on anyway. The immigrant is a transient other, an other without a face, similar to the barbaric nomads that just come and pillage through the resources a land has to offer before passing by in search of some other distant land to pillage next (this fairytale-ish scenario is actually highly implied and used in anti-immigrant rhetorics if one pays attention to their narratives). Of course, as shown by Hraba, Hagendoorn and Hagendoorn (1989), the social distance felt by a society towards this other embodied in the immigrant varies in relation to the immigrant's background and is even organized in a consensual hierarchy (for example, the less distance felt towards immigrants from Eastern Europe in comparison to the distance felt towards immigrant from the Middle East, discussed above).

This transient other, an other to whom it is thus increasingly difficult to relate to because of his or her perceived transient and temporary status, calls for understanding and acceptance from the official ideology's (which is, at the time, multiculturalism) standing point, but also threatens the internal comfort and well-being of the so-called natives. Henk van Houtum (2003) points out that even from a strictly utilitarian point of view, the attitude towards the immigrant is a highly ambivalent one: this outsider is a

delicate and unstable mix of both desirability and undesirability, a mix and an ambivalence which are visible including at the policy level. The desirability in case is for a specifically-skilled workforce that is scheduled to preserve the local economic stability and comfort in the future, either by providing cheap unskilled labor or highly skilled expertise and innovation from brilliant immigrants, the best that each poor country has to offer (an exodus usually called "the brain-drain" from east to west). The undesirability is, of course, but the other side of the coin: along with the good come the bad: the surplus workforce, the threat to the native workers that demand more pay and are perhaps cast aside by potential employers looking for the cheapest labor the job market can offer, the unemployed immigrants living in improper conditions in improvised camps, the occasional criminality and so on. Both desirability and undesirability in this context are means to the same end: protecting the own internal comfort zone (van Houtum, 2003). In spite of the meaningful and moving official messages of multiculturalism that promotes, in a way, the contemporary reinterpretation of humanist values, the real motor of how things are done is in fact cold hard economic interest. But how can the selfish need for selective immigration (that logically derives from this mix of desirability and undesirability) be reconciled with the need for a morally acceptable discourse (like the one that the current official ideology, multiculturalism, still provides)? The answer is that the two can't really be perfectly reconciled, or at least not yet. Hence the apparent crisis within multiculturalism that we seek to explore here.

Is multiculturalism still on?

The results of this above-discussed ambivalence are contradictory policies that sometimes seem to strangely mirror the practices of the pre-'70s "guestworker" programs, a resemblance that may lead to similar negative effects on all countries involved in the new migration flows (both on the giving and the receiving end), as argued in Castles, 2006. All in all, it really doesn't seem like the best approach to the changes engendered by the increasingly globalized flows of people. By mirroring some of its previously closed programs and policies, Western Europe seems to chase around its tail, not knowing or not being able to decide how to deal with the new mobility situation. All the while, The United States are apparently taking advantage of the irrational migration policies of Europe, getting the most skilled and innovative immigrants, while Europe ages and its fertility rates are at a historical low. These trends are sure to have a negative long-term impact on the future of Europe (argues Alesina, 2006, p 11-12). In this not-so-rosy context, debates on the role and future of multiculturalism are prone to appear – and already do.

It is already a common place in certain EU countries to argue that multiculturalism is already dead and buried or just another name for a well-known saying according to which the road to hell is paved with good intentions. It is the kind of reasoning that throws the water with the baby. The aim of our article is not to take the pulse of nowadays multiculturalism, but to understand how in a multicultural milieu, as the one specific to old European democracies, certain xenophobic discourses, especially the ones

directed towards immigrants, still subsist. But before we tackle the philosophical content of multiculturalism, we should take a rapid look at the initial aim of multiculturalist policies. Devised in the 70s and propelled by astute slogans, such as "cultural solutions to cultural problems", multiculturalist policies sought to improve the social status of second-generation migrants, who might have felt unwanted, oppressed by state racism or excluded by labor market on ethnic criteria. From a philosophical perspective, multiculturalist policies emerged after the turn in the liberal discourse from "orthodox liberal" to "liberal pluralist" (Kymlicka, 2001). "Orthodox liberal", which was the most prominent line of approaching diversity after WWII, relegated ethnocultural diversity to the private sphere. It was extricated from this realm by "liberal pluralist", a rectified version of liberalism according to which justice required a thorough public recognition of ethnocultural diversity. Obviously, supplanting "orthodox liberal" views by "liberal pluralist" perspectives represented an important leap with respect to rights granted to different minority groups. Apart from the fact that public policies' scope got broadened, the welfare state, as the source of multiculturalist policies, continued to be propelled by the same ideology, namely social liberalism. In a recently published book, titled *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, Will Kymlicka assesses the turn in the multicultural discourse. This time from „liberal multiculturalism" to a "neoliberal multiculturalism". Whilst liberal multiculturalism was about a "citizenization" process rooted both in social liberalism (politics of redistribution) and nationalism (creating good citizens through politics of recognition), neoliberal multiculturalism narrowed its scope to creating competitive actors in competitive economies (Hall, Lamont, 2013). In other words, neoliberal multiculturalism is not prone anymore to build a tolerant citizen but rather to construct a market actor who can perform effectively within a very competitive transnational economic milieu. There is no doubt that multiculturalism is ineffective by attending only to citizenship status bereft of market status. But would it be effective only by attending to market status with no regard to citizenship status? Of course not. Kymlicka stresses that multiculturalism is most effective when it takes into consideration both the citizenship status and the market status. Kymlicka's differentiation between multicultural liberalism and multicultural neoliberalism is quite helpful, because different scholars have construed multicultural neoliberalism as the death of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is often a misunderstood or misused term, due to the multiple terms sometimes used to describe or intuitively hint at the same depicted realities: multiculturalism, assimilation, integration, inclusion and so on. This kind of confusion may be not so troublesome when discussing the matter of multiculturalism from a strictly theoretical perspective, as we do in this particular section of the paper, but it can become dangerous when trying to understand the specific mechanisms in which multiculturalism or inclusion are defined, enforced and negotiated within a specific social context. As shown by Stalker, while multiculturalism is a broad worldview or perspective on the matter of immigration, the other terms used in relation to it are often actually referring to techniques or strategies of dealing with the outcome of multiculturalism:

"Integration is a term which is used fairly loosely and often interchangeably with concepts such as assimilation and multiculturalism. For the purposes of this discussion it

is assumed that integration is an objective which can be achieved either by assimilation or by multiculturalism, or by a combination of the two. Assimilation of immigrants means dispersing them throughout the community and steadily absorbing them so that eventually they become indistinguishable from a homogenous host community. Multiculturalism means tolerating, or even promoting, ethnic and other differences in such a way that identifiable groups coexist and interact to produce a heterogeneous but stable society." (Stalker, 1994, p 72).

In Europe, argues Stalker, the great waves of immigration, the growth of ethnic communities and the public awareness of them "prompted two parallel responses. First, a clamp-down on further immigration. Second, the promotion of multicultural development for those immigrants already in place." (idem, p 73). This dual and somewhat contradictory response (contradictory in opting for multiculturalism rather than the historical approach of assimilation) could be a possible explanation for the ambivalence we discussed above in the paper. Furthermore, the author names France, Germany and Switzerland as the main countries reluctant – if not openly opposed – to multiculturalism (idem, p 74), a view which seems to be consistent with our opinion also and with the case examples we have given previously to illustrate anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The present section of our paper tries to explain why certain authors believe that multiculturalist policies have failed. A particular emphasis will be placed on the political content of multiculturalism, accused by some as being too liberal and, as a consequence, impossible of being internalized by immigrant people. Other perspectives present multiculturalism as illiberal because it stresses pluralism whilst it simultaneously overlooks tolerance. Some authors have charged multiculturalism of concealing a rather particularistic stance instead of sharing a sheer universalistic one. And last, but not least, populism was considered to be the archenemy of multiculturalist policies. But before we start unraveling the political content of multiculturalism, we stress the fact that for the failure of multiculturalist policies immigrants themselves were blamed. Rod Liddle, a British columnist, contended that the Muslims were the ones "who killed multiculturalism" (Liddle, 2004) This is the type of recited truth which, according to Michel De Certeau, furthers the intolerant stance toward immigrant people by engendering social facts (De Certeau, 1984). Without dwelling too much upon Certeau's theoretical perspective, it is worth saying that according to him a mass media dominated society has become a "forest of narratives", a rather tortuous place, from which one is extracted by the rhetoric most conversant with her/his emotions. Especially in a social frame dominated by scarcity, Muslims in particular, and immigrants in general, become perfect scapegoats for explaining the failure of multiculturalist policies and thus an outstanding example of what sociologists call perverse effects. Instead of widening and deepening the social awareness and tolerance towards immigrants coming to EU countries, multiculturalist policies have been assessed as rather overprotective, from a social and cultural point of view, with the newcomers, who were thus unwilling to espouse the political and cultural values of the host country. In other words,

multiculturalist policies have failed to forge social responsibility and constitutional loyalties among immigrants.

Politics of redistribution and politics of recognition are just two consequences of the multicultural ethos that started influencing the policy making sector in Western Europe in the 70s in order to produce a better social integration of sexual minorities, religious minorities, immigrants and national minorities. Politics of redistribution is propelled by a Marxist way of understanding society, according to which one's place in status hierarchy is strongly determined by his/her economic situation. But it is quite clear that status hierarchy is not completely synonimous with economic hierarchy. For instance, certain national minorities, like the Catalans or the Quèbècois, have the same living standard as the majority, but their culture doesn't have the same social prominence as the majority's culture. Whilst the traditional working class needed social benefits engendered by politics of redistribution, gays and Jews with a solid position in the social hierarchy asked just for politics of recognition (Kymlicka, 2002). A good example of combining politics of redistribution and politics of recognition is that of women. Women's social status needs to be rectified by both politics of redistribution and politics of recognition. But this is also the case of immigrants who usually need to engage in both politics of redistribution and politics of recognition. Basically, xenophobic rhetoric has approached, especially in times of scarcity, the politics of redistribution area in order to criticize the immigrants. Trying to understand the politics of recognition, and the critical stances built upon this particular outgrowth of multiculturalist policies, is an undertaking that sends us in the area of political philosophy. Giovanni Sartori, for instance, contends that the politics of recognition engenderd by multiculturalism has forged new cultures (Sartori, 2007) which disrespect a pluralist pre-existing social order. In a pluralist millieu, writes Sartori, cultures are prone to recognize each other, creating thus a social climate conducive to tolerance. When new cultures are manufactured and imposed from above without striving for mutual recognition so that the climate of tolerance be furthered, pernicious effects emerge. Sartori claims that the new cultures supported by politics of recognition have displayed just a „radical ignorance" (Sartori, 2007) towards the existing cultural context, and thus the existing pluralistic millieu and its specific tolerance suffered deeply. It is quite clear that those who showed „radical ignorance" to a context presented as pluralistic and tolerant by Sartori assessed the cultural millieu differently. However, from Sartori's perspective, multiculturalist policies have failed to nourish tolerance just because they haven't place enough emphasis on efforts aimed at mutual recognition, instilling instead a „radical ignorance". Unlike Sartori, who accuses multiculturalist policies of little pluralist content because they have been too prone to positive discrimination, Liz Fekete claims that integration discourse in France, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Norway stresses the similarity between integration and cultural homogeneity. In the above mentioned countries, the integration discourse has been guided by the superiority of „Western morals" and national identity values, whilst laying to much emphasis on religious-cultural terms and too little on socio-economic ones (Fekete, 2008). This is a type of Schmittian liberalism that hinges on certain civilizational values, which are allegedly afflicted by Muslim immigrants especially

after 9/11, and wich imbues the integration discourse with a Huntingtonian perspective that entails dire consequences. Consequently, integration discourse is not about whether to integrate migrants. It's about how to integrate them (Lentin, 2011). This is how multiculturalist policies end up forging cultural racism. Another explanation for why multiculturalist policies haven't worked refers to populism. As an "empty hart" ideology (Taggart, 2000), populism emerged in the mid-1990s, when Western Europe was coping with the geopolitical disappearance of USSR, potential threats brought by globalization processes propelled by the neo-liberal philosophy, the reinstatement of politics and the weakening of political economy etc. New populism's main tenet refers to a widening cleavage between a corrupt elite and a pure people. Being inclined to idealize "the people", populism tends to fend off everything that is not related to a certain people's ethos. But this ethos is not a traditional one, as our reader might have expected, but rather a postmodern one, nourished by values which were brought in the limelight by the politics of recognition. What is definitely not characteristic to "the peoples of Europe" are especially the Muslim values, which strongly reject, among others, sexual freedom. Revolving around an assertive liberalism, this type of populism considers every cultural code that restrains personal autonomy as deviant. Thus, gender equality become the central value of a neo-nationalism (with Pim Fortuyn as a political icon) that makes a limpid distinction between pre-modern values that can be saved and anti-modern values which are to be externalized (Mamdani, 2005). Further on, we argue that willy-nilly multiculturalism policies have a strong particularistic content. David Miller claims that there is a false contrast between genuine identities forged by multiculturalist policies and an artificial national identity (Miller, 1995). Miller argues that group identities of any type could be artificial. In other words, the smaller the social group, the more genuine its identity, is just a false contention. He also contends that micro-groups and their particular identity tend to be very fragile outside national milieu, which makes national culture a protective umbrella for micro-identities. Continuing Miller's reasoning, we say that most of the injustices inflicted on group members take place inside a particular group. Which means that the sufferings caused inside a group needs to be rectified by some central institution which disseminates in the whole society a common meaning of justice and fairness. David Miller's arguments are philosophically tapped on by Pierre Manent, who considers that the European Union's most urgent task is to define itself politically (Manent, 2006). Employing classical liberal reasoning, Manent believes that politics is about putting things in common, like a territory and a population. Politics is also about limitations, such as the jurisdiction of a particular institution. Placing too much emphasis on individual rights rather than on citizen rights, hoping that the state would survive the nation-state and constantly detaching its institutions from the European peoples (this time defined in a modern sense) and thus thinning self-governance, the European Union understood as a "permanent public authority" (Vincent, 1987) will become less and less democratic. According to Manent, what post-Maastricht European Union has so far failed to create is a political body, which usually puts certain things in common. To sum it up, we argue that it is premature to talk about the death of multiculturalism. This is the cultural dream of the European Union. But in order to make it work, European Union

needs to define itself politically, namely to clarify what populations and territories are or could be considered European. In other words, an *European multiculturalism* needs to be defined and enforced, if the EU intends to become a coherent geopolitical block. Animated just by an *international multiculturalism*, it will be very hard for the EU to get over an economic crisis and the scarcity it causes, and multicultural policies and immigrants will once again be considered liable for an economic havoc caused by too much economics and too little politics. And *neoliberal multiculturalism*, which currently inspires the multiculturalist policies adopted by the most developed EU countries, is the salient expression of this lack of equilibrium between economics and politics.

A short conclusion

Sadly, as Halikiopoulou, Mock and Vasilopoulou (2013) have shown, the nationalist and civic values of right-wing parties – that often take pride in posing as the last defenders of a country's specific authenticity – not only fail to shield countries from radicalism, extremism and xenophobia (as the conventional view in the study of nationalism likes to believe), but even make these unpleasant attitudes flourish under the appearance of deploying the most beloved symbolic resources of national identity.

Thus, one could infer that the right-wing parties in Western Europe arbor dubious attitudes and messages and incite to open discrimination of the eastern-born transient other (the immigrant). What is interesting to learn from this is, first of all, how motives to justify these attitudes are constructed and offered (and how they're based on scenarios that criminalize the other and victimize the native in order to persuade and promote these radical attitudes); and second of all how these stirs and shifts translate into shifts within the broader frame of the (still) humanist Europe's official ideology: multiculturalism.

Motives given against immigration are always not just what they define themselves to be, which is rationalizations or reasonable concerns regarding the effect of allowing immigration waves to sweep the home country. Behind any such rationalization – and we're not at all denied the validity of such factual reasons offered – lies an often emotional and identity-related worldview that is fundamental to the way the receiving countries (in this case the countries from Western Europe) see themselves, their role and the way they define their nation and statehood. Within the limits and purposes of this paper, we have chosen to focus on these underlying views, while not attempting to deny or belittle the rational and factual analysis they sometimes engender. These ideas should be taken into account when discussing the more technical aspects related to policies and the welfare state's organization, because "the ideas that animate these practices (about the nation and about membership of the imagined national community) are of central importance" (Geddes, 2003, p 23). A rationalizing motive is never just a motive, which is precisely why such ethno-centric backed arguments often give way to forms of discourse very similar to hate speech.

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