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XENOPHOBIA, IDENTITY
AND NEW FORMS OF NATIONALISM

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XENOPHOBIA, IDENTITY
AND NEW FORMS OF NATIONALISM

EDITED BY
Vladimir Milisavljević and
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VLADIMIR MILISAVLJEVIĆ

Farewell to Universalism: Nationalism and Xenophobia After the “End of History”[1]

Abstract

The last few decades have brought about a significant change in the character of nationalism in Europe and, more widely, in the Western world. Quite paradoxically, nationalist politics is nowadays no more justified by appealing to biological or cultural superiority of one’s own nation or by the belief in its universal historical mission (e.g., “civilizing through colonial rule”), but rather by seemingly more modest arguments concerning equality, justice, right to difference, autochthony or even liberal democracy. This new defensive stance of today’s nationalism has allowed for a normalization of the right-wing political parties in institutional political life. However, it has not stopped xenophobia, but merely helped it to gain a more respectable face and spread more widely across the political spectrum. I argue that the rise of Western nationalism can be explained by the decline of universalism in philosophy, social sciences and citizens’ political sensibility in general. I also suggest that xenophobia and nationalism are supported not only by explicitly differentialist concepts, such as postmodernism or pragmatism, but also by some unquestioned presuppositions of political liberalism. This point is substantiated by an analysis of Fukuyama’s thesis about the “end of history” and of Rawls’ concept of international justice, in particular as to their treatment of the immigration problem.

Keywords: culture, difference, nationalism, universalism, xenophobia

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[1] This text has been written as part of the project “Structural, Social and Historical Changes in Serbian Society in the Context of European Integrations and Globalization” (No. 179038) of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

Francis Fukuyama initially entitled his famous 1989 article with a question: “Have we reached the end of history?” The question is still debated, even though it has lost some of its provocative power. But in the meantime, the affirmative answer that was provided to it, seems to be proven more and more wrong: contrary to the expectations, contemporary world does not appear to follow the path leading to the establishment of the universal world system of liberal democracies, which, according to Fukuyama’s earlier views, marked the end of history as we had known it.

The end of history thesis has been characterized by an ambiguity since its very beginnings, not only in Fukuyama, but also in Kojève, and perhaps in their common source of inspiration, Hegel. These authors posited that *universal* history could be brought to its end, consisting of the state of universal recognition, in *one part of the world* – Napoleon’s empire or Western liberal democracies – and that the rest would eventually follow the same course. However, as Fukuyama put it in his subsequent book, for the “foreseeable future, the world will be divided between a post-historical part” – in which all struggle for recognition has become superfluous – and “a part that is still stuck in history”, i.e., in wars, violence and aggression (Fukuyama 1992, 276, cf. Kojève 1969, 192).

Such view of the transitional phase preceding the realization of the “universal and homogenous State” (according to the expression of Alexandre Kojève) is utterly optimistic and at the same time questionable, in the first place for general philosophical and political reasons. One could hardly expect the post-historical part of the world not to be affected by conflicts in its tardy, “historical” part, and there are all reasons to believe that the relations along the fault lines between the two worlds would still belong to the realm of “history”, contaminated by its all-too-human passions. For example, given the importance of the immigration issue, Fukuyama’s assumption that “the historical and post-historical worlds will maintain parallel but separate existences, with relatively little interaction between them” (Fukuyama 1992, 277), does not seem to be realistic.

But let us put aside for a moment this objection and point to another important view shared by Kojève and Fukuyama, which is of more immediate consequence for our subject.

The end of history was supposed to result in an equilibrium state in which all substantial demands for recognition of rights are satisfied. Thus, it should have been the state in which *nationalism* has become insignificant and obsolete. This seems to imply that nationalism should be absent from those parts of the world in which history has come to its end (the liberal democracies). Such was, indeed, Fukuyama's conclusion: "The post-historical world would still be divided into nation-states, but its separate nationalisms would have made peace with liberalism and would express themselves increasingly in the sphere of private life alone", whereas "[i]n the historical world, the nation-state will continue to be the chief locus of political identification" (Fukuyama 1992, 276–277, cf. Kojève 1969, 276).

However, recent actuality does not confirm this view. On the contrary, for a couple of decades now, we have been able to witness an extraordinary rise of nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric – not only in the Third World or former communist countries, but in the most developed liberal democracies as well. In his first book, Fukuyama, in a way, acknowledged the existence of this problem. Nevertheless, he believed that nationalism essentially belonged to the past, and this view commanded his overall perspective when treating the phenomenon of the rise of nationalism in Western countries. Seen through the lens of the end of history thesis, nationalism was a minor and residual phenomenon, which was fated to completely fade away from the world (Fukuyama 1992, 271–272). Also, in his latest book, Fukuyama accepts the conventional wisdom according to which nationalist politics in liberal democracies represents nothing more than the "upsurge of old-fashioned nationalism" (Fukuyama 2018, xv), the revival or "awakening" (159) of the "ghosts of the older national identities" (145), or of the "demons" (153) of the past (so the commonplace metaphors go: cf. Kaplan, 1993). This frame of reference masks important features of today's nationalism and obliterates its novelty and specificity. But it also minimizes the significance of nationalism by confining its scope to one extreme of the political spectrum (the extreme right, or fascism).

I shall argue that these two shortcomings are responsible for difficulties – theoretical as well as political – in dealing with nationalism. Nationalism of our days is significantly different in its character from the earlier one. One of its main features is acute xenophobia, which nowadays emerges in forms previously unknown to us. As a political sentiment, xenophobia is certainly not something new. However, its justification in the name of a differentialist ideology or human rights, as well as its normalization, are something unprecedented.

One part of my thesis is that the rise of ethnocentric nationalism and xenophobia can be explained by the decline of universalism in politics, philosophy and social science. Thus far I have accepted some of Fukuyama's own conclusions. However, I believe that the decline of universalism is more comprehensive than what Fukuyama affirms. It does not affect only postmodernist, multiculturalist or pragmatist approaches, but political liberalism as well. Finally, I shall suggest that one of the main characteristics of the new Western nationalism is its relative independence from ideology. This accounts for the fact that xenophobic feelings and attitudes are much more widespread than we are commonly inclined to believe.

"Soft" nationalism?

To begin with, we may adopt the definition of nationalism by the German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler, according to which nationalism is

> a system of ideas, a doctrine, a picture of the world which aims at creating, mobilizing and consolidating a larger solidarity association (called nation), and above all at legitimizing of modern political power. This is the reason why the nation-state, with the nation which is as homogenous as possible, comes to be the central issue of nationalism.[2]

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[2] "*Nationalismus* soll heißen: das Ideensystem, die Doktrin, das Weltbild, das der Schaffung, Mobilisierung und Integration eines größeren Solidarverbandes (Nation genannt), vor allem aber der Legitimation neuzeitlicher politischer Herrschaft dient. Daher wird der Nationalstaat mit einer möglichst homogenen Nation zum Kardinalproblem des Nationalismus." (Wehler 2001, 13).

To this minimal definition of nationalism, we should perhaps add, however obvious it may be, that nationalism is devoted to the promotion of the interest of one particular nation. As Hobsbawm said, in a somewhat exaggerated statement, “nationalism by definition subordinates all other interests to those of its specific nation” (quoted in Walzer 1990, 549–550). Another point which deserves to be mentioned is the importance of the idea of “homeland” in nationalist discourse. Homeland is, usually, the territory of the nation-state. But this term sometimes refers to something else: a native region, town or even neighborhood.

Obviously, these features of nationalism (homogeneity of the nation, promotion of its interest, attachment to one’s homeland or soil) are potentially related to xenophobic attitudes or feelings. However, this is not necessarily the case, and Wehler’s definition makes no mention of ethnicity or race, much less of xenophobia or even violence. So, we may wonder how this definition of nationalism fits to what is usually referred to as “new forms” of nationalism or, more briefly, “new nationalism”, in which xenophobia has come to play such a prominent role. But first of all, is new nationalism xenophobic?

Xenophobia may give rise to violence, and, traditionally, one of the main topics of the theory of nationalism has been the distinction between moderate or liberal nationalism and its extreme and violent counterpart. At first sight, and as far as the Western world is concerned, this distinction seems to have lost some of its pertinence, particularly in regard to the problem of immigration, which is one of the most important challenges of contemporary rich societies. More specifically, in Western Europe, extremist political parties, openly inviting to violence against foreigners, have either disappeared from the political scene or adapted themselves to the political system of parliamentary democracy, in which they have achieved substantial successes.[3] This process of normalization of the extreme or far-right has been at work since the beginning of the 1990s.[4] Its consequences have become obvious during the last decade, with several emblematic events, such as Marine Le Pen's taking over the former National Front's presidency in 2011, the rise of populist nationalist parties in other European countries (the Alternative for Germany party in Germany, Geerts Wilders in the Netherlands or the Northern League in Italy), Brexit, Trump's electoral victory and Matteo Salvini's entrance into government. The result of this normalization has been the ever-growing difficulty of tracing a borderline between extreme nationalism and its moderate versions. Consequently, the suspicion of extremism or racism floats nowadays even over liberal or moderate nationalism, or right-wing politics in general. This "confusion" has often been deplored by the moderate right (Taguieff 2014, 12, 175–177). However, there is a good explanation to it: if acts of violence by political parties or individuals are not overtly supported or encouraged, it is only because of the assumption that the policies which *de facto* imply resorting to extreme violence, such as the extensively conceived tasks of the "control of national borders" or "war on terrorism", should be enforced by the state. Merely conceded to or enthusiastically advocated, this view is nowadays shared by moderate and radical nationalists alike.

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[3] The important question of secret connections between far-right political parties and illegal informal groups engaged in violence against foreigners may here be left aside.

[4] The transformation of the old right has been rightly stressed in anti-nationalist political agendas. Nonetheless, even in its new form, xenophobic

These changes in the political practice of far-right parties were accompanied, or preceded, by a shift at the level of the ideological foundations of nationalism, which made nationalism "softer" and hence more acceptable to a wider range of voters. Faced with the problem of immigration, new nationalism has adopted a new strategy, as it refrains, at least officially, from the old arguments stressing, e.g., the biological superiority of the white race. Its basis is cultural rather than biological, which suggests that it is more appropriate to speak of cultural than of biological nationalism or racism (Balibar 2005, 13). But new nationalism does not necessarily

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nationalism is still labeled as "radicalism" or "extremism" (Minkenberg 2013, 19): "This new radical right – identified above as the 'third wave' of right-wing radicalism in post-war Western democracies – is not simply the extension of conservatism towards the extreme end of the political spectrum; instead, it is the product of a restructuring of that spectrum and a regrouping of political actors and alliances. It is distinguished from the old right by its softening of anti-democratic rhetoric and willingness to play according to the rules of the game, as well as by its advocacy of ethnocentrism rather than classic biological racism."

affirm the cultural superiority of one’s own nation either. The argument most favored by its proponents insists on the so-called “irreducible difference” between nations and their respective cultures, as well as on the need to preserve national identity. As a rule, the second step consists of appealing to the principle of justice, stating the equal right of every particular nation to choose its destiny and protect its traditions and way of life. This change has become visible in the ideological discourse of anti-immigrant parties, like the Vlaams Blok, which rejected all accusations of racism brought up against it affirming that the political objective of the party consisted of nothing more than defending “the right of Flemings to be themselves” – the same right it readily acknowledged to other nations too (Betz 2003, 193). Surprisingly, in some cases, xenophobic nationalism has proven itself capable of accommodating to the so-called constructivist conception of the nation (as in the case of a purely imaginary homeland, the so called “Padania” in Italy) or the multiculturalist rhetoric.

At first sight, new nationalism is more modest than the traditional one, as it does not assign to one’s own nation any outstanding, universal world-historic mission (a civilizing, cultural or emancipatory calling, as was previously the case with British, German or French nationalism). New nationalism may be seen as a spiritual heir of postmodernism, as it abstains from any reference to grand narrations on the universal history of mankind. Victor Orbán’s vision of the Hungarian nation as a defender of Christianity appears to be one of the few exceptions to this rule; however, there are reasons to believe that Christian religion is understood by his party primarily as constitutive of a particular “cultural identity” of European peoples, which should be preserved as such at any price, rather than as an intrinsic spiritual value that deserves to be protected and promoted in its own right.

Unlike its historical predecessors, new nationalism presents itself in the defensive stance of closure and retreat, not of expansion or conquest. It seems to aim solely at preserving one’s home, one’s place of birth and antique traditions of one’s native community. Instead of adopting the discourse of liberation, new nationalism has developed a sentimental rhetoric of belonging in which intimate individual memories of one’s cherished region or village, with its church towers and soils (*les clochers et les terroirs,* as in the case of France's National Front), hold a place of honor.

However, all this lyricism is nothing but the likable side of the more disputable practice of erecting interstate walls, barbed wire fences or even mine fields, which we witness nowadays. As to the question of immigration, the most important practical consequences of new nationalism remain substantially identical to those of the same old right-wing politics: closing the borders for immigrants and refugees, hostile attitude to any form of blending of their culture with the one of the native populations, and discrimination. In spite of all changes in ideology, these practices still rely on xenophobic feelings of the domestic population, which are constantly incited and encouraged. The effort to help xenophobia gain a more acceptable image is also a matter of sustained concern.

Legitimizing xenophobia

By its form, origin and meaning, the word "xenophobia" reminds of terms such as "claustrophobia" or "arachnophobia", denoting pathological conditions which consist of a morbid and irrational fear of something or somebody which a healthy person perceives as innocuous. However, the typical field of application of this concept is not the one of psychology, but of sociology and political science: xenophobia that we are dealing with is not a purely subjective feeling, but an omnipresent phenomenon with major political significance. Nonetheless, the "pathological" overtone of the term accounts for the fact that it is so suitable for disqualifying of political adversaries. But it is important not to content ourselves with using this concept as a denigrating label. While questioning xenophobic discourses, practices and attitudes, we should be aware of the weaknesses of some forms of fighting xenophobia, particularly of those coming from leftist politics. It is commonly assumed that it is enough to state the xenophobic character of certain political attitudes and practices in order to make them repulsive or prove them wrong. To this type of criticism, one may respond with a question: isn't a certain amount of xenophobia, after all, something human and understandable, or even constitutive of the life in human society, which always consists of a more or less limited group of people?

It has been justly noted that, nowadays, "[x]enophobia is made productive, a necessity for survival. Its ugliness is made over, even beautified" (Amin 2011). In what follows, I will try to address some strategies of legitimizing xenophobia in Western societies. At the same time, I will sketch the broader theoretical context which has made the rehabilitation of xenophobia possible.

Let us take a step back and recall the significant (and unlucky) historical episode from the biography of Lévi-Strauss, as related by himself. It concerns his lecture given in UNESCO in 1971 at the opening of the International Year for Action to Combat Racism. Contrary to the original intentions of the organizer, the lecture put into question the widely accepted view that "the spread of knowledge and the development of communication among human beings will someday let them live in harmony, accepting and respecting their diversity" – the diversity which Lévi-Strauss himself considered as vital for the creativity of any culture: "if not resigned to becoming the sterile consumer of the values of the past […] capable only of giving birth to bastard works", humanity "must learn once again that all true creation implies a certain deafness to the appeal of other values, even going so far as to reject them if not denying them altogether" (Lévi-Straus 1985, 23–24).

Lévi-Strauss' standpoint was understood and condemned as a deviation from the anti-racist consensus, prevalent after the World War II. This judgment was harsh and unjust. Lévi-Strauss later said that his intention had been to circumscribe the meaning of the term "racism" in order to oppose its abuses. Nevertheless, he proposed an ambiguous distinction between racism and "the attitude held by individuals or groups that their loyalty to certain values makes […] partially or totally insensitive to other values". As he further explained (Lévi-Straus 1985, xiii–xiv):

> It is not at all invidious to place one way of life or thought above all others or to feel little drawn to other people or groups whose ways of life, respectable in themselves, are quite remote from the system to which one is traditionally attached. Such relative incommunicability certainly does not authorize anyone to oppress or destroy the values one has

> rejected, or their representatives, but within these limitations, it is not at all repugnant. It may even be the price to be paid so that the systems of values of each spiritual family or each community are preserved and find within themselves the resources necessary for their renewal.

Lévi-Strauss did not even mention the word “xenophobia” in this context. However, his utterances were understood as meant to provide an anthropological foundation for ethnocentrism and a justification of cultural xenophobia, as distinct from (biological) “racism”. The misunderstanding was so influent that one of the outspoken adversaries of Western xenophobia maintains that Lévi-Strauss was trying to establish a difference between xenophobia and racism (Balibar 2005, 21). More importantly, some of the attempts to justify xenophobia or exclusivism as a normal and legitimate attitude appeal to the authority of the great anthropologist: according to Rorty, “we may agree with Lévi-Strauss that such exclusivity is a necessary and proper condition of selfhood” (Rorty 1991, 210, cf. Geertz 1986). However, Lévi-Strauss’ goal was rather to contribute to the preservation of the endangered native communities of the world, even if his conclusions were expressed in general and far-reaching statements.[5] But we are nowadays witnessing a curious twist: the arguments which were originally put forward to protect native peoples, are being appropriated by the new nativist ideology of the “autochthonous” or “indigenous” population of developed Western countries. The westerners are pretending to find themselves in the position of Aborigines or autochthonous inhabitants of the Amazonian rainforests, whose fragile culture is allegedly endangered by the newcomers from overseas. But new Western xenophobia has nothing in common with the so called “primitive” fear before the strange or unfamiliar. Quite the contrary, given the colonial past of the West, we could see the new

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[5] Lévi-Strauss’ famous distinction between primitive and modern societies in terms of the difference between anthropophagy and anthropoemia (from the Greek word *emein*, “to vomit”) represents a powerful tool for challenging the typically Western way of dealing with alterity by exclusion or segregation: as a matter of fact, the new Western xenophobia could be considered as the supreme degree of anthropoemia (Lévi-Strauss 1955, 463–4; cf. Taguieff 2001, 20–21), much worse than the cannibalism of the “savages”.

avatar of xenophobia as a symptom of the repressed feeling of guilt of the populations of former metropoleis in face of the distressed descendants of all too familiar peoples, which are now, in turn, being cynically accused of practicing a colonization “in reverse” (*colonisation à rebours*) (Taguieff 2014, 19).

This particularistic argumentation, which has been termed “fundamentalism of difference” or “cultural differentialism”, was favored by certain developments in sociobiology of doubtful Darwinian descent, with its thesis on the genetic foundations of “primary” racism, sometimes directly identified with xenophobia (cf. Taguieff 2001, 45–55). But it was also encouraged – the point which deserves to be stressed – by the postmodernist absolutizing of difference and correspondent denial of universalism, in spite of the frequent and sincere engagement of the philosophical champions of difference against racism and xenophobia. As Manfred Frank perspicaciously observed, it is difficult to conceive, in terms of sheer logic, how Derrida’s “differance” (*la différance*), which implies “a politics of differentiation”, could, for example, serve as a basis for the struggle against the injustices of the Apartheid regime in South Africa (Frank 1993, 132–133).[6] On the contrary, it is easy to find in the “thought of the difference” the point of support for segregationist policies, and this has happened more than once.

Jacques Derrida honestly tried to fight nationalism and xenophobia, but was mistaken in his account of their reasons. Derrida finds the roots of nationalism and xenophobia in the metaphysical heritage of Europe, with its concept of universal identity. The following passage from his book *The Other Heading* insists on the essential affiliation between nationalism and universalism (Derrida 1992, 72–73):

> The value of universality […] capitalizes all the antinomies, for it must be linked to the value of exemplarity that inscribes the universal in the proper body of a singularity, of an idiom or a culture, whether this singularity be individual, social, national, state, federal, confederal, or not. Whether it takes a national form or not, a refined, hospitable or

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[6] Similarly, Terry Eagleton reveals a significant affinity between the spirit of populism and the postmodernist repudiation of universalism (Eagleton 1996, 28, 63–68, 112–128).

> aggressively xenophobic form or not, the self-affirmation of an identity always claims to be responding to the call or assignation of the universal. There are no exceptions to this law.

Derrida's verdict has not stood the test of time, which has confronted us with overtly and deliberately particularist forms of nationalism. Their proponents tend to refrain from any universalist argument, in the name of the pure diversity of human cultures and difference, which, however, entitles us to keep the newcomer as far as possible from the domestic population of Europe.

The right thing to do

Similar consequences could be drawn from a wider range of philosophical positions which explicitly put into question universalism. Probably the most telling is the example of Rorty, who believes "that moral values are just embedded in contingent local traditions and have no more force than that" (Eagleton 1996, 114) and advocates ethnocentrism in epistemology as well as in politics. The two aspects of ethnocentrism are interrelated. In terms of epistemology, Rorty adopts the viewpoint, which he explicitly labels as "ethnocentric", according to which "there is nothing to be said about either truth or rationality apart from descriptions of the familiar procedures of justification which a given society – *ours* – uses in one or another area of inquiry" (Rorty 1991, 23). Solidarity prevails over the scientific ideal of objectivity. This puts an end to any quest for universal principles.

What is the situation like when it comes to politics? A comparison with a postmodernist may here be useful. In his discussion with Lyotard, Rorty accepts Lyotard's thesis of the end of grand narratives, but reproaches him for rejecting the (presumably) non-grand, ethnocentric narratives, those that help to establish the identity and cohesion of a particular nation, of a "particular collection of human beings" (Rorty 1991, 24). Postmodernism, according to Rorty, leads to relativism, which his own ethnocentrism avoids; no less than Peirce's or Habermas' philosophy, postmodernism is liable to criticism as being "insufficiently ethnocentric" (Rorty

1991, 23). Rorty believes that we are justified in attaching “a special privilege to our own community” or ethnos (Rorty 1991, 29). On these grounds, he admonishes French authors, such as Lyotard or Foucault, for their loss of faith in liberal democracy (Rorty 1991, 220) and, by contrast, openly endorses ethnocentrism as the approach that Western countries should adopt in their relations to the rest of the world.

It may be objected that we should not blame Rorty for justifying xenophobia by his specific model of ethnocentrism. In a later book, Rorty expressly warns his readers that the ethnocentrism he is advocating “is dedicated to enlarging itself, to creating an even larger and more variegated ethnos”. Furthermore, it is an ethnocentrism of liberal people “who have been brought up to distrust ethnocentrism” (Rorty 1989, 198). Nevertheless, Rorty’s viewpoint, with its apology of provincialism and even parochialism (Rorty 1989, 73, 190, and Rorty 1991, 21–22, 26, 33), is strongly particularist. Rorty’s “solidarity” requires an identification with a particular group of people, the one in which a person happens to be born and raised. In Rorty’s opinion, identification is subject to gradation but never actually reaches the level of the universal human being: demands for universal or global justice are doomed to “weaken, or even vanish altogether, when things get really tough”, and give way to more limited loyalties (Rorty 2007, 42, cf. Rorty 1991, 200). It is difficult to tell this ethnocentrism apart from xenophobia in terms of the difference between “relation to one’s self” and “relation to others”. As has been noted, “the pair ethnocentrism/xenophobia […] refers to two sides of the same process” (Taguieff 2001, 59).

Rorty’s standpoint bears clear resemblances to some aspects of Heidegger’s philosophy: his insisting on the inevitability of ethnocentrism, to which we are “condemned” (Rorty 1991, 31–32), on the importance of contingency, on the tradition to which one belongs, appears to be supported by a conception of finitude of human being, which makes us think of Heidegger’s *Geworfenheit*, based on ontological premises.[7] However, unlike

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[7] Rorty has disowned this interpretation of his views. He has admitted that his own ambiguities in expounding the concept of ethnocentrism may have contributed to the misunderstanding that it consists of “attempting a transcendental deduction of democratic politics from antirepresenta-

Heidegger's, Rorty's ethnocentrism is deliberately subjectivist. Adorno rightly disputed such an attitude in the context of his general criticism of *Weltanschauungen,* where he condemned our readiness to understand our "bonds" (*Bindungen*), i.e., the contingent factual circumstances that determine our life – our nationality, religion or education – as our essential and irreducible attributes, which are not liable to further questioning (Adorno 1973, I, 125–130). But one may even agree with Rorty's general philosophical outlook and still have doubts concerning its political implications. Let me give an example of this point, based on another, practical dilemma that Rorty formulated in a subsequent text, which may not be central to Rorty's argument, but is nevertheless highly significant in our context.[8] The dilemma runs as follows. Since the scarcity of the resources of the rich part of the world (Western democracies) does not allow for achieving both objectives, which is the one we should opt for: preserving the democratic institutions of the Western world – free press, free public libraries, liberal education and all other "blessings of political liberty", which require substantial financing at the cost of the rest of the world, or trying to solve the problem of global inequality by a worldwide leveling of incomes at the expense of the population of rich countries (Rorty 2007, 43–44)?

Rorty gives no clear-cut answer to this question, but his overall standpoint – "liberal ethnocentrism" – strongly suggests that he inclines to the first answer. And when it comes to the issue of the right way of achieving an understanding between the Western world and other cultures, he merely substitutes his new method of "persuasion" of the advantages of Western liberal values and Western way of life for the old arguments tending to establish their superior rationality. Rorty does not even address the problem of immigration of the population of the Third World to the developed countries: his objective lies solely in demasking the hypocrisy of American companies which justify their transfer of capital

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tional premises", i.e., from the concept of "human finitude", while it is nothing more than "a reference to a particular *ethnos*" – the one of "the rich North Atlantic democracies" (Rorty 1991, 14–15).

[8] On this point, I owe much to an author who has explained Trump's electoral victory in terms of Rorty's "gentle" ethnocentrism (Looper 2016).

from rich countries to the Third World by appealing to the principle of justice extended to humanity as a whole, which should have moral precedence over the principle of national loyalty to their fellow American citizens; in this respect as well, his standpoint remains strictly ethnocentric. However, Rorty's general conclusion is that American liberals should incite the population of the Third World to follow the example of liberal democracies, to be "more like us", while staying home. Rorty likes to emphasize his choice of persuasion, as opposed to violence or force, as the right means for achieving this goal. But it must be noted that he concedes that resorting to "the threat, or even the use, of force" stays for him an option in critical cases where fruitful conversation proves impossible (Rorty 2007, 54).

Another problem is raised by the very form in which Rorty's dilemma is presented: "What […] is the right thing for the rich democracies to do? Be loyal to themselves and each other? Keep free societies going for a third of mankind at the expense of the remaining two-thirds? Or sacrifice the blessings of political liberty for the sake of egalitarian economic justice?" (Rorty 2007, 43). We may wonder what the precise meaning of the phrase "the right thing" in this question is. It is clearly not the "right thing" in any universal sense of the word, but the right thing "for us", liberally- and democratically-minded westerners. Now we may accept this point of view, but then we should also admit that, according to the same, "ethnocentric" premise, "the right thing to do" for the populations of the remaining two thirds of mankind – either distressed or simply eager for a better life – is to try to do everything they possibly can to force their way into the parts of the world which presently belong to the privileged portion of mankind. This looks as a much more natural solution to their problems than trying to imitate the West and implement, as Rorty suggests, Western values and ideas in their own countries, all the more so because they are constantly exposed to destructive influences and military interventions of major world powers. However, if so, everything becomes a matter of force, which can go as far as terrorism, and not of discussion. And when this happens, as is precisely the case in our days, it becomes hard to stop liberal people from nationalist and xenophobic feelings and policies. Rorty's "gentle ethnocentrism" obviously allows for the view that xenophobia too, under certain circumstances, would be the right thing to feel or act on. Justifying xenophobic attitudes could be considered the last of the "consequences of pragmatism" – of the vast project of dissolving all overarching, universal moral principles.

Pride and prejudice

Criticism of postmodernist and pragmatist approaches should not induce us to think that nationalism or ethnocentrism could simply be prevented by espousing liberal philosophy of universal human rights, as some would have us believe (cf. Taguieff 2001, 298).

This should be all the more stressed, as Fukuyama, himself a liberal, was right in putting into question the postmodern disavowal of universalism. However, one may wonder whether his own liberal concept is capable of fulfilling the promise of universal and reciprocal recognition.

Of course, Fukuyama opposes nationalism, xenophobia and right-wing identitary politics. But one can be a nationalist even if one's concept of nation is not based on ethnicity, race or religion. In Fukuyama's first book, one of the main obstacles to universalism is the aforementioned assumption of the fundamental difference between the two parts of contemporary world – the "historical" and the "post-historical". A preference for nationalism is also implicit in his thesis that nation-states always presuppose peoples as communities that share "the same language of good and evil" – values, that cannot be reduced to rational choices, and are built "on top" of them (Fukuyama 1992, 213).[9] Fukuyama believes that this statement also applies to liberal democracies, which embody the ideals of rationality and universal recognition. That is why he proposes the following answer to what he sees as the central objection to his end-of-history thesis – the incapacity of the liberal state to fully satisfy the impulses of the ambitious, spirited, "thymotic" part of human being (human "heart" or self-esteem), as different and irreducible to human reason (Fukuyama 1992, 215):

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[9] Latent nationalism is also at work in Fukuyama's historical account of the failure of the attempts to establish democracy universally: the main reason of this failure is "the incomplete correspondence between peoples and states" (Fukuyama 1992, 212), which allowed struggles for particular interests to frustrate demands for universal recognition. Fukuyama does not say whether one should seek to realize the *complete* correspondence between peoples and states in order to make universal democracy possible. However, it is obvious that this would amount to a worldwide realization of nationalist programs.

> For democracy to work […] citizens of democratic states must forget the instrumental roots of their values and develop a certain irrational thymotic pride in their political system and a way of life. That is, they must come to love democracy not because it is necessarily better than the alternatives, but because it is *theirs*.

This solution to the problem seems quite close to Rorty's ethnocentrism. Certainly, one could maintain that the value of the national pride *is* purely instrumental, as it ultimately serves the goal of liberal democracy, the universal recognition: in the same way as the citizens of Plato's Republic, the citizens of the post-historical nation-states would have to believe in an ethnocentric myth, while the universalistic goal of their state would remain invisible to their eyes, and this for the sake of its own realization. But if so, further questions arise: would not this myth, or cunning of (liberal) reason, affect the seriousness of democratic and well-informed choices that people are supposed to make in their political life – in particular, the ones which concern their relations with the outer, "historical" world, such as the issues of immigration, terrorism or military intervention? And if these choices are simply to be dismissed as irrelevant, what are the consequences for "democracy" in the liberal state? Finally, would the citizens of such a state, having forgotten the instrumental roots of their values, still be capable of seeing foreigners, who do not necessarily share these values, as their equals in dignity?

Fukuyama has been aware of the challenge posed to liberal democracies by massive immigration since the beginning. But the ambiguous way in which he presented its stakes is highly instructive: the main "difficulty" that post-historical countries would face resides in *justifying* their restrictive immigration policy, that is, in finding "*any* just principle of excluding foreigners that *does not seem* racist or nationalist, thereby violating those universal principles of right to which they as liberal democracies are committed" (Fukuyama 1992, 278, italicized by V.M.). Fukuyama's depiction of the nearest future suggests that the principal task of the foreign policy of liberal democracies, apart from "promoting the cause of democracy" throughout the world, would consist of protecting themselves from external threats and risks which come from the "historical" part of the world, for example, in "insulating" the regions of conflict, such as that of former Yugoslavia, from "larger questions of European security" (Fukuyama 1992, 274). Hence the relevance of realism "as a *prescriptive* doctrine": "[t]he historical half of the world persists in operating according to realist principles, and the post-historical half must make use of realist methods when dealing with the part still in history" (Fukuyama 1992, 279). But this is to say that the "post-historical" part of the world, contrary to the initial assumption, remains "stuck in history" too. These are clearly some elements of politics of national interest, not of universal recognition.

The realistic aspect of Fukuyama's liberalism has lately come even more to the fore. Fukuyama's latest book conveys a sustained critique of differentialist identity politics and multiculturalism. However, the main object of this critique are the obstacles which particularism poses to the effective functioning of the nation-state, rather than to the fulfillment of "universal liberal values". Fukuyama acknowledges the advantages of societal diversity, but seeks to limit its scope. Although psychologically understandable in terms of challenges which modernization poses to individual human beings, demands for recognition of particular, marginal identities – the same ones that have opened the back door to the revival of "white nationalism" and the rise of the political right – should, according to Fukuyama, give way to the more important goal of building comprehensive national identities. It is true that Fukuyama says that the latter should be "broader" and "built around liberal and democratic political values" (Fukuyama 2018, 128, cf. 165–166). However, he does not assume that the role of national identities is only instrumental, as he did before: the "end of history", the establishment of the "universal and homogenous state", is no more a serious issue for him.

Contrary to his earlier predictions, Fukuyama now suggests that the nation-state is fated to remain "the chief locus of political identification", not only in the historical, but also in the post-historical part of the world. Some of his arguments sound outright Hobbesian, with "national identity" taking the place of "sovereignty": "The extreme example of what can happen absent national identity is state breakdown and civil war" (Fukuyama 2018, 128). On the positive side, Fukuyama appears to think that the nation-state represents the sole viable and ultimate framework of political order "both at home and internationally", which probably means, of political life in general (Fukuyama 2018, 139). This is the reason why his interest shifts, internally, to the question of who "the people" of a given nation-state are, which amounts to distinguishing citizens from non-citizens, and to the one of adopting the best model of integration of foreign people from other cultures; externally, to putting in place the most effective policies to bar unwanted immigration. Needless to say, the two levels are interconnected, and Fukuyama's conclusions are restrictive in both cases. As effective states presuppose shared and well-defined identity (we are reminded that it was forged, in the case of European nations, by authoritarian means and violence), and given the failure of the multiculturalist approach to secure integration, Fukuyama feels entitled to advocate a "policy focus" on good old "assimilation" (Fukuyama 2018, 174, 177–178). He also mistrusts dual citizenship, which is prone to provoke conflict of loyalties, especially in the case of a war between the states to which allegiance is due (Fukuyama 2018, 168–169). As to the issue of immigration, he insists on the indisputable right of liberal democracies to protect their own borders (Fukuyama 2018, 175), as well as on the purely "moral" character of the obligation for developed countries "to shelter refugees and welcome immigrants": being "potentially costly both economically and socially", such obligations should not imperil their own interests and priorities (Fukuyama 2018, 138–139). The right way for Europe to deal with the immigration issue is conceived of in purely technological terms, as "regulating" the flow of migrants. Fukuyama stresses that organizations charged with this task should enjoy better funding and political support, in particular "from the member states most concerned with keeping migrants out" (Fukuyama 2018, 175).

Political liberalism is not necessarily universalistic in the cosmopolitan sense of the word. This is true of Rawls' version of liberalism as well.[10] The theory of justice, as developed by Rawls, takes for granted the existence of constituted and mutually exclusive political communities (or nation-states). The scope of his argument of the "veil of ignorance" – which enjoins us to put ourselves in the position of the least well-off members of society when choosing the just principles of distribution of power or wealth – is restricted to such communities (cf. Barry 1975, 128–133). In *The Law of Peoples,* the book which deals with international justice, Rawls almost entirely leaves aside what is often seen as the three most urgent problems of contemporary world: unjust war, immigration and the treatment of nuclear weapons. In particular, in his "realistic Utopia", the problem of immigration is taken to be "eliminated" by the project of encouraging potential immigrants to solve their problems in their countries of origin and assisting them therein (Rawls 1999, 8).

Rawls insists as strongly as Fukuyama on the right of particular states to limit immigration. His main argument for this is the need to secure, for a given people, the possibility of a responsible treatment of their territory with "its potential capacity to support them *in perpetuity*" (Rawls 1999, 8); besides, there is a legitimate need "to protect a people's political culture and its constitutional principles" (Rawls 1999, 39). Hence Rawls' apology of interstate boundaries, however arbitrary they may be from the historical point of view. As to the practical strategies of solving the world migration problem, there is ultimately no significant difference between the views of Rorty and Rawls.[11] When it comes to immigration, Rawls goes so far as to endorse Michael Walzer's warning that the world with an unrestricted right to immigrate would be the one of "deracinated men and women" (Rawls 1999, 39) – an argument that hardly fits into the set of liberal principles and values. Presumably, Rawls has here in mind the merits of American system of locally rooted democracy, which cannot be denied. However, in spite of his claim that *The Law of Peoples* is not ethnocentric (Rawls 1999, 121), the point of view expounded in this book could easily slip into ethnocentrism when, as Rorty said, “things get really tough”, making the loyalty to one’s own people matter more than justice.

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[10] Some authors have emphasized the progressive elimination of "universalist presuppositions" from Rawls' theory from *Political liberalism* on (Bell 2001). Rorty's own attempt to "historicize" Rawls' standpoint (see Rorty 2007, 47) corresponds to this trend in Rawls' development.

[11] Rawls prescribes a duty for well-ordered societies to provide assistance for the right of emigration, but not for "the right to be accepted somewhere as an immigrant". He admits that this makes the right to emigrate pointless. However, he simply states that "many rights are without point in this sense" (Rawls 1999, 74).

Rawlsian approach is not overtly xenophobic, even if the very name of “decent” (non-liberal) peoples may sound slightly derogatory. But certain “national preference” is implicit in Rawls’ disregard of the issue of distributive justice between peoples, as well as in his restriction of the principle of equal opportunity to a “liberal domestic society”. Global equality of opportunity, as opposed to the national one, “is not a significant issue” for Rawls, since “it conflicts with the right of national self-determination” (Milanović 2016, 139, cf. Rawls 1999, 113–120). It has been rightly noted that this argument represents an *ad hoc* limitation of the principle of equal opportunity (Milanović 2016, 125–139). Rawls’ liberalism could certainly be corrected at this point, and some of the attempts to establish the universal validity of the principle of equal opportunity have been inspired by his own theory of justice (Pogge 1989 and 1994). But the question of global justice should be conceived still more broadly. When dealing with it, we should also take into account the increased responsibility of the richest countries in the world – of colonial powers of the past, as well as of superpowers of today.

The idea of liberal democracy *per se* cannot prevent nationalism or xenophobia. As Ash Amin said, the problem of nowadays Europe – to which we may add: of all rich Western democracies – lies precisely in that it is “at once xenophobic and liberal” (Amin 2011). As has often been stressed, contemporary liberalism is inconsequent, as it puts harsh limits on the circulation of people between different parts of the world, while advocating the free flow of capital, merchandise and ideas. However, in Western societies, the very distinction between those who are inside and those who are outside gives rise to nationalism, regardless of the difference between arguments that are being put forward.

Nationalism and xenophobia do not necessarily involve confessing oneself to be a nationalist, or the explicit belief that one's nation is superior to others. They are manifest in the choices we make in critical cases, such as the decision to let the refugees drown in the Mediterranean, or even fire missiles at their boats, in order to prevent them from compromising our exclusive right to enjoy the benefits of the national security system and disturbing our daily life (cf. Hopkins 2015). In particular, as I would venture to say, the question of new nationalism is only superficially the one of different cultural backgrounds and values. At a deeper level, it is the question of the refusal of the populations of rich liberal democracies to make decisions which imperil their own well-being. Above all, new nationalism is welfare chauvinism, which is all about defending one's right to the "citizenship rent", the premium due to one's being born in the right country (Milanović 2016, 132–136, 231). It is much less caused by the fear of losing one's cultural identity.[12] In our "post-historical" world, xenophobia and nationalism function, so to say, pre-reflexively, as they can do without discourses or ideologies. Ulrich Wehler has stated that one of the most salient features of nationalism is its extraordinary capacity to accommodate all sorts of political regimes and constitutions (Wehler 2001, 50). To this we might add: all sorts of ideologies, and even the absence of any ideology.

Are alternative, non-xenophobic scenarios at least imaginable? The futuristic novel of the ill-famed French author, Michel Houellebecq, *Soumission,* offers one of them: it conveys a dystopian depiction of a Western country whose native elites have perfectly adapted to their new condition of converted Muslims, in spite of all cultural differences, as they manage to satisfy, in the new Islamic republic of France, their self-interest, even better than before (Houellebecq 2015).

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[12] For a different view, see, for example, Kymlicka 2015.

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