

XENOPHOBIA IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

in "Mind and Human Interaction", Vol. 9, No. 1, published by the University of Virginia/US

Analysis of the discourses and practices of exclusion have in the past often focused on the term "racism" and its derivations: racist discourses, racist attitudes, and more recently, racial-ization of victims. All these terms have been influenced by discussion in the USA, where indeed racism has been an important issue. One aim of this paper is to question the broader usefulness of racism as an umbrella term for ethnically based exclusion in Europe. First, because the original "scientific" basis or justification of racism has been discredited, the term does not truly capture the nature of the phenomena. Second, in the European context the actors of exclusion have generally shifted their discourse to different rhetoric and now put forward mainly cultural rather than "biological" racial arguments. Thirdly, because racism is used as a generic term outside scientific analysis, it has become so distorted that scholarly reference to it often involves an endless effort of definition in order to clarify one's intention.

The ensuing line of argumentation then tries to justify the use of a different term, xenophobia, as more adequate in the current European context. Despite possible objections of an insufficient definition for xenophobia itself, xenophobia is here understood as an operational concept that aims at overcoming the limitations of the term racism. Precisely because there are various ways in which exclusion of others is practiced and justified today, an inclusive approach is needed. In attempting to compile views from all European countries (Baumgartl and Favell, 1995), xenophobia had to be defined rather broadly in order to allow each national specificity to emerge. At the same time, it needed to have some degree of specificity in order to facilitate comparison. As became clear from the evidence collected, discourses and practices of exclusion differ widely in Europe-not only between Eastern and Western Europe, but even between and within single countries. A huge variety of exclusive arguments are indeed employed.

In the final section, an attempt will be made to find common features in exclusive discourse and practice between Eastern and Western Europe. We must take into account a wide range of causes, such as historical conditions, ethnic composition, economic difficulties, political constellations, etc. All this, alas, does not imply that also in Europe explicit racist exclusion has disappeared altogether. Some perpetrators continue to base their activity precisely on the issue of "race". Violence is executed on ethnically diverse people just because of their biological otherness, and pseudo-scientific ideologists insist on the links between biological and cultural features of their target groups. Racism is far from extinct, but, as said above, does no longer capture the whole range of the story.

the meaning of racism: racism, racialism and neo-racism

The origin of the word "race" has been traced back by Lopes Pegna (1971). In Medieval Italian the term *razzo* was coined from the ancient French word *haraz*, and both were used to designate artificial selections in horse breeding. Probably the 12th century Arab word for horse, *faras*, was introduced in France by participants in the Crusades. Other explanations start from the Latin word *ratio*, which developed in late Latin into *aratae* for "reasons," and then into "type," "variety," and "species." In the 15th century the meaning of *raza* in Spain was extended to breeds of dogs, and by the 18th century the term had been redefined and applied anthropologically in order to describe the diversity among human beings.

Race then became a pseudo-scientific term used in the study of biological, physical or physiognomic differences within the human species, and to support the contention that some sub-groups were genetically superior to others. Although manifold convictions of "traditional" racism still persist, there is scientific consensus that race as a biological concept has no relevance to human beings (see Gold, 1981). (Only when referring to the broader concept of race, things might be slightly different. Race

does not have an exclusively biological meaning in all languages FN1). In order to include the important cultural features that determine our personal and group identity, Lopes Pegna (1971) suggested we consider difference' in terms of "ethnie" rather than "race."

The terms race, racism and related words nevertheless remain in frequent usage. Two of the many definitions of racism seem to exclude each other. On one hand, racism as the irrational hatred of others based on color, religion, language, tradition, culture, ethnic group (according to the UN definition mostly found in Western Europe and North America, plus their colonies) is a behavior, without a theory behind it. Racists consider people with physical characteristics different from their own as inferior. On the other hand, Todorov (1993) defines racialism as an "ideology of diversity and inequality of other ethnic groups, and their relation to biological, genetic [inassimilable] features" (p. 90). This second definition does not imply any consequences for hostile behavior. Followers of this type of doctrine believe in the significance of "race" and link physical features to a person's or group's character. Finally, from another point of view, according to the UN Subcommission on Human Rights, racial discrimination is an ideology, and racism is the ensuing act of violence.

These attempts at definition seek to explain the offensive discourse and violent actions of certain groups against their victims, even if they are no longer based on biological racism. But because of the vagueness of the term, various denominations have lately been coined in order to reflect the different nature of contemporary forms of racism: symbolic racism, indirect racism, clandestine racism, and finally, neo-racism (see e.g. Barker, 1981). Today, instead of espousing hatred of others, the defenders of exclusion call for a preference national (Amaducci, 1994). They underline diversity instead of the outdated premise of inequality, and feel their nation (no longer their people) endangered by a different culture (and not race). Therefore research must move forward "to the explanation of the forms that racism actually takes in our contemporary society" (Solomon and Wrench, 1993, p. 8).

From Religious Anti-Judaism to "Scientific" Anti-Semitism

A well-documented example of the nature of exclusion and discrimination in Europe, and the problems associated with applying the term racism, is found in the long history of Jewish-Christian tensions. From the beginning, assimilation occurred between Judaism and Christianity, and the threat of disappearing differences has been a constant in Christian-Jewish relations. Christian anti-Judaism had its roots in the 4th century, when Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, and emerged as a distinct form of discrimination at least as early as 633, when converted Jews were held in suspicious of being "fictitious" Christians.

Pogroms and violence against Jews were frequent throughout the Middle Ages. Some authors cite the "Spanish obsession" with converted Jews during the reconquista and inquisition as some of the earliest examples of racist behavior. However, the suspicion against converted Jews at that time was not linked to their biological features. It was directed against their supposed "fake" acceptance of Christianity, and their continuing worship of the Jewish religion after baptism. Even if the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 was accompanied by various and numerous examples of barbarian violence, and other general accusations of exclusion FN 2, the matter was rooted in religion and not race. Generally, anti-Judaism is the correct name of these religious conflicts in which Christians discriminated against Jews. One can convert to another religion, while one cannot convert to another race.

The observations of a 17th century Viennese writer also indicate that anti-Jewish behavior was more characteristic of xenophobia than racism. After the emperor had assigned special privileges to Jewish traders, the author noted the following Christian reaction:

Their own failure is repressed, the success of others is declared "evil" ... [and the Viennese act as] a brutal aggressor who invents (or imagines) the others' blasphemy in order to justify its prosecution.

The image is decorated with various Christian forms, but in the background is deep paganism, against everything which is different because it is "different" (Drabek, 1975, p. 73).

Legal equality eventually was initiated to counter such destructive trends: Joseph II's Toleranzpatent and Napoleon's post-revolutionary law in 1807 eliminated all juridical limitation for Jews. Political rule was wrested from the hands of church leaders, and assimilation slowly undermined the outward signs that enabled Jew and Christian to be differentiated.

But "science" soon emerged to fill the gap and provide a new basis for discrimination. Free from church prohibition, early "anthropologists" began to explore the human body and genetics, including "natural sciences" such as craniology, the measure of criminal potential by skull analyses. Darwinism was just one keyword in the boom of natural sciences, and true racism was a by-product of this paradigm shift. Detailed studies of "race," such as the infamous work of Joseph Artur Comte de Gobineau, divided humanity in the two basic categories: white and colored. But in 1853 Gobineau included Jews as part of the white race, although any mixture of races was considered to produce mediocrity and ruin.

In the late 1850s and 1860s, anti-Judaists began to use scientific "racism" as a justification for their "anti-Semitism," and it was only then that the concept itself was consistently and specifically "justified." Finally there was scientific proof why they hated Jews. A new paradigm took over the discourse of exclusion, but it was scientism, not science, that legitimized political positions. In some cases even Jewish intellectuals "recognized" the inferiority of their "race". Science could not be doubted.

The rest of the story is too well known: the implementation of these "scientific principles". In Europe the mania of the Nazis, and the extermination of Jews and Gypsies during World War II; but also in American segregation and South African apartheid FN 3. However, discrimination based on scientific and biological reasons ceased to be an official standpoint in the USA in the 1960s and eventually in South Africa in the 1980s. After the holocaust, in Europe "race" was a taboo both in the West and the East. Discrimination did not cease to exist, but "science" could no longer be used to validate it, and the credibility of "racism" was biologically disproved. By the 1970s there was hope that official and eventually social exclusion might become a ghost of the past. Unfortunately all this changed in the context of 1989.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the Maastricht Treaty, the construction of "fortress Europe," the success of right parties in Western Europe, of former Communist turned-into-nationalist parties in Eastern Europe, and an "economic crisis" - to name but a few - challenged European post-war identity. New justifications, explanations and rhetoric stepped in, creating a new wave of exclusion. But as a fundamental concept, "race" no longer completely captured the re-emergence of new rigid ideas of ethnicity and the problem of the Other. Xenophobia in its national variations had emerged.

In order to understand what happened, and what continues to happen ten years later, it is necessary to document events of this period, and then attempt to find useful means of analysis when traditional terms and approaches fail to explain the phenomena of 1989. We must attempt to understand this new and complex beast, its instrumentalizations, and main triggers. It must also be noted that such discussions of either the concept of race or xenophobia are problematic at yet another level: the convictions and evidence of social, behavioral or biomedical scientists are irrelevant to the man on the street, who clearly sees that differences exist. The fact that racism is "biologically" wrong does not necessarily mean that it simply will cease to exist. The refutation of any racist ideal is sustained "not because it is more true, but because it is ethically superior," and ethics are a difficult matter (see Todorov, 1993).

Xenophobia: An Operational Definition

Xenophobia, or "dread of foreigners (or strangers)" implies that people actually perceive a threat, but does not necessarily mean that there is a rational, causal relation between the emergence of a multi-ethnic society and the fear many European populations feel. There is no single source of this perceived threat, nor are there valid (rational) reasons for the perceptions. Some cite a "flood of immigrants," which feasibly could be perceived as threatening (Winkler, 1992), but statistics do not confirm such a flood, and an increase in numbers alone cannot be the only trigger for xenophobic manifestations. Some perceive that the presence of a large number of foreigners endangers European identity, but there are no clear indications that identity is in fact being specifically eroded, or that foreigners cause a general cultural change that makes people feel uneasy. Nor is there clear or consistent evidence of a more general rise in "cultural fundamentalism," which is according to Stolcke (1994) a dread of change in general. In some states certain foreign groups were the targets of xenophobia and violence, while others were not: in Holland for example, xenophobic political organizations such as the Centrumdemocraten (CDs) have been far more opposed to the presence of Turks and Moroccans than Surinamese or Antillianese.

But xenophobia more aptly describes these various phenomena than the term racism since it encompasses two connected facets. On one hand, it indicates that there is an emotional or psychological side to the issue, and "foreigners" or "strangers" indicates that these fears are not strictly based on animosity toward others with a specific skin color, cultural background or physical characteristic. On the other hand, "foreigners" also implies that there is a governmental or state role in "regulating" the number of foreigners admitted to one's country, the rights they are accorded, and the processes through which they are assimilated, integrated or incorporated.

But even if there is no singular and specific cause for the rise of xenophobia in Europe, it definitely figured prominently on the European agenda in the 1990s, and there was far more attention to this "problem" than some ten years ago. The year 1989 brought the fall of the Iron Curtain not only on the political landscape, but also in our minds. In 1989 and 1990, feelings of solidarity with the "new" neighbors prevailed. But already in 1992 and 1993 we saw the emergence of conflicts, separation and exclusion not only in Yugoslavia, but in many other countries as well. A "wave" of xenophobia seemed to sweep over Europe. And many questions followed, revealing the complexity of the issue. Was this real, or was it exaggerated by the media? In other words, is it the real or the perceived problem that increased? Is xenophobia against neighbors stronger than against non-Europeans? Is there a genuine difference between Eastern and Western Europe in this aspect? Is there more xenophobia and racism in Protestant than Catholic societies, as some writers contend? What is the specificity of xenophobic Europe as opposed to other regions?

The information collected over the course of our study (baumgartl and Favell, 1995) answers some of the questions. At least three notions become clear: the triggers for xenophobic action in different countries; the degree of variation over time; and whether xenophobia is a problem for individual countries or for Europe as a whole.

Xenophobia as a general sentiment manifests differently depending on who is xenophobic, and who the target is. There is no single target: immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, guest workers, commuters, tourists, rich foreigners, or even absent ethnic groups provoke different reactions. Still, xenophobia does not necessarily imply action against others. It is when feelings and perceptions become conviction and justification for action that xenophobia becomes physically dangerous. From various viewpoints xenophobia can be perceived as a concept of the meso-level between two extremes: the first level concept is benign; the last level is disastrous. In other words, cultural fundamentalism can lead to xenophobia and then to exclusion and violence. In the same way, patriotism can lead to xenophobia and then to ethnic discrimination. When xenophobia reigns in a community, the diversity of others may eventually develop into racism against them (Figure 1).

Comprehending xenophobia therefore can be facilitated by considering it as a meso-level concept within a broad spectrum of perceptions, behaviors, and actions relating to "others." It does not necessarily correlate with violence against foreigners, or even with demands for political action to mitigate the perceived threat they embody. It can nevertheless evolve into malignant or violent forms such as racism, ethnic cleansing, or genocide.

Being situated on a meso-level also means xenophobia is dangerous, but you cannot punish or combat it directly. This is reflected in the definition used in the report of the European Parliament: "Xenophobia is the latent resentment or feeling ... it is an attitude that goes before fascism or racism, and can prepare ground for them, but, in itself, does not fall within the purview of the law and legal prevention" (EP, 1991). Similar conclusions can be drawn also from our case studies: there is no instant antidote against xenophobia: neither information ("there are not that many foreigners"), nor laws ("you must not discriminate foreigners"), nor appeals ("do not fear foreigners"), nor explanations ("they come because of ..."), nor scientific projections ("we are not able to change history").

Therefore, tools to avoid malignant off-shoots of ethnic identity reaffirmation can only target the problem either indirectly (eliminate triggers for outbreak), or through long-term initiatives (education). In this sense, observation as it was undertaken in our project can also be described as an attempt not to explain xenophobia itself, but rather the symptoms, which lead to the outbreak of malignant manifestations of ethnic identity towards Others. Paradoxically, a group's dread of losing its identity is specifically strong when differences with other groups are perceived as fading. All tools to overcome xenophobia should thus avoid real or perceived disappearances of differences.

Ethnicity and Identity

One way to begin to understand xenophobia is to consider it as a more malignant corollary of a rise in or greater preoccupation with collective identity, which tends to be defined according to dominant ethnic, religious, economic, political, and cultural terms. To have an ethnic identity is not per se a negative feature. On the contrary, it is a necessary step and part of the development of everybody's personal identity/ies. On the individual level, psychologists explain that "identity denotes the sense of self we acquire over time, as we experience and review our own core characteristics" (Thomson et al., 1995). National identity is one of these core characteristics - beginning in early childhood it provides a sense of "inner solidarity with our ethnic group's ideals and comfortable sense of belonging to a larger group" (ibid). According to Herskovits (1972), the ethnocentrism of group identity,

"... performs an essential function for human beings.... Without it, the kind of orientation in society that is indispensable to man could not be achieved, and the adjustment each individual must make to the world in which he lives would be difficult, if not impossible" (p. 75).

But constructing one's own identity means at the same time recognizing the diversity of Others. We cannot help but note differences, and to believe that "we" are special and often even superior to those with other identities. Prejudices therefore are an unavoidable result of contact with other ethnic identities, and sometimes, the source of feelings of superiority (see Todorov, 1985). By appreciating one's own identity and in contrast the alterity of alien groups we have achieved necessary steps toward a sound and sustainable self. A Salzburg Seminar session in 1994 observed that:

"ethnicity is not only central, it is also paradoxical: ... a sense of separateness, of difference, which may be as deep as that other human feature of the human condition, namely our dependence on others; on the one hand ethnic identity as a source of pride and perspective and empowerment, self-understanding, and yet the negative side, ethnic identity as the basis of bitterness, of feeling constantly besieged, of being belligerent.

Asserting a strong identity therefore is not necessarily harmful to others, but it manifests across a broad spectrum. A positive feeling of pride towards one's own ethnic group and a feeling of closeness to its customs, traditions, rituals, history and language could be defined as benign patriotism. But when one perceives that his or her ethnicity is threatened, negative perceptions against other groups typically emerge. Various processes can be initiated: projection of negative characteristics of one's own group onto the others, externalization of our own unwanted features onto "them," splitting otherwise complex relationships into simplistic good/bad - we/them scenarios, and scapegoating another group as the source of all problems. Although one's own group - similar the one's language - is in reality a diverse, historically grown conglomeration of people, influences, languages, cultures,

and customs, it is increasingly perceived as a homogenous entity, and other groups may likewise be perceived as homogenous, cohesive and single-minded, but in a negative or threatening way.

When large groups regress and become preoccupied with, Who are we now?, How are we different from them?, and What will become of us?, the result is often a tense and unstable social and political atmosphere in which the group attempts to maintain its sense of a cohesive identity. Members of various ethnonational groups begin to increase their attachment to what they define as their "own" large group, and simultaneously focus more and more on what differentiates and delineates them from their neighbors. In some cases, this process gains enough strength to greatly influence political, legal, economic, military and other aspects of domestic and international relations. Such was and still is the case in the former Yugoslavia, where the answer to a collective questioning of identity ultimately was sought through war (see Volkan, 1997).

When a group regresses, it may utilize primitive defense mechanisms such as externalization, projection, splitting, excessive idealization, and excessive devaluation. For example, Cullberg-Weston (1994), a psychoanalyst who conducted extensive research in Yugoslavia as it was collapsing, observed that:

"[In Yugoslavia] we found a strong tendency toward splitting. Images were split into good/bad and into we/them categories. Almost everyone idealized their own ethnic group and demonized others.... The black-and-white thinking was encouraged by nationalistic leaders who actively played on group antipathy, using propaganda aimed at creating fear, rage and insecurity about people's safety" (p. 27).

Again, the motivation behind such behaviors is the relationship between "self" and "other," or "us" and "them" and is not explicitly race oriented, but instead can be based upon class, religion, or social and ethnic dissimilarities. Even more, profound feelings can awaken when differences are perceived as disappearing (for example, by assimilation). When we talk about xenophobia we are talking of people for whom their ethnic or national identity is or became more important than other sources of identity.

Once this step has been taken, i.e. once one's own group is perceived as congruous and another as a "suitable target of externalization" (Volkan, 1997), then it is possible to dehumanize the "other." Even if cooperation and coexistence characterized the relationship of one group with another, as in the former Yugoslavia, severe societal stress and threats to identity can cause a rapid escalation of the rhetoric of exclusion to a previously unknown level of irrationality and violence. Once alterity is the main criterion for assigning ever new negative characteristics, it does not really matter any more whether they are true or false. The only thing that matters is that they are believed. It is this latent "dehumanization of the other" we call xenophobia.

Thus, xenophobia is the dread of foreigners as a group, which is latent, and triggered by a social, economic, or political crisis situation that helps initiate an ethnic identity crisis.

The European Context

Although the end of the Cold War prompted a period of enthusiasm and optimism, it also caused many Europeans to collectively question their identity. In post-World War II Western Europe considerable energy was devoted to internal and international issues like reconstruction, progress, anti-Communism, prosperity, growth, and technology. Eastern Europe partly embodied an antagonist identity: socialist/communist values, anti-capitalism, internationalism, but also progress and technology. Since the 1980s, however, most if not all of these concepts accumulated doubts and lost legitimacy. "Green" and socialist movements grew in the West, and Perestroika and calls for democracy grew in the East, undermining traditional ideologies and identities. With the collapse of the Soviet/East European "enemy," lines between "us" and "them" were blurred further, a vacuum of sorts emerged, and xenophobia seemingly grew to fill it and establish a "new" enemy Other.

At the same time, the European Union (EU) increasingly took over characteristics of a new state entity with powers formerly exerted by individual countries. There was greater stress on the similarities and cooperative potential of Europe's diverse nations, rather than the differences that led to two brutal 20th century wars, and numerous others in the more distant past. Growing economic links and industrial and governmental collaboration tied former enemies such as France and Germany. Barriers to trade and travel were being lifted through extensive multinational negotiations. The Schengen agreements (1990) provided free movement and unrestricted travel to persons across all borders of its fourteen member states. Individual nations were perceived as becoming the states of a new federal super-nation called Europe.

But abolishing borders between the individual states of the EU necessitated the simultaneous construction of new "walls" to protect the collective borders of the emerging union. Some feared that once "foreigners" gained access to one EU country, individual states would be unable to regulate the entrance of "undesirable" elements into their own, which was especially troubling to countries suffering from economic crisis and/or the growth of organized crime. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in July 1998 the EU also opened the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna.

During this same period xenophobic political parties began to grow in many but not all European countries. This rise seems to be, according to the data collected, not directly linked to the actual number of foreigners or minorities in a country. Indeed a good number of the countries have shown no signs of developing political parties that espouse xenophobic, racist, or exclusionistic policies (Finland, Greece, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, Spain); in some they were already well established but achieved more significant representation in both local and national governments (notably Austria, France, Belgium); in still others, such as Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain, a more diffuse and legislated toughness on foreigners appears to have vanquished the direct political threat of the extreme right for the time being. These differences do not appear to correlate with data about a more general deterioration of social attitudes (observed in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Germany; not in France, Belgium and Great Britain). Figure 2 shows the success of xenophobic parties between 1991 and 1995, as reported in Baumgartl and Favell (1995).

Cultural Fundamentalism: New Legitimacy in Western Europe

As noted earlier, the justification for exclusion of others has changed over time, and various "valid" (fashionable) paradigms have been used (see Baumgartl, 1989). Exclusion of foreigners as a general principle appears with two different explanations: absolute exclusion (neo-racism) is voiced against foreigners because of their ethnic belonging. It is justified as a quality problem. In contrast, relative exclusion opposes the number of foreigners, and wants to set limits: here the problem is of quantity ("the boat is full"). In practice these two discourses are often mixed, or one is put forward in order to hide the other one in the background. But today's rhetoric has taken on a yet another new ideological face to support such exclusion: cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is based upon the powerful force of enculturation on both individuals and their groups:

"[This process of cultural learning] is all-pervasive, and for the most part, we are not conscious of its operation. Cultural symbols are internalized so that they not only assure adequate response to particular cues to behavior, but set up those enculturated restraints that go under the designations of conscience, super-ego, guilt feelings and the like. Hence if culture is to be thought of as the ordering behavior in a society, enculturation is the mechanism which orders for each of its members the form and extent of accepted modes of conduct and aspiration, and also sets the limits within which variation in individual behavior is sanctioned" (Herskovits, 1972, p. 76).

The power of culture over people, and the notion that it is far easier to think and act in accustomed ways than to learn new ones, is then used to justify the exclusion of "foreigners" from "incompatible" cultures. Proponents see such foreigners as essentially unable to successfully integrate or assimilate, doomed to a peripheral existence in which they can neither maintain their own culture or adopt the new one. Moreover, it is, according to smart ideologists like Jean-Marie Le Pen, Franz Schönhuber or

Jörg Haider, no longer a negative attitude against foreigners which makes Europeans reject further immigration or refuge: respect for the diversity of others, so they say, should induce us to resist integration. For their own best interest "they should stay where they live," and thereby keep alive their unique culture and reduce the "brain drain" that poorer countries experience.

This type of anthropological reasoning is further supported by new "biological" ideas. For example, German behavioral scientist Eibl-Eibesfeldt, in his recent book (1994) underlines the thesis that, from a genetic viewpoint, human beings still belong to the Stone Age. Xenophobia is a relic from our tribal heritage, reflecting a psycho-biological fear of "strange" things, and politics cannot ignore this fact. Hence multi-cultural societies violate biological rules and needs, will always encounter inherent problems, and therefore may not be as viable as we would like to believe.

But others maintain that such "rational" justifications hide unconscious perceptions of a threat to identity rather than a vague primitive genetic trait or "reasonable" attempt to maintain cultural integrity

"... for the worth we ascribe to the things we have and use and the ways in which we use them; the relationships we sanction; the beliefs by which we live, lodge deeply beneath the stream of conscious thought. That is, we take these values for granted, which means that when they are challenged, our response is essentially an emotional one. On this plane we react to challenge; we do not reason" (Herskovits, 1972, p. 77).

Especially when comparing the past and present ethnic composition of former multicultural cities such as Vilnius (Vilna), L'viv (Lemberg), Thessaloniki (Solon), Chernowicz (Chernovtsy), Vienna (Wien, Bec) or ultimately Sarajevo and Prishtina, one is actually inclined to confirm the thesis of an innate impetus for monoculturation. Peoples without a home state, like the Gypsies, Armenians and Jews, but also small minorities who never had political independence (see Antolini, 1994) have been reduced to a mere fraction of their former number in numerous places. On the other hand, many recognize that in Europe, "ethnic purity has never existed ... diversity is the base of the very vitality of the European civilizations" (Bocchi and Ceruti, 1994, p. 206).

In this shift to a "cultural" paradigm, similar concepts and ideology are used by both sides for different ends: multi-cultural society is presented as a goal or a threat. According to the intentions of the speaker, they achieve a double sense: for example, cultural diversity is used by both defenders of equal rights for foreigners and propagators of exclusion; "ethnicity" can today both support claims for racial purity as well as the distinctive and valuable characteristics of all ethnic groups.

The main target of xenophobia in the West, in the absence of significant minority populations, are mainly immigrants and refugees. Although there are also a few multi-ethnic states in Western Europe, their constellation of ethnic groups reflects a balance between them (see Switzerland or Belgium). The combination of a solid majority group and traditionally resident minorities is less evident here than in Eastern Europe. Against history and all hard data, immigrants and refugees are therefore perceived as exploiting the welfare system, as changing the national culture and traditions, and as competitors in an ever tightening job market.

Taguieff (1994) and Amaducci (1994) studied this phenomenon in detail in the French case. The Front National (FN) has indeed been at the forefront of exclusionary discourse, and has achieved significant governmental representation. In turn, both the Wallonian and Swiss FNs have adopted the French model nearly without modifications. Most countries do have some form of party or organization which voices exclusion as its main content, and their political importance is often in inverse proportion to their degree of radicality. But the Austrian FPÖ and the French group of right parties, which use the threat of foreigners in their discourse, have convinced nearly a quarter of their respective national electorates.

In contrast, in Mediterranean countries xenophobia was not reported to be a main issue in national politics, apart from the Spanish and Portuguese CEDADEs (Celda de Amigos de Europa - Cell of Friends of Europe), which on their part represent less than one percent of the population. Occasional

gaffes by Lega politicians in Italy contrasted with a strong stand of all parties against "naziskin mobilisation." Greece has not overcome its ethnic tensions with either neighboring or domestic Slavic groups, but foreigners as such are not a dominant issue.

Populism and xenophobia therefore have paid political dividends, if used in the national politics of today's Western Europe. At the same time, moderate demands of exclusion have a higher mobilizing power than radical discourses. Particularly in vogue for this purpose has been the instrumentalisation of history: "historic ethnic conflicts" have been resurrected by would-be-historians and then adopted by politicians and journalists. Such simplistic and emotion-driving perspectives quickly gained popularity and legitimacy, while the contrary evidence of more objective historians received far less attention (see Bocchi and Ceruti, 1994). In some countries, the ensuing move to the right of mainstream parties seems to have indeed lowered the potential for primarily xenophobic parties to grow further (Germany, Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Austria). A general tightening of the climate towards weak groups in all societies, however, gives little hope that particular attention to and awareness of the necessity to interact with Others will change significantly in the years to come.

Nationalism: The New Unifying Ideology in Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe faces a different kind of exclusion: the targets are less rich foreigners from the West, or poor foreigners in transit, but resident minorities. Difficulties in the transition to independent democracy, which was anticipated to be far easier and faster in 1989 than it has turned out to be, resulted in a general crisis situation. An identity crisis brought on by the end of Communist ideology followed, and a wave of disenchantment with transition hit the former Eastern Block. In such situations minorities became the main scapegoats and served as the objects of projection for numerous resentments.

In contrast to Western Europe, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the exception of Poland, count substantial minority populations of different ethnic origin. Most of these groups are members of the majority ethnic group in neighboring states (Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania, Turks in Bulgaria, Slovaks in the Czech Republic, Croats, Serbs and Bosnians in the successor states of Yugoslavia). Moreover, nearly all of these countries have significant Gypsy populations. As was observed most clearly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but is likewise present in most Eastern European countries, the increasing importance of ethnos after the fall of the Soviet Union created xenos. With the collapse of the principle of a Soviet brotherhood that discouraged narrow nationalistic identity in favor of a higher equality and purpose, countries and groups in Eastern Europe began to question who they now were and what sort of independent nation they would become.

Once the xenos was perceived as such (as a strange body amongst us), and welfare capacities and economic problems induced further anxiety about the present and future, a minority was defined as the guilty one. Ironically, most if not all former Communist parties, thinly disguised by new names, tuned their messages of "salvation" to this wavelength. With the exception of the Czech Republic, in all Eastern European countries the re-baptised former Communist parties have returned to government at a certain point in the mid-1990s, be it in coalition (Hungary, Slovakia, Poland) or by majority (Bulgaria, Romania). Nearly all of them (again Poland may be the exception to the rule) use a new nationalistic rhetoric in order to realign their constituency. In general it can be said that contrary to the West, xenophobic parties are not a right-wing minority, but politically represent the ethnic majority.

Gypsies: An Ideal Target

Journeying through Europe since the 13th century, when the first wave of these nomads entered the European continent from the southeast, Gypsies (also called Travellers) have traditionally been the scapegoat in crisis situations. Their relation to the non-Gypsy population (Gaz'e or Gadge in their language) has always been one between banishment and inclusive control. The main threat Gypsies posed was often simply their nomadic status, which prompted suspicion and therefore rules and laws aimed at settling them as a solution to their "deviancy." But such integration attempts and policies geared to encourage their settlement, frequently caused them to be rejected by local populations, thus forcing them to move on. Today 30% continue to be "on the move," 40% are settled, and the rest shift between the two lifestyles (Lidgeois, 1987). In addition, Gypsies particularly have been hit hard by the modernization of the last decades: they lost their economic base, and their professions (like repairing or door-to-door selling) became obsolete. Many of them moved to cities or their peripheries, where they became more visible targets.

In Eastern Europe, Gypsies are strongly refused by populations in all countries. Even in the Czech Republic, the wunderkind among the former Eastern Block, there is uncertainty about what to do with the Gypsy population given the impossibility of "getting rid of them." Lower degrees of exorbitant hatred against Gypsies seem to prevail only in those countries where they were close to exterminated by the Nazis. More numerous than Jews in many countries in the aftermath of the Holocaust, although nearly exterminated in others, they have been named the "New Jews" by some (Tucker, 1994). They are not (yet?) a main target of all-European xenophobia, but certainly are targets in countries where they are present in significant numbers (Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain). In other countries, where they constitute only a minor part of the "foreign" population, they still receive inordinate attention (Ireland, Finland), and have been the victims of violent attacks in Hungary, Austria, and Italy.

No solution has yet been found for dealing with this European people nearly as numerous as the population of Switzerland. The attempted politics of forced assimilation in Communist Europe only reinforced the ever-present antipathies against Gypsies, and any activity in the West to meet their special needs as a nomadic people (like offering halting places) have met with outrageous resistance by the local populations in Italy, Spain, Great Britain and Austria. Throughout Europe they provoke irrational and intense dread even among people who never had any contact with Gypsy communities.

But surprisingly little is known by social science about their beliefs, traditions and culture. Gypsies therefore continue to historically represent the Other in their physical appearance, lifestyle, professions, and mentality, and attitudes and laws pertaining to them will most likely provide a barometer for both country-specific as well as Europe-wide xenophobia.

Instrumentalisation: The Real Trigger

History, and the myths and misconceptions that surround it, have been used to legitimize current conflict in Europe. Hatred and war have been quickly reignited, and irrational fears have been justified or incensed by spurious "rational" concepts and ideologies. It is true that the way of fully knowing the Other is long and fastidious. In his interpretation of the conquest of America, Todorov identifies various steps: after the discovery, one has to conquer, and to love, in order to know. Building tolerance and mutual understanding is a slow process even between two individuals. It is presumably even more complicated between different ethnic groups when the rules of communication cause exponential complication. Frequent misunderstandings and interest-motivated interference can start the vicious circle of ethnic hatred, and undermine within a few months the trust built carefully over decades. "Intolerance has so far always won over tolerance" Todorov (1985, p. 299) has pessimistically observed. Observation of the last decade of both social and political phenomena suggests that the ease of xenophobic populism in Europe may prove this equation to be true, although the consequences of this xenophobic arithmetic are surely not calculated. Against evidence (e.g. that foreigners will not suddenly, quickly and easily leave en masse), politicians and political parties insist on painting a myopic portrait of an illusive fantasy of contentment, security, and

prosperity of ethnic homogeneity. But in the end we have "no choice between tradition and modernity - the goal must be the renovation of creativity. Europe could become a model for the world, if it respects the other, and opens to the other. In doing so, it would find again its equilibrium, one of its characteristics" (Le Goff, 1994).

Notes

1. Por mi raza hablará mi espíritu ("Through my race, my spirit speaks") is the official motto of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) but certainly is not a racist statement.
2. Yerushalmi (1993) believes that religious discrimination during the Inquisition was also translated into racial terms whereby "assimilation developed a new anti-Semitism," a doctrine of the purity of blood (limpieza de sangre) which "can't be called other than racist" (p. 5).
3. Similar to racial scientism, historical scientism was the justification for dictatorship and violence under totalitarian communism.

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