RITA CHIN, *THE CRISIS OF MULTICULTURALISM IN EUROPE: A* HISTORY, PRINCETON, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017.

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It is reasonable to assume that many interested readers in today's Europe are eager to find thorough and well-written books about the continent's ethnic and cultural diversity on the ground and its political implications. Especially since the so-called refugee-crisis of 2015, the topic seems utterly unavoidable in private and public debates. The need for new literature written by scholars is huge, but the task is not an easy one, as it can be really tricky to grasp the general trajectories of multicultural societies and multiculturalism in Europe. Rita Chin's historical account of European multiculturalism is a positive example by all standards. It focuses mainly on the cases from Western European states, Great Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland in particular. Her general approach is chronological, though this can slightly change in some chapters (especially the last one entitled *The 'Failure' of Multiculturalism*) where the reasoning demands a looser structuring of the content.

The preface (p. ix–xiv) is a rather personal insight into the topic. Chin not only gives credits to all the contributors who helped her during the research and writing, but she provides the reader with a deeply private background, since in her childhood she and her parents were forced migrants as well (they are originally from Malaysia, and they left the country in the late 1960s).

The mentioning of this biographical fact comes as no surprise, because during the reading it is more than obvious that Chin, contrary to the historical "standard" of European immigrant policies, is a protagonist of a more inclusive and deeply democratical integration when it comes to migrants in Europe. However, her barely implicit stance does not damage the scientific value of the book, since her reasoning is founded on carefully chosen and processed historical facts.

The *Introduction* (p. 1–22) deals with the basic and necessary historical and theoretical background of the book. Short, yet profound, this chapter provides us some essential sketches which will be illuminated from many viewpoints during the main body of text. The historical part is about the very structure and nature of the "multicultural question". The theoretical paragraphs are, understandably, about the very concept of multiculturalism which has its origins in the early 20th century. Chin outlines the history of the idea and mentions Stuart Hall as her most significant reference point in the theoretical part. She underlines that the term can be quite a messy one, but it is by no means unusable because by this ubiquity it contains a very valuable critical space in which we can discuss the issues of sociocultural diversity.

Europe is, as Chin swiftly points out, in a way always harbored multiple cultures. However, the politically most influential Western European states witnessed a shift after the Second World War, when the discourses about cultural variety slowly began to revolve around the concept of multiculturalism. The first major chapter, *The Birth of Multicultural Europe* (p. 23–79), carefully evaluates and traces this process which was driven by imperial legacies and man-power shortage. All the cases of the previously mentioned European countries are presented in detail. It is worth to highlight here that Chin masterfully summarizes her arguments and observations at the end of each chapter (in the present case p. 78–79).

1973 marked the end of the post-war prosperity, and at that time guest work, which was interpreted as something temporary up until that period, definitely began to resemble long-term immigration. This prolonged change prompted a series of policies in Western Europe, as it is discussed in *Managing Multicultural Societies* (p. 80–137). Britain (Race Relations Act, p. 83–102) and the Netherlands (the process of pillarization, p. 102–112) were the only ones that implemented state-sponsored inclusive multicultural policies, and these measures are the sole examples of such measures even today. In contrast for instance, French policy relied heavily on a unique approach (p. 112–124), that is, on the political and cultural assimilation of migrants on individual level. These contrasting examples are thoroughly discussed, which is of crucial importance, since through them it is possible to understand not just the differences between states, but between inclusive and exclusive policies as well.

The biggest shift in public discourse took place at the end of the 1970s, and it is safe to assume that today's usage of language and ideas directly has its roots in this period. *Race, Nation, and Multicultural Society* (p. 138–191) is a stunningly written chapter on this shift, which begins with Margaret Thatcher's thoughts from 1978 about immigrants who "swamp" Britain.

Chin's careful argumentation convincingly shows that the British prime minister's usage of words, and the discursive upheaval in Europe about cultural belonging was nothing more than replacing the directly racist set of concepts with more positive arguments about cultural *and* national belonging. Especially interesting is the way by witch both the French leftist and conservative streams, through the resurgence of republicanist ideas, accepted Marie Le Pen's notion that immigrants pose a threat to the French national community. However, the key part of this chapter is an analysis of the well-known Salman Rushdie affair (p. 178–191), by which the immigrant problem, while thematically revolving around the issue of free speech, transformed into a monolith Muslim "problem" regardless of the very fact that European Muslims with an immigrant background have had different national origins. Although Chin does not use this interpretation explicitly, this antagonism can easily be characterized as a major boundary between "us and them". Finally, another feature deserves to be highlighted: the author's highly sensitive contextual thinking. A good example is her exploration of the West German case where the burden of the so-called Nazi heritage was enormous and it made the responses of the immigration policies highly specific (p. 154–166).

The Rushdie affair was not the only case concerning Muslims, as the issue of headscarves, involving questions about individual freedom and sexual democracy, literally exploded in France in 1989. All major details of the subsequent series of events is discussed in *Muslim Women, Sexual Democracy, and the Defense of Freedom* (p. 192–236). It was in these cases when "immigrant women" turned into "Muslim women" who should be "civilized" and "liberated". Especially important is the shift in which even leftist thinkers began to abandon the ideals of cultural relativism while championing sexual democracy. Chin's reasoning, while visibly critical of this change, is very clear on the whole process.

The last main chapter called *The 'Failure' of Multiculturalism* (p. 237–286) first

guides us to the 2010s, citing Angela Merkel, David Cameron and Nicolas Sarkozy's different but at the same time deeply similar remarks on the "failure" of multiculturalism, only to present one more crucial layer of the historical background. Around 2010 and even today, as Chin highlights, the object of the debates was not a rather narrow topic of cultural difference, but the very nature of European societies. What is particularly interesting here is that the author not only points out the direct background of the recent crisis, but she digs deeper into the historical roots of the "failure". The part (p. 240–264) which examines the ground-level and grassroot approaches in managing multiethnic communities in Britain and in France are of crucial importance, since these programs and efforts have never had proper and permanent support of the wide public or the political elites. The final part of this chapter deserves to be emphasized (p. 271–286), because it provides us with probably the clearest train of thought about the inherent cultural logic of the "mass cultural optics", which resulted in sweeping judgements about "us and them", that is, between Europeans and Muslims.

The epilogue of the book is entitled *The Future of Multicultural Europe?* (p. 287–305). Firstly, here we can read some conclusions with a critical view on liberal values and their narrow interpretation among conservatives and liberals alike. By drawing upon the consideration of Karl Polányi, Chin states that it was especially Western European leftists who abandoned a more collective notion of freedom. Secondly – and this forms the ending of the book – Chin provides us with "critical lessons and tools for self-reflection" (p. 297), that is, with the essential conditions for a more effective engagement with European sociocultural diversity. The most important fact of all, perhaps, is that the multicultural populations of Europe will not vanish and "go away", therefore in order to avoid highly risky outcomes, the old continent's leaders and societies must search for new policies and attitudes by drawing upon their democratic heritage. One of Chin's most important conclusions is that "we need to uphold both liberal conceptions of individual freedom and pluralistic communitarianism" (p. 303).

It is important to emphasize that the *Notes* (p. 307–346), the *Suggestions for Further Reading* (p. 347–352) and the *Index* (p. 353–363) provide us with useful material for further thinking and orientation in the topic. The careful editing of these additional parts makes them even more user-friendly than in other similar publications.

It is without doubt that the present work can be a useful guide for a wide variety of readers, not solely scholars. Thick and thorough, the book manages to find a proper central line among the lurking dangers of summarizing inquiries. One might argue that 300 pages about this topic are not enough, but this argument seems unfounded. Chin's work is rather a premier example of how to summarize a really complex issue avoiding superficiality and overwriting at the same time. If someone needs an introduction into the problematics of European multiculturalism, then this volume can easily be characterized as one of the must-read scholarly works.