


Cancel Culture in the Academia: The hispanic perspective

La Cultura de la Cancelación en la Academia: La perspectiva hispana

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Abstract

Although many cases of the so-called Cancel Culture in the American and British colleges and are taking place nowadays, social science researchers claim for a better understanding of the phenomenon and a clarification of the concept. In this context, cultural perspectives can be an interesting tool to illuminate facts and meanings. This paper tries to contribute to this debate introducing theoretical aspects as well as case studies from the Hispanic context. To achieve this goal, first three different approaches to the Cancel Culture (critical, institutional, and moral) are explained. Then, we examine the role of social media and the new "fear of isolation", connecting Cancel Culture with the classic theory of the spiral of silence (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). We complement the theoretical discussion with an exploratory work on cases of Cancel Culture in different Hispanic countries. Observing characteristics of those cases we can conclude that they do not follow the traces of the Anglosaxon world, but they share some aspects of the culture of fear in the new digital context. This is the first academic work in this field for the situation in Latin America and Spain.

Keywords: cancelation, free speech, public opinion, social media, spiral of silence.

Resumen

Si bien en la actualidad están sucediendo casos de la llamada Cultura de la Cancelación en las universidades estadounidenses y británicas, los investigadores de las ciencias sociales reclaman una mejor comprensión del fenómeno y una clarificación del concepto. En este contexto, las perspectivas culturales pueden ser una herramienta interesante para iluminar los hechos y los significados. Este artículo intenta contribuir a este debate, introduciendo tanto aspectos teóricos, como estudios de casos del contexto hispano. Para lograr este objetivo, primero se explican tres enfoques diferentes de la Cultura de la Cancelación (crítico, institucional y moral). Después, se analiza el papel de las redes sociales y el nuevo "miedo al aislamiento", conectando la Cultura de la Cancelación con la teoría clásica de la espiral del silencio (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Se complementa la discusión teórica con un trabajo exploratorio sobre casos de Cultura de la Cancelación en diferentes países hispanos. Las características de esos casos llevan a concluir que, aunque no tienen las mismas particularidades que el fenómeno de cancelación en el mundo anglosajón, comparten algunos aspectos de la cultura del miedo en el nuevo contexto digital. Este es el primer trabajo académico en este tema sobre la situación de América Latina y España.

Palabras clave: cancelación, libertad de expresión, opinión pública, redes sociales, espiral del silencio.

Summary

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1. Introduction

At the present time, Cancel Culture is one of the main topics referring what is happening in the public opinion. The tipping point of this phenomenon was the publication of the famous manifesto in *Harper's Magazine* in July 2020, "A letter on Justice and Open Debate" denouncing the situation and consequences of the Cancel Culture. It was a letter signed by 153 public figures, intellectuals, professors, and writers from the Anglosaxon world (Harper's Magazine, 2020). In the letter, they described the situation as one of "intolerance of opposing views, a vogue for public shaming and ostracism, and the tendency to dissolve complex policy issues in a blinding moral certainty". Public expression of different points of view was at stake.

Same month, the Cato YouGov national survey, of 2,000 Americans revealed that 62% of Americans say the political climate these days prevents them from saying things they believe because others might find them offensive, compared with 2017 survey when 58% agreed with this statement (Cato YouGov, 2020).

A few months later, the Pew Research Center published a survey on 10,000 Americans about the awareness on this topic. Results confirmed that there were different perceptions of the meaning of Cancel Culture¹ (Pew Research Center, 2021).

Most recently, in March 18 2022, *The New York Times* editorial headline pointed at the same concern: "America has a free speech problem". Talking about another survey, the newspaper was highlighting that 84% of adults said it is a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem that some Americans don't "speak freely" because they fear retaliation or criticism (The New York Times, 2022).

In higher education, where this topic confronts the idea of the academic discussion, cases of Cancel Culture had been listed by the National Association of Scholars. Up today, they count 226 academic cancellations in the United States and Canada (National Association of Scholars, 2022). Cases as professors Dorian Abbot, cancelled at the MIT, or Ilya Shapiro, in Georgetown, show how this practice is installed at the University level.

Thus, literature about Cancel Culture in the United States is already quite rich and extensive. Not just in America and focused on the college level, Pippa Norris (2021) connects the Cancel Culture with one of the most important theories in the public opinion domain: the spiral of silence (Noelle Neumann, 1974). Norris finds some key cultural variables to explain what is happening at the college discussion on social justice considering data from a world survey among scholars. Her conclusion is that Cancel Culture exist, and depending on the social culture, goes to one ideological direction or another; this means that in liberal social cultures (United States, Sweden and United Kingdom), right wing scholars perceive an increasingly chilly climate, while in more traditional societies (such as Nigeria) left oriented scholars think Cancel Culture is becoming a problem for them. Following this argument of cultural differences and spiral of silence, our aim is to contribute to the explanation of Cancel Culture from the Hispanic perspective, giving some cases and examples occurred in Latin American countries and Spain in order to feed the discussion about this new phenomenon.

It is important to say that there is no research about Cancel Culture at the university level in the Hispanic world (understood Spain and Latin America). There is just some research about Cancel Culture in the literature domain (Brovelli, 2020).

There is some research about a near concept to Cancel Culture that will be considered afterwards, the "escrache", limited to the cases of feminist actions in some countries, mainly Mexico (Mingo, 2020; González, 2019; González, 2018; Barreto, 2017) and Argentina (Bonavitta, *et al.*, 2020).

This paper tries to accomplish three goals; firstly, to give some light to the meaning of Cancel Culture; secondly, to explore the phenomenon in the Hispanic context as a first attempt to know what is going on; and thirdly, connecting this debate with the basis of the spiral of silence. Then, we will review the approaches to the concept, we will explore the role of social media, we will give some cases for the discussion and our conclusions will open new lines of research linked with the spiral of silence.

¹ Actions people take to hold others accountable, censorship of speech or history, and mean-spirited actions taken to cause others harm people canceling anyone they disagree with, consequences for those who have been challenged, an attack on traditional American values, a way to call out issues like racism or sexism, or a misrepresentation of people's actions. 58% of adults said that in general, when people publicly call others out on social media for posting content that might be considered offensive, they are more likely to hold people accountable. In comparison, 38% said this kind of action is more likely to punish people who don't deserve it.

2. Approaches to Cancel Culture

As the survey of the Pew Research Center demonstrated, there is no consensus about the definition of Cancel Culture. Researchers had also understood this in many ways (Norris, 2021; Strossen, 2020). Norris says that "the term has become so over-loaded in partisan rhetoric...and so confused and contradictory in popular usage, that it cannot and should not be redeemed" (2021, p. 4), but she claims for more research to clarify it.

If not a definition, we can distinguish at least some approaches when people refer to the Cancel Culture, at least in the American and British context. Here, we call them the critical approach, the institutional approach, and the moral approach.

a) The critical approach. This perspective is the origin of the Cancel Culture. It is rooted in the critical theory and the idea of social justice of the Frankfurt School. The argument is that the system we have created is unfair from the very first beginning, because it has been designed by a social elite, who turns their back on the rest to the society. Then, there is a historical discrimination of disadvantaged and marginalized groups and elites' dominion of the public spheres lacks from a fundamental justice. Therefore, Cancel Culture would be justified because it is the way that the historical victims must claim for their status (Bouvier, 2020; Clark, 2020). They claim for accountability. Role of victims and tyrants is well defined, so punishment is justified, according with this perspective. Cancel Culture is then "the withdrawal of any kind of support (viewership, social media follows, purchases of products endorsed by the person, etc.) for those who are assessed to have said or done something unacceptable or highly problematic, generally from a social justice perspective especially alert to sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, bullying, and related issues." (Ng, 2020, p. 623).

b) The institutional approach. Identifying the origin of the Cancel Culture in the critical theory, this perspective is related with our rights and freedoms in democratic societies. How we have built our systems for living together without chaos and disorder. Constitutions, laws, and rights declarations have built a corpus where our society stands and have been built for centuries. Freedom of speech is one of these rules. This argument roots in the American and French Revolutions, but in the United States where the Constitution highlights in its First Amendment this right, it has been historically one of the defining concepts of the country. Most of the people talking about free speech quote Jhon Stuart Mill essay *On Liberty* (1859) where he praises a society with open criticism of ideas, persuasive discussion and debate, and no stigmatization.

Cancel Culture then will be the opposite of the free speech culture: "Cancel Culture seeks to end discussion, or at least to truncate it, by summarily dismissing certain ideas -or even certain speakers- as ineligible for inclusion in the exchange" (Strossen, 2020, p. 1). Free speech is compatible with some degree of auto-censorship, because of the social pressure we all can feel in many issues, but it is in a context of freedom. The problem comes when there is social violence that does not booster for the freedom of speech. The barrier between the social pressure and violence has been narrowed with the Cancel Culture trend. This is what the latest national surveys in the United States are holding the attention and the idea of the editorial of *The New York Times* mentioned above.

c) The moral approach. This perspective does not refer to any Constitution or legal boundary, but it deals with the idea of a social punishment when we do not behave according with the social standards. Biggest social punishment could be ostracism, or total isolation. Shame is also a way of having a social penalty (Kahan, 2019). In this sense, Japanese society has developed for centuries an idea of shame that in some cases lead to suicide (Creighton, 1990). Cancel Culture is a shame culture, where the importance is not the possible reaction to a social punishment, but the shame itself, in order to erase your social presence and influence. Actually, there is no space for regret or it does not count. Once you are signaled under a cancelation, does not matter what you do. This means, it is not important to feel guilty in your conscience as an individual, because the moral judgment is on the others, not in your conscience. A work from a Ukrainian student, Heleta (2021), explains that main features of the Cancel Culture are 1) the guilty presumption 2) essentialism, meaning going from the judgment of one fact to the whole life and the person itself and 3) contagiousness, meaning that the goal is to create an atmosphere where everybody around is "infected" by the idea of social punishment.

Therefore, free speech, social justice and public shaming are in stake under the concept of Cancel Culture. Let's say that social justice is the cause of those actions, and censorship and shame are the consequences.

In Latin America a similar concept has been used: the so called "escrache". Originally used in Argentina, they can be defined as a popular protest against someone, in their home or in a public place, in order to denounce their impunity and publicly repudiate them. Usually, escraches are the result of a direct action of organized collectivities when they understand other institutions had failed in their responsibilities. According to this, escraches are not so related with the idea of silencing or avoiding free expression, but more about

justice and public shame. Also, they are more a punctual action, and they are strategically built by some collectives.

In her study, Norris gives a definition of Cancel Culture not far from the *escrache*, as it is defined as “collective strategies by activists using social pressures to achieve cultural ostracism of targets (someone or something) accused of offensive words or deeds” (2021, p. 4).

With this definition, she claims that Cancel Culture is not a new social phenomenon. Censorship and social censorship had existed for centuries. Why then, surveys are saying that public is more concern now? What has changed in the last years? Many authors claim that Cancel Culture is something directly connected with our new digital life.

3. Role of the social media

Since the protests that took place during what became known as the Arab Spring, the power of the social media in favor of collective action has grown, as has its interest in terms of analysis. There is little doubt that the Internet and the social media have reconfigured the arena of public opinion and have changed the role that the traditional actors played within it.

In the case of social movements or collective action, the transformation has been even more significant, given that activists and the social media work at the same level: citizen participation. In this respect, social activists have discovered a natural ally in the social media for their mobilization strategies, for attracting new members and in terms of their need to establish criteria for the public debate.

Castells (2012), emphasizes that new social movements push for more cultural changes than follow the power, as it happened with traditional movements. In the cultural fight, new activists want to build their own meanings and frames (Sádaba, 2022) and communication in networks are a key element (Castells, 2012).

In the case of Cancel Culture in social media, modern precedent would be the “Call-out culture”, which started with the #MeToo movement, when women were encouraged to denounce their abusers. Also, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter sought to highlight racial inequality and police brutality (Sádaba, 2021). Then, the increasing atmosphere of accountability for what has been considered offensive created what the Cancel Culture appears today. For some researchers, Cancel Culture is directly connected with social media. Chiou (2020) describes it as a form of digital vigilantism, a process where citizens are collectively offended by other citizens' activity, and coordinate retaliation on mobile devices and social platforms. Others explain Cancel Culture as a catalyst of digital hate (Cook *et al.*, 2021).

Then, for some scholars Cancel Culture “refers to the use of social media (or public platforms) to “cancel” the reputation of a public figure, usually in response to a negative social event or scandal” (Teixeira, 2021, p. 3).

The idea of mobilization and gathering through social media is relevant for any action of cancellation. Without these new platforms, the cancellation would not be so noisy neither effective to reach a large number of people in the social shaming process. Also, because social media can act as echo chambers that reinforce points of view (Baumann *et al.*, 2020). But also, because social media give voice to those ones who were said victims or marginalized in a more elite and institutional society. In this regard, Clark (2020, p. 91) concludes that outcome of Cancel Culture is the “fault of the elites' inability to adequately conceive of the impact social media connectivity has for shifting the power dynamics of the public sphere in the digital age”.

Among all social media, Twitter is the one where cancellations have been taken place (Bouvier, 2020), where textual limitations lead to an excessive oversimplification, ideological rigidity and lack of nuance (Ng, 2020, p. 623).

The use of social media in the Cancel Culture does not exclude in person actions. On the contrary, social media are sometimes the way to promote physical activities, as it happens with the classic *escraches* (Bastus, 2021). And the goal of the Cancel Culture is not just to eliminate some voices in the social media, but also to have an impact in their real-life behaviors. Therefore, the concept of Cancel Culture can be related to some ways of cancellation and censorship in our history “but is specifically designed for the digital age in the midst of hyper sociality” (Velasco, 2020, p. 6).

Also, because what social media can help to build is an idea of “culture” or social climate. None of the studies of the Cancel Culture refer to the culture part of the label as a key one, when, in fact, cancellation has occurred for years, but the idea of not just denouncing someone but creating the climate of fear for the next

to come is what defines the "culture". This is also why, unlike the *escraches*, climate of fear makes those own institutions are taking decisions firing the person who has been canceled. And climate of fear is also key because, it can generate more auto censorship, and also, a more long-term consequence about fear of isolation which is reputation.

Moreover, some scholars point out anonymity in the social media as the way to increase the possibilities of a climate of fear, in a context where aggressiveness of textual messages can be contagious (Kwon & Gruzd, 2017). Some studies confirm that in the social media, individuals who see their viewpoints as part of the minority being less likely to speak out (Yun & Park, 2011) and, on the contrary, those who feel that others in their agree with them, are more likely to engage in conversations online (Hampton *et al.*, 2014).

4. Methodology

It is true that some researchers explain Cancel Culture in the context of polarization of the American society (Hetherington & Weiler, 2009), and surveys and research always count on the variable of identification with a political view (left/right and degrees among them) to justify the results (Cook *et al.*, 2021). The Higher Education Research Institute (the most comprehensive source of information on college students in America) survey also confirms this polarization among the professoriates (Abrams & Khalid, 2020). Pipa Norris (2021) work about different countries position about freedom of expression and political correctness is based in a worldwide scholar's survey, where also ideological self-positioning is key to understand the results. This means in the academic literature, the empirical data about comparative Cancel Culture is about perceptions on the phenomenon, it is not about any case of Cancel Culture itself and its implications.

Therefore, for this first analysis in the Hispanic context we have chosen the case study methodology. This research is based in qualitative data collected in a case study form, exploratory in nature. As Ying states case studies are especially valuable as they provide the opportunity to describe the events surrounding a specific case over in an in-depth manner (Yin, 2011). Case studies are suitable when it is needed to illustrate a new behavior or alterations in the regular process. Also, from the example, they allow to conclude some general perspectives or trends for their peers.

Out of the United States of America and United Kingdom, and although it has been a topic covered in the news and there are many opinions from journalists, there are few papers of Cancel Culture regarding local cases. A paper from the Philippines experience (Velasco, 2020) claims that the phenomenon has traveled to the Asian world, and he demonstrates it with a case study of a celebrity who was cancelled because of a social media infraction.

We focus our work in the Hispanic world, understanding here Spain and Latin American countries, where the Spanish language is the common denominator (meaning we exclude Brazil) and having 20 countries in total. We take the cases till May 2022, starting in 2021, as many universities before were with COVID protocols and just online activities. We look at any news concerning freedom of speech or cancelation in Spanish, as an attempt to describe what is happening in this cultural context.

5. Results

Since 2021, we observe 7 notorious (meaning we can find some online news about them) *escraches* and/or cancellations at the college level in all those countries, summarized in Table 1. In all those cases, some people are pointing at someone or some group trying to cut their freedom of expression in a public space. In all of them (except the one in Mexico) we can see social media as an instrument to gather people and to mobilize, but the important action is the one taking place in real life. Also, there are punctual actions with no big consequences from the point of view of the university (except the Argentinian one, where there has been a trial). In this regard, it is also important to say that the actions are against professors in three cases (two in Barcelona and the one in Argentina), a politician, and the rest are at the student's level. There is another case at the Universidad de Granada, Spain (December 1, 2021), in which one professor is not appointed emeritus because of some homophobic declarations and a newspaper talks about cancellation.

In the cases mentioned above, the only ones where Cancel Culture is mentioned are the one in Mexico and the one to Juana Gallego, and this is why we will explain them in more detail.

Table 1. Escraches and/or cancellations at the college level

Place	Date	Type (According with the media)	Victim	Reason	Rol of social media
Universidad de Barcelona, Spain	January 12, 2021	Escrache	Joan Guardia, rector	Rector inauguration day	To gather people and to publish the escrache (https://bit.ly/3DXRpZm)
The Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México	February 2021	Cancellation	Students vs students	Feminist students vs prolife students	Hashtag #ITAMSinCensura helps to create the movement and feed the online controversy
Universidad Nacional de Plata, Argentine	August 8, 2021	Escrache in social media	A professor accused of being an abuser	Denouncing the abuser	Accusations trough the Instagram account of a group of feminist students. Reply from the School in the dean's twitter (https://bit.ly/3CgQuBR)
Universidad de Rosario, Colombia	February 2022	Escrache	University authorities	Students' demonstration because of COVID passes	To gather people and to publish the escrache (https://bit.ly/3RjsfHt)
Universidad Pompeu Fabra, Spain	February 23, 2022	Escrache	Student's pro independency against group of student's pro unity	Meeting of students	(https://bit.ly/3Ccvlb5)
Universidad Complutense, Spain	May 17, 2022	Escrache	Politician Leopoldo Lopez	He was going to start a conference	(https://bit.ly/3UMwo9P)
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain	March 15, 2022	Boycott and cancelation	Professor Juana Gallego	She does not agree with transgender agenda	Hashtag #yoconjuanagallego supporting the professor

Source. Own elaboration.

5.1. ITAMSinCensura

In Mexico, the Hashtag #ITAMSinCensura was trending topic in February, 2021. The hashtag was created after the fight between students of The Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) one of Mexico's most important institutions of higher learning.

The fight was between a feminist group called "La Cuarta Ola" and some prolife students, who were claiming that the feminist were trying to silence their opinions. Also, both sides were saying that the ITAM was in somehow party of the situation.

Facts are as follows: February 9, La Cuarta Ola published in Twitter a statement saying that for the elections of students' representatives the ones accused by violence against women or machismo should not appear in the lists to be elected. They mentioned 4 people. One of them replied publishing a letter in twitter, asking for respect to his pro-life ideas and denouncing the boycott proposed by La Cuarta Ola. Then, some students started the #ITAMSinCensura hashtag.

We can count a total of 1821 tweets including this #hashtag, so it became a trending topic in Mexico. Videos and other visual pieces were also sent by social media.

Although the discussion is still there and the positions are clear, there has been no more impact at the institutional level. Apparently, there are no professors involved, and it is a discussion among students.

The case is a clear example of the use of social media, and directly touches freedom of expression and feminists' points of view. The statement with the four students' names from La Cuarta Ola is understood by other students as a cancellation process and in order to stop it, they launched their hashtag. Students creating the hashtag claim for freedom of speech confronted with cancellation. In this sense, the social media was not so used "to cancel" here than to mobilize against a cancelation. Hashtag was used as a simplification

message in Twitter with a mobilization effect, as it has happened in other social movements mentioned above (e.g., Black Lives Matter).

For La Cuarta Ola, use of social media with their statements is a way to claim for social justice. La Cuarta Ola is a feminist group, that according with their Facebook and public declarations, follows the critical theory approach of social justice. For them, as it happens in other cases with this critical perspective, accountability is needed and justifies their actions.

5.2. yoconjuanagallego

In Spain, on March 15, 2022, Juana Gallego, a professor from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) denounced a student's group of the Master of Gender and Communication for making boycott to her sessions about gender and communication because of her public profile; she has been a historical feminist, against the transgender agenda and the queer ideology. When she went to the classroom, nobody showed up. Then, professor Gallego published a video in Twitter labeling her case as "an example of Cancel Culture". It was first time this label was used by one of the victims of this kind of actions in the Latin American colleges. Gallego's video reached 477,6K views, more than 5000 likes and 3500 retweets. Next, the hashtag #yoconjuanagallego started to be promoted supporting the professor. Also, some feminist movements endorsed this hashtag and asked to sign a letter backing the professor.

There were two sides confronted: a feminist network supporting Gallego with the hashtag #yoconjuanagallego; and others saying students had the right to choose to show up or not in her class. University statement the day after was supporting this last version, saying that the professor was free to teach, and the students were also free to go or not to her class.

The case arrived in *The Times*, making this case the first with an international echo among the cases mentioned: "Juana Gallego of Autonomous University of Barcelona is 'boycotted' for trans view" (Devereux, 2022).

In this case, social media again was used not as a tool to cancel, but on the contrary, to denounce cancellation. The hashtag was promoted to confirm support to the professor. Tweets content included topics as freedom of expression, the role of the Universities as centers for free discussions, and fights between feminism and queer ideology.

6. Discussion

The level of problematization the Anglo-Saxon university world is having with the so-called Cancel Culture has not the same intensity for now in the Latin American world. We find few cases, with different features, some of them related with feminist rights and not all of them related with the Cancel Culture approaches (freedom of speech, social justice, shaming).

In the two cases analyzed, for example, positive social media role (with positive hashtags) supporting people who have been canceled becomes more relevant and notorious than the cancelation itself and the reputational damage or shaming. Also, mobilization through social media in these cases is not to do any action of cancelation, but to endorse.

Then, if the phenomenon of Cancel Culture is related with the social media and the power to create a culture of fear, we cannot establish that this is what happens in those cases.

Also, we can say that groups confronted are not always in the axis progressive/conservatives as many surveys and the study of Norris (2021) explores. Just in the case of Mexico we could find the discussion between a critical feminist approach and a prolife one. However, as Norris and the American associations denounce, Cancel Culture is more related to actions against scholars and the consequences for the academia. In our analysis, this happens with the Barcelona professor. Therefore, we cannot conclude with a general pattern of the cases in the Hispanic context.

Then, we can think that maybe Cancel Culture is more an American phenomenon, linked with the actual polarization of the country and the state of the colleges debate, or we can figure out that it is a social problem just starting in other cultural contexts. Maybe, for instance in the case of Spain, as one journalist wrote, we

do not have such Cancel Culture because we have had a recent history of violence with local terrorism (Jiménez, 2022).

Moreover, as the definition of the phenomenon still is vague, it creates difficulties in the analysis of cases. From our understanding, the key is in the ability of collective action to generate fear through social media. In the cases of colleges, as we have been describing, this fear makes academic institutions react (many times against the professor canceled) and then, increases the possible auto censorship in the classroom.

A culture of fear is what is really at stake in the Cancel Culture. And this is where Noelle Neumann's theory of spiral of silence (1984) can give us an explanation. She thinks fear of isolation becomes the most important mechanism configuring public opinion. We avoid isolation and ostracism because we are social beings. She claims that we have an instinct to evaluate our environment, our "climate of opinion", after observation of what others do, and what the expectations of what others might think determine what we do. Then, she demonstrates that people who feel public support tend to express their opinion loud and clear. And on the contrary, people tend to hide their opinion when they think that they would expose themselves to "isolation pressure" by expressing it. This is how a spiral dynamic is created that ends up silencing certain opinions or attitudes. Then, the climate of fear promoted by collectives in social media nowadays generate a culture where some scholar's ideas and opinions are finally silenced. In the Hispanic context analyzed, the number and magnitude of cases is still low if we compare them with the reports of the Anglosaxon world, but it would be important to see if the Cancel Culture is a contagious one.

6.1. Limitations and future research

This study is the first attempt to observe the Cancel Culture situation at the college level in the Hispanic world. Cases are scarce and this makes a limited sample, but still, it is relevant to start the research in this topic and to be able to demonstrate the status of the issue. Also, as it was mentioned, the limitation of not having a clear definition of Cancel Culture is important in order to distinguish cases.

Then, more research is needed to clarify the concept and to know about the specifics of the cases. Also, many questions are open about the role of social media and moreover, considering what it has been already explored with the spiral of silence theory. If we think in a "culture" where fear of isolation works, we could explore at least some interesting assumptions:

1. In our public behavior, the emotions are sometimes more important than the arguments. To be afraid can be key for our social life.
2. In our public behavior, intuitions and expectations about what is going on are relevant.
3. Public opinion is not a fight between majority and minority opinions, it's not a question of numbers of supporters, it is about noise. It's a matter of who defends their ideas assertively and emphatically. Actually, minority opinions and attitudes in numerical terms are sometimes perceived as majority opinions as well.

In this respect, in recent years, the inability of the traditional media to maintain the influence they formerly enjoyed (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008), means that the social media may have become the source of the current climate of opinion. Thus, it is within the social media environment that we can now observe the climate of opinion that individuals use to develop an opinion.

Again, in the social media, Cancel Culture can be observed as "climate of opinion" where voices are acting in a loud voice and silencing others till self-censorship.

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