UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

TRANSCENDING RACIAL DIVISIONS: ANTI-RACISM AND IDENTITY POLITICS

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Preface

I declare that this thesis has been written by myself and that the work contained herein is my own original work except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text and in the bibliography section. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisors Dennis Hayes and Ruth Mieschbuehler for giving me the opportunity to work on this study and for their help and advice. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their love, loyalty, support, patience and for reminding me that there is more to life than a computer screen. I know the last few years would have been very difficult without your continuous support. But this thesis would not have existed without the unwavering support and love from Andreas Tintelott, my better half. He was the one who had to listen to my thoughts, ideas, arguments and rants at all hours of the day and night. Thank you, Andreas, for believing in me even when I had stopped believing in myself, for dealing with my mood swings and keeping me down to earth when I needed it.

At this difficult time, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents. They have sacrificed so much to give me and my siblings a good start. Merci Maman et Papa.

Abstract

The issue of race is one of the most important concerns of Western society today. This concern takes many forms and has entered all aspects of our lives. The social, economic and political worlds are all affected by discussions, contestations and conflicts involving racial thinking and the notion of race. In the political realm, the question of racial identities is one of the forms in which this contemporary concern for race takes place. The use of our racial identities in political discussions is understood today as 'identity politics'. This research examines the notions of race, racism, identity, politics and identity politics in the past and in the present and explores the contemporary relationships between politics, identity politics, the concern for racial identities and the notion of race. With such a comprehensive approach, it provides insights as to why the question of racial identity has taken such an important space in public discourse and in politics. It shows that the notion of race, a product of history, has anti-human, anti-rational and anti-political foundations which have been kept in the modern notion of culture. The use of racial identities in politics, a particular form of identity politics, is not a new phenomenon. Identity politics using politicised racial identities has existed throughout the historical development of race. The research compares the classical and contemporary meaning of politics and argues that identity politics, understood as identity-based politics or as the use of social identities within the political realm, is not politics in the classical meaning of politics. What has changed since the first use of politicised racial identities is the various understandings of humanity as individuals and the consequent degradation of political thinking. The philosophical concern for the Self, personhood, subject or identity has been a very particular interest in the Western world since the seventeenth century. However, the focus on psychology and personal identity has given rise to the psychological self. Under certain social and political circumstances such as the widespread atomisation of society, the development of the therapeutic culture, the common support for anti-Enlightenment ideas and the psychological approaches to understanding the world has led to contemporary identity politics being organised within a culture of competitive victimhood. This research shows that the focus on racial identities in public discourse is creating problems for an effective opposition to racism but is also producing an expansion of anti-political and anti-human thinking.

Introduction

There are numerous recent books such as *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging* by Afua Hirsch, *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo, *You Can't Touch My Hair: And Other Things I Still Have to Explain* by Phoebe Robinson and *Between The World And Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates which are written supposedly to let white people understand about 'black experience' (Coates, 2015; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Hirsch, 2018; Oluo, 2018; Robinson, 2016). And this 'black experience' seems to be often a very painful and dark experience. We are being told by Oluo, for example, that often 'being a person of color in white-dominated society is like being in an abusive relationship with the world' (Oluo, 2018:19). Discussing white privilege, an apparently 'manipulative, suffocating blanket of power', Eddo-Lodge warned us that because 'it's a many-headed hydra, you have to be careful about the white people you trust when it comes to discussing race and racism' (Eddo-Lodge, 2018: 92, 91). 'It is about race if a person of color thinks it's about race', claimed Oluo, because 'their racial identity is a part of them and it is interacting with the situation' (Oluo, 2018: 15). Philosopher Christopher Lebron argued that 'a refreshed radical black politics' had to face 'basic failure of imagination, fear of what directly confronting power requires of each of us, or simple lack of motivation'. And yet what he suggested was to use 'shameful publicity' to let others know that the 'idea and ideal of American democracy' is great but that in practice, 'very few of the benefits available to whites are freely or fairly available to blacks'. 'Shameful publicity sets the terms of moral and ethical acknowledgment on those acceptable to complainants', he declared (Lebron, 2017: 128, 132, 135-151).

Already, in 1991, conservative scholar Dinesh D'Souza was complaining about the increasing number of safe spaces, segregated places and 'proliferation of separatist minority organizations' on American college campuses, for various sections of the student populations (D'Souza, 1991). Education Scholar Robert Boostrom had analysed 'safe space' as an emerging metaphor for classroom life. And he had shown that this was a response to individual isolation felt physically as well as psychologically. But he thought this avoidance of stress led to a reduction in intellectual challenge, personal growth and critical reflection (Rom, 1998). A solution proposed by John

Palfrey and others is to create both safe spaces and brave spaces. The safe spaces would be ‘environments in which students can explore ideas and express themselves’ without feeling ‘marginalized for their perspective or exploration’ (Palfrey, 2017: 20). The brave spaces would be ‘environments that approximate the world outside academic life’ where the primary purpose is a ‘search for the truth, rather than support for a particular group of students’ (Palfrey, 2017: 21). Despite the dispute over these spaces and segregation in the United States, there now seems to be an increasing support for them in British universities although demands for these spaces still seem to provoke equally strong backlashes (Yates, 2015; Deruy, 2016; Gillespie, 2018). A student diversity officer, Bahar Mustafa, had asked white students not to attend an event for black students. She managed to keep her job but was caught in a middle of a racism row (Rush, 2015). In reactions to the new political and public demands such as safe spaces, segregation or censorship that are based on various identities including racial identities, articles and books are being written claiming the rising influence of what is seen as ‘identity politics’. Mark Lilla was worried that ‘identity liberalism’ has ‘banished the word *we* to the outer reaches of respectable political discourse’ (Lilla, 2017: 119). Francis Fukuyama also recognised that identity politics will stay in the modern world. However, to resolve the fragmentation resulting from smaller identity groups, he proposed to integrate ‘smaller groups into larger wholes on which trust and citizenship can be based’. He added that ‘we need to promote creedal national identities built around the foundational ideas of modern liberal democracy’ (Fukuyama, 2018: 166). National identities are often seen as superior to other identities with a following proposal to return to the larger identities. Douglas Murray’s solution to this ‘madness’ is to ‘retain an interest in politics’ but to become apolitical or anti-political (Murray, 2019: 256). One reaction to this criticism of identity politics is to maintain that ‘identity politics’ is often used as short-hand for politics coming from marginalised groups (feminism, anti-racism, homophobia, Trans people rights) and that the anti-identity politics position is often simply an opposition to people fighting for social justice. The resulting argument is to claim that ‘all politics is identity politics’ by demonstrating that identities other than national identities were used by others in the past and present (Yglesias, 2015; Penny, 2019).

The aim of the project was to understand why racial identity has become so important in public discourse among students and the newer generations and why it has become

such a focus in student political demands. This public discourse is generally understood as an increase in identity politics among students and the wider public. Political scientist Francis Fukuyama, while observing that the assertion of identity has increasingly become the main focus of politics, has warned the public about the rise of identity politics (Fukuyama, 2018). But identity politics was already an issue in the 1990s-2000s in academic disciplines. Thus, why has it now become a concern in public conversations? The questions the project was aiming to answer are: Is all politics identity politics or is identity politics a new phenomenon coming from the left and liberal side of the political spectrum? Which of these two notions can explain this intense contemporary focus on race, racial identity and identity? What is the relation between anti-racism and identity politics? Society, in several Western nations such as the UK and the United States, is becoming more diverse and yet, there seems to be an increase in racial tension rather than less. Or maybe, there seems to be more talks and concerns about race than in the recent past. But race is still involved in all aspects of people's lives. The important questions the whole of society needs to answer is why race is still so central, whether it is a good notion society needs to keep and if not, what are the ideas, policies, politics, attitudes members of society need to develop in order to stop the roles and effects of race. I am approaching these issues with a humanist and universalist position which argues for the importance of human beings. The problems and issues are understood through humanity's viewpoint, through its senses and its interests. There is an objective world outside humanity. There are truths that are universally relevant and, these can be rationally understood by human beings. The interest is to understand the type of society which would be best for the whole of humanity. My support for the notion of a common humanity, my beliefs in humanity's ability to reason and in its potential to control its destiny, in the value of human life and in the potentials of human beings are the framework within which this research is completed.

In the attempt to reach the aims of this project, a wider exploration of the contemporary relationships between politics, identity politics, the concern for racial identities and the notion of race became necessary. A deeper investigation of some of the concepts used became also part of the research methods for this thesis. It seemed that the public disputes are related to the very wide and various meanings of several of the notions used. Two of the arguments against the use of identity politics are the

accusations that racial identities are viewed as fixed and that racial thinking is promoted rather than opposed. What does race mean and how was the notion developed? Racial identities are very important for people in the twenty-first century. In a report produced by the Pew Research Center 'Race in America 2019', 74% of black adults say that their race is extremely important or very important to how they think about themselves. While 56% of English-speaking Asians and 59% of Hispanics of any race agree with the majority of black adults, only 15% of whites think that being white is extremely or very important for their identity. In contrast, 47% of white adults think their race is not at all important to how they think about themselves. The differences between these groups are not surprising when considering the history of discrimination and racism but this survey highlights how much racial identities are still important in people's lives (Menasce Horowitz et al., 2019). Investigating the meaning, roots and history of the notion of race but also the meaning and history of identity is an important concern in academia which needed to be studied. What does identity mean in relation to identity politics? In order to understand if there is really a difference between identity politics and politics, we need to grasp the original meaning of politics and compare it with identity politics discussed today. While researching the history of race, it quickly became clear that there were connections between race and culture but also between race, culture and nation. This raised a new question as to why racial, cultural and national identities are seen differently in public discourse. National identities are proposed to be superior to racial identities. What are the criteria that lead to this assessment?

The issues of race, identity, politics and identity politics have been discussed widely by many thinkers and intellectuals. Unfortunately, most individuals could not be covered here due to limits of space and time. Several criteria were used to decide for the inclusion of particular authors. They were introduced if their work answered particular questions raised during the research. The impact factor and citations of their work were also taken into consideration. The years of publication, the accessibility of their work as well as the accessibility of their ideas were also used as criteria. I wanted to look at the underlying issues generated by the use of social identity in politics rather than particular problems underlying specific theories. Thus, some ideas, theories, and authors are not mentioned here even though they are important in the discussion of

racial identity. Kimberlé W. Crenshaw's work on intersectionality is one example of such omissions.

This project has examined past and present literature and discussions in several academic fields such as philosophy, psychology, history, politics and sociology. An extensive survey of the literature on race and on identity were useful. The aim was to attempt to move away from too many specific academic interests, norms and structures in order to assess the issues from a different and wider angle. This was understood as both a strength and weakness. It was a strength because a multi-disciplines project is very useful if we want to understand issues such as race and identity which affect many areas of knowledge and of life in general. It is a weakness because the depths of knowledge of each of these disciplines will be more superficial than what we would need for a deep analysis. Nevertheless, the benefits of wider view here were thought to be worth the potential risks of superficiality. A deeper examination can be pursued later.

Chapter 1 looks briefly at the issue of politics, in order to later compare the notion of politics with the meaning of identity politics. This chapter is a short discussion of the origins of politics and the basis of different political traditions. It highlights some of the differences between classical politics and contemporary attitudes in politics in the 21st century by discussing the meanings of citizenship, the introduction of social identities in politics, the citizens' control of the governance of their society and the issues introduced in political conversations. In chapter 2, the development of the idea of race and the concern for racial identities are put in their historical contexts and shown not to be part of a permanent feature of human life but a product of history. The roots and the development of the notion of race as well as some of the meanings race since its first growth highlight the development of an anti-political means of viewing the world. Classical politics and some particular aspects of life in ancient Greece are discussed in this chapter to argue that racial thinking, the interpretation of the world through the notion that history is a competition between races, did not exist throughout all of human history. The recognition of human diversity, already existing in ancient Greece, did not lead the Greeks to develop the concept of race or to understand the world as a competition between different races. But, the idea of race became widely supported by intellectuals and thinkers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The

understanding of the world, society and progress as simply results of laws of nature and the intellectual search for a universal and seen-as fixed human nature are due to some of the Enlightenment notions and sentiments, to the social, economic and political circumstances, to the need to understand the reality of social inequality but also to the loss of Enlightenment optimism. The discussion in chapter 2 contradicts some of the contemporary opinions describing race as an innate characteristic of human nature, as an original sin or as a disease. In chapter 3, the modern notion of culture is investigated as a notion similar to the concept of race. We see how some of the basic understandings of society, of humans and of nature that inspire the notion of race are still found underlying the modern concept of culture. The world is still divided into discrete groups and the characteristics of these groups is still seen as describing and causally determining people's morality, behaviour, opinions and psychology. However, the notion of superiority and inferiority used in the notion of race is mostly replaced by the concept of 'different but equal', where universal standards are denied. Each culture describes a different world and thus, cannot be judged by universal standards. To better understand whether national identity can be seen as a better solution to racial identity, the concept of nation and some of the links between race, culture and nation are also explored. Within the universalist viewpoint, the idea that national identities or cultural identities are preferable to racial identities is seen as wrong. Furthermore, the post-World War Two definition of racism as a problem of individuals' ignorance, psychology and morality is shown to have strong effects on the development of modern anti-racism. The notion of race is not opposed and educating individuals in an attempt to change their psychology has become the mainstream method to fight racism.

Chapter 4 addresses the various meanings of the self in the past and the present. The question of the self is not a new question but a very important philosophical question that has been asked and answered in many different ways throughout history since antiquity. The self is a product of history. Several conceptions of the self are discussed in the attempt to understand the underlying ideas which explain the contemporary focus on racial identity. The knowledge of the self or humans' understanding of themselves is not fixed, shows constant transformation and does not develop in a linear and progressive fashion. The distinct notions of the self have been influenced by the historical, social, economic and cultural contexts in which the numerous thinkers

lived and thought. Questions of reason, immateriality, immortality, individual experiences and acquisition of knowledge have been important issues. However, one important event seems to have been the internalisation of the self. This internalisation of the self has influenced the development of the modern psychological self which is currently accepted by the majority of the population in the twenty-first century. In chapter 5, the question of identity is raised. The thoughts of various thinkers are discussed in order to examine many different interpretations of identity. Hence, the unclear understanding and interpretation of identity is highlighted. This discussion shows that the emergence of the psychological self, the emphasis on the mind as the self and the common psychological explanations for every aspect of human life are the causes but also the consequences of this current attention on identity. The concept of identity can then be understood as reflecting the modern and Western understanding of humanity. Historian Judith Stein has argued that the numerous identities are not defined in a vacuum but are dependent on the historical, social/economic and political contexts in which these identities are outlined. They are also influenced by the social and political objectives of the individuals defining the identities. Social theorist Marie Moran has argued that identity is an essentialising mechanism. Nevertheless, several ideas are used by various intellectuals to explain the contemporary focus on identity. The social problems of modern society, the effects of modern society on the psyche of the individuals or the contemporary political and economic contexts are some of the explanations used but there is also the importance of identity in identity politics. If the intellectuals focus is on the specific identities of seen-as-marginalized sections of society such as women, black people, homosexuals or other minority groups, identity politics is understood as political actions or methods of resistance and, as a phenomenon started in the twentieth century with the rise of the new social movements. If the intellectuals focus is on philosophical notions of the self and of the individual or on the relationships between the individual and society, identity politics is understood as social identities used in the political realm and, as a phenomenon which had already started in the eighteenth century with the use of identities existing at the time such as the past racial or national identities. Thus, identity politics and the use of politicised social identities are supported and/or attacked by various thinkers. In chapter 6, we focus on the identity politics promoted by the left and liberal section of the contemporary political spectrum. This is identity politics which uses identities of various seen-as-marginalised in the past or in the present. The

conditions which led to the development, after World War Two, of mainstream left-liberal identity politics are discussed. Anti-progress, anti-science and anti-human ideas existed before World War Two. The presence of the liberal and communist ideologies and the contestations between them did not prevent the replacement of politics by identity politics and the increased acceptance of identity politics as a valuable tool in the fight against racism, for justice and equality. These two main ideologies did not promote the intellectual, social and political ideas that would oppose the notion of race and the use of social identities in politics. In fact, the common disagreements are on the particular identities chosen to be supported. However, the contemporary social and political contexts such as the widespread atomisation of society, the search for psychological solutions to social problems, the therapeutic culture and the culture of fear have changed the forms with which identity politics is developed and understood today. The individual self is now understood as weak, fragile, isolated and threatened by everything around. This new view of the self has affected the ways identities and identity groups are supported and defended. In the twentieth century, the claim of a victim status has become an important part of identity politics.

1. The Importance of Politics

In order to understand the issue of identity politics and to discuss whether identity politics is politics, we first need to draw attention to the definition of politics which is used in this research. This chapter is a small introduction discussing the origins of politics and the basis of different political traditions. Some of the differences between classical politics and contemporary attitudes in politics in the 21st century is highlighted to further describe the definition of politics used in this research.

The development of a political realm was a very important step in human history. Political thought originated with the ancient Greeks and it developed when the Greeks stopped seeing humanity and society as part of nature and as simply following the same laws of nature. The notion that nature could be understood with human reason was an important step in human development. Classical politics distinguishes between the political order and the natural order. The political order is a man-made world but more importantly a common order created to deal with the concerns shared by all members of the political community (Wolin, 2016: 257-273). The nature of a good life for an individual will not necessarily be defined the same way as the nature of a good life for the community. In fact, the understanding of society and what it means to be an individual and the question concerning the relationship between the two have been important concerns since the ancient Greeks. For example, the understanding of society differs between various political ideologies and schools of thought. 'For the conservative, society is naturally hierarchical' and humans 'are not born free and equal, rational and independent' but with a 'complex web' of 'custom and tradition, which provide them with security and discipline and give meaning to their lives'. For the pluralist thinkers, society is a 'harmonious network of groups, organizations and associations, which both influence and compete for the loyalties of individuals'. Liberalism, with its 'political individualism', sees 'independent and rational beings, who are the sole generators of their own wants' and 'the best judges of their own interests'. Thus, in early liberalism, society was understood as established through a social contract between individuals. Today, participation in free elections is portrayed as the consent between individuals (Lukes, 2006: 77-78). Marxists understand human beings as social beings who create their individuality and find meanings only through the other

social beings. If we understand human beings as social beings, then we can also see that the political ideal of individual freedom is an historical phenomenon which could only be conceived after a decrease in the domination of nature over society. The capitalist development, its rise in labour productivity and collaborative productive activity provided a better space for its further development. But we can see the importance of politics both for the individuals trying to achieve their individual potential and for the society where social beings live.

Wolin observed that there has been a decline in political thought since the beginning of the nineteenth century through 'the erosion of the distinctively political' although John Rawls revived political philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century. The decline started with the introduction of the sociological notion of 'society', common to Lockean liberalism but also to conservatism, socialism, anarchism and managerialism (Wolin, 2016: 257-263).

Politics developed because of the ability of rational and social human beings to act collectively in order to create the world they want. 'One cannot speak about politics without also speaking about freedom; and one cannot speak about freedom without also speaking about politics', claimed Hannah Arendt (Arendt and Kohn, 2018: 220). It is through politics and political actions in the world that human beings struggle to create a new world where they can be free. She argued that fighting to get the necessities of life like in primitive societies is not a political action. If concerns are only about sharing resources and preserving lives, why should people be worried about living under democracy, oligarchy or dictatorship? A healthy political world is essential for human social development. The rational and political world is the common world humans can all enter to communicate together. The members in the political realm are the citizens who are prepared to take responsibility for the community or the world. There are three different questions: who can become a citizen? And who is the citizen? And what does the citizen do? In antiquity and today, there are restrictions as to who can become a citizen. Women could not be citizens in ancient Greece. In the West, various restrictions have existed and still exist. Various paths exist for individuals to become citizens of a nation. Individuals, with the help of a family member already citizen of a particular nation, can also become citizens themselves using the 'right of blood' known legally as *jus sanguinis* citizenship or citizenship by descent. An

individual born in a particular nation can obtain citizenship of this nation through the 'right of soil' known as *jus soli* citizenship. Citizenship by marriage known as *jus matrimonii* citizenship is another route to citizenship. Naturalisation for individuals who have entered a nation is also another path to citizenship. Often, this naturalisation is possible only after several years of life and work in the country, and after demonstrating some specific financial stability, a knowledge of the laws, way of life, traditions and culture of the nation. For investors with economic means, citizenship by investment or economic citizenship can be available after making a meaningful monetary contribution to the nation. The different combinations of these various paths to gain citizenship as well as the diverse ways of losing citizenship describe the restrictions for citizenship existing for each country worldwide (Vink and Bauböck, 2013).

But in antiquity, the citizens were not defined by their natural attributes but by their membership and commitment to being involved in participating in decisions and actions with the aim of creating a good life for the community. These actions (what the citizens do), for the Greeks and Romans, included defending the community and dispensing justice. Citizens were defined by the virtue of being members of the *polis*. The Greek *polis* was an association of equals (Meiksins Wood, 2008: 28-98). 'Each individual, if he is a citizen, is, at least in principle, able to fulfil all the social functions…The citizen of the classical *polis* belongs not to *Homo hierarchicus* but rather to *Homo aequalis*' argued Jean-Pierre Vernant (quoted in (Raaflaub and Wallace, 2007: 46).

Various policies, laws, regulations and attitudes worldwide which discriminate against a section of a citizenship define citizens by attributes such as races, cultures, identities, sexuality or birthplace (Paul, 1997; Volpp, 2005). These are not political characteristics but social and personal characteristics which are being politicised. It is clear that the meaning of citizenship has changed from its classical meaning when a 'tension at the heart of the concept of citizenship' is discussed: 'the tension arises from the actuality of a plurality of social identities and the singular identity implied by citizenship, that is, between the particularism of the former and the universalistic aspirations of the latter' (Purvis and Hunt, 1999: 458). But by politicising these social characteristics and identities, the important political world is damaged, and society

stays depoliticised. Politics is not denying the particular interests of different sections of society. In the political world, human beings recognise the different interests and conflicts in the community and apply together human reason to resolve these conflicts with the purpose of improving the common good. But the common good was not defined by the necessities of life. These were part of the household activities, the private realm. And of course, resolving political conflicts will, inevitably, create new ones. Thus, politics is a constant relationship between resolving conflicts and creating new conflicts (Wolin, 2016). We can also add that the citizens' control over how the community/society is governed has been lost in contemporary society. In antiquity, the citizens 'possessed not only eligibility for office-holding and the right to elect officials, but also the right to decide on all matters of public policy and the right to judge, sitting as a court, on all important cases, civil, criminal, public and private'. So, there was no 'institutionalized political elite', claimed historian Moses Finlay (Finley, 2019: 15). Political scientist Cynthia Farrar noted: 'In democratic Athens, the people actually ruled'. The essential features of the genuine popular self-government were: 'the people's awareness of their own potential power, the creation of institutions that enable them to realize that potential and the redefinition of status and power as political rather than social attributes' (Farrar, 2008: 172). This comment alone highlights the enormous gap between classical politics and its potentials and our contemporary political realm.

Politics, an important activity for humanity, has greatly changed since its origins in ancient Greece. The decline in political thoughts can be observed with the meanings of citizenship, the introduction of social identities in politics, the citizens' control of the governance of their society and the issues introduced in political conversations.

2. Race is a Product of History

This research is examining why racial identity is such a concern in public discourse. Hence, we need to comprehend the roots and the development of the notion of race as well as discuss some of the meanings race has taken since its first growth. The issue of race and the history of the idea of race are two important subjects which have been researched, studied and debated by many academics and intellectuals. The aim of this chapter is not to repeat all this work but to highlight some of the important aspects useful for the study.

By looking briefly at the development of the idea of race, the concern for racial identities will be put in its historical contexts and will be shown not to be part of a permanent feature of human life but a product of history. It is important to understand the differences between racial thinking and racism and these will be reviewed first. The discussion on some particular aspects of life in ancient Greece will be used to argue that racial thinking, the interpretation of the world through the notion that history is a competition between races, did not exist throughout all of human history. It then becomes essential to consider how and why the notion of race had developed at a particular time in history.

Racial thinking as dominant ideology in the West

Racial thinking is one of the dominant ideologies of the Western world. Interpreting the world, human history and the social, political and philosophical issues as natural competition between different races is one of the most powerful trends in the current historical period. Whether race is seen as a biological category, a social category, a cultural category, an analysis category or a psychological category, racial thinking has become a fundamental prism through which the world is seen, understood, analysed and interpreted. The idea of race is transformed into racism in practice when people think that others, who do not look or act the same as them, should be discriminated against, treated differently, hated or excluded. It is worth noting that there is no single definition of racism. Racism can be seen as an ideology claiming racial superiority, developed to defend the interests of the white ruling class. It can be seen as ‘relating to the prejudices of whites towards blacks to status distinctions drawn within white society’ which started in the nineteenth century (Banton, 1998: 27). Or, it can be

defined ‘as a system of racial discrimination, seeing its key site of operation not within individual consciousness, but in social processes that lead to racial inequality’ (Bonnett, 2005: 4). Nevertheless, even without a racist position, the notion of race is still promoted by those celebrating differences between people, promoting racial identities, promoting the concept of diversity as a value and pushing for diversity policies in all areas of our lives.

Racial thinking has become a pervasive ideology, but it does not mean that we are all racist. It is not a disease affecting human beings. Race is not ‘a condition. A disease. A card. A plague. Original sin’, as Michael Eric Dyson claimed (DiAngelo, 2018: ix, xi). Anti-racism has, unfortunately, become a lucrative business these days and will attract individuals interested in money-making schemes like the ‘Race to Dinner’ where wealthy white liberal women pay to be told at a dinner that they are racist (Noor, 2020). It should be clear that applying racial thinking and seeing the world in terms of a supposed competition between different races does not necessarily equate to supporting racist ideas and racism. But the belief that humanity can be divided, using a few criteria, into distinct and permanent groups, and that members of these groups have specific mental and moral characteristics determining and explaining their social positions and social issues, is the basis that legitimises our racial divisions. As sociologist Robert Miles noted:

> All the while that it is thought that ‘races’ exist then there is the possibility, indeed even the necessity, to constitute a theory of how different ‘races’ interact with one another. In so far as the ideology of racism is identified as one determinant of these ‘race relations’, a theory of racism becomes entangled in a theory of ‘race relations’ (Miles, 1993: 29).

In essence, as long as the concept of race exist or is used, the notion of racism will exist too. Race relations still use the concept of race.

Racial thinking before the modern concept of racism

To understand the issue of racial thinking and its problems, we have to analyse separately the notion of race and the concept of racism. The concept of racism is much more recent than the concept of race. Apparently, ‘racism’ first appeared in the title of

a book written by Magnus Hirschfeld in 1933/34 who was challenging the notion of race hierarchy proposed by others in the nineteenth century, but he did not give a definition. The concept of racism was quickly taken up by others who were challenging the Nazi ideology of race (Miles, 1993: 29). Julian Huxley, Alfred Cort Haddon and Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders published, in 1935, *We Europeans: A Survey of 'racial' Problems* where they provided a scientific critique of the Nazi theory of race by challenging scientific racism and racial science. This book was seen as an anti-racist statement and became popular. They, in fact, promoted what they thought was a better scientific understanding of race by arguing that races should be replaced with 'ethnic groups' and 'subspecies'. The word 'race', for them, had 'lost any sharpness of meaning' and at their time of writing, had become 'hardly definable in scientific terms' (Barkan, 1992: 296-302). They disagreed with the racial division of Jews by the Nazis, but still believed in the natural divisions of humanity into three biological groups (Malik, 1996: 125-126). Europeans could, in addition, be divided into three 'minor sub species' (Nordic, Euroasiatic and Mediterranean) while the Aryan or Latin races could be termed 'mixed ethnic groups' (Barkan, 1992: 300). Scientific and political critiques of racism, even though often opposing open expressions of racism, do not necessarily mean rejections of racial thinking. We see this also in the race equality discussions with those claiming that to 'think as an antiracist' is to 'think that racial groups are equal' (Kendi, 2017: 11). They may define racial groups using ancestry rather than simply skin colour, but they are still promoting the concept of race.

Of course, racial theory which developed the concept of race is a necessary *a priori* condition before racism, racial prejudice and racial discrimination can develop. Thus, it seems ahistorical or is an intent to rewrite history to talk about racist societies throughout human history when, for most of history, the notion of race had not yet developed. Nevertheless, there is currently a growing number of scholars who put the start of racial history in antiquity, medieval and pre-modern periods. This controversy is based on various understandings of human history, history of ideas, race and racism (Hahn, 2001; Kim, 2019; Seth, 2020). Racism understood as prejudice or as ideology will lead to distinct notions of racial history. According to historian Ibram X. Kendi, a racist idea is 'any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way' (Kendi, 2017: 5). Two important notions are in this definition: the notion of hierarchy and the notion of race. One cannot talk about a 'racist

idea' if there is not already a notion of 'racial group' or 'race', unless one is applying modern concepts to past understanding and beliefs. The controversy thus involves redefining race to apply it to the past.

In an attempt to highlight the suffering of a particular group of people, it has become common to rewrite history to try and extend the period of suffering far into the past. If it can be shown that a particular discrimination, a political or social situation has been happening for decades, centuries or even millennia, then it will add authority over the current demands for justice, privileges or protection. One of the problems with this is that they legitimise the notion of a linear or cyclical history with no sense of change and progress. They wrongly promote the belief that the past is the same as the present with, fundamentally, similar social, political, intellectual and economic circumstances, where human beings have not advanced by developing themselves and the society in which they live and where human actions and beliefs in the past can be interpreted in the same way as those in the present or even in the future. This notion of history reflects as well as further entrenches the very pessimistic mood of Western society; a pessimism where any change is often seen as negative (Bennett, 1997; Tallis, 1997; Gifford et al., 2009; Steenvoorden and Harteveld, 2018). There is a sense that everything is out of control or the result of the destructive nature of humanity, with no more beliefs in the potential of mankind to create a better society for themselves. Portraying racism as a permanent feature of humanity, as the original sin or as an innate characteristic of a particular group or of humanity as a whole, reflects and contributes to this very pessimistic sentiment. Furthermore, Vanita Seth argued that

> The driving force behind recent efforts to establish a premodern origin for racism stems from the desire for, and an insistence on, political relevance – that ancient, medieval, and early modern history (whether in reference to art, philosophy, literature, or politics) continue to have a bearing on, and/or are foundational to, the making of our contemporary moment (Seth, 2020: 360).

This is not unusual. We will mention in chapter 4, section 4.6 'Our psychology world', the rise of the academic discipline of psychology and its affiliates through their political relevance for the state and later for public life, during the wars and on the issue of race relations. Viewing racism as existing in pre-modern periods can be seen also as

reflecting the conservative aspect of some of the present-day anti-racism movement. The belief in a fixed human nature that determines the individuals' thoughts and beliefs or the conviction that race determines specific mental and moral characteristics are conservative ideas.

Racism can be understood as the political and social expression of the idea of racial thinking whereby races are described as inferior or superior. Félix Jácome Neto argued that 'ethnocentrism and xenophobia are two aspects of the same phenomenon: the culture in question interprets its ethnic disparities with other societies as hierarchical relations of superiority and inferiority' (Jácome Neto, 2020: 12). But 'racism is something more: it is a modality of thought and action closely linked to belonging to specific biological and/or geographical characteristics'. The hereditary character of racism is, thus, 'one of the main differences between racism and xenophobia or ethnocentrism' (Jácome Neto, 2020: 13). Then, the notion of hierarchy in races should be opposed but not by simply challenging the notion of 'hierarchy' itself. Making a judgment that a group is superior or inferior over another group using specific criteria is not wrong in itself. Many people do appreciate and discuss whether a specific sports team is technically superior to another team. The notion of racial hierarchy is a problem because it is based on a social order: racial order portrayed as natural, permanent and more importantly legitimate. Thus, racism can only be challenged by transcending the notion of race itself, by showing that race can disappear in a radically transformed society where its social, political and economic meanings will become irrelevant.

Not a permanent and natural aspect of our lives

Despite the present-day pervasiveness of racial thinking, it does not mean it was an inevitable development in human philosophy and ideas nor does it mean that racial thinking and the concept of race have always existed. The concept of race did not arrive naturally and fully formed, was not invented by some hateful people and is not the product of a human predilection for hate. In fact, it did not exist for most of human history and this fact alone tells us that it is possible to think in other ways. It is also not an accidental development, meaning that it did not just develop out of nowhere. It is an historical development, a concept which developed within specific historical, intellectual, social and economic circumstances. Race today became a reality,

although not a *biological* reality, through the struggles of humanity. Different groups of human beings fought each other as well as struggled against nature and other external forces, within a developing capitalist social organisation. Both the social circumstances and the struggles throughout history changed, and so did the meaning of race. Race is a product of history.

Racial thinking and racism can be challenged and are not permanent features of human life. Many people, in the twenty-first century, do not hate others but think it immoral to discriminate against others because of their skin colour, race or ancestry. Although more progress is needed (Ford, 2008; Storm et al., 2017). The fact that attitudes toward others have changed over the course of history on many issues such as identity, intermarriage, nationalism, the place of God in society and so on suggests that racial thinking or racist attitudes are also not permanent features determined by human psychology. For example, a follow-up of a 2012 study claims that today 90 percent of people in England do not believe you have to be white to be considered English and that the biggest shift from 2012 was within the older generation, the over-65s. Apparently, in 2012, 35 percent of them believed that ethnicity was a determining factor for Englishness but, in 2019, only 16 percent still believed this (Alexander, 2019). We have to be careful with surveys like this. People have a tendency not to reveal unpopular views, but even the fact that associating Englishness with whiteness is seen as unpopular today shows how moral and political opinions can change over time.

The various meanings of race throughout history, some of these meanings examined in this chapter but also in several other studies (Hannaford, 1996; Malik, 1996; Gossett, 1997; Banton, 1998; Kyriakides and Torres, 2012) clearly demonstrate that race is a product of historical and social development. The roots of racial thinking are found in the eighteenth century although like any other ideas and concepts, their development did not follow a straightforward linear path. Certain ideas may become popular at a particular historical time if they express the contemporary interests of social forces such as those of the ruling class, the working class, women or young people but may become rejected later. And the existence or absence of racial theories in various societies reflects specific historical and social views of the relationship between humanity, society and nature (Malik, 1996; Hannaford, 1996; Leon, [1944]

1970; Gilligan, 2017). Humanity's understanding of this relationship has changed throughout its history and social development.

Recognising human diversity, not race

People in antiquity did not perceive each other through the concept of race. Of course, like all of humanity, they saw physical differences between groups of people and the Greeks considered themselves superior to others but recognising differences between humans is not the same as arguing for specific and distinct races (Snowden, 1970; Hannaford, 1996; Jácome Neto, 2020). Acknowledging the existence of human variation does not mean grouping humanity into distinct and immutable groups, with specific biological characteristics seen as significant and important in determining cultural characteristics. There are two ways to view these variations. Human variation, physical and cultural, can be seen as the result of differences in degree or differences in kind. Racial thinking creates divisions in kind and states that these divisions determine the behaviour and mental abilities of specific groups. In ancient Greece, environmental factors such as geography and climate were thought to be the cause of human physical diversity. This implied that changing the environment would lead to changes in observed differences. They did not see the character of individuals, their social status or the structural organisation of communities as permanent features based on the physical differences between groups of humans. 'Greek authors value learning and education (*paideia*) in the development of both individual and peoples, since there was no thought of an individual naturally immune to *paideia* and unable to learn' (Jácome Neto, 2020: 13). Their interactions with other groups were not determined by differences in phenotypes but by the fact they were from different communities, from different familial or tribal affiliations. The Greeks saw themselves as superior mainly because they had developed a political society with new ways of thinking while others were seen as still living within a natural/primitive society. The ancient Greeks had invented political theory. They wanted to use critical reason to systematically analyse and question 'the very foundations and legitimacy of traditional moral rules and the principles of political right' (Wood, 2008: 1). They had developed a civic community, a community of citizens divided, not by race, but by classes such as peasants, landlords or artisans, where political conflicts could be resolved. This civic community was also not a master/servant or ruler/subject community as seen elsewhere. While building their sophisticated political and democratic society, the

traditional notions of families, clans, birth, blood or household were progressively replaced by the notion of citizenship (Wood, 2008). As Ivan Hannaford has argued in his book *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (1996), the ancient Greeks' concepts of 'politics' and 'citizenship' were a barrier to the development of the concept of biological race within their society. Seeing race as an antonym to politics, a thought suggested by Michael Oakeshott to Hannaford (Hannaford, 1996: 13), is an important idea to pursue; it gives us a key to finding a solution to some of the current social and political problems. In the West, racial, cultural and national identities have become more important than membership of a community of citizens. In the 21st century, humanity seems to be now ruled by an out-of-human-control 'nature' rather than by a man-made political and moral world.

In ancient Greece, individuals were judged according to whether or not they were part of a public arena. Aliens, slaves, freedmen, women, *metics* (resident foreigners) lived together with the citizens but had a different place in Greek life than did the citizens. They did not possess a political status. Citizens, the only individuals involved in the public world, were the ones participating in the important discussions and decisions concerning the future of their society (Riesenberg, 1992: 27-30). Their role was not simply to uphold the customs and habits determined by their ancestors as if they were just gatekeepers for traditions and culture, but also to discuss contemporary problems and make decisions about how to deal with them. The new form of governance, 'democracy', that they developed had firm restrictions on who could be a citizen, but their society was based on the concepts of 'the civic' and 'the political', not 'the racial'. The *metic*, who may have been a citizen in his own native city, was considered an alien in Athens and had an 'inferior legal and political status'. In Athens, he 'could not realize the potential in every man to exercise his rationality in political circumstances' and thus, he was inferior to Athenian citizens even if he was highly educated, influential and owned property (but not land) (Riesenberg, 1992: 28). Slaves could also be highly educated and do the same tasks as free men but were excluded from the political world (Riesenberg, 1992: 28-29).

Greek citizens were involved both in the domestic world and the public world. The domestic world, one that nobody could fully escape from, formed by the household and the family was the only place women and slaves could 'live'. This world was seen

as subject to the rules of nature (*physis*), kinship, hierarchy and inequality. More importantly, being chained to the domestic sphere alone, as women were, was seen as living a purposeless existence ruled only by the laws of nature. The public arena, available only to citizens, was seen as subject to the rules of man-made laws (*nomos*). Even though pederasty was accepted in ancient Greece, male prostitutes were also excluded from citizenship because they sold their bodies and could be influenced by the citizens they pleasured. 'The person of the citizen was to be free of obligations that might force him to serve the interests, indeed, the passions, of another individual, not those of the polis' (Riesenberg, 1992: 29-30). Even though there was a constant struggle between the lower classes and high classes, citizens of all classes were seen as equal politically and all with the right and duty to participate in decisions for the common good of society (Riesenberg, 1992: 21).Those in the public sphere were seen as having a purpose in life. For the Greeks, communities which did not have politics but were only regulated by customs and habits were seen as primitive living only according to the rules of the natural world. Aristotle believed that the polis, the Greek city-state and the community of citizens, was the best way to organise society in order to achieve the good life. An Aristotelian citizen 'had to be capable both of ruling over others and of being ruled' (Cohen and Ghosh, 2019: 29). He had to be able to judge and to carry the 'burdens of public responsibilities' but also able to tame his private interests and prioritise public interests (Cohen and Ghosh, 2019: 30).

According to Frank M. Snowden, Jr, a well-known scholar on black people in classical antiquity, 'natural bent, not race, determines nobility' for the ancient Greeks. He argued that racial prejudice in ancient Rome and ancient Greece was not an issue (Snowden, Jr, 1948: 41). Although, they made a distinction between Greeks and non-Greeks, individuals were judged by their own character, quality and excellence in living the good life, not by their racial purity. For the ancient Greeks, the people from northern countries were simply known as 'Scythians' while those coming from the South were labelled as 'Ethiopians'. The observed human variation was explained in the same ways for all groups of people with no notion of superiority and inferiority due to skin colour. More importantly, no negative attitude and no laws existed prohibiting miscegenation or racial mixing between 'Ethiopians' and 'Mediterranean whites' (Snowden, 1970: 169-195).

For racial thinking to develop later, new ways of comprehending the relationship between individuals, society and nature had to be cultivated. But the social context cannot be ignored here. The connections between the social, economic and political powers have qualitatively changed between the pre-modern and modern worlds. The forces and social relations of production and the individual's social relations have radically changed. We can understand how racial thinking and thus racial identities developed through the history of ideas, but we would need to look at the social/economic contexts to understand why race became an accepted way of thinking and the role it plays in contemporary society. The historical conditions that allowed the development of political theory in ancient Greece had to have included a certain belief in human agency, in humanity's role (even if restricted role) in determining its own destiny. Nature, in the contemporary modern world has much less influence on people than it had in antiquity. Humans have developed, for example, medical, scientific and technological tools that help them free themselves from nature constraints/domination and yet, the belief in humanity's ability to control its destiny is rare. There is currently a very low expectation of what humans can achieve. The environment, races, cultures, biology, nationalities, sex are constantly seen as factors causally determining individuals and communities' behaviour and characters, giving little role or no room for humanity's actions. Environmentalism, racialism, nationalism, conservatism, individualism, communism, religions or identity politics, for example, all have their own specific understanding of what it means to be human and a particular grasp of the relationships between an individual, the community/collective/society and the natural world. Kenan Malik noted that like 'Plato, Aristotle saw the needs of the individual as subordinate to those of the collective' and, as seen with the modern discussions on subjects such as climate change or Covid-19, humanity is still actively debating whether this is the right approach (Malik, 2014: 41).

The divisions, the barbarism, the cruelty and the slavery of the Ancient World were not based on the concept of race but on whether people were seen as part of the public arena, the domestic arena or from other societies with no politics. Slavery in the Greco-Roman world, and for most of our history, was based on the notion of 'Might is Right', meaning that the most powerful people can conquer others and do what they want with the conquered. What is right is determined by the most powerful people. This leads to another important point about the history of racial thinking. Previously, the

‘might is right’ theory was justification for the acts of many communities in the world, including in Europe. The ‘might is right’ theory is a doctrine which asserts that the superiority of the conquerors over the conquered is due to the historical fact of conquest, of having shown physical strength over the conquered. Superiority was seen as being a result of historical events such as winning a war, or a greater ability to use force over others, not because of theorised physical superiority. Natural strength can help win a war, but so can a specific military culture or a well-organised society. However, it was the victory itself that led to the claim that a community was superior to another. Racial theory introduced the idea that the speculated physical and psychological abilities of a particular community shapes and predicts the superiority or inferiority of a community.

God and Race

For the idea of race to finally develop, the classical Greco-Roman political view of members of society, and the Judeo-Christian religious view of the faith community had to be replaced by a new and purely biological vision of ‘natural Man’. Before the biological view of the world appeared in Western thought, the Jewish, Muslim and Christian religions had already colonised much of the political world, changing it and damaging it (Hannaford, 1996: 87-126). The religions promoted the idea that there was a direct relationship between Man and God and that the laws which needed to be obeyed are those revealed by God, not man made. Worshiping God and observing religious rules in daily life was seen as being at the centre of human existence. ‘Citizenship’ was no longer a consequence of the ability to reason philosophically and politically in a Greek or Roman public arena but the result of membership of the Jewish or Christian faith community. For example, the Church developed arguments to justify its involvement in political affairs, its role in providing important moral guidance to the rulers of man’s world. Essentially, the Church not only involved itself in God’s affairs and in the saving of men’s souls but also had a certain hold over human affairs on Earth (Siedentop, 2015).

Prior to the Enlightenment’s attack on religion and tradition and the rise of the idea of understanding the world through reason, Europeans generally saw the human world as divided between Christians, Jews, Muslims and ‘heathens’. The new notion of the ‘biological natural human’ replacing the notion of the ‘child of God’ provided the space

for the concept of the biological race. In the Christian world, the previous belief that the common ancestor of all human beings was Adam had not left much room for the potential picture which describes people as belonging to different races from distinct ancestors. The Enlightenment's critique of religion and tradition and the triumph of the scientific revolution helped in giving space for the potential development of the concept of biological race.

Pre-racial ideas

It is possible to argue that the first pre-racial ideas appeared with the Spanish 'blood purity' (limpieza de sangre) laws and the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 and of the Muslims a decade later. But Spanish laws had made use of the Jewish notion of purity of blood which was not a biological notion but a religious, genealogical one. The Spanish argued that they wanted to preserve the purity of Christian lineage, and thus discriminated against or expelled anybody with Jewish, Muslim or heretical ancestry (Hannaford, 1996: 122-124). This 'purity of blood' concept also became important in the context of the Spanish colonial adventures in South America.

Throughout the sixteenth century, the Spanish argued that South American natives were not necessarily impure of blood until they had rejected Christianity, and that the role of Spain was to bring these people into the membership of the Christian faith. Nonetheless, there were also discussions about the nature of the native population who were very badly treated and often forced to become slaves. Were they humans or an inferior species? Bartolomé de Las Casas became a fierce opponent of slavery and ill-treatment in South America. He initially owned slaves himself but after entering the priesthood, he argued that South American natives were humans. For the rest of his life, he fought against the unjust treatment they received from the Spanish (Gossett, 1997: 12-13). The arguments used by Las Casas and the resulting proclamation by Pope Paul III, in 1537, opposing the enslavement of native South Americans are thought to be quite important for morality and politics and in the history of the idea of race. Las Casas argued that the natives of the New World were true humans possessing reason and were thus capable of being part of the Christian faith and being equal citizens under the law. These qualities, Las Casas argued, meant it would be heretical to take their property and their political liberty from them and to enslave them (Gossett, 1997: 13). His opponents, and in particular Juan Ginés de

Sepúlveda, maintained that the natives were sub-human creatures (von Vacano, 2012: 401).

What is even more historically important is the Valladolid debate, on July 8, 1550. It is considered to be the first European moral debate on the treatment of colonised people by colonisers. Las Casas argued that Aristotle's point stating that some people may be by nature slaves is not a justification for the claim of natural superiority of one group over another, especially in this case, where the natives possess reason. The barbaric customs of native South Americans such as human sacrifice did not prevent them from entering the Christian faith later because they also had reason (Hannaford, 1996: 149-150). In essence, Spain in the sixteenth century – contrast to the Portuguese, French and British empires - was concerned about the 'very essence of human nature' and thus, about the rights and treatment of colonised people, long before this important moral discussion was ever considered in other European countries. That is not to say that cruelty, persecution and enslavement did not occur in colonial South America after the banning of slavery regarding native South Americans. Natives still suffered all of these. And it is worth noting that the Spanish had not prohibited the enslavement of Africans who became a significant section of the population in colonial South America. However, political scientist Diego von Vacano argued that Las Casas is an important figure in the history of race. He 'should be considered as one of the central (if inadvertent) contributors to the intellectual scaffolding that allowed the early-modern construction of racialization' (von Vacano, 2012: 402). He did not introduce racial categories through scientific or biological arguments but with rhetorical arguments during political contestations. His categories were artificial racial arguments developed to argue his political positions. He wanted to incorporate new groups into the Spanish empire. These new groups could not be sub-human to be subject of the crown but had to be groups out of a diverse humanity. Las Casas's universalism came from both his Christian convictions and his support for the Empire (von Vacano, 2012: 403-404). An interesting point made by von Vacano is that Las Casas seemed to have also undermined one of the fundamental tenets of ancient Greece: the antinomy of the civilised (political Greeks) and the barbarous (non-political people). He had used the notion of barbarians to describe the very brutal Europeans (Christians) while emphasising the docility and goodness of the natives who simply have not yet been influenced by the modernising that was Christianity (von Vacano, 2012: 403).

From the sixteenth century onwards, Europeans, in great numbers and with a willingness to take great risks with their own lives and wealth, set sail to explore the largely unknown world. Curiosity about the world and people living in it, a sense of adventure and of wonder, a need to search for material benefits, but also a search for the 'noble savage' were characteristics which drove them to travel. Writing about journeys and experiences of traveling became an important part of Western literature between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries with a rising interest in exoticism and primitivism. The rapid social changes that occurred with first the scientific revolution but later with the industrial revolution and development of capitalism overthrowing the old social systems, also led to increased nostalgia about the past and the traditions. Curiosity about and interest in the 'bon sauvage' (noble savage) and his traditions was, in reality, an idealisation and romanticisation of those seen as primitive peoples still living close to nature. The way of life of the 'noble savage' was contrasted with the Western way of life, seen by some as becoming increasingly complex and superficial. Primitivism originates more from criticism and/or rejection of one's own society than knowledge and appreciation of other communities. As historian and philosopher Tzvetan Todorov (1939-2017) noted, the more poles apart a particular community or culture is from one's own, the better candidate for idealisation. With the idea of the noble savage living nearer to nature, the past Western society, seen also as nearer to nature, could be recreated and celebrated (Todorov, 1994: 264-287).

During the 'long eighteenth century' of the Enlightenment period (end of the seventeenth century till the beginning of the nineteenth century), intellectuals and philosophers favoured the rejection of religion, old beliefs and traditions and promoted the importance of reason, experimentations and observations in order to understand the world but more specifically to understand human nature. Enlightenment philosophers attempted to "overturn every intellectual assumption, every dogma, every 'prejudice' (a favorite term) that had previously exercised any hold over the minds of men" (Pagden, 2015: 11). The concern of Enlightenment which should be seen as an open-ended process was an attempt to understand human nature and humanity's past in order to predict humanity's future and its social development. The belief in a universal human nature and rejection of the divine led to the need to describe humanity in all of its characteristics such as its passions, its sociability and

its place in nature. Studying the differences and similarities between different communities and imitating aspects of the natural sciences became an important part of the new human science (Pagden, 2015: 1-18). However, historian Antoine Lilti really stressed the ambiguities of Enlightenment, showing that it was not a philosophical and political doctrine we need to defend or contest, not a coherent set of ideas and values or not even a reform program. The tensions within Enlightenment were greater than what Tzvetan Todorov, Anthony Pagden or Jonathan Israel had implied (Lilti, 2019). Nevertheless, one of the roots of racial thinking was an intellectual search to understand a universal and seen as fixed human nature. The original motivation was not an innate hatred of the others. The racial discourse was further expanded to explain class differences in European societies before a more developed concept of race was applied to explain differences between Europeans and the rest of the world.

Natural history and race

In 1684, Francois Bernier (1620-1688), a French physician and traveller, published his work translated as '*A new division of the Earth according to the different species or races which inhabit it'* and considered to be the first classification of humanity into different races. Rather than use the old divisions into Christians, Muslims, Jews and heathens, Bernier argued that geographers should not divide 'the world only according to the different countries or regions' but use a classification based on different observable human characteristics. He described humans as if they could be divided into four different racial groups: Europeans, Far Easterners, Negroes and Lapps. Lapps were the only group he described negatively (Gossett, 1997: 32-34). He thought that the differences he observed were partly due to the environment in which people lived.

In the early discussions of race, the search for historical and biological human origins started an important debate between monogenists, who argued for a single origin of all human races, and polygenists, who argued that different races had different origins (Haller, JR., 1970). The natural historians' main interests in collecting, describing and classifying humans and the belief in equality promoted by some of the philosophers of the Enlightenment meant that the new racial discussions were not as focused on the idea of innate superiority and inferiority as what is found in later discussions. More significantly, the belief in human perfectibility and in the possibility for human

universalism promoted by Enlightenment philosophers, in the eighteenth century, were still obstacles to the idea of racial hierarchy where some races are seen as permanently and inherently uncivilised. In the eighteenth century, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), a Swedish naturalist and a devout Christian, Professor of Botany and the father of taxonomy (the system of classifying and naming organisms) devoted his life in trying to discover the natural order of God's creation by studying plants and animals. He believed humans were one species and named the species *Homo sapiens* but divided the species into five groups; *Europaeus albus* ("white European"), *Americanus rubescus* ("red American"), *Asiaticus luridus* ("yellow Asiatic"), *Afer niger* ("black Negro") and *Homo ferus* ("wild, cruel, savage man") (Hannaford, 1996: 203-204).

A contemporary of Linnaeus and a very influential authority in natural history, George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), insisted on human unity and on the differences and superiority of mankind over animals. It was not because of Christian beliefs that he agreed with a single species but because he reasoned, as a naturalist, that the fact that blacks and whites can have children together proved they belonged to a single species. Reason was the criterion he used to establish human superiority over animals. 'Man is a reasoning being; the animal is totally deprived of that noble faculty' he argued, and all varieties of Man had reason and language: 'The savage and the civilized man have the same powers of utterance; both speak naturally, and are equally understood' (Todorov, 1994: 97). According to Buffon, the different varieties of humans observed were a result of the temperature, altitude, diet and social customs. He thought that later generations of black people living in a colder climate would have whiter skin. Human unity also implied that all humans can be judged by the same standards and that a hierarchy within the species could be described by analysing specific characteristics such as the sociability of communities. The smaller communities were the less sociable and so the less socially developed. The nations of Western Europe were deemed at the top of the hierarchy while the small Native Americans were at the bottom. White Europeans were the norm in order to compare all other groups: 'Nature, in her most perfect exertions, made men white' (Todorov, 1994: 105) and thus blacks' inferiority was enough reason for them to be subjugated and reduced to slavery.

Buffon's scientific reputation allowed him to promote his racialist ideas which link the physical characteristics such as skin colour and body size with specific levels of civilisation, culture and morality. Still, an important point to stress here is that despite Buffon's early racialist opinions, the word 'race' was rarely used before the nineteenth century. Earlier descriptions of human diversity and attempts to understand differences between people were not comparable to nineteenth-century discussions of race. There was still no belief that humans could be permanently separated, with the help of biology, into distinct and self-reproducing groups. Buffon, for example, still believed the observed differences, including physical differences, were due to the environment and culture. This led him to think that education could eventually change people, even though it might take years.

The issue of chattel slavery in the United States and the original egalitarian sentiment behind the American claim to independence had, of course, influences on the discourse of race. The case of Thomas Jefferson highlights the tensions and contradictions found in individuals' beliefs and opinions. These contradictions and tensions are found also between abstract beliefs and principles supported by people and the reality of social life and practice. Thomas Jefferson was part of the social and political movement which tried to apply some of the Enlightenment ideals to create a new society out of the old feudal regime. The new and developing capitalist forces and social relations of production did destroy some of the old divisions such as the division between the king and his subjects. But the new divisions between the new capitalists and the emerging working class or the old divisions between the labouring classes, slaves and plantation owners came to be seen as permanent and natural. Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was a Founding Father of the United States and principal author of the US Declaration of Independence that states that 'all men are created equal'. Still, he believed that the mental and moral characteristics of people of African descent, such as their perceived lack of imagination, proved their inferiority (Gossett, 1997: 42-43). In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* he raised his suspicion 'that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind'. Apparently, his personal observations led him to believe that blacks and whites could not live free together. And, he attempted to rationalise it, even though he disagreed with most natural historians of his time. Mostly opposed to slavery, he still raised his suspicions

that the ‘unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people’ (Berlin, 2015: 91). Jefferson’s contradictions and reasoning could also be seen as a journey from the hope of seeing social equality, to observing constant inequality in the new society and finally conclude that some people can never be equal.

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), Professor of Medicine in Germany, is considered the father of craniology and, together with Buffon, the founder of anthropology. He also believed in the unity of the human species but thought that mankind could be divided into five varieties, some of which are still frequently used today: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malay (Hannaford, 1996: 207-208). However, he did not think these varieties were fixed and immutable. The climate, environment, mode of life and other factors were thought to be responsible for the variations in humanity. He was opposed to the idea of superiority and inferiority between varieties of humans but, contrary to many today, he attacked those who did not separate humans, possessor of speech and reason, from the orangutan. Interestingly, these early theories of human variety on the monogenist side were seen as potential theories able to replace the medieval European notion, based on the Hebrew book of Genesis, which states that humanity is under one God and divided into three groups, the descendants of Noah’s three sons. The three sons had survived the flood with Noah in the Ark: Shem fathered the Semitic people including the Jews; his offspring inherited the Promised Land and populated the Indian Ocean, Persia and Armenia. Japheth’s offspring populated Europe; while Ham’s offspring populated Africa, Egypt and Libya. Ham’s descendants were cursed by Noah while Shem’s and Japheth’s were blessed; Ham was accused of laughing at his sleeping father’s naked body while his two brothers covered it up.

Although polygenism became a more popular theory only in the nineteenth-century discussions of race, in the previous century Voltaire (1694-1778) and Lord Kames (1696-1782) had been two advocates of the idea of separate species of humans. Polygenism was associated with a radical anti-religious outlook and with blasphemy. Trying to explain the differences between Africans and Europeans, Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), French writer, historian and philosopher, declared that, ‘it is not improbable that in warm climates apes have ravished girls’ (Todorov, 1994: 101). He

thought Native Americans and blacks were distinct species from Europeans not just because of the differences in their physical appearances but also because of their levels of civilisation and intelligence. Nonetheless, he still recognised rationality and sociability as common characteristics of all species of humans. As we can see, Voltaire was an Enlightenment thinker who did not really believe in equality. Henry Home, Lord Kames, the Scottish jurist and philosopher, is another example of an intellectual who, involved in the discussion of the nature of human species, attempted to use scientific reasoning to justify his political opinions. He used examples of interbreeding and fertile offspring found in the animal kingdom, such as that between hares and rabbits, to argue that the possibility of having fertile children produced by mixed couples of blacks and white Europeans did not gainsay the idea that blacks and whites were also two different species (Gossett, 1997: 45).

Thus, in the eighteenth century, the main explanations for the differences between people were still the ideas describing a causal effect on people by the natural and/or social environment such as climate or culture. There was still no coherent theory of race, and human history was still not seen as a history of a competition between races.

Against Enlightenment universalism and equality

In the nineteenth century, the egalitarian and universalistic attitude of Enlightenment had less and less influence on the discourse of race. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the development of what is now known as ‘scientific racism’, the racial theory that explains human differences by grouping people into distinct and immutable biological units. Increased contacts with diverse human populations led to greater scientific interest in racial classification. However, ‘scientists reified the concept of race and endowed it with explanatory powers beyond its initial taxonomic purpose’ (Barkan, 1992: 15). The progress in biological sciences was used to promote the idea that people can be biologically separated into discrete and distinct groups and that each of these biological groups have their own physical, cultural and mental abilities. What we will see in chapter 3 is that biological races may have been discredited but the perception that humans can be divided into immutable and distinct groups was not questioned. The concept of ‘ethnic group’ and ‘culture’ replaced the concept of biological race. Identities, in the twenty-first century, have become another way of

understanding the relationship between humanity, society and nature where immutable differences are used to explain social relations and human interactions.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the debate between those who believed in a single human species and those who argued that races were groups of people with entirely different ancestors from other groups was still very much alive until Darwin's theory of evolution. Strong support for the monogenist argument came from James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848), an English anthropologist and ethnologist, who is considered the founder of English anthropology. He argued that all variants of the human being had the same inner nature. According to him, the human race was originally black and lighter skin came later, once civilisation had developed (Gossett, 1997: 54-55). In the United States of America, the leader of the polygenist side was Dr Samuel George Morton (1799-1851), a famous physician and researcher in natural history, who argued that the single Creation story claimed by the Bible was wrong. He suggested that studying human cranial capacity and 'mixed-race' people would help in determining the origin of the different races as well as determining their mental ability. His conclusions? Native Americans were 'averse to cultivation, and slow in acquiring knowledge; restless, revengeful, and fond of war, and wholly destitute of maritime adventure' while blacks were 'joyous, flexible, and indolent' and constituted the 'lowest grade of humanity (Gossett, 1997: 59). He was famous for personally collecting more than a thousand human skulls, determined as he was in showing a relationship between the size of a skull and a biological race (Malik, 2008: 134). Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), a Swiss naturalist, became a supporter of the polygenist side after seeing black people when he moved to the United States. Their anatomical differences convinced him that they could not be the same species as the 'White man'. Interestingly, Agassiz's and Morton's polygenism was challenged by John Bachman (1790-1874), the minister of St John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina who believed in the common origin of the human species, despite his commitment to slavery. As we saw before, the polygenist argument was seen as anti-Christian, thus, defenders of slavery were not always keen in using this idea to support their notion of superiority and inferiority between races. Using the story of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Bachman argued that the fact that people of African descent were part of the human race did not mean they were not inferior to white Europeans. Blacks are 'still everywhere the servants of servants' he declared (Gossett, 1997: 63).

In France, the question of the unity of the human race or of the different origins of the human types became very contentious during the first half of the nineteenth century. Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), a French naturalist, who was one of the first to use the word 'biology', to describe the new science aiming to understand the 'origin and development of living organisms' (Henry, 2012: 216), had argued that all species, including the human species, were not fixed and that the environment had an impact on all living organisms. He was the first to develop a coherent theory of evolution elaborating on his idea that species transform into other species. His ambitious aim was to understand the chronological order of the birth of all living organisms (Henry, 2012: 216-221). Lamarck faced strong opposition from the rest of the scientific community who resisted the idea of evolution for living organisms. For some people, his theory was still too radical against religious beliefs. One of his main opponents was eminent paleontologist and zoologist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) who established the notion of species extinction as a scientific fact. He made the case for the fixity of species and argued that changes in a species would lead to its disappearance, making evolution of species unlikely. Thus, the differences in human types is not due to evolution and change if Lamarck's theory is rejected, but from having different ancestry if Cuvier's position is preferred.

The dispute influenced and was influenced by the American Civil War and its consequences and by the theory of evolution discussed after Charles Darwin (1809-1882)'s publication of the *Origin of the Species* in 1859 (Haller, JR., 1970: 1323-1326). According to John Haller, the 'Civil War and not Darwin ended the origin feud in America' (Haller, JR., 1970: 1323). However, Darwin's theory of evolution curtailed the monogenist-polygenist debate in Europe, given that not only the human species, but all species were now thought to come from a single ancestor. But, in fact, the theory of evolution led the development of racial theory in a new direction where different human races were explained as inferior or superior according to their degree of evolution between the ape and the higher evolved types of humans. As Haller argued:

> The problem of the European anthropologist became not so much the confrontation of science with the precepts of Christianity, as it was an effort to preserve the dignity of the Caucasian from those 'Darwinists' who carried the

> theory of evolution into the realm of mankind by relating the ‘inferior races’ with the anthropoid (Haller, JR., 1970: 1324).

The confirmation of the single origin of the human species did not challenge the idea that there were different biological races, nor did it challenge the idea of a hierarchy between races. Darwin’s theory did, however, pose a challenge to numerous other discussions around race, such as the influence of geography and climate on skin colour or body shape.

Political and social concerns led the progress in racial thinking. Scientific explanations followed, adapted and were used to respond to these concerns. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century, imperial expansion overseas, industrial growth and class conflict at home shaped the racial thinking in Britain, for example. The notion of the Anglo-Saxon race was used in British imperialism to distinguish various members of the British empire. It was used to stress the commonality between all white British colonies of settlement. In mid-nineteenth century, the need to define the nature of the British national character, especially in relation to the ‘Celtic’ peoples in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, led to its development (Rich, 1990: 12-26). There were many European and American intellectuals involved in the discussion of race and my intention is not to give detailed information about these discussions or even a brief overview which would still most likely involve a few hundred pages. A single glimpse into the complex intellectual origins of racial thinking can already challenge some of the common views on the history of the concept of race. The contemporary reduction of this history by some people to extremely simplistic ‘us and them’ explanations does not help us to understand the issue of race in the past and present.

The idea of race became fully formed in the second half of the nineteenth century, after the American and French Revolutions and the important social troubles throughout Europe that followed these revolutions. By the mid-nineteenth century, anthropologists, among others, started to assert that humans could be divided into distinct races. Alabama scientist and polygenist, Josiah Nott, finally accepted Darwinian theory of evolution but still argued that the theory did not deny the notion of human races as distinct species or at least as ‘permanent varieties’ (Haller, JR., 1970: 1324). They argued that these categories were natural, immutable and objective and

that each race had its own specific cultural development, culture and way of life. They promoted the idea that social phenomena such as poverty or culture were biologically determined. Defining races by characteristics such as skin colour, facial appearance, hair texture and colour, and cranial profile, they argued that membership of a specific race would predetermine individual and group behaviour, intelligence and moral character. Thus, the concept of race was first developed within the European and American intellectual community before it became widely accepted in society. But to understand the growth of racial thinking, we need to grasp the relationship between the intellectual discussions and the social, economic and political contexts in which these concerns and intellectual discussions arose. The nineteenth century saw a lot of economic, social, political, cultural and intellectual changes. The end of slavery, the industrial revolutions, the rapid urbanisation, the wars, the rapid development of science, colonialism and the great expansion of the European empires were some of the causes and consequences of the nineteenth century turmoil. The historical and social context is also important to understand contemporary racial thinking and racist ideas. Tarek Younis, for example, suggested that in our 'post-racial era', 'psychologisation allows nation-sates to evade the charge of racism in their management of Muslim political agency'. He argued that the public counter-radicalisation policies 'presume an *a priori* psychologised society'. There is an increasing connection between national security and mental health with a search for 'at risk' individuals, within certain sections of society, before they had acted, based on psychological profiles (Younis, 2020). Overt racism is socially unacceptable, racial thinking is still widespread and meanings have changed.

The Contradictions of the Enlightenment

One of the most important points for our current discussion about race is that the idea of race, developed in nineteenth-century Western society, is a mechanism for explaining away the mismatch between the Enlightenment notion of equality and the social reality of inequality in the new society. If social inequality were to be the result of a natural and racial hierarchy among men, then humanity's potential to challenge this inequality could be rejected as a simple illusion. Social inequalities, which still existed in the new capitalist society, were portrayed as part of a supposed natural and permanent order out of the control of human actions. Enlightenment philosophers had challenged the notion of natural and God-given hierarchies present in the old medieval

feudal system but social problems, the fear the ruling elites felt toward the new social force represented by the working class, and the reaction by some intellectuals against the social disorder created by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries revolutions, provided the conditions under which racial thinking could be fully developed and accepted.

Some intellectuals did not decide to invent the concept of race to justify their actions and/or inaction, but that the social inequalities still present in society were increasingly seen and accepted as natural and permanent, despite the Enlightenment's belief in equality and promise that men, endowed with reason, could take charge of their own destiny and erase all social divisions. The specific social conditions and problems created after the American and French Revolutions, the building of nations in Europe and the constant social troubles established a sense of disorder and instability. In this atmosphere, the increasing rejection of the optimism and philosophy of natural universal rights previously advocated by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment allowed the development and acceptance of certain ideas and made race become a reality. In fact, the intellectual reactions to the Enlightenment are the true origins of the ideas which developed to form the concept of race.

Enlightenment universalism did not create the racial discourse but developed the idea of natural rights where all humans are equal as opposed to the old belief of a natural hierarchy between humans. As Kenan Malik has noted, Enlightenment philosophers initially understood progress as inevitable, as a result of people challenging traditions, irrational prejudices and superstitions and improving or destroying old institutions. The initial opposition to these ideas and to social change came from a very diverse group of people known as the Romantics. Some of the Romantics did start as supporters of the 'common man' seen as suffering terribly from the consequences of capitalist development. The social upheaval that followed the revolutions led them to search for order and stability. They argued that the natural rights would destroy social equilibrium and thus demanded the return of traditions and hierarchy to help restore order (Malik, 1996: 71-84).

The idea of race grew, in the second half of the nineteenth century, during a period of important concerns about democracy, vote extensions to the working class, political

equality, the meaning of ‘nation’ and ‘national character’, and the building of nations. The internal class divisions within European societies were first rationalised and naturalised through the discourse of race before race became associated with skin colour. The concept of race gave expression to the interests of the ruling elite. It gave them a positive sense of superiority over the common people, like in France for example. Georges Vacher de Lapouge appropriated Henri de Boulainvilliers’s idea of Frankish and Gallic ancestry to support his sense of superiority. The notion of Frankish and Gallic ancestry, developed in the early eighteenth century, argued that the higher social position of French nobles was down to the fact that they were descendants of the tribe of the Franks, a courageous, self-governing Germanic people. The common people were seen as descendants of the Gallo-Romans who had been conquered by the Franks. Lapouge argued that the cause of the problems in France after its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, in 1871, was the ‘dilution of the higher-class dolichocephalic Frankish elements during the French Revolution and their subsequent replacement by the increasing brachycephalic lower-class elements’. Essentially, for Lapouge, France was not a community with a single good race but a ‘multi-racial’ community damaged by the common people or lower classes (Hannaford, 1996: 292). M. Seliger argued that the polemics over the Franks had started, in the sixteenth century, with the work of lawyer and humanist François Hotman (1524-1590) called *Franco-Gallia* (1573). These polemics lasted until the eighteenth-century, involving intellectuals such as Boulainvilliers and Montesquieu. The difference between the earlier discussions and later ones demonstrate the early development of race terminology before actual race thinking. Seliger claimed that ‘the question discussed before and after the Revolution was the extent to which political rights of various classes derive from the nature and duration of the *conquest* of Gaul by the Franks in the fifth century (my italics)’ (Seliger, 1958: 274). This earlier justification for the class structure was the ‘historical fact of conquest’. This is a might-is-right approach, an ‘appeal to history and force’. It is not the same as the later approach based on race, with Lapouge for example, where the physical and psychological differences between groups is seen as ‘the decisive cause of what happened to these groups in history’ (Seliger, 1958: 274).

In England, for example, Alfred Marshall (1842-1924), considered one of the most influential economists of his time, expressed both his beliefs in the superiority of the upper classes and in the superiority of the British race:

> There can be no doubt that this extension of the English race has been a benefit to the world. A check to the growth of the population would do great harm if it affected only the more intelligent races and particularly the more intelligent classes of these races. There does indeed appear some danger of this evil. For instance, if the lower classes of Englishmen multiply more rapidly than those which are morally and physically superior, not only will the population of England deteriorate, but also that part of the population of America and Australia which descends from Englishmen will be less intelligent that it otherwise would be. Again, if Englishmen multiply less rapidly than the Chinese, this spiritless race will overrun portions of the earth that otherwise would have been peopled by English vigour (Jones, 1980: 145).

Marshall understood history as the history of races. For him, the economic and social well-being of England and of the world depended on the breeding rate of the upper classes and of the British population.

The view of history as an account of permanent competitions between races also developed from the nineteenth century when history became an academic discipline rather than just a branch of literature. Professional historians wanted to separate their own work they saw as being part of important scientific effort from the work of amateurs seen as storytellers. This trend is seen as having been greatly influenced by German historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831), who reinterpreted the history of the Greeks and the Romans by looking at the character of the people, their kin and kith relationships, their ethnic characteristics, their climate, languages and geographical regions. Developing his conception of natural history, he reinterpreted the political and social world of the Greco-Roman by describing the ‘natural people’ and their languages which, in his view, help us to understand the past. He thought that the way to understand the Greco-Roman past was by looking at racial/ethnic groups and their interactions with each other and their climate rather than by looking at their political character (Hannaford, 1996: 237-240). His work was and is still used widely.

History became a series of natural histories described by anthropologists, philologists (studying languages) and historians. Today, history is often understood using natural sciences, psychological and anthropological concepts rather than political and economic concepts. It creates natural stories of different types of people and communities that came before us.

Count Arthur Gobineau (1816-1882) is another intellectual who developed racial thinking to establish a hierarchy between people in the Western world and those from elsewhere but also to redevelop the belief in natural hierarchy within Western populations. Gobineau, who is often considered the father of scientific racism with his work *Essai sur l'inegalité des races humaines* (1853-55), translated into English as "The Inequality of the Human Races," in 1915, during the First World War, believed that it was unstable racial mixing in particular that was causing the decline of humanity and the fall of civilisations. A French aristocrat and diplomat, an enemy of the ideals of the French Revolution such as equality and democracy, he wrote his essay after the revolutions of 1848, the large and widespread revolts against the European ruling elites. He used Niebuhr's work to argue 'that the racial question overshadows all other problems of history, that it holds the key to them all, and that the inequality of the races from whose fusion a people is formed is enough to explain the whole course of its destiny' (Hannaford, 1996: 265). He believed he was using science and the laws of natural history to explain the collapse of civilisations. Unfortunately for him, the optimism of the Enlightenment still existing at the time of the French publication of his work, the hatred of feudal aristocracy he favoured and the contemporary interest in an updated 'Might is Right' idea in step with the Darwinian notion of the 'survival of the fittest' were temporary obstacles to his ideas. He had to wait 50 years and for the First World War before his doom and gloom ideas (he believed modern civilisation was not in any way superior to previous civilisations) became widely and positively received (Arendt, 1973: 170-175).

Gobineau did not agree with the idea of a 'pure race' but thought that the mixing of the three races which he believed existed determines the future for individuals and civilizations. His assessment that civilisations needed a 'state of relative stability' led him to argue that no racial mixing would be just as bad as too much racial miscegenation. In his view, white Europeans with their innate reason are beautiful,

intelligent and strong while ‘clearly the Creator was only making a sketch’ in creating the ‘yellow race’. In the black race, ‘the mental faculties are mediocre or even non-existent’ (Todorov, 1994: 130-131). However, his belief in the superiority of the white race did not lead him to believe that humanity could ever move toward perfection. His claim that ‘humanity is not infinitely perfectible’ highlights his strong antipathy toward theories of progress (Todorov, 1994: 125).

‘Slavery was not born of racism’

Even though, prejudices against non-Europeans existed, the ideology of race and a strong hatred of black people were not the *origins* of modern chattel slavery. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, chattel slavery was not justified using racial arguments but often in terms of the economic utility of employing people better suited to hard labour in a hot climate (Banton, 1998: 25-26). Warren Billings also argued that the ‘preoccupation with the roots of modern racism obscures attitudes other than prejudice that allowed Englishmen to find in chattel slavery solutions to their problems with labor and social control’. Prior to chattel slavery, ‘seventeenth-century Englishmen were not strangers to the idea of service, which was anchored deeply in their feudal past’ (Billings, 1991: 46). Previously, slavery was defended under the ‘Might is Right’ doctrine, where the strongest groups conquer the weakest groups and then do as they please with them. Aristotle, for example, justified slavery as a necessity for the continuation of democracy in the city-states to allow citizens the time to involve themselves in politics (Ryan, 2012: 85-86). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the discussions about slavery were mainly focused on the excessive cruelty and violence toward slaves; the practice itself was not questioned and many people whom we would consider ‘white’ today, such as Greeks, Slavs or Tartars, were sold on European slave markets before the new development of modern black slavery. We cannot dismiss the importance of the specific historical and social conditions of modern slavery by arguing that slavery had existed throughout history and that different groups of people were affected by it. The scale of modern black slavery is, by itself, enough to suggest differences with the past. But more importantly, slavery is also a product of history. Historian Ira Berlin demonstrated that the master-slave relationship was a changing relationship. There was constant contestation and negotiation between the masters who ‘presumed absolute sovereignty’ and the slaves who ‘never relinquished the right to control their own destiny’ (Berlin, 1998: 3).

Additionally, the study of slavery throughout history displays the important distinction between *societies with slaves* and *slave societies*. In societies with slaves, slaves 'were marginal to the central productive processes; slavery was just one form of labor among many'. Slaves could be treated with extreme callousness at times. In slave societies, 'slavery stood at the center of economic production, and the master-slave relationship provided the model for *all* social relations' (my italics). Racial ideology was eventually used as explanation for the slaveholders' position after 'the process by which societies with slaves in the Americas became slave societies' (Berlin, 1998: 8).

Historian and politician Eric Williams (1911-1981) had noted that slavery 'in the Caribbean has been too narrowly identified with the Negro. A racial twist has thereby been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery (Williams, 1944: 7). In his work *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), he carefully highlighted the different political and economic interests of slave owners, shipbuilders, merchants, capitalists, aristocrats and the political class in his analysis of the role of slavery during the development of capitalism. Very interestingly, he also showed how slavery finally became a problem for fully developed capitalism. This is a point rarely mentioned by other authors because the importance, for the capitalist system, of the availability of 'free' workers able to sell their labour is ignored or portrayed as a natural aspect of human life. Charles Hirschman argued that racism emerged 'as a result of three transformations that created sharp divides between Europeans and other peoples'. Slavery is one of the three transformations he considered. The other two are the 'spread of colonial rule across the world, especially in Asia and Africa in the nineteenth century' and 'the development of Social Darwinism' which became dominant in the nineteenth century (Hirschman, 2004: 392).

Modern slavery occurred in a world where the majority of the European population was unfree and living extremely hard, cruel and short existences. Very harsh treatment, laws, policies and regulations ruthlessly controlling the lower classes were the norm. In Virginia, in the seventeenth century before slavery started, numerous statutes were introduced to tightly control the labouring class arriving in the New World. The legislation was to define 'the terms of the labor contract', 'restrain what the legislators perceived as the servants' vicious habits', 'establish the masters' property

rights' and give 'minimal protections to the servants' (Billings, 1991: 48). Servants became an important element of their owners' property (Billings, 1991: 51). Prosperity mainly came from the countryside both in Europe and in the colonies, before the full development of capitalism. A great number of the labouring classes was essential for the economy and, for economic reasons, African slaves were often seen as the best option over limited free labour. In the New World, the introduction of monocultures for trade and profit, the move from small farms to large plantations and the limited supply of Native Americans led to look first at the European poor whites for a labour supply. Most were indentured servants. The homeless, vagrants, kidnapped poor, convicts or war prisoners such as the Irish prisoners were shipped to the New World. The increasing industrial development in England meant a rising need for its own labour supply at home, limiting the labour supply for the New World. But also, the change in the economic structure in the New World, with increasingly larger plantations for tobacco, sugar and cotton, led to even more demands for African slaves (Williams, 1944).

One of the best-known American events, the Bacon's Rebellion, is one of many examples showing that the relationship between different groups of people can be understood only in its historical context. The black/oppressed versus white/racist/oppressor relationship, portrayed today as natural and permanent due to some supposedly innate characteristics of both whites and blacks or portrayed as the consequence of the original sin inherited by white people, denies the reality of our past. In 1675, Virginia, Bacon's Rebellion first started as a result of a political dispute within the ruling elites of the colony. It was a dispute over a policy concerning Native Americans, between Governor Sir William Berkeley, on behalf of those privileged by the old English regime, and the newer plantation owners led by Nathaniel Bacon. They all agreed with the idea of pushing Native Americans out of the lands for English settlement but not on the timing and rate for it to be done (Allen, 2012: 203-212). The Governor needed to keep a friendly relationship with some of the Native American tribes to protect the English settlers but also to have help from the tribes with capturing runaway bond-laborers. The privilege of trading with Native Americans was restricted to only a few of the elites approved by the Governor, creating resentment among other social elites and colonists. Economic problems with tobacco prices and competition

from other colonies led plantation owners to blame Native Americans and to demand more lands.

But the rebellion, which originally started as anti-Native American and over demands for more lands, turned into social troubles with increasing political and military power for Bacon and his supporters. In 1676, ordinary settlers and bond-laborers entered the rebellion for their own interests, thus opposing the plantation owners and demanding freedom from servitude. Bacon had promised liberty to all servants and slaves, augmenting the numbers of his rebel followers. Virginian settlers of all classes including people in indentured servitude and slaves and of all backgrounds such as English or African descent joined the rebellion hoping for freedom (Allen, 2012). They chased the Governor out and torched the capital, Jamestown. The alliance between European-American indentured servants and African-American slaves and indentured servants, all fighting for freedom and for the abolition of slavery, greatly disturbed the ruling class both in Virginia and England. Despite the increasing number of policies and regulations, already introduced by 1676 against the labourers of African descent, the rebellion was not a division between races, black and white, but a division between different classes, the labouring classes and the ruling class, who clearly had different interests in liberating servants and slaves. It also explains the famous statement on the back cover of the book *The Invention of the White Race* by Theodore W. Allen (1919-2005) which stated that “when the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no ‘white’ people there; nor, according to the colonial records, would there be for another sixty years” (Allen, 2012).

This statement was meant to show that the white race was invented later by the ruling class in order to divide the labouring class. The white race or any other races were not *invented* by the ruling class. ‘Invention’ creates too much an idea of a premeditated conscious act by a somehow united ruling class. It can also give the image of a conspiracy theory which is not useful. And as seen with Bacon’s Rebellion, it was fear that made the ruling class act and create new laws and regulations, not a sense of power. And the separation between black slaves and white labouring classes did not start because of racism within the white population. In this chapter, I have been trying to explain how race and racial divisions are not natural or invented but are the product of history, of the relationship between intellectual inquiries, social conflicts, and social

and economic development. With the Bacon's Rebellion, we see the conflicts within the European ruling class, between the settlers and the Native Americans and between the ruling class and the labouring classes during very difficult economic problems. In response to the social upheaval, the fear of the ruling class led them to introduce more policies and laws to divide the labourers of European descent from laborers of African descent. A white person marrying a black person would be banished from the community. A white woman giving birth to the child of a black man would be fined, have an increase in years of servitude or become an indentured servant for a few years (Billings, 1991: 58). Free black men could not hold public office anymore. Between 1680 and 1705, new Virginia laws were introduced to completely separate the population according to skin colour (McLaughlin, 2019: 24-31).

Early black liberation

The movement for black liberation in the French Caribbean at the end of the eighteenth century is a very important historical event to consider when studying the history of liberation movements. But it also confirms the view that the notion of race is a product of history resulting from the conflict between various interests (white elites, slave owners (whites and free blacks), black slaves, white servants, free blacks, French, British, American…). The debates around slavery in the eighteenth century showed the tension between Enlightenment support for universal rights and the reality of a society where property rights were seen as very important politically, philosophically and socially. There were numerous attempts to reconcile the rights of slaves with those of slaveholders (Malik, 1996).

In the eighteenth century, the majority of the French population in mainland France was not initially interested in the colonies. With no personal economic interests in slavery, and it being a world away, troubles in the colonies were a long distance from the social upheaval they were dealing with at the time. The majority of the population died in the same local rural area in which they were born and had lived throughout their lives. Most could not read, and news came from people, like seasonal laborers and merchants, who had to travel to work. The French state and the Church would impart only news they deemed important for the population to know about (Hobsbawm, 1995: 22). The issue of black slavery was most certainly not of any importance to most of them, except for those living in port cities. The original discussions about slavery,

freedom and rights came from the urban upper class. A few Republican democrats, including Brissot and Condorcet, who formed the 'Societé des Amis des Noirs' (Society of the Friends of Black People) in Paris on February 19, 1788 demanded the abolition of the slave trade between Africa and the New World and better treatment for slaves (Israel, 2014: 396). They did not believe that slavery should be ended immediately but gradually, first by stopping the slave trade and forcing owners to keep the remaining slaves healthy. Eventually, once the slaves were deemed ready for freedom and ready to become part of society, they had hoped, slavery would become illegal without bloodshed or civil war. Their arguments emerged from the contradiction between supporting equality for black people and the importance of preserving the French economy and property rights. The colonies were essential for the economy of France at the time of developing capitalism because of the weakness of the developing bourgeoisie compared to the continued presence of the still powerful Ancient Regime. The wealth of the new capitalist class was dependent on colonial trade and private property. However, 'the rapid growth of France's slave colonies in the years before 1789 made its own contribution to the instability of the *ancient regime*', argued historian Robin Blackburn. Colonial wealth created antagonism and conflicts of interests. 'Between 1770 and 1790 the slave population of the French Antilles rose from 379,000 to 650,000'. St Domingue (modern-day Haiti) had about 465,000 slaves and 'was the largest and most productive slave colony in the Caribbean in 1789'. Some '30,000 whites and 28,000 or more free people of colour were organised and armed to defend slavery' (Blackburn, 2011: 163-164). Abolition of the slave trade and slavery was often opposed using the argument that this abolition would damage France. It was also easy to claim that black equality was being promoted by foreigners intent on attacking France's economy and power in the Caribbean. Britain, for example, which also had interests in the Caribbean world, was a major economic rival of France worldwide (Hobsbawm, 1995: 207-223). Slave owners argued that black slavery was natural and necessary because whites could not work in the plantations as efficiently as the blacks could. Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de le Brede et de Montesquieu, mostly known as Montesquieu (1689-1755), is one of the most famous of the political philosophers of the Enlightenment. While Montesquieu was not a defender of slavery, slave owners used his name and adopted his proposition for their own purpose. He had argued that black slavery might be a necessary evil because certain groups of people might be better adapted to a particular climate than others,

leading him to declare that ‘black slavery seems less shocking to our reason’ (Israel, 2014: 403).

While Republican democrats were not pushing for the immediate abolition of slavery, they were arguing for the rights of ‘free blacks’/’gens de couleur’ in the colonies, people with mixed black and white ancestry, who owned property or even slaves. Interestingly, the voting rights of ‘free blacks’ with substantial property were initially approved by the French National Assembly in May 1791 at a time when many poor whites did not have the vote. Support for the radical idea of black emancipation was also quite low among the ‘free blacks’ at first. The ‘free blacks’ who were wealthier than other black people supported the white plantation owners in their opposition to the demand for equality. They did not oppose slavery, especially given that they often owned slaves themselves. Malik has explained well the ambivalence about slavery:

> It is not racial categorisation but the social needs of modern society that impel it to restrict the concept of equal rights. Economic utility and the desire not to challenge property rights, not racial ideology, gave rise to Western ambivalence about slavery. The particular forms that capitalist society adopted ensured that Enlightenment universalism became degraded in practice. It was through this process that the discourse of race developed (Malik, 1996: 69).

The history of the Haitian Revolution showed both this ambivalence and the resolution of it when the balance of social power changed. The first uprising on the island of Saint-Domingue was in October 1790 when a few hundred ‘free blacks’ led by Vincent Ogé, an educated ‘free black’ also described as a quadroon (one-quarter black, three-quarters white French). He was part of a group of ‘free blacks’ who had been lobbying for the French National Assembly to give them the same rights as white plantation owners. Returning angry from France to Saint-Domingue, he organised an insurrection. Captured, he was tortured and publicly executed on the wheel as a deterrent to others but, in fact, the execution increased dissatisfaction among the ‘free blacks’ (Israel, 2014: 404). The Haitian Revolution was very well researched by Cyril Lionel Robert (CLR) James (1901-1989) in *The Black Jacobins* (1938) where he showed how the slaves of Haiti were not just victims of slavery and oppression but became active in fighting for their own liberation. This revolution was one of many

other slave rebellions given that slaves have always resisted their enslavement one way or the other, but it was also the most successful of them where the slaves defeated three great powers: France, Britain and Spain. The revolution started in August 1791 and by 1803 they had finally ended slavery and French control over the colony. Saint Domingue was renamed 'Haiti' and declared an independent nation in 1804. The notion of the Rights of Man was put into practice through the transformation of Haitian society. As James remarked:

> The Blacks were taking their part in the destruction of European feudalism begun by the French Revolution, and liberty and equality, the slogans of the revolution, meant far more to them than any Frenchman. That was why in the hour of danger Toussaint, uninstructed as he was, could find the language and accent of Diderot, Rousseau, and Raynal, of Mirabeau, Robespierre, and Danton. And in one respect he excelled them all (James, 1989: 198).

The story of one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution, former slave Toussaint Louverture, is worth highlighting here because it emphasizes the universality of human reason and the existence of a human civilisation and not just 'Western' civilisation or 'white' civilisation. Toussaint Louverture and others, in the end, understood the importance of the ideas promoted by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution for their own particular struggles. They realised the true significance of these ideas and the real consequences they can have when taken to their logical conclusion. The Enlightenment and French Revolution notions of equal rights and universal rights of man became inspirations for their own fight for freedom from slavery. They illustrated the idea that any human being, from any race, culture or identity, can understand and appropriate thoughts coming from other parts of the world. Today, cultures are presented as barriers to understanding each other's ideas when, in fact, we are all capable of hearing an idea, understanding it, making it our own, applying it and letting others know about it.

In art, Jean-Baptiste Belley (1746-1805) was used to link the French Revolution with black liberation. A freed slave fighting for black rights, he became the first black deputy in the French National Assembly in September 1793. Anne-Louis Girodet, an artist who wanted to use art for political purposes, painted a portrait of Belley standing next

to a bust of Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, Abbé de Raynal (1713-1796) whose famous work ‘History of the East and West Indies’, published in 1770, denounced European cruelty toward the colonial peoples. The portrait became one of the most famous pictures linking the French Revolution and black liberation (Israel, 2014: 412).

Thus, in conclusion, we have seen that the recent notion of racism is fully dependent on the notion of race and that race is a product of history and a relatively new concept which was fully developed in the nineteenth century. The idea of race became widely supported by intellectuals and thinkers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We cannot look at history as a black versus white races competition unless we are willing to read history backward and apply our present-day concerns to people in the past. The recognition of human diversity, already existing in ancient Greece, did not lead the Greeks to develop the concept of race or to understand the world as a competition between different races.

In fact, race opposes the concept of politics developed in ancient Greece and the possibility of creating a man-made world. However, racial identities have been very important in political affairs since the first development of the concept of race. The difference with contemporary politics is the political actors using racial identities in politics. The definitions and use of racial categories such as the anglo-saxon race, white race or races defining various upper-classes and lower classes were developed and used by the political, social, economic and intellectual elites to argue for specific political interests and positions. Race was not always simply defined by skin colour. Some intellectuals had believed that groups such as the lower classes within the white European ‘race’ were from distinct races.

The loss of Enlightenment optimism led, unfortunately, to an understanding of the world, society and progress as simply results of laws of nature. The intellectual search for a universal and seen-as fixed human nature also allowed for the development of racial thinking. But more importantly, the change from the political community and political life developed by the ancient Greeks to the religious community with the monotheistic religions made the development of the racial community later possible. Thus, the history of the idea of race, briefly shown here, contradicts contemporary opinions describing race as an innate characteristic of human nature, or of white

people, as an original sin, as a disease or as an invention by the ruling class or by white people.

3. Essentialism and Fatalism in Another Form: Culture

In the previous chapter, we have briefly discussed the development of racial thinking but more importantly, have shown the anti-political, anti-humanist and anti-Enlightenment aspects of the notion of race. With the apparent rejection of race as a biological category after World War Two, the modern notion of culture became more accepted. An important question to consider is whether the move from the idea of biological races to the modern notion of culture is a move towards a more political and a more humanist understanding of the world. In this chapter, we are going to discuss how some of the basic understandings of society, of humans and of nature that inspire the notion of race are still found underlying the modern concept of culture. We will also look at some of the links between race, culture and nation in order to question and examine the idea that national identities or cultural identities are preferable to racial identities.

Leaving the Enlightenment and Humanism

Alexis de Tocqueville and Gobineau, after meeting in France, became friends and had many years of sustained correspondence even though their ideas were quite irreconcilable. Alexis Charles Henri Clérel, Viscount de Tocqueville (1805-1859), was a French political thinker and historian who is best known for his work *Democracy in America* (1835), one of the most influential books of the nineteenth century. He attacked Gobineau's beliefs that behaviour and moral qualities are causally determined by race. He argued that Gobineau's 'fatalistic' position leads to 'a vast limitation, if not a complete abolition, of human liberty' (Todorov, 1994: 127). Alexis de Tocqueville was right with his objections to Gobineau's doctrines. As seen in chapter 2, the strong deterministic and fatalistic assumptions underlying the concept of race is anti-freedom and anti-human. The belief that belonging to a specific race causally determines behaviour and outlook, moral and mental qualities, leaves very little or no room for human reason. A racial outlook ends up denying the potential for free will and agency and the possibility for human beings to determine their own future. It leaves no room for autonomy, morality or for a moral conscience. It allows no possibilities for conscious social change and for reaching freedom. The racial outlook denies the Enlightenment belief in human perfectibility and in universalism. This thinking is based

on an anti-human sentiment. Humans are seen mainly as objects, inanimate and passive, acted upon by external factors with no acknowledgment of their quality as subjects, with a mind and an ability to act independently, to consciously decide and to transform their present and future. The argument in this chapter is that this is the case also with the current promotion and celebration of cultural differences. The concepts of race and of culture share some similar assumptions. 'Races' are seen as permanent groups with biological differences leading to a notion of hierarchy. 'Cultures' are seen as permanent groups with historical and man-made differences (such as traditions) where the notion of hierarchy is mostly rejected today.

The constant relationship between humans as subjects and humans as objects seems to be forgotten by the promotion of a fatalistic quality for race, culture, identity or other external deterministic factors. As we will see in the discussion about the self and identity in chapters 4 and 5, there are various interpretations about human nature. The interpretation used in this thesis is that humans are created both from external, out-of-their-control factors influencing them and shaping them and from their own capacity to act on external factors as well as on themselves. They are not simply individual mouthpieces for particular races, cultures or identities but are persons capable of making their own decisions, acting upon them and being responsible for their own actions. Thus, individuals' moral conscience and reason are denied when race, culture, identity or social circumstances are seen as factors generating fates. Hannaford had argued that there were, at least, two distinct approaches to social organisation. Humans can use political thought or racial thought in order to organise themselves as well as to interpret the world around them. Through discussing and analysing many historical figures involved in political and racial thought, Hannaford argued that racial thinking developed and became increasingly important when political thought and attitude, first created by the ancient Greeks, was gradually abandoned by Western society (Hannaford, 1996). The numerous politicised identities such as the racial, cultural and national identities currently intervening in political debates indicate that Hannaford was right on this point and that we are still in a very anti-political period. Politics cannot exist without the notion of human agents using their capacity for reason in order to understand the world and to organise collectively their own man-made world. The point made by Tocqueville concerning the limitation to human liberty and Hannaford's point on racial thinking and political thought are

linked to the same concept of human as subjects of history. Human beings are not simply objects acted upon by external forces. Humans need to be viewed as persons with the capacity for reason, who are able to transform their social, economic and cultural world and who have an active role in fighting for more freedom in order to create a better world for themselves.

In *An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* (1784), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), one of the most influential philosophers of the Western world, responded:

> Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. The immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* (Dare to be wise) Have courage to use your own understanding! (Kant, 2009: 1).

Kant was upholding the importance of reason in order for us to question and understand the world around us. Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789), one of the most radical Enlightenment philosophers, argued that we needed to 'attack at their source the prejudices of which the human race has been so long the victim' (Pagden, 2015: 11). Besides, Jonathan Israel argued that the Enlightenment was in fact a battleground between two wings, the 'moderate' and 'radical' Enlightenment who oppose each other on important questions. Considering the American Revolution, he argues that the two streams were fighting over 'democratic versus aristocratic republicanism, support of, versus rejection of, universal rights, citizenship for all versus limited suffrage' as well as discussing 'the place of religious authority in society'. These intellectual disagreements also led in practice to questions such as whether to reform the 'existing social, legal, and institutional order' or to replace it. The moderate wing was the one which managed to become mainstream, according to Israel. Voltaire or Lord Kames, as seen in the previous chapter on racial theories, were part of the mainstream Enlightenment. Philosopher Denis Diderot, philosopher and mathematician Marquis de Condorcet, philosopher Baruch Spinoza and political philosopher Thomas Paine, for example, were seen as radical Enlightenment thinkers (Israel, 2017: 4).

The discussion on the Enlightenment is relevant for the contemporary race discourse because the concept of race fully developed historically after this period. Enlightenment supporters and opponents participated in the intellectual debates. The role and influence of Enlightenment thinking on race is still a very controversial topic with many individuals putting the blame for racial thinking and racism fully at the feet of the Enlightenment (Bouie, 2018). According to David Theo Goldberg, 'the shift from medieval premodernity to modernity is in part the shift from a religiously defined to a racially defined discourse of human identity and personhood' (Essed and Goldberg, 2002: 286). He agreed with the notion of a recent development of the concept of race. However, he put the roots of the idea of race on the Enlightenment emphasis on empiricism and rationalism:

> Empiricism encouraged the tabulation of perceivable differences between peoples and from this it deduced their natural differences. Rationalism proposed initial innate distinctions (especially mental ones) to explain the perceived behavioural disparities (Essed and Goldberg, 2002: 289).

It is worth remembering that the idea of race became fully developed only in the nineteenth century, about one century after the Enlightenment period. In addition, the Enlightenment was divided between two streams, the radical and the moderate thinkers, who disagreed on the scope reason should take in organising life. But more importantly, the contradictions within Enlightenment do not allow the simplistic accusation that it is accountable for the existence of racial thinking (Vartija, 2020).

The Enlightenment can be understood as part of a European period where 'humanism', which puts humanity at the centre of history and society, was actively developing. There were individual European humanists, such as Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), the Florentine scholar and poet in the fourteenth century. These early humanists were interested in the past and in the intellectual discovery of the Greek and Latin writing. In fact, Tony Davies argued that the early humanists which also included Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) had no common programme of interests or objectives (Davies, 2008: 72). The Enlightenment period expressed a certain humanism in the belief that humanity can understand the world and have access to the truth with human reason rather than simply obeying traditions, religious beliefs and

prejudices. Humanism was further expressed in other ways, for example with Karl Marx (1818-1883) who claimed in his work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) that ‘men make their own history, but do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past’ (Marx and Engels, 1977: 96).

So, looking at some of the Enlightenment ideals, we can see how humanist sentiments have been degraded or abandoned in our current society. The common portrayal of humans as the destructive force in nature that needs to be eliminated or contained is one example out of the many which express the decline of humanist thinking. Astrophysicist Stephen Hawking had told in an interview in 2010 that humanity’s greed and stupidity could be its downfall and six years later, renewed his point by saying ‘we have certainly not become less greedy or less stupid’ (Puiu, 2016). Philosopher Luc Ferry offered a critique to what he called the ‘deep ecology’ movement which had argued that ‘anthropocentrist modernity is a total disaster’ (Ferry, 1995). The way we define different groups of human beings and how we understand the relationships between these varied groups has a direct connection with how we conceive humanity and comprehend the relationship between humans, society and nature. The way we see ourselves and others strongly influences the ideas we will develop in order to resolve social issues. If one believes people cannot be trusted, one is more likely to support ideas that will control others rather than policies that give them the space to make their own decisions. It is also linked to the visions and hopes for the future. The presence or absence of a humanist vision, one expressed well in Martin Luther King, Jr’s speech “I have a dream…’ (Luther King, Jr, 1963), affected and still affects the intellectual and political contents of anti-racism movements.

Origin of the modern concept of culture

The philosophical idea of the ‘inner voice’ started with Enlightenment philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, but that the focus on the individual ‘inner voice' was further developed through the counter-Enlightenment stream called Romanticism. Kant believed that the source of our morality could be found within our inner self, in our own minds, not from God or from nature. The romantics’ emphasis on the individual but their refusal to accept the Enlightenment’s focus on reason, preferring an emphasis

on emotion and imagination, developed the idea of a fixed inner essence (Malik, 1996: 75-76). German Romanticism and Idealism partially grew out of Kant's project of understanding objective knowledge. In his work *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Kant wanted to resolve the conflict between dogmatism represented by G. W. Leibniz's (1646-1716) ideas and scepticism represented by David Hume's (1711-1776) ideas (Lakshmipathy, 2009: 90). Leibniz, seen as belonging to the rationalist school of thought, had claimed that objective knowledge of the world, uncontaminated by the perspective of the observer, was possible. He had thought that human reason alone could reach the truths about all entities, even entities that could not be known through the senses such as God or freedom. Hume, portrayed as a member of the school of empiricism, had seemed to argue that there was no objective knowledge, no possibility of knowledge through reason (Scruton, 2001: 19). In response, Kant argued that all knowledge bears the marks of both reason and experience. First, he maintained that it was impossible to know the world 'as it is in itself', independent of human perspective so limits to human reason had to be acknowledged. But, then, he also tried to show that, in the idea of experience, there was already an objective reference or *a priori* knowledge independent of experience but which made experience possible. 'Experience contains within *itself* the features of space, time and causality' as Scruton explained (Scruton, 2001: 27) (Lakshmipathy, 2009: 90).

To argue his points, Kant distinguished between phenomena (world of senses) and noumena (world of understanding). One of his motivations for this was to make room for human freedom (Lakshmipathy, 2009: 90). The notion and practice of morality by moral agents, according to Kant, means that there must be human freedom. Thus, Kant made room for human freedom by claiming that in the noumenal realm, causality with the laws of nature was not the only causality. Causality of freedom also existed there with human reason, while in the phenomenal world, freedom did not exist because everything follows the laws of nature. In essence, human beings can bridge the two realms because, with their power of reason, they can transcend the world of senses (Lakshmipathy, 2009: 91-92). Nevertheless, the question still remained as to how nature could give rise to humans capable of bridging the divide between nature and freedom. For romantics and idealists like philosopher F. W. J. von Schelling (1775-1854), one of the answers was to argue that reason was not unique to human but was a characteristic of nature. Nature had produced self-determined and subjective

humans, and this allows nature to understand itself. So, the right aim, according to romantics, was to show that ‘freedom is not exclusively a property of human beings, but that freedom determines the essence of human beings as the highest manifestation of the power inherent within nature’. They rejected the dualism of Kant (Lakshmipathy, 2009: 95). The concepts of nature, human nature and freedom were thus radically changed. If freedom is already found in nature, then there is also freedom when humans follow some laws of nature, when they act according to some inner necessity. Humans no longer need to be self-determined or to act against natural determinations to be free. This is clearly a major change from the Enlightenment idea of reason and human self-determination. The intellectual space allowing the claim that there is no contradiction between the notion that humans are racially and culturally determined, and the idea of freedom emerged with the Romantic change.

Thus, various notions in Romanticism have allowed theorists for racial thinking to later develop a notion of an inner essence shared by a specific community, causally determined by race and culture. True nobility or the true people of a specific nation would have a distinct inner essence from people of other cultures, races or nations. Indeed, the Romantic movement in Europe, between the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, has been described as ‘the crisis of European consciousness’ by Paul van Tieghem who saw this crisis as more general and more profound than the more intellectual crisis of 1680-1715 described by Paul Hazard. Isaiah Berlin defined it as a ‘shift of consciousness’ that ‘cracked the backbone of European thought’. ‘The backbone had been the belief in the possibility of a rational comprehension of the universe’ (Furst, 1968: 116). Rationalism applied to everything including the arts was eventually rejected by the romantics who emphasized individualism, imagination, and emotion. Nonetheless, Romanticism is not a unified movement but several streams which arose and developed differently in England, Germany and France between 1750 and 1830.

France, in the seventeenth century, under King Louis XIV also known as the Sun King, was the leading European power. Its culture was promoted as the highest standard one should imitate and achieve. But in the eighteenth century, other European societies such as Britain wanted to resist French cultural hegemony and despotism. Britain had indeed achieved more political liberties than all the other monarchies and

feudal systems. Thus, it turned to the idea of 'rediscovering' its own ancient traditions, literature and other arts. To challenge the hegemony of French classicism in the arts, first the British nation and then, other nations started to build new national cultures, based on rediscovered and invented old ones, understood as folk cultures today. These discoveries were also often related to communities from the North of Europe. New national histories were formed from the 'barbaric' Celtic, Germanic, Scandinavian cultures of the past with their popular songs, poems, superstitions, traditions (Thiesse, 2001: 29-34). This earlier pre-romantic phase, which started in England, in mid eighteenth century had already visible aspects of later Romanticism such as: 'some recognition of the role of the imagination, the emphasis on the original composition of the genius, the cult of sensibility' and 'the discovery of external nature' (Furst, 1968: 119). Late eighteenth century (1770-1790) saw the development of the German pre-romantic trend with the *Sturm und Drang* Movement. They introduced many of the basic concepts of Romanticism including the 'notion of organic growth and development, from which arose both an interest in the past' and 'a new pantheistic vision of nature as part of a unified cosmos' (Furst, 1968: 121). German Romanticism fully developed from 1790, with the writers of the Jena group which believed in the 'unquestioned primacy of the subjective imagination of the original creative genius' but who also strived for knowledge. This movement influenced not only the arts but philosophy, politics, religion, science, and history (Furst, 1968: 123-124). The French Revolution, which brought philosophy, literature and politics together, was also a big influence on the German romantics. They first believed that the French Revolution was introducing a new era with the unity of reason, imagination and politics. Disillusionment set in with the later events in the French Revolution and more conservative attitude and notions emerged (Sturma, 2000: 220). In its later phase, in early nineteenth century, German Romanticism promoted with the Heidelberg group developed a less philosophical but more patriotic quality. With an interest in history and an increased opposition to Napoleon, a new national consciousness and pride emerged (Furst, 1968:123-127). Interestingly, the French Revolution, its turmoil and the strong hold of French classicism can explain the late emergence of French Romanticism in 1820s and 1830s. It was strongly opposed as a foreign influence damaging the French national heritage and traditions (Furst, 1968: 132).

German political Romanticism and Idealism were greatly influenced by Rousseau whose ideas were used to criticise the Enlightenment. Rousseau also inspired German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), one of the intellectuals whose ideas shaped the current meaning of culture. He was one of the most significant thinkers because he was also one of the most coherent in developing ideas for German Romanticism. Influenced also by Kant, he combined ideas from the Enlightenment and from its opponents. Herder rejected Enlightenment universalism. He argued that there was a common biological humanity but that human groups separated and diversified into distinct people during social evolution. 'Herder's central political idea lies in the assertion that the proper foundation for a sense of collective political identity is not the acceptance of a common sovereign power, but the sharing of a common culture' argued Frederick Barnard (Herder and Barnard, 2010: 7). The real spirit and true culture of a nation come from the spirit and culture of a particular people who are part of the lower classes and live in the countryside, not from notions developed by intellectuals. He saw language as a common human characteristic and argued that each different language was the lived expression of the people's spirit and the sum of all their ancestors (Thiesse, 2001: 37). Each culture or society is formed by a people with a unique and specific character defined by their language, history, way of life, myths and legends. A specific individual has a spiritual relationship with a specific people, a '*Volk*' bound by language, traditions, ritual and history. It was 'through language that the individual becomes at once aware of his selfhood *and* of his nationhood' (Herder and Barnard, 2010: 7). In his view, a foreigner cannot really learn another language because it is linked to the soul of a particular people. History for him became a history of different cultures or more exactly, a history of variations between the cultures. He thought that there were no absolute, no universal and timeless standards and norms in order for us to judge human creations. All had to be judged within a particular context and 'each historical period and nation corresponded to a specific type of humanity' with 'its independent existence' and 'individual reason' (Finkielkraut and Mazal Holocaust Collection, 1995: 7). He did not accept racial thinking, nor did he believe in hierarchy of cultures or nations. He was against despotism and intolerance. Because of his beliefs in a spirit of the people, he thought that new states, created through war and the combining of different people, were not right. Still, we will see later that his arguments were used in the development of racial

theory advanced by others and as inspirations to actions such as the Third Reich or Nazi Germany (Thiesse, 2001: 40-43).

The support for Herder's ideas started in Germany after the defeat of the old Prussian army by Napoleon in 1806, also in the later phase of German Romanticism. This defeat and resulting French domination led to the search for an approach able to unite the German nation against the occupation. French universalism, promoted as a force which would bond and benefit all countries conquered by Napoleon, became a focus for resentment and not only in Germany. This universalism mixed with French ethnocentrism argued that French society was the best representative of humanity. But despite this claim, France had not been able to eradicate social divisions in France, let alone in Germany and elsewhere. Thus, sections of the German elites started to see French universalism not as liberating but as a foreign attempt to dominate Germany. By developing Herder's ideas, German nationalists tried to create a sense of German unity and uniqueness through the idea of 'the Spirit of the German people'. Defining the relationship between individual and community had been at the centre of the romantic movement. They saw a unity between individual and community where culture could not be seen as simply the sum of all its individuals. They argued that an individual could not exist outside his community. Novalis (1772-1801), one of the main figures of early German romanticism, had claimed that 'to become and remain human, man needs the state. Without a state, man is a savage. All culture results from the relationship between man and state'. In Late Romanticism, the cultural community was even more emphasised while the aesthetic individualism receded (Sturma, 2000: 230). As we can see the original modern notion of culture was first developed with the concept of the nation. In order to understand the relationship between race and culture, it would useful to look at the historical origin and definitions of the concept of nation as well as the social, economic and historical forces intervening during the period of nation-building.

Origin of the modern concept of the nation

The modern concept of the nation as a *political* entity emerged in France, in the mid-eighteenth century, to challenge the feudal hierarchy and the power of the aristocracy. The concept evolved during the attempt by the French bourgeoisie to overthrow the Ancient Regime and replace it with a Republic and a capitalist system. This political

concept, in the original meaning, was based on the idea that all people living on the territory voluntarily form the nation together. It was centred around the ideas of Enlightenment and on the *Social Contract* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the most influential philosophers of Western society but also an ambiguous opponent of the Enlightenment. The concept promotes the notion of a citizenship where all citizens regardless of class, birth privilege or ethnicity would be sovereign, would have rights and be allowed to participate in the life of the state (Noiriel, 2015: 12). The nation was thus conceived as a voluntary and political community of citizens, based on our ability for reason and free will. The sovereignty and authority of the king, given by God, was to be supplanted by the sovereignty and authority of the people as a whole. For Rousseau, 'sovereignty and the general will are tied conceptually to one another. When a people exercises its sovereignty it is expressing its general will' (O'Hagan, 2003: 114). For his theories, he represented the people as if they were one individual and thus, the general will was modelled on the idea of an individual will. This is an important point because we can see where the idea of a national character or national identity emerged from. An individual has a character; a nation has also a character. And thus, 'for Rousseau, the general will is the foundation of legitimacy. It embodies political legitimacy in virtue of its source, the sovereign people' (O'Hagan, 2003: 122). All democratic nation-states today have strong restrictions on the power of the people and are certainly not voluntary political associations based on reason and commitment. It is interesting to also note that even common language was not used initially to define a nation. The notion of a national language itself developed from nationalism. In France, as late 1860, it is thought that about half of the French population was still learning French as a foreign language (Noiriel, 2015: 41). In fact, English-born American political theorist Thomas Paine was elected to the French National Convention, in the new French Republic in 1792, even though he did not speak French.

American nationhood was also originally developed with the notion of the sovereign people or popular sovereignty against colonial domination, for the common good against privilege, for equality and universalism. Eric Hobsbawm noted that:

> We cannot therefore read into the revolutionary 'nation' anything like the later nationalist programme of establishing nation-states for bodies defined in terms

> of the criteria so hotly debated by the nineteenth-century theorists, such as ethnicity, common language, religion, territory and common historical memories (Hobsbawm, 1992: 20).

The concept of self-determination and the demand for the right to form their own nation have been useful in the fight for liberation and access to rights by some groups of people, previously living under the domination of others. But if we look at all the different communities in the world who did not get their own nations, it is clear that these concepts can be used to cohere a movement but can also be used to deny the freedom of others.

The original concept of the nation was partly developed by the Enlightenment but the universal Man of Enlightenment, the rational individual with free will, is contradicted by the particularistic notion of citizen/non-citizen, defined by geography and nationality. Today, nationality and citizenship have become mainly defined by culture, race, birthplace, ancestry or legal concepts. As Maxim Silverman remarked:

> This contradiction appears even more marked when one remembers that it was precisely the break with privilege and particular interests and the creation of a common good that were central to the Revolutionary ideal. By defining the common good within the exclusive framework of the nation, the Revolution crystallised the tension between universalism and particularism of the Enlightenment (Silverman, 2014: 27).

The universalism of the Enlightenment was an abstract notion and thus, could not resolve the contradiction at the time.

Other notions of the 'nation'

As we saw, German nationhood, for example, was not a 'revolutionary nation' and it developed later in the nineteenth century. It was based on particularism as opposed to universalism, on a special people bound by blood and heredity and a specific German soul. It developed in opposition to Napoleon and the promoted French universalism as seen above. The differences between France and Germany's original understanding of the nation has led some people to define the original French meaning

of nation as ‘civic nation’, based on the universalist ideas of the French Enlightenment while describing the original German meaning as ‘ethnic nation’, based on the particularism of German Romanticism. This is in order to make a distinction between a voluntary community of citizens versus a community of people together because they are defined by common races or ethnicities. This distinction between France and Germany is a myth. French nationalism, with the French Revolution, started by being based on an ethnocentric universalism with the idea that France would show the world the best ways to think and live. The political definition of citizenship was lost very quickly. In the nineteenth century, behind other nations such as Britain and Germany which had already advanced in this direction, French nationalism changed and developed on an invented definition of French history and culture.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Enlightenment ideals and French universalism supported by the revolutionaries were rejected by most. The French opponents had been arguing that this notion of a common humanity had created too much social upheaval and a complete destruction of social order. Joseph de Maistre, one of the most formidable French opponents of the French Revolution, and who was against the view that mankind was universal, had already famously declared in 1797: ‘There is no such thing as *man* in the world. During my life I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians. Thanks to Montesquieu, I even know that *one can be Persian*. But as for *man*, I declare that I have never in my life met him; if he exists, he is unknown to me’ (Finkielkraut and Mazal Holocaust Collection, 1995:15). He was arguing that people were born into particular societies and that from birth, they had to socialise and organise life and behaviour according to the customs, rules and traditions of this particular society. People do not choose to be part of a community but are born into it. Destroying traditions and old institutions in order to create a nation based on equality, free association and universal rights would be, according to him, akin to destroying the nation’s soul and identity (Finkielkraut and Mazal Holocaust Collection, 1995:13-15). The particular culture found in a community, society or nation should be preserved because it embodies the group’s identity. Anti-Enlightenment thinking is at the root of the concept of culture and nation we are familiar with today.

The defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, the fall of the Second Empire replaced by the third Republic, the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune,

the increased fear of the working class/'masses' experienced by the elites and the demand to give the Alsace and Lorraine regions to the Germans really changed the conversations about the meaning of the nation. Of course, the original French meaning had already been rejected with Napoleon and his empire. In 1882, Ernest Renan (1823-1892), a famous French philologist, gave a celebrated lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris called 'What is a Nation?' Renan was rejecting biological race, language, geography, religion as significant factors to understanding a nation. To challenge the Germans, who were demanding the Alsace and Lorraine regions be given back to them on ethnic justifications, he argued that, even though the study of race is essential for the history of humanity, race had 'no application in politics'. He added that the instinctive awareness that led to the divisions and formation of nations in Europe did not consider race and that 'the first European nations are nations of essentially mixed blood' (Renan, 1882: 6). He reasoned that a nation is a living soul made of two parts, one in the past and one in the present. The part in the past is made of a rich common heritage, while the part in the present is the current consent to live together and the will to carry on promoting this undivided common heritage. He believed that an individual, like a nation, is the result of common sacrifices, efforts and caring and that the cult of the nation's ancestors is right. Our ancestors made us what we are, Renan claimed and, the Spartan motto 'we are what you were; we will be what you are' represents all nations (Renan, 1882: 8). Renan was arguing that a nation is formed of individuals with a common history and ancestry and with the willingness to carry on together the traditions of these ancestors. According to him, the consent to live together comes from the common heritage and common ancestry. He was promoting the idea that a common inherited culture, rather than language, race or ethnicity should define a nation. This is a conception of the nation where 'race' is replaced by 'culture'. In Renan's conception, we do not have rational and self-determining individuals consenting to live together and accepting their role in the life of the state, with rights and duties. This is the opposite of the Enlightenment ideals that had promoted the use of reason above obedience of traditions, customs, prejudices and old hierarchy. If organising ourselves through race is anti-political, then organising ourselves around obeying traditions from a common ancestry is also anti-political. Since the beginning of modern politics, racial and cultural identities have both been politicised and used in politics to defend particular interests. With Renan, the cultural identity was the national identity. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that communities based on kinship,

clans and families are pre-political communities based on pre-political attachments, not political entities based on the agency and commitment of rational individuals to collectively work for the common good.

The idea of the nation during the 'revolutionary democratic' period was originally based on the Enlightenment belief in a common humanity with a single culture. Various groups may not have been at the same level in human culture at that particular time but there was a belief that all would, eventually, join it at the same level and that the differences would disappear. The idea of the nation by the end of the nineteenth century was entirely based on the rejection of a common human culture. Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), a French author and politician and an outspoken nationalist, believed that France was 'definitely not a race but a nation' but also famously claimed 'Helas! There is no French race, but a French people, a French nation', showing his unhappiness that there was no French race to consider (Todorov, 1994: 229). He saw France of 1870 as sick, brainless, uprooted, corrupted by money, and where foreigners, like parasites, were poisoning the French nationals (Schenker, 2007: 6). For him, 'a nation is the shared possession of an ancient cemetery and the will to continue to maintain the prominence of that undivided heritage' (Todorov, 1994: 229). More importantly for our discussion here is that he believed that this specific French heritage, that belonging to a specific nation, completely determined people's thoughts and acts. According to him, we cannot really escape from our nation or culture. Nation and individual are simply part of a long continuity and 'the universe is all of a piece, which means that the future can be one and only one' (Schenker, 2007: 15). He made his determinism even clearer when he asserted: 'If I were to be naturalized as a Chinese and conform scrupulously to the prescriptions of Chinese law, I would not stop forming French ideas and associating them in French (Todorov, 1994: 230). The complete rejection of the existence of a common human culture was undoubtedly clear when he argued that, 'German truth and English truth have nothing to do with French truth' and that, 'they can poison us' (Todorov, 1994: 57).

The nineteenth century was the age of nation-building where many European nations became fully formed. During the 'Age of Revolution' (1789-1848) and excluding the French Revolution, Eric Hobsbawm defined three main waves of revolutions between 1815 and 1848. The period 1820-1824 saw the social upheaval mainly in the

Mediterranean region: Spain, Naples and Greece. Between 1829 and 1834, the events affected all Western Europe (west of Russia) when the Bourbons in France were overthrown, and the Belgium Revolution led to Belgium independence from the Netherlands. The biggest wave was the revolutions of 1848 affecting many European countries such as France, the German states, the whole of Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland and Britain. The nineteenth century was a period of great social and political upheaval and transformation. The 1830s saw the final defeat of the aristocracy by the bourgeoisie in Western Europe and the emergence of nationalist movements in many European countries. The working class also started to become a social and political force in Britain and France (Hobsbawm, 1995). All these events revealed deep divisions and inequalities within Western societies which led to a fear of change within the upper classes and a demand for order. Society, social issues, inequalities, hierarchies and order started to be explained with laws of nature which physical anthropologists and other naturalists described. God was replaced by nature. The notion of order, equilibrium and design in nature was applied to society. Social Darwinism put natural, scientific processes as 'the guarantor of social equilibrium' rather than God, who was increasingly rejected (Jones, 1980: 140-159).

The concept of race was applied to explain divisions within European and American nations. The divisions between the lower classes and upper classes were explained as natural and permanent racial divisions. A description of the British Bethnal Green poor as 'a caste apart, a race of whom we know nothing, whose lives are of quite different complexion from ours, persons with whom we have no point of contact' (Malik, 1996: 93) was no more unusual than the claims by Scottish anatomist Robert Knox that 'the Celtic race does not, and never could be made to comprehend the meaning of the word liberty'. Knox went further in voicing his opinions about the Irish Catholics by declaring the 'source of all evil lies *in the race*, the Celtic race of Ireland. There is no getting over historical fact'. He then concluded that the 'race must be forced from the soil; by fair means, if possible; still they must leave. England's safety requires it' (Kyriakides and Torres, 2012: 55). This view of the Irish as a separate race was also exported from Britain to the United States even though the separation between white and black race was already well established there. Race became central to Western elites' sense of superiority and identity, both at home and abroad. Many today see the

world divided into nations as something that has always been so. But the modern concept of nation and the building of nations are relatively recent phenomena.

Racial science in trouble

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, divisions and inequalities were seen as natural. Racial and natural theories claiming the authority of science were used to interpret the world. Race had become the main way Western political elites explained their assumed superiority over the world and justified their pretended civilising mission. Political, social and economic inequalities between nations, international events and conflicts were described and interpreted as the consequences of inequalities between races or as the degeneration of particular races.

The word eugenics, from the Greek words for 'well born', was coined by polymath Francis Galton (1822-1911) in 1883. He wanted to give 'the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable (Kühl, 2002: 4). His aim in improving the physical and mental level of the human race, with the help of state intervention, was based on the notion that certain people did have better physical and mental qualities than others and that these people should be encouraged to breed faster than others (Jones, 1980: 99). In essence, his aim was centred around his belief in perfection and a fixed human nature. He imagined a close-ended future where humanity would have eventually created the best human possible according to certain criteria rather than the open-ended notion of perfectibility promoted by the Enlightenment. In fact, Galton wanted to use his idea of dividing the 'fit' and the 'unfit' to attack aristocratic privilege he saw as an obstacle to evolutionary development. He had hoped for a social system where birth and ancestry would not be a factor for social status. Social selection through abilities and achievement was, for him, better in improving the character of the population (Jones, 1980: 35-36). The international eugenics movement was very influential in the early twentieth century until World War II. It appealed to people across the political spectrum and across nations. Scientists from quite a few fields of study such as genetics, psychology, biology, anthropology and sociology were involved in the eugenics movement throughout the Western world (Hofstadter, 1992: 61-169). Not all in the movement were supporting or working on racial theories. Some focused on what they thought were 'degenerates' such as mentally-ill people or people with mental and/or physical

characteristics seen as outside the acceptable norms. Family studies were, for example, another interest. These studies were used to justify sterilisation in order to stop the fast reproduction of 'degenerates'. The most famous study was done on the Kallikak family by Henry Herbert Goddard who later distanced himself from it. It was to show the differences in mental and physical qualities between the descendants of a single soldier who had an illegitimate child with a 'feebleminded tavern wench' and legitimate children with a 'respectable girl of good family' (Kühl, 2002: 40).

The early twentieth century also saw an increasing lack of confidence in the idea of 'white race' superiority and a weakening of the influence of scientific racism and racial theories. Christopher Kyriakides and Rodolfo Torres argued that 'whiteness' as an identity was intrinsically weak. As seen before, white lower classes had fought in solidarity with black lower classes against the white ruling class. The authors provided several other cases in order to demonstrate their point:

> Whiteness is intrinsically weak – fractured in its origin – and it is only after we are able to grasp the internal weakness of whiteness that we begin to understand the relative strength of racial doctrine. The power of limitation it placed on possibility was related not to the strength of whiteness but to the prior defeat of the radically subjective (Kyriakides and Torres, 2012: 72).

The problem is not the power of whiteness. It is the anti-humanist sentiment and ideas which undermined the notion of human beings as autonomous agents able to act on their own destiny. We have seen, in section 3.2 'Origin of the modern concept of culture', how the idea of self-determination was undermined by the counter-Enlightenment trends. Nevertheless, Barbara Fields did wonder why many did not ask the question as to why 'blackness' has been so strong. Whiteness may be seen as a weak *identity* for the lower classes, but blackness is '*identification*, authoritative and external' (my italics) (Fields, 2001: 51).

So, the rise of the working class, the increasing power of their movement with a growth in trade unionism and the demand for more democracy, had led to questions about the racial superiority of the elites over the lower classes. The weakness of the notion of 'white unity' was further shown with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. This was

the first time a European power, Britain, had an alliance with an Asian power, Japan, to counter a Western rival, Russia. The Treaty of Alliance between the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire on August 2, 1914 and the presence of black soldiers during the war also undermined white solidarity (Furedi, 1998: 33-40). The military victory of Japan over Russia in 1905 was seen by many in the West not simply as the result of a conflict between two nations but as a humiliation of a 'white nation' by a 'non-white nation' and a threat to the 'existing balance of racial power' (Furedi, 1998: 29-30). The growing resistance to Western domination in the colonies and the rise of Third World nationalism, especially after the Second World War, led to further undermining of racial theories. Elazar Barkan, in his book *The Retreat of Scientific Racism* (1992), thoroughly showed the reluctance of the American and British scientists in abandoning the concept of race between the world wars (Barkan, 1992). They were influenced like everybody else by the social and political contexts in which they lived but eventually had to distance themselves from it. The events that created a particular dislike for racial theories were the Second World War and the Holocaust.

The Nazis seized power in Germany in 1933 and the German racial hygienists were able to introduce their eugenics laws within the first 6 months, with an increasing racial focus against Jews and others. The international eugenics movement and in particular the American eugenicists had given them important theoretical, scientific, practical and social information about eugenics laws. But one of the complaints from German eugenicists was the incoherence with which these laws were applied in the United States. A close relationship between American and German eugenicists had developed after the First World War and, by 1930, had taken over the leadership place from Great Britain. That relationship was financial; for example, with the Rockefeller foundation. But it also included the transfer of scientific, medical and political knowledge (Kühl, 2002: 37-39). By 1933, the American eugenics movement had provided quite a few examples of sterilisation and immigration laws that aimed to improve the population. The United States Supreme Court in 1927, for example, had decided that, in order to prevent 'being swamped with incompetents', compulsory sterilisation was constitutional. They had argued:

> It is better for all the world if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those

> who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustained compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover the cutting of the Fallopian tubes (Kühl, 2002: 38).

The American Immigration Act of 1924 was approved by many German eugenics supporters even though eugenics concerns, the mental tests, were not the basis of this 1924 act. Hans F K Guenther, a famous German race anthropologist, celebrated it as an act meant to prevent both degenerate individuals and some ethnic groups from entering the United States (Kühl, 2002: 38). The Nazi effort in improving the 'German race' was itself interpreted by the international eugenics movement as the first nationwide attempt to adopt their ideology and implement their practical proposals. They had been asking their own government to be more eugenically minded. With the experience of the eugenics movement behind them, the Nazi government introduced several laws and regulations very quickly such as the 'Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals' for the sterilisation and castration of criminals, the 'Decree for the Granting of Marriage Loans', passed in July 1933 allowing 'funding to non-Jewish couples free of mental or physical illness'. The 'Law on Preventing Hereditarily Ill Progeny', for the sterilisation of people with physical and mental 'problems', passed in July 1933 in Germany and enacted in January 1934, was influenced by analyses of the Californian sterilisation measures. At that time, nearly half of all sterilisations in the United States had been performed in California. This 'Law on Preventing Hereditarily Ill Progeny' was also based on the American eugenicist Harry Laughlin's Model Eugenic Sterilization Law of 1922. Laughlin had 'called for the sterilization of the mentally retarded, insane, criminal, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed, and economically dependent which included homeless and orphans' (Kühl, 2002: 39). Eventually, when the racial and anti-Semitic aspect of the Nazi measures were very clear and widely known, in the late 1930s, some supporters of the international eugenics movement started to distance themselves from Nazi racial hygienists. The Nuremberg laws were passed in 1935 and from 1937 the sterilisation measures included ethnic and religious groups. The Nazi pogrom of the 9-10 November 1938 and the numerous decrees limiting German Jews finally made some of the figures in the international eugenics movement uncomfortable.

Culture, nation and immigration

The American Immigration Act of 1924 is one of many examples showing the relationship between race, nation, culture, immigration and politics. It also demonstrates how some other groups of people can be portrayed in order to justify their exclusion from the nation. Racial, cultural and national identities were constructed through politics, immigration laws and policies. These identities became important socially and politically. The notions of a national character/identity and a 'good' citizen were also promoted and accepted through education and the school systems since the nineteenth century (Tröhler, 2016a). Interestingly, Carl Degler argued that it was not the social scientists' interest in intelligence testing that created this immigration act. The racial and ethnic basis for immigration was also not new. This act prevented all Chinese and Japanese people from entering the United States. But racist policies against Chinese and Japanese had already existed prior to the 1924 Act. Degler noted that the demand to curtail immigration had been increasing since the 1890s with labour unions' fear of economic competition and nativist groups' fear of the social character of the new immigrants. The new immigrants were from southern and eastern Europe and were 'poor, Catholic, and Jewish, often illiterate, unskilled, and given to congregating in large cities, which were already seen as prone to crime, immorality, and violence' (Degler, 1991: 52-55). The reasons underlying the American Immigration Act of 1924 were the racist attitude and hostility, particularly against Asian people, but also the demand for national unity and cultural homogeneity. Their hostility to Jews and Catholics was justified by a national need for social, cultural and racial cohesion. The hostility toward southern and eastern Europeans followed the nineteenth-century European sentiment where European cultures were defined against French hegemony by promoting the Nordic ethnic communities against southern ethnic groups. There was also, in the eugenics and racial science movement, a belief that immigrants with ancestry from the north of Europe were superior to those with Alpine or Mediterranean ancestry. Historian Mae Ngai argued that the Immigration Act 1924 defined, decoupled and realigned race and nationality in different ways with the invention of 'national origins' applied to Europeans. The various European nationalities were ranked in a 'hierarchy of desirability' while at the same time, the law portrayed them as belonging to the white American race. They thus acquired both an ethnic or national-based identity which could be changed in America and a fixed racial identity. These two types of identities were uncoupled for Euro-Americans. For non-European immigrants, however, and in particular for Japanese,

Chinese and Mexicans, and Filipinos, their ethnic/national identities and racial identities were seen as the same and as permanently foreign (Ngai, 1999). The definitions for ‘native stock’ and ‘foreign stock’ clearly demonstrate how race changed the meaning of nationality. The ‘native stock’ were persons ‘descended from the white population in 1790’, the year of the first census (national origin and ancestry were not included for this census). Not all persons born in the United States since 1790 were considered ‘native’. The ‘foreign stock’ were those descended from white people who had immigrated after 1790. Nationality was defined according to country of birth except for the American nationality (Ngai, 1999: 71-72). A few more historical facts highlight the relationships between racial, cultural and national identities and politics. In the United States:

> The census did not differentiate the foreign-born until 1850 and did not identify the places of birth of parents of the native-born until 1890. Immigration was unrecorded before 1820 and not classified according to origin until 1899, when it was arranged, not by politically defined nation-states, but according to a taxonomy called ‘races and peoples’. Emigration was not recorded until 1907 (Ngai, 1999: 71).

From the nineteenth century, racial thinking, social Darwinism and other eugenics notions were increasingly used to interpret the world and to define political actions and policies.

Another example showing hostility toward Catholics is the fear generated by the immigration of French-Canadian people, in late nineteenth century United States. They had come to work in New England cotton mills and thought themselves as American as anyone else but with simply their own culture which included Catholicism. Fear and hostility led to appalling living conditions and claims of an ‘invasion’ of Catholics were loudly cried (Vermette, 2019). These kinds of racial, ethnic or cultural justifications as well as rationalisation using the economic competition argument have been applied many times and are still regularly used in order to define and restrict groups of immigrants (Noiriel, 2006; Gatrell, 2015; Thiesse, 2001). The nation is often seen as a permanent, closed and fixed system rather than as a historical and transient concept susceptible to change with human actions. The perceived limit on jobs and

resources is understood as the natural limit of this closed system and is fought over by different groups. But then, historically, there had been economic problems, depression, crisis or higher unemployment in nations with smaller populations than today's populations. The important question would be to analyse the specific social, political, economic and intellectual conditions and social limitations that provided the space for the development of racial theories which were eventually used in policies and political discussions such as the issue of migration. What were the limitations of the new society that eventually gave rise to the anti-political reactions opposing the radical and revolutionary ideals of the Enlightenment and the radical democratic impulse still found in some of the nineteenth-century revolutions? The citizens of classical political theory contesting the meaning of the common good were replaced by racial, cultural and national beings defending their particular interests in the new modern and formal political world. In Athens, citizenship was a 'critical determinant in relations of exploitation' because the 'economic exploitation was inseparable from juridical and political status' argued Wood. In relation to social, political and economic power, the capitalist system represents a break from the other social systems. The market became a new form of coercion regulating all human activities and relationships. A new division of labour between state and private property and a transformation of social power are developments that have greatly influenced the meaning of politics and citizenship. As Wood stated, showing the difference in the meaning and consequence of democracy in ancient Greece compared to today:

> Capitalism has been able to tolerate an unprecedented distribution of political goods, the rights and liberties of citizenship, because it has also for the first time made possible a form a citizenship, civil liberties and rights which can be abstracted from the distribution of social power. In this respect, it contrasts sharply with the profound transformation of class power expressed by the original Greek conception of democracy as rule by the demos, which represented a specific distribution of class power summed up in Aristotle's definition of democracy as rule by the poor (Meiksins Wood, 1990: 72).

The meaning of citizenship today and the criteria for exclusion and inclusion in nations are not based on political definitions, in the classical political sense. Identity politics is

a product of this qualitative break from previous social organisations and of the new formal political world which emerged with capitalism.

Defining a nation with race in the Western world is no longer publicly acceptable in many nations since there are many minorities born and raised in the West who are part of the ruling elites and upper classes. Cultural differences, not racial differences, have become more useful in defining ‘us and them’. As Silverman has argued, the ambiguity between nationalism and racism have allowed many to hide their political position. He added that ‘anti-racism has frequently shared a similar discourse (or even the same discourse) as racism yet maintains its distance simply by cloaking itself in cultural nationalism as opposed to biological racism’ (Silverman, 2014: 22).

It is important here to quickly highlight the difference between the idea of culture as human activity and the modern notion of culture used in concepts such as cultural relativism, cultural diversity, multiculturalism or cultural identity. Humans are social beings and so they always exhibit culture rather than simply exist as biological beings. Culture in that sense is specific to our species. It is related to our sociability, our human cognition and our mental abilities such as language and processes such as remembering, thinking or judging which allow us to understand the world around us, to gain knowledge and to transfer it to the newer generations, to organise ourselves in man-made communities. Culture in this sense can be also termed ‘civilisation’ and it is open-ended. The way ‘culture’ is understood when applied to nation, ethnic group, communities or groups is no longer open-ended. We can see this when people talk about ‘saving their culture’ or ‘leaving their culture’ as if there is something intrinsic, made by something other than humans as social beings, that needs to be saved *from* humans and their activity or that can be left behind by individuals (Kymlicka, 2003). These cultures are often seen as different, separate and incapable of blending with others, with each individual bearing a very specific culture. This specific culture was given to them from birth or from ancestry. Discussions around family adoptions of children are places where these ideas can be clearly expressed. The ethnic or national backgrounds of the children can be seen to matter in adoptions as if babies and young children carry their cultures with them or are representatives of specific cultures when going into a new family. Why would a child born in Sri Lanka and brought up in England have to learn about Sri Lankan culture and not simply English culture?

If people need to preserve a specific culture, then they have little or no possibility to change themselves or the culture. This is associated with a perception that they have no possibility to fully comprehend other cultures that they have not inherited from their community or from their ancestry. This is why the singer and songwriter Johnny Clegg, also known as the 'white Zulu', was viewed as unusual. He understood Zulu music and dance even though he was born in the UK and was a white middle-class rather than a black migrant worker (Denselow, 2019). Culture as a fixed entity is also seen in the argument that people can own specific cultures and that others are not allowed to own it or use it as they wish. 'At its core, cultural appropriation is about ownership of one's culture', claimed Ijeoma Oluo. Realising the problem with questions such as 'who defines what is sacred to a culture?' and 'who defines what is off limits?', she concluded that if one has enough respect for the marginalised culture then one will listen if an individual says that 'it hurts me' (Oluo, 2018: 145). She is essentially saying that any individual from the 'marginalised' cultures can, with a notion of harm, stop others from accessing, enjoying, sharing and engaging with these cultures. Authors from a specific cultural identity apparently cannot possibly understand, discuss or use characters with a different identity. This is, evidently, an important issue for novelists and some have entered the conversation with more nuances ('Whose life is it anyway? Novelists have their say on cultural appropriation', 2016).

Hence, the continuity between 'race' and 'culture' is the deterministic and fatalistic aspects of the two concepts. An early illustration of this was with Maurice Barrès and the Dreyfus affair where a French Jewish captain, Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely accused and convicted of giving military secrets to the Germans. The Dreyfus affair is an example of the anti-Semitic notion, developed in the nineteenth century, portraying Jews as the racial or cultural enemy within the nation. For Barrès, it did not matter whether Dreyfus was innocent or guilty because 'nationalism requires us to judge everything with respect to France' (Todorov, 1994: 57). The important issue for him was not abstract justice but whether a specific verdict is beneficial to France. There is no truth or justice but French truth and French justice. Interestingly, his position also led him to be more 'sympathetic' to Dreyfus than other people because he saw him as not responsible for his own thoughts and actions. 'Here are ways of thinking and

speaking apt to shock the French, but they are most natural for him; they are sincere, and we may call them innate', Barrès declared (Todorov, 1994: 58).

As Tzvetan Todorov suggested, 'culturalism' grows out of 'classical racialism', replacing 'physical race with linguistic, historical, or psychological race'. Culturalism 'shares certain features with its ancestor, but not all' declared Todorov reminding us of the later rejection of superiority and inferiority supplanted by a 'glorification of difference' (Todorov, 1994: 157). Already with Barrès, we see that the notion of a single truth, single justice and more importantly the possibility for an objective understanding of the world is attacked. This is one fundamental distinction between racial thinking and culture relativism. The key figure who introduced the concept of cultural relativism, which he coined, at the beginning of the twentieth century was Franz Boas. He was also one of the most prominent opponents of the Nazi racial theories. This modern concept of culture has been and is still constantly used by many groups to defend their political and social interests. However, it is worth noting that the attacks on the idea of an objective world, promoted here by nineteenth-century nationalists, were seen long before the emergence of post-modernism. Of course, the philosophical discussions about the existence of an objective world and objective knowledge also predated Barrès.

Degraded universalism and multiple worlds

One of the important questions is how we ended up with this modern concept of culture so similar to the concept of race even though the idea of biological race seemed to have been mostly rejected. It seems there are no more attempts to express that, 'I am human; and I think nothing that is human is alien to me/ Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto'. This well-known quote comes from Publius Terentius Afer, known as Terence, a once-enslaved man, in the Roman Republic, who turned playwright. The radical meaning of this comment is lost for now. '*Nothing* that is human is alien to me', expresses a universalism that is foreign to many today. What seems currently fashionable is a degraded form of universalism based on the idea that we, biological beings, are all from the same biological species called *Homo sapiens*. It is degraded because it suggests that the only universal qualities we have are biological in nature. It is related to the view that human nature or human essence can be defined simply by biology. And yet 'Chimps aren't us', Jeremy Taylor demonstrated in his book *Not a*

Chimp: The Hunt to Find the Genes that Make us Human (Taylor, 2009). Clinical neuroscientist and philosopher Raymond Tallis, challenging scientism, noted in *Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity*:

> The distinctive features of human beings – self-hood, free will, that collective space called the human world, the sense that we *lead* our lives rather than simply *live* them as organisms do – are being discarded as illusions by many, even by philosophers, who should think a little bit harder and question the glamour of science rather than succumbing to it (Tallis, 2012: 8).

The authority of the natural sciences is still used in order to promote the notion that we are our bodies, denying our uniqueness and our past achievements.

But a very important shift occurred when the concept of biological races was replaced by the idea of multiple and different cultures. The notion of 'race' had mostly conceptualised human beings as biologically different and separate but living in a single common world, with common standards, laws and understanding but, more importantly, with the idea of an objective truth. One single world existed but various races were on lower parts of the ladder of social evolution and had not yet reached the top or simply did not have the ability to reach the best of this world. The understanding and interpretations of the world was singular and based on the 'superior race'. The current notion of 'culture', on the other hand, conceptualises human beings as part of one common biological humanity with equal mental capabilities but separated into distinct cultures with distinct understandings, interpretations, values and worldviews. The possibility for an objective truth and objective understanding has disappeared. We went from 'one world with many races to one race in many worlds' (Malik, 1996: 147). This is a very important shift with many consequences for liberation movements. Theorists of the concept of culture have reworked some of the assumptions underlying racial theories but have also moved away from the essential notion of objective truth and objective knowledge. 'Your truth is not my truth' or 'white people truth is not black people truth' are current expressions of this important shift. It is worth recalling some of the figures and events that led to this important change.

Franz Boas is a key figure

Franz Boas (1858-1942), a key figure for our current concept of culture, is also considered the father of cultural anthropology. He studied what was called ‘psychophysics’, wanting to understand ‘how the characteristics of the observer determined the perception of physical phenomena’. His studies focused on analysing the way Inuit perceived the colour of seawater. The letter Franz Boas wrote after meeting the Inuit or ‘savages’, as he called them, expresses his belief well:

> I often ask myself what advantages our ‘good society’ possesses over that of the ‘savages’. The more I see of their customs, the more I realise that we have no right to look down on them. Where amongst our people would you find such hospitality?...We have no right to blame them for their forms and superstitions which may seem ridiculous to us. We ‘highly educated people’ are much worse, relatively speaking…As a thinking person, for me the most important result of this trip lies in the strengthening of my point of view that the idea of a ‘cultured’ person is merely relative and that a person’s worth should be judged by his *Herzensbildung* (noblesse of heart) (Malik, 1996: 151).

With his egalitarian view on race, he challenged scientific racism, but his position was to argue for an equality in differences. ‘Savages’ and Westerners are not the same, but the two groups are equal. This is familiar because this is the usual argument today when people argue for equality. The Enlightenment philosophers believed that, with progress, divisions they saw as artificial would disappear. Boaz acknowledged diversities as permanent but saw all groups with equal value. His notion of cultural relativism stated that people from a specific culture could not criticise the cultures of others. But we can also see with this letter that his beliefs arose from a dissatisfaction with his own society. He was not happy with the social and political situation in Germany. Some think him being a Jew may have contributed to his sense of alienation from what was happening in Germany. There was also a general sense of pessimism throughout Western society at the time. He eventually emigrated to the United States 6 years after finishing his doctorate (Monaghan and Just, 2000: 36-39; Barkan, 1992: 76-78).

Boas had a great influence on anthropology but also on the issue of race. His concept of culture was seen as a direct challenge to the idea that differences in mental and

social abilities were due to race. This was a time of strong official segregation in the United States. His best-known work, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, published in 1911, argued that the mental capabilities of 'savages' did not differ from those of civilised people, challenging the still common belief that the concept of social evolution could explain the social and intellectual inferiority of the primitive people. For him, race, culture and language were separate variables that should not be confused. His other influential contribution is his argument that our theories and ideas were not from our own reason but from the influences of our ancestors and of our environment (Degler, 1991: 61-63; Barkan, 1992: 81). Boas revisited the old German romantic view of culture discussed earlier, but he abandoned the idea of hierarchy between culture. Humans are separated by different cultures, each of these cultures 'is the outcome of its geographical and historical surroundings'. Denying the existence of a universal standard to judge other cultures, he argued that 'civilization is not something absolute, but that it is relative, and that our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes' (Degler, 1991: 67). For Boas, 'culture was synonymous not so much with conscious activity as with unconscious tradition' noted Malik (Malik, 2000: 145). He relied on culture and history rather than on biology to explain an individual's behaviour and ultimately forgot reason and moral conscience. His position led him to say that 'we cannot remodel, without serious emotional resistance, any of the fundamental lines of thought and action which are determined by our early education, and which form the subconscious basis of all our activities' (Malik, 2000: 145). Thus, an individual is unlikely to change but, in addition, it is necessary for the individual to keep his particular culture.

Anthropologists began to think that the study of humanity involved the study of all different cultures. Boas encouraged his students to study all ethnic groups including the main culture in the United States. Many of his students became important anthropologists who developed some of his ideas but also managed to make anthropology an important academic discipline. They legitimised and popularised the idea of culture. Alfred L. Kroeber, Robert H. Lowie, Edward Sapir, Melville Herskovits, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead are some of his students who made their own important impact in the field of anthropology but also in our knowledge of the world and of ourselves.

UNESCO and culture

After the Second World War, the United Nations was founded with the official purpose of promoting international cooperation, preventing further conflicts, promoting social progress and support for the fundamental human rights. It is easy to forget the history of human rights. As Kirsten Sellars remarked, the ideal of human rights is not timeless or eternal but was developed during the Enlightenment. She gave a very interesting account of the people, diplomacy, campaigns and pragmatism that led us to the rise of human rights after World War II (Sellars, 2002).

The impact of anthropologists such as Boas and his students were clearly seen after the Second World War. After the war, members of the United Nations decided to create a special branch, UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation), under the directorship of biologist Julian Huxley, which would deal with questions concerning science and culture. They wanted to draw a line between the past associated with war and ignorance and the peaceful present connected with knowledge. The Allies had fought the war using as defence the idea that they were fighting against tyranny, racism and ignorance. Western scientific racism had become a big problem with its connection with Nazism and the Holocaust. After the systematic discrimination and annihilation of millions of people justified with racial and eugenics theories, many people started to see the race issue as a destructive force in society. The Jews had been persistently persecuted throughout the ages, but the notion of a 'Semitic' race was fully developed in the nineteenth century during the development of racial thinking. Thus, UNESCO claimed in its constitution that 'the great and terrible war that has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of the inequality of men and races' ('UNESCO Constitution', 1945). It is worth highlighting these few words again: '*propagation*, in their place, *through ignorance* and *prejudice'*. We have discussed a few of the intellectuals, scientists and other educated men who developed these ideas, the historical contexts for their development and some of the applications of these theories in politics and policies. Racial theories did not develop and propagate because of ignorance and prejudice. Nonetheless, in *The Race Concept: Results of an Inquiry*, published in 1952 by UNESCO, scientists argued that, until the 1920s, race prejudice 'only affected areas on the margin of civilization, or continents other than'

the European continent (UNESCO Paris, 1952). Trying to distance themselves from the Western history of racial thinking, they claimed it was 'the outcome of a fundamentally anti-rational system of thought' in 'conflict with the whole humanist tradition of our civilization' (UNESCO Paris, 1952). Racial doctrine does oppose the humanist tradition, but it is also a product of Western intellectual tradition, the tradition that challenged Enlightenment ideals.

After the war, UNESCO started to promote the notion that racism was the result of an individual's ignorance and behaviour. The United Nations Economic and Social Council asked UNESCO to consider 'initiating and recommending the general adoption of a programme of disseminating scientific facts designed to remove what is generally known as racial prejudice (UNESCO Paris, 1952). Individual psychology and irrationality are the source for the problems of racism, according to UNESCO, which stated that 'knowledge of the truth does not always help emotional attitudes that draw their real strength from the subconscious or from factors beside the real issue (UNESCO, 1950). This definition of racism as an individual's racial prejudice will later have considerable consequences on the fight against racism, with blame placed on the wrong and often the more powerless people.

Racial science versus anti-racist science

To build their program of education, UNESCO had invited a team of cultural anthropologists and sociologists, under the leadership of anthropologist and renowned anti-racist Ashley Montagu. Anthropology and sociology fields of studies, at the time, were already moving toward the idea of culture rather than race because of the consequences of Nazi applications of racial theories. They agreed that all men belonged to the same biological species, that 'national, religious, geographic, linguistic and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide with racial groups' and that it would be better "to drop the term 'race' altogether and speak of *ethnic groups".* Humanity was still classified into three major dynamic divisions which changed throughout history: The Mongoloid, Negroid and Causasoid divisions (UNESCO, 1950). Thus, they agreed with the concept of biological races understood as groups separated by a specific variation in certain genes but disagreed with the notion that biological differences determine social and cultural differences. There are no doubts about a biological variation within humanity, but the important issue is why certain variations

become socially meaningful and are used to divide people into ‘race’ or ‘ethnic group’ while others do not matter. We have already seen in section 3.6 ‘Culture, nation and immigration’ how immigration laws can define and redefine racial, ethnic and national categories and make them meaningful.

In accordance with the belief that racism can be fought with an educational program, the team noted that one common human trait ‘which above all others has been at a premium in the evolution of men’s mental characters has been educability, plasticity’ and that all ‘are capable of learning to share a common life’ (UNESCO, 1950). This plasticity of mind and the level of education were now defining the post-war ‘cultural man’ and could, together with social and cultural differences, explain the variation in human behaviour and mental characteristics. The notion of plasticity of mind and of brain (known as neuro-plasticity) is a vast subject in several academic fields such as neuroscience, psychology or education. It was in the late nineteenth-century that the concept of ‘plasticity’ was developed (Mateos-Aparicio and Rodríguez-Moreno, 2019). With plasticity of mind, education is now seen as the way to challenge a social problem or change the world. Since the twentieth century, the ‘educationalization of social problems’ is firmly grounded in Western societies even though there is little or no evidence that education has been successful in solving social problems (Depaepe and Smeyers, 2008; Labaree, 2008). However, Daniel Tröhler argued that the ‘educationalization of the modern world’ is a more comprehensive concept which understands what has been happening since the eighteenth century (Tröhler, 2016b). But what underlies the idea of plasticity and race? The belief in plasticity is the belief that human beings can be manipulated to support an idea rather than they need to be convinced for them rationally recognise the idea as right or good. The human mind is seen as plastic, malleable; therefore ‘education’, which usually mean assertions, statements, propaganda or images or words to guilt-trip, will make people know the right ideas they should be supporting. It is based on a very degraded view of other people and usually ordinary people. People need to be ‘educated’ as if they were young kids at school rather than be convinced as if they were adults with rational arguments. Their ability to reason is denied with the promotion of mental plasticity. In reality, despite decades of studies, the impact of education on racial attitudes is still a very much contested topic (Wodtke, 2012).

The contempt for people's ability to reason is not new and is also certainly not unique to one side of the political spectrum. John Carey, in his book *The Intellectuals and The Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (1992), argued that many 'founders of modern European culture' show contempt for the rapidly growing population of ordinary people, in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He had studied the reaction these intellectuals express, through their writing, against the 'masses'. When education meant access to humanity's knowledge, many were not happy with ordinary people getting into it. In England, the 'difference between the nineteenth-century mob and the twentieth-century mass' was 'literacy' and fear and contempt were the reactions to this change. The educational legislation at the end of the nineteenth century, the increased literacy of the working class and the development of newspapers catering for the lower classes provoked a hostile reaction from many European intellectuals (Carey, 1992: 3-22). Education which develops knowledgeable, intellectually autonomous and critical individuals is much more dangerous for those who want control and order than 'education' that teaches individuals to behave and think in specific and restricted manners.

Anyhow, geneticists and physical anthropologists were upset because they had not been invited to join the first UNESCO team. A second team which included eminent biologists such as Theodosius Dobzhansky and JBS Haldane was formed. They concluded that 'available scientific knowledge provides no basis for believing that the groups of mankind differ in their innate capacity for intellectual and emotional development' (UNESCO Paris, 1952). Naturally, this particular conclusion created a few reservations among other scientists. Racial science had been supported by many before the war. Between the 1930s where many still supported aspects of racial theories and 1946, with the UNESCO declaration, not much evidence had developed and yet many scientists had allegedly changed their minds (Degler, 1991: 205). We can see how politics, not science, had promoted but then later seemed to reject the idea of race. UNESCO was trying to use the authority of science to support its statements the same way racists had been using science to give authority to their racial theories. UNESCO had a big influence in the popularisation of the idea that cultures were the main forces that determine and shape human beings. The promotion of cultural relativism, originally developed by Boas and his students but further developed by others such as structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, popularised the notion

that humanity is separated into numerous cultures that can only be understood using norms, ideas, values and concepts found within each of these cultures. No hierarchy between cultures is possible because they cannot be judged with universal human notions.

Thus, in conclusion, we can say that, when the notion of races as biological categories was mostly abandoned, replaced by descriptions of cultural characteristics such as language and psychology, some of the basic beliefs and ideas underlying the notion of race still remained with the modern notion of culture. The world is still divided into discrete groups, cultural groups, and the characteristics of these groups is still seen as describing and causally determining people's morality, behaviour opinions and psychology. There are, however, important differences. The notion of superiority and inferiority used in the notion of race is mostly replaced by the concept of 'different but equal', where universal standards are denied. Each culture describes a different world and thus, cannot be judged by universal standards.

The notion of culture developed with the notion of 'inner essence' which grew out of Romanticism. The 'inner essence' is shared by a specific cultural community. This cultural community can also describe a national community or a nation. We have seen in this chapter the strong historical, social and intellectual links between nation, culture and race.

It is also important to note how scientific racism was abandoned after World War Two and how the notion of racism was turned into a problem of individuals' ignorance, psychology and morality. This change in defining racism had, of course, strong effects on the development of modern anti-racism, where educating individuals and changing their psychology has become the mainstream method to fight racism.

4. Self

The question 'who am I?' is not a new question but a very important philosophical question that has been asked and answered in many different ways throughout history since antiquity. The attempt to understand nature was probably the first philosophical concern which started before Socrates. However, early Greek or pre-Socratic thinkers were not only interested in questions about the physical world. Questions of religion and ethics were also part of their interests (Curd, 2020). The willingness to understand nature and the subsequent belief that humans were not simply part of it led to the question of human nature. Of course, the fundamental basis of this question and for many others is human curiosity and thirst for knowledge. The answers involve many different conceptions of the self and of human nature. The notion of personal identity developed later as part of the development of modern philosophy. It is worth looking briefly at the origins and historical development of the philosophical question of the self because the ways we see ourselves today, the ways we define our personhood and our identities including our racial identity are influenced by the numerous pathways and ideas developed throughout this history. But more importantly, it is useful to compare the perceptions of the self in the past and in the present to try and understand some of the distinctive features of the notions of identity and identity politics today. I am mentioning only a few of the philosophers involved in these questions due to space but also because the purpose of this thesis is not to present an exhaustive history of the self. All philosophers are of course influenced by the society in which they live and by the particular culture around them. The specific social and political questions and concerns discussed during a historical period are very important for the development of the philosophical search. However, while giving some aperçus of the social situations, I will mostly concentrate on the individual philosophers and some of their ideas.

The self in the ancient world

Greek pre-Socratic Ionian philosopher Heraclitus de Ephesus (535 - 475 B.C.E.) is thought to be one of the first philosophers to start the question about the concept of self (Gerson, 1992: 249) (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 9-11). With his comment 'Nature likes to hide itself', Heraclitus was combining the pre-Socratic interests in nature and in 'the contrast between appearance and reality' (Gerson, 1992: 249). He and

Xenophanes of Colophon (570 - 478 B.C.E.) not only focussed more on humanity but also started to examine ‘the nature of inquiry’, the possibility and limits of human understanding (Curd, 2020). He is famous for his belief that the world is in constant state of flux. He is believed to have said that ‘you cannot step into the same river twice’ but what he meant by this comment is disputed. It may mean that the river will be the same river, at the same place, but because of the constant flux, it will also be different than previously encountered. It can also mean that because of the constant flux, nothing is the same from one moment to another. This can be seen as the historical beginning of the discussion concerning identity. What is the identity of object or human over time? Are we the same person if we download our mind into an artificial intelligence? If we clone ourselves, how would we define the clones? Will the clones be me?

Heraclitus’s full doctrine was that flux and opposition was necessary for life. He did not oppose war, and in fact, he is thought to have declared that: ‘War is the father of all and the king of all’ (de Burgh, 1923: 123). To achieve harmony in the world, the constant conflict between opposites is necessary. Much of Heraclitus’s writing has not survived and his thoughts are mainly known through the quotations of Plato and Aristotle (Russell, 1991: 62). Humans have souls which are a mixture of fire and water with water as bad and fire as good, he claimed. The soul first arises from water but if the individual lives well by becoming wiser with self-understanding, the soul dries out. When the body dies, the wet or moist soul returns to water. The dry souls ‘join the cosmic fire’ (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 11).

Socrates (‘470’?-399 B.C.E.) did not leave his own writing because he believed that direct conversations between people with exchange of ideas were more important. His thoughts are interpreted through the writing of others. Unsatisfied with the study of nature and the physical explanations proposed by other philosophers, Socrates turned toward the study of human life as his main concern. He is often seen as the first who focused on the problem of the self (Cornford, 1932) (2007: 4). The motto ‘Know thyself’ inscribed on the Temple of Delphi is seen to represent the philosophy of Socrates who believed that knowledge was possible. He believed his role as a philosopher was to examine himself and other men, that ‘the greatest benefit for a person to converse every day about goodness’ and that ‘an unexamined life is no life for a human being

to live' (Plato and Gallop, 2008: 54). He went on trial and died for his continuous questioning and for corrupting the minds of the youth. But his constant demands for people not to accept beliefs and ideas without rational questioning and his question as to what a good life is are still very much relevant today. The contemporary search to define our personal identities and for understanding what makes us happy or uncomfortable is influenced by the philosophical attitude started by Socrates. He argued that each person had an immortal soul and that happiness was to make the soul as perfect as possible. Self-knowledge and wisdom were more important than social success because, for Socrates, the perfection of the soul or self is 'the true end of life' (Cornford, 1932: 37). The interaction within the soul between the rational part and the desire part will determine whether a person leads a good life.

Many of Socrates's thoughts are related by the Athenian philosopher Plato (428/427 – 348/347 BCE) who was inspired by Socrates but who later developed his own philosophy. Jerrod Seigel argued that discussions of the self in Antiquity were often related to the questions of death and immortality. He suggested that Plato was the first to argue that 'the core of each person's existence is an *immaterial* soul, which by its nature is immortal.' (my own italics) (Seigel, 2005: 46). The idea of the immaterial soul was accepted and later developed by Christianity. Death, for Plato, is believed to be the deliverance of the immortal soul from the body, 'where it has sojourned only as a stranger and pilgrim' (Cornford, 1932: 77). Knowledge is present in the soul, but 'latent and unconscious'. The soul has seen the Truth before it arrived in the body and it must attempt to recover the Truth during the life of a wise man (Cornford, 1932: 71). Plato saw the individual soul formed by three parts. A person has reason, unlike animals. He has also what is called *thymos* in Greek defined as passion or 'spirited part of human character'. And thirdly, he has desires and cravings, the appetitive part of the soul. When there is conflict between reason and desire, 'the function of the *thymos* is to side with the reason' (Guthrie, 1997: 112-113). As philosopher Charles Taylor argued, Plato sees the good man as the 'master of himself', when reason rules over desires. If one is ruled by one's desires, one can never be satisfied and thus, cannot be calm. One is ruled by chaos if desires rule in the individual but has 'unity with oneself, calm and collected self-possession' when reason rules. In essence, 'rationality is tied to the perception of order' (Taylor, 1989: 115-126). But as we saw above, the immortal soul is temporarily in the body and thus, 'to be ruled by reason

means to have one's life shapes by a pre-existent rational order'. Taylor argued that the idea of reason *made* rather than *found* was developed later. René Descartes, French philosopher in the seventh century, is seen as the representative of this 'internalisation' (Taylor, 1989: 124). Interestingly, Raymond Martin and John Barresi suggested that Plato's division of the soul, with the spirited and appetitive parts seen as beastlike lower parts, may be interpreted as the origin of the idea of the unconscious. Augustine's idea of the self as a psychological self in conflict seemed to follow Plato's notion and was later developed by philosophers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries such as Montaigne and Shaftesbury and by Rousseau in the eighteenth century. Schopenhauer and then Nietzsche in the nineteenth century again used the notion of a soul divide and in conflict but Freud later described the lower parts as aspect of 'the unconscious' (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 20).

Aristotle's work (384-322 B.C.E.) had a great deal of influence on Christian, Islamic and Jewish philosophers, especially in the medieval period. The appearance in Europe, in the twelfth centuries, of the translation of his writings by Islamic thinkers, the work on Aristotle's philosophy by Islamic philosophers as well as the advanced development of Islamic science had a major impact in challenging old Christian beliefs. Two of the most pre-eminent Islamic philosophers were Persian Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abdallah ibn Sina ('980'?-1037) whose name was latinised to Avicenna and Abu al-Walid ibn Rushd (1126-1198) whose name was latinised to Averroes. So important was Aristotle in the Middles Ages, that he was simply known as 'the Philosopher' and Averroes as 'the Commentator' (Henry, 2012: 34). Aristotle was a pupil of Plato for twenty years. The denial of one of the most influential Platonic ideas in Western philosophy, the world of Forms, is his main dissent from Platonism. Plato had argued that the real world was not the material world but a world of Forms or 'Ideas'. He believed in the possibility of knowledge and in the possibility of having a universal and unique understanding of the world. However, the world changes or is not seen the same way by all. To argue for the possibility of absolute truths or meanings, he proposed the notion that there is a 'Form' or 'ideal' for all concepts and objects. This 'Form' is fixed, not influenced by different human perceptions and represents the real nature of things. Aristotle disagreed and believed that the Forms had no real existence 'apart from the visible and tangible things which embody them' (Cornford, 1932: 88).

Living beings, according to Aristotle, had different kinds of souls. The vegetative soul is the soul that the allow the being to nourish itself and reproduce. Plants have this soul. The sensitive soul has the power of the vegetative soul but also allow the being to have sensations, to feel and to desire. Animals have the sensitive soul. Humans, however, have the ability to reason and to think and thus, possess the rational soul which has, in addition to the ability to reason, all the powers of both the vegetative and the sensitive souls. In Aristotle's philosophy, the soul is not separated from the body and so, it dies when the body does (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 22).

Other ancient influences on Western philosophy of the self comes via the Atomism school of thought and the Greek and Roman Stoic philosophies. Atomism explains the physical world as composed of small and indivisible bodies called atoms. This is a materialist natural philosophy which proposes that the real world is only the atoms which assemble, separate and move around to form larger entities. A materialist conception of the self is a common feature of our contemporary explanations for personhood and individual identity. Stoicism was founded by Zeno of Citium (335-263 B.C.E.), a materialist. His well-known disciple Chrysippus (280-206 B.C.E.) was the principal promoter of Greek Stoicism. Both Greek and Roman Stoicism developed separately and thus there are many ideas within the school. But Stoic philosophers, in general, push for behaviours according to one's specific character which would improve one's moral worth. To them, goodness or virtue is inherent in the world and humans, seen as all equal, should act in human affairs and promote the good with their reason and actions. They had also materialist conception of the self. Chrysippus is thought to have argued that 'we live to the extent that we breathe' and that 'soul is what makes us live, and breath is what makes us breathe, so soul and breath are identical' (Kenny, 2010: 198).

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 C.E.), a Roman emperor, Seneca (4 B.C.E.-65 C.E.), an advisor to an emperor (Nero) and Epictetus ('55'?-135? C.E.), born a slave and lived in Rome before his freedom and banishment, are three other Stoic philosophers who had and still have a lot of impact on philosophy and on our contemporary principles. Epictetus put a lot of emphasis on individual character, behaviour and moral worth. There is a certain fatalism in Epictetus's philosophy. God gave individuals distinct qualities and character and to act morally is to act according to one's given character.

The social circumstances and individual character are not chosen by individuals, but the individualistic component of his philosophy says that individuals can choose to act according to their own true self, to the individual character given to them by God. 'The possession of a particular talent is instinctively sensed by its owner' says Epictetus in response to the question 'But how do we know what is in keeping with our character?'. If one is meant to be part of a crowd, one should make sure to be part of a crowd. If one is meant to be a dissenter, then one should try to be a dissenter. Both the conformist and the dissenter should not be asking the other to change their actions (Epictetus, [135 C.E.] 2010: 5-9).

The problem of individual character and personal identity seems to be an important aspect of Stoic philosophy. They had a particular interest in self-interrogation. David Sedley argued that the Stoic school is the first to really attempt to understand assumptions behind the notion of personal identity. A play written by the comic playwright Epicharmus in the fifth century B.C.E. seems to be the earliest occasion where the puzzle of personal identity is highlighted. It will be subsequently discussed as the Growing Argument by those concerned with change and identity. In the play, a lender organising a banquet asks a borrower to pay what he owes, to attend the forthcoming banquet. The borrower, unable to pay, asks the lender, if one adds or subtracts a pebble from a certain amount of pebbles would the resulting amount of pebbles be the same as it was before the addition or subtraction. The lender says no. The borrower gives another example and again the lender agrees that a thing that has been cut is not the same as the thing originally unchanged. 'Well now,' says the borrower, 'think of men in the same way. One man is growing, another is diminishing, and all are constantly in the process of change. But what by its nature changes and never stays put must already be different from what it has changed from. You and I are different today from who we were yesterday, and by the same argument we will be different again and never the same in the future'. The lender agrees so the borrower explains that he is not the same man who contracted the debt and not the same man who will be going to the banquet. After being hit by the annoyed lender, the borrower complains but is then told that the man who hit him a minute ago is not the same man as the one still standing there (Sedley, 1982: 255-256). Chrysippus attempted to answer the paradox with an argument that was similar to what John Locke used in the seventeenth century. If we describe a person as a 'lump of matter', then this person

may be changing his identity from moment to moment but if a person is described as a person, the identity does not change. Stoic theory uses four 'levels' of existence to describe every individual: 'substrate', 'qualified', 'disposed' and 'relatively disposed'. In his argument, Chrysippus maintained that our 'substrate' or substance has no endurance over time i.e. the body does change. However, the 'qualified' individual has qualities that stay through time, thus different 'lump of matter' but same individual human throughout one's life. Sedley argued that Chrysippus is the first to develop this principle of non-identity (Sedley, 1982: 257-260). This is, of course, still a current philosophical discussion as well as an important concern for everyday life. What are the qualities that are useful in identifying an individual as unique but as the same individual throughout his life? Are skin colour, race, ethnicity or culture qualities which can be used in describing the personal identity of an individual? Has Rachel Dolezal stop to be herself when she claimed to be a black woman and has her identity changed again when she was 'outed'? (Aitkenhead, 2017).

Moral conscience is one of the core concepts in the philosophical question of the self, but it is also an important issue to understand when considering the qualities and defaults of what is called identity politics today. According to Richard Sorabji, moral conscience was established and developed by the ancient Greeks and Romans. He argued that the original meaning of both the Greek and Latin expressions is 'sharing knowledge with *oneself* of a defect, almost always a moral one of being in the *wrong*'. It suggests a mind split into two selves with one self trying to hide the guilty knowledge. Thus, 'conscience is a form of self-awareness that always remain *personal*, and concerned with *particular* defects' (Sorabji, 2014: 2). Different conceptions developed since Antiquity but what is interesting to note here is that most understandings of moral conscience connect it with *rationality* even if the consequences of using one's moral conscience can be emotional responses (Sorabji, 2014: 35).

Historian Jerrod Seigel argued that the understanding of modern selfhood has been organised historically through three distinct and broad dimensions since the seventeenth century. They reflect some similarities with the Stoic levels. These three dimensions, described by Seigel, are the bodily or material dimension, the relational and the reflective dimensions. The bodily dimension concerns the physical existence of the individual self. It includes the body but also what we would see as basic needs,

urges and temperaments (Seigel, 2005: 5). Seigel argued that the self in this bodily dimension seems to be independent of time and place (Seigel, 2005: 7). But is it really independent of time and place, especially when the dimension is so broad as to include the body as well as the self 'shaped by the body's needs'? Human needs are historically specific. He admitted that the categories are broad enough to have different and even opposite meanings to different thinkers. The second dimension is the relational dimension and 'arises from social and cultural interaction, the common connections and involvements that gives us collective identities and shared orientations and values'. Our selves, in this dimension, 'are what our relations with society and with others shape and allow us to be'. The third dimension is the reflective dimension defined by 'human capacity to make both the world and our own existence objects of our active regard, to turn a kind of mirror not only on phenomena in the world…but on our consciousness too, putting ourselves at a distance from our own being so as to examine, judge, and sometimes regulate or revise it' (Seigel, 2005: 5-6). The historical changes show that the contemporary notions of self and identity are not fixed but more importantly, that the progress in knowledge of the self is not linear. Humans constantly transform their own understanding of themselves and of the world. Different social and historical circumstances are affecting the way humans understand themselves but the variation in understanding will also have an effect on human ideas and actions. In essence, the self is a product of history.

God and the self

All three big monotheistic religions found in the West, Judaism, Christianity and Islam were influenced by Greek philosophy but also greatly influenced the later philosophy of the self. Many of their thinkers tried to combine their belief in a universal single God and man created in God's image with Greek philosophy and morality and old pagan traditions and thoughts. For the ancient Greeks, there were emphases on reason, importance of knowledge, teaching and improving one's moral worth. They introduced the art of politics, of reasoning, of arguments and counter-arguments and of speaking in public to convince others. Their quest to understand nature and themselves and to separate the 'good' selves from the 'bad' selves was not done by attempting to improve their religious doctrines but by demanding the use of human reason. For the Hebrews, the difference was faith and the special relationship of the Jewish people with God. Thinkers from the other two later religions also tried to push the notion of faith and for

a good relationship with a powerful God while developing the concept of the self. However, it is important to note that in the Qur'an, the pursuit of knowledge was still particularly emphasised. Acquiring knowledge on many subjects was seen as an Islamic virtue and was encouraged.

The Book of Genesis, the first book of the Hebrew bible and the Christian Old Testament is meant to describe God's creation of the world and of humanity as the title of the book indicates. '1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2. But earth was in chaos, and darkness covered the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. 3. God said 'Let there be light', and there was light.' (own translation) (Gen 1:1-1:3) (Osty and Trinquet, 1973). Most importantly for our discussion here is that God created man in God's image and wanted humanity to dominate over the animals and the rest of the world. (Gen 1:26). The book explains the creation of the first human couple Adam and Eve, the couple's hunger for knowledge and their subsequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden because of disobedience (Gen 2:7-3:24). The story of Adam and Eve and the notion of the original sin as well as the other stories such as those of Abel and Cain, Noah and his ark, Noah's sons, Abram and God's special relationship with the Jewish people had and still has a very profound influence on Western conceptions of the world, humanity, human nature, the self and personal identity.

The belief that humans were created in God's image drove philosophical reflections toward notions of human nature and personhood. Martin and Barresi argued that, with the thought that a powerful God is able to know everything about each individual's mind and soul, reflections on the self became more concerned with human subjectivity (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 54). Ancient philosophy talked about immaterial soul, immortal soul, or whether the death of the body will result in the death of the soul. With the three religions, the notion of an afterlife where humans will be judged on their actions and thoughts on earths and the belief of a possible resurrection of the human body were introduced. These ideas encouraged 'philosophical reflection not only on personal identity over time but on the identity of the body over time' (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 54).

Augustine (354-430), Christian philosopher and one of the church fathers, tried to create a coherent synthesis of Christianity's beliefs while examining and discussing ideas and notions from Antiquity. He did not see his work as trying to create an historically correct understanding of human history but as providing a prophetic insight (Hannaford, 1996: 94). His thoughts on many issues such as human freedom, the soul, sin, human psychology, sex, salvation and theory of time had profound influence in the Middle Ages and remains very influential today. His most famous work is the *Confessions* where he described his relationships with himself and with God. His autobiography became a model in Western tradition of autobiography. In telling his story, he refocused the notion of the self on human subjectivity and human will. Larry Siedentop argued that:

> For Augustine, the conscious action of the individual has now to be understood as mysterious merger of intellect and feeling, the result of an obscure process in which the heart is 'stirred'. By understanding the will as a compound of intention and feeling, Augustine in effect repudiates the assumption that had pervaded ancient thinking: the assumption that reason, largely from its own resources, can motivate (Siedentop, 2015: 103).

In constructing the notion of the active self, Augustine was, in fact, making the emotional part of an individual, which is seen as faith, more important than the rational side. He was not developing the notion of the rational mind but destroying the rationalism of Greek philosophy. With his autobiography, he promoted the idea that humans needed to explore their subjectivity to care for and love their own soul. With the description of his innermost struggles, of his relationship with God, and of his doubts, he elaborated the idea of the self with internal and psychological conflict. He internalised the self. To understand ourselves and the truth, we need to go inward. 'Do not go outward, return to yourself. Truth dwells within' is one of his very famous comments (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 70-71). Inside the soul of the individual lies God and the truth. Taylor explained the focus on inwardness: 'Augustine shifts the focus from the field of objects known to the activity itself of knowing…For in contrast to the domain of objects, which is public and common, the activity of knowing is particularized; each of us is engaged in ours. To look towards this activity is to look to the self, to take up a reflexive stance' (Taylor, 1989: 130).

In the West, Christian conceptions of the self, including those influenced by Aristotle thoughts rediscovered in the Middle Ages, have dominated until the Renaissance. Thirteenth century scholar Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-1274) was one of the most important philosophers who have tried to integrate Aristotle into Christian doctrine (Kerr, 2009: 16). He actually reversed the relationship between reason and faith proposed by Augustine. He said that 'Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, which is why natural reason ministers to faith and the natural inclination of the will ministers to charity' (Kerr, 2009: 33). Aquinas believed that human reason, given by God, does not corrupt faith but perfect it.

The self in the modern world

In the seventeenth-century, Aristotelianism and the primacy of God were both questioned. What is important to note here is that until the seventeenth century, when the identity of a person was considered, it was mostly understood as meaning the membership or non-membership of a particular community. In Ancient Greece, the important question was the membership of the *polis*, the community of citizens. Those outside the *polis* had no identity and were simply part of the private household realm or members of a non-Greek speaking communities often labelled as *barbaros* (Siedentop, 2015: 7-47). With the three monotheistic religions, the concern was the membership of the faith communities. The notion of personal identity, important notion for the contemporary discussions about identity and identity politics, will only start to really develop in the seventeenth century. Both the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were periods of big social changes with the rise of capitalist economy, the decrease in authority of the old institutions such as the Monarchy or the Church and the destruction of traditional communities. The new interest in the empirical study of nature, which started in late Renaissance and the increased scepticism toward the religious doctrines encouraged atheism. These developments were a problem for the previous worldview (Henry, 2012). There was a doubt as to whom and what would provide directions and a meaningful system for human morality, social attitude and behaviour. In the middle of this crisis in thoughts, French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes (1596-1650) attempted to develop a coherent system of natural philosophy, a new vision of the world and a new idea of the self. His work greatly influenced modern scientific worldview and provided the initial ground for

modern philosophy. His first publication *A Discourse on the Method: Rightly Directing One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (1637) attempted to present a method that would challenge scepticism and scholasticism and help humanity in reaching the truth. The statement '*Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am)' was to give an argument no sceptical thinker could reject. If he was able to think and doubt the truth of what he thinks because his senses may give him the wrong ideas, then this proves he existed. This thought, he claimed, was the first principle of his philosophy (Descartes and Fataud, [1637]1984: 100). He argued that humans have a body but also a thinking soul, distinct from the body and independent of the material world. The rational and immortal soul, currently understood as the mind, and matter inhabit two different realms of existence. The death of the body would not mean the death of the soul (Descartes and Fataud, [1637] 1984: 102). His separation between mind and matter, known as the cartesian dualism, is still very relevant today in our thinking about human nature. How can we reconcile the understanding of humans as bodies understood scientifically and the notion of free will, consciousness and self? Descartes was a Christian and one of his intentions was to defend the existence of God. But atheists later used his philosophy to develop materialist philosophical doctrines with no God, no soul and no other immaterial entities, thus seeing humans as only matter.

His argument for the existence of God was based on the notion that humans can have, in their own minds, the perfect idea. The presence of the perfect idea proves the existence of the perfect being (Descartes and Fataud, [1637] 1984: 103-104). The important step, Descartes made in defining human beings, was to put the self/mind 'as a defining feature of a human being and as a means of acquiring truth' argued Kenan Malik. 'With Descartes the mind became fully interior and the private possession of the individual' (Malik, 2014: 180). This is one of the most important features separating modern philosophy from pre-modern philosophy. He argued that the inner self is the means which allows humans to acquire knowledge and find the truth. So, according to Descartes, humans were thinking entities and nature was like a machine. Animals had no souls like humans but were simply complex machines. Natural objects, including biological objects like human bodies, could be explained in mechanistic terms with precise natural laws. He developed what is known today as his 'mechanical philosophy' (Henry, 2012: 132-137). Several seventeenth-century

philosophers provided alternatives to Descartes's understanding of the self. French Catholic philosopher Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) was a materialist who attempted to reconcile Epicurean atomism with Christian beliefs. He argued that humans had a corporeal soul which produces biological effects like sensation and digestion and an incorporeal soul, created by God and which make humans self-conscious (Martin and Barresi, 2006: 132). He influenced German philosopher and important thinker of the Enlightenment Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). For Leibniz, material objects are made with small, invisible and immaterial nomads that are conscious due to the internal drive given to them by God. But humans are not simply an aggregate of nomads but have a human soul made of a single dominant nomad. He rejected the dualism of mind and body with the body and soul made of nomads (Kenny, 2010: 673-676).

English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), considered to be one of the founders of political philosophy, strongly disagreed with Descartes's dualism, arguing a materialist position which challenged the existence of immaterial entities. Human souls are material. Non-corporeal entities, including soul or angels did not exist. Worried about the turmoil in England, Hobbes finally fled to Paris in 1640, two years before the beginning of English civil war. He met Descartes and Gassendi there. His most famous work *Leviathan* was written in Paris and published in England in 1651. He returned home the following year. His work and his materialist position had offended some Royalists and the French clerical authorities (Hobbes and Gaskin, 2008: XVI-XVII). Humans, outside society, is seen by Hobbes, as humans in a state of nature where their only concern is self-preservation. But nature has made humans 'equal, in the faculties of the body, and mind' (Hobbes and Gaskin, 2008: 82, chap13). This leads to an 'equality of hope in the attaining of our ends' with all humans desiring the same goods (Hobbes and Gaskin, 2008: 83). With such a nature and equality, humans are in constant 'state of war', fighting each other to fulfil their personal needs and living in 'continual fear, and danger of violent death' (Hobbes and Gaskin, 2008: 84). Rational humans have a 'right of nature' which allow them to do anything they want to preserve their own lives but left unchecked, there is no security. Thus, the first law of nature obliges men to seek peace by following the rule of reason. This rule of reason is in two parts: the right of nature to do what is wanted to defend one's life and the first law of nature forcing humans to seek peace. The second law of nature then is

the demand for humans to give up their right of nature to a central power which will make sure no-one goes back on the contract. All individuals accept a covenant between them all and form society together (Hobbes and Gaskin, 2008: 86-95, chap 14). Society becomes the civilising influence for humans. The most interesting point here, in relation to the philosophy of self, is the new existence of the individual as agent creating society. The individuals, with their own needs, made the contract in order to form a society they want. In the past, members of societies were seen simply as individuals adapting to a fixed and ordered society. But Hobbes's material definition of human nature implies a fixed human nature (Malik, 2014: 185).

Philosopher and political theorist Michael Oakeshott claimed that the history of political philosophy, in relation to the intellectual history of Europe, has three traditions. The first tradition has the 'master-conceptions of Reason and Nature' and Plato's *Republic* may be chosen as representative. The second tradition has the 'master-conceptions of Will and Artifice', started in ancient Greece, was influenced by Jewish and Islamic thoughts and has Hobbes's *Leviathan* as representative. The 'master-conception of the third is the Rational Will' and Hegel's *Philosophy of the Right* is the representative masterpiece (Oakeshott, 2000: 7-8). Most people view Hobbes's philosophy as a materialist philosophy, but Oakeshott argued that Hobbes's philosophy is based on what he had considered as the nature of philosophy. 'Philosophy is reasoning' and 'reasoning is concerned solely with causes and effects'. This means, for him, that philosophy excludes anything in the world that cannot be understood with the notion of cause and effect. Oakeshott argued that Hobbes does not deny the existence of immaterial things but their rationality. The mechanistic element of Hobbes's writings is due to his rationalism (Oakeshott, 2000: 16-19). It is unclear whether Hobbes believed in God or not.

One of the main issues with Descartes's philosophy is the lack of a cause-and-effect bridge explaining the relationship between mind and matter. Spinoza was originally influenced by Descartes but, in a way, he went further than Descartes and eliminated the bridge. Dutch Jewish philosopher, Benedictus (Baruch) de Spinoza (1632-1677), was one of the many important philosophers produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and an early Enlightenment figure. It is often thought that the fact that he was excommunicated from his own Jewish community for having objectionable

views had a strong effect on his philosophical ideas, but Jonathan Israel argued that he was developing his philosophical system years before his excommunication in 1656, at 23 years of age (Israel, 2002: 162-174). The exact reason for his ex-communication are unknown but the motives for his philosophising are thought to be to answer the question ‘What is a genuinely good life for a human being?’ (Spinoza et al., [1677] 1989: IX-XI). In trying to answer the question, he challenged many of the fundamentals ideas of religion, tradition, morality, politics, ethics and definition of a human being. Interestingly, he is one of the few philosophers, since antiquity, who had to earn his living working with his hands, grinding and making lenses. His masterpiece Ethics was finished by 1675 but because of clerical opposition and the fear of prosecution, it was published only posthumously in 1677 (Spinoza et al., [1677] 1989: XVI).

Modern philosophy and mechanistic worldviews were slowly developing, in the seventeenth century, but the religious institutions were still in power opposing these new changes. Spinoza, unlike Descartes, argued that there is only one substance which he called ‘God or Nature’ (more of a Stoic God than a religious God) which has the attributes of both matter and thought. For him, there is a single reality, one set of rules governing reality and humans are completely part of it. He disagreed then with the Cartesian universe in which mind and matter are separated in distinct realms. As Jonathan Israel explained, Spinoza thought that everything was determined including humans. Like Hobbes, he thought that humans were guided by a drive for self-preservation. The existence of beneficial objects such as food, which help humans in their survival, are wrongly explained by the presence of an agency and a directing divine ruler(s) creating everything. In effect, Spinoza argued that religions were the consequences of psychological determination and superstitious nature (Israel, 2002: 230-232). He claimed that ‘Nature has no end set before it, and all final causes are nothing but humans fictions.’ (Israel, 2002: 233). It follows that notions of ’good’ and ‘evil’, beauty or sin do not exist in nature but are relative notions created by human imagination (Israel, 2002: 233). True and false ideas are equally real because they come from human perception which can make mistakes. Everything in the universe is ruled by a logical necessity, including human actions and thoughts and thus, truth and falseness can only be understood and discovered with reason using mathematical methods. Bertrand Russell argued that Spinoza was trying to liberate humans ‘from

the tyranny of fear'. The rule of logical necessity means that humans cannot change the future themselves because their actions and thoughts are also determined by this necessity. Hope and fear are useless because what will be will be (Russell, 1991: 556). The understanding and knowledge of humanity's place in the deterministic universe will liberate humans. Freedom is not freedom from the logical necessity but from fear and ignorance. Only reason will help humans understand everything in nature, including human emotions such as hate or jealousy. If humans believe they are outside the 'universal laws of nature', they 'believe that man disturbs rather than follows the order of nature'. Thus, they 'then attribute the cause of human weakness and inconstancy not to the universal power of nature, but to some defect or other in human nature, wherefore they deplore, ridicule, despise, or, what is most common of all, abuse it' (Spinoza et al., [1677] 1989: 83). But Spinoza argued that:

> Nothing happens in nature which can be attributed to a defect of it: for nature is always the same, and its virtue and power of acting is everywhere one and the same, that is, the laws and rules of nature according to which all things are made and changed from one form into another, are everywhere and always the same, and therefore there must be one and the same way of understanding the nature of all things, that is, by means of the universal laws and rules of nature (Spinoza et al., [1677] 1989: 84, part III)

Abusing and ridiculing emotions is based on a misunderstanding of the world, of nature and of humans' place in the world. Understanding emotions must be done through using the same logical necessity that rules the universe. And given that mind and body are one substance, the mind had no absolute power over the actions of the body and thus no absolute power over the emotions. But 'in so far as the mind understands all things as necessary it has more power over the emotions, or, is less passive in regard to them' Spinoza declared (Spinoza et al., [1677] 1989: Part V, Prop. VI, 204). The choice humans have is to accept this reality and be active or to ignore it and be affected by our emotions such as jealousy and hatred. As Malik observed:

> The importance of Spinoza lies not in his claim that things cannot be otherwise but in his belief that the human condition can be rationally understood and that

> out of this understanding emerge the tools with which we can transform ourselves (Malik, 2014: 189).

In the philosophy of Spinoza, there is one world and individuals can free themselves by rationally understand it. This knowledge is the basis of virtue.

Israel suggested that "the concept of a 'crisis of the European mind' in the late seventeenth century as a transitional phase sandwiched between the confessional era and the Enlightenment was introduced into modern historiography" by historian Paul Hazard (1878-1944). In his book *La Crise de la Conscience Européenne (The European Mind 1680-1715)* (1935), Hazard looked mainly at France, but he described the intellectual upheaval with the conflicts between the old religious outlook, Aristotelianism and the newly emerging philosophical trends of the Enlightenment. Israel thought the crisis occurred earlier (1650-1680) when considering more than France and that the period 1680-1750 is a revolutionary period of rethinking with an emphasis on rationalism and secularism (Israel, 2002: 20). The trends in the philosophy of the self was affected by these developments in the Western world.

If religious and dogmatic doctrines or the cosmic order cannot help any longer in defining morality, what can replace them? Empiricism became one of the answers proposed. *Quid est Veritas?* What is Truth? In England, with the early rise of the market economy and the upheavals, questions on the meaning of truth, knowledge and the individual with its specific social and moral attitudes became even more central. English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) tried to answer these questions by arguing that, with our own senses and experiences, the mind can reach a certain understanding of the truth. His goal was also to determine the limits of human understanding. Locke is often seen as the philosopher who developed the notion of personal identity and turned scholars' attention toward exploring ideas of 'psychological truths, truths present in the mind, living, constant, and indefectible' (Hazard and May, [1935] 1973: 278). The concept of personal identity involves the matter of grasping what makes an individual the same person over the course of his life, despite the physical, emotional, moral and intellectual changes. The transformations during an individual's life have not been understood in the same ways throughout history, as seen above with notions of an immortal soul for example. Most

contemporary theories assume the body as the basis of the self and of personal identity. We see this well with the slogan ‘my body, my choice’. Locke introduced the notions of the self and of truth which comprise the mind and individual experiences. Rather than the presence of a single immortal and immaterial soul, an individual human has his own mind which increases its knowledge through the senses. His book *An essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) revealed his new conception of the human mind, the origins of ideas, knowledge and morality. He did not believe that humans could obtain any absolute comprehension of things around them. There are limitations to human knowledge, and this needed to be accepted. According to Locke, there are no such things as innate ideas. The ideas of self, identity, of God, of things around humans are not innate. At birth, the human mind is a *tabula rasa* or blank slate and later experiences help in forming thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. But he was both an empiricist and a rationalist. He believed the mind was a product of experiences but that human reason was also involved in forming ideas. Sensations experienced, while living in the world, will affect the individual rational mind which will then create complex and abstract notions and ideas and build knowledge (Seigel, 2005: 88-89). In Locke’s words:

> Since the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident that our knowledge is only conversant about them…knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas (cited in (Hazard and May, [1935] 1973: 285; Book IV, Chap 1).

Paul Hazard interpreted Locke’s understanding of knowledge as:

> The relationship now is not between subject and object, but – something much more simple – between subject and subject, and henceforth the struggle to eliminate the possibility of error is no more than a domestic concern, of taking and maintaining internal precautions (Hazard and May, [1935] 1973: 285).

This is a very important point. Knowledge is produced and corrected in the mind of the individual from sense perception and reflection. His orientation to psychology

encountered quite a few attacks because of fear that it will create a moral and cultural crisis. The content of individual minds changes regularly and thus, personal stability would not be possible. If there is no innate morality, would reason be enough to help individuals conduct themselves morally? (Seigel, 2005: 89-91).

The philosopher Charles Taylor described Locke's self as 'punctual' or 'disengaged' and sees it as one of the most important developments for the modern self. The motive for the rise in using scientific understanding of the self was to get control over the cosmic order and God. The initial resulting disengagement of the self was due to a search for control as well as new conception of the knowledge. However, the self became more disengaged with the works of Descartes and Locke. The next step in disengagement involved the objectification of individuals' senses with Descartes's idea that experiences are ideas in the mind. A first-person experience, like pain, is now seen as an impersonal idea that can be used to describe other individuals' experiences. According to Taylor, Locke went even further than Descartes, in creating the punctual self, when he rejected the notions of innate ideas and innate moral tendency. But more importantly, the punctual self is created when Locke apparently argued that the mind, after receiving sensations, passively and mechanistically construct knowledge by adding simple ideas together to form complex ideas. For Taylor, in creating the picture of the world as described by Locke:

> We wrest the control of our thinking and outlook away from passion or custom or authority and assume responsibility for it ourselves. Locke's theory generates and also reflects an ideal of independence and self-responsibility, a notion of reason as free from established custom and locally dominant authority (Taylor, 1989: 167).

The problem is that 'knowledge for Locke isn't genuine unless' developed by the individual (Taylor, 1989: 167). Thus, according to Taylor, what distinguishes classical philosophers such as Plato with Descartes, Locke, Kant and most people in the modern world, is a radical reflexivity where the previously inner self only understands the world through a first-person perspective (Taylor, 1989: 176). But Locke was wrestling with the question of personal identity. As philosopher Roger Scruton

suggested, he was trying to know if a specific individual could have a different history from the body in which he is embodied. We have seen his notion of *tabula rasa*.

According to Roger Scruton, Kant put the rational being before the body to understand the self. He thought that the conscious 'I' was the crucial feature of the rational being which allows a self to live in society and develop individual morality (Scruton, 2014: 29). But he had also argued against rationalists that simple self-awareness, is not enough to tell humans whether they have a self that is substantial, immortal, immaterial or 'accident'. Self-consciousness cannot even tell if an empirical 'I' exists because the 'I' is not part of the world but a 'point of view' on the world (Scruton, 2001: 70-71). As Kant said: 'the subject of the categories cannot by thinking the categories acquire a concept of itself as an object of the categories' (Scruton, 2001: 71). With self-awareness, humans explore their own limits for empirical knowledge. Kant concluded that the gap between the conscious 'I' which is a point of view and the soul which is a thing cannot be bridged with reason. Hence, Taylor disagreed with Kant and others who identify the self with the thinking mind, with abstract principles or with the body. Taylor argued that the sense of self is connected to the sense of good. The sense of good is developed and understood when individuals live in societies. Societies should provide the 'moral sources' that would give the self its needed stability. 'To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose' (Taylor, 1989: 27). Thus, he disagreed with scholars who understand the self without looking at the specific moral frameworks in which they develop. For Taylor, there are three dimensions of our moral life and several kinds of moral frameworks have developed historically in relation to these dimensions. The dimensions are respect for the life of others, understanding the meaning of life or what makes a good life and notions concerning dignity or sense of ourselves in relation to our social life. These are related to aspects of the self mainly developed after Locke.

The socialised self emerged in the eighteenth century with Romantism. The Romantic school raised emotion over reason. Many of the Enlightenment philosophers had stressed reason and science while the Romantic philosophers later advanced the

notion of self-expression, imagination and creative human actions upon the world and on themselves. The social creation of the self was reintroduced in a more powerful way than what was found in the classical world because the notion of the individual self and personal identity had by then developed. Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), one of the most significant French philosophers of the Renaissance, is thought to have first put some light on this socialised self with his self-portraits in his *Essays.*

One of the foundations of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712-1778) philosophical journey was to consider natural human before or outside society. Unlike Hobbes, he did not see fighting for self-preservation and self-interests as the basic life of humans in state of nature. Hobbes saw the state of nature as war of each natural human against all, with society and the civil ruler helping to control the aggressive and selfish humans. For Rousseau, human nature was not fixed with particular desires and feelings like selfishness. These desires and feelings can only emerge from society and be expressed in social life. They do not derive from nature. Original humans are like beasts with simple needs like food, sleep and procreation but with sense of cooperation, they create a kind of social life and can become natural humans, less like beasts. Society, with proper education and laws, could make natural humans become humans. Rousseau was, however, criticising what his contemporary society had become. Judith N. Shklar explained his thought:

> The difficulties of full socialization were so great because Rousseau was so deeply aware of the individuality of each person. Each one of us has a self which forms the core of our character. This personal self is not inherently hostile to other selves, nor does it thrive in permanent solitude. Indeed 'our sweetest existence is relative and collective and our true self is not entirely our own'. Solitude is not the answer, but neither is society. In fact there is no solution (Shklar, 2009: 159).

He was interested in the relationship between the morally innocent, free and simple natural human, who is born with an individual self and personality, and the influence of the corrupting, alienating, moral and immoral contemporary modern society.

> L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers. Tel se croit le maître des autres, qui ne laisse pas d'être plus esclave qu'eux. (Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Some believe themselves masters of others but are more slaves than they are) (Rousseau and Guillemin, [1762] 1978: 60).

Natural human, for Rousseau, is free. He has free will and is not like the determined thing or 'machine' seen by other philosophers. A human being is a 'physical man' whose concern is self-preservation but has also a 'metaphysical and moral side' with free will (O'Hagan, 2003: 41). He also has 'anarchic freedom' and 'personal freedom'. The anarchic freedom in state of nature exists because there are no government and laws. The personal freedom is due to the fact that natural humans have no master, no employer or other humans claiming superiority over others (Rousseau and Cranston, 1984: 31-33). In his '*Discours sur l'origine et les Fondements de l'Inegalite parmi les hommes (A discourse on the Origins and the foundations of Inequality among men* or called also *Second Discourse*) (1755), Rousseau started by stating that there are two kinds of inequality:

> I discern two sorts of inequality in the human species: the first I call natural or physical because it is established by nature, and consists of differences in age, health, strength of the body and qualities of the mind or soul; the second we might call moral or political inequality because it derives from a sort of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. This latter inequality consists of the different privileges which some enjoy to the prejudice of others – such as their being richer, more honoured, more powerful than others, and even getting themselves obeyed by others (Rousseau and Cranston, [1755] 1984: 77).

Rousseau thought that the source of natural inequality was obvious i.e. from nature but that it was worth asking about the connections between natural and moral/political inequality. Were the people at the top because of natural inequalities in merits? (Rousseau and Cranston, [1755] 1984: 77). His belief in free will led him to support the notion of perfectibility or capacity for self-improvement. This notion of perfectibility was discussed by other Enlightenment philosophers but for Rousseau, free will meant possibility of choosing the bad. He explained the degrading aspects he observed in

modern society as the results of bad choices (Rousseau and Cranston, [1755] 1984: 33). He believed that self-betterment was not through fighting for individual self-interests but being socially active in an 'ordered' society. 'Freedom, in any case, was for Rousseau not a matter of doing as one pleased, but of *not* being compelled, either from within or from without, to do what one does *not* wish to do' noted Shklar (Shklar, 2009: 162). As seen above, the tension in Rousseau's work, but also in others, is between his support for self-improvement, human freedom and equality, on the one hand, and his belief that social humans can only be free if they follow society's common good, the general will and proper authority, on the other hand. This tension still exists in the twentieth-first century and it is still very much part of our contemporary social and political discussions. The issues of race, identity, identity politics and politics today all touch the important question of the relationship between individual and society.

German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) took from Rousseau some of his ideas concerning the relationship between individual and society. Thus, he also emphasised the socialised self but with two themes, reason and history. He described his thoughts of this relationship with his famous master-slave relationship. The metaphor was to highlight an individual's need of others for his own self-consciousness, freedom and identity. To develop self-consciousness, a person needs acknowledgement and recognition from another person. For Hegel, self-consciousness is 'attached to its own living body, and to the living body of the other person from whom it requires acknowledgement' (Singer, 2001: 78). In fact, what Hegel was arguing was that self-realisation is not through isolation from others and introspection but is the result of dynamic relationships with others in society. Self-consciousness is not fixed but changes with history. He introduced the notion of social and historical development and understood history as the unfolding of the Spirit.

Another contributor to our contemporary understanding of the self, Karl Marx (1818-1883), did not agree with this notion of history even if he agreed with the importance of social and historical development. For Marx, human activity and class struggle had been the driving forces of history. This is one of the reasons Hegel is seen as an idealist and Marx as a materialist. Marx further developed the notions of human liberation and individual development. Human nature/essence is not fixed but is made

by humans who transform themselves or self-transcend in specific manners, in particular societies and throughout history. Social and historical contexts are important. Being human meant changing the self through human activity. 'The materialist doctrine', Karl Marx noted in the third thesis on Feuerbach where he is arguing against the materialist doctrine that existed so far,

> that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society (…) The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionizing practice*' (Marx and Engels, [1845] 1977: 28-29).

Marx insisted that humans are not simply objects produced by society but subjects or agents who act on themselves and society. In the sixth thesis on Feuerbach, he further noted that 'Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the *human* essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations' (Marx and Engels, [1845] 1977: 29). The self is a socialised and historical self, not an abstract self created by a thinking mind in isolation. For Marx, humans cannot create their self-consciousness without recognising that they are social beings.

The twenty-century saw an increasing preoccupation for the self, with searches for the self developed in many more directions. Psychological understanding of the mind is one of the methods to comprehend the self. The philosophy of the mind is now an important academic subject. Foci on the body or part of the body such as the brain, on the behaviour of people or on feelings and perceptions are other methods through which the self is investigated today. We saw the importance of Descartes for modern philosophy and, in particular the philosophy of the self. The cartesian dualism, mind and body, has been a very influential doctrine and has drawn several challenges over the centuries. Philosopher Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) strongly criticised this doctrine. He was an empiricist philosopher and in his book *The Concept of Mind (1949)*, he

challenged what he called ‘the official doctrine’. He described it as a ‘dogma of the Ghost in the Machine’ and as fundamentally wrong in principle because of a category-mistake (Ryle, [1949] 2009: 5). Because a thinking, feeling and active person cannot be defined simply with the tools of physical sciences describing a complex body, Descartes and others, looking for a better explanation, made the mistake in thinking that a separate mind can be added and be defined by the same cause-and-effect methods used for the body definition. The mind and body seemed to belong to the same descriptive category, where the body is governed by rigid mechanical laws and the mind by rigid non-mechanical laws. We can recognise the existence of mind and of body without believing that they represent ‘two different species of existence’, insisted Ryle. The mind-body unsolved problem is a consequence of the doctrine. The mind and body influence each other but understanding the ways they do has become an issue. Therefore, for him, ‘both Idealism and Materialism are’ also ‘answers to the wrong question’ (Ryle, [1949] 2009: 12). The logic of the cartesian dualism has raised another unresolved problem of the ‘other minds’; if the mind which is understood as private, cannot access and be accessed by other minds, how do we know that other minds exist? Thus, according to Ryle, Descartes asked the wrong question: “Instead of asking by what criteria intelligent behaviour is actually distinguished from non-intelligent behaviour, he asked ‘Given that the principle of mechanical causation does not tell us the difference, what other causal principle will tell it us?’” (Ryle, [1949] 2009: 11). The self is the ghost in the machine that an individual will search for but fail to catch. This wrong notion of the self is created by the use of the index word ‘I’. Index words such as ‘now’, ‘here’ or ‘I’ ‘indicate to the hearer or reader the particular thing, episode, person, place or moment referred to’ (Ryle, [1949] 2009: 168). The ‘I’ gives falsely a reference that does not exist. Ryle believed that the mind could be known by looking at the behaviour of the individual. The actions and emotions are the manifestation of the person, evidence of who we are (Ryle, [1949] 2009).

Philosopher Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) also responded to Descartes and others but using a different empiricist approach to Gilbert Ryle. His main work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) explained his philosophical doctrine. One of the leading proponents of phenomenology and existentialism, he wanted people to rediscover the world of perception, the world ‘revealed to us by our senses and in everyday life’ in order to better understand ourselves and the world. This world

was forgotten, according to him, because of a common utilitarian attitude as well as a worldview where lived experience is seen with little value compared to science and knowledge (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009: 31-32). It is not science itself that he attacked but the 'dogmatism of a science that thinks itself capable of absolute and complete knowledge' (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009: 36). Discussing Merleau-Ponty's belief, Thomas Baldwin remarked that 'the relationship between perception and all other modes of thought, including science, is one of 'Fundierung' (foundation)' (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009: 7). Merleau-Ponty did not see science as the enemy but wanted us to recognise the importance of perception. He claimed that the 'theory of the body is already a theory of perception' (Merleau-Ponty, [1945] 1967: 529) because an individual's perception of the world is synonymous to perception of his body and his perception of his body is done with the external world. And if 'we reconnect with the body and with the world, it is also ourselves we will rediscover, because, we perceive with our body, and the body is a natural self, the subject of perception' (own translation) (Merleau-Ponty, [1945] 1967: 239). There is a dialogue between the embodied subject and the external world and the definitions, interpretations and meanings in life are done with human consciousness. He believed that our perceptions of the world through our experiences guide our actions: 'The things of the world are not simply neutral *objects* which stand before us for our contemplation. Each one of them symbolises or recalls a particular way of behaving, provoking in us reactions which are either favourable or unfavourable' (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009: 48). For example, we can know aspects of a person's identity such as tastes or character, by looking at objects in their homes. Thus, for him, mind and body represent the person. We do not see others as pure spirits, nor do we see them as simply bodies. His aim was to develop a kind of humanism, not based on a 'community of pure spirits' but with the real relationships between people in society (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009). It is worth noting that he was writing at the end of World War II.

With the recent advancement of science, especially science of the brain, some philosophers developed more materialist notions of the self but with a focus on the brain. Paul Montgomery Churchland, philosopher and neuro-philosopher, is an advocate of what he calls 'Eliminative Materialism'. He argued that 'our common-sense conception of psychological phenomena constitutes' a 'fundamentally defective' theory that will be rightly corrected with the 'framework of completed neuroscience'

(Churchland, 1981: 67). Even if he disagreed with other neuroscientists and neuro-philosophers about the problems of folk psychology, he agreed with many that the self is defined by the neuro-structures and processing of the brain (Churchland, 1981).

Continuous but specific search for the self

We have, briefly, been looking at some distinct notions of the self throughout history. The self has been defined and redefined and we can see that the importance of defining ourselves for ourselves has been recognised for much of human history. Can we explain these many notions as the result of progress in better understanding the self? We may have better understanding of the natural world including our human biology, but the continuous redefinitions of the self are necessary because the individual and the self are socially and historically specific. The meanings of the individual and the self are different across various cultures. Some social practices like circumcision or mask wearing can clearly show the differential understandings of the individual, the self and community across cultures. Also, the questions of God, immaterial soul, immortality and death cannot be resolved with science. They are part of our cultural wars. They are not simple scientific debates but are 'more fundamentally about the meaning of human life and what living well means' (Dworkin, 2013: 9). These notions are intimately linked with the historical and social periods in which they arose. The focus on God, immortal soul and resurrection of the self were important matters in specific historical periods but, even though many people still believed in God or gods, the loss of authority of the religious institutions directed the discussions on the self elsewhere during Enlightenment and later. The subsequent acceptance and rejection of these ideas cannot be explained by simply determining whether these ideas were true or false but by looking at the social conditions of a particular historical period. Before the Enlightenment, history was viewed mainly as cyclic like the seasons returning every year. With the Enlightenment's notion of progress, history started to be seen as linear and inevitably going toward progress. Successive ideas are thought to be truer than all the previous ones. This view portrays history as an agent acting on humans seen as objects. It also ignores how historical narratives are created. Historians do not all have the same theories and philosophies and the selection of facts and past events to create a narrative will partly depend on the historians (Carr, [1961] 1990).

The ways we understand ourselves, the ways we define our identity today, the ideas we accept as true today are influenced by our contemporary social conditions of life. And on the other hand, theories, interpretations and meanings we develop to understand ourselves influence our social conditions of life. From the seventeenth century, when the old feudal system in European countries was being eventually replaced by a capitalist mode of production, the concern for the individual self became increasingly important. But can we understand this increased concern as a single process? Political theorist and historian Ellen Meiksins Wood (1942-2016) did remark that 'European feudalism in Europe was internally diverse' and thus, the transition from feudalism to capitalism was not a unique process itself (Wood, 2017: 73). She proposed that the transition from the old feudal system did not necessarily lead directly to a capitalist system. Eighteenth-century France, with its absolute state, was a place where Enlightenment ideas had developed without a capitalist system. Wood argued that the notion of modernity should not be directly identified with capitalism. Modernity in England and in France, for example, was not expressed in the same ways and with the same social system (Wood, 2017: 182-189). Indeed, Seigel argued that national contexts influenced the development of the notion of self. The relationships between the three dimensions (bodily, relational, reflectivity) he used to analyse the self, were different depending on the national context of the philosophers. Britain, France and Germany were used as examples to make his point (Seigel, 2005: 36-40). Still, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the capitalist social system became the common system in Europe through revolutions, reforms, influences and economic necessities (Hobsbawm, 1995). Capitalism, with the market economy, differs from any other social forms of the past and if we consider the history of humanity as a whole, it is a system which has existed only for a very short period of time. It is also currently the most common social system in the world. These are relevant points if we want to try and understand some of the specificities of the notion of race, self, identity and identity politics. Explaining all these various issues as the consequences of human nature, for example, results in explaining nothing.

Thus, the individual became an important feature of the new society. John Locke, in England, first developed the notion of personal identity. We know that the new capitalist society arose earlier in England than in other European countries. With this new system, new concerns arose. The destruction of traditional communities and the

new workers-employers relationships, for example, generated worries that did not exist with lords-serfs relationships. Conflicts and uneasiness between, on the one hand, the individuals in society and, on the other hand society itself, increasingly developed into an accepted fact philosophers had to discuss and resolve. Individual freedom became a major concern and as a result, social conditions including laws and policies became organised around it. The internalisation of the self seemed to become an accepted notion. And with the notion of an isolated and internal self, the psychology of the individual started to be a major preoccupation. In his book, *Consciousness and Society*, H Stuart Hughes analysed the profound intellectual changes that occurred in Europe between 1890 and 1930. He suggested that the next generation of thinkers, after Marx, were more concerned with the 'irrational, virtually unchanging nature of human sentiments'. According to him, Sigmund Freud's 'drives' are seen as an example of this new direction. For Hughes, this period is characterised by scholars who agreed that the 'basic characteristic of human experience was the limited nature of its freedom'. The work of sociologists, anthropologists, economists, and psychologists were all influenced by this sense of limitation. They shared a 'wider experience of psychological *malaise*', worries about the old social realities and uncertainties about the new ones. Thus, this sense of limitation in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is in sharp contrast to the earlier optimistic Enlightenment period of the 'self-conscious rational being' (Hughes, [1958] 1979: 3-4, 14). But Hughes also suggested that thinkers of this particular period were not really opposing Enlightenment tradition itself but the positivist outlook of late nineteenth century (Hughes, [1958] 1979: 29).

Thoughts about the self and identity entered a period in late nineteenth and early twentieth where interests turned towards the 'problem of consciousness and the role of the unconscious'. Studying psychological processes became more important that investigating objective reality. Hughes stated that 'it was no longer what actually existed that seemed most important: it was what men thought existed. And what they felt on the unconscious level had become rather more interesting than what they had consciously rationalized' (Hughes, [1958] 1979: 63-66).

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who coined the term 'psychoanalysis' is seen as a major figure of these new directions. He developed a theory explaining the relationships between the unconscious and conscious aspects of human psychology. The unconscious mind, which contains memories, drives or hidden desires, have a controlling influence upon the conscious mind. Humans have a tendency to want to ignore their own unconsciousness because it could reveal unpleasant thoughts, desires and emotions. He believed that, by examining the unconscious part of our mind, we could better understand ourselves and our dark sides. This would allow us to be more active and in control and thus happier. Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, though, argued that 'many of the current misconceptions about Freud and psychoanalysis have arisen from the fear of self-knowledge' and that Freud's insights threaten our narcissistic image of ourselves' (Bettelheim, 1984: 15-16). It would seem that Freud's self was not an internalised self or a psychological self as often understood but a socialised self. Freud described the psyche as being divided into the conscious 'I' or '*ego*', preconscious '*Über-Ich*' 'above I' or '*superego*' and the unconscious '*id*' realms. The superego is part of the psyche that is 'created by the person himself out of inner needs and external pressures that have been internalized' (Bettelheim, 1984: 58). Russell Jacoby agreed that Freud and psychoanalysis have not only been misunderstood but psychoanalysis as a theory has been forgotten. It was forgotten 'because it is disturbing – not least because it insists that the past is not so easily shuffled off as we suppose'. He believed that it is important to remember that the past influences the present and not to think of the past as something 'left behind'. He cited Freud as saying that the past 'lives on in the ideologies of the super-ego and yields only slowly to the influences of the present and to new changes' (Jacoby, 1975: vii).

The most 'revolutionary' consequences of Freud's theories have been changed by Adler and the neo-Freudians like Eric Fromm and Clara Thompson and forgotten by society, argued Jacoby. The 'private individual' is usually thought to be in opposition to the 'public individual' in relation to society. But 'Freud undid the primal bourgeois distinction between private and public, the individual and society; he unearthed the objective roots of the private subject – its social content' (Jacoby, 1975: 26). This step into the private psyche of the individual was done with the new notions of the superego, the unconscious, Oedipal complex and with the concepts of repression. For

Jacoby, Freud's uncovered social was very different from the social realm defined in the liberal ideology of the private and autonomous individual and consumer. In this ideology, the 'social' explaining the relationship between the individual and society is described as the 'values', 'insecurities', 'norms' and 'goals' individuals have in life. Freud, with his psychoanalytic theories and biological materialism pushed away the notion of social as 'values and norms' to introduce an 'inner social dynamic' within the individual psyche. By doing this, he had shown that the idea of the real 'individual' was not yet true in contemporary society. In other words, Freud, with his psychoanalytic theory of repression and compulsions, had shown that individuals were de-individualised by contemporary society. By taking this dynamic out, the neo-Freudians lost this critique of the bourgeois 'individual' (Jacoby, 1975: 30). Still, Richard Sorabji noted that Freud gave us the notion that the superego is the 'vehicle of conscience', that conscience is not innate, repeating in modern times what had already been discussed by others in the past, such as St. Paul or Augustine, (Sorabji, 2014: 190-191). Freud transformed public conceptions about mind and historian Linda Nicholson maintained that these changes helped in the challenge against racial thinking and racialism. 'In Freud's focus on thoughts and memories as the causes of behavioural disturbances, he opened a space for attention to be given to complex human interactions as formative of character'. The biological and natural explanations for human characters and behaviours in different races had to be replaced due to Freud's dynamic psychology, liberating the 'racially stigmatized' (Nicholson, 2008: 63). There is no doubt that Freud had a revolutionary impact on modern thought including on the issues of the self and on identity.

This shift towards psychology and other disciplines related to it is due to a shift in the social structure with a fragmentation of the psyche, Jacoby suggested (Jacoby, 1975: xvii). Countless issues are seen through psychology. History, education and politics are often understood in psychological terms. For example, the academic field, political psychology, is concerned with applying theories from evolutionary psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology and others to understand politics. Social problems such as poverty or racism are discussed using psychology (Haushofer and Fehr, 2014; Schilbach et al., 2016). Jacoby argued that psychoanalysis forces historians to look at 'the social, economic, and political *origins of psychic* phenomena'

rather than simply “reduce social, economic, and political phenomena to their psychological ‘roots’” (italics added) (Jacoby, 1975: viii).

Psychology, as we can guess from the discussion of the self originated from philosophy and became an independent academic discipline at the end of the nineteenth century. Psychology and philosophy have since developed completely separately because their methods of enquiries are different.

Our psychological world

Freud was a major figure, but he was not the one seen as the founder of modern psychology. With his experiments done in 1879 at the University of Leipzig, Professor Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) is often seen as the main founder of modern psychology. He believed that ‘mental processes could be experimentally studied’ and he developed the first methods which were used by the ‘next two generations of psychologists. (Hunt, 1993: 128-129). His interests were to investigate the nature of consciousness. In the United States, William James (1842-1910), who was interested in understanding why humans acted in certain ways and how behaviour works, is seen as the founder of American psychology. Psychology has since greatly expanded as an academic discipline. But after the Second World War, it stopped being mainly an academic discipline and has exponentially increased its influences in many other areas of commercial, public and private life. Founder and CEO of the charter school Success Academy, Eva S. Moskowitz bluntly stated that ‘today Americans turn to psychological cures as reflexively as they once turned to God. But our relationship to the psyche appears to have exceeded that of believers and become more like that of cult members’ (Moskowitz, 2001: 1). Historian Ellen Harman was just as blunt, in 1995, when she started her book *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* by stating that ‘psychological insight is the creed of our time’ (Herman, 1996: 1). She recognised the universality of psychology in every aspects of American life, but she also highlighted how it had changed American society. And this has not only happened in the United States, but also in Europe. We often measure the conditions of life, including material or economic conditions by judging our ‘mental and emotional health’. Moskowitz believed that this modern faith in the psyche, she had called ‘therapeutic gospel’ had three tenets. They were the beliefs that ‘happiness should be our supreme goal’, ‘our problems stem from psychological causes’ and the

'psychological problems are treatable' and that they 'should be addressed individually and as a society' (Moskowitz, 2001: 2-3). It is used by employers to deal with workers' demands and work conditions but another particular and important area where it has really imposed itself from the beginning is education. Discussing the rise of what they called 'therapeutic education', Kathryn Ecclestone and Dennis Hayes showed how the focus on the psyche has invaded the education system in the United Kingdom. Concerns for emotional literacy and emotional well-being have steadily replaced interests in imparting knowledge to the newer generations and improving human knowledge in general (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). Writing in 2000 in the United States to discuss the death of character, sociologist James Davison Hunter was already claiming that 'when it comes to the moral life of children, the vocabulary of the psychologist frames virtually all public discussion'. The influences of philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, sociologists and historians have all decreased (Hunter, 2008: 81). But his main preoccupation was the disappearance of the social and cultural conditions such as creeds and convictions which bind, compel, constraint and limit human beings to act in certain ways and thus would allow the development of character. 'When the self is stripped of moral anchoring, there is nothing to which the will is bound to submit, nothing innate to keep it in check. There is no compelling reason to be burdened by guilt' (Hunter, 2008: xiv).

The understanding of human beings as beings with specific cultural identities and the construction of racism as a psychological and behavioural problem had an enormous effect on the anti-racism movement. Overt expressions of racism were increasingly seen as immoral, as unsophisticated or as the acts of an uneducated person. Ideas that seem right-wing or conservative were marginalised after the war, because of the experiences of Nazism and fascism. But racial thinking was not opposed but reworked. Racial divisions were still accepted as permanent, a product of human psychology, social experiences or biology. Leah N Gordon, in her book *From Power to Prejudice: The Rise of Racial Individualism in Midcentury America* (2015), analysed the development of what she calls 'racial individualism' in academia and among the intellectual activists involved in the issue of race and racism in the United States. Racial individualism developed between the end of the Second World War and the early 1960s and became the dominant framework used to understand the issue of race and racism; the preference for it is due to its often hard-to-see conservative

potential. The post-war boom and the shift in American liberalism which became less critical of the economic order, the Cold War, anti-communism and the rejection of radical left-wing politics that used to suggest structural and economic interpretations of racism, the extensive influence of psychology are aspects of the context in which racial individualism became so influential. Gordon argued that:

> Bringing together psychological individualism, rights-based individualism, and belief in the socially transformative power of education, racial individualism presented prejudice and discrimination as the root cause of racial conflict, focused on individuals in the study of race relations, and suggested that racial justice could be attained by changing white minds and protecting African American rights (Gordon, 2016: 2).

Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn has also shown how social engineers and experts took over the American civil rights movement targeting people's minds and prejudices with their new enterprises such as 'racial identity theory', 'oppression pedagogy', 'diversity training', 'interracial etiquette', 'ethnotherapy', 'cultural reeducation'. Lasch-Quinn rightly argued that these activists and intellectuals moved away from the earlier universalism of the civil rights movement (Lasch-Quinn, 2002: xi-xviii). As she noted:

> That race was a pre-eminently psychological matter had become so widely believed by the 1960s that the notion of an individual's coming into racial awareness – or a society's rising consciousness of race – was reduced to narrow models for blacks and whites. For blacks, this consciousness involved freedom from psychological and emotional repression, mainly self-affirmation through the release of rage or another form of self-assertion. For whites, it meant freedom from the alleged psychological debilitation of their own racism (Lasch-Quinn, 2002: 132).

The focus of research on the psychology of racial identity, before World War II, were on differences in intelligence but, after the experiences of the war, they concentrated more on the cultural effects influencing psychology and personality. This, of course, challenged scientific racism which was based more on nature than culture. 'Personality theory and research were increasingly foregrounded in studies of black

and white racial psychology after 1945' noted Herman. She thought that this was partly due to the widespread influence of *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a sociology book written by Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford (Herman, 1996: 181-182).

One of the main concerns for psychologists is the issue of child development into adulthood which is understood today as going through different stages. In the past, children were simply seen as 'small-sized adults' (Hunter, 2008: 82). Erik Homburger Erikson (1902-1994) was one of the theorists who influenced the concept of children development but, as we will see now, he also started the contemporary and specific discussion about 'identity'. 'It is human to have a long childhood; it is civilized to have an ever longer childhood', he believed (Erikson, [1950] 1995: 13). He is also the psychoanalyst who coined the terms 'ego identity' and 'identity crisis'. One of his main concerns was to study the relationship between the ego and contemporary society with the notion of ego as 'denoting man's capacity to unify his experience and his action in an adaptive manner' (Erikson, [1950] 1995: 13).

Thus, by highlighting a few of the numerous thinkers involved in the philosophical question of the self, we have been able to view the constant transformation of humans' understandings of themselves and of the world around them. The self is a product of history. The distinct notions of the self were and are influenced by the historical, social, economic and cultural contexts in which the numerous thinkers lived and thought. The knowledge of the self or humans' understanding of themselves is not fixed but also did not develop in a linear and progressive fashion. Atomism, in antiquity, had a materialist view of the self. Neuroscientists like Churchland, in the twenty and twenty-first centuries, have different notions of the self than the atomist thinkers did in the past but, their notions are still materialist.

The questions of reason, immateriality, immortality, individual experiences and acquisition of knowledge have been important issues in the philosophical quest to understand the self. However, one important event seems to have been the internalisation of the self with the influence of Augustine but also of Descartes. In fact, Descartes is often seen as the father of the modern philosophy of the self with his division between mind and body. The internalisation of the self has influenced the

development of the psychological self that is currently accepted by the majority of the population in the twenty-first century. Academic, intellectuals, politicians and the general public currently use the psychology of individuals as acceptable explanations for many aspects of public and private life. These explanations based on psychology have had a big impact on the concepts of racial identity, racism and anti-racism. Consequently, examining and discussing the psychology of individuals, within a specific culture, became the focus for both racism and anti-racism.

5. Identity

To understand the importance of racial identity in public discourse, we need to grasp the meaning of the concept of identity or at least try to understand some of the various meanings of this concept. Thus, the thoughts of various thinkers will be discussed here in order to examine different interpretations of identity. How and why these interpretations exist will also be discussed because this will help us in comprehending why identity, and in particular racial identity, has become such as focus in contemporary Western society. Racial identities are used in contemporary political discussions and asking when this use started, why it started and whether this use should be accepted or rejected are three important questions needed to be considered. Through arguments made by various intellectuals, these questions will be examined here.

Meanings of identity

The concern for identity, which became a particular preoccupation throughout the Western countries, since the 20th century, is not simply the continuous philosophical quest for the self. But we have seen that, with Locke and others, the philosophical quest became more focused on understanding the meaning of personal identity and on defining the psychological self. The emphasis on the mind as the self and the impact of the ubiquitous psychological explanations for all aspects of modern life including political and economic life are both the causes and consequences of this modern concern for identity. The word identity has become one of the most popular terms taken for granted, used in numerous academic and public discussions and in many different social, political, cultural, academic, technical and commercial contexts. The intense debates over 'identity politics' in academia since the 1980s and with the general public for the last ten years have contributed to the increasing interest for the term and notion of identity. As Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper already noticed in 2000, the language of identity had become important 'both as an idiom of analysis in the social sciences and humanities and as an idiom in which to articulate experience, mobilize loyalty, and formulate symbolic and material claims in everyday social and political practice' (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 28). It seems to be a word that does not need explanations or definitions. There are now constant discussions

about the identity of people, living beings, inanimate objects, concepts and ideas. Dictionary.com made identity the 2015 Word of the Year because of the high-profile events and debates concerning the issues of gender, sexuality and racial identity (Dictionary.com, 2015). The concerns and questions of identity are now seen as if they have always been there, as if they have always been part of the general conversations. But a closer look at the use of the word identity shows that it has different meanings to different people in different contexts. It could be replaced with character as national character, self as seen above, personhood, soul, individuality, sense, subject, quality, nature, attitude, authenticity or resolution. With the current confusing public and academic disputes over 'identity politics', it is worth looking briefly at how identity is currently understood.

The word identity is not a new word in the English, French (identité) or German (identität) language. It is thought to have been used in English since the sixteenth century (Gleason, 1983: 911) and may have been employed with a more technical, mathematical meaning in the French and German language (Izenberg, 2016: 2). However, it was not really used in academic, professional and political fields until the twentieth century. Political scientist William J.M Mackenzie thought that the term was first over used in social sciences, with the issue of national character and with the introduction of the notion of 'political identity' (Mackenzie, 1978: 11). In his history of identity, Phillip Gleason mentioned that the original *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, published in 1936, had no entry for 'identity'. Identity became only a concern for the social sciences in the 1950s and appeared first time in the 1968 edition (Gleason, 1983: 910). Interestingly, even though the term had changed and became important in many aspects of life, the definition of identity found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1983 still only reflected the old important meaning of sameness in relation to the self. The dictionary defined it as follow: 'The sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality' (Gleason, 1983: 911). Our civil data such as names, birth dates or parents' names were and still are a way of describing our identity. The contemporary concerns for stolen identity over online transactions or the use of personal data without permission, for example, are still based on the same definition of identity.

As seen in chapter 4 ‘Self’, John Locke is one of the main figures who introduced the question of personal identity in modern philosophy. In his second edition of *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1694), in chapter XXVII, he concentrated on the issue of identity over time (Izenberg, 2016: 6-7). He defined identity as sameness, hence ‘one thing cannot have two beginnings of existence, nor two things one beginning’ (Locke, 1694: 2). For him, a person ‘is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places’. Thus, self-consciousness and memory are important in defining a person or a self. ‘For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being’ (Locke, 1694: 9). If one remembers or is conscious of past actions and thoughts, then one is the same self. Personal identity, according to Locke depends on the same consciousness, on the consciousness of one being one to oneself. Changes in the body does not create a new self or new personal identity (Locke, 1694: 9-11). But the immense focus on identity today cannot be explained by a public interest for understanding the philosophical self. Philosophical debates and preoccupations often filter down to society and to the general public but the extent in which this particular concern has become so much part of the general public discussion needs to be explained.

It is often thought that the public concern for personal identity has first originated from the concepts of ‘identity crisis’ and ‘ego identity’, expressions first coined by Erik Erikson in mid-twentieth century. A psychoanalyst working with World War Two veterans and children, he used his clinical experience to develop his concepts of identity and identity crisis. This psychological conceptualisation of identity, using Freudian concepts, understood identity as part of the normal human development (Izenberg, 2016: 105-143). Life, for him, was made of several stages of development. An emerging personal identity, started at childhood, will become established with the successes and failures made in the different stages. There are ‘eight ages of man’. The first is the basic trust/mistrust shown by babies toward their parents or carers with, for example, a level of anxiety in feeding or in the absence of the mother. The following ages are ‘autonomy versus shame, doubt’, ‘initiative versus guilt’, ‘industry versus inferiority’, ‘identity versus role confusion’, ‘intimacy versus isolation’, ‘generativity

versus stagnation' in adulthood and 'ego integrity versus despair' in maturity. Children in puberty and adolescence, with rapidly changing bodies, are in the age where they have to define their identity or be confused about their role and sexual identity (Erikson, [1950] 1995: 222-247). According to Erikson, the 'adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult' (Erikson, [1950] 1995: 236).

He was interested in psychological well-being and tried to understand what he called 'identity crisis'. He thought that war veterans suffering from what used to be called 'battle fatigue' suffer, in fact, from 'identity crisis' because they had lost their previous sense of who they were after their experiences of war. His interest was focused on personal identity that he understood as both social and psychological. Identity was the sense of knowing oneself through the interaction between 'the core of the individual' developing and the society in which the child is developing into adulthood. The child will first only identify with the parents and their values (with no judgement) but growing up, he will accept and reject what he used to only identify with and develop his own identity. Identity was seen as a dynamic process with a certain sense of individual autonomy. It developed after identification. Erikson was concerned about the pathology (identity crisis) observed in some children that he believed was due to the rapidly changing environment found in the modern world. For Erikson, the psychic problems come from social problems (Izenberg, 2016: 105-143). He popularised the idea of identity with his books - his first book *Childhood and Society* (1950) - and his work. He eventually disagreed and struggled with the changes in his original concept. For example, he disagreed with the introduction of the notion of self-conception and self-image (Gleason, 1983: 915). By 1955 and with American intellectual Will Herberg's book *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*, the notion of identity had already moved away from its original meaning of sameness and from Erickson's notion of identity. A sociology book that was very well received, it explored the religious situation in American life in the 1950s with the notions of identity and identification. American as the land of immigrants is not a melting pot but a 'triple melting pot' due to religious identifications, had argued Herberg (Gleason, 1983: 912).

Some themes in the identity issue

There are too many definitions of identity, since the term has been used regularly, to list them all here, but some of the themes appearing in the debates are worth mentioning here in order to explore the relationships between race, identities, identity politics and politics. One common theme is the psychological aspect introduced in the definitions. Ultimately, identity can be seen simply as reflecting our modern understanding of ourselves. Identities are both the causes and consequences of who we are as humans in current Western society. Many interpretations see us as psychological selves with mental and emotional processes that need to be defined in order to delimit our particular identities. Psychological does not necessarily means isolated or non-social. It explains the focus on our individual mind, on our mental and emotional processes. The few current notions of self which do not involve some psychological component are often selves defined by the materialist or naturalist school. Humans are seen as animals with simply a physical body needed to be understood. The mind, personality, tastes and other mental and emotional aspects of human life are explained by the working of the brain and of other parts of the body. This leads often to an evolutionary but ahistorical view of human beings and their identities (psychological understandings of the self can also be ahistorical). Neuroscience and other brain sciences, for example, are often used to argue that we are nothing more than our brains (Satel and Lilienfeld, 2013; Malik, 2000). As Daniel C. Dennett stated: 'our minds are just what our brains non-miraculously do, and the talents of our brains had to evolve like every other marvel of nature' (D. C. Dennett, 2003: vi). Descartes believed in a *res cogitans*, a thinking thing. Many people today believe in the 'self as a unified, rational agent, in control of a body' but Dennett proposed the 'human user-illusion' which resides in the brain and evolved with the development of communication. This theory is based on the analysis of the brain and on the timing of voluntary actions of humans and animals. The self and free will are illusions, according to Dennett. Human brain structures have evolved with the activity of 'communication of its actions and plans' in several stages and through language and culture. The human brain eventually developed this extra layer, a kind of new virtual machine for processing and it gives humans the illusion of intentionality and free will (Daniel C. Dennett, 2003).

But, for the many people who do not see a machine-like self or a naturalist self, the proposed definitions and importance of identities in human lives are still very

contested. Psychologist James E. Marcia, who changed and developed Erikson's thoughts on adolescent identity, suggested that 'identity refers to an existential position, to an inner organization of needs, abilities, and self-perceptions as well as to a socio-political stance' (Marcia, 1980: 159). Philosopher Sydney Shoemaker did not think identity should be understood as individual essence but as 'a set of traits, capacities, attitudes that an individual normally retains over a considerable period of time and that normally distinguishes that individual from other individuals'. If understood this way, then identity can be 'sought, lost, or stolen' (Shoemaker, 2006: 41). But he also suggested that a worry for survival is involved in identity today. This point brings Christopher Lasch and his 'Minimal Self' to mind. Historian and social critic, Lasch had argued that, in times of troubles, the concern with the self 'takes the form of a concern with its psychic survival'. Proper selfhood, with 'a personal history, friends, family, a sense of place', in effect selfhood with a personal identity, is replaced by a beleaguered 'minimal self' (Lasch, 1984: 15-16).

Given the vast diversity of what are called 'social identity' which include racial, national, sexual, religious, professional, private or gender identities, philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah suggested that 'identity' may not be the right word. Nonetheless, he gave his own definition of identity by describing how they work in people's lives. There are four categories. The criteria of 'ascription' where groups are described with certain properties and people are classified according to these descriptions. Of course, there are disagreements and they are important at a time when politics involves prior classification into identities. 'Identification' is the second way of describing identities. 'I identify as…' is more than simply being put into a category. One describes one's behaviour, attitudes, feelings or opinions as a result of identification to a particular identity. People can be treated with respect or no respect simply because of their identities thus, 'treatment' of others is the third way that make social identities important. Appiah called the last category 'norms of identification' because often 'social identities are associated with norms of behaviour' and predictions are done on the basis of these norms (Appiah, 2006: 16). Sociologist Rogers Brubaker and historian Frederick Cooper, who disagreed with using identity as an analytical concept or as 'category of analysis', also highlighted very well the diversity of meanings found in the use of the word 'identity'. They argued that the term used by scholars was 'hopelessly ambiguous' and depended on the scholars' academic and theoretical

tradition, the contexts and the questions asked. They saw broadly five different meanings of identity:

- ‘Identity’ as opposed to ‘interest’. Often debated with certain notion of particularism attached to identity and notion of universalism attached to interest.
- ‘Identity’ as sameness among members of a group.
- ‘Identity’ as “a core aspect of individual or collective ‘selfhood’ or as a fundamental condition of social being”.
- Identity can be seen as the product of the social or political actions as well as the basis for more social and political actions.
- ‘Identity’ used to highlight the “*unstable, multiple, fluctuating, and fragmented* nature of the contemporary ‘self’” (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 6-8).

Brubaker and Cooper’s proposal was to use other terms which would be more precise and more specific. Terms like ‘identification’, ‘categorization’, ‘self-understanding’, ‘social location’, ‘commonality’, ‘connectedness’ or ‘groupness’ were suggested (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 6-8).

Sociologist Nikolas Rose, who looked at psychology in particular to analyse the ways humans have tried to understand themselves, interpreted identity as one of the ‘diverse languages of personhood that have evolved’ throughout history. There is no ‘*continuity* of human beings as the subjects of history’ who give meaning to external events because “the ways in which humans ‘give meaning to experience’ have their own history”. His interests were to investigate the intellectual and practical techniques used by the human selves *to form their own selves*. The interesting issue is not ‘the historical construction of the self but the history of the relations which human beings have established with themselves’ (Rose, 1996: 128-150). Thus, identity is the way humans have developed to understand themselves, but also to relate to their own selves and to act upon themselves. In fact, Rose believed that psychology and its affiliates ‘had a very significant role in contemporary forms of political power, making it possible to govern human beings in ways that are compatible with the principles of

liberalism and democracy' (Rose, 1999: vii). For him, the creation of human beings as psychological subjects is the development of individuals 'capable of bearing the burdens of liberty'. The 'values of autonomy and self-realization' are proposed to be 'essentially psychological in form and structure' (Rose, 1999: viii).

Political scientist James D. Fearon who wrote the highly cited but never published paper *What is identity (as we now use the word)?* argued that identity has two contemporary meanings. It refers to social categories 'defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes' and personal categories as formulations of dignity, self-respect or pride. An individual takes a special pride in some socially distinguishing features. For Fearon, identity today 'reflects and evokes the idea that social categories are bound up with the bases of an individual's self-respect' (Fearon, 1999: 2). It seems that his general definition of contemporary identities is mainly based on identities developed in political actions such as identities used by the new social movements. He is not the only scholar who analyses the concept of identity by focusing on the identities and claims used by a very specific section of society. Cornel West is another scholar who based his definition of identity partly on the original demands of oppressed, discriminated and marginalised people, even though he recognises a wider definition of identity in order to include whiteness and national identity as examples of identities (West, 1995). Also, a certain misleading counter-position between 'social' and 'personal' identities is present in some studies. Identities called 'personal' and used by an individual are actually 'social' identities. Human beings are social beings and the social aspect of an individual's personal life, thoughts, attitudes, morality are well recognised even if they are defined in different ways. It seems that 'group identity' or 'collective identity' may be better labels in opposition to 'personal' and 'individual' identities. Interestingly, W. J. M. Mackenzie did question the shift from the idea of personal identity to the notion of collective identity. He understood the move from individual to collective as a move based on a metaphor where a group of people is now seen like a person and thus can have identity and identity crisis (Mackenzie, 1978: 28-39). The notion of national identity and Rousseau's general will are both based on this metaphor where a community of people is supposed to have a specific character, identity, personality, likes and dislikes, beliefs, values and ideas.

The importance in understanding that all these identities are social identities is seen in the discussion about identity politics. One of the arguments made in this thesis is that the politicisation of social identities and the use of these identities to compete for resources damage our important political realm. This leads to another point about the notion of political identity. This notion seems to exist to justify the use of some social identities in politics while the use of other social identities is criticised. Citing John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) who was examining the concept of nationality, Mackenzie remarked that three of the recognised dimensions of political identity were mentioned, while one was excluded. The three mentioned were nation, race, religion. Class was excluded (Mackenzie, 1978: 133). We can also notice how other contemporary dimensions such as gender, sexuality or ideology were not discussed, let alone all the new identities currently used like identities based on disability, profession, lifestyle, ethnicity, culture or location. In fact, political scientist Courtney Jung argued that political identities do 'not arise spontaneously'. 'The emergence of new political identities therefore signals some shortcoming of the democratic system' stated Jung. People did not feel a prior commitment to claiming shared identities along the issues of gender, race or class but were compelled because these categories were used to define unequal distribution of rights, privileges and goods in liberal democratic societies. 'It is the political contestation over exclusions and inclusions that produce political identities' (Jung, 2006: 32-33). The constructivist theories of identity are, according to Jung, superior to the essentialist theories because they better explain the appearance of new political identities as well as the rise and fall of others (Jung, 2006: 33). It seems that the increased use of politicised social identities could be explained, at least partly, by a growth in contestations over exclusions and inclusions but also over the contemporary need to fight for resources that are perceived as limited. Of course, the fragmentation into smaller and smaller identity groups, from women to disabled homosexual women for example, is not simply the result of exclusion and inclusion created by the state. Furthermore, the assumption behind Jung's argument is that political actions can only be reactions to unequal distribution. Sections of society, apparently, only enter politics by being defined or by defining themselves over exclusion or inclusion and by defending their identities. The possibility to develop political ideas, ideologies and actions that go beyond one's own identity, such as politics based on universal rights for example, is ignored in Jung's assumption. A political voice is only imagined through a political identity, through the membership of

a group identity. Therefore, it is not surprising to read her conclusion that 'all politics is identity politics' (Jung, 2006: 35). The social position of an individual is certainly important, but the political content of the individual's ideas does not have to be about defending an identity. Working class politics was not always about simply defending working class interests and identities. The universalist politics of some of the old working-class politics, which specifically fought for human emancipation, for the destruction of all classes including their own and for the creation of a new social organisation, was not based on identity politics and not on a wish to build a working-class political identity.

This classification between personal and social identities is also seen with social theorist Marie Moran. In her book *Identity and Capitalism*, she divided the contemporary meanings of identity into three categories: the 'legal', the 'personal' and the 'social' sense of identity. The 'legal' sense of identity, as in 'identity card' is mostly about proving who you are. The 'personal' sense of identity uses psychological and physical characteristics to define the core quality of an individual, the content of selfhood. These characteristics define what makes an individual's inner self unique, different from others. The contemporary notion that one needs to discover one's true self suggests that the core quality can be given by God or nature, not created or chosen by the individual defining himself. But there is also a common perception that the sense of self can be chosen with the current lifestyle identities. More importantly, the personal identity is often defined by active recognition and differentiation. People are expressing their personal identities by choosing a specific way of life or adhering to a fashion in order to mark their inner selves as dissimilar to others (Moran, 2015: 40-47). The third contemporary sense of identity discussed by Moran is the 'social' sense. She argued that social identity seems to mean 'claiming membership' of a given social group. Claims of multiple identities by proponents of intersectionality clearly show that a social identity is often the social group itself and that it is not necessarily associated with the 'experience of being a member' of the group (Moran, 2015: 45-47). When one claims, 'as a black woman, I think that…', one is saying that the ensuing expressed thought is dependent on the crossing of the social group 'black people' and the social group 'women' in one particular individual. The opinion is supposed to be the product of the intersection between the black identity and the women identity. Social groups, including social classes, are treated as identities rather

than scientifically analysed groups. This is why there are now academics, journalists, entrepreneurs or politicians claiming to be 'working class' despite the fact that their economic and social position and their experiences, put them in the middle class, capitalist class or as part of the ruling elites. The comment 'I identify as…' does not necessarily mean 'I experience life as…'.

Identity defined as a search for existential meaning is another vision found in discussions of identity. Philosopher and political activist Cornel West defined identity as a matter of life, desire and death. Identities are constructed according to how an individual understand his desires and how he conceives of death. The desires are for recognition, for association and bounds, a 'quest for visibility', 'the sense of being acknowledged', for protection and safety. Identities are related to death because some people die over certain identities. Individuals can be killed because their identities are not accepted by others or they can die because they decided to fight and defend a particular national identity. Thus, for West, defining identities are about weaving 'webs of existential meaning', material resources and bodies (West, 1995: 15-19). For sociologist Richard Jenkins, identity is also a matter of meaning although his general definition has a lesser psychological sense than what West described above. According to Jenkins, identity is:

> A multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities. It is a process – *identification* – not a 'thing'. It is not something that one can *have*, or not; it is something that one *does* (Jenkins, 2008: 5).

Identities are thus not fixed and not essential characteristics of a self. And 'identification doesn't determine what humans do'. In fact, Jenkins also argued that classifications and identifications are not neutral but often based on evaluation, motives and emotions (Jenkins, 2008: 5-6). Given that the process of identification is a matter of meaning which of course involves interaction with other humans, Jenkins agreed with the proposal that, by definition, all human identities are social identities (Jenkins, 2008: 17). Charles Taylor emphasised the philosophical and psychological difference of modern identity compared to the identities of the past. As he argued, people always had identities even if the notion and term were not developed. An

identity is about ‘who we are and where we’re coming from’. ‘It is the background against which our tastes and desires and opinions and aspirations make sense’ (Taylor, 1994: 33). The current preoccupation with identity and recognition has developed to create an identity characterised by an emphasis on our inner voice, our own individual inner nature, on authenticity and on being true to ourselves. But identity is not defined with an isolated inner voice that is only dependent on the individual, because humans are in constant dialogue with others, with their family and friends but with also other members of society. ‘We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us’ (Taylor, 1994: 32-33). This means that the connection between identity and recognition, which is constantly highlighted today, is not new. The original notion of a struggle for recognition was developed by Hegel who, in his work *The Phenomenology of Spirit (1807)*, discussed the development of the human spirit through examining the history of consciousness. In his master-slave dialectic and consciousness, he developed the notion of a human need for recognition (Hegel and Pinkard, 2018). So, according to Taylor, recognition is very important for the self and for identity because we understand who we are in open dialogue with others. Misrecognition, such as demeaning image, can create problems for people who can internalise this demeaning image of themselves. Recognition was not an issue or seen as an issue in the past. The modern age did not introduce the important need for recognition because, in the past, ‘general recognition was built into the socially derived identity’. Identities were straightforwardly defined by the fixed and accepted social categories. Today, identities defined by the individual inner voice do not enjoy this recognition *a priori*. Thus, Taylor concluded that what characterises modern society is ‘the conditions where the attempt to be recognised can fail’ (Taylor, 1994: 34-35).

Charles Taylor and his essay *The Politics of Recognition* had a major impact on the discussion of identity and recognition. Part of the debate on identity has focused on the demands from social groups who were seen as marginalised in the past; in particular racial groups, women and homosexuals seen as marginalised in mid-twentieth century. While proposing an explanation for what she saw as the problem of ‘political tribalism’, Amy Chua argued that, today, all groups feel like they are ‘being attacked, bullied, persecuted, discriminated against’ (Chua, 2018). But we have to make a distinction between, on the one hand, the sections of the population who were

objectively discriminated and oppressed in the past and who eventually affected part of the development of the concept of identity and on the other hand, the numerous present-day identity groups who *feel* discriminated against and oppressed. The recent claims of discrimination and oppression will be influenced by the contemporary political situation and the current ways in which an individual or a group can have a voice in the political realm. Thus, we have seen that some of the notions of identity were defined in relation to the 'originally oppressed' groups and given that marginalised groups often have to deal with negative stereotypes or demeaning images, the issue of recognition has become particularly important in the debate on identity. As political philosopher Sonia Kruks remarked in 2001:

> What makes identity politics a significant departure from earlier, pre-identarian forms of the politics of recognition is its demand for recognition on the basis of the very grounds on which recognition has previously been denied: it is *qua* women, *qua* blacks, *qua* lesbians that groups demand recognition (…). The demand is not for inclusion within the fold of 'universal humankind', on the basis of shared human attributes; nor is it for respect 'in spite of' one's differences. Rather, what is demanded is respect for oneself *as* different (Kruks, 2001: 85).

Some of the identities used in identity politics today are from groups who were misrecognised or not recognised by society. These identities have demanded recognition but on the basis of their perceived differences. As Taylor has argued, this does not mean identities did not exist in the past or that recognition was not important for the self and for identities (Taylor, 1994). It is interesting to note that there have also been strong assumptions underlying the numerous analyses regarding the relationships between the status as marginalised, self-esteem and need for recognition. Often, low self-esteem is assumed to exist as a consequence of marginalisation and oppression. The authors who reviewed some of the studies of black self-esteem noted that a major focus in the 1950s and early 1960s was the 'mark of oppression' approach. 'Blacks were assumed to internalize negative racial images of themselves with a devastating effect on comprehensive self-esteem' (Porter and Washington, 1979: 54). For their analysis, they separated the concepts of racial self-esteem and personal self-esteem. How a person feels about himself as a member of a certain racial group defines the notion of racial self-esteem. Personal self-esteem

means feelings about ‘one’s individuality regardless of racial group’. The various methodologies, approaches, political values, assumptions, groups and social classes studied, and definitions of ‘self-esteem’ demonstrated that the previously assumed direct relationship between oppression and low self-esteem was shown as mostly wrong. Nonetheless, despite the inconsistent findings, the authors argued that the studies had shown that:

> In the 1970s black racial self-esteem has improved and that personal self-esteem among blacks is not lower than among whites. The increased racial militancy of the past decade has had a positive impact on both dimensions of self-image. A consistent trend is the stress on the positive psychological effects of blaming the system rather than the self. System-blaming is a component of racial militancy of any type (Porter and Washington, 1979: 69).

Racial militancy which included a new focus on black pride and demands to improve social organisation had, apparently, a positive effect, at least on the psychological self.

Political philosopher Axel Honneth had a similar position to Charles Taylor on the importance of recognition for the formation or malformation of the self and identity. They have both highlighted the intersubjective quality of the self and identity through emphasising the moral and psychological processes they think are involved in the formation of identity. However, they did not analyse recognition in the same way. Honneth disagreed with what he saw as Taylor’s too narrow notion of legal recognition which led Taylor to counter-pose social movements in the past understood as to fight only for legal equality with current social groups seen as fighting only for ‘recognition of their culturally defined difference’. According to Honneth, today’s ‘identity-political’ movements can no more be reduced to their cultural objectives than the traditional resistance movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be pinned down to material and legal goals (Fraser and Honneth, 2003: 122-124). ‘Human integrity is dependent on the experience of intersubjective recognition’. Denial of recognition of individuals or groups can ‘impair them in their positive understanding of self’, but there are three types of disrespect and thus, three types of recognition we need to acknowledge (Honneth, 1992: 188-189). Disrespect for a person’s physical integrity, such as preventing the person the free use of her own body, attacks the

person's confidence in herself. Exclusion from the possession of certain 'rights' or from what everybody else expects from society is social ostracism and a lack of recognition for the person's moral accountability. Demeaning a person's or a group's lifestyles or methods of self-realisation is a refusal to approve self-realisation which is normally acquired through the 'encouragement in the form of group solidarity'. According to Honneth then, the three patterns of recognition are 'love', 'rights' and 'solidarity' (Honneth, 1992). But contrary to both Taylor and Honneth, philosopher and political scientist Nancy Fraser did not view recognition as a matter of self-realisation but as a matter of justice. She wanted to move the issue of recognition from a question of identity, individual psychology and interpersonal relationships to a question of social relations and social status. The problem of misrecognition is not a malformed identity or 'impaired subjectivity' but a denial of social status as full participants of society by the social institutions of that society. It is unjust for a section of the populations to have been given a lower social status by social institutions, which it had not been fully involved in creating. Demands for recognition are not to help the psyche but to achieve full participation in social life with others as peers (Fraser and Honneth, 2003: 27-30).

Historian Judith Stein (1940-2017), however, understood that identities were defined by people according to their specific social and political objectives. In her essay *Defining the Race 1890-1930*, she challenged the idea that racial identities and consciousness were fixed. They had different meanings depending on the historical and political contexts and on the objectives of the people who claimed the identities.

> The ways people define themselves are determined by their history, politics, and class. They change. The same words have conveyed vastly different meanings and encouraged diverse actions (…) People employ strategic fictions that can be understood only in a context. They always must be understood as one element with other ideological beliefs that have nothing to do with race. And they interact with definitions made by other people, especially by those who exercise power (Stein, 1989: 78).

She gave the example of very well-known social reformer and abolitionist Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) who, depending on the circumstances and on the audiences, would define blacks as Americans or as a people. Political activist Cyril Briggs (1888-

1966) thought of blacks as a people and a race who needed their own nation-state. Striking longshoremen in 1919 called themselves 'honest workmen' and saw themselves as a class on the one hand but, in another occasion as a race. Different historical periods and different contexts meant that black people and black leaders did not see themselves in the same ways. 'Most black leaders who grew up during the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction had not pondered the nature of race' argued Stein (Stein, 1989: 81). They mostly saw themselves as Americans who will succeed with individual hard work and equal laws. With the Jim Crow era and disfranchisement but also because of their social positions, intellectuals and leaders like Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963) viewed the world differently. For example, African-Americans were understood as Americans but also as members of an international race. Stein thought that their use of the notion of race which was developed by Western elites was an attempt to interpret the world and challenge the discrimination they faced. The definition of black identity and other identities were not done in a vacuum or from the inner self. They depend on the social and economic contexts, political actors and political objectives at a particular historical period (Stein, 1989). Problems in America have been continuously explained, by white and black Americans, through the notion of race but, Stein disputed this:

> The persistence of the term is not equivalent to biological or historical continuity. The search for single, autonomous, and authentic traditions in Afro-American history reflects current politics and essentialist intellectual trends. To give racial identities and language transhistorical meaning is to enter the realm of metaphysics or imagination (Stein, 1989: 104).

Thus, according to Stein, race is not a basic and permanent element of personal identity. The use of racial identity and even the many possible definitions of racial identities depend on context. As she demonstrated in her essay *'Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others': The Political Economy of Racism in the United States*, we 'cannot understand the development of culture and politics from within the black community alone' (Stein, 1974: 463). This applies to all other communities. And yet, many of the debates about identities and identity politics are understood by analysing the ways people express themselves within a community. In fact, the essentialist aspect of identities is often promoted, consciously or unconsciously, and the notion

that race, ethnicity or culture are permanent and internal elements of an individual's personal identity is often accepted.

The recent public discussions about white scholars pretending to be black highlight the important essentialist aspect of identities that is often there but not seen. Many people would deny that there is a particular essence defining identities such as the 'Muslim identity', the 'working class' identity or the 'British identity' and yet, these identities are discussed as if what it means to be Muslim, working class or British can be described with some permanent and essential characteristics. Rachel Dolezal, Jessica Krug and CV Vitolo-Haddad are three persons who are identified as being 'white' but had pretended until recently to be 'black' (Aubry Kaplan, 2020). These actions created strong reactions but not many people asked why these persons were seen as 'fake' black, supposedly in opposition to 'authentic' black. What did they lack so they could not be seen as 'black'? What is the essence or characteristic of 'blackness' they lack? The essentialism of racial identity was seen on many sides of the discussions. 'I definitely am not white' claimed Rachel Dolezal who also claimed to see herself as a black woman (NBC News, 2015). One of the questions in the interview was whether she changed her appearance, darkened her skin in order to be black. This question highlights one of the still current beliefs that 'black' identity is related to physical appearance like darker skin colour. Others use ancestry, the one drop rule, culture or lived experience as characteristics to define one's 'true race' but there is always an underlying notion that there is something essential which can determine whether one person is 'black' or 'non-black'.

The controversy around a particular article which, unfortunately, led to the shaming of the author was also interesting to follow because it highlighted some of the contemporary issues around identity. Philosopher Rebecca Tuvel wrote an argument in 2017, where she reasoned that a support for transgenderism should lead to a support for transracialism. She was not arguing for people to support transgenderism or transracialism but to consider that the rationale in favour of transgenderism can lead to a support for transracialism too. In the article *In Defense of Transracialism*, Tuvel was investigating how identity claims are made and accepted. For identity transformation, a person needs to self-identity, and then, society needs to accept the self-identity and grants membership in the new group (Tuvel, 2017). Tuvel took into

account the difference between gender/sex and race. She started by mentioning that there is a growing social recognition of trans individuals and so, there are less examples of isolation. This means a growing social acceptance that individuals can feel like belonging to the sex group which was not assigned to them at birth. If society accepts this move away from the biological sex, why not for non-biological race? One argument used in support of transgenderism, is to claim humans have a sexual anatomy and a sexual neuropsychology and that sometimes, due to biological abnormality, the two do not correspond. Hence, on the basis of neuropsychology, a trans individual may simply demand a recognition of his/her natural true sexual self. If race is not based on biology, this argument based on the notion of natural and true cannot be used for transracialism. Yet, Tuvel recognised the problem in portraying a biological basis for transgender identity. First, because not all trans people see their lives this way but secondly, because it would mean that the question of a biological basis for transgenderism will have to be debated and determined before considering the position and demands of trans people. She argued that a biological or social basis for the transgender identity should not be taken into account for society's acceptance of transgendered individuals (Tuvel, 2017: 265-266). Furthermore, to believe that biological sex determines gender, argued Tuvel, is to claim that there is 'some core, let alone some biologically based, kernel of experience' shared by all women. The old unanswered question 'what does it mean to be a woman?' is raised here. Can we state the identity of person as 'woman' simply because of the presence of a vagina or a certain level of hormones? Thus, can a putative biological basis for gender and transgenderism be used to explain a support for it while denying the possibility for transracialism? By comparing transgenderism and transracialism, Tuvel was highlighting the bad faith involved in supporting one while opposing the other.

Another line of reasoning in support of transgenderism and against transracialism is to argue that an individual sexual body can be changed but that race is determined with biological ancestry (Tuvel, 2017: 267). Given that there are no biological races and the one drop rule is, supposedly, no longer accepted as right, this is not a valid argument. How can one's biological ancestry determines whether one is white, black or any other races? And yet, we know this is done constantly. People with different backgrounds will define themselves and be defined by society differently, depending on the contexts, on the needs or on the morality and values of one identity versus

another. One can be white in some context and defined as black at a later time. But Tuvel's conclusion is simply that race change is at least theoretically possible and that 'whether it is *practically* possible will depend on a society's willingness to adjust its rules for racial categorization to better accommodate individual self-identification' (Tuvel, 2017: 267). Literary theorist Walter Benn Michaels summarised very well the relationship between passing and transracialism and the question of essentialism:

> How, then, is passing possible? To an antiessentialist, the question could be put this way: How is it possible to pass for something without becoming what it is you pass for? To an essentialist, the question could be put slightly differently: How is it possible to pass at all? What must race be in order for it to be the sort of thing that can be concealed? (Michaels, 1997: 128).

These are very useful questions which highlight the difficulty in discussing racial identities. The argument against transracialism is based on racial essentialism but the support of the notion of transracialism is also based on the same essentialism. His arguments were that there was no such thing as 'ex-white' or 'ex-black' and that portraying race as 'social construction' as a defence against biological essentialism was not an anti-essentialist argument. The possible positions for essentialism and anti-essentialism are to accept race as an essence or accept that 'there is no such thing as race' (Michaels, 1997: 125).

One of the crucial claims made about identity today is that it is defined by a person's lived experiences and if it is about an identity defining a marginalised group, the experience has to be related to oppression and discrimination. Consequently, the objection that 'it is unacceptable to claim a black identity unless one has grown up with a black experience' was put against Tuvel but also against the three persons discussed above (Tuvel, 2017: 268). Philosopher Kris Sealy responded to Tuvel's arguments by stating that 'only in light of my past experience with being racialized in a particular way that my current experience can be categorized as such' (Sealey and DePaul University, 2018: 22). The lack of the 'organic relationship' between past experience of racialisation and the present circumstance means that the present experience cannot be seen as 'racialised as black'. In other words, if you did not grow up racialised as black, you cannot be black in the present (Sealey and DePaul

University, 2018: 22-23). There are several problems with this point. Yes, an individual's past experiences and memories affect the individual's present. But individuals are not causally determined by some specific experiences. Black people do not all behave or think the same ways even if some of them have experienced 'racialisation'. And why would racialisation necessarily have more of an effect on an individual's identity than, for example, a good education and good access to knowledge? She also seemed to think that all people currently identified as black have the same experiences of racialisation. An individual identified by society as 'black' who grew up in a community where race did not matter, for example, would not have the 'past experience of being racialized'. Here, the essence for the black identity, could be seen as the past experience of racialisation as black. Later in her argument, she admitted her belief in a core that is not biological ancestry or genetic but still 'unavoidably inform what it means to be (and *not* to be) black' (Sealey and DePaul University, 2018). Fundamentally, for Sealy, what it means to be black depends on the lived experiences, feelings and meanings originated from specific black individuals who can then decide whether to allow others to enter the identity group. In essence, some individuals own the oppression of the past and others cannot simply decide to take it for themselves or cannot have a say in defining a particular identity. Kwame Anthony Appiah reasoned that 'what makes the invocation of lived experience such as powerful move – the fact that it's essentially private, removed from inspection – is exactly what makes it such a perilous one' (Appiah, 2020). In politics, lived experiences should not be used above facts, reason and reflection because the possibility of critique is vastly reduced.

Additionally, the problem with this kind of definitions for philosopher Lewis R. Gordon is that 'neat, semiological formulations of human reality don't comport with lived manifestations of agency'. The relationship between human beings seen as agents and reality cannot provide simplistic definition of identities. He suggested that the contemporary debate to find the right definitions for racial identities is connected to the reason as to why identities have become so important: 'a decline in the capacity (power) of people to have an impact on political forces (power) affecting their lives'. The struggle to define identities is less about attempting to understand the present lived experiences and 'more to do with what is desired' (Gordon and DePaul University, 2018). Claiming and defining identities have become increasingly important

because the possibility of political actions to change the world is seen only with the use of politicised identities asking for particular interests.

Nevertheless, some scholars do insist that their concept of identity is fundamentally non-essentialist. Sociologist Stuart Hall (1932-2014) is one scholar who made this claim. His 'concept of identity does *not* signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change' (Hall, 1996: 3). This also means that there is no single essence shared by people with the same history or ancestry. Identities are never unified and in fact, they are at the moment 'increasingly fragmented and fractured'. Again, we see the idea that contemporary identities are fragmented as opposed to what they were in the past. 'Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of *becoming* rather than *being* (Italics added)' (Hall, 1996: 4). He added that they are created within representation and 'relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself'. (Hall, 1996: 4). What is interesting is the sense that defining identities leads to the redefinition of the self and that it is an endless process. His vision of continuous redefinition seems to be understood through his grasp of the concept of identification. In common sense language, identification is based on the recognition of shared characteristics, origin or ideal between individuals and the resulting solidarity created between them. However, the 'discursive approach', which explores meanings through human interactions, 'sees identification as a construction, a process never completed – always 'in process'. In psychoanalysis and psychology, the concept of identification is also widely used. Freud defined identification in psychoanalysis as 'the earliest expression of an emotion tie with another person', playing 'a part in the early history of the Oedipus complex'. The changes in the ways a boy identify with and relate to his parents while growing up shows identification as ambivalent (Freud et al., [1921] 1985: 134). So, according to Hall, the concept of identification with its various connotations will affect the diverse meanings of identity and create a non-essentialist concept.

If there is no clear and inherent essence that can determine objectively the identity of an individual, how and with what can the individual be identified as having the right or authentic identity? How can we talk about various identities without representing them

and defining them? With the present-day use of identities in political actions and demands, the authenticity of an identity and the methods in determining if an individual has the right to claim an identity create the space where all identities can become fixed and essentialised. In fact, Marie Moran made a very crucial point when she noted that 'though identity is treated most commonly as a substantive property of individuals and groups, in fact, identity is a classificatory device, that classifies according to what is considered essential to a particular person, type of person, or group' (Moran, 2015: 50). Thus, identity 'is an essentializing mechanism'. The concept, including its past and present meanings, is *itself* an essentialist concept because 'it is premised fundamentally on the notions of sameness, oneness and how these constitute – or are essential to – a given entity' (Moran, 2015: 50). Specific characteristics (physical, cultural, psychological, moral or intellectual) are defined as essential to the individual or group, common to all members of the group and different from all other individuals or groups. These definitions are usually not created internally, within the group but by self-appointed community leaders and gatekeepers of identity groups. Is he a real Muslim if he has an opinion that is not accepted by self-proclaimed community leaders? The essentialising character of the identity discussions is seen on both the new and old identities. National identity is another example. Can an immigrant or first-generation born in a country be considered as having the national identity? It seems that commitment to a country or a decision to defend a community are often not regarded as shared and essential characteristics to allow membership of the group (Sabbagh, 2020).

Whether social identities are imposed on the individual or are self-defined does not change the essentialising mechanism of classifying individuals. It seems to lead to very restrictive definitions for human beings. The identity of a Jew, according to an anti-Semite, is the presence of 'Jewishness', had argued Jean-Paul Sartre in 1946. This 'Jewishness' was seen as an essence, a substance that could not be modified (Sartre, 1968: 44-45). His reflections, on the issues of antisemitism and Jewish identity, were published just after World War Two. He had started by expressing his belief that the anti-Semite really needed the Jews as the enemy he wants to destroy and would have invented them if they had not already existed, suggesting a need for recognition. The anti-Semite has a fear of 'himself, his conscience, his liberty, his instincts, his responsibilities, his loneliness' and fear of 'changes, of society and of the

world'. Thus, Sartre had concluded that antisemitism was a fear of the human condition. Society had a problem, not the Jews because people who believed in democracy had been too weak. They had defended the Jews as simply 'human beings' but destroyed them as specifically 'Jews'. 'The anti-Semite reproaches the Jew for *being* Jewish; the democrat would gladly reproach him for *considering* himself a Jew. Between his enemy and his defender, the Jew seems to be in a bad position (my own translation)' (Sartre, 1968: 69). The anti-Semite condemned the Jew for his imposed Jewish identity. The democrat condemned the Jew for recognising his self-defined Jewish identity.

Sartre later argued that there are Jewish races in a sense that there are physical characteristics passed down to the following generations. These characteristics did not determine the nature of Jewish people but were factors in determining their social situations. But 'le Juif est un homme que les autres tiennent pour Juif (the Jew is a man considered Jewish by those around him)' (Sartre, 1968: 83). This essay by Sartre is a good example of the difficulties in defining a specific identity. It is particularly difficult if it is to help in understanding historical events. He had tried to understand world events by analysing the psychology of the people involved (anti-Semites, Jewish people, the democrats, and French society in general).

Why has identity become an issue?

Overall, there seems to be two kinds of definitions of identity. Definitions of identity based on various understandings of humanity, of the self and of the relationships between the individual and society and definitions based solely on analysing what is often understood as contemporary 'identity politics'. More precisely, the latter kind of definitions use only the identities developed since the 1970s and based on claims of grievance and marginalisation, as a basis for understanding the general contemporary preoccupation for identity. The fact that the concern for identity did not start with the new social movements representing specific sections of society does seem to be ignored. In other words, identity politics can be viewed as a phenomenon started only in mid-twenty century when marginalised groups such as African-Americans, women or gays and lesbians reclaimed positive identities for themselves in order to make political demands. Or, it can be understood as the use of any type of social identities to enter the political realm. This latter understanding will interpret identity politics as a

phenomenon that started, in the eighteenth century, with the starting concerns for racial and national identities, the development of modern politics and the development of modern social theory. The differences found in the various ways people are ascribed an identity or are claiming an identity today compared to what they did in the eighteenth century should not be ignored. But distinguishing the two main notions of identity politics can help us understand the fundamental issues and not simply the problems and qualities of identity politics when practiced by particular groups.

The concern for personal and collective identity is ubiquitous. It started with what is called the modern period, the historical period after the Renaissance. As we saw in section 4.3 ‘The self in the modern world’, John Locke had already developed a notion of personal identity in the seventeenth century. Thus, the issue of identity started with philosophical and political questions about what it means to be human and how we define an individual in a modern and/or capitalist society. The destruction of previously accepted traditional identities and hierarchies created a space for the development of new ways of defining individuals and the self. Biological explanations for identity were common as we saw with the development of the notion of race in the eighteenth century. In the beginning of the twentieth century, with the increasing acceptance for psychological explanations in relation to many aspects of our social, economic and political life, natural descriptions for identity were still used but with psychological concepts. Identity also became an increasingly important notion for the recently developed academic discipline called ‘sociology’. The term ‘sociology’ was coined by philosopher Auguste Comte who is also often described as the founder of sociology with his main work *Cours de philosophie positive* (The Course in Positive Philosophy) (1830-1842). Positivism is thus one of the origins of sociology. The traditional philosophical studies of society were replaced with what was seen as studies using scientific methods (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1973). Sociology had developed into a fully autonomous discipline after World War One, but like psychology, its prestige had greatly increased during and after World War Two. Thus, the fact that in mid-twentieth century, social movements also turned their interests toward defending their own images and self-images, thus their identities, does not mean that we can understand the contemporary concern for identity and use of identity in politics only by focusing on the latest claims made by these movements. Erik Erikson argued that ‘we begin to conceptualize matters of identity at the very time in history when they become a

problem' (Erikson, [1951] 1995: 256). He thought it useful to develop the concept because it helped us understand some aspects of ourselves but also could help to deal with some particular issues newly arising. Eva Moskowitz, discussing the United States, argued that the tendency to look at the mind for explanations and solutions developed from mid-nineteenth century. As she noted, 'problems that were once considered political, economic, or educational are today found to be psychological' (Moskowitz, 2001: 2).

Some of the main explanations as to why identity became such a crucial issue in the twentieth century, for both academia and the general public, point to the continuous problems of modernity, continuous issues related to the nations, colonialism and understanding of national characters/identities after World War Two, the issue of racial relations, consumerism and mass society, conformity, changes in social classes, individualism, the success of sociology as an academic subject and of course, the enormous success of psychology (and all the fields related to it) in academia, in politics and in public life. Modernity was seen as creating an isolated individual, obsessed with consumerism in a fast-changing and chaotic society. The concept of identity has become a useful and easy go-to analytical tool for those concerned about the relationship between individual and society and for those discussing various social, economic and political problems.

Charles Taylor argued that people who had lived a couple of centuries ago would not understand our modern notion of identity. This is not surprising in itself. There are many modern notions such as race, nation, democracy, human rights, genocide, eugenics they would not understand if they came to us today. But he gave specific reasons as to why people of the past like Martin Luther (1483-1546) would not understand identity today:

> Underlying our modern talk of identity is the notion that questions of moral orientation cannot all be resolved in simply universal terms. And this is connected to our post-Romantic understanding of individual differences as well as to the importance we give to expression in each person's discovery of his or her moral horizon (Taylor, 1989: 28).

The previous universal terms such as God, nature or Enlightenment universalism have partly been replaced by post-Romantic particularism. Certain fundamental moral questions, such as the right to life and integrity, are still presented in universal terms, noted Taylor, but we do not see them in these terms. The past moral frameworks that allowed humans to be oriented in moral space and to know who they were, are no longer accepted today (Taylor, 1989: 27-30). Thus, in the eighteenth century, the development of our understanding of the self introduced the notion of human beings 'endowed with a moral sense', with a feeling for right and wrong. This was in opposition to the idea that deciding right and wrong was a matter of calculating consequences. The inner voice for morality became increasingly seen as free from God or free from a universal idea of Good and more dependent on the inner self, on one's particular way of being. Taylor was describing how the 'individualized identity' became the way humans understand themselves today. The other change that made the concern for identity and recognition inevitable, according to Taylor, is the 'collapse of social hierarchies, which used to be the basis of honor'. The meaning of 'honor' here is linked with past inequalities and with the sense of 'preferences'. This honor has been replaced with the modern notion of dignity 'used in a universalist and egalitarian sense' and compatible with democracy. With the notion of dignity, the demand for equal recognition developed (Taylor, 1994: 26-32).

For sociologist Anthony Giddens, self-identity is a reflexive project of the self. Reflexivity is not a new feature of modern life but, it has taken a particular aspect in contemporary post-traditional societies. There is a continuous examination of social life, of past, present and future, of biographical narratives but in a context where there are now many choices. Lifestyles choices become more important, for example, because traditions are no longer accepted as much as in past. "One of the most obvious characteristics separating the modern era from any other period preceding it is modernity's extreme dynamism. The modern world is a 'runaway world'", noted Giddens. He added that it was not only 'the *pace* of social change', but also the '*scope* and the *profoundness* with which it affects pre-existing social practices and modes of behaviour' (Giddens, 1991: 16). The dynamism of modernity is due to the *separation of time and space*, meaning that the sense of past, present and future is separated from the local place in which people live. This is due to the more globalised modern world. The *disembedding* of social institutions is also affecting the dynamic aspect of

modern life. Social institutions and social relations are separated from their local contexts and organised in more globalised manners, concentrating on monetary considerations and expertise. The third major influence on the dynamism of modern life is *institutional reflexivity* where new information and knowledge lead to constant re-examinations of social life. This reflexivity actually 'undermines the certainty of knowledge', rather than help in developing 'knowledge of the social and natural worlds' because it is based on the notion of doubt, on constantly revising and discarding knowledge (Giddens, 1991: 16-21). Thus, according to Giddens, self-identity is the psychological consequence of the social life in high modernity.

Merleau-Ponty granted that the modern world was seen as lacking 'the dogmatism and self-assurance of the classical world-view' in many aspects of people's lives and that modern thought was displaying 'the dual characteristics of being unfinished and ambiguous'. This gives the space for claims of 'decline and decadence'. We think 'knowledge as provisional and approximate' today when people used to think of finding the eternal laws explaining the world (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009: 78). But, as he also asked, is this ambiguity, incompletion and uncertainty only the state of the modern world or was the classical world affected by the same tensions? The increased concern for understanding the self and the increased focus on searching identities may be explained by the perceived uncertainty plaguing the modern world. Then again, could this feeling of uncertainty be the result of humanity's new awareness of what the world has always been? The search for identities may be seen as the consequence of a 'greater clarity of vision'. There is a loss of quality in the short term, seen in art, politics and other aspects of life but the solution is not to restore to what was before and mask again what the world is about (Merleau-Ponty, [1948] 2009: 82-83).

"While it is true that identity 'continues to be the problem', this is *not* 'the problem it was throughout modernity" argued Zygmunt Bauman. He then added that "the *modern* 'problem of identity' was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the *postmodern* 'problem of identity' is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open" (Bauman, 1996: 18). According to Bauman, identity becomes an issue when one does not know how to define oneself in relation to others or does not know where one belongs. Identity is an escape from the uncertainty. Thus, identity was a problem

from the start and could only exist as a problem. It is a modern task for the individual responding to socially created problems. Using the image of the pilgrim, he argued that a pilgrim going to the desert would leave behind all life anchors but would self-create and would be building something new. He would experience life as 'disembedded', 'unencumbered' selves. With modernity, the desert came to society rather than stayed outside. 'The world turned placeless' and 'the familiar features were obliterated'. With modern society becoming a desert, the Protestant/member of modern society has to be a pilgrim. He has to self-create but also giving himself a meaning in life. The building of identity is the project of meaning and the difference between what will satisfy the individual and what is actually achieved is the driving factor for the continuous 'identity-building'. But with the continuous changes in modern life, the problem is no longer to build an identity but to preserve the identity built so far, to have a solid foundation on which to assemble. Bauman was describing a directionless life where people tried to construct a solid identity for themselves but were unable to do so in a world with no stable traditional social structures. For Bauman, the pilgrim has now been replaced by the stroller, the vagabond, the tourist and the player (Bauman, 1996). Fundamentally, the concern for identity is a product of modern individualist life:

> In our world of rampant 'individualization', identities are mixed blessings. They vacillate between a dream and a nightmare, and there is no telling when one will turn into the other. At most times the two liquid modern modalities of identity cohabit, even when located at different levels of consciousness. In a liquid modern setting of life, identities are perhaps the most common, most acute, most deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of *ambivalence*. (Bauman and Vecchi, 2004: 32).

The explanation that the rapid global change and lack of continuity in modern life has led to elusive identities is common. The concept of identity is used to analyse contemporary society and analyses of modern society are employed to understand the concept of identity and the claim for identities. Mervyn F. Bendle argued the existence of a current crisis of identity which expressed itself as a crisis of society and a crisis of theory. So, at the moment, there is a very pervasive idea throughout Western society that 'identity was both vital *and* problematic' but that the conceptions

of identity are too under-theorised. These under-theorised conceptions of identity are nevertheless used in analyses in many academic disciplines including sociology, psychology and politics (Bendle, 2002). Questions regarding the relationships between the individual and society, human nature, human psychology and analyses of contemporary society are answered with these under-theorised conceptions of identity. Bendle discussed some of the proposed sociological answers as well as the problems posed by this lack of theoretical rigour found in the issue of identity. But he also agreed that identity became an important issue in the early nineteenth century, 'in the shadow of the Enlightenment, the Industrial and Democratic Revolutions, the decline of feudalism, the erosion of religious authority and the rise of Romanticism' (Bendle, 2002: 15). 'Factors that underpinned a sense of continuity (geography, community, employment, class, etc.) were destabilized; whilst those that had provided a sense of differentiation (ancestry, social rank, gender, moral virtue, religion, etc.) were delegitimized' (Bendle, 2002: 16). Consumerism, individualisation and individualism are then factors in making identity such a concern today.

Sociologist Siniša Malešević, though, remarked that members of the social sciences discipline often have a need to capture the "'essence' of social reality in a single word" and often found them outside their discipline. Words from arts, literature, theology, architecture have been used. In the case of identity, they took it from mathematics, logics and analytical philosophy but via psychology and its affiliates as seen above (Malešević, 2006: 14). Analytical philosophy uses two concepts of identity or sameness: qualitive ('I and my Replica are qualitatively identical') and numerical (but we may not be one and the same person) (Parfit, 1992: 201). The concept used in the social sciences has still kept the dualistic meaning based on the original mathematics, logics and philosophical definitions despite the fact that the social sciences are studying humanity and its social world. Even with the numerous differences in the use of identity today, Malešević maintained that the concept used is still dependent on its origins and criticised the different approaches, which use the word 'identity' in order to analyse social reality, as unnecessary, 'vague and all-inclusive' or 'reified and excessively inflexible' (Malešević, 2006: 15-21). Yet, the stronger point he made, helpful for us in understanding why the notion of identity has become important, is that 'the concept is largely a European and Western creation' and that it is a modern concept. Anthropological studies have shown that 'unlike the Western or European

concept of identity which is profoundly individualist and visualises collective behaviour in an individual, conscious, purposeful way, many non-Europeans operate with a very different understanding of collective and individual action' (Malešević, 2006: 22). The 'linear vision of time', 'the strong sense of continuity and progression' and 'the concrete material boundaries' used to define the self and identity are not found in many non-European societies. It is worth remembering again that the current definitions of who we are as human beings depend on space and time. As Malešević highlighted and as seen in this chapter, several theories exist explaining why the concept of identity emerged. But its specific spatial and temporal definitions indicate the weaknesses of the concept as an analytical tool to understand *universal* social reality (Malešević, 2006: 23). So, why has this problematic concept become so central both in academia and public discourse? Malešević observed that there was already a sociological call for 'identity' as early as the nineteenth century. He could have added that there were also psychological and philosophical calls. He recognised that there were probably many sociological and historical reasons for the dominance of identity today. Nevertheless, he made an uncommon but very interesting claim about the most important reason for this prominence:

> The astonishing popularity of the concept comes primarily from the fact that 'identity' has historically and ideologically filled the role that the three major social concepts have vacated – the concepts of 'race', 'national character' and 'social consciousness'.
>
> The master ideological concept used to make sense of human difference and similarity from the late eighteenth until the first half of the twentieth century was the concept of 'race' (Malešević, 2006: 31).

He saw the derivatives 'ethnic identity' and 'national identity also as vague and inclusive and as helping the prominence of identity. From his interpretation of the various definitions of identity given by others, as all based on the dualist sameness-difference, he concluded that the new concept of identity was replacing old failing sameness-difference concepts. One could also argue that the seen-as-universal need for identification, when traditional and fixed social hierarchies were declining, was, first, fulfilled with the concepts of race, national character and social or class consciousness. In other words, the contemporary and very vague notion of identity

used by many people in various contexts has the ability to fulfil this universal need for identification now.

We have discussed the importance of concept of race in chapter 2. The issue of national character/identity has only been briefly approached in relation to the concept of race in chapter 3. It has been an important issue since the formation and use of nations as political entities, but it regularly becomes a particular concern at a time of social crises. The first big crisis of the capitalist system reached its apogee in the 1880s. As historian Gérard Noiriel argued, many European governments reacted by taking protectionist policies, against free trade but also free movement of people. In France, the law of 1889, which introduced compulsory conscription is an important step for the definition of the French identity. The term 'immigration' started to be an important term in France at that time. A French person was no longer simply one who could vote and be called upon to defend the nation. With the new law, the French people now belonged to the state and the 'quality of French' had become a major political issue. The essential quality was and still is loyalty towards the French nation. This quality is also seen as essential in other nations even though the laws and policies were and are different. Noiriel noted the distinction between countries of emigration like Germany who used the 'jus sanguinis' (right of blood) and countries of immigration like the United States which used the 'jus soli' (right of soil) (Noiriel, 2007: 18-23). The first crisis of capitalism also led to the development of strong labour movements and development of the concept of social/class consciousness. Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the concepts of race, class consciousness and national character played a major role in social and political life. For Cold War politics, the ideological master concepts of social/class consciousness and national character which 'were both vague and inclusive enough to accommodate many distinct processes, events or social actors' were useful to interpret a supposedly united front against the enemies. 'As such these concepts were both also deeply collectivist, analytically inflexible and strongly prone to reification (Malešević, 2006: 33). In fact, Gleason argued that, with scientific racialism falling into disrepute in the 1930s, the scientific study of the national character started in World War II. Well-known cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978) and other scholars 'were called upon by agencies of the United States government to apply their skills to such questions as how civilian morale could best be maintained or what kind of propaganda could be

most effectively employed against the enemy'. She admitted later that 'culture-and-personality studies of the 1930s' would be seen in 1961 as studies of the national character (Gleason, 1983: 924). The notion of national character had been an important discussion in the nineteenth century but the experience of wartime where psychology was increasingly used, led to new psychological techniques to investigate the national populations, in particular the 'problematic' national populations like the Native-Americans and African-Americans. During the war and after, in order to understand their enemies and their own populations, social psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists and psychiatrists performed studies of morale, attitudes, characters, individual personality, relationships between an individual and a group/society (Rose, 1999: 36-39). Erikson was influenced by these.

Psychological explanations have become pervasive in many Western nations. This point is repeated several times because it highlights the uniqueness of this current Western period with regard to the modern world. Agreeing with the philosopher Ian Hacking's point, Patrick Bracken argued that:

> Increasingly, Western societies understand the impact of violence and other types of suffering and formulated questions about responsibility and morality through the sciences of memory and psychology. Most non-Western societies deal with these issues very differently, most often through a mixture of religious, spiritual and political ideas and practices (Bracken, 2003: 7).

Thus, psychological explanations for personal or social problems should not be seen as universal and yet, there are used to explain social, economic, and political problems worldwide. What Bracken is concerned about is the need to look at contexts to understand how individuals will view a particular event and react to it. He is opposing the ideas that 'the mind exists as separate from, and in relation to, an outside world' that lead to the notion that life meanings are internal, found in the 'interior' mind (Bracken, 2003). People, from distinct cultures and moral frameworks, do not view and react to similar events, such as bombings, in the same ways. What one finds offensive will depend on one's individual past experiences and one's ideas and opinions. Nonetheless, the widespread success of psychology and its affiliates (psychoanalysis, psychiatry, psychotherapy), also known as 'psy-disciplines' is one of the reasons for

the high prominence of the concept of identity in modern life. For example, physical and psychological trauma and other events which happened to or was done to a person have led to the emergence of an accepted 'survivor identity'. This kind of identity becomes important in a society with the widespread adoption of a 'therapeutic sensibility' (McLaughlin, 2012). Social, economic and political problems are all understood through psychology and the individual self. And the damaged self also needs to be recognised. The survivor identity exists but becomes even more crucial in a society where politics is understood only as politics of recognition and a fight for resources.

So, if 'psychology' is understood as 'an emphasis on analysing mental processes, interpersonal relationships, introspection, and behaviour as a way of explaining both individual and social realities', its tight relationship with the various definitions of identity today becomes very clear (Herman, 1996: 5). In her analysis of the influences of psychology on American public and political life, Herman concluded that these psychological experts, who increasingly intervened publicly and socially, in policy making, 'helped to transform the conceptual foundations of public life in the postwar United States' (Herman, 1996: 10). They 'have been a critical force in the recent convergence between private and public domains, cultural and political concerns. Joining the comprehension and change of self to the comprehension and change of society was their most enduring legacy' (Herman, 1996: 12). This is clearly seen with the issue of race and identity politics. As seen in chapter 3, racism, after World War II, was redefined as a problem of an individual's psychology, behaviour and attitude. Racial inequalities were explained as products of family life, black masculinity or black psychology. One of the most influential earlier studies which clearly linked racial problems with race relations, psychology, behavioural theories and social engineering was *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, published in 1944. Funded by the Carnegie Foundation, the project was headed by Gunnar Myrdal (1898-1987), Swedish economist, sociologist and 'architect of his country's welfare state during the 1930s' (Herman, 1996: 175-181). Myrdal is known as the one who helped to destroy the United States racial policy of 'separate but equal'. This increasing influence of psychology was done with a claim that it was 'capable of revealing universal laws about human experience, personality, social life, and

subjectivity' (Herman, 1996: 12). Barbara Fields noted how the notion of race relations has been so useful for those who did not want to face the social problem of racism:

> The ideological formulation *race relations* skirted the considerable difficulties of stating the Negro problem within the forms of a purportedly democratic polity and with respect to persons who were nominally citizens in that polity enjoying full political rights. Race relations so suited the liberal thought of the time, and has been so well able to accommodate the internal twists of liberal and neoliberal thought since, that it remains a vital part of the prevailing public language today (Fields, 2001: 54).

The social sources and consequences of racism are not questioned and analysed.

One of the most common perceptions among those interested in the issues of identity and identity politics is the link between identity and the new social movements active in the 1960s-1970s. For many people, Erikson is seen as the one who introduced a new concept of identity and started to make the term popular in academic and public discourse. And the Civil Rights movement, the Feminist movement and the Gay and Lesbian rights movement are seen as responsible for making identity important today with their demands for recognition and with the introduction of identity politics in the 1970s. This means forgetting the influences of sociology and psychology since the nineteenth century and their special relationship with the state in the twentieth century. Additionally, it was only from late 1980s and especially through the 1990s to early 2000s that identity had attained such a prominent position in both academic and public discourse. In essence, identity became a hegemonic concern at the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War is generally viewed at the end of 1991, with the Berlin Wall going down in 1989-1990 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1989, Francis Fukuyama published an essay *The End of History?* for the journal 'The National Interest' where he argued that the last remaining ideology still standing, liberal democracy, may constitute the end of History. This essay and his book in 1992 *The End of History and The Last Man* were seen as controversial and led to many debates. His perception of History is based on Hegel's philosophy of history and consciousness. Fukuyama interpreted History 'as a single, coherent, evolutionary process' of development of human society. Although this directional evolution of humanity or

historical progress was not seen as open-ended but as ending when humanity 'had achieved a form of society that satisfied its deepest and most fundamental longings' (Fukuyama, 1992: xii). He maintained that Hegel's end of History was the liberal state. Hence, at the end of the Cold War, with the defeat of the Soviet Union and communism, he proposed that humanity had reached the end of history with the victorious liberal democracy and a general consensus supporting the legitimacy of this ideology. He recognised that there were still problems but that they were due to the 'incomplete implementation of the twin principles of liberty and equality' and of the '*ideal* of liberal democracy' (Fukuyama, 1992: xi). The end of History was, according to Fukuyama, reached due to both the level of economics achieved and the form of recognition finally obtained after the struggle for recognition. The industrial development had fulfilled people's desire and reason but, this was not enough otherwise people would have been happy with market-oriented authoritarian states. People, their autonomy and selves as free individuals, needed to be recognised for their own self-esteem. Hence, democracy, contrary to communism provided universal and equal recognition, the right form of recognition. This was how Fukuyama had mostly explained the failure of other ideologies (Fukuyama, 1992: xii-xix). The end of the Cold War and the 'victory' of liberal democracy was celebrated by many but for Fukuyama, 'the end of history will be a very sad time' because:

> The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history (Fukuyama, 1989: 17).

He recognised the importance of rivals and conflicts, but it is not just the end of History providing him with not much joy. Fukuyama understood this period also as the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution'. The twentieth century had seen the world descended 'into a paroxysm of ideological violence' but a universal consensus for liberal democracy has entered the world (Fukuyama, 1989: 1). In fact, he was not the first person to discuss the notion of the end of ideology. The discourse of the end of

ideology had already occurred in the mid-1950s. Stalin had died in 1953, giving some intellectuals the perception and hope that communism, the rival ideology to liberalism, will die soon. Fukuyama was writing at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The first intellectuals discussing the end of ideologies in 1950s and 1960s were writing at a time of expansion for the Soviet Union as well as Stalinist influence on Third World decolonisation movements.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) was an institution linking intellectuals and with an international liberal anti-communist consensus. Historian Giles Scott-Smith argued that there was an initial connection between the CCF and the 'end of ideology' discourse, especially with their conference 'The Future of Freedom' (Scott-Smith, 2002). Assembling about '150 intellectuals and politicians from many democratic countries, and included men ranging in opinions from socialists to right-wing conservatives', it was held in Milan, Italy, in 1955 (Lipset, 1960: 404). After the death of Stalin, there was a need to provide another more productive worldview than simply anti-communism and anti-totalitarianism (Scott-Smith, 2002: 437-438). The comment 'end of ideology' is thought to have been coined by French philosophical essayist and novelist Albert Camus, in 1946. In an article in *Combat*, the Resistance newspaper he edited, he argued against the idea that Marxism and ethics could be reconciled and claimed that Marxism as an 'absolute philosophy' needed to be rejected. The rejection 'would show that our time marks the end of ideologies, that is, absolute utopias which in reality destroy themselves' (Jacoby, 1999: 3). The earlier end of ideology discourse was, thus, mainly an intellectual and propaganda project arguing that there was no other choice but to promote the notion of a free capitalist society. Recognising a decline in radical, class-based politics, intellectuals across the political spectrum, argued that political differences between left and right no longer existed or did not matter in the fight for freedom. 'All agreed that the increase in state control…would not result in a decline in democratic freedom'. Although economist and philosopher, Frederick A. Hayek, was one of the few who did not agree with state intervention (Lipset, 1960: 404-405). Many people thought that, with the welfare-state politics and economics, 'the classless society was apparently being attained without recourse to revolution or political strife' (Scott-Smith, 2002: 440). Scott-Smith maintained that the discourse represented a reformulation of liberal ideas in an attempt to propose an answer to the Marxist anti-capitalist notion. 'The reformist politics of social democracy,

by combining the maintenance of economic growth with ethics of egalitarianism', were meant to oppose the Marxist view of a better society. The intellectuals wanted to show that 'the interests of all sections of society could be represented in the democratic system'. But most importantly, they wanted to demonstrate that a Marxist analysis was no longer useful to explain modern industrial society (Scott-Smith, 2002: 442-443). 'The democratic class struggle will continue, but it will be a fight without ideologies, without red flags, without May Day parades', claimed Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the American sociologists who had a lot of influence on the theory of the end of ideology (Lipset, 1960: 408). The other two intellectuals who had influence were Daniel Bell and Edward Shils. Apparently, social sciences were more useful as tool than politics to understand American society. This is an important point highlighting a demand by intellectuals to replace politics and ideologies with social sciences while psychology and its affiliates were already entering every aspect of social life. In essence, by the end of the Cold War and despite the political turmoil of the 1960s-1970s in several western countries, with the civil rights movement in the United States, feminism, the Gay liberation, anti-war protests, student radicalism, labour movements, decolonisation movements and the New Left, there was no longer an organised movement with a certain ideology that was effectively opposing liberal democracy. This is not to say that radical Marxist politics was no longer needed or that it has ceased to exist but that there was a lack of a coherent ideological movement opposing liberalism. Labour movements had collapsed. Marxism had been attacked by both the left and the right and the Soviet Union with its Stalinist ideology had shown their great weaknesses and had disintegrated.

The end of the Cold War effectively led to a short outburst of triumphalism in the West with a revival of the end of ideology discourse. Anthony Giddens developed his notion of a third way, of beyond left and right and his concepts of reflexive modernity and identity. Political scientist, Samuel P. Huntington claimed, in 1993, that world politics is entering a new phase and that 'the fundamental source of conflict' will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic' but will be cultural due to the cultural differences between civilisations. 'The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future' (Huntington, 1993: 22). His essay *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993) and later his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) have been extremely influential since their publications. Interestingly, he had written

another essay *No Exit: The Errors of Endism*, in 1989, criticising Fukuyama's thesis. He had compared what he saw as an 'intellectual fad', the 'theory of endism' of 1989, which discussed the end of Cold War, the end of wars or the end of History, with the 'theory of declinism' which worried about American decline. For him, the theory of declinism gave at least a warning 'we're losing' which would push people into action in order to stop the decline. On the other hand, endism simply gave an illusion of well-being which leads to complacency. According to him, one could not predict that the Cold War and wars between democratic nations had ended and would not come back again. The decline of communism did not necessarily mean the triumph of liberalism, the impossibility of 'conflicts within liberalism' or of the emergence of new rival ideologies. In fact, he had noticed a turn back toward traditional cultures and identities in the Soviet Union and China (Huntington, 1989). One of his problems with the theory of endism was that 'endism overemphasizes the predictability of history and the permanence of the moment' (Huntington, 1989: 10). And yet, a few years later, his thesis will be understood as permanent state of the world with his claim that 'there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others' (Huntington, 1993: 49). The end of the Cold War meant the end of conflicts between communism, fascism-Nazism and liberalism. Ideologies will decrease in importance. But increasingly violent conflicts will occur with 'the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations and among non-Western civilizations' (Huntington, 1993: 23). According to Huntington, civilization identity will be increasingly important in the future. These identities represent real and basic differences between people and with globalisation, there will be more interactions between people of different civilization identities. These interactions will enhance differences. His assumption here was that interactions between people with cultural differences would lead to more animosities. Another assumption was the belief that cultural identities would create more problems than national identities, despite the past numerous wars and destruction between nation-states or between nation-states and communities. The weakening of the nation state as a source of identity was understood as the cause of an increasing claim for religious identities which often take the form of 'fundamentalist movement' (Huntington, 1993). What is crucial to note here is his beliefs that 'cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones'. For him, cultural identities are essential and permanent characteristics, that cannot be

changed. With class and ideologies conflicts, ‘people could and did choose sides and change sides’. But with the question ‘what are you?’ in the clash of civilisations, the describing identities and culture cannot be changed (Huntington, 1993: 27).

Conflicts between ideologies have been replaced by conflicts between civilisation or cultural identities, according to Huntington. In the realm of politics, fixed and permanent identities have replaced ideological and mutable positions. Thus, the importance of identities today is partly due to the use of identities in politics. The current hegemonic position of identity is partly due to the fact that there are no more ideological positions to choose from. The violent and vicious characteristics of contemporary politics could be explained by the fact that the conflicts are between made-as-fixed differences between people rather than flexible and rational positions which can be changed with arguments and reflections. As seen in section 5.2, Moran had shown how all identities can be really seen as fixed because they are all mechanisms of classification. But in politics, as Walter Benn Michaels had argued, whether one chooses ‘between physical and cultural, fixed or mobile’, one still chooses ‘between two different accounts of identity. And to choose between two different accounts of identity is already to have chosen identity itself’ (Michaels, 2000: 651-652). Fukuyama did understand politics as a question of identity and recognition when he argued that ‘*the* problem of politics over the millennia of human history’ was ‘the effort to solve the problem of recognition’ and that recognition is the origin of tyranny, imperialism, and the desire to dominate’ (Fukuyama, 1992: xxi). He used a psychological characteristic, the need for recognition, so that he could bypassed any historical and social differences over the millennia to argue that, with ‘universal and equal recognition’ provided by liberal democracies, history has ended.

Should social identities be used in politics?

Appiah, like many others, imply that social identities should have a role in politics but that the real concern is to know ‘how large a part these identities should play’. The answer for Appiah seemed to be ‘a large part’ as long as individuals were not forced to use their identities and as long as recognition was not the only political demand. In his argument, Appiah started with the original Greek notion of ethics, the notion found in the work of Aristotle’s *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Ethics seeks to answer the question of what makes a good human life (Appiah, 2006: 17). This question is crucial in politics

but not in the way Appiah used it. Classical meaning of politics was not simply about individual fulfilment, happiness or dignity. The Aristotelian *eudaimonia* is actually an alternative to past and contemporary utilitarian happiness. Jeremy Bentham had advocated the idea that moral decisions should be based only on 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people'. Happiness was, for him, based on pleasure and no pain. John Stuart Mill had agreed with Bentham that happiness was the sole basis for morality, but he also remarked that 'few human creatures would consent to be changed into any lower animals'. Noting that there was a marked preference for pleasure using higher faculties, Mill introduced the notion of different levels of pleasure, with some levels, such as mental pleasures, specific to humans (Mill and Mill, [1863] 1993: 163). Aristotelian *eudaimonia* is not utilitarian or individual happiness. Also, the relationship between the individual and society in ancient Greece was much less antagonistic and the notion of the good life was used to discuss the kind of society Greeks or humans should build. Philosopher Arthur Adkins (1929-1996) noted the obvious link between ethics and politics for Aristotle by highlighting the fact that Aristotle had stated, at the beginning of *The Nicomachean Ethics* that, politics was 'the art or science of the practical good'. He also noted that Aristotle had argued in his work *Politics* that 'the *eudaimonia* of the individual is the same as the *eudaimonia* of the polis', that 'the polis is an association of like people for the sake of the best life or *eudaimonia*' and that 'human beings have the same goal individually and in common, so that the definition of the best man and the best constitution must be the same' (Adkins, 1984: 29-30). Indeed, Aristotle had stated that the ultimate end of political science is the supreme good and thus, the 'knowledge of this supreme good' is 'of great importance for the conduct of life' (Aristotle et al., [322 B.C.] 1996: 1094a25). *Eudaimonia* is the supreme good and it used to be translated as 'happiness' but now, many use the more accurate 'human flourishing'. Consequently, human flourishing is not about the fulfilling of immediate desires, a sense of well-being or pleasure. It is a state of being that means 'living well and doing well' and achieved through practical activity. Malik argued that 'it is at one and the same time an objective measure of human wellbeing and a value-laden concept of flourishing (Malik, 2014: p34). Indeed, the value-laden is seen when ethics is used today as a way of arguing that 'each of us has a life to live' and that 'the standard by which we decide whether I'm flourishing is, in part, set by aims I define for myself' (Appiah, 2006: 18). A very individualistic notion of life and flourishing is expressed here. Identities are seen as essential because

humans use them to construct their own lives. Recognition of one's identity becomes important for an individual's or a group's dignity.

The argument which justified the use of identity politics was presented in the following way. The need for recognition is understood today as a universal and permanent aspect of human nature. Politics is understood as state involvement in regulating issues. The demands for recognition or the politics of recognition is then seen as essential for human dignity, hence human flourishing. People can negotiate between themselves about negative and positive norms of identification and this is micropolitics. But the state also does treat people differently and has to deal, on one hand, with individual oppressors and their fight for individuality and self-expression and, on the other hand, with oppressed individuals who need self-respect. Laws against hate speech can be seen as solution but with a demand for people to realise that not all claims, like demands for vote or for rights, are for recognition. In the end, people need to ask for more than simply recognition. Even though, Appiah disagreed with some of the restrictive aspects of identities such as its essentialism or recognised that politics should not be only to ask for recognition, he eventually justified the use of identity politics for the flourishing of individuals (Appiah, 2006). There is no concept of the flourishing of society with these kinds of arguments based on liberal individualism. There is also a misunderstanding of the original meaning of politics. Politics is often seen today as simply a battle for resources between groups. If understood this way, then various groups need to find ways to enter the battle and social identities become useful. Many other reasons have been given as to why identity politics is productive, useful for a section of society or simply a normal part of politics. Courtney Jung believed that all politics is identity politics. She argued that 'identity is not only a possible ground of politics; it is also an effect of politics'. Identities are 'important markers of differential access to resources' and thus, products of state actions and part of the political process. In a democratic society, 'the politics of identity is a struggle to achieve a political voice' and politicised social identities or 'political identities' are simply constructed through interactions with the state (Jung, 2006: 33-35). Identities do become defined through political actions and struggles but they are also short-term, dependent on time and place for their definitions. What means to be black or white has changed a lot over the years. This also does not explain why all politics is identity politics or why identities should be politicised to be used in politics. But Jung's position

was to advocate ‘critical liberalism’ and thus, her belief that all politics is identity politics was based on staying within liberal democracy but using identity politics and the emancipatory potential of rights as a method to ‘renew the promise of democratic governance’ and ‘extend, and relegitimate, the boundaries of citizenship and deliberation’ (Jung, 2006: 36-37).

But Jung made a useful point when she described many oppositions to identity politics are achieved by counter-posing race, gender, sexuality or other identities against class. For her, race or gender politics acts as ‘strategically distinct but structurally analogous way to make political claims’ when compared to class politics (Jung, 2006: 36). Often, the demand to use class rather than other identities is simply another form of identity politics but with class as the chosen identity. Ultimately, her positive view of identity politics was based on the opinion that democracy is about political contestations. Democracy would be renewed with liberalism providing the space for more identity formations and claims of rights. Democracy and politics are ultimately perceived as a space for identity formations and contestations between them (Jung, 2006). For Linda Nicholson, identity politics ‘represents neither a lost nirvana nor a simple wrong turn’ but a useful ‘beginning of a discussion’ about identity which is important, has meaning and affects life possibilities. The problem about the identity discussion in mid-twentieth century was that they had portrayed ‘identities as either simply individual or homogenous among members of groups’. But since the 1980s, theorists have been developing a more complex view of identity. This complex view is what is needed politically even if it is harder to use. Thus, according to Nicholson, identity politics has made it possible to start understanding identity in more complex view and has ‘stretched the notion of what constituted a legitimate political issue’ (Nicholson, 2008: 185-186).

Much of the support for identity politics is based on a specific understanding of identity politics as coming from liberation and social movements. Thus, identity politics is interpreted as a method of resistance, a form of political struggles by those who have been or who are excluded from the social, economic or political arenas. Grant Farred, for example, traced identity politics with the emergence of the New Left in mid-1950s. The new social movements have defined themselves against the ideology of the New Left by reinterpreting and appropriating their strategies. The apparently problematic

Old Left's universalist predilections and proclivity for grand historical narratives, seen also as 'exclusionary tendencies of modernist subjectivity', were rejected by the New Left who was 'committed to renovating and democratizing the socialist project'. The New Left rejected the narrow conception of politics of the Old Left, mobilised marginalised constituencies and allowed the introduction of new political actors. However, the New Left declined in the late 1970s and identity politics arose in early 1980s out of its erosion (Farred, 2000: 629-630). According to Farred:

> The struggle for identity enabled an entirely new way of conducting oppositional politics for previously marginalized constituencies. Identity politics represents nothing so much as the achievement of minority public 'voice', metaphorically speaking, an enfranchisement of black, female, gay, bisexual, and ethnic communities (Farred, 2000: 631).

Identity politics is seen as the proper political tool for marginalised groups. In fact, because of the difficulty of certain groups for public self-definition, identity politics has focused on the 'struggle to articulate the minority experience in the dominant public sphere'. It is about a right to self-definition. Consequently, the dominant groups do not need to worry about self-definition because they are already socially distinct and in power. These groups can achieve their 'economic, political, and social ends by virtue of their dominations' (Farred, 2000: 642).

According to Farred, the universalism of the Old Left was a problem and the politicisation of certain identities have allowed marginalised groups a political voice. Walter Benn Michaels does agree that particularist identity politics has replaced universalist politics and ideologies, but he sees this as the problem. His argument is worth spending some time to explain in more details. He noted that in the Clash of Civilizations, for Huntington, the alternative to culture differences was not physical differences but ideological differences. Culture was seen an alternative to old ideology. Choosing one of the two notions of identities, fixed or flexible, in politics, is still choosing two different accounts of identity over the alternative which is ideology. This choice represents what he called a 'disarticulation of difference from disagreement'. During the Cold War, with ideologies, there was a link between difference and disagreement. The differences between the Soviet Union and the United States were

not simply differences between two countries but between two social systems. The question was not who you were but, which side you support. One could support communism whether one was American or Russian. For Michaels, the cold war was, in essence, universalising because the question as to which of the two social systems is *better* is intrinsically universal. It was not a question of better for Americans or for Russians but a question of the better system for all. Conflicts which do not involve ideologies (ideologies as a set of ideas that describe what is right for all, not only for a section of society) can be explained by appeal to differing interests or strategies. In conflicts with differing interests, people do not *disagree* about what they want. They simply want *different* things. This is no disagreement but difference. But in ideological conflicts, people disagree with what is true, regardless of what they want. People would support capitalism or communism because they thought one of them to be the universally right and true system (Michaels, 2000: 650-653). So, Michaels argued that 'ideological conflicts are universal, in other words, precisely because unlike conflicts of interest, they involve disagreement, and it is the mere possibility of disagreement that is universalizing' (Michaels, 2000: 653). The fact that people disagree with what is the universal truth is, of course, not a criticism of universalism. This means that the universality of truth is the consequence of the disagreement. It is a fight between different notions of universal truths and, thus, universal truths cannot be used to dismiss disagreements. In other words, 'the universal does not compel our agreement, it is implied by our disagreement; and we invoke the universal not to resolve our disagreement but to explain the fact that we disagree (Michaels, 2000: 653).

Michaels made a distinction between difference of opinion in conflicts of ideologies and difference in point of view/perspective/subject position in conflicts of identities. In conflicts of identities, the differences seen are due to differences in perspective of the people who do the interpreting. These are differences without disagreements. In these cases, the subject position is essential to understand the differences (due to various perspectives or positions) whereas in disagreements over universal truths, the subject position (or the way one individual interpreted an issue compared to another's interpretation of the same issue) did not matter (because it is about judging what is true for all). In contemporary politics, where ideologies have disappeared or seen in a suspicious way, the identities and perspectives of the actors have become an essential aspect of the political realm. The fights for resources, the demands for recognition, the

language of rights and privileges, the attempts to save cultures and traditions are all aspects of politics where the subject position of the observers or actors is essential today. And according to Michaels, these are differences but not disagreements. In the time of rival ideologies, the answer to which side was supported was based on what people thought was true. At the moment, the question is 'who are you?' and the answers are based on identities, on personal experiences, on likes and dislikes. The essentialising of the subject position follows from this. It does not depend of whether identities are seen as essences, fixed or flexible or on what determines the actual subject position (race, gender, sexuality, religion or culture). The relevance of the subject position itself leads to the essentialising. It is no more based on what you believe is true but on what side you support based on what you are. He called the contemporary period posthistoricism. He had explained his position in 1996, after Fukuyama's end of history position and others' arguments. 'In posthistory, we believe our beliefs not because we have reasons to think that they are true but because we have stories to tell about how they came to be ours'. And he added that it was a period where 'we don't need ideologies, we have cultures' and "we don't miss 'abstract goals', we have ourselves" (Michaels, 1996: 19). In essence, Michaels summarised what he thought was the problem with the loss of ideologies and universalism and the acceptance of the politics of difference and of identities:

> Indeed, the whole point of posthistoricism – the whole point, that is, of commitment to difference – is to understand all differences as differences in what we are and thus to make it seem that the fundamental question – the question that separates the postideological left from the postideological right – is the question of our attitude toward difference: the left wants to celebrate difference, the right wants to overcome it (Michaels, 2000: 654).

This is an important point that highlights the difference in the political world today compared to what we had in the past. What seems to have been lost is the search of the supreme good of Aristotle, the search for the universal truths we would believe to be true for all, not only a section of society. Politicised identities were used in modern politics with racial identity, national character or class but the presence of ideologies also kept the classical notion of politics as conflicts and contestations over what is good for humans and how society should be organised to promote the creation of the

good human life. In essence, the death of ideologies or more exactly, the decline of ideologies have further damaged the political realm by leaving the space for the politics of difference and the politics of identity. It is not surprising to see the increasing importance of identities in politics given that there are no more 'abstract goals', beliefs in universal truths, big ambitions or political objectives such as human emancipation. Michaels's point is for us to stop valuing difference and stop valuing sameness because they are both a choice within identity politics. This would be hard because, as he said and as we have seen in the other chapters, 'the development of technologies of difference (above all, of race and culture) has been fundamental to modernity' (Michaels, 2000: 662).

Politicised social identities

So, the politicisation of social identities is not a new phenomenon. Racial, cultural and national identities were used in the political realm to argue particular positions, since the nineteenth century. The national character, which became 'national identity' later, is often based on the notion of sameness as if the national population is uniform within the nation and different from other populations. It is also based on the notion of 'ipseity', i.e. selfhood or identity, related to the perception of continuity and stability between past and present (Noiriel, 2007: 19-20). The nation has its own distinct identity like a person and the members of that nation are part of that identity or represent this particular national identity. Nationality became an essential part of an individual, defining his behaviour and mental characteristics. Race, developed in the nineteenth century as seen in the first chapter, was a very important aspect of Western elites' identity. It was used to base their political positions and demands both within their nation and abroad. These early identity politics were certainly not based on inclusion only. The identities may have represented bigger groups than the ones today, but they were excluding many people while fighting to satisfy only particular interests and privileges. In fact, Sarah Churchwell went further with the point in her article *America's Original Identity Politics* when she argued that 'the United States was founded on identity politics', if one considers '*The Economist*'s description: political positions based on ethnicity, race, sexuality, and religion' (Churchwell, 2019). We can add gender as another identity used in politics. In another article, Churchwell gave several examples of how politics and political actions were based on racial and ethnic identities in the United States and the United Kingdom. Identity politics using racial

and ethnic identities is, of course, not unique to these two countries. She mentioned the many American monuments celebrating the Confederacy and built at a very particular historical period, between 1885 and 1915, with many built in the North. The Civil War had ended in 1865 and the Reconstruction period in 1877. The monuments were built during a period where racial egalitarianism had retreated and 'Confederate mythologies of the Lost Cause of the noble Southern states' were developed. The statue of British slave-trader Edward Colston (1636-1721) was built in Bristol, in 1895, almost 200 years after his death. This was at the end of the nineteenth century when Britain had to deal with opposition to its claims to imperial dominance and with labour unrest at home. The Saxon and Anglo-Saxon bloodlines were used to promote superior political and social positions. British imperialism and American exceptionalism were explained with the supposed superiority of the Anglo-Saxon bloodline. At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a hope to organise world politics around an Anglo-Saxon dominance, the *fin de siècle* Anglo-Saxonism (Vucetic, 2011; Bell, 2014a). In 1836, in a Vermont newspaper, readers could see an expression of this identity politics: "To our precious Saxon blood, we are indebted, it seems, for our laws, our liberty, our intelligence and our civilization: not to the 'wisdom of our ancestors'…(but) to our blood; that is to our family descent." (Churchwell, 2020).

Sociologist Craig Calhoun also disagreed with the notion that identity politics is a new phenomenon. As he noted, the women's movement has roots at least 200 years. The European nationalisms of the nineteenth century, the anti-colonial resistance or workers movements are other examples. But he claimed that the difference between identity politics of the past and now is that 'it had to content with various more universalizing, difference-denying, ways of thinking about politics and social life' (Calhoun, 1994: 23). What he seemed to argue is that, in the past, people were forced to join certain identities, without them having the possibility of claiming a difference and of forming another specific identity according to their own self-definition. People were forced to accept British as identity but not be 'Black British'. Basically, recognition is the basis of this argument. Some sections of society were not recognised as different from the main population and the main identities did not define them but ignore them. Nonetheless, the observation that identity politics developed before the twentieth century does not lead to the conclusion that all politics is identity politics as many individuals try to maintain. Not all politics involves arguing for the interests of a

group against the interests of other groups or against the interests and common good of the wider society.

And this highlights the significant shift in contemporary left-liberal identity politics: those with universalist political positions, with demands for equality for all, equal opportunity and better life for all have given up on their universalist positions to imitate the dividing identity politics that originated from the right, from those opposing the universalism of the Revolutionary Enlightenment ideals. The notion that politicised identities can be useful for groups to fight for their particular interests has currently been accepted by activists and groups fighting against racism, for justice and for equality. Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein argued that:

> The biggest internal debate absorbing the world left for at least the last seventy-five years has been whether identity is a left concept and therefore a left concern. In 1950, most activists on the left would have said no. Today a majority would say yes, indeed. But the debate remains fierce (Wallerstein, 2013).

Of course, associating contemporary identity politics with only liberation and lifestyle movements and with the new social movements from the left is false. The new religious right, white ethnic communities or various nationalist movements are also part of contemporary identity politics, even if they are often ignored in the media. It would seem that only 'white identity politics' is highlighted but because of the false notion that 'white identity politics' is simply far-right politics. Nevertheless, by using politicised identities, the left-wing activists have reinforced the already existing notion of permanent and natural divisions based on race, ethnicity and culture. They have also strengthened the notion that race, ethnicity, culture and identity are essential and permanent aspect of people's lives and that they causally determine people's fate and opinions. People become reduced to only some specific aspects of their lived experiences and social positions. Calhoun, however, remarked that 'it may be not helpful to allow the critique of essentialism to become a prohibition against the use of all general categories of identity' (Calhoun, 1994: 18). Essentialism should not be seen as a historical stage of the seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth- century until Enlightened thinkers freed western thought from it. The notion of essentialism as modernist, with postmodernism later delivering western thought from essentialism is

also wrong, argued Calhoun. His view is that essentialist reasoning became important during the modern era as 'part of several different but related intellectual and practical projects'. He added that:

> It reinforced and was reinforced by the rise of individualism, the rhetoric of national identity, and appeals to nature as a 'moral source'. It participated in both the advance of universalistic moral reasoning – as for example the notion of human rights was grounded on a presumed essential commonality of human beings – and the advance of relativistic social explanation and moral construction – as from Montesquieu on the laws and mores of different people were understood as specific to their contexts (Calhoun, 1994: 18).

So, opposing the use of identities, politicised identities and identity politics on the ground that they are based on essentialist thinking is not useful, according to him. Essentialism and social constructionism have been used for various projects in the past. And yet, essentialism has created many misunderstandings and barriers that cannot simply be dismissed when we judge the use of politicised social identities and of politics of identity. The hindrances due to the idea of a black race, black identity, black pride or black power are examples of this. Even if we talk only of black people within a single nation, what does a 'black leader', 'black community' or 'black politics' mean? Does the black identity lead to the same interests? Judith Stein has shown well that 'race never – not even during the period of mass disfranchisement and the descent of Jim Crow – exhausted the universe of black people's political concerns and action'. How Booker T. Washington had become known as a black leader, for example, is fully grasped only when historians look at the 'whole pattern of social forces', including the Populist insurgency, 'affecting blacks after the Civil War' and 'not only the racial manifestations' (Reed, 2019). Political scientist Adolph Reed noted that:

> Stein pointed that elevation of Washington and the Bookerite program of withdrawal into individualism and racial self-help under guidance of the southern ruling class derived most importantly from the latter's concern to undercut interracial Populist agitation. 'Without understanding the fear engendered by Populism, we cannot understand why the ruling class elevated Washington and tried to strengthen his power among blacks' (Reed, 2019).

This particular comment showed both the role of identity politics had played for both the black population (with the still continuous notion of a singular racial subject) and for the ruling class attempting to break up interracial solidarity in order to defend their own ruling class interests. The present notion of white privilege also demonstrates the same problem of essentialism. Discussing and challenging racism had been, to a great extent, supplanted by the notion of white privilege. But when people use the notion of white race, they do the same as what others do with other racialised minorities. It is assumed to be a useful category even though it puts together top politicians, heads of multinationals, middle class professors, cleaners and homeless people. The white privilege argument is based on the idea that this category of people (white people) does not suffer from discrimination or oppression because of their race. Thus, not being discriminated against becomes a privilege rather than what should be the norm. The fight against racism used to be a demand for all to be treated the same, regardless of race. They demanded for black people to be part of the norm. It was not a fight for black people to be privileged because of their race. With this notion of white privilege, the norm then becomes being discriminated against and having privilege is to live without discrimination because one's racial identity. This argument is why a starving white child, or a white homeless man can still be portrayed as having white privilege. The discrimination suffered by people from the lower classes is ignored by associating all the classes together. An upper-class individual, black or white, can avoid all discrimination because of their social positions. This is the real privilege that is ignored. Because of the privilege of their social positions, they are *protected* from all discrimination that exist in society. The lower classes, even if some do not get discriminated against, obviously do not have protection against all discrimination.

So, challenging racism using politicised racial identities does not challenge racial thinking. In fact, it promotes racial thinking as a progressive step either by celebrating perceived racial differences or by racialising others. Because some people have been racialised, there is now a demand for white people to also recognise they are members of the white race or whiteness. The current 'unracialized identity' of white people becomes a problem for the anti-racist activists because, according to them, whites do not recognise the significance of race without recognising themselves as members of a racial group (DiAngelo, 2011). It is true that all of us partly use our personal

experiences to interpret the world and thus those who have never considered other people's lives or do not want to access humanity's knowledge on the issue of race and racism will simply ignore the problems faced by others. This notion that many people do not recognise the discrimination and oppression others are facing is not new. Influential sociologist, historian and black rights activist W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963), in his work *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (1935), had mentioned already a blindspot in not recognising the role of black individuals in the reconstruction period. 'It is only the Blindspot in the eyes of America, and its historians, that can overlook and misread so clear and encouraging a chapter of human struggle and human uplift' (Du Bois, [1935] 2007: 474). In 1967, the demand to challenge white supremacy, white-skin privilege and the white blindspot was seen in the letter by Noel Ignatin (Noel Ignatiev, 1940-2019) and a letter and commentary by Ted Allen (Theodore Allen). The commentary was titled *Can White Radicals Be Radicalized?* and both letters and commentary were published by the Radical Education Project of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) (Ignatin and Allen, 1967). But the recognition of the blindspot is not a good justification for racialising others and perpetuate the original social problem one was meant to oppose. A very useful comment by Judith Stein really highlighted some important shifts which have occurred in the race discourse: 'Changing the historical subject from racial prejudice to whiteness is analogous to the alteration of the political lexicon from racial discrimination to white privilege during the same period' (Stein, 2001).

The academic studies concerning the issue of white racial identity or whiteness has greatly increased in numbers since the 1990s. Alexander Saxton's book *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (1990) is thought to be the first book to use the notion of whiteness. Earlier, in 1989, feminist Peggy McIntosh had published *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, a shorter version of an article published the year before. She had argued that white people were taught not to recognise their white privilege (McIntosh, 1989). However, it is historian David R. Roediger's book *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991), which is seen as setting up the contemporary discussion on the issue of whiteness both in academia and in public discourse. Since then, he has written several books around the same issue. In

1992, renowned novelist Toni Morrison (1931-2019) published her essay *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, which was also very influential on the issue of whiteness in literary and public arenas. She is well known for her reflections on black experience and racial identity. 'Until recently, and regardless of the race of the author, the readers of virtually all of American fiction have been positioned as white. I am interested to know what that assumption has meant to the literary imagination' explained Morrison (Morrison, 1993: xiv). With this literary criticism, she did not want to focus on the effects of racism on those who suffer from it but to consider 'the impact of racism on those who perpetuate it'. She added that she would like to 'examine the impact of notions of racial hierarchy, racial exclusion, and racial vulnerability and availability on nonblacks who held, resisted, explored, or altered those notions' (Morrison, 1993: 11). There have also been many more books published by others looking at white identity formation such as Noel Ignatiev's book *How the Irish Became White (1995)*, George Lipsitz's book *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics (1998)* or Time Wise's book *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son (2008)* (Johnson, 2019).

One of the subjects, academic whiteness studies focuses on, is labour history, race and the role of the white working class in the issue of racism. In *The Wages of Whiteness*, Roediger had analysed the psychological, cultural and ideological mechanisms that led to the complicity of white workers in perpetuating a racist society in the United States. He supported a new labour history which tried to 'reconceptualise the study of race and class'. He agreed with the opinion that 'workers, even during periods of firm ruling class hegemony, are historical actors who make (constrained) choices and create their own cultural forms' (Roediger, 2007: 9). Hence, racism does not simply trickle down to the working class from the ruling elites where it was first developed. His views are that workers participated in the creation of their own racial identity. It is clear that no humans can be understood by only one identity, whether it is race, gender, sexuality, religion, parenthood, class or profession. Judith Stein and others made it clear that using racial black identity to understand black people actions and politics is wrong and ends up with falsehood and misleading information. So, have the notion of whiteness and the whiteness studies been useful in improving knowledge of race and of the resulting social problems such as racialisation and racism? Historian

Eric Arnesen was quite critical of whiteness as a category of historical analysis even though he thought it was right to make 'white racial identity a subject of direct examination'. Whiteness seems to be another concept with various meanings, depending on the scholars' motivations and aims. He argued that the concept of whiteness had a problem with a lack of empirical evidence and with using too much psychohistory when the actual voices of immigrants did not exist. Whiteness studies became an increasingly accepted aspect of labour history partly because earlier, in the 1970s and 1980s historical studies, there had been too much romanticisation of the white working class. The portrayal of 'white working class struggles in too positive a light and with failing to portray white workers' conservatism and their racial and gender biases' had created a backlash (Arnesen, 2001: 4). Political scientist Cedric Johnson noted, however, that this 'academic field of inquiry was born in the waning years of the Reagan-Bush era' (1981-1989) when the new proponents of whiteness studies wanted to 'reverse the trend of neoconservatism and revitalize the American left'. The New Right had been targeting the egalitarian reforms of the civil rights and second wave feminism as well as programs of the welfare state. The argument was that the New Right emergence was done through appealing to the white racial identity and thus, whiteness was the problem (Johnson, 2019). Roediger himself had made it clear that he was supporting the neo-Marxist perspectives, 'personified in the US by Herbert Gutman and in Britain by E.P. Thompson', who were developing a new labour history (Roediger, 2007: 9).

Hence, the analysis of the different definitions of whiteness in the literature led Arnesen to propose that:

> Whiteness is, variously, a metaphor for power, a proxy for racially distributed material benefits, a synonym for 'white supremacy', an epistemological stance defined by power, a position of invisibility or ignorance, and a set of beliefs about racial 'Others' and oneself that can be rejected through 'treason' to a racial category (Arnesen, 2001: 9).

With all these different definitions, this concept and its use are difficult to criticise as 'it is nothing less than a moving target', added Arnesen. In essence, the motivation behind the studies have often been to answer the old question as to why white workers

have refused to make common cause with black workers in the workplace. Or to put it in another way: why do white workers vote or act against their own interests? The assumptions underlying this question is that there is a 'logic of solidarity' and that white workers failed to see their self-evident common interests to embrace the natural solidarity they should have with black workers. Ultimately, interracial solidarity between all workers is interpreted as natural and logical and the fact that white workers at different historical times and places did not act in solidarity with others is explained with analyses of the specific cultural and psychological traits of white workers. The reason for the white racial identity to have more influence on workers than their working-class identity is simply explained with the notion of a 'psychological wage' (Arnesen, 2001: 11-12; Johnson, 2019). The political failure of having rational arguments to convince workers and to build solidarity between them is conveniently ignored. Nevertheless, historian Eric Foner did not view the concept of whiteness in so bad a light as Arnesen did. He did recognise the risk of homogenisation when using the concept. But he interpreted whiteness as a form of consciousness among many others. According to Foner, the role of historians is to 'examine the specific historical circumstances under which one or another element of identity comes to the fore as a motivation for political and social action'. The concept of whiteness should not be abandoned but refined and historicised. It is the role of historians to understand when and why racial identities became primary factors in decisions and actions in specific circumstances. He developed his point by adding that men and women who had taken for granted their identity as white, in the past, did try to keep their privileges. But in other times and places, they 'walked picket lines with nonwhites, voted to accord them the rights of citizens, and united with them against common foes' (Foner, 2001: 58). Whiteness alone cannot explain the various decisions, attitudes and actions during labour history. Still, Foner gave also a very early example of the use of a politicised white identity by the ruling political elites. The Naturalization Act of 1790 is 'one of the first pieces of legislation enacted by Congress after the ratification of the Constitution', he claimed. The naturalization process to become American citizens was restricted to 'free white persons' (Foner, 2001: 57).

Ignoring the politicised social identities of the past and thus, ignoring the divisiveness of past identity politics, a divisiveness not based on political contestations but social competition, will restrict our ability to understand the fundamental and damaging

aspects of past and present identity politics. And so, Adolph Reed is right when he recognised the insights whiteness studies could provide, even if this has not yet been achieved. ‘Racial and class status, identity and politics have been fundamentally and inextricably, linked in the American experience’ and this needs to be addressed to understand the present and organise for the future (Reed, 2001). These links are not only an American phenomenon even if they are presented differently in other places. The various theoretical interpretations of the relationships or non-relationships between race, class, culture, identity, politics, power and identity have led to many definitions of identity politics. In fact, whether it is acknowledged or not, the various theoretical and philosophical appreciations of the relationship between the individual, society and nature have determined all of these discussions. We can see why historian Barbara Fields argued that whiteness was resting on an insecure theoretical ground. She remarked that ‘Whiteness is the shotgun marriage of two incoherent but well-loved concepts: identity and agency’ and added that ‘it replaces racism with race and equates race with racial identity, which it accepts uncritically both as an empirical datum and as a tool of analysis. It thereby establishes a false parallel between the objects and the authors of racism’ (Fields, 2001: 48). If racism is understood as ‘assignment of people to an inferior category and the determination of their social, economic, civic, and human standing on that basis’, if ‘identity means sense of self’ and if agency is viewed as ‘anything beyond conscious, goal-directed activity, however trivial or ineffectual’ then, she argued, ‘racism exposes the hollowness of agency and identity’. The targets of racism do not choose racism, do not negotiate it nor do they have a say in their imposed identity. Targets of racism may challenge racism itself, but they do not voluntary choose racism. According to Fields, what the concept of whiteness does is to create a false symmetry between the targets of racism and the ones choosing to impose racism on others. Moving from racism (‘the act of a subject’) to race (‘attribute of an object’) and then, using identity defined as substance of race and giving a racial identity to authors of racism allows the false symmetry to emerge. Ultimately, Fields argued that the concept of whiteness allowed the possibility for racism to hide. Racism hides behind race and racial identity, behind identity and voluntarism (Fields, 2001: 49).

The concept of the white race has always been weak because of the social conflicts between the different social classes and the ways the lower classes have visualised

their interests and acted upon their decisions. White servants, at various times and places, had aligned with black slaves against their upper-class masters, for example. To promote the notion of white race would be to promote a homogenous group of people determined only by their race. European immigrants saw themselves and were seen as Finns, Scots, Catholics. But Afro-Americans and others such as the Caribbeans or Africans were simply 'black'. The imposed homogenisation of groups of people according to race has only been possible with groups which were targets of racism. Racialisation is acted upon those considered inferior or Others. However, Fields thought that the notion of racialisation was not enough because it could be applied to many different actions. For her, 'the equation of Afro-Americans' peoplehood with race is corollary of racism', not simply the act of racialisation (Fields, 2001: 50). Consequently, the asymmetry in racial ideology, seen with "the 'unmarked, unnamed status', 'seeming normativity', 'structured invisibility' and 'false universality' of those who are designated 'not black'", is what whiteness studies claim to want to change. But this rewriting of history, imposing a race to those who are 'not black' is not very useful. 'Rather than explore what the absence of a mark or name means, whiteness scholarship mulishly insists upon inserting the mark and name, officiously making good the failure of people in the past to do it themselves' (Fields, 2001: 51). And this is a strong argument against the concept of whiteness: it hides racism and the asymmetry in racial ideology, uselessly rewrites history and does not explain the source of working-class bigotry. Barbara J. Fields is one of two sisters, the other being sociologist Karen E. Fields, who wrote the well-known book *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (2012). They wanted to explain 'how and why a handful of racist notions have gained permanent sustenance in American life' (Fields and Fields, 2014: 2) and in doing so, they coined the word 'racecraft', modelled on 'witchcraft' to name the process through which the fiction of race is made real. They did not see irrationality and superstition in those who accept racism. What they focused on was the processes of reasoning that manage to make race and racism plausible. According to them, human action and imagination are the sources of racecraft (Fields and Fields, 2014).

But the more crucial point is that the use of politicised social identities does not lead people to oppose the social, economic and political inequalities meant to be the targets. The social and material basis that created these different 'marginalised'

groups is no longer opposed. With the politicised identities and identity politics, the real sources of social divisions have simply become seen as specific and essential characteristics defining particular identity groups. A worker, who used to be defined objectively through the analysis of the forces and the relationships of production, is now seen as part of the working-class identity group with specific traditions, cultures, values and political ideas. The social relationships of the workers in the very historically specific capitalist mode of production have become naturalised. Traditions and cultures are no longer understood as dependent on the material conditions of their lives. The social and economic inequalities suffered by the working class can be seen as natural or as the consequences of individuals' inadequacies and thus, can be ignored in order to focus on relationships in the cultural and formal political realms.

The arguments used here are based on ideas developed by Marx. He recognised the fact that human beings need to produce in order to live and satisfy their physical needs. To satisfy these needs, humans will inevitably, through their productive activities, create new 'non-physical' needs which will then also become necessary in order to satisfy the original physical needs. Thus, the foundation of human existence and all human activities and needs originate in the sphere of material production but are also mediated and take forms in different ways. As István Mészáros noted:

> Productive activity is, therefore, the mediator in the 'subject-object relationship' between man and nature. A mediator that enables man to lead a human mode of existence, ensuring that he does not fall back into nature, does not dissolve himself within the 'object' (Mészáros, 2006: 80).

Productive activity, essential for human existence, creates more needs and increases the complexity of human social organisation. This activity also allows the possibility for humanity to control nature and to gradually free itself from nature's domination (Mészáros, 2006). This means that we have to look at the foundation of human existence and understand the specific forms it takes in the capitalist society in order to understand the basis of the social and economic inequalities we experience today. If the expressions of human society and its economic structure are simply acknowledged as features, definitions, identities or labels of individuals and groups, the roots that led to the creations of these various and divided groups are ignored.

Individuals and groups, like the white working class, with no power and no responsibility for the way society is organised, end up being blamed for social problems. In the *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Karl Marx argued that:

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness (Marx and Engels, [1859] 1977: 181).

The white working class or even white people as a group, black people, men, women, the capitalist class, the politicians and all other sections of society are not guilty or responsible for the economic structure. But 'the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out' (Marx and Engels, [1859] 1977: 182) should be explained, defended and opposed with a good grasp of the material condition of life. At the moment, anti-racism and radical ideas are only developed through interpreting our cultural life, interpersonal relationships or ideological forms. Politics is a 'practical science' because its aim is to determine how one ought to act'. 'The end is not knowledge but action' had declared Aristotle (Mulgan, 1991: 8). This does not mean that knowledge is not important in politics but that the ultimate purpose of politics is the whole of human good, not just for isolated individuals but for all the members of a community'. The full development of the human potential is the human good (Mulgan, 1991: 3).

When Gáspár Miklós Tamás discussed the concept of class and socialism in his essay *The Truth About Class* (2006), he did not directly mention politicised identities but two socialist intellectual traditions: the Rousseauian notion of class as caste and Marxist notion of class as class. His argument is worth considering in the discussion between

identity politics with politicised identities versus universalist politics with ideologies. He argued that the two intellectual traditions 'have opposite visions of the social subject in need of liberation' and of course, this opposition had many consequences such as on the knowledge of consciousness or social and political attitudes in relation to equality or culture. He thought that most with socialist tendencies have followed the Rousseauian position rather than the Marxist position even if the position is not acknowledged because 'it is emotionally and intellectually difficult to be a Marxist since it goes against the grain of moral indignation' (Tamás, 2006: 228-229). It is undeniable that there are big differences between Rousseau's and Marx's philosophies even though Rousseau is sometimes portrayed as a forebear of socialism. Karl Marx's political aim was human liberation with the abolition of the proletariat:

> The proletariat, on the contrary, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite, private property, which determines its existence, and which makes it proletariat (Marx and Engels, 1856: Chap. 4, on Proudhon).

The political aim of having the proletariat abolish itself as a class and thus abolish all classes was one of the central points of Marx's political ideas. The proletariat abolishing itself was not E. P. Thompson's socialist aim, argued Tamás. With ideas such as that 'the working class is a worthy cultural competitor of the ruling class' or that 'regardless of the outcome of the class struggle, the autonomy and separateness of the working class is an intrinsic social value', Thompson was understood by Tamás as wanting 'the *apotheosis* and triumphant survival of the proletariat'. In his masterpiece *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), historian and political activist Thompson (1924-1993) had apparently synthesised the tradition of Rousseauian socialism (Tamás, 2006).

Rousseau had also used the concept of 'the people' which are all those who are 'not the rich in talent or goods'. 'The people is mankind; those who do not belong to the people are so few in number that they are not worth counting. Man is the same in every station of life' (Shklar, [1969] 2009: 168). His aims were to replace the social hierarchy found in monarchies to a society with 'the people' as sovereign. Marx's aims were, as seen above, to transform the structural organisation of society by abolishing all classes. Marx did not celebrate the people or even the working class's superiority

or merit. He had recognised that all humans were being robbed of their humanity and were alienated but that, within the capitalist society, there were already the tools for a better society. He wanted to transcend the capitalist social system, not reverse the hierarchical order between working class and capitalist class. Tamás argued that economic historian Karl Polanyi saw the foundations of Rousseauian socialism in Rousseau's great discovery of 'the people', who were no longer simply the nobodies or mass of uneducated idiots. Indeed, 'the people' in Rousseau's language does not have the negative connotation of 'the masses' (Tamás, 2006). We have already seen in chapter 4 that he did not believe that society and civilisation necessarily lead to moral progress. What Tamás was attempting to do in discussing several socialist individuals was to show the moral and philosophical foundations that underlies what he called Rousseauian socialism.

Contemporary identity politics today is actively and openly promoted not only by many who see themselves as liberals but also by many who see themselves as 'socialist' or left. But even though, identity politics is pervasive across the political spectrum, one question is what are the intellectual ideas that led for this trend to be celebrated by those who used to support universalist politics? Of course, there is no space here to fully answer the question but Tamás's arguments seem to lead to the suggestion that universalist politics, i.e politics based on universal truth rather than on specific identities, has rarely existed since the birth of modern politics. It may have been very difficult not to use politicised social identities at a time when the labour movements were forming in order to fight against their terrible social conditions and defend themselves against strong attacks from the capitalist class. With the lack of general solidarity with sections of society who had to deal with discrimination and oppression, one can recognise the political and social difficulties, for these sections, to resist identity politics to defend themselves. But are the contemporary social, economic and political conditions good justifications for still using identity politics rather than redeveloping politics and in particular, universalist politics?

Tamás's points are that 'Rousseauian socialism is moralistic, no historicist'. It is based on the notion of 'the people' having inherent qualities and separate culture and morality. Equality is the main idea of this socialism. Rousseau had proposed the notion of the free-born humans who ended up in chains in society. The people are hence

seen as the natural humans compared to the ‘fake’ rich individuals. They seem to have ‘a culture and a morality that attracts the sympathy and the solidarity of all persons of good faith’. So, the Rousseauian socialist solution is not the abolition of the people or of class but the abolition of the aristocracy and clergy or abolition of ‘caste/estate’. The French ancient regime, before the French Revolution, was divided into three estates: the first estate was the clergy, the second estate was the nobles and the third estate was the peasants and bourgeoisie. In the French revolution, the call was to have the third estate become the nation, the sovereign people while discarding the rest (Tamás, 2006: 234-235). From the early labour movements, the defensive actions were done with arguments claiming the moral superiority of those supporting working-class autonomy. So, the actions resulted in the creation of counter-power of working-class trade unions, parties, banks, newspapers, libraries, workingmen’s clubs, novels, intellectuals and many other areas of life. ‘This counter-power developed its own political superstructure and ideology, from ‘reformist’ social democracy to revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism, a whole separate world where the bourgeoisie’s write did not run’ (Tamás, 2006: 236). Because of the particularities of British capitalism, the British workers’ movement was, apparently, particularly affected by this caste-like, sometimes quasi-ethnic differences of ‘class’, with an ‘intricate system of almost tribal markers such as diction, dress, speech habits, even posture, forms of courtesy and diet’. The visible enemy was ‘the toff’, not the ‘bourgeois’. So, what has been the problem with many socialists is the portrayal of class more in cultural and political terms than in social/economic terms. Tamás maintained that:

> It cannot possibly be denied that the shift to culture in class theory was and is caused by the fate of socialism (i.e., of the workers’ movement): to succeed only in the sense of making capitalism more modern, democratic, secular and (perhaps) egalitarian via cross-class alliances forces the workers’ movement to abandon the specific proletarian calling envisaged by Marx (Tamás, 2006: 241).

Emancipation was replaced with equality, egalitarianism, statism and ‘culture’. This is not denying the importance of equality, democracy or the fight for rights and liberties. The point is that these have become the end points of some political programs. The contemporary social movements are also new manifestations of this trend. Seeing identity politics in the present-day left becomes not so surprising when we understand

that class has long been seen as a cultural and political identity. This class identity was seen as the primary identity socialists should support until racial, gender and sexuality identities were pushed forward by social movements. Many had not and still do not grasp or use the notion of class with Marx's understanding of class. This meant that the political and social aim of human emancipation with the abolition of class could no longer be the main socialist demand.

The distinct Rousseauian views of 'class' have led to some criticism attacking Ellen Meiksins Wood's point apropos the difference in meaning between class equality and race/gender/sexuality equality. In her essay *The Uses and Abuses of 'Civil Society'* (1990), she clearly had an understanding of class based on Marx's analysis of the total capitalist society. She did not view class as an identity at all, nor did she reduce it to culture and politics. This is why, using a thought experiment about a democratic society which would acknowledge, encourage and celebrate differences of identities, she compared identities with class and asked the important questions:

> Is it possible to imagine class differences without exploitation and domination? Does our imaginary democratic society celebrate class differences as it does diversities of life styles, culture, or sexual preference? Can we construct a conception of freedom or quality which accommodates class as it does gender differences? Would a conception of freedom or equality which can accommodate class differences satisfy our conditions for a democratic society? (Meiksins Wood, 1990: 76).

It is not very difficult to realise that demands for class equality would not have the same effect on a democratic capitalist society as demands for gender or culture equality. As she added, 'the abolition of class inequality would by definition mean the end of capitalism'. 'Gender and racial equality are not in principle incompatible with capitalism' even if all social relations are determined by capitalism. In essence, Wood was showing the connection between the concept of identity and contemporary notion of equality where the notion of equality has developed in a way that it does not question the foundations of capitalist society. In fact, Wood argued that the creation of this 'particular kind of universal equality' was a 'specific feature of capitalism'. It is a formal equality which deals with 'political and legal principles and procedures rather than with

the disposition of social or class power'. And, she added, 'formal equality in this sense would have been impossible in pre-capitalist societies where appropriation and exploitation were inextricably bound up with juridical, political and military power' (Meiksins Wood, 1990: 76-77). Wood did not oppose the politics of difference and the politics of identities because she saw class as a special privileged identity or as a more unifying identity than race or gender (the 'unifying identity' argument is used by those supporting the working class or national identity). She recognised that ignoring this specific and special category - an important part of the total explanation for the way the current social system functions - is preventing a critical understanding of capitalism and is leading to an acceptance of the system as it is. This leads to the end of a universalistic project or more exactly the end of a project with a vision of an alternative social system seen as universally right for all humans.

The connection that she showed between identity and equality is also a connection between identity politics and equality. It highlights why identity politics is so comfortable in liberal democracies and with liberalism. So, when the current issue is presented as a problem between politicised social identities and class politics, it is not specific enough to be right. Class has been viewed both as identity and as a category of analysis to explain the social system. Thus, class is not always in opposition to identities.

Ellen Meiksins Wood's arguments showing some of the limitations of identity politics are good points to conclude this chapter on identity. The aim of the project is to understand why racial identity has become so important in public discourse. It is clear that the emergence of the psychological self, the emphasis on the mind as the self and the common psychological explanations for every aspect of human life are the causes but also the consequences of this current attention on identity. The concept of identity can be understood as reflecting the modern and Western understanding of humanity. And the various answers to the question as to why identity has become an issue highly dependent on this understanding. The social problems of modern society, the effects of modern society on the psyche of the individuals or the contemporary political and economic contexts are some of the ideas used to explain the focus on identity.

We have seen that the notion of race has become part of the way most people understand themselves and the world around them. In this chapter, the unclear understanding of identity is highlighted. Some of the numerous definitions and understandings of the concept of identity were discussed here, highlighting various notions of personal, social and political identities. An important question in the concept of identity is the question of essentialism. Can particular characteristics such as race used to define an identity be considered essential characteristics of the individual and the group? Historian Judith Stein has challenged the notion that racial identities such as the black identity has had the same meanings in different contexts. Identities are not defined in a vacuum but are dependent on the historical, social/economic and political contexts in which these identities are defined. They are also influenced by the social and political objectives of the individuals defining the identities. Social theorist Marie Moran argued that identity is an essentialising mechanism. She, thus, cut across the argument as to whether identities are fixed, natural or socially constructed.

But we have also seen that the importance of identity is partly due to its use in identity politics. The two main understandings of identity politics are obviously linked to the various meanings of identity. If the focus is on the identities of seen-as-marginalized sections of society such as women, black people, homosexuals or other minority groups, identity politics is understood as political actions or methods of resistance. If the focus is on various but general notions of the self and of the individual or on the relationships between the individual and society, identity politics is understood as social identities used in the political realm. So, identity politics can be seen as a phenomenon started in the twentieth century with the rise of the new social movements or can be grasped as a phenomenon started in the eighteenth century or before with the use of identities already existing in the past such as racial or national identities. Thus, identity politics and the use of politicised social identities were and are both supported and attacked from different angles, by various thinkers.

6. Social and Political Conditions under which Contemporary Left-Liberal Identity Politics Developed

In the previous chapters, we have seen that racial identities have been used in politics by the political elites since the development of the notion of race in the eighteenth century. Thus, identity politics has developed before its contemporary use by the left-liberal section of the political spectrum. Identity politics in this political section use the identities that have been defined and supported by the new social movements of the twentieth century. Racial identities are used in public discourse by individuals like university students who claim to oppose racism. The questions are why and how this has occurred. The social and political contexts such as the presence of the liberal and communist ideologies and the contestations between them will be examined and discussed to answer these questions.

Post Second World War and anti-Enlightenment

The war, with the systematic extermination of millions of people and the Nazi experiments in concentration camps, led to demands for new visions of society. Wars would be prevented with the development of science and technology, and racism would disappear through education. But the post-war relief, even in the radical and social movements, did not lead to an increased support for Enlightenment ideals such as perfectibility, progress, universalism and the importance and power of human reason.

There was an optimism for what science and technology could do for people's everyday lives and for humanity in general. John Gillott and Manjit Kumar, in their book *Science and the Retreat from Reason*, argued that 'until the late 1960s, science was generally regarded as laying the basis for progressive interventions in a natural world viewed as threatening, capricious, and potentially destructive (Gillott and Kumar, 1995: 5). But the important point is that post-war enthusiasm for science was already based on the belief in human beings' limitations. Enlightenment belief in science was supported by the belief in humanity's ability to rationally understand humans, society and nature. It was also supported by the belief in progress, human development and human perfectibility. The philosophers believed that progress comes from the use of reason, from challenging prejudices, norms and traditions of the past and by creating

new ideas and paths for the current society (Pagden, 2015). Science, as a rational human activity, was seen as an important tool for progress. This was not the common belief after the Second World War despite the enthusiasm for science. As Gillott and Kumar noted: 'the post-war reception of Karl Popper's ideas shows the Western theorists recoiled from the idea of bending nature, through science, to human will'. Popper opposed the 'assumption of an *objective reality that human beings can understand'.* For him, science could not recognise the Truth. A scientific interpretation can only be shown as false but not proven true. This view results in undermining the idea of progress in scientific knowledge (Gillott and Kumar, 1995: 15). In fact, Gillott and Kumar went further and argued that nineteenth-century intellectuals had already broken the link 'between the advance of natural science and the advance of human happiness,' 'between science and reason, between science and progress' with, for example, Auguste Comte's positivism and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism (Gillott and Kumar, 1995: 155-160).

We cannot achieve any social progress without increasing our understanding of the objective world and of nature and without the bending of nature to create a new social reality. Of course, this is not the same as supporting the current irrational destruction of the natural and social world we observe in some parts of the world today. Natural laws are independent of humanity's will and they cannot be transformed or destroyed but they can be understood and used for humanity's own benefits. We do not destroy the law of gravity by flying a plane. Planes are designed to overcome the force of gravity. Humanity has a need to interact with nature in order to survive and reproduce. In earlier societies, natural laws dominated humanity more than they do today. Our understanding of plant and animal breeding and the advance in agriculture are examples of our progress. We became less dominated by natural laws. These natural laws, mediated by different historically specific societies, are expressed as social laws influenced by humanity's increasing understanding and control of nature. Social laws are independent of individuals' will. But one of Karl Marx's contributions in our understanding of the world was to show that these social laws could be understood and analysed scientifically, that they take different forms in various societies and that they are 'specific to the particular stage of development of society' (Füredi, 1986: 85). Our need to interact with the natural world in order for us to eat and survive, for example, takes a social form. Every human society studied will show a need 'to work,

produce and consume in order to reproduce itself'. But, as Furedi observed, 'the forms in which labour is organized – as slavery, serfdom, the peasant economy, wage labour – are historically specific, governed by the special laws arising from particular relations of production' (Füredi, 1986: 86). Then, ideas which oppose humanity's ability to bend or control nature for its benefits are anti-progress and anti-human positions which demand the continuation of nature's domination over humanity. Nature can be cruel; females of some animal species such as primates kill their own offspring or other young in order to give others a chance to live. Resource competition, scarcity, need for protection against aggression are some of the reasons for these actions (Lukas and Huchard, 2019). These females are limited by what nature produces while human society can and did develop an understanding of nature to produce more for more people. Agriculture is a good example where we produce more with less manual work to feed more people. The time and labour needed to produce food are reduced and can be used for other new needs such as spending time in movie theatres with the family. 'Growth may not provide all the answers but it is a precondition for successful development rather than simply one among many desirable objectives. Economic growth provides the resources necessary for development to occur' claimed journalist and author Daniel Ben-Ami (Ben-Ami, 2010: 96). The common demand to downscale economic growth is based on perceived limitations humanity is expected to adhere to and to accept. Degrowth, a direct translation from the French word 'décroissance', used to be political activism but has now enter academia as a multi-disciplinary field. It started with the political opinion 'indefinite economic growth on a finite planet is impossible; facilitating growth as the overarching aim of socio-economic policy will eventually lead to involuntary economic decline with far-reaching social and political consequences' (Weiss and Cattaneo, 2017: 220). Weiss and Cattaneo claimed that the academic discourse has emerged from the 'French cultural critique of the growth imaginary and from environmental and social activism' (Weiss and Cattaneo, 2017: 222). Others have tried to give a definition to what they see as the degrowth social movement and said that it 'challenges the hegemony of growth and calls for a democratically led redistributive downscaling of production and consumption in industrialised countries as a means to achieve environmental sustainability, social justice and well-being' (Demaria et al., 2013: 209).

Contest between 'individualist Man' and 'socialist Man'

Some of the modern meanings of identity were developed after World War Two during the contest between two main ideologies: liberalism and communism. Kyriakides and Torres proposed that the anti-Enlightenment position, which had developed from the shock of the Second World War and the Holocaust, was given free rein at the end of the Cold War, when the contest between the 'socialist Man' of Stalinist Soviet Union and the 'individualist Man' of Western liberal democracies ended. A weak version of Enlightenment Man was fought over by liberalism and socialism/communism but at the end of the Cold War and the fall of Stalinist Soviet Union, 'individualist' Man left standing could not sustain the weak version of Man. The anti-Enlightenment views of humanity were able to gain credence again at the end of the contest (Kyriakides and Torres, 2012: 7-8). Both 'individualist Man' and 'socialist Man' were already very weak versions of the Enlightenment definition of humanity. In fact, the authors themselves argued that, 'The West's optimism of the individual will did not exist as an internal pre-supposition of liberalism; rather, it reflected the political imperative of countering the alternative Enlightenment model of human beings – the collective subject – of Soviet communism' (Kyriakides and Torres, 2012: 8).

Liberalism developed from the reactions against Enlightenment, the French and the American revolutions in the eighteenth century, the rights of Man and later, the revolutions of 1848 (Sabine, 1950: 669-674). It was later on influenced by John Rawls and his theory of justice based on post-war social democracy. Post-war socialism/communism progressed from Stalinism and the failure of the Russian Revolution. It also grew from Western critiques of Marxism developed after the failure of working-class and left-wing movements (Anderson, 1987). Optimistic and future-oriented humanism and universalism had been rejected on both sides. But liberalism and communism as well as conservatism were ideologies with different understandings of the world, of the individual and society and thus provided distinct solutions to social problems. As we saw in the previous chapter, with the end of ideologies and the end of history, these ideologies do not exist as distinct anymore in a very depoliticised Western world.

With racial thinking, culture, nation, eugenics and other development, we have seen the existence of ideas and trends which contradicted the notion of human beings, reason, humanism and universalism of the Enlightenment. The 'victory' of liberal

democracies over the Soviet Union models did not lead to long celebration for the liberal 'individualist' Man and celebration of capitalism as a good social system. The end of the Cold War has shown that Stalinism was never a viable alternative to capitalism and liberalism. It has also shown the many weaknesses in liberalism and the lack of positive arguments in support of the current capitalist system.

The 'individualist' Man and Liberalism

The 'individualist Man' was not the 'Enlightenment Man' but 'limited Man'. Sheldon S Wolin argued in his book *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* that liberalism has been mischaracterised in the twentieth century because democratic radicalism and liberalism are grouped together despite them being two 'distinct traditions of political thought (Wolin, 2016: 263). George Sabine agreed and noted that 'between the philosophy of natural rights in the Revolutionary Era and the liberalism of the nineteenth century there was a profound difference of temper and spirit. The philosophy of natural rights was in essence a revolutionary creed (Sabine, 1950: 670). Wolin viewed democratic radicalism as only partly influenced by John Locke who is known as the 'Father of Liberalism'. Democratic radicalism is, in fact, mostly originated from 'eighteen-century rationalism and the experience of the French Revolution' (Wolin, 2016: 263). In contrast, Lockean liberalism is thought to be influenced by pre-French Revolution, but more importantly by classics economics and philosophers such as David Hume and Adam Smith. The anti-Enlightenment thoughts of David Hume, for example, can be seen in his understanding of knowledge. He had concluded that no knowledge comes from reason and he, in essence, had put a strong limit on reason (Russell, [1946] 1991: 634-647). Hume thought that 'reason cannot operate without ideas, and ideas are acquired only through the senses' explained Scruton (Scruton, 2001: 24). Wolin interpreted the difference between Lockean liberalism and the radical democratic tradition as a divergence in the belief of 'the ability of human mind to fathom reality and to translate the results into practical actions' (Wolin, 2016: 263-273). The term 'liberalism,' argued Jonathan Israel, is a 'general historiographical disaster' when used to describe the earlier intellectual and political trends in the nineteenth century. This term generally lumped together "anti-democratic moderates, heirs of the 'moderate Enlightenment' and post-1800 philosophical radicals conserving the Radical Enlightenment legacy" (Israel, 2017: 15). The promotion of liberalism as heir to

Enlightenment and radical democratic tradition, in order to fight the war against contemporary neoliberalism and left identity politics, is but a myth. In fact, there are multiple definitions of liberalism and Richard Rorty's quote cited in Duncan Bell's paper expressed well what has been happening to liberalism:

> Like the history of anything else, history of philosophy is written by the victors. Victors get to choose their ancestors, in the sense that they decide which among their all too various ancestors to mention, write biographies of, and commend to their descendants (Bell, 2014b: 683).

'Liberalism is a spectre that haunts Western political thought and practice', claimed historian Duncan Bell. Recognising the numerous conceptions and definitions of liberalism, he suggested that it can be conceptualised as the sum of the arguments that have been classified as liberal, and recognised as such by other self-proclaimed liberals across time and space' (Bell, 2014b: 685). This definition alone shows the vast ambiguity of liberalism. And, when we consider the Anglo-American political debate, we can see he was right when he argued that 'the scope of the tradition has expanded to encompass the vast majority of political positions regarded as legitimate' (Bell, 2014b: 689). Political scientists Michael Freeden and Marc Stears recognised that liberalism is an 'assembly of family resemblances, with a rich and complex historical story and with numerous contrasting contemporary formations'. But, they also noted the existence of elements that are widely accepted; 'an individualist creed, celebrating a particular form of freedom and autonomy, involving the development and protection of systems of individual rights, social equality, and constraints on the interventions of social and political power' (Freeden et al., 2013: 388-389). Nevertheless, they also warned that the interpretations are controversial. With all these various definitions, especially when ideas from across the political spectrum can be defined as liberal by self-claimed liberals, one has to wonder why it is still accepted to talk about illiberal liberals or illiberalism of contemporary political trends. What does illiberalism mean when liberalism is so widely defined?

Still, what follows is one specific and brief historical account, keeping in mind that the meanings and origins of liberalism are different depending on the country considered. What is also kept in mind while discussing liberalism is the fact that liberalism and

liberals have been very comfortable with slavery, racism and anti-Semitism, Social-Darwinism, eugenics, nationalism, social engineering, colonialism and imperialism and many other ideas and positions which could never be associated with notions of freedom, humanism and universalism. Early liberalism developed as a reaction to democratic radicalism and its ideals were the expression of the outlook of the new capitalist class in the nineteenth century. The capitalist class became increasingly powerful socially and economically. The development of liberalism allowed them to have more political power. Their outlook turned away from the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the natural rights of the revolutions. Romanticism, idealism, utilitarianism developed to replace the more revolutionary concepts of the Enlightenment. The increase in political power, with the widespread support for their ideals such as the 'greatest happiness principle', happened before the new working class had started to organise themselves in a new labour movement with their own ideology (Sabine, 1950: 741-744). Historian Alexander Zevin argued that when liberalism finally became a set of ideas in Britain, it became "a totalizing fusion of the political ideas of rule of law and civil liberties with the economic maxims of free trade and free markets, in theories of 'limited government'". In the United States, no such crystallization occurred because many of the tenets of liberalism 'were taken for granted from the start' (Zevin, 2019: 11, 12). One of the efforts of liberalism was to develop concepts of government which would give as much freedom as possible to the capitalist class to act without the interference of the state. The underlying liberal idea justifying this position on liberty was that nobody could really know another's true interests. This idea, of course, does not question the differences in economic, social and political power between the social classes.

The liberal concept is actually centred on the notion of an abstract individual based on the characteristics of an individual from the capitalist class, an individual with much social, economic and political power already. The concept of freedom currently accepted today was developed from this. We understand liberty as freedom from state interference or freedom resulting from restraints on state power to intervene in our lives. Our current concept sees freedom as absence of interference. But there is an older and more important meaning; the ability to exercise control over our own lives or freedom as having *power against interference* has been largely forgotten. The difference between the two freedoms can be understood this way: one can choose

what to eat only by choosing something on a specific menu given by another (freedom as non-interference) or one can go out and eat whatever one wants without being forced to choose on that particular menu or with having the power to refuse the specific menu and to choose another (freedom as non-domination, power against interference). In his book *Just Freedom: a Moral Compass for a Complex World*, political theorist Philip Pettit discussed the way the original meaning of freedom as non-domination developed in the Roman Republic and was maintained until the new meaning developed with the liberal utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the early nineteenth century (Pettit, 2014). The change between the two meanings really shows the beauty and power of a rational argument well-made and the subsequent consequences when it is not intellectually and politically challenged. According to Pettit, Bentham wanted to extend freedom to women and workers and thus 'argued that freedom requires just the absence of actual interference, i.e. free rein, not the absence of a power of interference. This made it possible to maintain that women and workers could be free, provided their masters did not actually misuse their power of interference' (Pettit, 2014: 195). Bentham managed to develop a notion of freedom with less depth, less significance, less value in order to extend it to others. Women and workers have finally freedom to live within the social system where they are exploited without having to consider the possibility of a 'freedom' from exploitation and from domination by other human beings. This new notion went well with the newly developed capitalist society where workers' lack of control over their lives and the domination by the capitalist class did not concern the state as long as workers could be free to enter into a work contract. Slaves or serfs were not free to enter into these contracts but workers in a capitalist society can now be seen as having the 'choice' because the political, economic and social powers dominating them have been ignored or dismissed. Indeed, historian Annelien de Dijn argued that the contemporary conception of freedom as restraints of state power with an emphasis on private independence is a modern invention which was not developed by those fighting for liberty but by the enemies of democracy. The new concept of freedom is 'the outcome of a prolonged political struggle triggered by the Atlantic Revolutions of the late eighteenth century' (Dijn, 2020: 3).

Early *laissez faire* liberalism, giving the capitalist class free rein, was later opposed by the developing labour movement. In its later development, liberalism tried to reconcile

the capitalist and the working class and their opposing interests in order to become the main ideology in Western democracies. It attacked the most brutal aspects of capitalism and the cruel effects of the capitalist class pursuing their own interests (Sabine, 1950: 669-674). The revolutions of 1848-49 and the later upheavals had a big impact on liberalism because claims from the working class could not be ignored any longer. With more political and civil liberties, liberal thoughts tried to portray a society where the divisions between social classes were no longer important. Liberalism, after World War Two, promoted the notion of racism as a problem of individuals' psychology and behaviour rather than it being a social problem, for example. Subsequently, the solutions proposed were education and policies to regulate and control the relationship between the different races. The notion of race was not opposed by liberals but accepted in race relations policies. The view that race could be transcended through collective human actions and profound social transformation was not considered. One of the points of this thesis is that race, culture and identity are based on the denial of human rationality and thus denial of humanity's potential in understanding and acting upon itself and the world. And as such they are anti-political ideas. Anti-racist ideas based on a similar view of humanity are also anti-political barriers preventing humanity from challenging and transcending race and racial divisions.

From early on, liberalism had seen passion, desire and feelings as the key to moral judgments, decisions and actions. The liberal notion of the 'greatest happiness' principle is based on this. Liberals saw reason as simply there to determine 'the most efficient means to achieving the ends proposed by feeling' (Wolin, 2016: 298). Jeremy Bentham, a key figure in liberalism, central member of the 'Philosophical Radicals' group and the founder of utilitarianism, put happiness at the heart of his moral code. 'It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong,' Bentham believed (Sabine, 1950: 676). He introduced psychological and subjective notion into politics. Bentham thought that what mattered 'was the *consequence* of any act. What determined the moral character of such consequences was the principle of utility'. Utility for Bentham meant the 'capacity to engender happiness, both in the individual and in society' (Malik, 2014: 209). He had developed the first consequentialist theory. Consequentialist theories are still very influential in our contemporary thinking. Actions are still often judged morally right or wrong

depending the outcomes and consequences. Alternative positions are to judge actions as morally right or wrong according to the intrinsic natures or contexts of the actions. With liberalism, the common good is no longer the product of reason but rooted in desire, in values based on a certain understanding of pain and pleasure. In the economy, human beings' willingness to satisfy their own self desires were seen as the basis for the common good. Later on, the suggestion that the happiness of future generations should also be considered was added to liberal theories (Wolin, 2016: 299).

In the second half of the twentieth century, in 1971, when the liberal consensus was already failing, John Rawls published his book *A Theory of Justice* which had and still has an enormous influence on liberal political philosophy and its critics, on modern liberalism and on current social justice theories. The context for his theories, known as 'liberal egalitarianism' was political and social circumstances that had already disappeared. These were the post-war boom, social democracy, liberal democracy and an emphasis on welfare and regulatory state where social problems were dealt with through expert policies and a big administration. His ideas were built on his theory of 'justice as fairness' and the belief that fulfilling self-interests were the key to people's actions. In his thought experiment, he argued that if people had to agree with a society, unseen behind a 'veil of ignorance' and where they would not know the position they would occupy in the new chosen society, they would choose a society where the worse-off people live as well as possible (in case they ended up as part of the worse-off group). He is following the liberal conception that fulfilling self-interests and desires is the key to governance. And yet, in real life, we can hear of many actions people take against their self-interests and desires, including the sacrifice of their own health or life, to help others (Rawls, [1971] 2005).

Rawls's just society follows two principles: 'a principle of liberty, which affirms citizens' basic rights and freedoms, and of equality, which calls for inequalities to be limited and resources arranged so that they benefit the least well-off members of society' (Forrester, 2019). His emphasis was on redistribution of resources to alleviate some inequalities suffered by the worse-off persons, but he still accepted that inequalities were inherent to society. Thus, inequalities do not need to be confronted but managed. In essence, he only argued against the excesses of capitalism. Some inequalities are

even justified if they lead to advantages for all. This is how affirmative action can be justified for example. To achieve redistribution, institutional solutions were emphasised with the help of a highly centralised, technocratic and autonomous state possessing the 'power to redress the socio-economic inequalities' without having to examine the 'political economy of concentrated wealth and corporate power' (Wolin, 2016: 531). Rawls's political liberalism 'was based on a deliberative vision of politics that saw democracy as modelled on discussion' and other older concerns such as 'nature of the state, political control, collective action' were squeezed out of political thought development (Forrester, 2019).

One of the important alternatives to the liberal egalitarianism was the school of thought known as communitarianism. It originated with political philosopher Michael Sandel's book *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* published in 1982. Sandel took issue with the atomistic, non-socially linked liberal individual Rawls is portraying when he used the thought experiment. Individuals cannot simply get out of their social and personal experiences and thus, cannot be behind a 'veil of ignorance' when choosing a just society. Sandel advocated for community to be prioritised over the individual because 'community describes not just what they have as fellow citizens but also what they are, not a relationship they choose but an attachment they discover, not merely an attribute but a constituent of their identity' (Heartfield, 2002: 45).

An important point here is that, in liberal egalitarianism, the protection of political rights and civil liberties takes priority over opposing economic inequalities. The protection of rights and liberties is done by the state which has become technocratic and autonomous. With the rise of neoliberal policies such as privatising part of the welfare state and public institutions and with the anti-democratic transnational institutions, even these rights and liberties are threatened.

The 'socialist Man' and Stalinism

The 'socialist Man' of Stalinist Soviet Union was certainly not 'Enlightenment Man'. In fact, Stalinism in the Soviet Union moved far from the Enlightenment, from Karl Marx's thoughts and theories and from Marxism developed at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. It is thought that Marxism started, in 1878, with the publication of Anti-Dühring by Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). There are now

several schools of Marxism. Ingo Elbe separated them into three main schools: the classical/traditional Marxism, Western Marxism and the *neue Marx-Lektüre* (New reading of Marx) (Elbe, 2013). The high point of classical Marxism, or what was called Marxism-leninism, ended in 1924 when Lenin died, after the failure of the 1917 Russian Revolution and of the European, in particular German, working-class uprisings in 1918-20. The First World War had already broken up Marxist theorists between the social chauvinists who supported their own nations and those opposing the war and the support for the ruling elites (Anderson, 1987). The radical and revolutionary ideas found in Marx were progressively taken out and destroyed, mainly by those claiming to be proponents of Marx's ideas. Marxism-Leninism very quickly degraded with the advance of Stalinism in the Soviet Union. Stalin took over after the death of Lenin, increasingly purging all opponents such as Trotsky, Ryazanov, Bukharin and Preobrazhensky (Anderson, 1987: 19-20). The Soviet bureaucracy readily created dogma out of Marxism to help in their justification for their own existence and to claim support for themselves. The disintegration of the working class, the development of the new bureaucracy repressing and controlling the working class, the absence of economic and social cohesion, the lack of basic rights and liberties were features of the Soviet Union. The 'socialist Man' of Stalinist Soviet Union had moved backward, away from any concepts of rational and social human beings, perfectibility, progress and development of humanity's potentials, universalism or freedom. It was the 'chronic weakness and instability of the capitalist world order' that helped the Soviet Union survive for so long, Furedi concluded (Füredi, 1986: 250). The propaganda from the Soviet bureaucracy claiming the positive development of individuals working hard and sacrificing themselves for the benefit of the whole society could have been easily set aside if the contest between the capitalist societies and the Soviet Union was not so important for both sides.

Classical Marxism has had strong critics among liberals, conservatives and others since its development in the nineteenth century but after the failure of the European working-class movement in the early 1920s, it was increasingly questioned, changed and attacked by Marxist radicals and other left-wing intellectuals, especially by those who preferred reforms and order to revolutions and disorder. The works of Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch were the start of a new direction for Marxism which will be eventually called Western Marxism. Lukács critiqued the notion that Engels's ideas

were the same as Marx's and proposed the critique of ideology of reified consciousness (Elbe, 2013). After the Second World War, the attacks coming from within the radical left camp increased in their hope to find justification for their own failure. The post-war boom with successful capitalist economies, growth, higher living standards for ordinary people and social democracy with promotion of the welfare state created even more problems for dogmatic Stalinism and Marxism because capitalism did not behave in the way they had been claiming it would. Capitalism did not collapse on its own as predicted by some of them but, on the contrary, led to better conditions of life for ordinary people. Many finished by concluding that there were actually no limits to growth in capitalist societies. They had finally turned away from analysing the material conditions and limitations of the system to more romantic, cultural and psychological critiques of society.

Marxism became only a sociological, intellectual and academic subject with no longer any relation with politics and political conflicts. The materialist and economic framework of society was ignored and only the superficial appearances created by society were discussed. Ideas such as the dictatorship of the proletariat and the importance of the working class as agents of social change were abandoned (Wood, 1998). Ordinary people were seen as to blame for the horrors of World War Two or thought as easily led by the power of advertising, media and now internet. It is useful to note here that the contempt for ordinary people and for their quality as rational agents was already present. Ordinary people were seen as easily manipulated people. Radical theories and critiques moved from production in society to consumption in society. From the working class defined by their social position in production i.e. as workers, radicals concentrated upon individuals as consumers, developing analysis of different modes of consumption. From the productive working class as political agents, radicals moved to the idea that their role as consumers would be the place to look for political agency.

Marxist intellectuals such as those from the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt rejected historical materialism all together and turned further into psychological analysis, cultural and linguistic explanations. Horkheimer, as the new director in 1930, changed the research areas away from "historical materialism as a 'science', toward a development of 'social philosophy' supplemented by empirical investigations"

(Anderson, 1987: 32). Marcuse, another member of the Frankfurt School, argued in 1964, in his *One-Dimensional Man*, that contemporary Western society creates 'artificially' needs and interests and manipulates the working class through consumerism and the mass media. Thus, it was irrational to consider them as potential agents of social change as Karl Marx had argued (Marcuse and Kellner, [1964] 1991). The New Left movement, in the West, was not homogenous and was influenced by a wide range of ideas. It developed out of the disillusion with Stalinism, but also from the left's political defeat in convincing the working class with their ideas and partly arose out of the student radicalism of the 1960s (Meiksins Wood, 1995). The American New Left was influenced by the civil rights movement and the Frankfurt School which saw students and academics as the agents of social change, and rejected Soviet communism, orthodox Marxism and social democracy. The main organisation was the Students for a Democratic Society with Tom Hayden as its founder and first president. With the Port Huron statement, a political manifesto published in 1962, they called for a new movement which 'must give form to the feelings of helplessness and indifference, so that people may see the political, social, and economic sources of their private troubles and organize society'. The university was seen as playing an essential role because it 'is located in a permanent position of social influence' and is 'the central institution for organizing, evaluating, and transmitting knowledge'. Students and academics in universities, essentially individuals from the middle class, were called to form this new movement showing their belief that students and academics rather than the working class were the important agents for social transformation (Hayden, 1962). In the 1960s, the end of the post-war boom led to a revival of class conflicts but also in an increase in the radicalisation of the middle class as seen with the New Left. Their politics, based on middle-class interests, took over any other radical politics originally based on classical Marxist politics and working-class interests.

The British New Left developed in the late 1950s and was also influenced by Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci, the Frankfurt School with Herbert Marcuse, American sociologist C. Wright Mills and structuralist and post-structuralist thinkers such as Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. British theorists such as Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart were some of the first developing the new analysis and ideas about culture and mass media, especially after the formation of the Centre for Cultural Studies in Birmingham. Culture was no longer seen as reflecting

the forces and social relations of production. It became important in and of itself. Radicals turned to education as a tool for cultural and social change, imitating the liberal view of the world.

Thus, the 'socialist Man' was not the 'Enlightenment Man' but also not the 'Marx Man'. Karl Marx did not develop his understanding of the capitalist social organisation simply because of his moral opposition to exploitation. Exploitation existed in previous societies. Extremely harsh conditions of living for most of the world's population were not unique to developing capitalism. He believed that it was possible to rationally and scientifically understand a specific human society, its unique 'mode of production' and 'historical form of social process of production'. Criticising what he called 'vulgar economy' which only looked at the 'outward appearances of economic relations' and endorsed the concepts developed by those defending the status quo, he rightly reminded us that 'all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided' (Marx, [1894] 1984: 817). His theories on the capitalist society led him to understand what he thought were the positive aspects and limitations of this particular society. He combined the abstract notion of universalism of the Enlightenment with a particularism based on the specific material basis of the capitalist society.

Marx was also humanist who was interested in human emancipation and in the full development of the individual in society. He thought that for humans to be free, they had to overcome material constraints, such as food production, which limit human beings' ability to make decisions and choices. To overcome the material constraints dominating humanity, the development of the productive forces of society is essential. He rejected the abstract concept of freedom promoted by liberalism. Freedom cannot simply be an act of will and he argued:

> It is possible to achieve real liberation only in the real world and by real means…Slavery cannot be abolished without the steam engine and the mule jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and…in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity (Füredi, 1986: 8).

It is clear that the possibility for an individual to express fully his individuality within society depends on his ability to decide free from material constraints and from domination by others. Discussing the important question of alienation, Mészáros explained Marx's concept of freedom as being in three parts which are linked to each other. The first part is the degree of 'freedom from natural necessity' which depends on the productivity of labour and the specific stage of human development. Social progress allows us to move further away from nature's domination. 'Freedom from the interfering power of other men' is, in a way, a little similar to the Republican concept of freedom as non-domination. A specific level of freedom from natural necessity could be reached but it does not necessarily mean the majority of humanity will enjoy the result of this. This depends on the kind of social relations of production existing in a particular society. The third aspect is the 'freedom to more fully exercise Man's essential powers', the powers that distinguish human beings from the rest of nature. Labour or human activity as 'free activity' is one essential power. It is not determined by necessity and mere survival and thus does not include activity related to our animal functions such as eating or procreating. The 'power of Man to objectify himself through his labour' is another essential power. Humans can put something of themselves in the work they do and thus can 'see' themselves in what they have created. Sociality is a third essential power. It is also a very important characteristic of humanity, making human beings 'universal' beings (Mészáros, 2006: 153-159). Our sociality is at the root of all aspects of our lives; progress, knowledge, society or science are dependent on this human trait.

James Heartfield, in his book *The 'Death of the Subject' explained* (2002), provided an interesting account of how the autonomous subject, the rational, independent and active person, has been degraded by many Western intellectuals including many left-wing intellectuals. The symptoms, such a common view of humans and society in pathological terms, are well established today (Heartfield, 2002: 224-236). The view of the inner self as vulnerable and isolated and the promotion of identities, where the level of oppression and suffering is used as a factor to determine the quality and position of the importance of identities, both reflect and are the consequences of this attitude over the subject. A victim mentality is developed and supported because it has become common to look at the victims who have suffered the most as those who

should have louder voices, more resources and more authority. The more they can prove their suffering and victim status, the worthier they are for others to support as a valid cause. Young and Sullivan noted that the pre-modern notion of 'Might is Right' is now reversed. In the past, power was equated with righteousness and now, members of victimised groups are viewed as morally superior (Young and Sullivan, 2016: 30). The use of trauma and injuries in order to recognise, ground or give importance to the self and to identity or, the competition between groups (competitive victimhood) to claim a victim status are aspects of this contemporary culture. As seen before, this 'culture of victimhood' and many of its developing aspects have been described and increasingly discussed, in many academic disciplines and in public discourse, since the end of the twentieth century (Farrell, 1998; Buruma, 2002; Torpey, 2006; Noor et al., 2012; Young and Sullivan, 2016; Noor et al., 2017). This victim culture seems to indicate that the idea of a strong and rational humanity with a potential to transform itself and the world has been abandoned.

Contemporary liberal-left identity politics

Today, black students groups use identity politics to fight for their specific interests against society seen as the enemy. In the past, white identity proponents or racists used identity politics to fight for their specific racial interests defined by the belief that the white race had distinct interests.

The expression 'identity politics' is thought to have been first read in April 1977. It was found in the political statement of a black feminist group, based in Boston, called the Combahee River Collective (CRC). The group was originally part of the National Black Feminist Organisation (NBFO), founded in 1973 in New York. Even though 'identity politics' was not used as an expression, we know that identity and the politics of identity was already an important concern among social movements activists calling for the liberation of blacks, women and gays. The NBFO original statement in 1973 claimed that '*We,* not white men or black men, must define our own self-image' and that they had to 'continue to remind the black liberation Movement that there can't be liberation for half the race' showing their frustration with the movement they had been supporting (Guy-Sheftall, 1995: 230).

Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith and Demita Frazier, with their CRC statement, expressed well a particular step in black feminism history. They still believed in the possibility of radical social transformation with a universalist basis for their politics of liberation. They were still committed to fighting for a new world where all oppressions (racial, gender, sexuality, class and imperialism) had disappeared. However, they also show a concern in developing a new politics of subjectivity which would include a positive identity for black women. To build better radical political ideas for their own situation as black women dealing with racism, sexism and working-class issues, they thought they had to base them from their own personal experiences, their own identity rather than others' experiences (Guy-Sheftall, 1995: 231-240). This belief that their personal experiences can be the basis for political analysis, theories and intellectual development came from their 'experience and disillusionment' built up after their involvement with black liberation movements (civil rights, black nationalism and the Black Panthers) and the traditional left-wing political groups. Their feelings of abandonment were certainly based on reality. The position of women in black liberation movements was not considered important or appropriate to worry about by many activists. With her historical study *Women, Race and Class*, scholar and political activist Angela Davies exposed the problematic racist and classist biases of the women's liberation movement from the abolitionist days to the 1970s (Davis, 1983). The traditional left concerns were often focused on the exploitation of workers while racism and sexism were ignored or even supported. Furthermore, the feminist movement was mainly concerned with white middle-class women's problems and experiences. The political isolation of these groups and the failure of the labour movement and left-wing political groups to develop universalist radical politics have led to a progressive turn toward political ideas highlighting differences of culture, experiences, subjectivity and identity. Interestingly, in 1979, medical sociologist Renee Anspach is thought to be the first to use the term identity politics in academia, in a paper discussing 'the emerging political activism among the disabled and former mental patients' who seek 'to alter the self- and societal conceptions of people with disabilities' (Bernstein, 2005; Anspach, 1979).

There are, of course, differences between identity politics of the past and present. The increased degradation of the subject, the further atomisation of society, the search for psychological solutions to social problems, the therapeutic culture and the culture of

fear led to a view of the self and individual as weak, subject to medical conditions, isolated and threatened by all around. Furedi stated that the current cultural phenomenon leads more to the 'promotion of self-limitation' and the 'distancing of the self from others' than to the 'realisation of self-fulfilment'. 'It posits the self in distinctly fragile and feeble form' with an increasing need of experts to manage life. Thus, it 'both reflects and promotes the trend towards fragmentation and alienation' (Füredi, 2004: 21). It is true that the contemporary form of identity politics is the 'first movement to internalise the therapeutic ideal' and that through 'identity politics the preoccupations of the self are converted into a wider group identity' (Füredi, 2004: 162-164). The form that identity politics took was influenced by the therapeutic culture becoming increasingly influential in the second half of the twentieth century. Historian Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn argued that the increasing preoccupation with the place of white activists in the black power movement, for example, was due to an increased concern in asserting a black identity defined progressively in therapeutic terms. Sociologist Philip Rieff had argued that a cultural shift in modern society had replaced 'religion as the dominant way of understanding the world' with psychotherapy and thus individualism and obsession with the inner self becoming the main focus (Lasch-Quinn, 2002: 43-45). Analysing some of the international campaigns to redress past injustices, social scientist John Torpey insisted that claims of reparations are part of a new form of politics demanding symbolic recognition and which emerged out of several trends including the collapse of transformative politics (Torpey, 2006). Some political scientists, however, did not see the turn in psychological explanations as bad. They stressed the psychological foundations of identity politics to argue that the particular psychological literature on identity would help discussions in political science (Renwick Monroe et al., 2000).

Many supporting modern identity politics have argued that to fight social injustice, defending each distinct group separately is more effective than universalist Marxist politics. Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin had disagreed with this point. He saw a danger in ignoring the class issue when discussing racial discrimination. As he noted, if a black worker sees the problem he faces only through the prism of race, 'he will inevitably find himself the ally of the white capitalist against the white worker' and will become a pawn used by management against other workers. All workers will lose. If, while still recognising the issue of racism, he acknowledges the problem of poverty,

‘he will be aligned with the white worker against management’ (Rustin et al., 2003: 226).

But class politics today has also changed drastically because of the greatly expanded and thus transformed meaning of class. Culture, lifestyle, lived experiences and identity are introduced into the original class category to create a wider concept because of the perceived theoretical exhaustion of class (Bottero, 2004). We have seen the Rousseauian definition of class but with the even wider concept of class, completely leaving behind the original category of analysis, class politics has become an integral part of identity politics. Class politics, in its original sense, was not identity politics but the political form that the aim for *universal human emancipation* took after understanding the basis of capitalist society. The early aim of Marxism was political action for human freedom. István Mészáros recalled Marx’s view:

> Thus although the fundamental governing principle of the new society is *economic* (as opposed to the essentially *political* regulative principle of feudal society), it cannot be divorced from the political framework in which it operates. Therefore the task of ‘universal human emancipation’ must be formulated ‘in the *political form* of the emancipation of the workers’ (Mészáros, 2006: 157).

Class politics were originally based on an understanding of workers as the rational agents of social change, not based on the romantic, faith-based or identitarian definitions used to explain the support for workers today. It was a politics of freedom, based on the belief that workers needed to overcome social obstacles in order to create a classless and freer society. As discussed in chapter 1, Hannah Arendt thought that the classical meaning of politics associated politics with freedom. It was only in our modern age that the aim of politics had become security and life interests. Politics was originally concerned with the world and not with life itself (Arendt and Kohn, 2018: 220-235). With such an understanding of politics, we can see not only that identity politics is not politics but also most of our political world is not concerned with freedom and political issues but with social/cultural, economic/technical and private issues.

The book *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (2016) written by academic Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, who is part of the American left, is interesting in regard to

this tension between identity politics and class politics. Although the premise of her book is still that black people are the most oppressed and that their main barrier to a better life is racism, one can feel the constant tension between this claim and the realisation, with the all the material collected, that the poor from all backgrounds are actually attacked by the American police and by the state (Taylor, 2016).

One of the main disagreements in politics today is not in using identities but in the distinct cultures and identities supported by various sides. We see this through the expanding competitive victimhood culture but also in most attempts to approach and have a voice in the political arena. There are constant contestations between supporters of the various identities. Political positions, also seen through identity politics, are part of this identities competition. Two researchers, analysing online comments, found that "Brexiters used certain terms, or categories, to 'define' the attributes of someone who belonged to the Remainer camp, and vice versa." Those definitions were labels such as 'scaremonger' or 'racist'. Once these political positions are seen and acted upon as if they were identities, the solutions proposed to stop the disputes are also non-political such as the demand for people to return to feeling British to support a 'larger identity'. Thus, the researchers argued that '*social psychologically* informed measures could be used to try and *heal social* divisions' (italics are mine) (Taylor, 2019). Developing political arguments to convince members of the opposite political side is not considered a solution because this is no longer a political dispute but a competition between identities. Social and political problems are only understood in term of culture and identity and politics is only seen through identity politics, so there is an increase in the support for white identity despite an apparent decrease in support for racist policies and racist attitudes. Kenan Malik noticed the rise of white identity politics which is often linked and discussed in terms of the working class. In our current social and political circumstances such as 'the erosion of the power and standing of the working class', 'the blurring of the old divisions between left and right', 'the creation of a new fault line separating the winners from the losers of globalisation', and 'the rise of populism and the emergence of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim movements', the working class is encouraged to view the social problems they are facing through the prism of identities and the blaming of specific sections of society (Malik, 2020).

At the moment, 'White guilt' has become the way in which some white people, especially white liberals, have expressed themselves in order to show their awareness of racism and their own racism. Being aware of the life experiences of black people has become a way of attenuating their feelings of guilt. That is why the books about 'black experience' are so popular. Whether they have agreed with racist ideas or not, the claim that their white race makes them racist is promoted. The original sin, in the white population, apparently forces individuals to act on it in order to purify their moral being and their soul. Demands for social transformations have been replaced by therapeutic means to help passive and emotional human beings who have to live with and suffer in an out-of-their-control world. Social critic Shelby Steele explained well the current attraction for claims of racism and the constant racialisation of every single issue today:

> The most striking irony of the age of white guilt is that racism suddenly became *valuable* to the people who had suffered it. Racism, in the age of racism, had only brought every variety of inhuman treatment, which is why the King generation felt that extinguishing it would bring equality. But in the age of white guilt, racism was also *evidence* of white wrongdoing and, therefore, evidence of white obligation to blacks. King had argued that whites were obligated to morality and democratic principles. But white guilt meant they were obligated to black *people* because they needed the moral authority only black people could bestow (Steele, 2007: 34).

White guilt has become a valuable currency for some black individuals but how useful is it for an anti-racist movement? The concepts of responsibility and guilt have been concerns throughout the history of philosophy. They are related with questions of morality, self, free will or politics. But they became an even bigger issue, after World War Two. The Holocaust and other horrors of wars and the Vietnam war, for example, raised questions of collective responsibility and guilt. Later, matters of individual and collective responsibility and guilt in relation to social problems such as race, rape, suicide, terrorism, homelessness and climate change became increasingly important, not only in philosophy but also in social sciences and political disciplines. Very interested in the philosophical and political concerns for responsibility, Hannah Arendt responded to political and legal philosopher Joel Feinberg who believed in a firm

distinction between guilt and responsibility (Feinberg, 1968). She agreed that one can have responsibility and be held liable for things one has not done. However, being and feeling guilty for things one has not done is meaningless and can lead to phony sentimentality. As she declared: 'Where all are guilty, nobody is. Guilt, unlike responsibility, always singles out; it is strictly personal. It refers to an act, not to intentions or potentialities' (Arendt, 1987: 43).

Thus, we have discussed some of the social and political contexts which influenced the mainstream development of identity politics in the left and liberal sections of the political spectrum after the Second World War. The political context was already permeated by anti-Enlightenment ideas, sentiments and attitudes. Anti-progress, anti-science and anti-human ideas existed before World War Two and has continued after. Clearly, the two main ideologies, Liberalism and Communism, present during the increasing acceptance of identity politics and the initial post-war contestation between these two ideologies were not promoting the intellectual, social and political ideas that would oppose the notion of race and the use of social identities in politics.

The use of politicised social identities by people involved in the political and public conversation is common now. The disagreements are on the support and concerns for particular identities. Even though, identity politics existed in past centuries, the contemporary social and political contexts have changed the forms with which identity politics is developed and understood. The further atomisation of society, the search for psychological solutions to social problems, the therapeutic culture and the culture of fear, for example, have redefined the individual self as weak, fragile, isolated and threatened by everything around. This new view of the self has affected the ways identities and identity groups are supported and defended. In the twentieth century, the claim of a victim status has become an important part of identity politics.

Summary and Conclusion

Race is a product of history and it is a relatively new concept. It became fully developed only in the nineteenth century. The history of the concept of race challenges many of the current notions of race used in the contemporary anti-racism debates. It contradicts opinions describing race as an innate or essential characteristic of human nature or racism as an original sin, as a disease or as an invention by the ruling class or by white people. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the idea of race became widely supported by intellectuals and thinkers. Race did not simply serve to distinguish white Europeans from non-white people from other parts of the world. It was not always simply defined by skin colour. Some believed that groups such as the lower classes within the white European 'race' were from distinct races. The ideas eventually became accepted by the public most probably because they seem to interpret the world and people's experiences correctly and because there were no strong alternative interpretations.

The new biological definitions of mankind, the need to justify the colonisation of the non-Western world, the Atlantic Slave Trade, the conditions of the new working class and the continuous social inequality led to the eventual acceptance of the notion of race that linked biological factors interpreted as important - such as skin colour or cranial capacity and size - to cultural customs. Many Enlightenment philosophers had thought progress was inevitable if human reason and actions were promoted. The loss of Enlightenment optimism led, unfortunately, to an understanding of the world, society and progress as simply results of laws of nature, as seen with race. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, even though they were natural rights, had given expression to the willingness to challenge old notions of social, natural and religious hierarchy. It provided the arguments for the liberation of the politically and socially unequal lower classes. But the limits and reality of the new capitalist society, with social inequalities still very much existing, led to the eventual acceptance that these inequalities are permanent and natural and led to the development of race. Kenan Malik had made a very crucial point when he argued that 'inequality is not the product of racial differences' but that in fact, 'the perception of racial difference arises out of the persistence of social inequality (Malik, 1996: 7).

The basic understanding of the world underlying the race concept, has unfortunately not changed when ‘race’ was replaced by ‘culture’ and ‘identity’. Boas had developed his concept of culture as a challenge to racial hierarchy and racism and had promoted the notion of equality. But human beings are now seen as shaped and moulded by their specific cultures without any possibilities for them to reason and change. Reason, the basis for our autonomy and moral conscience, is denied with a vision of human beings as simple representations or owners of specific cultures. The anti-human sentiment and anti-humanist attitude are found both in cultural relativism and racial thinking. The modern concept of identity is certainly no more liberating than the concepts of race and culture. They are all essentialist ways of construing personhood and grouphood which leave no room for reason, free will and moral conscience. Individuals are simply determined by fixed identities. But denying our individual agency is dangerous. Conscience and moral judgment are exercised at an individual level. If we lose the habit of using our individual conscience to make decisions and act upon these decisions, we lose our moral autonomy, our ability to decide what is right and what is wrong and can act in ways that are very immoral.

It is clear that the politics of identity, understood as the use of politicised social identities, has emerged with the counter-Enlightenment reactions and anti-universalist positions in the eighteenth century. Race, national character and culture became politicised and used in politics. Identity politics has developed through several centuries. However, the understanding of the self through psychology, concern for the self and personal identity, disappearance of transformative left politics, lack of support for human reason, atomisation of society and lack of political vision have led to the evolution of meanings of identity politics. The notions of the common good and human liberation have nearly disappeared in contemporary Western society where each identity group fights for its own interests regardless of the consequences for the future of humanity or society as a whole. These identity groups are getting more fragmented to allow for more particular and personal demands. These fragmented identities reflect the atomised society where individuals are portrayed as isolated, vulnerable and threatened by all others.

The new form of identity politics reflects the contemporary preoccupation with the self and personal identity and thus to question someone’s identity or personhood is seen

as the worse transgression. To question or attack the claims of an identity group is understood as a personal attack, as questioning the inner self of members of the group. Each of these groups are becoming more individualised in the search for their inner self. But this focus on individual personal experiences leads to an increasing lack of empathy for others. The therapeutic culture, as we saw, both reflects and promotes the atomisation of society as well as the sense of alienation individuals feel today. Identities internalise this and thus the competition between identities is progressively becoming a cruel competition between atomised, isolated and vulnerable individuals. Virtue is decided not on the quality of individuals' actions and decisions but on their suffering. To claim an understanding of victimhood in general and to declare one's own suffering has become the manner in which one is considered worthy of sympathy. But in the hierarchy of suffering, individuals have to ignore others' suffering to promote themselves. They are creating a world which denies the possibility for empathy, compassion and solidarity with others who do not belong to the group.

Society has become heavily influenced by psychology and sociology. Politics is no longer used to understand and act in the political world. Sociology and psychology have invaded all aspects of public and private lives. But more importantly, at the birth of modern politics when societies transitioned from the feudal system, an anti-political culture increasingly established itself with the introduction of the politicised social identities. This anti-political culture has accelerated with the decline of all remaining notions of membership of a political arena in which individuals opposed each other with various ideologies or conception of the universal truths and of freedom. Identity politics is not just accepted by the left and liberals today but is accepted and used widely. The difference is in the identities supported. In fact, politics today is understood only through identity politics even though identity politics is anti-political at its core. Identity politics is not politics. As we have seen in the chapter discussing race as a product of history, Hannaford had looked at the historical relationship between politics, religion and race and had shown that 'principles of civil association' were 'in opposition to race in Western civilization' (Hannaford, 1996: 13). If we understand politics as with notions of the polis and polity, then we can see that politicised social identities are anti-political. The polis is understood as an association of equals, but identities based on social and racial inequalities are not equal. This support for identity politics, of course, have consequences on anti-racism but also on many other social and political issues.

Students and others enter the political arena through using their particular identities. But with a sense that the self is vulnerable, isolated and in danger from others, they will demand protection for themselves. In Western society, we understand ourselves only through the psychological self. This current understanding of ourselves will affect how we act. The current culture of competitive victimhood is a reflection of the pervasive identity politics and the weak psychological self.

There is a need for a better understanding of what society has lost in its understanding of politics but also in its understanding of the relationship between humans, society and nature. In antiquity, privileged individuals saw themselves as citizens of a polis. Later, many individuals saw themselves as members of a religious community. In the twentieth century, many individuals see themselves as members of a racial community. This research has shown the reasons why racial identities have become such public concerns in contemporary society but more importantly, have demonstrated why this focus on racial identity and identity politics is both anti-political and anti-human. Using a wider view of the issues by looking at different academic disciplines has been very useful in the attempt to answer the questions raised in the introduction. Examining the various notions of race, racism, identity, politics and identity politics in the past and in the present has offered a comprehensive approach that led to important insights. It is necessary in society to have individuals with deep knowledge of very specific areas of knowledge as well as individuals with more superficial but wider knowledge of several issues. Thus, even though a lack of deep knowledge of all the subjects raised can be used as criticism for this research, the insights provided here through the application of a very wide intellectual framework are very critical and very valuable for further understanding of all these socially and politically crucial issues.

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