

Political Liberalism and the Multicultural Imagination: The Vortex of Identities

Matan Oram

The Academic College of Tel-Aviv-Yaffo School of Government and Society,
Israel

Abstract: The dynamism of change in the Western world of the social intensifies the political significance of the interrelations between ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘identity’. In light of diversified moral-value spheres and life worlds, the term ‘political community’ acquires a different meaning in the modern world of Western liberal democracies. This dynamism, whose impact is prominently reflected in the public sphere, widens the gap between ‘consent’ and ‘rift’ and hence challenges the aptitude of the liberal democratic polity to reproduce the social cohesion and the consent needed for legitimacy. Negative reactions to a strengthen in go fanti-libera ltendencies to the extent of a crisis of confidence in the democratic process may result. This essay deals with the political meaning of ‘identity’ in the light of John Rawls’ conception of ‘political liberalism’. Illuminating the difference between ‘cultural pluralism’ and ‘multi-culturalism’, I propose to elucidate the affinity between the ‘politics of identities’ and the ‘colonization of identities’. Pointing to the potential foci of tension and social conflicts through the problematic of the modern concept of ‘life world’, this essay sheds light on the aptitude to cope with these symptoms of crisis through the political conception of liberalism.

I

Historical overview

As a historical epoch of national awakening with a far-reaching political significance, the nineteenth century symbolizes an ethos whose crucial impact is engraved in the history of the twentieth century. The consequences of World War I – the collapse of two vast multi-national political entities, the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires – led to the necessity of new political arrangements guided by the search for pacification of the political tensions among national identities. This tendency was clearly reflected by the motivation to include the Wilsonian principles in the 1919–1920 Versailles agreements in order to harmonize the political arrangements under construction with the (territorial) delineation of national identities. From a historical retrospective view, we can say that the prospects of this vision were based on a realization of the universal principle of popular sovereignty through the particularity of national self-determination. Woven into the ethos of national liberation, this connection between (national) ‘identity’ and ‘sovereignty’ acted as a driving force in the processes of decolonization, just as it did in the growth of the totalitarian regimes and dictatorships in the twentieth century.

We may understand, against the background of similar circumstances albeit only partly, the new political formations and the struggles and the arrangements that came into the world following the collapse of the Soviet Union. At any rate, the history of national liberation may easily be attached to amidst aken or manipulative tendency of blurring those contradictory rudiments between liberalism¹ and nationalism. As it is widely known, countless criminal violations of human rights, especially against minorities, have been committed under the banner of ‘national liberation’. In the course of such struggles for freedom and independence in which any national movement fulfills its mission by establishing a nation-state, a sovereign political entity is born that realizes collective freedom by self-government, though not one that is necessarily a liberal democracy.

In this context of modern history, ‘nationalism’ in general and the post-colonial era in particular provides with historical examples to sharpen the essential disparity between ‘liberty’ as a constitutive moral value of ‘liberalism’ and ‘national liberation’, though for the most part these do not reflect the political fulfillment of ‘liberalism’. In other words, it reveals the inherent contradiction between ‘nationalism’ and ‘liberalism’. While ‘liberty’ – a free-standing moral value and natural right that is a foundation of human and civil rights– is to be perceived and measured in the interactive context of individuals among themselves, and in the face of states’ authority. A national liberation’s sphere of morality may only indicate a specific interactive context between a distinct, particular collective and a certain political entity. That is, although based on the universality inherent in the right of self-determination, any given national liberation’s framework of reference is particular. So it would be difficult to find where a national ethos that once was a fertile ground for the realization of political liberalism; or put another way, the search for an entity demonstrating compatibility of nationalism and liberal democracy is hardly to be found. Moreover, most modern conflicts and violations of human rights may be

¹ For a critical discussion of this issue, see Umut Özkirimli, *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 96–104.

linked, either directly or indirectly, to the background of national tensions and the identities associated with these tensions.

As far as the philosophical discourse of liberalism is of some affinity to any aspect of culture, it may only be to (the liberal) political culture. Therefore, 'liberalism' in its political meaning (i.e., 'political liberalism') indicates a specific political culture acting through a constitutional polity to secure the side-by-side existence of a variety of cultures (or communities of cultures) whose commitment to these constitutional principles is taken for granted. This commitment stands as a differentiating indication between 'cultural pluralism' and 'multi-culturalism'. It sharply clarifies the meaning of political liberalism as projected from the philosophical discourse to the modern world of the social.

In the perception of political philosophy, liberalism² is first and foremost viewed through a rational commitment to a scheme of moral values. So much as the multicultural perceptions of political communities are based on complete indifference regarding the moral value sphere of the variety of cultural communities that make up the political community, at issue is a position that can hardly be reconciled with the rudiments of political liberalism. Accepting the plural society³ as its moral standard, the liberal polity is examined through cultural pluralism⁴ as distinct from multiculturalism. This distinction does not merely denote a semantic difference. Having a significant influence in both the realms of the constitutional democratic polity and that of the public sphere, the meaningful discrepancy between 'cultural pluralism' and 'multiculturalism' should be carefully measured.

II

² Dealing with the democratic development of liberalism, and the basic political meaning of liberal democracy, Giovanni Sartori explains the distinction in meaning of "democracy within liberalism" and "democracy without liberalism." See Giovanni Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1987), 367–398.

The philosophical-political meaning of 'liberalism' has clearly been analyzed and efficiently explained in John Rawls' perception of 'political liberalism'. The fundamental principle of 'political liberalism' was restated in his "Reply to Habermas": "The central idea is that political liberalism moves within the category of the political and leaves philosophy as it is. It leaves untouched all kinds of doctrines, religion, metaphysical, and moral with their long tradition of development and interpretation. Political philosophy proceeds apart from all such doctrines, and presents itself in its own terms as freestanding." See John Rawls, "Reply to Habermas," *Journal of Philosophy*, 92:3 (March 1995): 134. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 4–46; 89–129. For a comprehensive discourse on democracy in the broad context of liberalism, see David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2006), 259–289. For a discussion on this issue from the point of view of citizenship and rights, see Alan Ryan, *The Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 21–44. And see also Andrew Mason, *Living Together as Equals: The Demands of Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 25–54.

³ See John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*. Part I – "The First Part of Ideal Theory" (London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 11–58.

⁴ Here I find Rawls' 'reasonable pluralism' as a helpful standard for this perception of (cultural) pluralism which is defined in his *Political Liberalism* (p. 36.). This perception of pluralism was clearly explicated by Rawls in his *The Law of Peoples*: "Though we can imagine what we sometimes think would be a happier world – one in which every one, or all peoples, have the same faith that we do – that is not the question, excluded that it is by the nature and culture of free institutions. To show that reasonable pluralism is not to be regretted, we must show that, given the socially feasible alternatives, the existence of reasonable pluralism allows a society of greater political justice and liberty" (p, 12).

Crisis of modern liberalism and its features

One of the prominent features that signify the crisis of modern liberalism is what may be called the cultural aspects of self-determination. Specifically speaking, political communities in the modern world of the social are characterized by increased, diversified life world elements. In this social existen celiberal democracy must insist on one basic legitimate demand from its citizens – the supportive acknowledgement of its political culture. It is this ‘standard minimum’ of civic sentiment in order to stipulate cultural pluralism which requires a rational consent that will allow for the coexistence of different self-declared communities of culture.⁵ The contractual validity of this consent is reflected in its rootedness in the universal principles of a liberal constitution. Normatively defined through the equal guarantee of individual rights and liberties –an essential precondition for the very existence of an open society –this supportive acknowledgement asserts the civil obligation to differentiating consciousness according to the definition of a ‘state’s the sphere of universality. Leaving untouched “...all kinds of doctrines, religion, metaphysical, and moral...”⁶political liberalism delineates (constitutively) the sphere of particularity by keeping these aspects free of state’s authority. Since the state is assumed to be an institutional embodiment of universal consciousness, nothing – under no circumstances – may yield any right to infringe the equilibrium between these two spheres: ‘universality’ (political community)vs. ‘particularity’ (cultural community and identity). That is, no subject matter of this sphere of particularity is to be favored by the state, not even through majority preeminence. In so doing, liberal democracy secures the minorities’ rights by the majority’s power. In the broader context of this discussion, religion may be a prominent example of a source of social conflicts if it were not constitutionally defined by its exclusion from political and administrative power.

As this differentiation maintains the plurality of life-worlds, it preconditions the autonomy of the public sphere in order to allow the existence of an open society. Yet, in the modern era of globalization, liberal democratic political communities are frequently composed of asocial texture more diversified by different and sometimes conflicting cultural elements not necessarily

⁵Here it is worth mentioning Ferdinand Tönnis’ insightful socio-philosophical analysis of modernity through the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), which is the title of his widely known and influential work (1887). As a reflection of two types of social groups and relationships, these concepts underlie the discussion of the modern social world through a differential definition of the premodern and the modern world of the social. Based on common consciousness and relationships of common practices and experiences, feelings and attitudes, kinship, geographical location and shared residence, *Gemeinschaft*, the premodern denotation of ‘community’, is something a person is born to and grows into; it may often be historically exemplified by premodern rural society. Or put in Husserl’s phenomenological vocabulary, *Gemeinschaft* belongs to the kinds of concepts that pertain to our ability to ‘know’ as these accompany our pre-understanding of the lifeworld rooted in our unmediated familiarity with the world ‘known to us’. If then *Gemeinschaft* represents the premodern social reality, *Gesellschaft* is the type of human interrelations that characterize the modern world of the social. While *Gemeinschaft* is conceived through relationship itself as a “real organic life,” *Gesellschaft* denoting ‘society’ as reflected in modern life is “...an aggregate of human beings...” that may be characterized as an instrumental association the ‘inner logic’ of which is the particular interests and goals of its members. In some of its elements Tönnis’ descriptive analysis of *Gesellschaft* (see pp. 65–66 in particular) is reminiscent of Hegel’s conception of ‘civil society’. See Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society – Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, trans. and ed. Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper and Row, 1963 [1st Engl. ed., Michigan State University Press, 1957]), Part I, 33–102.

⁶*Ibid.*, 134.

compatible with “public political culture of a liberal constitutional regime.”⁷The background of this incompatibility may be associated with religion, or any specific sphere of morals and values, or some other constituent of a particular identity. At issue is a fragmentizing power which impoverishes the potentialities of reconstructing the common civil sentiment needed for sustaining the political culture of the liberal political community, which is a basic condition for the very existence of a democratic regime. In other words, the basic claim of political liberalism is foundational as the presupposition for the very existence of an open society.

Liberal political culture requires as minimal consent from its member-citizens as legitimately can be demanded in democratic political-community on behalf of the pluralistic existence of different communities of culture and identities. This specific requirement of upholding a common political culture consistent with democratic polity reflects the essential difference between ‘cultural pluralism’ and ‘multi-culturalism’. I wish to demonstrate this problematic by the following paradox: multi-culturalism may actually allow the leaving of education in the hands of those cultural communities that are hostile to the basic values and founding principles of an open society. This may be reflected in a segregationist exclusion of individuals and collectives on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, religion or whatever else. As such the flatness and oversimplification of the multicultural imagination in interpreting the interrelations between the variety of identities and the political-community may be legitimate in the demand for adopting a religious law (possibly in violation of women’s rights or basic human and civil rights) into the legal tenants of the democratic state. The absurdity, however, is that anti-liberal claims such as this and the like, which among other things threaten the openness and the autonomy of the public sphere are often (willingly) displayed as a ‘faithful ‘political reflection of ‘liberalism’. That is, with the multi-cultural imagination, the anti-liberal argumentation is presented through the liberal language as ‘freedom of religion’, ‘freedom of speech and opinion’, the ‘right to self-determination’ and so on. All are gathered together under the comprehensive problematic of the politics of identities.⁸

⁷Ibid., 15. In his *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls presents a detailed analytical explanation of the concept “Realistic Utopia.” In this conceptual context he reviews seven conditions for a “reasonably just constitutional democratic society,” or simply a “liberal society.” The third condition “...requires that the category of the political must contain within itself all the essential elements for a political conception of justice. For example, in political liberalism persons are viewed as citizens, and a political conception of justice is built up from political (moral) ideas available in the public political culture of a liberal constitutional regime. The idea of a free citizen is determined by a liberal political conception and not by any comprehensive doctrine, which always extends beyond the category of the political” (p. 15).

⁸In his *Identity and Violence*, Amartya Sen claims that the classification of the identities by which the human social world is conceived as a collection of religions or ‘civilizations’ or ‘cultures’ is oversimplified. Meanwhile, many other identities involving gender, profession, class, language, science, politics and morals, which are ignored, are much more potentially conflictual than the variety of divertive classifications that forms the world in which we actually live. See Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006), chap. 2, in particular, 18–39. For Sen’s specific criticism of Huntington’s thesis regarding the ‘clash of civilizations’, see pp. 10–11. For a more extensive discussion of Huntington’s theory and this issue generally, see chap. 3, 40–58. See also Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

III

Identity, confinement, violence

In 1986 the Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o published his *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*⁹ accompanied by the statement that he would never again write in English, but only in KiKuyu, his mother tongue. The most insidious imperialist weapon, he averred, is culture. The hegemonic culture of the former colonial power expunged the native people's belief in their names, languages, traditions and autochthonous life-world – and ultimately in themselves. With movingly poetic sensitivity, Thiong'o epitomizes a profound literary description that illustrates the power of identity which, as described by Marty Sen., "...can be a source of richness and warmth as well as of violence and terror..."¹⁰ Especially important to note here is Frantz Fanon's work, *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*),¹¹ which left a strong imprint in the discourse on colonialism and extends far beyond the introspective narration of colonialism and the processes of decolonization. This is a work of salient value in the extended context of the philosophical discourse on human rights. Illuminating the interconnections between 'identity', 'culture' and 'self-determination', Fanon introduces a distinctive critical analysis by which he unfolds a keen understanding of the developmental dynamics of transition to self-rule as a foundation to a free society. Moreover, beyond the processes of national liberation and democratization, the power of identity and cultural heritage is a significant factor in the formation of the autonomous self:

When the black man, who has never felt as much a "Negro" as he has under white domination, decides to prove his culture and act as a cultivated person, he realizes that history imposes on him a terrain already mapped out, that history sets him along a very precise path and that he is expected to demonstrate the existence of a "Negro" culture.¹²

Whereas identity in the wider sphere of reference, such as a culture which distinguishes a particular collective, a national culture is...

The collective thought process of a people to describe, justify and extol the actions whereby they have joined forces and remained strong. National culture in the underdeveloped countries, therefore, must lie at the very heart of the liberation struggle these countries are waging.¹³

The interrelations between identities highlight the reciprocal influences between life world constituents (such as identity formatting) and social fragmentation.¹⁴ As an abundant source for

⁹Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (New York: James Currey, 2005 (1981)).

¹⁰ Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 4.

¹¹ See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. R. Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 1963), in particular chap. 3, "On National Culture," 145–180.

¹²*Ibid.*, 150.

¹³*Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁴ In the general context of things, Britain's 'Brexit' from the EU by referendum on 23 June 2016 and its consequence, the resignation of the Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron, may be conceived as a climax of <http://jrdsjournal.wixsite.com/humanities-cultural>

major political issues, these interrelations¹⁵ affect the philosophical discourse on modernity by re-articulating modern political discourse through the conceptual prism of crisis. The decreased ability of the modern liberal democratic (nation-) state to cope with the political implications of this social fragmentation specifies the focus of this crisis. Its philosophical theoretical facet is a reactive trend of radicalized critical thought from illiberalism to anti-liberalism, which outlines a general point of departure, to wit, the crisis of modernity is congruent with the crisis of modern liberalism.

Following this, I find a constructive value in mentioning two opposed extremities whose rejection of the Enlightenment's rational universal values is a common denominator in this triangular context of 'political liberalism', 'identities' and 'cultural pluralism': if(a)'post-modernism'¹⁶ may be

a separatist tendency that had already been resonating across the Continent as one of the most salient features of the nationalist right-wing political parties and movements in Europe, e.g., the German AfD, the FN in France, Britain's UKIP, CD in Greece or the M5S in Italy. The current strengthening of those movements and others demonstrates the power of (national) identity by redrawing its lines against the (allegedly fragmenting) liberal spirit of globalization, which deconstructs the national ethos of a unifying identity. All this is in addition to an already delimited capacity to construct a (European) political community founded on a social infrastructure under one constitution and a common civil sentiment. Withal the importance may be attributable to the economic aspects; there is no reason to assume that the disintegrating power of identity politics is diminished. On the contrary, it is likely that as the economic situation deteriorates, the disintegration will be exacerbated. In the European social mosaic as a wide spectrum of shades and sub-shades of national, linguistic, cultural and religious variances, the European Union is a political community without *demos*. In a social reality within which not even a 'Belgic identity' is possible (Flemish or Walloon), it would be hard to imagine the formation of a 'European identity'. In this sense, the 'United States of Europe' may only be imagined as a vision that its realization is still not in sight. However, as against this pessimistic view, it can be argued that precisely because of this 'vortex of identities', other integrating foundations are needed as a social common denominator in order to reconstruct a peaceful prosperous Europe. Then it would be reasonable to search for another identity infrastructure which is more 'universal' – a European identity (inherently ultra-national) created around a civil, constitutional, political commonwealth that will be able to accommodate a wide range of cultural communities and lifeworld variations. Presumably, the feasibility of such a commonwealth may only be a limited circle of member states (at least initially) whose common denominator is a basic consent for accepting a liberal constitutional, federative political order obliging all member states to uphold a clear separation of church and state. In any case, it would be too early to deal with the consequences of the Brexit outcome when the practical implications of Britain's withdrawal are still uncertain. The potential possibility of Scotland and/or Northern Ireland, for example, to join the EU independently along with the possibility of other countries withdrawing would signal the need for a redefinition of the EU as a political entity.

¹⁵ See Harvie Ferguson, "The Sublime and the Subliminal: Modern Identities and the Aesthetics of Combat," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21: 3 (June 2004): 1–33. See also Sen, *Identity and Violence*, chap. 1, "The Violence of Illusion," 1–17.

¹⁶ Described by Foucault as "enigmatic and troubling." See the chapter, "What Is Enlightenment?" in Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, trans. L. Hochroth and C. Porter (London: MIT Press, 1997), 105. I have discussed this topic in Matan Oram, *Modernity and Crisis in the Thought of Michel Foucault – the Totality of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2016), 66–75. In the Introduction to *The New Constellation*, Richard Bernstein has juxtaposed the definitional obscurity of the term 'postmodernism' with the problematic of the concept of 'modernity'. These two conceptions carry a wide range of meanings within and between disciplines, such that a comprehensive definition is unlikely to be formulated. Therefore, Bernstein suggests 'modern/postmodern *stimmung*' that reflects a shifting, instability and volatility in the meaning hinting at 'mood', 'atmosphere' or 'fashion'. See Richard Bernstein, *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), especially see the Introduction and specifically, 31–56, 230–292.

characterized as undermining the rational foundations of the Enlightenment (the 'meta narrative' of the Enlightenment), and (b) 'neo-conservatism'¹⁷ (deceptively named 'neo-liberalism') may be considered as opposing the socio-political aspects of the liberal ethos whose spirit is the Enlightenment as expressed in the modern liberal democratic state. That is, to the extent that the institutionalized expression 'open society'¹⁸ is the liberal democratic polity, the tension (re)produced by (and in between) these two trends of negation is easily channeled against 'liberalism' as representing the Enlightenment's values. More specifically, aiming at the origins of the 'crisis of modern liberalism', the developmental history of the two (a) and (b) trends directs our consideration toward a preliminary premise, according to which the modern perception of rationality is in itself a foundational element of a particular life-world. This premise assigns the interrelating thematic structure – 'political liberalism',

¹⁷ In my view 'neo-conservatism' is the correct term for what is already more commonly known as 'neo-liberalism'. The latter is a misleading term of something that is not only very distant from liberalism, but often reflects the very opposite. It is meant to suggest 'liberalism' but clearly it is not. Similarly, the phrase 'free market economy' (which is hardly 'free' in reality as a so-called source of maximum benefit to the maximum number of people) is a misrepresentation purporting to reflect the true meaning of 'liberalism'. Moreover, it blurs the demarcation lines between economics as a merely one-dimensional sphere, however important, of human societal life and liberalism itself in order to create a new concept of 'liberalism' or some other consciousness of the concept. Its essential meaning and content has become impoverished as a morally rigid sociopolitical outlook that should be expressed by a free and well-ordered society of free and equal individuals who are first and foremost rights bearers. Economic freedom in a free market economy is a *condicio sine qua non* for a free society; however, it is not what generates political liberalism but rather its result. Anyway, the economic sphere is one aspect of the modern state which, like religion, its separation from political power is one of the hallmarks of a modern democracy. This differentiating separation based on an autonomous civil society is an outcome of a specific perception of the morality of freedom as the foundation of liberal society. Moreover, seeing in economics the 'essence of everything' is not only a distorted perception of 'liberalism' but may easily be transformed into a tyranny of poverty through a 'Darwinist' concept of the social which reproduces poverty and in any case violates the basic rights, the freedom and the entitlement to equal opportunity for the many. This is inherently opposed to liberalism in all respects, although political and economic liberalism nourish each other. For a general discussion of this issue, see Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics – How Washington Made the Rich Richer and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010). See also Robert H. Frank, *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and the Common Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). Two works are particularly notable in this regard: Luigi Zingales, *A Capitalism for the People: Recapturing the Lost Genius of American Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), especially 149–182, and the comprehensive work of Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), particularly 471–570. On this topic, among other things, Stephan Holmes has penetratingly criticized communitarianism as an anti-liberal view, which in some cases is tangential to the extreme Right. For his specific criticism of McIntyre's *After Virtue* and a general critical discussion of communitarianism, see Stephan Holmes, *The Anatomy of Anti-Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 88–121, 176–189.

¹⁸ Leszek Kolakowsky in his *Modernity on Endless Trial* points to the weaknesses of liberalism and thus reevaluates the concept of the 'open society' by examining some of its qualities. Illuminating the differences between Bergson's concept of 'open society' and Popper's as a point of departure, Kolakowsky explains why the sharp contrasting of a 'closed' and an 'open' society seems to him highly questionable. In so doing, among other things, he highlights how in the traditional liberal world view the "...freedom of economic activity is a necessary, though certainly insufficient, condition of political freedom..." (p.166). However, as against this he penetratingly claims that in an unlimited form of freedom in economic affairs, thereby creating monopolies, precisely this economic freedom is 'self-destructive' as a factor for political liberalism. See Leszek Kolakowsky, *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1990), 162–174.

‘culture’, ‘identity’ –in the broader contextual framework of the philosophical discourse on modernity. As the starting point of political liberalism involves the interrelations between ‘liberalism’ and ‘rationalism’ whereas ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ are at the essence of the ‘life world’, we are required to refer to the issues regarding the interrelations between ‘rationality’ and ‘life-world’.

IV

Critical thought and phenomenological discourse

The philosophical premises for deliberating the question engendering the interrelations between ‘rationality’ and ‘life world’ are to be found in Husserl’s phenomenology. His differentiating explanation of two types of ‘knowledge-consciousness’– ‘the world as known to science’ vs. ‘the world in which we live’– is a point of departure for a basic consideration of the concept of life world. Our ability *to know* is accompanied by our pre-understanding of the life world, which is rooted in our familiarity with the world “known to us.” Unintentionally obtained, this particular ‘knowledge’ takes place in a variety of life situations in which no (scientific) proof is required; a sense of belonging to a particular place or specific culture is of this kind of ‘knowledge’. That is, since ‘collective consciousness’ is intertwined with shared knowledge which constructs a common understanding of the world, the pattern of structuralized knowledge is a decisive factor in the formation of the (particular) life world through which our comprehension of the world is determined.

Husserl’s specific discernment of the ‘crisis of Western civilization’ is pre-positioned by his critical insights concerning the foundations of the Western culture of science. In his (unfinished) last work, *The Crisis of European Sciences*, he presented a wide-ranging analysis concerning the connection between the modern perception of science and the Western crisis. Modernity is characterized as a totality of a worldview founded on positive sciences.

The exclusiveness with which the total world view of modern man, in the second half of the nineteenth century, let itself be determined by the positive sciences and be blinded by the “prosperity” they produced, meant an indifferent turning-away from the questions which are decisive for a genuine humanity. Merely fact-minded sciences make merely fact-minded people.¹⁹

Husserl’s perception of the crisis of modernity extends from the impact of the European sciences on Western culture through the interrelations between its perception of ‘knowledge’ and the moral value

¹⁹Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970 [1936]), 5–6. This critical outlook regarding the domination of the positive sciences recalls Vico’s (*The New Science* (1744), which may be viewed as a search for ‘universal principles’ to be applied to the study of the human-social world (the ‘world of nations’). The affinity of *The Crisis of European Sciences* to *The New Science* may be found in Husserl’s perception of crisis (since the beginning of the new era ushered in by Galileo and Descartes) that can be seen in Vico’s search for those ‘universal principles.’ Husserl’s ambition to articulate philosophy as ‘the self-fulfillment of reason’ corresponds with Vico’s search for a universal validation of a comprehensive system of statements and arguments in this context of the study of man and society. It might be said that both Vico and Husserl aimed at this challenge independently of any axiomatic point of departure which is contradistinctive to the Hobbesian instructive theory or as later taught by Rousseau.

sphere. His thought, perhaps like Vico in his time, reflects a searching for an analytical understanding of these interrelations by illuminating this perception of knowledge in the wider context of the constituent community. However, going beyond Vico's basic insights, Husserl, positioned as he was in the 'modern' world, identifies a crisis – the crisis of modernity whose roots can be traced back to a life-world formed by the totality of the positive sciences yielding “the total world view of modern man.” In his analysis of this crisis, Husserl composed the meaning of phenomenology within which, by the comprehensive movement of *epoché*,²⁰ he focuses on the concept of 'life-world', which is a keynote for the study of man and society by comprehending its perception of 'knowledge' as 'self-knowledge'.

Reflecting a deep-seated sense of alienation toward 'genuine humanity', the crisis of European science signifies the new existential condition of modern man. This perception of crisis stems from Husserl's criticism of the notion of 'science,' whose positivist-scientism is but only one facet of the multi-dimensional human intellect. Therefore, 'human knowledge,' above and beyond any 'objectified knowledge' is a state of human consciousness. Hence, 'knowledge' in an unmediated sense as 'self-knowledge' is at the heart of 'identity'. It may be expressed, among other things, as one's 'self-determination' within which a sense of reality is formed. A 'consciousness of (immediate) knowledge' which presented through Husserl's premises in the specific context of 'rationality' and 'life-world', may serve as the philosophical groundwork for dealing with this theme of identity in the wider socio-political context. Since 'collective consciousness' is intertwined with shared knowledge through which a 'common understanding of the world' is generatively constructed, one should not rule out that 'collective identity' is merely a manipulation by which a certain community is imagined.

V

Between consent and rift – the growing of political extremism

Extreme nationalist, right-wing politics and ideology –by the 'political community' should organically be identical with specific 'community of culture/life world' – is a heuristic example here. Moreover, as it is particularly evident in the history of colonialism and decolonization, identity may be 'imposed from above' for the purpose of outlining inclusion/exclusion boundaries whose significance for entitlements and rights is unquestionable. Along these analytical lines, Ruanda's bloody history of the Tutsi genocide may be narrated as a disastrous episode of 'imposed-from-above' identities whose 'ethnic' rivalry is one of the worse manifestations of colonized identities. Exclusion (usually associated with segregation and discrimination) would not be imaginable without a presumed determination of 'the other(s)'. In so far as it is a social reality of liberal-democracy for

²⁰Husserl's usage of this Greek term denotes the classic meaning of 'skepticism' whose etymological roots lie in the Greek word *skepsis*, meaning 'investigation' or 'inquiry'. The term *epoché* (suspension, restraint) was re-assigned by Husserl, basing himself on the constructive meaning of 'skepticism' to denote an essential element in the formative process of knowledge. Thus, all phenomena should be examined as a substance brought into our consciousness, thereby 'we know'. This perception of 'knowing' is contradistinctive to the world 'known' to science. “Are science and its methods not like a machine, reliable in accomplishing obviously very useful things, a machine everyone can learn to operate correctly without in the least understanding the inner possibility and necessity of this sort of accomplishment? But was geometry, was science, capable of being designed in advance, like a machine, without an understanding which was in a similar sense complete – scientific? Does this not lead to a *regressus in infinitum*?” (Husserl, *Crisis*, 52).

immigrants, the adoption of a 'new home civic identity' may consciously or unconsciously have a socializing means against this 'otherness' which is often imposed on them as a 'new identity'.

The dominance of parochial features, where a great deal of overlap between 'community' and 'political community'²¹ is involved, tends to extend the political significance of particular identities. In other words, where 'civic nationhood' has not established itself as an integrating universal social-civic sentiment – as against parochial or sectorial loyalties of whatever kind – the likelihood is that it will become a fertile breeding ground for an illiberal political culture. Where more dimensions of 'community' (as an expression of particular identities) and 'political community' (the sphere of universality) are intertwined, the growth of 'civic culture'²² reflecting 'democratic stability' would be hard to expect. Presumably, such a type of social reality might not be the ideal social platform for the growth of 'political liberalism'. At any rate, it is clearly evident that the essence of liberal democracy should probably be reflected as a political culture in both the public sphere and its political structure, that is, it should foster a free flow of opinions and views, a plurality of identities and free political parties and associations.

However, once the minimal and basic consent that is necessary for the very existence of these basic characteristics is at risk, then the strengthening of anti-liberal trends paves the way for the creation of a closed society. A minimal consent is necessary as a preliminary condition for the existence of a free and open society whose openness to a wide range of identities is taken for granted. This condition forms a basic entente controlling the manner in which disagreements will take place – how they will be expressed in the public sphere, in the parliament, in political institutions, among individuals and communities, and how social disputes are settled. Will the institutions and political processes really function as mediators and moderating factors? Will there be a broad social base that supports democratic rules?

²¹ In this context of political community, Turkey, Russia, China, Egypt, the Baltic Republics and in fact the vast majority of the new states that were born after the collapse of the Soviet Union, would be mentioned here under the typology of 'illiberal democracies'. Dealing with the issue of immigration, Jürgen Habermas has clarified this twofold ('community'/'political community') meaning of liberal-democratic citizenship: "The identity of the political community, which also must not be violated by immigration, depends primarily on the legal principles anchored in the *political culture* and not on an *ethical-cultural* form of life as a whole. It follows that one must expect only that immigrants willingly engage in the political culture of their new home, without necessarily abandoning the cultural life of their country of origin. The *political acculturation* demanded of them does not extend to the whole of their socialization." See Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 513–514; Idem, *Faktizität und Geltung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1992).

²² Dealing with the interrelations between 'civic culture' and 'democratic stability' or 'stability of democracies', in their pioneering work (see below), Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba were the first to use this term 'civic culture' or 'political civic culture' in the conceptual context of modern democracy. Analyzing the meaning of this term as a balancing mixture of three types of political culture ('parochial', 'subject' and 'participant') they have clarified the significance of equilibrium between 'consent' and 'rift' as a basic element in a theoretically generalized model of 'civic culture' to characterize the political culture which is the most appropriate for the stability of democratic political structure. Questioning the 'rational activity model', their explication regarding political culture and political behavior in the specific context of the stability of democracies takes into account a wider range of aspects (beyond membership in political associations and activities) such as one's national sentiment and the emotional aspects of political participation. See Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (London: Sage Publications, 1989 [Princeton UP, 1963]), and in particular see 1–44.

<http://jrdsjournal.wixsite.com/humanities-cultural>

In the space between 'consent' and 'rift', a very serious problem might take shape when inter-identity disputes translate themselves into a debate about the source of authority and legitimacy. Once public controversies (mainly about values) cross the border beyond their designated terrain (the public sphere or the legitimate political institutions and in particular the parliament) and penetrate into the constituent elements of democratic sovereignty, a deep crisis can develop that threatens the very existence of a democratic regime. Such a threat on democracy and political stability may emerge in all its severity whenever religious identity is politically ascendant and in particular where no clear constitutional separation between church and state is established. In exploiting the weakness of democracy to defend liberal values, religious leadership, for example, can easily take the opportunity to undermine the rule of law by legitimizing religious norms that violate civil rights while delegitimizing sovereign, democratic authority, or even by challenging the exclusiveness of the legislative branch. This may occur against the background of debate on the nature of the public sphere, individual rights or any particular expression of identity, either collective or individual, when the arguments raised are in the name of the liberal principle of the 'freedom of religion'. That is, conflicting identities are often conflicting values, and politicization blurs the differentiation between 'community' specifying a particular identity and 'political community' even as civic nationhood denotes the wide circle of the *demos* through which sovereignty is embodied. Ancient Athenian democracy (which is by no means considered 'democracy' in its modern meaning and by modern standards) could not tolerate any waning of the monolithic identity which Socrates threatened by his overt heresy against the gods and by presenting alternatives in the moral value sphere.

The sovereignty of rights bearing people as a constituent principle of political liberalism is established in the equality of human beings and their civil rights. This wide circle of equality includes all individuals as member citizens in the political community, which in the modern world of the social is formed of a wide range of communities and identities. In other words, the 'political community' is the embodiment of universality as a general civil identity which makes the side-by-side existence of different and diverse identities and particular communities of identity. A clear differentiation between these two spheres of 'community' and 'political community's necessary as a condition for political liberalism and democratic stability.

Plurality of identities and life worlds is one of the main characteristics of the modern world of the social. So the differentiation between these two biospheres of consciousness (community vs. political community), or alternatively, between the 'universal' and the 'particular', is the point of departure in dealing with the 'vortex of identities', which is a prominent challenge for contemporary political liberalism. That is, if we understand 'cultural pluralism' through Rawls' perception of 'political liberalism',²³ this pluralism is embodied in a liberal 'political community' within which the rights of all are equally defended through a constitutional delimitation of the influence of a particular culture in the universal realm of civil and human rights. At issue is a constitutional regulation to prevent particular cultural identities and inter-cultural areas of friction and conflict to become a potential factor that makes the political an arena of a culture war instead of the scene of public interest and

²³ See Rawls, "Reply to Habermas", 134. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 4–46, 89–129. In 'Lecture I' in this work, Rawls explains "...that we must distinguish between how a political conception is presented and its being part of, or as derivable from, such a comprehensive doctrine. I assume all citizens to affirm a comprehensive doctrine to which the political conception they accept is in some way related. But a distinguishing feature of a political conception is that it is presented as freestanding and expounded apart from, or without reference to, any such wider background" (p. 12). See also his discourse regarding "reasonable pluralism" in Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 11–30, 54–58.

integration. Politically articulated (which mostly manipulated), the struggle for cultural recognition may easily become a struggle for cultural mastery. In other words, this is the dynamism of colonized identities which bear the potentials of socio-political segregation and exclusion.

VI

Decolonization of identity

‘Colonized identity’ may be described as the power to create a domain of otherness – to ‘define’ individuals or an entire human group as ‘different’. Thus, the colonizer not only deprives the colonized of her or his elementary right of self-determination but, through an imposed-from-above identity, an infrastructure for segregation and discrimination is formed when, contradistinctively, a sphere of privilege is delineated. Depriving somebody of his or her mother tongue and life world, shaming anybody’s culture, lifestyle, values, traditions, customs, religion, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origins –all are certainly a fatal blow to any persons human dignity, which of course is already a violation of the equality of the individual human’s value. Both ancient and modern history abound with examples of social division based on any categorizing means –be it ethnicity, social class, color or racialization. Hellenes and barbarians, *metoikoi* and citizens, *patricians* and *plebeians*, slaves and freemen, believers and heretics or the built-in identity of socio-structural differentiating of the feudal class system, the Indian casts or any dynastic attribution; all are mentioned as human social differentiations which create identities or perhaps are an outcome of such imposed identities, whether as a consequence of political manipulation or as an object for this kind of manipulation.

The disastrous history of the twentieth century’s crimes against humanity may be narrated through this context of identities. The physical extermination of millions of Jews by the Nazis in the Holocaust was preceded by an inclusive (anti-Semitic) determination and a venomous racist propaganda to exclude them as citizens and deprive them of basic human rights. The Armenian²⁴ holocaust was the genocide committed by the crumbling Ottoman Empire during the World War I against a distinct human group determined by the (Muslim) Turks as *giabur* – a derogatory name for heretics who in this case were Christians. The differentiation of the identities Tutsi and Hutu in Ruanda was the creation of a colonial rule that formed two human groups whose members are mostly more similar than different and that built a wall of hostility between them that aroused such powerful animosity that it led to genocide.

One cannot ignore the ‘natural’ human tendency to want to form a ‘self-identity’ by belonging to a larger group by virtue of whatever elements of common identity, whether it centers around a certain life world or culture or derives from the desire to be ‘distinctive’. Additionally, there is the affinity to want to belong to a certain ‘majority’ or ‘minority’²⁵ through lifestyle, fashion, social status, profession, traditions, values, culture, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, tastes, self-fulfillment or membership in a voluntary association. Contradistinctively, ‘colonized identity’ is about reducing this wide diversity into one– by labeling and tagging – so that

²⁴ See Mark Levene, *The Crisis of Genocide, Vol. I: Devastation. The European Rimlands 1912–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 95–171.

²⁵ In the social reality of modern life it might be said that any given individual may identify her or himself as belonging at the same time to both a ‘majority’ and a ‘minority’ at different levels of social interactions and attitudes.

'interpreting 'one's self and tagging her or him according to the community of a particular identity which the colonizer alleges the individual belongs to. It may be especially conspicuous in terms of an ethnic and/or religious affiliation.

Considering the liberal democratic social reality as our context of discussion, colonized identities may serve as a benchmark for substantive democracy. In this context of reality, which characterized by multiple life worlds and cultures, the politics of identities may be reflected in the overall depiction of political representation. Picturing a certain social fabric through cultural representations, this description of 'colonized identity/ies' serves to conceptualize imagined 'colonies' of culture and identity whose impact is an outcome of political manipulation. The modern liberal democratic reality is characterized by a diversity of identities whose mosaic of variance forms the social pattern. However, it is likely that the tendency of this heterogeneity will become transformed into a political problematic and will grow stronger when the state transforms itself into an actor in the game of identities.

Along with the principles of political liberal is masthey fit into 'civic culture', the legitimacy of the democratic political system depends largely on its ability to maintain 'democratic stability'. That is, the 'state', even if reduced to the so-called 'minimal state', as a moral entity committed to the welfare of its citizens, it should have an obligation of being an integrating body; certainly not the other way around. In our context of identities and cultural plurality, the state should refrain from taking a stand in the extensive and varied mosaic of cultures and identities. This neutrality is as essential as is the foundation for an autonomous civil society, which is a basic condition for the very existence of a well-ordered democratic state. Moreover, the state's only affinity to this dimension of identities and cultures is that it is expected to encourage intercultural dialog as a balancing factor towards the prevention of a future intercultural war.

The politicization of identities, similar to a state's interfaith involvement (not to mention the adoption of a particular religion), may motivate a dynamism leading from conflict to violence and finally to open hostilities. Let us say that the absence of a common consciousness of civil nationhood is a substrate for the growth of 'local patriotisms' and parochial-sectorial loyalties, thus the political community will begin to look more like a fragmentation of particular groups of identities, cultures and divisive loyalties. In other words, a civil sentiment of universality – which is a basic condition necessary for the emergence of the *demos* – is an infrastructure for the people's embodiment of sovereignty which articulates every member-citizen as a carrier of rights. However, it is clear that in the modern world of the social and particularly in modern mass democracy, the *demos* is not monolithic. Consequently, I suggest that this problematic, described here as a 'vortex of identities', should be considered along the political-philosophical lines of political liberalism.

VII

Political liberalism, plurality of cultures and identities

The 'politics of identities' may be described as a specific type of political behavior motivated by a particular common identity through which a human group expresses its aspiration to accomplish rights as an identified collective. However, this should be distinguished from the 'politicization of identities' by which the identity of the individual (or the entire human group) is drawn from the person's selfhood while in fact it is 'imposed from above' by those who hold the power of the

‘political center’²⁶ or social power centers. As a constituent of the self, ‘my identity’ should not be determined by anybody but me – neither a personal nor certainly not an institutional entity. Therefore, to ‘define’ some body is to alienate her or him from themselves, thus categorizing the person or persons as an ‘other ness’ and imposing on them a fabricated identity. Depriving people of their self hood negates the fundamental right of self-determination, whether an individual or a collective; therefore, as Charles Taylor well describes,

Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, which is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the background understanding to the modern ideal of authenticity, and to the goals of self-fulfillment and self-realization in which the ideal is usually couched.

Moreover –

We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us.²⁷

Bearing moral implications, the question of ‘identity’ features the close relationship between ‘critical thought’ and ‘political philosophy’. As an aspect of human consciousness whose transfusion into the social experiences is of a significant impact on the political community, ‘identity’ is sort of a mediating prism between the individual and the socio-political. John Rawls has examined the significance of these interrelations by illuminating the affinity between ‘reasonable pluralism’ – as sourced in ‘public reason’²⁸ – and the legitimacy of the liberal

²⁶ In his *Paradoxes of Democracy*, S. N. Eisenstadt has illuminatingly analyzed the tensions inherent in the political processes, structures and institutions of democratic regimes while inclusively taking in account the fragility of democracy along the lines of the ‘political program of modernity’. Dealing with the political process which strengthens the stability of the democratic regime in modern societies, he points to the conditions that contribute to its fragility. The openness of the modern political process, says Eisenstadt, gives rise to deep changes in the sociopolitical power centers that become more responsive to the demands of protest movements. This responsiveness and openness contribute to a redefinition of the political. See Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *Paradoxes of Democracy* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 42–64.

²⁷ Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism – A Critical Reader*, ed. David Th. Goldberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 78–79. In some similarity to Rousseau’s differentiated consciousness of *amour proper* and *amour de soi*, Taylor describes the discourse of recognition through two differentiated levels: the ‘intimate sphere’ and the ‘public sphere’. In the intimate sphere the formation of identity and the self is connected to the place one occupies in interactions (dialogue or struggle) with others. In the modern public sphere it is where the politics of equal recognition is ‘playing a bigger role’; it is the politics of universalism and equal rights and entitlements for all citizens (ibid. 81–82).

²⁸ See John Rawls, “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” in idem, *The Law of Peoples*, 131–138. “The idea of public reason specifies at the deepest level the basic moral and political values that are to determine a constitutional democratic government’s relation to its citizens and their relation to one another [...] Those who reject constitutional democracy with its criterion of reciprocity will of course reject the very idea of public reason. For them the political relation may be that of friend or foe, to those of a particular religious or secular community or <http://jrdsjournal.wixsite.com/humanities-cultural>

democratic political realm. In all of the above, Rawls assumes that “Since there is no reasonable religious, philosophical, or moral doctrine affirmed by all citizens, the conception of justice affirmed in a well-ordered democratic society must be a conception limited to what I shall call ‘the domain of the political’ and its values.”²⁹ Then, it is clear that the liberal conception of democratic citizenship is that the state should not reflect an affinity towards any particular identity. More specifically, Rawls’ conception of ‘public reason’, which is the foundation of ‘reasonable pluralism’, stipulates a democratic society: “The unity of a reasonable Society of Peoples does not require religious unity. The Law of Peoples provides a content of public reason for the Society of Peoples parallel to the principles of justice in a democratic society.”³⁰

The constitutional guarantee of human rights and full civil equality derives the life world’s freedom for all diverse (religious, ethnic or cultural) communities, thus necessitating the establishment of a political community that is a tapestry of identities. However, the question is to what extent ‘the state’ is able to, or should at all, be involved in managing heterogeneous identities. Is the ‘political apparatus’ indeed the appropriate framework in this regard? Or, in relation to the topic of rights, is it proper that the state should have a say in this regard? It may be assumed that the answer to this question and others consequently arising, should be looked for in the essential meaning of a well ordered democratic citizenry which demarcates the authority of the state along corresponding lines of constitutionally secured human and civil rights.

The historical processes that led to the modern state and then to the democratic constitutional nation-state (as we know it) have provided the infrastructure for the democratic principles of lawful government, subject to the laws that primarily protect liberties. Namely, both individual and public spheres of life a resecured by political power. However, the conception of the nation-state can comprise the political paradigm for national liberation and democratization, the same as it can lead to nationalism and totalitarianism. This internal contradiction that is inherent in the simultaneous birth of natural rights and the nation-state in the French Revolution denotes the intrinsic tension between the ‘universal’ and the ‘particular’, which has transfigured into the modern liberal democracy.

At this point, we are required to make a historical-philosophical distinction that will allow us to separate the modern national consciousness from the premodern. In his breakthrough perception, Giambattista Vico laid the foundations for this distinction.³¹ Since the world of nations (governments, states, social institutions and political frameworks) is a human creation, it is a fully knowable world, so we can trace the developmental lines in the formation, progress,

those who are not; or it may be a relentless struggle to win the world for the whole truth. Political liberalism does not engage those who think this way” (p. 132).

²⁹ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 38. Rawls has further discussed the issue of ‘public reason’ in the aforementioned essay, n. 28 above, and see idem, *The Law of Peoples*, 131–180.

³⁰ Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 18.

³¹ See Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, unabridged translation of the third edition with the addition of ‘Practice of the New Science’, trans. T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fish (London: Cornell University Press, 1968 [1744]). According to Vico all nations, ‘barbarians’ and ‘cultivated’, though they evolved separately, independently and at distance from one another, they shared three basic practices that are customary among humans, though with different practical expressions in every nation, these being religion, marriage and death. For Vico, the sacred prohibitions of the various religions determined emergence of the various nations, which form a common denominator throughout all humanity (*The New Science*, articles 163, 332, 346).

stabilization, decline and demise of nations. Therefore, the history of the term 'nation' reflects the generative process of 'nation-state' formation.

Nations and tribes that have not yet united politically – *gens* or *populis* – are different from the Roman usage of *natio* which often denotes 'barbaric', 'pagans' or 'wild peoples'. In its classical meaning the term 'nation' indicated communities that formed on a basis of geography, a common language, customs, traditions and culture but had yet not unified under an entity that could be referred to as a political unit. The medieval meaning of 'nation' is obviously pre-modern and as explained by Vico,³² it was rooted in or built around the development of the local dialects of spoken languages. The concept of 'nation' starts to take shape only at the dawn of the modern era. From the mid-eighteenth century onward, as Habermas³³ has noted, the two meanings of 'nation' – a 'community of descent' (from a common ancestry) and the 'people of the state' – started to become interwoven with each other.

The French Revolution defined the 'nation' as the source of sovereignty; since then, every nation bears the right of 'self-determination' with all its political implications. Moreover, the "intentional democratic community (*Willensgemeinschaft*)"³⁴ gradually replaces of the ethnic influence. The French Revolution and the Enlightenment are acknowledged as having had a decisive role in ideating the premodern meaning of 'nation' and then 'redefining' it as a form constituting civil identity associated under a sovereign political entity. From here on out at issue is a 'nation of citizens', not a 'community of descent'. In a historical retrospection, it is a transformative process from an ethnically, nationally anchored collective identity toward the idea of 'civil nationhood'. Consequently, the 'collective identity' embodied in the political community emerges around the common existence of free and equal individuals, member-citizens, who take part in the common experience of defining and realizing rights. This is the context in which Habermas suggests his interpretation of 'constitutional patriotism'.³⁵

³² See *The New Science*, articles 921–931. The affinity between language-related features (phonetic, grammatical and etymological in particular) and the emergence of cultures, nations and political entities were observations pioneered and illuminated by Vico. In his linguistic inquiries, Vico denotes a three-stage linguistic development from 'mental language' through 'heroic language' to the 'articulated language', whose mark is imprinted in the consolidation of institutions, customs and laws.

³³ See Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 495.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 494.

³⁵ This concept of 'constitutional patriotism' (which Habermas is not the first to use as it corresponds to Sternberg's earlier notion of 'friendship toward the state') is noted in Habermas' comprehensive work *Between Facts and Norms* in the broader context of citizenship and the transformation of identity in a cultural pluralism. Referring to liberal political culture he says that it "...is only the common denominator for *constitutional* patriotism (*Verfassungspatriotismus*) that heightens an awareness of both the diversity and the integrity of the different forms of life coexisting in a multicultural society (p. 500). Habermas also distinguishes the American variant of 'constitutional patriotism' from the European. The difference is that European constitutional patriotism may not be detached from its affinity to nationally specific interpretations of those universal constitutional principles (p. 507). However, this is not sufficiently discussed by Habermas, so the concept itself remains rather vague. According to Todd Hedrick, "...it seems that Habermasian constitutional patriotism represents just a more abstract, less ethically substantial form of collective identity, whereby loyalty is tied not to a particular national ethnic culture but to a set of abstract principles as they are concretely embodied in the nation's constitution." See Todd Hedrick, *Rawls and Habermas: Reason, Pluralism, and the Claims of Political Philosophy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 175–180 (quotation from p.175).

<http://jrdsjournal.wixsite.com/humanities-cultural>

In his general criticism of the ‘republican model of citizenship’, Habermas rejects the approach of the individual’s status based on how a state’s citizen should be defined in the context of a political culture which is connected to a specific ‘tradition’ or ‘culture’ with a particular meaning. This may explain the communitarian insistence that citizens should ‘patriotically’ identify with their form of life, which is something that Habermas criticizes in Charles Taylor’s conception of citizenship and identity.³⁶ Moreover, this ‘patriotic commitment’ completely negates the rational universal principles of liberalism and it would hardly be a source for cohesion and consent, especially in a multicultural social reality. Equally, Taylor’s approach is seen by Habermas as violating the independency of the universal principles of constitutional democracy by its attempt to entwine these principles with cultural particularism. At this point we should broach the rational universal principles of political liberalism.

As Habermas discusses this issue from the perspective of a ‘rational-communicative’ search for post-traditional factors in social integration and cohesion, John Rawls presents a philosophical-political analysis of the foundational principles of political liberalism. Moreover, basing himself³⁷ on the perceptual basis of the ‘liberal idea of justice’ and the meaning of ‘public reason’ or the general concept of ‘well-ordered society’, Rawls extended the discourse on identity and citizenship far beyond the aspects of the sociological-political and the formal constitutional. This discourse, as developed by Rawls, clarifies the essential connection between the problematic of identity and citizenship as a significant facet of the philosophical principles of political liberalism.

Reasserting political philosophy as ‘realistically utopian’,³⁸ Rawls extends its signification by aiming at ‘the future of our society’. He aims for this horizon of hope through his distinctive view of a ‘realistic utopia’ conception of a social world founded on a reasonably just constitutional democracy, by which the foundational principles of political liberalism, peace and justice will be achieved. Following Rousseau’s opening thought in the *Social Contract*,³⁹ this horizon is seen as a moral-normative guide, by which Rawls wishes to propose a rational-liberal response to the problematic of conflicting values in a multicultural social reality. Dealing with the “political conception of the person,”⁴⁰ Rawls stresses the importance of being devoid of any identity for the actual and active meaning of one’s citizenship. Anybody’s life as a free person should not be affected by her or his identity preferences or inborn traits. As a heuristic example in this context, Rawls introduces the possibility in which citizens convert from one religion to another, or abandon religion altogether, while (of course) there is no question that in terms of

³⁶ Habermas, “Between Facts and Norms,” 499.

³⁷ Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 29–35.

³⁸ By the idea of ‘realistic utopia’ as founded on the premises already laid down in *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*, Rawls aims for a basic reconciliation of the political praxis and a given variety of variances of sociopolitical conditions. His proposal embraces a philosophical extension of a dialog between different peoples and cultures under a constitutional democracy based on the values and principles of justice and political liberalism: “What would a reasonably just constitutional democracy be like under reasonably favorable historical conditions that are possible given the laws and tendencies of society?” (Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 11). Rawls explains this idea in the *Introduction* to his *The Law of Peoples*, 3–10, and in *idem*, Part I, 11–23.

³⁹ “My purpose is to consider if, in political society, there can be any legitimate and sure principle of government, taking men as they are and laws as they might be. In this inquiry I shall try always to bring together what right permits with what interest prescribes so that justice and utility are in no way divided.” Rawls quoting Rousseau in *The Law of Peoples*, 13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 29–35, and particularly 30.

their status as citizens – as free and equal individuals – they are the same persons as before in all aspects of rights, entitlements and duties.

Considering the idea of ‘justice as fairness’ as a form of ‘political liberalism’, Rawls perceives political institutionalization as a combined formation of the ‘moral’ and the ‘instrumental-functional’. Hence, the insight is accordingly derived that ‘political society’ is a means to bear out the perception of good, either for individuals or collectivities.⁴¹ In this context I would like to mention Rawls’ important distinction between ‘peoples’⁴² and ‘states’. In his view a ‘people’⁴³ is a conscious entity whose ‘moral character’ or ‘moral nature’ is a hypostasizing pattern which makes a human group distinct in the all-inclusive sphere of the Society of Peoples (see fn. 43 below). For Rawls the moral constituent is inherent in the essence of the concept of ‘people’ which in the context of the Society of Peoples may be ‘reasonably just’ or ‘decent’.⁴⁴ The ‘state’, in contrast, encompasses political institutions, the constitution and the policies conveyed in relation to other states. Therefore, states

“...are often seen as rational, anxiously concerned with their power— their capacity (military, economic, diplomatic) to influence other states [...] How far states differ from peoples rests on how rationality, the concern with power, and a state’s basic interests are filled in.”⁴⁵

Then, both dimensions of the ‘moral’ and the ‘political’ are merged in the idea of ‘well-ordered peoples’.⁴⁶ This idea, which has a strong affinity to that of ‘well-ordered society’, guides our discussion toward the specific problematic of identities in a liberal democratic polity.

⁴¹ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 201.

⁴² In this context of ‘people’, I find it of constructive value to mention Martin Buber’s perception of ‘nation’: “A people becomes a nation to the degree that it grows aware that its existence differs from that of other peoples [...] So the term ‘nation’ signifies the unit ‘people’, from the point of view of conscious and active difference. Historically speaking, this consciousness is usually the result of some inner – social or political – transformation, through which the people comes to realize its own peculiar structure and actions, and sets them off from the actions of others. It is decisive activity and suffering, especially in an age of migrations and land conquests, that produces a *people*. A *nation* is produced when its acquired status undergoes a decisive inner change which is accepted as such in the people’s self-consciousness. To give an example: the great shift which made ancient Rome a republic made it a nation, too.” See Martin Buber, “Nationalism” in *A Land of Two Peoples – Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, ed. with commentary, Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983 [1921]), 51.

⁴³ Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 25–30.

⁴⁴ Using the term ‘Society of Peoples’ for all peoples whose relationship to other peoples is based on the principles and ideals of the ‘Law of Peoples’ (derived from Lat. *ius gentium*), the term ‘decent’ for Rawls describes... “nonliberal societies whose basic institutions meet certain specified conditions of political right and justice (including the right of citizens to play a substantial role, say through associations and groups, in making political decisions) and lead their citizens to honor a reasonably just law for the Society of Peoples.” (Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, 3, fn. 2).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁶ As Rawls notes (*ibid.*, 4, fn. 6) the term “well-ordered...” comes from Jean Bodin’s idea of *Republique bien ordonnee*. Moreover, Rawls’ conception of ‘well-ordered people’ is founded on the idea of ‘well-ordered society’, which is essentially rooted in the principles of ‘justice as fairness’ already laid down in his *A Theory of Justice*. See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 3–53. As Rawls develops this concept in his *Political Liberalism*, a ‘well-ordered society’ is conceived as a fair system of cooperation (over time) <http://jrdsjournal.wixsite.com/humanities-cultural>

'Well-ordered peoples' who, according to Rawls, are worthy of the membership in the Society of Peoples ('liberal' peoples and 'decent' peoples) are by definition part of a reasonably just Society of Peoples in that its members follow the reasonably just Law of Peoples. Then, taking Rawls' idea of a 'well-ordered democratic society' as our scope of reference, the plurality of identities and cultures determines the inner-logically inherent meaning of 'political liberalism'. Rawls' distinction between 'peoples' and 'states' is philosophically and analytically based on the differentiation between 'community' and 'political community'. That is, in the modern (democratic) world of the social particularly, the *demos*, which is the 'political community', is a mosaic of identities that is made up of communities of culture and diverse life-worlds.

Conclusion

Social existence may be characterized by a two-dimensional structure of identity: the level of personal and communal identity⁴⁷ and that of 'political community' within which one's 'public identity' is formed. Considering the conception of modern liberal democracy as our scope of reference, this dualism reflects two spheres of consciousness affinities, interrelations and action, which through both ultimately; the basic human nature of a social being is fulfilled as an autonomous personality in the role of citizen. However, naturally, the interrelations between these two spheres without a constitutionally consented arrangement can become a source of social tension and friction. In our age of globalization and accelerated dynamism of social change, the difficult questionarises: what are or what should be the liberal-democratic means to cope with this problematic? If all the above so far manages to delineate the possible directions in the search for answers, it may be sufficient to point the way forward.

within which citizens are free and equal, while the 'public political conception of justice' is what effectively regulates this society. See Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 35–40.

⁴⁷ Rawls has specifically discussed the connection between the 'political conception of justice' and 'identity' in the essay – "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical". See John Rawls, *Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freedman (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 404–406 in particular.

<http://jrdsjournal.wixsite.com/humanities-cultural>

References

1. Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. London: Sage Publications, 1989(1963).
2. Asad, Talal. "Religion, Nation-State, Secularism." In *Nation and Religion – Perspectives on Europe and Asia*. Edited by Peter van der Veer and Harmut Lehman. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999.
3. Avineri, Shlomo and Avner De Shalit, eds. *Communitarianism and Individualism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
4. Benhabib, Seyla. *The Rights of Others – Aliens, Residents and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
5. Berlin, Isaiah. *Against the Current*. London: Hogarth Press, 1979.
6. Bernstein, Richard. *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.
7. Bertrand, Romain. "Islam and Politics in Europe and in Asia: Comparative Reflections." *Asia Europe Journal* 1:3 (2003): 323–331.
8. Breuilly, John. *Nationalism and the State*. Manchester University Press, 1993.
9. Brewer, Daniel. *The Enlightenment Past – Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
10. Brown, John R. "Does French Islam Have Borders? Dilemmas of Domestication in a Global Religious Field." *American Anthropologist* 106:1 (March 2004): 43–55.
11. Buber, Martin. "Nationalism." In *A Land of Two Peoples – Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*. Edited with commentary by Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, chap. 4. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
12. Dahrendorf, Ralf. *The Modern Social Conflict – the Politics of Liberty*. London: Transaction Publishers, 2008.
13. Dutceac, Anamaria. "Globalization and Ethnic Conflict: Beyond the Liberal – Nationalist Distinction." *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 3:2 (January 2004): 20–39.
14. Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated from the French by R. Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963. Idem, *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris: Maspero, 1961.
15. Foucault, Michel. *The Politics of Truth*. Translated by L. Hochroth and C. Porter. London: MIT Press, 1997.
16. Fox, Jonathan. *A World Survey of Religion and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
17. Ferguson, Harvie. "The Sublime and the Subliminal: Modern Identities and the Aesthetics of Combat." *Theory, Culture and Society* 21:3 (June 2004): 1–33.
18. Frank, Robert H. *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and the Common Good*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
19. Habermas, Jürgen. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996. Idem, *Faktizität und Geltung*. Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt a.M., 1992.
20. _____, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism." *The Journal of Philosophy* 92:3 (March 1995): 109–131.
21. _____, "Learning by Disaster? A Diagnostic Look Back on the Short 20th Century." Translated by H. Beister. *Constellations* 5:3 (1998): 307–320.

22. Hacker, Jacob S. and Paul Pierson. *Winner-Take-All Politics – How Washington Made the Rich Richer and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.
23. Hedrick, Todd. *Rawls and Habermas: Reason, Pluralism, and the Claims of Political Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
24. Huntington, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.
25. Heath, Joseph. “Culture: Choice or Circumstance?” *Constellations* 5:2 (June 1998): 183–200.
26. Held, David. *Models of Democracy*, Oxford: Polity Press, 2006.
27. Holmes, Stephan. *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
28. Honneth, Axel. *The Fragmented World of the Social – Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
29. Husserl, Edmund. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Translated by D. Carr. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970 (1936).
30. Kedourie, Eli. *Nationalism*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1960.
31. Kimlycka, Will. *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
32. _____, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
33. Kolakowsky, Leszek. *Modernity on Endless Trial*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
34. Laurence, Jonathan. *The Emancipation of Europe’s Muslims – the State’s Role in Minority Integration*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
35. Levene, Mark. *The Crisis of Genocide, Vol. I: Devastation. The European Rimlands 1912–1938*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
36. Lewis, Pericles. *Modernism, Nationalism and the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
37. Lugg, Catherin. “One Nation under God? Religion and the Politics of Education in a Post-9/11 America.” *Educational Policy* 18:1 (January and March 2004): 169–187.
38. Mason, Andrew. *Living Together as Equals – The Demands of Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
39. Nozick, Robert. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books, 1974.
40. Özkirimli, Umut. *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.
41. Oram, Matan. *Modernity and Crisis in the Thought of Michel Foucault – the Totality of Reason*. New York and London: Routledge, 2016.
42. Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. Translated by A. Goldhammer. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014.
43. Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
44. _____, “Reply to Habermas.” *Journal of Philosophy* 92:3 (March 1995): 132–180.
45. _____, *The Law of Peoples*. London: Harvard University Press, 1999.
46. _____, *Collected Papers*. Edited by Samuel Freedman. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999.

47. Ryan, Alan. *The Making of Modern Liberalism*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
48. Sartori, Giovanni. *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*. New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1987.
49. Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.
50. Shadid, W. and P.S. Van Koningsveld. "Muslim Dress in Europe: Debates on the Headscarf." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16:1 (2005): 35–61.
51. Smith, Anthony. *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.
52. Sternhell, Zeev, Mario Sznajder and Maya Ashéri. *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
53. Taylor, Charles. "Cross Purposes: The Liberal Communitarian Debate." In *Liberalism and Moral Life*. Edited by Nancy L. Rosenblum. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
54. _____, "The Politics of Recognition." In *Multiculturalism – A Critical Reader*. Edited by David Th. Goldberg. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
55. _____, *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: The Blacknap Press, 2007.
56. Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ wa. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. New York: James Currey, 2005 (1981).
57. Vico, Giambattista. *The New Science*. Unabridged translation of the third edition with the addition of "Practice of the New Science." Translated by T. G. Bergin and M. H. Fish. London: Cornell University Press, 1968 (1744).
58. Walzer, Michael. "Communitarian Critique of Liberalism." *Political Theory* 18:1 (February 1990): 6–23.
59. Wolff, Stefan. *Ethnic Conflict: A Global Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
60. Zingales, Luigi. *A Capitalism for the People: Recapturing the Lost Genius of American Prosperity*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.