LIVING TOGETHER WITH OUR DIFFERENT BELONGINGS: PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS, ESSENTIALIST OBSTACLES AND INTERSECTIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des

Doktorgrades der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)

vorgelegt

der Philosophischen Fakultät I

der Martin-Luther-Universität

Halle-Wittenberg,

von Herr Özgür Uçar

geboren am 27.03.1983 in Bursa (Türkei)

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Tag der Verteidigung: 13.07.2022

to Gözde,
because of her never-ending patience and
her faith throughout the writing of this
dissertation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

dearest friends Dr. İlker Şatıroğu, Dr. Onur Kır, Dr. Parvin Zare and Caner Can, who made my days in Halle unforgettable. We all shared an invaluable and memorable time in Halle (Saale). Each of my friends mentioned here gave me very valuable moments during the writing process of the thesis. I am grateful to each of them for the companionship and solidarity they have given me. Also, I thank Helin Defne who is my dear little friend in Çanakkale for giving me the joy in the past couple of years.

I would like to present my sincere thankfulness to my deceased father Ali Uçar for his great role in my life.

Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and give my thankfulness to my best friend and my spouse Dr. Gözde Kıral Uçar for her companionship in all aspects of my life. Her presence and unending support gave me strength when I thought that this work would never end or that I could no longer continue. Without her love, patience, endless support and encouragement, I am sure that I would never have completed this study. In gratitude for her love, I dedicate this work to her.

<div style="text-align:right">Çanakkale, September 2021</div>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Living Together with Our Different Belongings:

Philosophical Roots, Essentialist Obstacles and Intersectional Alternatives

Today, the globe is at a crossroads, with uncertainty and disaster becoming the norm. Climate disaster, widespread poverty, intense conflicts and wars, rapid population growth[1], migration, and finally the worldwide pandemic are just a few of the issues that humanity is dealing with. In addition to these fundamental issues, the rise of populism, extremism, and radicalism in the social and political spheres has made humanity's ambition to realize centuries-old ideals of justice, equality, and freedom seem like an unachievable dream. The persistent instability and unpredictability reveal a deep sense of despair about the present and the future that lies ahead of us. One of the primary elements in the pessimistic general picture is the rapid transition[2] in social structure from the end of the eighteenth century up to the present. Individuals' and societies' lives, worlds of meaning, and sense of belonging have radically changed as a result of this process; people's responses to questions like where they live (e.g., cities instead of villages), how they are fed, by whom and how they are governed (e.g., republic instead of monarchy), and how they define themselves have begun to change dramatically (Hobsbawm, 2010). Practical philosophy and interdisciplinary social sciences, which are centered on the issues of quick and extreme change,

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[1] According to UN figures, the world population has risen from around 1 billion 200 years ago to over 7.5 billion today, and it is anticipated to rise to over 11 billion by the end of the century (Nations, 2017).

[2] It is assumed that our homo sapiens predecessors, who completed their anatomical evolution between 100 thousand and 300 thousand years ago, had access to functions equivalent to those of today only 50 thousand years ago (White et al., 2003). With the significant developments that have occurred in the last 200 years, our species has achieved the current technological and scientific level.

attempt to comprehend, explain, and solve these issues. One of the primary challenges of practical philosophy and social sciences is the visibility of distinct belongings of people and groups, as well as their claims, in the continually changing structure of social life. The probability for human groups to live together in a non-conflict or low-conflict situation- acknowledging their differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, gender, ability, and stage in the life cycle, has been one of the most serious topics of the last century. The goal of this study, which focuses on this topic, is to examine the philosophical inquiries that are the source of proposed approaches to the coexistence of people with their various belongings, to reveal the structure of the belief system that shapes these inquiries, and to discuss the perspectives of specific solutions.

The philosophical background of the essentialist belief system that gave them their form, as well as the new categories of belonging that emerged in consequence of very rapid and deep-rooted transpositions, displacements, and dislocations experienced by individuals and societies, spread over a wide area. This study, which examines the effects of approaches to the organization of belonging categories in the social field and of essentialism in the sense of believing that certain types of things have a basic and fixed essence that determines what they are in general, focuses on the essentialist belief system that has been influential since the early philosophers of Western philosophy. With its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components, the idea of belonging, which is at the heart of the study, has been viewed as a multi-layered structure with critical roles for human beings. It is possible to examine the notion of belonging, which has various beneficial social and individual functions, as one of the important sources of many conflicts and oppositions that arise in the social and political aspects. The coexisting behaviors of groups of individuals with diverse affinities, in particular, stand out as a major cause of social conflict and antagonism. One of the fundamental agenda items of contemporary political philosophy and social sciences is how individuals and groups with various belongings will live together. Departing from the hypothesis that essentialism as a belief system has a negative effect on the basis of the coexistence of individuals with different belongings resulting in conflict, this research delves into how and why

essentialism works, the multifaceted, relational, and intersectional structure of belongings that essentialism ignores, and critical and alternative approaches to comprehending the concept of belonging. To this end, the factors that are effective in the organization of belongings in the social aspect were determined and the philosophical roots of these factors were examined first and foremost. The emergence of the modern subject, the tension between the universalist-particularist approaches and the negative effects of the essentialist belief system have been identified as the main interrelated factors that lead to the problematic situation regarding the concept of belonging. The intellectual origins, extent, and importance of the concept of belonging for human beings were examined after this review. The relationship between the politics of belonging and the essentialist belief system is unveiled from this perspective, and the necessity and potential of a sort of political understanding separate from this relationship is examined. Finally, the concept of dialogical transversal politics as an alternative to essentialist politics of belonging was assessed as part of this discussion.

Under the influence of the essentialist belief system, the politics of belonging have frequently devolved into practices of exclusion, subordination, and, at best, assimilation, especially in modern times. It is possible to detect an intense relationship between the uniform and homogenizing structure of the dominant sense of belonging, which became effective in the nineteenth century and shapes the social and political spheres today, drawing on the *I-Other* dichotomy, and the functioning mechanisms of the essentialist belief system. Essentialism is efficient for human beings in forming cooperative and solidarity networks with others who share similar characteristics, forming diverse collectivities with them, and developing particular belongings towards these collectivities, thereby establishing the social and political sphere. Thus, essentialism as a belief system utilized by people striving to make sense of the world and define their own existence can be discussed in terms of its harmful and good implications.

Essentialism is a belief system that defines our social categories and forms of belonging by providing a background to our beliefs. Essentialism, as Anne Phillips (2010) points out, is an

effective resource in identifying belongings, building identities, and forming collectivities since it is a part of the human condition in terms of simplifying complex information so that it can be comprehended. Essentialism actively operates when people see a certain feature of others similar-identical to their own features, define themselves and the people in that group based on this common ground, and adopt a different attitude and behavior towards individuals and groups that they think do not have this essentialized feature. Thus, essentialism serves as an essential foundation for the creation of differences as a distinct entity and a collectivity. Essentialism's negative impact on politics of belonging can be seen in the hierarchical ranking of diverse belongings, the placement of a particular belonging as the most valued and 'primary' belongings, and the stabilization and naturalization of a particular position of belonging. Therefore of this process, the essentialist belief system that leads to intolerance, dogmatism, animosity, and prejudice impacts ways of comprehending belonging, living together practices, and hence political space, as per Janicki (2002). It is plausible to claim that the construction of essentialist politics of belonging leads to a singular, fixed, static, homogeneous, uniform, dominant, and reducing the notion of belonging from this perspective. This condition has resulted in the difficulties of different and coexistence being fixed at an insoluble and problematic position, since it causes many sources of discrimination and conflict, such as nationalism and racism, gender inequality, homophobia, and xenophobia. Essentialism's long-term impact has created the impression that these issues are persistent and unsolvable. However, these issues are not insoluble; analyzing the conceptual network that underpins the issues and revealing the network's connections is a good first step. Such a philosophical study will allow for a perspective that tries to not only comprehend but also eliminate problems. From this perspective, determining the impact of essentialism on people's perceptions of belonging and revealing the multidimensional and intersectional structure of belonging can provide a valuable foundation and opportunity to positively transform people's practices of living together with their differences. This potential should include, on the one hand, a perspective that is not stuck in the self-other dichotomy, that is not hierarchical and dominant,

and that does not overlook diversity, and, on the other hand, a perspective that recognizes social equity as a goal. This study intends to discuss the potential of a politics free from the harmful effects of essentialism by examining the notion of belonging and the politics of belonging, which is constructed in an essentialist form, with reference to its origins in the history of philosophy. This study, which focuses on the issues of diversity and living together, intends to have an inclusive discourse on the problems' foundations, the consequences linked with these foundations, and the offered ways to solve these issues.

1. 1. Methodology and Structure of the Study

Some basic problems found in the context of differences and living together, numerous discourses created by these problems, and some options put forward to overcome these problems are discussed within the study's structural integrity and limitations. This research is focused on an interdisciplinary and critical academic literature review with practical philosophy at its core, with the goal of understanding and explaining some of the influential thinking patterns that affect social life. This survey of the literature uses a variety of resources, ranging from primary resources to historical analyses, official papers to semi-official documents. This research, which employs a comparative literature review as a research method and is based on a critical examination of the related philosophical literature, is divided into three sections.

The theoretical basis and philosophical sources of the challenge of coexistence with diversity are highlighted in the first part of the study. The hypothesis that the formation of the modern subject idea was a critical turning point in the process of theorizing the aforementioned problem was presented, and the evolution of the modern subject idea throughout philosophy's history was thoroughly explored. This study aims to determine the changing positions of human beings in theoretical discussions by tracing the approaches that have been the root of the modern subject idea throughout the history of Western philosophy. One of the main objectives of this research has been to better understand humans' relationship with themselves, other living things,

and the world, as well as to examine the shifting positions of humans in pursuit of meaning during the modern age. Another topic of study in this section is the universalist and particularist methods to explain and regulate the change in human beings' position in the socio-political sphere as a result of the process of subjectivation. The goal of this study is to discover theoretical reflections on the divergence and commonality between these two approaches, which focus on the problem of organizing observable distinctions in the socio-political field emerged in consequence of modern subject understanding. The goal of this discussion, which takes place in the context of the impact of historical events on universalist and particularist methods, as well as philosophers' contributions, is to ascertain what type of impact essentialism has on both approaches. Essentially, this section of the research focuses on the philosophical roots of the modern subject concept, which allows us to uncover the dominant understandings of belonging and difference in our time, as well as the prominent universalist-particularist approaches to the organization of belongings in the social sphere. The purpose of this section's philosophical investigation and literature review is to discuss the effects of essentialism on the development of the modern subject idea, which is the source of the problem of coexistence with differences, as well as the universalist-particularist approaches proposed to solve this problem.

The intellectual roots of the essentialist belief system, which generates our current sense of belonging, its working mechanisms in the social and political realm, and the positive and negative effects of essentialism are explored in the second part of the study. Various prominent approaches to essentialism have been determined and the domain of essentialism has been presented, based on the idea that essentialism is the dominating trend in a long line ranging from the early philosophers of the history of philosophy to modern philosophers. In this way, it is aimed to build a framework of the basic philosophical arguments that essentialism draws on in shaping the political and cultural minds of humanity. Aside from the philosophical foundations of essentialism, studies in psychology, sociology, and political science were also utilized in this discussion. Essentialism has been regarded as a structure that has expanded to practically every

aspect of social life, as well as a scientific and intellectual activity. The relationship between diversity, coexistence problems, and essentialism, as well as how essentialism influences these problems, are discussed in this context. Hence, the philosophical origins and development of essentialism are investigated in this chapter, as well as the processes through which it is effective in social and political life. The structure of essentialism, which provides the background to our attitudes and behaviors and shapes our belonging categories, is analyzed in this section, which investigates the background and general lines of the effort to organize people and groups of people within the framework of an idea of a static, fixed, singular, homogeneous, and resistant to change.

The following section includes a discussion in which a critical examination of our age's understanding of diversity in the context of the concept of belonging and the politics of belonging is included. The concept of belonging, which is a multifaceted term that comprises membership, identity, space, and relationality, has been examined as a product of human existence's endeavor to understand and question itself, as well as to find its place in the world. Despite its multifaceted nature, essentialism and many types of political belonging can turn the concept of belonging into an instrument of dominance and a suppressive force for differences. On the basis of these assumptions, the notion of belonging, its breadth, and the different layers that make up belongings are examined in depth in this part. The concept of nationalism is then examined in order to illustrate the various features of essentialism that are effective at various degrees of belonging. This study tries to show how nationalism interacts with essentialism and what methods essentialism employs in the process of creating a sense of belonging. The hypothesis that the essentialist effect on nationalism can be determined in its discursive structure has been investigated from this perspective. Finally, the assumption is presented that using a dialogical transversal politics approach can disclose the multidimensionality and intersectionality of the concept of belonging. The potential of the idea of transversal politics, which is concerned with finding solutions to problems of difference and coexistence, as an approach that avoids essentialism, does not ignore human positionalities and aims to go beyond *identity* and *citizenship*-centered searches in favor of

a multidimensional sense of belonging has been explored. In this last discussion chapter, the results are reviewed and discussed in consideration of the findings in the literature. The limitations of the study and directions for future research are presented. Finally, the dissertation is concluded with a general conclusion.

This study, which focuses on issues of diversity and coexistence, has thus attempted to achieve its goal of presenting an inclusive philosophical discussion on the sources of the problem, its emergent forms and effects, and, eventually, remedy options. It is the goal of this research, which tries to benefit as much as possible from the perspectives of philosophy and interdisciplinary social science, to discuss a problem that has significant reflections in the social and political field, from various perspectives and the perspective of political philosophy. Of course, as with the entire philosophical challenge, each question presented in this study has prompted new problems, and each attempt at conceptual clarification has necessitated a broader explanation. Despite its limits, this research seeks to provide as broad a foundation as possible for some of the most complex and extensive issues that people and groups of people face. This study intends to contribute to current political debates by claiming to be an example of looking at urgent concerns of the era from the standpoint of practical philosophy and an interdisciplinary approach. This study, which is focused on the philosophical formation, is based on a comparison and critical evaluation of philosophical literature in general, with the goal of contributing to the theoretical groundwork that may provide a basis for future research.

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF THE HUMAN SUBJECT'S TRANSFORMED POSITION

Philosophy is the result of an attempt to define and interpret the world, society, and, most crucially, human existence. Human beings in the position of questioning and being questioned are at the heart of this attempt to make meaning. Every philosopher has considered and debated the position of humans in the world in some fashion. Through philosophical activity as an endeavor to define and position himself, it is possible to discern diverse approaches to human's position in the world, society, and other living things. Philosophers' perspectives vary depending on their epistemological, ontological, political, and ethical orientations, as well as historical, geographical, and scientific circumstances. On the one hand, the various orientations and perspectives that have evolved try to explain man's modified position in philosophical inquiry, and on the other, to arrange this transformation according to specific principles. One of the most difficult challenges encountered in the effort to explain and arrange the situation in question has been defining people's relationships with other people and determining their position with respect to others who are different from them. A significant driver of the argument over humanity's position has been the process that began with humanity's separation from nature and other beings in nature and proceeded with them establishing themselves differently from other people in the social realm. The problem of how people interact with those who are different from them, or how to live together with those who are different, has become more challenging than it has ever been in history. In this regard, the major goal of this part is to address the breaking points that have proven to be effective in solving the problem of people coexisting with others, as well as to examine the key solutions

proposed for this problem. To this end, the hypothesis that the emergence of the modern subject idea is an important turning point that determines the relationship that people establish with those who are different from themselves is argued, and then it is examined in the context of its background in history of philosophy. Therefore, the goal of this study is to expose the theoretical change of human beings and the effects of this transformation by focusing on modern knowledge and, its byproduct, the modern subject thought. The process that led to the formation of the modern subject, as well as the concept of the modern subject itself, are regarded as one of the most important sources of the ideas and practices about the human condition. Therefore, it has been stated that understanding the modern period's alteration of the subject will give an important foundation for analyzing the challenge of coexisting with other human belongings, which is at the heart of many of our age's concerns. Thus, the evolution of the notion of the modern subject, as well as ideas put forward in the pre-modern and modern periods of the history of philosophy regarding human positions, are covered in this section. It is expected that by doing so, the continuity and diffusion of the philosophical perspective that underpins the concept of the modern subject will be shown.

Two basic theoretical methods, particularistic and universalistic approaches, which aim to regulate the problem of living together of human beings with varied belongings, are concentrated on in the other sub-section of this chapter. These two prominent methods to defining belonging reflect two fundamental patterns. Certain aspects of this duality, as well as their objections to one another, are discussed in this section of the research. The study in this section tries to determine the relationship between these turning points and approaches and essentialism based on comparative literature analysis of various thoughts and orientations put forward in philosophy. As Fuss puts it, essentialism "is classically defined as a belief in true essence—that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing" (Fuss, 2013, p. 2). The goal of the following section of the research is to highlight the impact of the concept of essentialism, which will be investigated in depth, particularly in terms of its social and political

aspects, in molding man's changing position in the sphere of thinking. Accordingly, based on the reflections on essentialism in the philosophical literature, the assumption that essentialism has a very fundamental effect on the theories and approaches that have been put forward to determine the position of human beings has been attempted to be analyzed.

Human beings' changing positions in philosophy reflect their process of subjectivation. Thus, the history of western philosophy can be understood as the history of the human being becoming a subject. The subject has frequently been employed as a focal point in philosophical debates, providing meaning to the founding agent and the structure as a whole. Looking closely at the conceptual background of the 'subject', the Ancient Greek concept of 'hypokeímenon' (ὑποκείμενον) (cf. the Latin *subjectum*), which is a term in metaphysics, literally means the "underlying thing", of which conceptual context meaning foundation, basis, 'that which lies beneath' comes to the fore (Davies & Gregersen, 2014, p. 53). While the concept of the subject is conceived as founder, subordinate, and being exposed to, it also corresponds to the concepts of a person living in a country, citizenry, and nationality (Oxford-Learner's-Dictionaries, 2019). The concept of the subject, by definition, carries both these meanings; it includes both being exposed to and being active, that is, two opposite situations. In terms of these opposing definitions, according to Aristotle: "Whenever one thing is predicated of another as of a subject, all things said of what is predicated will be said of the subject also" (Aristotle, 1991, 1b10-1b15). The subject is the fundamental premise that sets itself apart from the rest. The term *hypokeimenon-subject* was first used by Aristotle and then in the Middle Ages to mean *substance*. From a psychological and epistemological standpoint, however, it was not until the 17th century that the notion took on its current meaning, literally 'me' and 'self'. In this regard, subjects, in the modern sense, find themselves in front of the not-I, the object, and place themselves against it; or they are those who approach an object with the goal of learning and acting. While, from a psychological perspective, it means 'me' the bearer of psychological experiences, such as thinking, designing, knowing, listening, and seeking; in epistemology, 'subject' refers to a being that tends to know but is not

itself a subject of knowledge. In the logic-linguistic framework, the subject is used as the bearer of the predicate. It is possible to see how the meanings of the terms subject and object have shifted dramatically over time, particularly during the modern period. Accordingly, the subject, together with this period, gained the meaning of being a foundation for perception, design, impression, thought and senses, as well as 'me' or 'intellect' as something that thinks, feels, and is conscious of something. The object, on the other hand, is the entity different from the subject, that is, outside the individual with intellect. Throughout the history of philosophy, the changing position of the subjects' relationship with beings other than themselves, or, in other words, the transformation of human beings' relationship with those who are different from themselves, can be tracked. In this context, philosophical research into the history of human subjectivation will provide an important foundation for explaining the changing position of humans in the social field, as well as their relationships with people who are not identical to them.

In general, the concepts put up about the position of human beings in the world can be divided into three distinct periods. Despite a few unique voices, the subject of epistemological activity was understood to be the Logos/God-Subject during the first of these periods, which began in the early days of philosophy and persisted throughout the Middle Ages. Despite the fact that this period's human cognition has a variety of conceptual lines, it is typically in a passive, defined position before the Logos or God. Human beings are understood in this way as creatures who attempt to grasp the qualities of the Logos or God and obtain a share of these qualities. The statement *cogito ergo sum*, which arose as an objection to the concept of the subject in the first period, characterizes the second period: This period can be characterized by placing the human-subject idea at the center of the world of thought, which is presumed to have begun with the renaissance historically. This period can be seen as a sea change in the theoretical development of a new subject understanding. The third period can be regarded in conjunction with the postmodern understanding, which examines the modern project and its effects in general. Various attempts to deconstruct the philosophical and political center in which the human is positioned as a subject in

modern thinking, as well as to re-evaluate the institutions and notions of the modern construction process, may be traced back to this period. The radical criticism of the modern period has been reflected in statements such as "All that is solid melts into air" (Berman, 2010) in this period, which some philosophers have labeled as postmodern (see, for example, Lyotard, 2006; Toynbee, 1999).

The human beings' constructing process of their own position is a never-ending and interactive process. While the origins of the process of subjectivation, or the placing of humans in a central position, may be traced throughout the history of philosophy, the modern age can be designated as the turning point of this process. From this perspective, the goal of this section is to trace the modern conception of the subject across philosophy's history, as well as to identify the philosophical views that are the genesis of the concept and the manifestations of essentialism in these thoughts. The process from the ancient Greek world of thought to medieval Christian philosophy, from Descartes to Kant's philosophy, has been focused in line with this attempt. How some prominent philosophers conceived 'human' and their contributions to the process of human subjectivation in this period were examined. The modern understanding of the subject is based on a variety of theoretical approaches to the network of relationships that humans have with themselves, the planet they live on, and other humans. Today, it would be useful to reveal the processes and approaches that prepared this important change in the history of philosophy, the process of human subjectivation, and the transformation of the human subject in philosophical discussions, in order to analyze this network of relations, which is a problematic and conflicting area in many respects. Despite the fact that the process of humans' subjectivation and construction of their own position spans the whole history of philosophy, due to the study's limitations and breadth, all philosophers or currents that contributed to the contemporary notion of the subject could not be included in the discussion. In the limitation, it was attempted to pay attention to the impact of philosophers' innovations in the history of philosophy, as well as the gravity of the break they generated. However, recognizing the eclectic nature of the history of philosophy and the limits

of the study, an attempt has been made to include a substantial amount of literature in the discussion.

2.1. The Position of Human Beings in the History of Philosophy

In the history of philosophy, the search for the foundations of human life and the position of the human subject has played a significant role. Throughout the history of thought, this search has produced an eclectic set of ideas that influence and compete with one another. For foundations and beginnings, Ancient Greece, like many other subjects, is a good place to start[3].

2.1.1. Human Subject in Ancient Greece

Although there was no concept of subject in Ancient Greece in the manner that we understand it now, it is possible to identify fundamental ideas about what it meant to be a human being at the time. It can be said that the great philosophers of the ancient age provided some premises for the current understanding of man through their views. Many scholars argued whether modernity is a fundamental break from previous eras (Kumar, 2009) or whether it is a continuation of the previous approaches. The origins of modern understanding can be found in Ancient times and the Middle Ages, based on the assumption that no period of history is independent of the prior eras (Pessin, 2002; Stark, 2006).

The works of Homer and Hesiod, who lived in the eighth century BC, contain the oldest examples of the ancient Greeks' human understanding. These poets, who were greatly influenced by Greek mythology, lifted the veil between the world of humans and the Gods, allowing an unknown world into the realm of thinking. Drawing on the Gods, Homer taught us stories about humans, known and unknown realms. The fact that we can still find something about humanity

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[3] It is possible to discuss the products of serious thought activity in the domains of astronomy, medicine, and mathematics in the pre-Ancient Greek period, notably in Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as a very significant thought tradition in Iran, Egypt, but especially in China and India. Wisdom, philosophy, and science in Greece can be considered a pleasant and somewhat coincidental continuation of an intellectual activity that began practically simultaneously in all of these geographies, enabled by historical circumstances.

and ourselves in Homer's mythological stories after hundreds of years is evidence of this. These works, on the other hand, are part of the mythology phase of human cognition; humans are beings who acquire lessons from mythological stories, are participants in Gods' games, and can only be included in the game through the actions of some heroes. Mythology[4], as a byproduct of the effort to explain and understand the world in which humans live, is "the early religious and scientific experiences of mankind" (Spence, 2014, p. 11). It is possible to argue the existence of the endeavor to understand and explain the nature lived in, but not the idea of a *knowing subject*, in the thought maps of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, the *Nature Philosophers* who led the transition period from mythology to philosophy: They attempted to define and describe the fundamental building component, *arkhe*, which is the *first principle* or *first element* of everything in the world they live in. From this perspective, the early philosophers had no intention of defining the knowing subject or testing the accuracy of the knowledge they gathered[5].

Greek philosophers notably Parmenides, Heraclitus, Democritus, and Anaxagoras addressed and debated the fundamental concerns of knowledge's possibility, source, and limits. Traditional metaphysics' interpretation of Parmenides' statement, which represents a turning point in the history of philosophy with his concept of being, highlights the idea that thinking and being are one and the same: "(...) because the same thing is there for thinking and for being"[6] (Parmenides & Gallop, 1991, p. 57, Frag. 3).

In contrast to Heraclitus, who saw change and plurality as the real truth, Parmenides described reality with the notion of *One*, which is eternal, unchanging, and continuous. According to the traditional metaphysics interpretation of Parmenides, his philosophy is one of the first

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[4] When mythological examples from various cultures are analyzed, it is clear that the sacred image is primarily portrayed with animistic aspects. Animism is "the first recognized stage in man's mental experience", according to Spence (2014, p. 22). It might be argued that the fact that Ancient Greece was the pinnacle of the mythological universe's shift from animism to anthropomorphism (Spence, 2014) and that the philosophy had rooted in this geography are inextricably linked.

[5] Of course, people' efforts to comprehend the world around them might be viewed as a reflexive and indirect attempt to comprehend themselves. On the other hand, it should be noted that the subject of natural philosophers' questions is not the human being, but rather the cosmos beyond the human.

[6] ...to gar auto noein estin te kai einai'/... τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι

examples of a hierarchical and thus essentialist idea that prioritizes thought. The position of thinking beings, above all else, is expressed as the actual reality with this viewpoint, which sees being and thinking as identical[7]. With his approach to the Thinking-Being relationship, Parmenides' philosophy, according to this traditional metaphysical understanding, is one of the origins of the subject-object distinction of the modern age. With his theories on the subject-object distinction, Democritus can be considered one of the pioneers of the idea of the subject and essentialist philosophical thought. According to him, atoms (*atomos* or *atomon*), which are invisible particles of matter with qualities, are those who truly exist, that is, the essence of existence. Primary characteristics, such as form, size, weight, hardness, and motion, are derived directly from the properties of atoms, while secondary qualities, such as color, taste, heat, and cold, give the impression that they exist due to the way atoms affect human sense organs (Denkel, et al. 1985). Democritus argued that various aspects of objects (taste, smell, sound, etc.) differ from person to person, and even depending on the presence of the same person in different circumstances, and he offered a unique perspective on the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity in perceptions[8]. Democritus' distinction between the (primary) qualities that he believes truly belong to things, such as size and shape, and the features (secondary qualities) that are a matter of consensus, such as color, established a unique foundation for Plato and Aristotle's epistemology, as well as John Locke's "distinction of primary and secondary qualities" in the modern period (Hamlyn, 1967, p. 9).

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[7] This approach, which reduces thinking to a subject's activity, is found in Kant and the German Idealists, according to Heidegger, but Parmenides did not suggest it. The insufficient-erroneous meaning of the word *noein* utilized by Parmenides by traditional metaphysics has a part in this erroneous reading, according to Heidegger, who identifies this approach as an erroneous reading of Parmenides. According to Heidegger, this erroneous reading, which dates back to late antiquity, is the result of a hierarchical understanding that sees thinking and existence as inseparable and thus elevates the thinking subject above all else, and this approach peaked with German Idealism (Heidegger, Fried, & Polt, 2014).

[8] This theory predates, in a sense, the idea that the appearances in this world are deceptive, which Plato articulated in his Theaitetus dialogue, albeit for a different reason. Democritus and his tutor Leucippos had a major influence on subsequent philosophers, particularly Protagoras, Gorgias, and Pyrrhonism, with their approach.

The work of the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle advanced the epistemological interest that began with the Pre-Socratic philosophers. Philosophers' interests shifted from Natural Philosophy to problems concerning human life after the break in Ancient Greek thought in the middle of the fifth century BC. During this period, philosophers who had incorporated their social environment and personal lives into philosophical concerns began to focus on ethical and political issues. With this period, alongside the existing human endeavor to learn and explain nature and the cosmos, an interest in the practical problems of human existence began. In their research, the Sophists[9] began to discuss not only the philosophy of nature, which they had inherited from the pre-Socratic philosophers but also practical issues related to human beings and turned to human perceptions, ethical and political interests in the context of the proposition of *man as the measure of all things*, which Plato (1992) attributes to Protagoras.

Despite the fact that the Sophists presented an irreconcilable set of philosophical ideas, they were influential in bringing human existence and its practical concerns to the forefront of philosophical discussion. Sophists provided the earliest examples that established human and subjectivity as one of philosophy's major issues (Denkel, 2003). Therefore, the notion that a human being is not just an existent but also a subject capable of knowing began to take hold. They began to question how much of what we believed we knew about nature was real and objective, and how much was the result of human thinking, in response to the questions of the early philosophers. While questioning human's efficiency as a subject in the process of acquiring knowledge, Sophists argued that there cannot be a universal standard of truth, thus the measure of 'true' is the perceiving subject itself (Hamlyn, 1967). This relativist approach highlighted that information and truth should be evaluated according to the individual's perceptions, and their social, cultural, and

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[9] The Sophists, born out of a desire to promote the *intellectual* interests of the newly developing merchant elite in the democratic city-state of Athens, took on the task of spokesperson and theoretical counselor for the new owners of political power in Athens. The sophists were a key figure in the development of a new philosophy around the middle of the fifth century. The philosophy they established represents the point of view of the merchants who seized power in the new democratic society, consisting mostly of a complex of ideas that can be summarized in terms like empiricism, phenomenalism, individualism, relativism, and humanism.

personal tendencies, based on the absence of absolute and permanent truth. With the distinction they made between *physis* and *nomos* and the importance they gave to skepticism and critical questioning, the Sophists[10] both served for philosophy to gain a new character and provided an important ground for the great system philosophers Socrates-Plato and Aristotle through the discussions they pioneered. The Sophists, who raised one of the first arguments against the idea of an unchanging reality and a fixed essence, adopted a skeptical attitude toward the reality of essences while contributing to the human-subject idea by conceiving the human as a major problem with their relativist approach.

In the history of philosophy, which is the sum of the objections of the philosophers to each other, the primary challenge to the Sophists came from Socrates-Plato. This objection has a significant consequence in that it extended the orientation that began with the Sophists to a larger circle and systematized the debate, particularly with Plato's philosophy. According to Socrates, one of the first thinkers to wonder what makes a person human, the *psyche* (ψυχή) or soul is identical to a person's intellectual abilities, and a person's true self is what distinguishes them as human. According to Socrates; who sought answers to questions including *What is the purpose of humans? Which type of activity is unique to humans?* and *What functions is a human capable of fulfilling that other beings cannot?*; the type of activity unique to humans, in other words, *arete,* must be related to the human mind. Because only humans have the power to possess and employ their minds, which sets them apart from other animal species. Socrates thought he lived in a moment of crisis in which traditional morality had been destroyed and replaced with a new market or success morality. One of the main causes of the crisis, he claims, was that people viewed themselves as intelligent and virtuous because of their unfounded knowledge of morals and virtues (C. C. W. Taylor, 2003). The Athenians' unfounded claims to wisdom had to be disproved, and

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[10] The word *physis* can be translated as nature, and the word *nomos* can be translated as law, custom, or convention (Christopher C. W. Taylor, 2007). The physis-nomos divide can be traced back to pre-Socratic naturalists such as Democritus and Heraclitus, and was further developed by the Sophists. While pre-Socratic philosophers explored the physis-nomos discussion, in other words truth–appearance or truth–convention (belief) issue in the context of physical theory, it was brought to the moral and political realm by Sophists (Barney, 2012).

their false belief in moral knowledge had to be disproved, according to Socrates. Socrates' method served an important purpose: it served as a wake-up call to show people their ignorance and that they were on the right path. This effort established the theoretical and practical framework for his philosophy toward humanity. Together with the Sophists he opposed, Socrates, who placed the stated aim at the core of his life and philosophy, can be seen as an important agent in the attempt to bring the ethical and political issues of humanity to the center of philosophy.

Humans have a crucial role in Plato's philosophy, as one of the first representatives of systematic philosophy and a disciple of the Socratic tradition. In The Republic dialogue, Plato (2013) attempted to define the framework of a comprehensive human understanding, not merely of politics or law. Of course, he is primarily concerned with the human being in action, and thus largely with moral and political questions. However, in Plato's philosophy, humans should be regarded as a whole, and action should not be conceived independently of thinking. Plato attempted to provide a solution to the issues that plagued the society in which he lived (Pappas, 2003). Plato aimed to create a stable understanding of values, as well as a constant and unchanging policy operation, in opposition to the Sophists' relativist ethico-political ideas. As part of this construction effort, Plato's dialogue 'Theaitetos', which he began with the query 'What is the episteme?' can be seen as a discussion about the source of knowledge (1992, 184b-186e). Plato, in contrast to the famed sophist Protagoras who argued that perceptions based on the senses are the foundation of knowledge, believed in absolute existence and hence that absolute knowledge could be attained. Plato believes that there is a definite and clear understanding that is independent of our sense organs. To avoid the chaos and disintegration caused by relativity in the social and political domain, this clear and explicit knowledge is required[11]. Thus, neither the senses nor

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[11] Plato believed that the society he lived in was in a state of decline and crisis. The Sophists, he claimed, were to blame for the situation. Plato, disturbed by the Sophists' numerous and extreme forms of moral skepticism, considered that the first and most important step was to establish moral norms on a firm foundation. Only by asserting, or at least assuming, the existence of absolute and objective standards of value, moral ideas that are timeless, unchangeable moral essences, could he do this.

memory, where images are stored, nor perception nor experience are the sources of knowledge for Plato; it is the soul itself that thinks, understands, designs, and sees[12].

For Plato, ideas are a useful means of answering a number of significant metaphysical issues regarding the nature of the true being and the essential components of the cosmos, as realities or entities that offer moral standards and permit precise knowledge. Despite his significant epistemological and ontological differences from the Sophists, Plato's focus is also on the human. Plato established a 'human nature' design with an epistemological and ethico-political understanding based on ontology (see e.g., Plato, 2013, IV. 444b4-5). Plato regards humans as an organism with a wide range of functions, conducting a kind of psychological investigation on human nature. These functions, however, must be brought into balance and harmony, according to him[13]. In Plato's systematic philosophy, aimed at presenting a consistently ethical, political and metaphysical framework, it is possible to identify a human design shaped by the philosopher's observations about the society in which he lives. With the Socrates-Plato tradition, a philosophical perspective consisting of dialogues with an ethical-political concern for human beings has begun to replace a philosophy consisting of monologues of the observer of nature/universe. Although human and human action is one of Plato's key research topics, Plato determined the purpose of human beings and the objective of philosophy as gaining knowledge of *the idea of the good* (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα) (Plato, 2013, VI. 505a2). This design also influenced Aristotle's successor, Aristotle, and the medieval Scholastic worldview. In the shadow of Plato's idea of the good, it may be said that human beings, despite not being at the top of the hierarchy, are in a very privileged position for him.

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[12] Knowledge cannot be achieved by senses, according to Plato (1992), who believes that the action of experiencing the outside world is unreliable in terms of knowledge since there is no reality in the sensible world. It is impossible to argue about the correctness of the data provided by the senses and the reality of the things reached by the senses, as evidenced in Plato's critique of Protagoras' relativist approach. This critique is based on Plato's concept of the World of Ideas and an ontology that is based in this universe.

[13] There are three independent components that make up the human spirit, just as there are three separate classes that make up the ideal state, according to Plato, who sees an equivalency between the concept of the three-part spirit and the construction of the ideal state or political fiction.

Plato's philosophy has been heavily criticized, particularly by modern thinkers, when it comes to the ontological position of humans. The pioneering attitude of human ontological detachment from nature is the target of this criticism. Plato's philosophy has been criticized for providing an important foundation for dualist thinking and the legitimization of issues like sexism, racism, and speciesism that are created by this method of thinking (see, for example, Byrne, 2010; Plumwood, 1994; Popper, 2015; Singer). Plato's philosophy, according to Plumwood (1994), is one of the most important sources of the dualist and hierarchical Western thought tradition, which distinguishes mind and emotions and body, man and woman, master and slave, culture and nature, universal and particular as hierarchically different things. Byrne (2010) claims that Plato's views on other entities in nature and women (see, for example, Plato, 2013, Book V) are a reflection of this method of thinking[14] and that this hierarchical approach is linked to Plato's understanding of ontology. However, these criticisms against Plato can be considered as a commentary, a perspective on his work. It is possible to say that the social status of women in Ancient Greece was considerably limited. Nevertheless, it would be anachronistic to evaluate the philosophers with today's norms on the equality of men and women in this period when women were seen almost as domestic slaves. Yet, it is not entirely possible to accept the mentioned criticisms of Plato as entirely correct when his practical and political philosophy is taken into consideration. On the contrary, it is possible to state that Plato was quite ahead of his time with some of his approaches. For example, the following words he expresses in the Republic can even be considered quite progressive in terms of women's political equality: "Then a woman will have the same nature in respect of becoming a guardian of our state as a male..." (Plato, 2013, p. 471). From this point of view, it is necessary to note that the criticisms of commentators such as Byrne (2010) or Plumwood (1994) are based on a kind of interpretation and the implications of Plato's philosophy in the field

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[14] Plato regarded women as primordial, chaotic, emotional, incompetent, animal-like individuals, according to Plumwood (1994). Plato maintained, according to Byrne (2010), that animals are hierarchically inferior to humans and are less important than people because they lack reason.

of its influence. It can be stated that the hierarchy that Plato sees in the social sphere and between Forms is the source of these criticisms of Plato.

Other beings in nature, according to Plato, are essentially copies of ideal forms, and hence have the same ontological root as humans[15]. Plato maintained that the only task of humans is to go above nature and reach the Idea of Good, based on this division between humans and nature (C. C. W. Taylor, 2003). However, in Plato's philosophy, humans cannot be said to have control over nature outside of themselves. He was more concerned with regulating and disciplining the part of human beings that is controlled by their emotions and bodies. Human beings, according to Plato's philosophy, are beings whose emotions and bodies must be tamed by the mind. Plato's philosophy, which brings the senses and emotions to a secondary position as per reason, and other beings in nature to a secondary position according to humans, is thus an important source of dualist and hierarchical perspective. Plato provided an excellent illustration of the essentialist approach through this perspective. Plato, who believed that things had an essence, presented a very original and self-consistent idea of essentialism with his theory of Forms, according to Politis (2021). The substance or forms that make up the essence of beings are at the heart of Platonic idealism; this idea of a permanent, unchanging, and everlasting form resulted in a kind of essentialism that he inherited from Hesiod, Pythagoras, and Parmenides. Plato utilized the degree of having this essence as the main criterion in classifying the beings, positioning the rational side of human beings as the essential part that they share with the Idea of Good through the human nature notion he established.

With his approach to the subject, Aristotle stands out after Plato. The subject, which Plato left in the shadow of the Forms, was given a significant role by Aristotle in knowing the situation of human beings. In the prologue to Metaphysics, the relationship between humans and knowledge is stated as follows: "All men by nature desire to know" (Aristotle, 1995, p. 2). Contrary to Plato's

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[15]Plato (Plato, 1975, 30b-31b) claims that the cosmos was created by a divine Craftsman (Demiurge) with the desire to be likened to the most beautiful and rational of all beings in all respects in the Timaeus dialogue (although this dialogue appears to contradict the ideas in The Republic on some points, and its place in his philosophy is disputed).

notion of ideas, which assigned the subject a restricted role in the process of knowing, Aristotle

devised the most thorough conceptual approach to the soul-body problem in his time. According

to him, theoretical knowledge is an attempt to comprehend reality; therefore, to comprehend

reality, one must first comprehend its cause. He also asserts that the senses do not provide

knowledge of causes[16]. Departing from this, Aristotle defines knowledge as the investigation of

the knowledge of the fundamental principles of existence. According to Aristotle, the question of

what being is can be solved by categorizing it. Thus, *substance* should be the first category of

being (see Aristotle, 1995, 1028a30). Hence, Aristotle established the substance as the first

category of existence and linked knowledge to it in the same way. Substance, according to

Aristotle, is a category of being that can explain what existence is and how knowledge is acquired.

The solution to the question of what substance is will provide light on the question of what the

nature of being is. Substratum (foundation) is another term for substance[17]. Substance, according

to Aristotle, is the foundation upon which knowledge is built (Aristotle, 1995, 1079b-5). Because

knowledge of things is dependent on the substance, it will not be defined unless its substance is

explained. The aforesaid Aristotelian conception of substance is one of the most thorough

examples in the history of philosophy of an idea of an essence that is truly *out there*, unaffected

by changing circumstances and always remains the same, and has shaped understanding of the

subject in the post-Aristotelian period, particularly in Scholastic thought. The idea of the *subject*

has been reimagined in the modern era as *I*, which is the foundation of perceptions, designs,

impressions, and thoughts, and is conscious of what it perceives, designs, hears, and thinks. In

reality, while the category of the subject in pre-modern philosophy is not a very important one, it

does appear to be one of the fundamental categories associated with the modern period. It is

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[16] The senses, according to Aristotle, cannot provide knowledge of causes; they can tell us that the fire is hot, but not why it is hot (Aristotle, 1995, 981b 10-13).

[17] In Ancient Greek, the word *hypokeimenon* is used to describe the foundation (Substratum) (Heidegger, 2002). The word refers to the one who, in principle, gathers all in itself, the underlying. This term, however, does not refer to a subject that offers a foundation for understanding in Ancient Greek philosophy. Descartes will be the first to change a human into a subject, in an attempt to create a foundation that will serve as the foundation for all existence.

possible to underline that Aristotle's philosophy, with his ideas extended through to the scholastic period, is the figure severely challenged by modern philosophers.

Aristotle proposed a chain of entities in a softer form that could be articulated to some extent, rather than Plato's rigid, impermeable order of categories of being. Aristotle rejects the concept of a soul separate from the body (Aristotle & Hett, 1986,406a). Unlike Descartes, he also rejects the concept of a mental substance separate from bodily substance (see, Aristotle & Hett, 1986, 412a20-412b25)[18]. The soul and the body, according to Aristotle, are two aspects of one substance. In this sense, unlike Plato, Aristotle, who desired to bridge the gap between the soul and the body that Plato had created, believed that there was an interaction between the two. The soul cannot exist without a body, and the body cannot exist without a soul, according to Aristotle (Irwin, 1995)[19]. Aristotle adopted his teacher's concepts of the *form* (*eidos*) or *idea* and employed them repeatedly in his works. However, the meaning he ascribes to them differs from that which Plato ascribes to them.

Aristotle never thought of form or concept as separate from visible objects; rather, he argued that it is immanent to visible things, expressing itself through them and giving them their form (Zeller, Nestle, & Palmer, 2000). This claim leads to the conclusion that reality or truth is not distinct from the visible universe and must be found in the entire universe itself. That is why, unlike his teacher Plato, Aristotle prioritized natural studies. This, however, should not appear to suggest that Aristotle ascribes actuality to matter. Although Aristotle believes that matter and form, or body and soul, interact, he maintains that the basic essence of humans is linked to having a soul

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[18] It is hard to evaluate Aristotle's philosophy within the boundaries of a camp or current of thought. Instead of analyzing his knowledge of being, for example, with his closeness to philosophers Plato and Democritus, or as a Cartesian approach, it would be more accurate to assert that his method is sui generis, as Sorabji argues (Sorabji, 2009, p. 64).

[19] Aristotle began his discussion of the soul by delving into the ideas of previous thinkers. He claimed that previous discussions of the soul had primarily concentrated on the human soul because philosophers did not have adequate information about other organisms (Aristotle & Hett, 1986). Substance has three connotations for Aristotle, who thinks of the soul as a substance. The first definition of substance is matter which cannot be determined by itself; the second definition is form, and the third definition is the combination of matter and form; in other words, the soul is the entelecheia of the body (Aristotle & Hett, 1986)

(*psyche*); the soul is the cause (*aitia*) and main principle (*arkhe*) of living things (Aristotle & Hett, 1986, 402a8). Aristotle claimed that the soul found in all living beings, or the principle of vitality and life, differs from one living thing to another depending on how active it is and that this leads to a fundamental distinction between living things (Caston, 2012, p. 319). Apart from the characteristics that people share with other living organisms, humans are distinguished from plants and animals by the nous that only humans possess. Thus, like his instructor, Aristotle equated reality to form, essence, or idea. However, for him, this essence (*ousia*) manifests itself in observable things. That is, the idea was the form or essence realized in visible things, rather than a reality independent from visible things. Therefore, observable things are nothing more than the realization of form or essence. In this way, unlike Plato's philosophy, Aristotle's philosophy, which explains the relationship between matter and form, concepts and visible things, was open to nature and nature's knowledge. According to him, studying nature (physis) is not distinct from studying reality and truth: learning about specific things and particulars is a necessary step toward learning about the universal, form, and essence. In this light, Aristotle's philosophy, which unlike Plato's does not establish a sharp boundary between matter and form, human and nature, can be understood as an attempt to reconcile and overcome the competing ideas of philosophers before him, particularly Plato.

The influence of Aristotle's philosophy on medieval thought and modern subject comprehension can be attributed to the breadth and creativity of the conceptual set he constructed and utilized. Aristotle's definition of substance, for example, overlaps with Descartes' definition of substance in that it depends on nothing but itself for its existence. Descartes' concept of beings existing in tandem with their substance might be understood as an interpretation of Aristotle's concept of *ousia*. According to Aristotle, who conducted a comprehensive discussion on the question of what distinguishes human beings from other beings and what makes human beings special, human thinking consists of three classes: Theoretical, practical and productive (Aristotle et al., 2009, 1139a27-8). In the setting of these several domains of action, Aristotle placed the

human at the heart of his inquiry; he addressed the characteristics that separate humans from other species. Accordingly, for him, the question of '*what is human is'* has an ontological character. It is possible to identify one of the first examples of human as an acting being in Aristotle's philosophy based on his work *On The Soul* (Aristotle & Hett, 1986) and his other great work, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, Ross, & Brown, 2009), in which his views on human being are discussed in the most comprehensive way (Aristotle, Ross, & Brown, 2009). Aristotle intended to uncover the most basic quality, the essence, of not only human beings but all beings that make them themselves, through his idea of the soul. A human is a being that acts, imagines (creates imagery), thinks, and evaluates as a living with logos. The distinguishing and vital feature of the human soul, unlike the soul possessed by all living beings, is nous, or thinking/intelligence (Aristotle & Hett, 1986, 414b18, 429a6-8). Aristotle differentiates between *active* (*nous poietikos*) and *passive* (*nous pathetikos*) intellect, claiming that abstraction, or active nous, is the essential substance of intellect (Aristotle & Hett, 1986, 430b). Consequently, nous is the faculty that connects notions, makes relationships between concepts, and reveals the knowledge of true universal propositions and 'principles' (Aristotle, 2014, 136).

According to Aristotle, who believes that humans and all other living things have a function (Aristotle et al., 2009, 1097b25), the function-activity of humans is to live according to logos (Aristotle et al., 2009, 1098al-5). His ethical-political[20] thoughts, which are based on his understanding of existence and knowledge, show his attitude toward the various human positions, which is the result of a teleological understanding. Humans are the only beings with the ability to think and act who can achieve happiness (*eudaimonia*) or the good life (*eu zen*). Therefore, we might conclude that Aristotle saw humans as acting beings, as beings of alternatives. Humans, he claims, are a being of alternatives who, unlike other things in nature, are not constrained by necessity and may evaluate their options and make decisions based on their evaluations (Aristotle

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[20] In Aristotle's mind, ethics and politics are intertwined. He stated this theory at the start of Nicomachean Ethics when he argued that ethics is a part of politics (Aristotle et al., 2009, 1094a25-109b4).

et al., 2009, 1103a25). Humans have the potential to actualize ethical principles rather than the endless anxiety of their desire because they have the option of living in accordance with reason. In this regard, humans are undetermined beings who have alternatives on both of their sides. Aristotle, who provides an important conceptual basis for the development of the epistemologically modern subject and broadens the topic, placed human life in a pivotal position as an active and establishing being based on these conclusions. Aristotle is articulated to the subject debates of our day through this approach. The fact that he appears in the center of the works of both philosophers who created the modern subject (e.g., Descartes) and thinkers who critique the modern subject idea (e.g., Heidegger) indicates Aristotle's impact on the construction of the modern subject. Despite their apparent interaction with other living things, human beings, according to Aristotle's philosophy, are at the top of a hierarchy with other living beings as they have *nous*. Thinking and reasoning, according to Aristotle's philosophy, are the attributes that distinguish humans from other living things, and this feature places people in a unique and privileged position. Aristotle, who argued that reasoning is the most significant and distinguishing feature of a human being, continued the hierarchical idea that he had inherited from Plato, albeit with certain modifications and softening.

The hierarchical style of thinking, which began to be explored systematically with Plato and Aristotle's philosophies, had an influence on later philosophers' perceptions and interpretations of the universe. For this reason, Aristotle's original perspective can be defined as one of the foundations of the understanding that recognizes humans as a subject superior to other beings in nature. With the philosophies of the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the philosophical inquiry shifted its focus from nature to human beings and their activities. Aristotle's metaphysics or physics study, as well as, of course, his ethical and political investigation, are examples of a method that works for human beings from various dimensions. Human beings were conceived of as a reflection of Logos, which prevailed in all spheres of existence, and as a part of logos for a time after this crucial period of Ancient Greece. Throughout the Middle Ages, humanity was

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considered as a part of the creator and eternal God, his mirror in the world, alongside the idea of God, which replaced the Logos in Ancient Greece. This replacement does not imply that Logos and God are the same being. Although the concept of Logos, which is generally used by ancient Greek philosophers to express the intelligent, animating and rational properties of the universe, has been used in relatively different meanings from Pythagoras to Empedocles, from Parmenides to Plato, yet it has a common context in some respects. Logos, as Hillar puts it, "among its many meanings are word, speech, statement, discourse, refutation, ratio, proportion, account, explanation, reason, and thought" (Hillar, 2011, p. 6). In its many different connotations, Logos is a multilayered concept that has other meanings than the idea of God, just as it differs from mythos: just as mythos was replaced by Logos in human thought, the centrality of Logos in philosophical thought began to be replaced by the idea of God by the Middle Ages.

2.1.2. The Foundations of the Modern Subject in Medieval Thought

The idea of God, who created and rules this world, the only and good one, is at the center of philosophical research in medieval thought, where religious thought was decisive and powerful. The human being entrusted with the job of a *servant* in this world has the responsibility to follow the directions of God (and, of course, those who claim to be God's representatives) without inquiry. Hence, humanity's responsibility is to be a passive participant in a sacred history whose meaning and scope are unquestionable. Despite significant exceptions and objections, Scholastic thought dominated philosophical thought during this period[21] of Western philosophy history and established the general characteristic of this century's philosophical orientation[22]. Humans are an

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[21] There is not a single adjective that can adequately characterize the medieval period. However, it is a typical mistake to define this period obscurely, ignoring the various voices during it and evaluating it as a whole. Thus, describing the Middle Ages as a *dark age* is the outcome of an attempt to understand history as a *progress* from *bad* to *good*. The existence of thinkers who made societal criticism and dealt with eroticism in the 12th century, for example, is mentioned by Le Goff, who claims that the Middle Ages were as *dark* and *bright* as other historical periods. On the other side, it casts doubt on the validity of claims of *enlightenment* and *progress* based on post-medieval phenomena (for example, mass wars, genocides, various forms of dehumanization and oppression, and so on) (Le Goff, 1994).

[22] Philosophy was not limited to the Western world, of course. For example, during the same historical eras when Christian theology dominated Western thought, Al-Farabi (2004), an Islamic thinker, argued that religion and religious sciences were servants of philosophy. These activities of great Islamic thinkers (e.g., Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldun,

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important tool for understanding God-subject in terms of their position, according to this approach: It is widely acknowledged that the best way to grasp God is to comprehend his creations, particularly human beings, who are the most valued of his creations. Believing and devoutness are basic tasks, according to the Middle Ages' common opinion. The world of objects, including the body, is just temporary and so unimportant; the essential is the divine, and this world, the world of objects, including the body, is simply a décor that we use to get to the divine.

Despite this general picture, it is worth noting that substantial contributions to the development of the modern subject were made throughout the medieval period. For example, Augustine, one of the key thinkers who shaped Medieval philosophical thought, is also one of the most influential sources in Descartes' subject thought (Charles Taylor, 1989). Descartes described truth as a criterion in the subject itself, the thinking 'I,' and established the subject as a fundamental and absolute foundation capable of dispelling all doubts. The concept of inwardness drawn through the design of the *I* in language, according to Charles Taylor (1989), is constructed on a spatial contrast based on the inside-outside opposition. Taylor (1989) emphasized the concept of interiority that was established in Western thought with Augustine and stated that the roots of this differentiation in language, which did not exist in Ancient Greece, should be explored in the Middle Ages. Taylor (1989) emphasizes that Augustine points out human's new position in the face of truth with his famous statement: "*Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi. In interiore homine habitat veritas*"[23] (Augustine, 1959, p. 69). God, rather than his transcendent nature, can be recognized through the light within us, in our souls; the correct way to God is within us. In this regard, Augustine, who claims that the truth is inside the human being, precedes Descartes and sets the *I* as the foundation for the truth. In this regard, Taylor (1989) claims that it was Augustine, without exaggeration, before Descartes' metaphysics, who laid the first-person singular ground for

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and others), who stood out with their interest in science and philosophy in opposition to the Western Scholastic tradition, did not survive long. With Ghazali's *Rejection of Philosophy*, it began to weaken philosophically in consequence of social and political conditions. Due to the study's limits, other intellectual endeavors in non-Western countries, particularly Islamic societies, could not be included in the discussion.

[23] Eng. trans.: *Do not go outside, return to within yourself; truth dwells in the inner man.*

truth. According to Taylor (1989), the terminology of interiority first appeared in Western thinking with Christian philosophy. Similarly, Touraine (1995) argues that Augustine's inward movement is nearly identical to Descartes' cogito. Only internal knowledge, Augustine maintains, can dispel skepticism and prove the reality of ultimate conclusive knowledge (Augustine, 1998). The only way for the knower and the known to reach certainty as one is through inner knowledge. The usage of this interior language might be looked at as a preparatory stage to Cartesian philosophy. Augustine argues that it is impossible for the first person to doubt his own existence, thereby eliminating the possibility of doubt. Augustine traced a road from doubting to the grounding of existence with the words "*si fallor, sum*"[24] which inspired Descartes' argument of *Cogito, ergo sum* in his works *Against the Academics* (Augustine, 2019) and *The City of God Against the Pagans* (Augustine, 1998) in which he discussed the possibility and nature of true knowledge.

In The Consolation of Philosophy, Boethius examined the relationship between the knowing subject and the known object, the formation process of knowledge, and the role of God in this process, and concluded that humans can know themselves and become conscious of themselves through their understanding (Boethius, 2008, Book V). Boethius[25] (2008) emphasized that the knowing subject is the focal point in the problem of knowledge and that the known can only be known depending on this subject, when discussing basic epistemological problems such as the structure of knowledge, the share of the knowing subject in knowledge, and the relationship between knowledge and existence. Humanity is in their soul, according to Boethius (2008), who poetically portrays humans' situation on earth in The Consolation of Philosophy, and the salvation of their soul is in the sky, that is, in God. Accordingly, it can be stated that the thoughts of Boethius,

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[24] Eng. trans.: *If I am mistaken, I exist* (Augustine, 1998, p. 484)*.*

[25] Rather than his approach to subject understanding, Boethius draws attention to his thoughts on the Problem of Universals. Boethius took the Problem of Universals, which Porphyry of Tire had sparked, and expanded it by adding dimensions. Porphyry raised questions such as *Are genera and species permanent realities? Are genera and species only notions of the mind?* and (*If) these are realities, where are they?* in the start of his *On Aristotle's Categories* (Isagoge) (2014) and left the questions unanswered. Boethius sought a solution to the question of whether species and genera, or Aristotle's secondary substances, have a substantive existence, commenting on Porphyry's entry.

who is a bridge between Ancient Greek and Latin, regarding the role of the subject in knowledge are one of the sources that provide a basis for the modern subject.

Discussions about the human position, or the development of subject knowledge, are numerous and diverse. Within the scope of the study, the summary above can be used to describe the opinions of some significant thinkers in Western philosophy on the position of human beings in the framework of the relationships between nature and human, matter and form, and therefore the foundations of the modern subject. Thus, it can be claimed that there is a large accumulation of philosophical ways prior to the so-called modern period that forms the framework for modern subject thought; nonetheless, there are significant contrasts between these approaches and modern subject comprehension. The shift from philosophical debate, in which the early philosophers investigated nature and the universe, to philosophical research, in which human beings and human activity were investigated, laid a crucial foundation for the modern subject. In ancient philosophy and medieval thought, the intellectual roots of human beings' hierarchical status over other beings in nature, for example, due to a feature such as reason, can be found. In the early stages of philosophy, nature is viewed as a totality, the Logos, that can be comprehended by humans; the philosopher's mission is to comprehend and explain this existential unity. As Heidegger (1977) points out, the human being is not against or outside of nature in this design, but rather inside it. The separation of humans from nature or the world of objects by bold colors, their absolute hierarchical superiority over these areas, and the ensuing dominance began in ancient times with the works of system philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle[26]. The transition from human design as a whole with nature, a part of nature, in the position of "the shepherd of Being", as Heidegger (2008, p. 254) puts it, to human design as the master and sole ruler of the universe is a process that began to be systematically examined by Plato and Aristotle, and took on its true character with the modern period. The search for the essential principle, substance, or feature that constitutes the

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[26] Subjectivism and anthropocentrism, according to Heidegger, are the main sins of modern philosophy, with origins in Plato and Aristotle (see, Heidegger, 1977).

essence of human beings and existence, in general, draws attention to this approach, which is ongoing and effective throughout this process. Almost all philosophers during the time period in question have this as one of their key goals. From the search for *arkhe* by the early philosophers to the distinction drawn by systematic philosophers between matter and form, from the existence of ideas to the evidence of God, essentialism has been one of the most common modes of thinking in history of philosophy. It is plausible to argue that essentialism affected modern subject understanding as well as shifted the role of human beings in the process from Ancient Greece to modern times. The primary reasons that were effective in the creation of the modern knowledge of the subject, as well as philosophical approaches in the quest to explain the altering situation of human beings, are discussed in the following section.

2.1.3. Theorizing the Modern Subject

Modernism is the name given to a social value system and structure that began to evolve in Europe around the 17th century and extended all over the world over time, with a strong emphasis on enlightenment and rationalism. Modernism, according to this definition, opposes and breaks with tradition; it refers to a fundamental alteration or shift in all areas of individual, social, and political life. According to Giddens, modernism is associated with,

> (I) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention, (II) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy, (III) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy (Giddens & Pierson, 2013, p. 94).

Modernism is built on a new economic system, a different form of organizational structure, and has a very dynamic structure compared to the preceding social order (Giddens & Pierson, 2013). The structuring of information and a new understanding of sovereignty are at the heart of this organization, which is also known as "post-traditional order" (Giddens, 2010, p. 2). (Giddens & Pierson, 2013). Modernism can be viewed as a historical epoch, a philosophical approach, or a

political project. The initial intention of modernism as a political project was to deconstruct the hierarchical structure based on the church's and ruler's power and to replace it with a society founded on popular sovereignty, in which every citizen is treated equally before the law (Charles Taylor, 2008). Modern order can be defined as the name of a social, artistic, political, and theoretical change that includes rationalism, which accepts that objective knowledge can be obtained through reason, and which reaches the pinnacle of an ontological position rooted in Ancient Greek philosophy, and which develops a new subject, self-other conception as a result of these. Many scientific, philosophical, and political events have both caused and resulted in changes in human understanding and subject thought in the modern age. Many Eurocentric developments, in particular, have had a significant impact on theorizing modern subject design. This shift in Europe is the result of a series of cumulative philosophical, social, and scientific events that have an overall impact. Some of these events can be listed as follows: the Crusades carried out against the Eastern communities and encountering different cultural accumulations in this way (for example, translations of the Ancient Greek, Egyptian and Arab thinkers' works into Western languages), the Geographical 'Discoveries' of the 15th and 16th centuries[27], the development and spread of the printing press, the Renaissance that emerged with the cultural and economic enrichment experienced in Europe as a result of various *encounters* (Blum & McNeil, 2010; Copenhaver & Schmitt, 2002). Another important aspect of this process is the changing structure of society as a consequence of the transformations, such as the expanding social division of labor and the effect of roles. People began to reach out to one another as the populace mobilized, and they began to meet people who were not from their families, clans, or villages[28]. The

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[27] Geographical Discoveries or Invasion: The negative repercussions of the Geographical Discoveries, a crucial turning point in world history, have been extensively documented. The list of violent events in the history of the Discoveries is long: Slavery, innumerable deaths, forced migration, and horrific violence (Lunenfeld, 1991; Young, 2016).

[28] Of course, human interactions with one another did not begin in the modern era. Human beings have encountered the other, those who are not like themselves, since ancient times, and have devised various strategies (such as annihilation or integration) in response to these experiences. So much so that new scientific discoveries suggest that humans had contacts with others even before or during the early phases of evolution. According to genome analysis of a bone discovered in a Siberian cave, a female who died around 90,000 years ago was half Neanderthal and half

trustworthiness of religions and ancient social institutions began to be questioned as a result of scientific advancements, social shifts, and philosophical transformations, and the dominating religious institution of the Middle Ages was challenged by the Reformation. Significant changes in the understanding of humanity and society occurred as a result of this new phase. Before looking at some of the philosophers who affected our understanding of the subject during the history of modern philosophy, it's important to grasp the changes brought about by this *modern* period. Thus, the main lines of the period in which the modern subject originated can be determined. Accordingly, the following are the key philosophical and scientific innovations that occurred throughout the modern period (see Cevizci, 2002):

The emergence of an autonomous philosophical understanding as a product of the human mind: During the Middle Ages, philosophy was primarily in the service of religion, and the reason was mostly in the service of faith[29], despite the Nominalist objections that arose in the 13th and 14th centuries. In this regard, the stress on the autonomy of reason from faith and philosophy from religion grew stronger in the post-Middle Ages period.

The emergence of a new cosmological paradigm: The concepts of Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, and Isaac Newton in the seventeenth century gave rise to cosmology and scientific materialism. Copernicus was the one who took the first and most important step in the development of this cosmology. Copernicus' astronomy, which includes the heliocentric system, which shows that the earth revolves around the sun rather than the sun, is significant not only because it removes the earth from its position as the center of the universe, but also because it emphasizes the idea that the universe has no center. Thus, Copernicus' idea shocked the Middle Ages' notions that followed Plato and Aristotle and were based on the concept of God. Nature had its own design in

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Denisovan: "This is the first time scientists have identified an ancient individual whose parents belonged to distinct human groups" (Warren, 2018, p. 417).

[29] The implications of the autonomy in question following the medieval period can be tracked through the interests of thinkers. For example, Thomas Aquinas, the great thinker of the Middle Ages, is known for both his philosophical and theological works, whereas Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Thomas Hobbes, philosophers of the post-medieval new period, have almost no theological works.

antiquity and the Middle Ages. For both, nature was created by God for a specific good purpose, according to a certain plan, with God or the Final Cause at its core. However, according to the cosmology anticipated by Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton, nature generates a field of lifeless matter that is alien to living and intelligent human beings, and so will be controlled by the intelligent human being through observation and analysis. So, according to the new cosmology, the cosmos or nature is a massive, inanimate machine that exists independently of humans. Thus, nature can only be comprehended on its own terms, rather than through an understanding of God's purposes. Nature, according to modern thinking, is a *cosmos* or universe, with humans, not God, at its heart. Making a discourse about nature involves making a discourse about humans, the world, and God all at once. In other words, the concept of the universe, or the idea of world unity, is discovered with this new conception. Nature has now become one; it has also abandoned its purposefulness and transformed into a mechanism that may be utilized. Mathematics ensures the uniformity and universality of nature's language, which is essentially a machine or mechanism. The foundation of the vast scientific movement that developed industrial society is this design of nature or new cosmology.

The emergence of modern science: The birth of modern science and the development of the scientific method were two of the most important factors in this new epoch after the Middle Ages. The discovery of nature by scientists was one of the principal sources of opposition to medieval philosophy. It is the discovery of a new world known as the world of facts, whose language is mathematics, rather than an occurrence or discovery that can only be described by the resurrection of secularism and classical naturalism.

Changes in the value of science and knowledge: In consequence of this shift, science has become the single most powerful engine of progress, the very essence of progress. In modern times, however, science has been prized not for its intrinsic value, but for the utility it brings. Hence, knowledge is no longer required for pure understanding or to satisfy curiosity, as it was in the classical era, or for uncovering God's plan that provided purposefulness and order to the natural

world, as it was in the Middle Ages, but for its utility. According to the great minds of modern philosophy, such as Sir Francis Bacon, knowledge is power (2011). Science was now viewed as a model for development in other sectors, and its role in social and political reforms was being sought. Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge in philosophy, advanced ahead of ontology or metaphysics and into the center of philosophy throughout this time, which lasted until the renowned *linguistic turn* of the twentieth century. It was aimed to explain and justify the human mind's achievement as embodied in scientific knowledge in the shifting thought hierarchy of this period, as well as to demonstrate that exact and precise knowledge may be attained in philosophy, just as it can in science during this era. Another aspect or attitude that left its mark on the period, again within the same epistemological framework, was the search for a method, which was seen in practically all philosophers.

Transformation in the way of understanding the truth: With the development of homocentric thinking against the theocentric-based theological knowledge of the Middle Ages, rationalism has expanded its field of impact. Thus, until the nineteenth century, rationalism was the prevailing attitude or inclination that defined this new era. Truth, according to the renowned seventeenth-century philosophers who prepared the modern period, is not something given by religious authority or sacred writings; it is something discovered by a free and unbiased investigation based on reason. Thus, natural rather than supernatural reasons should be used to explain the physical and mental worlds, society, morality, political institutions, and even religion itself. Rationalism, in its broadest definition, is the unwavering belief in the power of the human mind and progress on the one hand, and in science and scientific method as a means of progress on the other (Thomas, 2014).

The search for a worldly foundation for politics: Political philosophy in this new period is based on the subject or the individual. Accordingly, since the Renaissance, all political ideas of the new period have attempted to grasp society from a worldly perspective. People-centered political doctrines that highlight the will of the people begin to consider society as a human-made

system rather than a natural structure. The foundation and legitimacy of the state's sovereignty were attempted to be legitimized by a worldly principle rather than a divine will throughout this period. Instead of holiness or kings who shared in this sanctity, the nations will come to the fore as the new base of sovereignty. The concept of civil society began to grow with the emphasis on individual rights in the seventeenth century when the state-society identity began to come to the fore in political philosophy theories. With this situation, from the seventeenth century, the emphasis on human will as the creator of society has grown, and the concept of contract, where this will express itself, has been the explanatory principle. Indeed, until Hegel's philosophy, the concept of the social contract, which became the explanatory premise of practically all political theories, was presented as an individualist principle throughout the nineteenth century. While valuing the human being as a rational being, this period's political philosophy not only respects the importance of the individual but also places it at the heart of the system in a way that protects the individual's rights.

The change in the position of the human being, or, in other words, the birth of a new concept of the subject, was one of the most important effects of the transformation associated with the changes in this period. Humans began to be viewed as beings that question their overwhelming reliance on God, fight their fate, and even control their own fate during this period. Accordingly, humans began to be viewed as a free and autonomous subjects, rather than as a servant of nature, ideas, or God: humans were placed at the center of thought, the universe, and history. The traditional links that held the communities together eroded as the impact of the worldview in which God is at the center waned, and other bonds gained strength in their place: Traditional lifestyles and the influence of tradition in life began to change in consequence of the transformation, which was not restricted to the religious area. This destruction of tradition has accelerated as a result of modernism (Giddens, 1991). A subject-based emancipating philosophy, which supports a rebellion against tradition and authority, has emerged in place of a philosophy that is dependent on authority

and religious tradition and whose boundaries are eroded by theology. The homocentric approach to philosophy gained strength in virtue of this development.

God was the source of not just existence, but also values and authority in the Middle Ages. God was responsible for the world's order in addition to being the creator of everything that exists. Many philosophers had a hierarchical understanding of ontology, which supports this idea (e.g., Saint Anselm, Saint Augustine, Peter Abelard). In the prevalent philosophical perspective of this age, God is the ultimate goal and main subject of human knowledge as an eternal and substantial reality. Thus, God, the central subject of existence and knowledge, is the creator of the principles that guide human life and behavior, as well as the determiner of good and correct moral and political views. However, the human subject, namely the Western subject, was the beginning point, rationale, and determinant of philosophy's new method of thinking. The human-subjects were intended to serve as the foundation and new pillar of philosophical thought, and they faced pressing challenges in the new world: Grounding knowledge in themselves or in their minds, reconstructing existence in accordance with scientific demands, creating a new value system in accordance with modern economic conditions, and basing their political body on a contract made by themselves in a way that will establish their nation-state. The concept of morality, like many other conceptions, evolved during the seventeenth century. The moral understanding of the Middle Ages, like other fields of philosophy, was built in response to theological demands; living morally was thought to mean living according to God's commandments. In the changing world, however, morality was constructed in such a way that human beings were directly at its heart, rather than a divine source. The idea that reason and rationality are the foundations of morality has been strengthened by modern philosophy. The phenomena of a human, subject, or thinker seeking their own liberty rose to prominence during this period; this shift emphasizes emancipation from religion, tradition, and faith.

On the one hand, the philosophical thinking that arose in the modern age is a re-evaluation of previous philosophies, and on the other hand, it is a radical rejection of old concepts. It is

conceivable to see the modern understanding of the subject, which is the byproduct of a cumulative process, as an objection against medieval thought, particularly Scholastic philosophy. The tremendous change in the world of thought and the epistemological position of humans during the modern age has been strongly tied to this objection. This transformation, which began with the works of Renaissance humanists such as Bacon and Descartes and continued with the Enlightenment thought of the 18th century, expresses a philosophy, a way of understanding the world, that commenced in the 17th century in the Western world and gained momentum with the Enlightenment thought of the 18th century. The future and the 'new' are emphasized in modernism, not the past. According to Scruton, modernism "began with repudiation of the past" (Scruton, 1996, p. 547). Therefore, modernism is a reaction to tradition as well as a shift or change brought about by a break with tradition in the aspects of individual, social, and political life. Thus, the modern era has profoundly and in numerous ways altered every aspect of social and individual existence. Modernism is linked to the Enlightenment in terms of intellect, the French Revolution in terms of politics, and the Industrial Revolution in terms of economics. Opinions on modernism's institutional transformation are equally diverse: capitalism in Marx's philosophy and the industrialization process in Durkheim's thinking come to the fore as reasons for this transition. On the other hand, Weber's approach emphasizes that the most significant consequences of modernism occur in technology and rationalization, with bureaucracy as the principal outcome of this process. Modernity, according to Anthony Giddens (2010), is a multidimensional reality that encompasses all of these characteristics. The human relationship with existence and, more broadly, with truth has been modified by modernism, which has a multidimensional structure. Theorized with the philosophical methods put forward in the 17th century and later, the new concept of the subject evolved in the social and political context of Western Europe, formed by the aforementioned changes. The philosophy of Descartes, one of the architects of modern subject thought theory, is at the forefront of these methods.

Descartes is widely regarded as a leading figure of contemporary subject concept (Thiel, 2011; Žižek, 2008). What makes Descartes the pioneer of modern philosophy is that he built his philosophy departing from the subject. Until Descartes, the human understanding was in general positioned in relation to the universe, whereas with Descartes, the universe was positioned in relation to human understanding. which implies a philosophical transformation. Such a transformation requires a metaphysical foundation. Descartes, as the architect of this transformation, fulfils the necessity of the transformation and begins his philosophy with metaphysics, which he sees as the root of the tree of knowledge. The metaphysics of Descartes is based on three fundamental problems; I doubt, Cogito ergo sum and God exists. These problems also correspond to the three periods of Descartes' metaphysics. In Descartes' philosophy, doubt is attempted to be eliminated with the proposition Cogito ergo sum, which is the first certain knowledge. It is the knowledge of God's existence that gives him complete certainty and liberates him from his doubts. He is a rationalist who values method and mathematical precision, and his knowledge and comprehension of the subject reflect the typical traits of modern times. He believes that humans' rational structure is sufficient for attaining specific knowledge and that the method used in mathematics should be used in philosophy as well. Reason is the only feature that distinguishes humans from other living things in Descartes' philosophy, and it must be used correctly: The method in the search for truth is a prerequisite for him (Descartes, 1988). Descartes believes that common sense or reason is the best-shared thing in the universe and that it is inherent in all humans. Humans, he claims, are made up of *res cogitans* (thinking beings) and *res extensia* (being as body). Descartes thereby broke the Western Middle Ages' indivisible substance. With him, the matter-form, body-soul dilemma, which are amongst the most important difficulties in philosophy history, have become an even more complex problem. The *res cogitans* lie at the heart of Descartes' philosophy (Descartes, 1988). Descartes' search for a solution to the dilemma of these

two distinct substances' interaction[30] is a powerful example of dualism, which has expanded throughout Western philosophy's history. Hence, things must be explained by "reducing them to their essentials - the fewest possible, ultimately, irreducible elements" (Hall, 1992, p. 282). According to this viewpoint, the mind is the most important aspect of human beings, and it is this aspect that makes humans themselves and distinguishes them from one another. This viewpoint is one of the most distinct examples of the essentialist and thus hierarchical approach, which places the mind above matter, the soul above the body, and ideas above nature. In his opinion, "the soul constitutes the essence of the self" (Thiel, 2011, p. 37). The essentialist and hierarchical perspective, which is particularly prominent in Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies, may be found in Descartes' philosophy, albeit in a different form.

Descartes centered his view of the *mind* on the knowledge and thinking subject, forming the fundamental skeleton of the modern subject. One of the major turning moments in the history of philosophy and thought is this positioning of the human being. Accordingly, in the modern day, the cogito has become the only guarantee of knowledge and plays a crucial role as a thinking substance (Descartes, 2019). Descartes focused his attention on what exists within his consciousness as the very consciousness of himself, rather than on a reality outside of himself. Humans become their self-consciousness, namely the subject, at this stage. In other words, the cogito is proof of being *I*[31]; thinking and being are identical. The terms 'I think' and 'I exist' are equivalent. Descartes attempted to find clear and definite knowledge as an endpoint that could not be questioned, revealing the knowledge of the *I* through the contrast he drew between skeptical and methodical doubt. With his performative subject design, Descartes constructs the subject based on thinking *I*; accordingly, the subject is a fully active being. The signal of the modern epoch was this break, which drove the subject from its inert or largely passive position before the Logos or God to the center of thought and philosophy.

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[30] Thinking substance and spatial substance.

[31] Descartes uses the first-person pronoun *I* to represent the concept of a *Cartesian self* or *self* (ego).

Descartes' philosophy might be regarded as a challenge against external authority over the rational thinking process of an individual subject. The subject that thinks, or *Cogito*, has achieved a fundamental role in the process of human self-creation and determining their position in this universe thanks to Descartes, one of the modern period's pioneers, with his emphasis on absolute autonomy and freedom of the subject[32]. He argues that knowledge of the *I* is a clear and distinct knowledge with a certainty that can be distinguished from all other sorts of knowledge because he believes that knowledge of the *I* is possible through an unmediated and direct consciousness. Descartes believed that everyone had once in their lives experienced the grounding of undoubted solid knowledge through introspection of *I* and had to come to this undoubted conclusion. In that circumstance, the modern mind cannot find any other ground, criteria of knowledge but itself, that is, its own existence. Descartes' philosophy, known as mind-body dualism, has been the cause of difficulty that many intellectuals have attempted to solve throughout the modern period. Contract-based methods, for example, adhered to Cartesian solipsism for the understanding of the atomized individual, which would be the cause of conflict, while applying the mind-body dichotomy to the nature-culture opposition, as pioneered by Hobbes and Locke. This situation, which can be observed in Hobbes' analysis of people and politics, is revealed in his understanding of the individual. Hobbes, who reduced the non-I to an instrumental stance against the I, adhered to the Cartesian paradigm, despite having a monist conception of the human-nature or subject-object relationship. Nature is viewed as a machine governed by mathematical laws, and it is emphasized that it can only be understood through the mind's designing power by this thought. Thus, the hierarchical relationship between I and others began to be epistemologically theorized in the form of a subject-object relationship. As described later in the research, the subject-object and I-other relationship, which can be thought of as versions of the mind-body dualism, is a complex dilemma with political and moral implications. Descartes established the methodological groundwork for

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[32] One outcome of the philosophical change that began with Descartes is that epistemology has become more important in comparison to metaphysics and ontology.

philosophical anthropology by initiating the modern philosophical process of thinking about humans. However, he limited the means of thinking about human beings in an anthropological sense by sliding into solipsism when it came to reducing the subjects to only knowing their designs. With Descartes, many modern philosophers have attempted to understand the link between the introverted subject and those beyond the subject.

Descartes built the epistemological foundations of the modern subject by developing the first and middle ages' foundations of modern subject understanding with a method-based scientific understanding. Many thinkers in Continental European philosophy followed and expanded the path he paved: for example, Spinoza, Leibniz, Malebranche, and Wolff, all important representatives of Continental European Rationalism, emphasized the rational side of humans and strengthened the subject position of humans, despite their differences. The essentialist perspective, which maintains that human beings are rational beings and hence have a privileged position among other beings, was perpetuated by thinkers in this orientation. The notion of the mind as a faculty that distinguishes humans from other living things became popular with Ancient Greek philosophy; yet, what is meant by the mind has changed, and the mind's substance and scope have shifted. It is possible to follow the debate among Anglo-Scottish Empiricism philosophers about the content and breadth of the mind, which is in contrast with Continental Rationalism. Humans can only reach the knowledge of the cosmos within the limits of their skills, according to Locke, one of the most famous representatives of this school, and so it is impossible to argue that they have an endless mental capacity to comprehend the universe.

In his essay *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke (1998) questioned the possibilities, sources, and boundaries of knowledge, claiming that human understanding was *tabula rasa* at first and that the only source of knowledge was an experiment consisting of sense and reflection. Locke, whose thoughts on knowledge influenced Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, attacked idealist understandings of existence and knowledge, advocating instead an approach based on experience and sensation. Locke analyzed the subject as an active element in the process

of learning knowledge, presenting an example of grasping the modern subject independent of the substance and the ability to understand. In the framework of a dispute about individual identity, Locke sought a response to the question, 'what *is I?*' (Denkel, 2003). According to Locke (1998), identity is defined as the existence of the ideas that underpin the existence of a thing at one point in time while remaining unchanged at another. For him, a lengthy examination of how one becomes aware of their existence is unnecessary or impossible; one is so clearly and exactly aware of one's own existence that proof is neither necessary nor possible. Nothing is more clear to a person than his or her own existence (Locke, 1998). To put it another way, self-consciousness is the result of being aware of one's own particular identity. Unlike Descartes, Locke reduced the *I* to a personal identification issue. This step by Locke, namely, the idea that there is no need for an ontological-substantial basis or a spiritual source to identify the subject, lays a solid foundation for later understandings of the subject, such as Kant's (Thiel, 2011). Universals were developed to classify the plurality of particulars, and they are a medium of communication, according to Locke (1998), who takes a nominalist approach with his perspective that what exists is the multiplicity of particulars. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about universals independently of mind and language. The similarities between particulars, according to Locke (1998), are a way of establishing these generalities. He maintained that human beings cannot know an object's essence and that knowledge of an object can only be gained through its fundamental and secondary qualities, thereby rejecting Aristotle's and Scholastic essentialist ontology perspective of the realist idea of universals (Uzgalis, 1988).

Aristotle methodically theorized essentialist theory, which argued that a group of people sharing certain necessary features suggests a set of traits, which therefore defines the essence of the natural species. Locke, who opposed Aristotelian philosophy, which says that species are arranged in a hierarchical system, and the essentialist understanding that systematized it, proposed that classification of particulars might be done in a variety of ways, not just one. Locke, who believes that real and nominal essences should be distinguished (see also Locke, 1998; Yolton,

2010), confronted the Aristotelian definition of the essence with the concept of real essence and defined the idea as nominal essence, which has no real existence but is established as a signifier of the intellect. The nominal essence is not a requirement for a thing's existence, but it is a requirement for it to be known and recognized (Locke, 1998). According to Fuss, nominal essence;

> signifies for Locke a view of essence as merely a linguistic convenience, a classificatory fiction we need to categorize and to label. Real essences are discovered by close empirical observation; nominal essences are not 'discovered' so much as assigned or produced—produced specifically by language. (Fuss, 2013, pp. 4-5).

In certain ways, this divide expresses the contrast between essentialism and constructivism. Hence, Locke's distinctions and conclusions concerning essence based on the concept of existence and knowledge might be understood as an argument against classical essentialism. Locke's argument for essentialism, on the other hand, involves certain inconsistencies with his social and political beliefs.

Locke, who is one of the philosophers[33] who places the pre-social state of humans, or the state of nature, at the core of his moral, political, and philosophical beliefs, has a particular human understanding at the foundation of his approach. The state of nature can be interpreted as a reflection of modern philosophers' analyses of human and world affairs. The concept of 'state of nature' as a potent metaphor, according to Benhabib (1992), is the beginning point of modern moral and political philosophy. The practical goal of this approach for philosophers is to reveal an understanding of the natural law. These thinkers looked at the foundations of natural law and natural rights, as well as the origins of law. The notion of the state of nature serves as the foundation of the contract, which is assumed to be the basis of the state's existence as a tool for finding answers to these issues. With a similar approach to Hobbes, Locke began by exploring the

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[33] Important thinkers including Mozi, Grotius, Pufendorf, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hume, and, more recently, Rawls and Nozick, can be shown as examples.

concept of human nature before moving on to the concept of human rights, which has its roots in the natural law or natural rights debate. The state of nature, according to Locke, was, at least initially, a state of freedom and equality. The concept of law of nature, which is linked to law and morality, is based on the belief that there is a natural law that people follow even when there is no authority (Locke, 1993, p. 262). Because the intellect has been equally given to mankind by nature, the law of nature is discovered by the intellect found in everyone: "All people are endowed by nature with reason, and I say that natural law can be known by reason" (Locke, 2007, p. 85). Locke grounds equality and freedom on the reason that everyone has; as a result, the law proposed by Locke is placed in a universal position. This universality means that every natural law applies equally to all humans. According to Locke, the law of nature is essential to human life; yet, this does not imply that everyone can understand the law of nature (Locke, 2007, p. 85). Habits, as well as diverse perspectives derived from various traditions, may be useful in this separation.

The protection of property rights, according to Locke, is the cause for the move from the state of nature, which is a state of equality and freedom, to the construction of a civilized society (Locke, 1993, p. 325). Living according to nature's laws "gives rise to peace, harmonious relations, friendship, freedom from punishment, security, possession of our property, and -to sum it all up in one word- happiness", according to Locke (2007, p. 133). But humans also have other characteristics, such as self-love, bad habits, passions, and a sense of vengeance, which can lead to people harming one another. Human beings have agreed to a civilized administration and a contract-based civil authority to avoid the chaos and improper living that these could bring. The emergence of the state has been possible in consequence of this transition, and individuals have taken steps to defend their property, particularly their lives, freedom, and health (Locke, 2018). A contract that people voluntarily signed in order to be protected from a probable state of conflict and instability enabled the transition from the state of nature to the state of society (Locke, 2007, p. 268). Locke meets the essentialist tradition of his time and generally in the history of philosophy, with the idea that the distinguishing feature of humans is a rational being, while looking for a

ground to investigate the position of humans in the political arena with his understanding of the state of nature and natural law. Locke, who does not address whether there is a true essence or not, argued that even if there is, human beings cannot know it in its entirety (Locke, 1998). Thus, the moral and political approach of Locke, who attempts to place some distance between himself and essentialism in terms of his ontological and epistemological perspectives, differs. He emphasizes reason as a distinguishing element of human nature, and he considers humans to be superior to other living things. Locke and other contract theorists' most essential contribution to the understanding of the subject, in this perspective, is to place the subject at the center of political imagination. Locke and contract philosophers based the legitimacy of authority and law not on the will of God, but on the decisions made by the people, on the authority given by the people.

In the modern subject's theorizing process, there are a number of significant turns. One of these major milestones is David Hume's philosophy, which is one of the most notable representatives of Anglo-Scottish Empiricism. From Descartes to Spinoza, from Leibniz to Christian Wolff, empiricist thinkers, who took a different approach to the modern topic than Continental rationalism, maintained that knowledge may be derived in general through and within the constraints of experience. Despite their disagreements on some fundamental issues, rationalism and empiricism, both of which place the subject at the center of their arguments, are based on the assumption that the presence of an *I* is certain. In his Treatise of Human Nature (2009), David Hume, one of the founders of empiricism alongside Locke, believes that human nature and *understanding* should be re-examined for a new beginning in epistemology. Although he is an empiricist, Hume, who strives to explain human understanding, does not seek knowledge solely in the external world; he places a high value on the activities and faculties of the human mind in the acquisition of knowledge. Hume treated all kinds of knowledge that were not subject to experience with suspicion as an Enlightenment thinker who wished to establish that metaphysics and theology were fallacies and illusions and that metaphysical knowledge and religious propositions were unattainable. Knowledge, he claims, is a perception process that begins with experience. Although

Hume was an empiricist, he included the mind's perceptions, which were separated into two categories: impressions and ideas, in the process of knowledge formation (Hume, 2008, p. 96; 2009, p. 17). The mind's perceptions, on the other hand, draw their strength and content from sensations and experiences: What does not have an impression cannot have an idea, he claims (Hume, 2008).

The human person is at the center of Hume's philosophy, which seeks to explain how humans acquire knowledge through new scientific breakthroughs. In philosophy, Hume intended to realize Newton's revolution in natural science by constructing a human science that encompasses logic, morality, criticism, and politics and operates similarly to positive sciences (Hume, 2009; Craig Taylor & Buckle, 2016). Human nature is universal, according to Hume, who, like many other Enlightenment thinkers of his time, placed the concept of *human nature* at the foundation of human science. Therefore, Hume discovered in the concept of human nature the basic constant required for science similar to the precision and universality of natural sciences (Craig Taylor & Buckle, 2016). Hume (2008) was influenced by Newton and attempted to reach the general principles underlying all sciences as an Enlightenment philosopher who aims to understand and discover this understanding of human nature, in other words, the nature of the human intellect, which is the basis of the idea of universality.

One of the most essential objectives for Hume was to expose the universal principles and laws of human nature. His ideas on human nature are founded on two key assumptions at this point: (1) Human beings have a constant and uniform nature. People have not essentially changed over history. So, for a human naturalist, all events in history offer a field of experimentation in which to study and explore the unchanging, uniform nature of humanity. (2) Observation and experiment would be utilized to learn about human nature (Hume, 2009). Unlike many past philosophers, Hume intended to base his study on experimentation and observation, rather than metaphysics: the foundations of this thought should also be built on experimentation and observation (Hume, 2009). Hume, one of the first philosophers to thoroughly and comprehensively

investigate the causality principle, which holds that everything, including our ideas, must have a cause, emphasized habit over causality as a logical imperative. Custom or habit provides a foundation that is based on experience but is not limited to it, including the imagination of the mind (Hume, 2008, p. 121). Hume's method is one of the first to base human nature and knowledge on human nature's capabilities rather than a theological or metaphysical[34] starting point or power. Thus, Hume went one step further than Locke in his endeavor to break free from Cartesian rationalist metaphysics, which could not move away from the teleological worldview, and in his goal of political emancipation from the monarchy. Hume's ideas, which aim to keep basic concepts like intellect, substance, God, soul, and causality, which form the foundation of traditional metaphysics and philosophy, away from philosophical grounding and human science, are effective and important not only in terms of epistemology or metaphysics but also morally and politically. His beliefs can be interpreted as an opposition to human positioning in the world: he was against human positioning being determined in a rationalist or theological context. Humans, according to Hume, are complicated entities having passions, biological and psychological structures (Hume, 2009, p. 431). Hume, who views the human person as a psycho-physiological whole and sees the self as a unity produced by the interaction of internal and external forces, claims that human behavior derives from emotions and passions and that human beings by nature act on the axis of emotion and reason (Hume, 2009). Hume was ahead of his time in conceptualizing the human being as a holistic structure by highlighting the role of emotions and passions.

While Hume raised a challenge to the essentialist view of rationalism in an attempt to comprehend the human being as a whole, he retained a privileged position for humans in his philosophy and shared the essentialist rationalist tradition's attitude. A comparison can be established between the human species and other species, according to Hume (1985), who argued

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[34] There is an attempt behind Hume's consideration of the concept of causation to place experience and observation on the basis of human existence and knowledge. Hume states that the idea of a God whose existence or non-existence cannot be understood cannot be the topic of human understanding while discussing the causality principle behind the cosmological and teleological arguments put forward to prove God's existence (Hume, 2008).

that comparisons are required in the formation of conceptions, and humans are in a different position from other species with particular traits. In this setting, Hume's philosophy, which was skeptical and critical of all previous philosophical history, followed the tradition in some ways. However, by challenging the idea that humans have an essential and unchangeable transcendent element in their nature, he established a significant trend in the history of thought. We can talk about our impressions and perceptions, where our passions are decisive, not substances in human beings, for Hume (2009), who does not seek a substance in the shape of matter or form. Hume, who began his philosophy with fundamental objections to the concept of causality, did not also seek refuge in a materialist viewpoint to escape the rationalist understanding. Hume intended to grasp the nature of humanity in all its richness and purity by proposing a human science to establish the relationship between experience and understanding originally. Despite its expressions with essentialist implications such as *human nature*, Hume's philosophy, which is very effective with its originality and innovation, has brought a new approach to modern subject understanding because it examines the human being not only with one feature, but also with a multidimensional perspective that takes into account passions, emotions, reason, and experience. However, in his philosophy, the attitude of placing human beings in a privileged position versus other beings was maintained; instead of thinking of human beings in a privileged position because they were created by God, a conception of human beings that are different in nature came to the fore. Hume's ideas, on the other hand, constitute a unique contribution to our contemporary understanding of the modern subject as an attempt to comprehend the principles that underpin human knowledge and action. Hume's attempt is the result of a method that provides the concept of the modern subject with an Enlightenment flavor. Kant's thoughts on the modern subject were heralded by Hume's approach.

With his thorough and systematic philosophy, Kant, a philosopher who aimed to explain human existence in all of its dimensions, is one of the intellectuals who made a significant contribution to the modern form of the subject. His philosophy is a comprehensive and systematic

examination of knowledge, existence, morality, art, and politics. Kant's philosophy is a philosophy of criticism, as the titles of his three major works[35] indicate. Kant (2004, p. 10) sought to explore metaphysics[36], which was attempted to be taken out of philosophy by 18th-century empiricism, after waking up from his own "dogmatic slumbers" with Hume's studies focusing on the problem of causality and his skeptical approach in his philosophy (Kant, 1999, A856-B 884). Descartes intended to eradicate the skeptical attitude toward knowledge and belief, in addition to striving to overthrow the dogmatic metaphysics created by Scholastic philosophy. Kant, on the other hand, attempted to overcome not only Hume's skepticism but also the dogmatism and metaphysics that he believed existed in philosophy prior to him. From this point of view, Kant, who critically examined the human intellect in all of its aspects and analyzed the boundaries imposed by rationalism and empiricism for human life, brought these two orientations together in some aspects. Hereby, Kant claims that, while humans are confined in their understanding to the sphere of experiment, they are rational beings capable of thinking comprehensive concepts based on the hints they acquired from the experiment. In other words, while Kant agreed with empiricists that knowledge begins with experience, he contended that knowledge also requires some a priori elements not obtained from experience. Thus, the question addressed in the Critique of Pure Reason as a whole is the possibility of this a priori knowledge, as well as, in a broader sense, what a human can know (Colleran, 2019).

With his thesis that time and space are a priori, Kant attempted to bridge the gap between reason and experience that previous philosophers had failed to do, and in particular, to eliminate

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[35] Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason and Critique of Judgment

[36] Metaphysics, according to Kant, is the result of a natural predisposition (Naturanlage) in humans (Kant, 1999, B21). Natural predisposition differs from Descartes' concept of innate ideas in this context. A human being, according to Kant's philosophy, is a person who is naturally inclined to overcome the limitations of their reason. Consequently, Kant claims that individuals cannot cease questioning things in the sphere of metaphysics, and that they have a natural tendency to do so (Kant, 1999, B22-23). Metaphysics, according to Kant, is the result of a natural predisposition (Naturanlage) in humans (Kant, 1999, B21). Natural predisposition differs from Descartes' concept of innate ideas in this context. A human being, according to Kant's philosophy, is a person who is naturally inclined to overcome the limitations of their reason. Accordingly, Kant claims that individuals cannot cease questioning things in the sphere of metaphysics, and that they have a natural tendency to do so (Kant, 1999, B22-23). In his work The Critique of Pure Reason (1999), Kant examined the subject of metaphysics from an epistemological and anthropological perspective, stating that before knowing anything, we must first evaluate our *capability to understand* itself.

the problems presented by Newton's and Leibniz's approaches. He attempted to prove, on the one hand, that necessary knowledge is attainable in mathematics and natural sciences in opposition to Humean empiricism, and on the other hand, that non-dogmatic metaphysical knowledge is possible in opposition to dogmatic rationalism (Kant, 1999). Time and space are treated by Kant as pure forms of intuition (Kant, 1999, A24, A31); object knowledge can be accessed through intellect categories such as pure forms and causality. This knowledge of phenomena is obtained by both the data of perception and the intuitions and categories of pure reason. Kant (1999), who made a classification about judgments (propositions) to discuss the limits and possibilities of knowledge, against the rationalists who defend the possibility of analytical a priori judgments and the synthetic a posteriori, that is, the possibility of judgments derived from experience argued by empiricists, discusses the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments which both expand our knowledge and are universal and necessary. One of the most basic notions that defines Kant's epistemological perspective is synthetic a priori knowledge. This concept is a reflection of the question of what the intellect and understanding can know independently of experience or the endeavor to define the limits of knowledge. The discussion of how synthetic a priori judgments are possible has attempted to answer this question, which is the duty of pure reason (Kant, 1999, B20). The knowing subject establishes synthetic a priori knowledge through concepts of understanding and time-space intuitions (Allison, 2004). Hence, in Kant's critical analysis, the subject is in a position where it turns to the field of experience, which has its internal laws, and establishes reality while discovering about it.

With a new perspective, Kant attempted to address problems and concepts that he believed could not be addressed by previous philosophy. For the solution to theoretical and practical difficulties, he examined notions such as *pure self*, causality, freedom, reason, intellect, experience, time, and space. Accordingly, the development of the *pure self*[37] is the starting and

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[37] Unlike the *empirical self*, whose intellectual, informational, emotional, and psychological states fluctuate with time, the term *pure self* is used to refer to a constitutive *self* that does not change over time but incorporates it. No self-given or self-existing starting point is accepted in Kant's transcendental philosophy. This includes not only the *object*

source point for Kant's system, which he refers to as *transcendental* philosophy. In Kant's Copernican Revolution analogy, the effect of this new approach that evolved in the idea of the subject can be seen. Kant, a "turning point" in contemporary thought (Creighton, 1913, p. 133), likened his philosophy to Copernicus' revolution in astronomy (Kant, 1999, B XV). Kant's philosophy, like the Copernican Revolution, is the outcome of humans trying to reposition themselves in the world and the universe. The idea that the Sun[38], not the Earth[39], was at the center of the universe rose to prominence in cosmology with Copernicus. According to modern understanding, the subject should now be at the core of knowledge processes and play a founding role in them. According to Kant, Copernicus sought "the observed movements not in the heavens, but in their observer" (Kant, 1999, B XXII n.). Departing from this point, Kant "seeks the laws governing the realm of experience not in the objects themselves but in us" (Bonevac, 2003, p. 41): "(…) we can cognize of things a priori only what we ourselves have put into them" (Kant, 1999, B XVIII). Kant considers that the intellect fits the objects problematic, as it implies that the human being is merely a passive receiver of knowledge. Kant believed that, much as Copernicus did in astronomy, it was unavoidable to make a hypothesis or change of position to explain a priori knowledge and so justify the existence of synthetic a priori propositions. Thus, the entire realm of existence remains unchanged, but the hypothesis, or point of view, that is, the stance, has changed.

In the sphere of knowledge, Kant suggested the hypothesis that the external world and objects suit the structure of the human mind, rather than the idea that the human mind fits the external world. Thus, while the subject's position changes completely in Kant's philosophy, what we know and what we cannot know, — in other words the limitations of our knowledge, are determined. Things in the external world are perceived and experienced as they seem in our experience (as a phenomenon) by our own subjective laws; yet, we can never know how those

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and the *world* in the most general sense, but also the *self* on which the *world* will be built. That is, the "pure self" is a synthetic unity, or a space that has been constructed; a space that links, unifies, and synthesizes, but not a substantive being (Allison, 2004; Gözkan, 2018).

[38] The Copernican Model: A Sun-Centered Solar System or Heliocentric model

[39] The Aristotelian-Ptolemaic model of Universe or Geocentric model

things are in themselves, or the *thing-in-itself*[40] (Ding-an-sich). Thus, no knowledge about the ideas of God, spirit, and freedom can be revealed through the ability of understanding, according to Kant, who wants to show that the theoretical mind cannot reach the knowledge of the metaphysical field beyond experience; however, the intellect cannot hold back from producing these ideas and asking questions about these issues. Human morality provides the foundation that allows these ideas to form. With his approach developed in his practical philosophy about the principles of reason, especially the idea of freedom, Kant made a transition from the level of knowledge to the field of morality, from the theoretical to the practical (Kant, 1999, A 329- B 386).

Kant used practical reason to overcome this dilemma, expressing that freedom can be considered in his theoretical philosophy, but it remains an unknowable and unsolvable problem. In an attempt to uncover the subjective origins of scientific and moral principles, Kant maintained that people can find these principles and organize their lives around them without the aid of any divine help (Allison, 2004). Kant, on the other hand, builds duty-based (deontological) ethics based on the broad structure of pure practical reason in the Critique of Practical Reason, revealing the basic framework of his philosophy regarding the sphere of knowledge and existence in this way. Kant sought to finish the work he began with epistemology with practical philosophy, examining the human being in all of its dimensions. Kant believed that the link he imagined between human theoretical and practical actions might be formed on a firm foundation. Humans, according to him, are not only beings with a theoretical mind that comprehends and theorizes about what is around them, but also beings who have a pure practical reason for carrying information about what they should do, in other words, beings who do not only need to know but also have the need to act and behave (Kant, 2002, p. 3). The general framework of the idea of a human being as a moral subject

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[40] Kant's conception of the "thing in itself" is one of the basic concepts of his philosophy and "the key to his division between phenomenal world of knowledge and the noumenal world of free will, morality, and religion" (Solomon, 2003, p. 183).

has been determined by this approach, which is a result of the idea of human beings who act and establish their life.

Kant attempted to identify the principles on which our behavior and decisions should be founded in his main work, the Critique of Practical Reason, in which he concentrates on moral philosophy (Reath & Timmermann, 2010). The project at hand is not about using an empirical approach to determine existing moral principles and see if they've changed through time and across cultures. Kant is looking for moral principles that are universal, essential, and a priori. Hence, Kant did not seek the validity of specific moral principles, but rather universal and a priori principles that would serve as the foundation for all moral acts (O'Neill, 1990). He claims that we have moral knowledge in addition to our sensory intuition-based understanding of objects. Thus, we humans know that it is our responsibility to tell the truth and that human life must be valued. In the sense that it is independent of experience and human conduct, the moral knowledge in question is a priori knowledge. Kant claims that his mission is to uncover the a priori elements in our moral knowledge, to show how synthetic a priori propositions are feasible in the sphere of morality, and to reveal the source of these elements (Kant, 2002; Reath & Timmermann, 2010). For this, he looked at the unsolvable problem of freedom, which he addressed in his analysis of antinomies in the Critique of Pure Reason, as a question of practical reason, and thus freedom found its true meaning in the practical realm.

Human freedom, according to Kant, is characterized as following the unchangeable moral law, rather than disarray or anarchy (Heimsoeth, 1994, pp. 254-256). One cannot behave morally without being free[41], according to Kant (2012), who founded the moral law on his analysis of morality; we can only attain the consciousness of freedom through the moral law. This law can be established with synthetic a priori propositions freed from the field of experience. Kant investigated in depth the moral doctrine that synthetic a priori propositions are feasible, or, to put

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[41] Freedom was the most basic starting point of philosophy for thinkers of the period, such as Kant, Fich, Schiller, Schelling, and, of course, Hegel, in accordance with the social and political atmosphere of the 18th and 19th centuries.

it another way, a new moral metaphysics whose limitations he attempted to define. Moral metaphysics, then, "investigates the idea and principles of a possible pure will" (Kant, 1993, p. 58, X). Kant's inclusion of fields with different laws, such as phenomena and noumena, in his philosophical design originated from his desire to make room for ideas like freedom and morality, which are not perceptible to the senses yet are essential for human understanding[42]. The reason why causation must be established in the noumena field, according to Kant, is for a practical purpose; this purpose is to make place for human freedom (Kant, 2002, p. 74). Hence, Kant refers to "(T)he law of causality from freedom", a non-experimental source of the notion of cause (Kant, 2002, p. 25).

If we are talking about the legitimacy of moral law and if this law is to include all humans, it must be a priori and have an absolute necessity, according to Kant's (2002) practical critique. Because the world of experience provides a relative, non-absolute moral ground, Kant's idea of the universality of morality cannot accept. The moral law, on the other hand, is an a priori law derived from pure reason and thus applicable to all rational beings. According to Kant, who establishes a direct link between moral law and freedom, both freedom and moral law mutually require one another. Accordingly, human liberty leads to the moral law, and moral law, in turn, leads to liberty (Kant, 2002, p. 44). This single categorical imperative, according to Kant, is as follows: "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (Kant, 1993, p. 88, 52). Departing from this point of view, Kant formulated the universal imperative of duty of law as follows: "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a Universal Law of Nature" (Kant, 1993, p. 88, 52). In this context, for Kant, "a will whose maxim always conforms to this law is good absolutely, in every respect, and is the supreme condition of all good" (Kant, 2002, p. 84). Thus, the moral law serves as the foundation for both good will and duty. The moral law applies to all rational beings with these characteristics: "This principle,

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[42] Kant's work can be seen as an attempt to overcome Hume's critique of causality, thereby allowing for human morality and freedom. Kant encapsulates this endeavor in the phrase "(T)hus I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith" (Kant, 1999, B XXX).

however, does not need to be searched for or invented; it has all along been in the reason of all human beings and incorporated in their essence, and is the principle of morality" (Kant, 2002, p. 133). The moral law, which is unconditional and contentless, provides humans with a formal foundation by which they can determine their own will, and this moral law "is the sole determining basis of the pure will" (Kant, 2002, p. 140). What makes a human's conduct moral is that it is determined by the moral law, rather than by the content of the will that underpins it.

The individual's autonomy is also due to the fact that the moral code does not exist in a framework that is ready-made and ordered according to particular contents. Kant gave humans the responsibility and autonomy to develop their own moral beliefs and act in accordance with them. Hence, Kant maintained that a human is no more a being that is subject to moral principles that are presented, imposed, or preached to them, but rather a being who develops these principles and rules (Rawls, 1989). Accordingly, humans are the only beings who have the ability to act freely outside of the laws of nature, and hence can be moral (Reath & Timmermann, 2010). Humans can determine the reason for their will as free beings; in other words, freedom is the moral law's raison d'être. For Kant, "a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same" (Kant, 1993, p. 114). Kant practically assigned autonomy and the ability to act freely to all rational beings, particularly human beings (Kant, 1993, p. 116). Hence, Kant, who established the scope of a universal morality, also established the subject of that morality. For him, freedom is the essence of humanity; humans are entities that obey the moral code they devised with their minds, and so become autonomous and free in consequence of doing so. Kant continued the autonomous position of the human subject and his basic relationship with freedom in his thinking on law and politics, applying the critical analysis he used in the realms of knowledge and morality. Kant claimed that individuals could only be free if they followed the laws they made, and contended that law and the state exist to ensure human liberty (see, Kant, 1991a, 1993, 2006b). Consequently, Kant has made a significant and thorough contribution to the modern subject idea by situating the human person

as an independent subject through his practical philosophy and epistemology, which is based on the idea of freedom.

As can be seen in the review, in which it is attempted to summarize the various contributions that have come to light across the history of philosophy, the approach to the position of humankind has been formed as a result of various amendments and breaks in philosophy during the process of the advent of the modern concept of the subject. The representation and position of humankind in modern understanding have been affected to a considerable extent by this rupture, which is the outcome of Kant's effort to establish an integrated philosophical system for the realms of knowledge, morality, law, politics, and art. Thus, human beings, unlike other living things, are in a unique position to choose whether or not to transgress nature's laws by following a universal moral law. Humans are separated from other living things by this ability, as they are not bound by the laws and motives of nature. The human species, according to Kant, will develop a more free and just order. Accordingly, an order founded on human and human rights will emerge, and the ideal of eternal peace, defined as the union of morality and politics, will be pursued more vigorously (Kant, 2006b). Humans are the only beings capable of achieving this aim with their minds; they require the guidance of their intellect, not their motives and feelings, to do so. Kant clearly sees humans as a being of possibilities, based on these ideas. In terms of being human, humans have value and dignity as a being of possibilities. Therefore, Kant might be regarded as the first philosopher to regard human as autonomous and moral being who possesses freedom (Mengüsoğlu, 2014). This position of the human in nature has only been possible because human possesses the ability to reason (understand) and uses that ability to recognize its own uniqueness. In this sense, humans are both subject to the order of nature and have the ability to act independently against it from their original position. However, Kant's ideas can be viewed as a continuation of some of the problematic aspects of modern subject comprehension. Kant's emphasis on the value and dignity of being human (see Kant, 1991a) implied indirect regard for other living things and nature, however, he positioned humans hierarchically above other living

things and nature. This approach might be seen as a reflection of the belief that humans are the masters of nature. The subjects, who are in some ways dependent on natural laws, are put in a separate position from other beings and nature itself in Kant's philosophy, with their intellect allowing them to establish their independence and autonomy. These beings cannot be moral subjects, according to Kant, because the mind, which determines the nature of people and makes them human, is not found in other living things in nature, such as non-human animals that act on instincts (Wood & O'Neill, 1998). Kant explains the value of a human being as a moral subject in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*:

> Rational beings, on the other hand, are called persons because their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves -that is, as something which ought not to be used merely as a means- and consequently imposes to that extent a limit on all arbitrary treatment of them (and is an object of reverence) (Kant, 1993, p. 96).

Thus, Kant, who highlighted non-human beings' instrumentality, extended this idea in his later works with statements like humans are privileged by nature, and animals are instruments for human ends (Kant, 2007) or rational beings are individuals, while non-rational beings are things (2006a, Kant)[43]. Kant's philosophy arose from a desire to free people from pre-fabricated thought schemes (such as religion or worldviews); to this end, Kant put the moral subject, the human being, at the center as a constitutive being of possibilities. Therefore, Kant continued to emphasize the rational part of human nature, which resulted in Enlightenment thought, as well as the anthropocentric viewpoint, which sees humans as hierarchically dominant over nature. In this regard, his ideas can be viewed as both a turning point in the history of philosophy and a continuation of the previous way of thinking. In the light of several problematic aspects such as race, gender inequality, slavery, colonialism, and from the perspective of the twenty-first century,

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[43] Despite Kant's opinion that animals are simply things with lives, he did not believe that we can treat them as we like. He said in his work Lectures on Ethics that we have certain indirect responsibilities to animals (Kant, 2008). Hence, these responsibilities do not relate to them, but how we treat them may have an impact on our responsibilities to other people. In particular, it has been suggested in recent studies of Kant's philosophy that he had a respect for non-human species, albeit indirectly (see, for example, Korsgaard, 2012; Regan, 2010; Wood & O'Neill, 1998).

the content of Kant's determination of the moral subject, as well as the consistency of this content, has been criticized (see e.g., Bernasconi, 2001; Kleingeld, 2019; Mills, 2014; Smith, 2015). Although such an approach could be considered anachronistic, it is crucial to highlight these concerns to highlight some of Kant's philosophical flaws.

The question of whether the human being, whom Kant regards as a creature of possibilities, has a predefined, fixed structure or essence is a contentious one. On the one hand, Kant argues that humans are beings who can construct themselves as moral beings through their practices/acts; on the other hand, he emphasizes the rational side of human nature, emphasizing this characteristic and defending the idea of a human nature on which moral principles are based. Although Kant's approach to human nature might be seen as a potential that has yet to be realized and that will emerge through the intellect, this approach runs the risk of implying a universal uniformity, an ideal and abstract human form. The concept of 'human nature,' as explored in the previous section of the research, is one of the most fundamental philosophical thinking forms in which essentialism is exposed. The concept of 'human nature' bears the potential of leading to a view in which some human characteristics are validated and idealized, while others are at best marginalized and compelled to repress.

Despite the fact that Kant based moral conduct on human freedom and autonomy, his system of duties was criticized for its formality and abstractness. Hegel, for example, critiques Kant's rational individual as unreal and abstract. Hegel (2015) stated that Kant's universal principles are disconnected from tradition and society, and so ineffective in real-life situations. According to Habermas (2001), Kant's ethics of duty does not address the consequences of the action, and the maxim on which the action is founded is rooted in the autonomy of the will of an abstract-identical self. According to him, the principle reached in this manner lacks content that would satisfy the parties' mutual recognition (*I* and non-*I*), as well as their mutual expectation and interest (Habermas, 2001).

Despite the criticisms leveled by critics of modernism or those who advocate for its reconstruction, it is possible to conclude that Kant values human beings not because they are bearers of metaphysical or substantive truths, but simply because they are human, in other words, based on their actions and practices. His philosophy's journey from the axis of existence and knowledge study to the practical sphere of human activities reveals this approach. Kant, who places human beings in an ethical-political field that extends beyond a study of knowledge or existential philosophy, might be said to perceive humans as agents who identify and define their own capacities in the phenomenal field. Kant, a renowned philosopher of Enlightenment philosophy and a modern thinker, believes in human existence and the fundamental position of humanity. Kant strives to show the feasibility of a compromise by proposing a self-governing human concept from the area of knowledge to practice. Kant offers a moral and universal commonality in the context of social and political conflicts and divisions, citing the capacities of reason as intersubjective talents shared by all humanity as the source of this reconciliation. Kant, who established the framework of the subject-object relationship with the categorical imperative, which is at the foundation of his moral and political thinking, advanced a conceptual line that is also at the heart of the contemporary political theory, such as empathy and reconciliation. People were positioned as actors with potential by Kant, who discussed them in the context of their relationships with others. Kant's emphasis on human dignity has made him one of the most prominent figures in twenty-first-century political philosophy.

In consequence of the modern period's theorized style of thinking, a significant alteration in the subject's position in the realms of knowledge, existence, morality, and politics has occurred. With the modern version of the concept of the subject, whose roots may be traced back to the first studies of Western philosophy's history, a substantial shift in human beings' epistemology, ontology, morality, and politics has occurred. Over time, the philosophical inquiry that began with nature in the early Western philosophers came to focus on human understanding and acts. Human rationality, a universal human nature, a hierarchical understanding of existence, and thus the search

for determining the essence of human nature, and the universe, which have provided the basis for the modern subject idea throughout philosophy's history, have all been theorized. It is plausible to claim that this process, in which humans began to position themselves above other beings and a new understanding of knowledge and existence, based on a dualist divide between soul and body, created the basis for human positioning as a subject.

Platinos', Plato's, and Aristotle's prominent philosophies were altered, transformed, and reinterpreted, with the idea of God replacing the Logos, which became prominent in philosophy following the ancient Greek philosophy. With their ideas about inner orientation (e.g., Augustine) or the role of the subject in knowledge (e.g., Boethius), medieval philosophers were able to produce literature that formed the basis for the modern subject by reinterpreting the hierarchical concept of existence and self-seeking in Ancient Greece through the existence of God. The shift in human status, which may be traced back to the beginnings of Western philosophy, was accelerated by the rupture with Descartes' philosophy and reached a pinnacle with Kant. Modernism is a product of the effort to redefine and reposition the universe, the world, societies, and people as a consequence of various scientific, political, and economic developments that occurred in Europe during the 17th century.

Human subjectivation and centralization in philosophy have been theorized as a consequence of the shift in human understanding. There has been proposed a new viewpoint on the universe, the worth of science and knowledge, and the problematization of truth, as well as an autonomous interpretation of philosophy based on human rationality. It may be determined that morality and politics began to become secular during this period. The beginning point and purpose of modern philosophies is to reveal the Western subject's mystery, to find the human being, who is hidden behind a sacred veil with Scholastic thought, in all of his or her reality. The process of the subject's settlement in the center has provided very important openings for the understanding of the capacity, possibilities and position of the human being as a self. The subject-I has pursued a self-aware course, draws the capacity and boundaries of its knowledge, attempts to build a

method for this effort, and presents itself as a moral determiner in a politically centralized position, in line with modern philosophy. It was attempted to create a barrier between human and transcend beings during this period. It has been sought to locate the human as a subject in a separate and autonomous position in the realm of existence. The modern subjects, whilst making sense of the world outside themselves in this positioning process, have defined it from their own theoretical framework. Therefore, the external world's structure, which contains both difference and variety, is fixed in the *same*, in a single place of belonging. According to Descartes' self-concept, *A* defined itself in the *not-A* (non-A) duality, and in this way, *not-A* was defined as the negation of *A*, and it was closed to alternative definitions. For both *A* and *not-A*, this circumstance eventually resulted in a static position, a condition of closure. The modern conception of the subject based on the antithesis of self and non-self, has theorized that individuals define themselves through the Other. Through the self's revelation of its other, the divide between the self and the other has formed the basis of a fundamental conflict. This contrast is a critical component of the modern concept of the subject. According to Stuart Hall, identity is "a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself" (Hall, 1991, p. 21). In modern epistemic terms, the masculine-white subject, for example, is viewed as a widely accepted representation, and the Other is defined by this representation. Therefore, individuals who lacked the features of the subject in question were inevitably positioned in relation to it: Women were defined by their lack of the male phallus, and black people were defined by their non-whiteness. The distinction between self and other is reflected in terms like developed-underdeveloped, civilized-barbarian.

Modern subjects' perspectives have obtained meaning within dichotomic mechanisms and have been understood from the perspective of the opposing position. People with differences are labelled as evil, irrational, abnormal, grotesque, sick, primitive, monstrous, and dangerous within a certain category of the Other: The positions of the subjects, or their belongings, are determined by the other, by the different (Connolly, 2008). With the shift in the contemporary period, the

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human, who was defined as an agent in ancient Greek philosophy, has begun to be conceived of as an ego. Human, who is a natural member of the society in the ancient Greek world, a part of the cosmos (given, of course, that he is a man and not a slave), is a part of an unnatural coexistence established with the modern period on the basis of his/her own subjectivity. Modern philosophers who believe human self-consciousness to be the basis of all kinds of knowledge have placed rationality at the core of this awareness by following Descartes' path. With Kant's initiative, human beings, freed from the necessity of nature and the limits of moral and cultural instructions given to them, are appraised as autonomous beings who are the agents of their activities on the one hand, and positioned on a hierarchically higher level, separate from other beings and nature on the other.

As can be seen from its traces in the history of philosophy, the modern understanding of the subject, which shapes the content of belongings, in other words, the definition and scope of the *I*, has been embodied in moral and political philosophies built on epistemological and ontological foundations. Philosophers' moral and political ideas, which are based on their knowledge and existence perspectives, reveal how they define and position human beings. As mentioned in this chapter, one of the fundamental efforts of philosophers from Ancient Greece to modern times has been to define and scope human beings as a subject; for this goal, philosophers first endeavored to identify concrete and indisputable basis for knowledge and existence. Descartes (2013) uncovered one of the first and most influential examples of subject metaphysics when he discovered this definite and undoubted basis, in other words, the Archimedean point, whose presence and certainty is undeniable, in the thinking self, that is, the subject. This approach gave the concept of the reason a different meaning than in classical philosophy; it is no longer thought of as a reason that attempts to identify the substance of existence, but as an instrumental reason that relates to the object. Nature and other species in nature are reduced to a position where their values are less than human beings or none at all, with this point of view, which reduces everything other than reason into a purposeless and consumable substance. This epistemic idea of the subject is ultimately founded on a dichotomy between subject and object, which Kant's transcendental subject has posed as a

challenge. Kant intended to create the universal foundations of knowledge and activities of the subject staying on an individual plane to fill the pits left by Descartes and the philosophies before him (Bernstein, 2011). Thus, the modern understanding of the subject, which began with Descartes in the modern era and culminated with Kant, establishes an important context that determines the position of the *I* based on epistemological and ontological grounds, in other words, the social and political scope of human existence's belongings. In the universalist tradition, which has acquired a systematic framework with Kant's philosophy, it is possible to discern reflections of Kant's philosophy, which has extremely major repercussions in epistemological, ontological, moral, and political spheres. The history of the formation of the modern subject can be seen as the history of the universalist tradition's theorizing in general. The use of a given idea of human nature, which usually originates with an emphasis on rationality, to construct a set of universally valid norms and standards for all human beings is one of the most fundamental markers of this relationship. With the idea of the modern subject, the ontological, epistemological, moral, and political foundations of this approach, which is the consequence of a quest for a shared essence in all human beings, were built, allowing universal humanity thought to develop.

Since the early philosophers, curiosity about discovering the essence of the cosmos and human beings has been a significant focus, as addressed in the essentialism section of the study. From the Philosophy of Nature through Plato, medieval thinkers to Kant, the majority of philosophers have sought this universal and ideal reality, an essence. In terms of political ramifications, the emergence of the concept of the modern subject, in which human beings are hierarchically positioned above other beings and nature in general, and which is regarded as different and privileged in terms of its essence, has been particularly significant. The universalist tradition's general orientation was determined by the aforementioned political consequences, which were expressed in the claim of controlling human relations with other beings and with each other. Moreover, the particularist tradition, which can be understood as an opposition to universalist philosophy, might be read as an opposition to this tendency. As a consequence, the

tension between universalist and particularist philosophies, which will be discussed in the next section, can be viewed as defenses and objections to modern subject understanding. From this perspective, the tension between universalism and particularism is addressed in the following subsection, as are the philosophical approaches proposed for the organization of individuals in the social realm and diverse categories of belonging throughout the period in which the modern subject emerged.

2.2. Different Approaches on the Position of Human Beings

The advent of the modern subject has opened up a vast space that necessitates a reassessment of people's coexistence practices. Different philosophical traditions have looked into how to place and organize modern subjects in an evolving and changing social space in diverse ways. The emergence of the modern subject is one of the sources of the transition of people who believe in a certain religion and live in a certain piece of land, from having a limited set of belonging as a subject to a position where they belong to a wide variety of categories such as ethnicity, nation, gender, citizenship. The challenge of how to manage the coexistence of people with new categories of belonging became one of philosophy's key agenda items in consequence of this process. The content and extent of the problem of belonging can be discussed from the perspective of two primary philosophical approaches that strive to shape the organization of modern subjects in the social realm. In this subsection, which aims to discuss the universalist and particularist traditions, the philosophical foundations of the approaches to the organization of human beings in the social field and the categories of belonging are examined.

One of the most fundamental philosophical foundations that is the root of our age's understanding of belonging is the tension between universality and particularity, which is also one of the most important debates that has formed our social and political life. The conflict in question is the result of an attempt to find a solution to the question of which principles will organize human coexistence in practice. It's crucial to assess this debate alongside the process of developing the

modern subject. Because the process of human subjectivation and the dilemma of how these subjects might coexist are linked in a structure that influences and categorizes them. The content of the relationship with the other is likewise determined by the subject's definition, namely the *I*. According to this perspective, the process of structuring the modern subject, which began with Ancient Greek philosophy, was triggered by Descartes' philosophy, and culminated with Kant, outlines the general lines of conflict between universalist and particularist approaches to the organization and definition of subjects in the social and political realm.

First and foremost, a philosophical and historical context for the universalist tradition is presented in this part. Because the philosophers listed in the section devoted to the modern subject are also the founders of the idea of universalism, this chapter concentrates on the universalist tradition's main characteristics, social setting, and historical context. The tension between universality and particularity, it is suggested in this section, is a fundamental area of debate that defines people's experiences of living together and the various categories of belonging that are effective in social life. The goal of this research is to identify various approaches to the concept of belonging and to highlight the significance of two traditions that have provided effective solutions to the challenge of coexistence with differences. For this purpose, it would be useful to first take a closer look at the conditions under which this tension arises.

A significant shift in the structuring of the subject in the social and political sphere has occurred in the recent era. The social structure, which had been determined for many years by the pacifying severe domination of social-political inequality, began to shift in consequence of numerous changes. New social organization searches and attempts to define humanity have emerged in consequence of these shifts, particularly in Western societies. The foundations of numerous new types of social categorization in the political area were built during this period, which corresponds to a totally new stage in human history. Many of the claims that today define the political field with their demands, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, language, class, physicality, and nation, were laid in these times (Paradies, 2006). The creation of these new

types of social categorization has been facilitated by a number of variables. The Renaissance, Enlightenment, scientific revolutions, and great upheavals in the social-intellectual field occurred during this period, which was also the source of the emergence of the modern concept of the subject. Scientific revolutions, which some philosophers consider to be the most important 'event' in Western history (see, for example, Westfall, 1986), are one of the most essential causes of this shift in the influence they cause. Important social and political results such as the Industrial Revolution, the American Revolution (1775–1783), and the French Revolution (1789–1799) were made possible by scientific breakthroughs that ushered in the Age of Revolution. Perhaps for the first time since the Neolithic Revolution, such radical and rapid changes in people's lives occurred: Where people lived (e.g., cities instead of villages), how they were fed, by whom and how they were ruled (e.g., popular power rather than kings), and how they defined themselves concerning these have all begun to change very quickly (Hobsbawm, 2010). During this historical period, a considerable portion of the people, particularly in Europe, moved away from rural areas and began to live in cities.

Mills argued in his essay The Sociological Imagination, written in the 1960s, that one in six people transitioned from a feudal to modern life in the course of a generation, and that this new life caused considerable fear and anxiety in individuals (Mills, 2000). According to Mills (2000), this shift in society has resulted in significant changes and confusion in both emotions and institutions. In the cities to which he relocated, a person who previously considered himself as a hardworking peasant, a good Christian, a man, and a good family member had to redefine himself as a member of new belonging categories. People have had to redefine their positions in the practice of living as a result of this new circumstance, which is the result of scientific, social, and political advancements. Thus of philosophical, political, and technical changes, religion, which has been regarded as the source of moral ideals for enormous masses for hundreds of years, has begun to be questioned and critiqued. As a consequence, people found themselves in new groups, clusters of belonging, and social categories: the world they knew had been flipped upside down,

and the traditional communities had been transformed and destroyed. Following the disintegration of communities, Bauman (1996) claims that the numerous categories that formed, or new kinds of social categorization, supplied the glue that held individuals together. With its epistemological and ontological roots, the main tension between the *universalistic* and *particularistic* approaches in the history of philosophy regarding the status of belonging categories in the social field has become one of the leading tensions of contemporary political thought providing the basis for discussions between *universalism* vs. *identity politics*, *objectivity* vs. *relativity*, *pure transcendentalism* vs. *pure historicism*, *modernity* vs. *postmodernity*.

2.2.1. Universalist Idea of Humanity

Throughout the history of philosophy, many great philosophers have urged people to think, decide, and question for themselves, without the influence of others. From 'the Socratic method' through Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, a major part of the history of philosophy can be seen as a call to be self-critical and autonomous, as well as ready for self-development. The Enlightenment period, often known as the *Age of Philosophers*, was one of the most intensive periods in the history of philosophy in terms of philosophers' search and calls in this direction. The term *enlightenment* refers to both a historical period and a philosophical movement, and it is one of the most fundamental sources of the universalist ideal. At this point, by evaluating the philosophical concept set that the Enlightenment thought gave rise to, it is feasible to reveal the impact of the universalist approach in philosophical, social, and political spheres.

The Enlightenment period is one of the most effective examples of individuals struggling under the weight of various structures on an individual and social level, turning to new ideas and developing critical and questioning approaches to dogmas. The idea of Enlightenment, in all its diversity, molded the theoretical backdrop of the universalistic approach and set its basic framework by providing a comprehensive plan and theoretical premise for how the social and political space produced by modern subjects should be arranged. By clarifying the idea of

Enlightenment, which incorporates all of the characteristics of the universalist approach and places the modern subject in a social and political framework, information about the structure and content of the universalistic approach can be revealed. This attempt at explanation is to demonstrate universalism's close relationship with modernity, and more specifically with the modern subject. Of fact, not all Enlightenment philosophers subscribed to the universalist viewpoint. It's also feasible to debate philosophers who shared the dynamics of the Enlightenment movement and discussed universalist principles, but advanced ideas that were rooted in the particularist tradition. The Enlightenment period is significant in this regard because it reveals dynamics that are at the root of both universalist and particularist approaches.

The Enlightenment can be considered a period, a concept, a movement, a philosophy, an ideal, and a mission all in one. Enlightenment is the idea of transforming a human into a subject, but it is also the start of the subject's dissolution. Despite some distinguishing characteristics and perspectives, Enlightenment thinking is not a unified concept; it is a movement that differs from philosopher to philosopher, from country to country without an absolute beginning and end date. It is vital to highlight the existence of several Enlightenment while discussing the philosophy of Enlightenment, such as the English, Scottish, French, and German Enlightenment (or *Aufklärung*). Despite their many similarities, thinking of Enlightenment intellectuals as members of a homogeneous group and viewing Enlightenment thought as a coherent framework is erroneous. However, the idea of Enlightenment can be assessed in terms of some of its general traits and tendencies[44]. In this regard, while keeping in mind the diversity of different enlightenments, it is possible to highlight the points that Enlightenment thought has in common with the ideal of

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[44] It's difficult to speak about a single Enlightenment thought that is both historically and geographically uniform. Although it is conceivable to discuss the Enlightenment's distinct legacy and how it influenced the globe as a whole, it would be a huge error to overlook the period's diversity and mobility. Enlightenment is not the result of a small group's efforts. It owes a lot to mutual relations, debates, and their many manifestations in various places. *Éclaircissement*, *Enlightenment*, and *Aufklärung* are movements that emerged in conjunction and have common perspectives, but they also have distinct orientations and viewpoints. However, enough intersection points may be found to analyze these various currents under the banner of *The Enlightenment*.

universality, and to identify some basic features of the Enlightenment that have been the source of the universalist approach, in line with the limits and purpose of the study.

After the Middle Ages, scientific, social, and political developments influenced the emergence of Enlightenment ideas, which occurred roughly simultaneously in continental Europe and Anglo-Saxon regions. In general, Enlightenment thinkers believed that religious sovereignty resulted in conflicts, conflict, suffering, and poverty, and instead highlighted the urgency of a profound and universal change that would allow reason to rule (Beiser, 1996). People hoped that the Enlightenment would demythify *magical* nature and therefore make it understandable[45]: "The shackles of superstition, myth, and ignorance" were challenged by Enlightenment scholars (Mirza, 2012, p. 21). The belief that the gravity of the situation in the world and the information needed to get out of it may be achieved with the confidence of human reason and knowledge of reality - by means of reason - is based on the need for change aimed at the Enlightenment. The post-medieval period allowed for a review and revision of existing institutions and practices due to the transition in epistemological, ontological, ethical, and political understanding that had previously prevailed. The state and society developed for the first time in the modern sense as a result of these transformations, which freed the state and public sphere from the dominance of the church and religion (West, 2011). The Enlightenment as an opposition and redemption movement that questions religious ideas, dominant understandings of nature, society, and political organization is an important ground for the discussion of belonging. In this regard, the Enlightenment has a two-dimensional nature, with a destructive and critical attitude toward the old social and political

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[45] All of nature's living, sacred, and inviolable features vanished in the geographies where the Enlightenment flourished, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, who presented one of the most prominent critics of the Enlightenment; nature has become an object that can be dominated. Nature is now a raw resource that will be acknowledged on a legal level and changed and made usable via the application of the appropriate rules. The human being is both the subject and the object of this dominance; to rule nature also is to rule people. Because a uniform and inclusive reason as a new God, to fill the place of all myths, is a prerequisite for this new understanding. Humans, who are the rulers of nature, will now take on the role of God, who used to be the ruler of the world (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002; Horkheimer, 2018).

system, which is dominated by religion, and a constructive attitude aimed at establishing a new world ideal on a universal level (Cassirer, 2009; Gay, 1998).

Enlightenment thinkers, who sought to organize humanity, nature, and society according to universal principles, laid the theoretical groundwork for the social transformations and revolutions that followed. The fact that the Age of Enlightenment overlaps with the historical period known as the Age of Revolution is not coincidental: The Industrial Revolution, the English or Glorious Revolution (1688), the American Revolution (1775–1783), and the French Revolution (1789–1799) are all closely linked to the interests and influences of Enlightenment philosophers in the social and political realm (Bristow, 2017; Munck, 2000). The problems of the social-political field attract the interest of Enlightenment thinkers and Enlightenment. According to Dorinda Outram (1997), multinational corporations began to emerge during the Age of Enlightenment, and transcontinental European empires were founded, laying the groundwork for globalization. According to him, these worldwide changes lead to the assumption of humanity as a *whole*; when the *world* develops and grows in perception, world history begins to be considered the global history of humankind (Outram, 1997). The emphasis on the universal in social and political events that are the outcome of the human, moral, and reason design formulated in modern subject knowledge can be identified. The search for universality has widened with the discovery of *new worlds* and the expansion of the geographical map.

Enlightenment intellectuals sought universal principles, a universal human existence, a universal reason, and a universal morality because they hoped for a universal change beyond reforming a limited civilization or a small social environment in which they lived. As a leading thinker of the Enlightenment period, a period of philosophical, scientific and socio-political significant changes, Kant's answer in 1784 to the question *What is Enlightenment?* could be seen as a sketch of this era. This response by Kant, written in the comparatively late time of the Enlightenment, both demonstrates and critiques the Enlightenment's general lines. With his famous remarks at the beginning of his article, Kant invites us to challenge and question the given:

"Sapere aude![46] Have courage to use your own understanding!" (Kant, 1991b, p. 54). With the possibility he defines as "man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity", Kant invites us to struggle against one of the deepest enemies of philosophy: "(…) the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another" (Kant, 1991b, p. 54). The value placed on human existence and faith in human consciousness is at the heart of the philosophy of Enlightenment, which includes values such as *finding your own way* and *acting with your own thoughts*. Kant's placing of the human as an independent being in a constitutive position reflects these ideals, which were institutionalized with the modern concept of the subject. Having the courage to use one's own reason, in other words, the freedom to choose not to submit to any authority other than one's own reason, is the quality of the autonomous subject. The Enlightenment's motto, 'Sapere aude!', is a call for humans to establish themselves as the actor of their own life by using reason in an autonomous manner, free of any form of determination. The concept that humans can fully recognize the world they live in by utilizing their own reason is referred to as enlightenment (Cassirer, 2009). This epistemological belief has been transformed into a world ideal established/organized by reason, and hence essentially a political understanding, with the idea of the Enlightenment. The importance of reason as a capability, a potential, and the most fundamental trait that all individuals possess (see Kant, 2002) is also central to Enlightenment thought. Despite its limitations, reason, according to Enlightenment philosophy, is capable of reaching universal laws by reconciling analyses based on facts and applying the information obtained to the whole/universal one, or of establishing laws, as Kant puts it (Allison, 2004). These universal laws were conceived as tools to be utilized in the prediction, definition, and control of other processes. Enlightenment intellectuals, as Habermas (1987) points out, attempted to create an age that was not surrounded by the ideals of the past and sought validity in its own laws. Hence, the universal and autonomous reason is the primary authority to be followed. This new epoch, foretold by

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[46] Eng.: Dare to be wise!

Enlightenment thinkers, is founded on the belief in universal criteria for truth and the universal nature of human beings, as well as the belief that human reason, guided by universals, can rule life.

The influence of Enlightenment intellectuals, who historically found their closest inspirations in Locke, Newton, and Pierre Bayle, is centered on three French thinkers: Montesquieu[47], Voltaire, and Rousseau (Munck, 2000). This group of *philosophes*[48], including D'Alembert and Diderot, as well as their German, English, and Scottish contemporaries, dreamed of a universal social and political transformation, as well as a scientific and philosophical transformation. The shift in ideology and focus has had a significant impact on this socio-political split. The issue of philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Hannah Arendt (1961) pointed out, was to unburden the past rather than rehabilitate the historical process: For Descartes, who is widely regarded as the founder of modern philosophy, and his colleague Hobbes, philosophy had to first abandon its old patterns and be reconstructed on a new plane. For extremely justifiable and logical reasons, according to Arendt (1961), the loss of faith in the ability of the senses to reveal the truth, at least for some philosophers such as Descartes, brought philosophy to such a dramatic rupture. This circumstance is one of the signs that the senses are unable to access the truth. For example, according to Arendt (1998), the direct impact of Galilei's invention of the telescope on philosophy is remarkable. With the invention of the telescope, Galilei demonstrated the inability of the human mind and senses to understand the mysteries of the earth. In other words, it was neither the reason nor the senses that changed the material worldview; rather, it was a tool. This tool became one of the indicators of the rise of homo faber and the paradigm of the sovereign state (Arendt, 1998). With the influence of other advances and discoveries in science and

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[47] Montesquieu's Persian Letters, written in 1721, are considered the beginning of the Enlightenment as a historical epoch (see Munck, 2000). Montesquieu's philosophy differs from the Enlightenment's monist understanding of culture, and some intellectuals, such as Parekh, place him among the pluralist philosophers (Parekh, 2000). In this regard, Montesquieu, like other pluralist philosophers of his period (e.g., Vico and Herder), might be classified as a particularist thinker influenced by enlightenment ideals.

[48] The Encyclopedia is recognized as one of the most important studies of Enlightenment thinking, with editors Diderot and D'Alembert and authors Voltaire, D'Holbach, Turgot, and Jean Jacques Rousseau (Goldmann, 2009).

technology, the rise of contemporary sciences based on experimentation, rather than philosophy as a search for truth, gained importance throughout this period (Arendt, 1961). Thus, the mission of philosophy has been reduced to measuring the effects of causes rather than searching for truth, or underlying causes. What is meant by effects of causes in this context has never been defined solely in terms of natural sciences; morality and politics are directly involved in this inquiry. Thus, modern philosophers began to show a keen interest in the realms of morality and politics, as well as a participative desire to uncover the repercussions of causes.

Furthermore, particularly during the Enlightenment, it was possible to discuss the existence of philosophers who took an active role in politics and influenced it (Arendt, 1961). For example, Locke had a direct influence on the American Constitution, while Les Philosophes influenced modern politics by participating in administration and meddling from the outside. The tight link between Enlightenment philosophy and the French Revolution is the most obvious example of this relationship. Voltaire, who utilized the term of philosophy of history for the first time, begins his work with a complaint that history should be written by philosophers in this new century, in which history was seen as something that could be constructed: "You [as a philosopher] seek for nothing but useful truths [in the history], and you say you have scarce found anything but useless errors" (Voltaire, 2018, p. 1). Voltaire's theory of history[49] attempted to demonstrate that history was a massive mistake, consisting of wars and killings caused by people's superstitions. And now, with this new *age of philosophy*, the potential to rewrite history and build a new world has arisen: This ideal of the Enlightenment intellectuals indicates that their philosophy and socio-political understandings are inextricably linked. The personal/individual dimension of human beings, as well as their status as citizens, was a major concern for Enlightenment thinkers. Many Enlightenment thinkers involved in politics tried to create comparability between their

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[49] The study in question has nothing to do with the later-defined area of history philosophy. The *philosophy of history* arose largely in opposition to the Enlightenment's mentality, which isolated itself from history and tradition and saw today as the starting point for the future. Giambatista Vico, a philosopher who did not use the term *philosophy of history* and who received little attention during his lifetime and for a long time after his death, should be acknowledged if a premise for *Philosophy of History* is to be mentioned.

epistemological and metaphysical assumptions in their philosophies and the practices in the field. Their faith in reason, science, and progress has shaped their reactions to political events (Schmidt, 1992).

It is possible to state that the Enlightenment ideal of universality concentrates on a few concepts and ideas. The assumption that human beings are rational, the notions of *human nature*, *humanity*, and *human dignity*, and the *universal human rights* discourse generated by these notions are all related and complement each other. The concept of reason, which is universally shared by all humans, was a significant characteristic of Enlightenment intellectuals in their pursuit of a universal ideal of universality in social and political affairs[50]. Enlightenment thinkers believe that the reason, which is the most distinguishing trait of humans, acts in the same way in all humans, but that some institutional and cultural factors stand in the way of the reason fulfilling its function. This viewpoint, which includes criticism of the church and existing political structures, assumes that these obstacles and disruptions may be resolved by a universal reconstruction.

The sole authority to follow for Enlightenment philosophers is an autonomous and universal reason. The legitimacy of Enlightenment philosophy, according to Habermas, lies in the principles established by human reason, and it aims to bring about a new era based on these rules (Habermas, 1987). The Enlightenment philosophy puts an emphasis on an understanding of the reason of which context and conditions are not limited to particular. This understanding of reason examines the modern subject in terms of sociality as defined by universal truth criteria. The modern subject has the ability to organize life as per universal principles and criteria in a liberal and rational manner. The concept of reason, which is the most fundamental aspect of human nature and is universally shared, is a key feature of Enlightenment thought (Berlin, 2013; Israel, 2001).

The concept of human nature, which is another foundation for the universality ideal, highlights the ideal of a world in which all people are equal and free on a global scale. Human

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[50] The Enlightenment thinkers' emphasis on rationalism was not shared by all thinkers. For example, Rorty claims that in the spread of human rights culture, Hume prioritized emotion above reason, and that he is a better guide than Kant in this regard (Rorty, 1989). Rousseau, too, emphasized the significance of emotions over reason's sanctification.

nature is founded on the premise that there is an essence that distinguishes human beings from other beings, a basic feature shared by all people, which dates back to Ancient Greek thinkers. Many philosophers throughout history have attempted to discover and define the fundamental trait of human nature, or its essence. An abstract human design is based on a specific trait and a historical time in these endeavors. This historical period could be an *era of heroes* or a glorious period in human history, for example. The idea of human nature is built on this historical moment, which acts as a target to be reached, a potential to be disclosed, or a situation to be avoided on which the idea of human nature is based. These *imagined*[51] or *created* events refer to a time when humanity was at peace and coexisted, and at other times when it was in conflict and continually at war. This human nature design, founded on a specific epistemological and ontological acceptance, both embodies and politicizes abstract content by idealizing it through the historical time addressed. This activity starts with a basic understanding of human nature and progresses to a universal set of moral and political principles and ideals. In terms of portraying a universal human design, understandings of human nature generally have a monistic perspective in terms of embodying disparities between the characteristics to be avoided for human beings and the qualities to be affirmed and accomplished. In this regard, the universalist approach detailed in this paper and the approach characterized by Parekh as *moral monism* have a close affinity. In other words, a direct relationship between the universalist approach and the monist approach may be established.

Moral monism "refers to the view that only one way of life is fully human, true, or the best, and that all others are defective to the extent that they fall short of it", according to Parekh, who examines monism in the context of approaches to moral values (Parekh, 2000, p. 16). "One value is the highest, and others are merely a means to or conditions of it", according to the monist viewpoint, which has been influential since Ancient Greece (Parekh, 2000, p. 16). "In order to

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[51] In the sense that they are manufactured, with the endeavor of human beings to locate roots in a given period that is said to exist in history, the ideas of invented tradition by Hobsbawm (2012) and imagined communities by Anderson (2006) are related.

show that one way of life is the best, the monist needs to ground it in something that all human beings necessarily share and is transcultural in nature", says Parekh, who examines monism with examples from Ancient Greece, Medieval Christianity, and liberal philosophy (Parekh, 2000, p. 17). Monists argue that human nature, which is universally shared by all humans, is knowable, and that humans are the only beings who can know it in specific ways with the characteristics they possess. The concept of human nature can provide a broad and abstract framework for predicting how people behave. This natural state, in whatever form it takes, serves as a model for human people to follow in order to achieve a certain way of life (Parekh, 2000).

The basic features of the monistic approach, which is based on human nature, are summarized by Parekh (2000). Consequently, monists assert, first and foremost, that human nature is universal. Differences are viewed as different versions of identical qualities. Some people seek sexual pleasure, while others seek knowledge; this may be explained from a monistic standpoint, as each group pursues its own desires. The distinctions are reduced to similar motifs and features. Cultural differences, for example, are reduced to changes in some generally shared qualities throughout time. These differences frequently occur in consequence of the departure from the natural state; for example, the natural state of humans has been shifted away as a result of emphasizing emotions over reason, intuitions over knowledge, and so on. Second, monists distinguish similarities and differences in a hierarchical order. They believe that epistemologically, ontologically, and morally identical features, namely the essential side of human nature, are more important and superior than secondary differences. Third, according to Parekh (2000), the concept of human nature is unaffected by social interactions, history, or geographic location. Fourth, monists believe that human nature is totally knowable; human nature, no matter how simple or complex, can be understood and described (in a philosophical, religious, or scientific way). Finally, decent and righteous life is built on the foundation of human nature. It is critical to live in harmony with human nature to live a happy life. According to monist thinkers, one essential feature among many others is the *differentia specifica* of our species (Parekh, 2000, pp. 17-18). With these

features, As Parekh points out, monism is a highly prevalent and effective pattern of thought in the history of philosophy, and it has appeared in a variety of ways[52]. The monist perspective, which determined the general structure of the modern subject and Enlightenment philosophy, also shaped the framework of the universalist approach.

Aside from the idea of universal equality, which became the focal point of their political debate in the eighteenth century, another notion that Enlightenment thinkers concentrated on was a category of humanity that is the carrier of universal values. The objective of a free and egalitarian society in which mankind's potential is realized is included in the concept of universality, which is based on the assumptions of a knowable human nature, a discoverable and fixed essence, and the value of humanity as an actor (Cassirer, 2009). The concept of *humanity*, which is based on universal values and the uniformity of modern subjects who are the carriers of these values, forms the basis of the principle of universal equality, in other words, an idea of equality that transcends all differences, which has been a fundamental notion of political discourse since the 18th century. This idea is linked to modernity, according to Laclau, who claims that such political discourse requires political agents who can transcend all particularism and constraints: "Modernity started with the aspiration to a limitless historical actor, who would be able to ensure of a perfectly instituted social order" (Laclau, 2007, p. 51).

In the social and political realms, the concept of 'humanity,' which is the foundation of the modern subject's universality, has been represented in the concept of Universal Human Rights. Human rights, in general, are the manifestation of the highest values and rights that people have by virtue of their birth as human beings (Ignatieff, 2001). As Kaufmann stated, "Human rights…are held by all human beings in an equal manner; they have them, because and as long as they are human beings, whether they have aware of it or not. And their rights are inalienable,

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[52] Greek monism, Christian monism, and classical liberalism's monism, according to Parekh, are the three most influential examples of moral monism in the history of philosophy. Parekh delves into these three different types of monism. As shown in this study, various varieties of monism share some essential characteristics.

indispensable" (Kaufmann, 2019, p. 113). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights[53], which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948[54], is an example of the modern subject design that prioritizes and values the human being. Some argue that the concept and conventions of universal human rights are today's most significant civilizational achievements (see Gearty, 2006; Kuçuradi, 2007). According to Ignatieff, the purpose of human rights is "to protect human agency and therefore to protect human agents against abuse and oppression" (Gutmann, 2001, p. ix). Human rights are concerned with the meaning, value, purpose, and position of human beings in society.

Another example of the universalist approach's impact in the philosophical and social fields is the notion of human dignity, which is independent of any social or historical circumstance and transcends all differences. Kant (1993) connected the concept of *human dignity* to people's ability to make free and moral decisions. Kant (2012) highlighted a mutual need between freedom and moral law, citing freedom as the justification for moral conduct. Thus, the moral law that applies to all rational beings originates from the fact that a human is a free being, and all humans are important because they have this freedom, or the ability to make moral decisions (Kant, 1993). This value is embodied in the concept of human dignity. According to Hill, in Kant's moral philosophy, all persons have "equal intrinsic worth", independent of their social station, and this is a right that cannot be gained or lost (Hill, 2014, p. .215). Kant argues that;

> (…) every rational being, exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will: He must in all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be viewed at the same time as an end" (Kant, 1993, p. 95).

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[53] It should be noted that the reflections of the universalist approach in practice expands with many other covenant and declarations that followed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966).

[54] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by resolution 217 A (III) on 10.12.1948 (Assembly, 1948).

Kant gave the modern subject his character with this perspective, which sets human beings at the center of the field of thought based on rationality. The notions of rationality, human nature, humanity, human dignity, and human rights, which constitute the universality ideal, are also the target for the opponents of the idea of universality. Before moving on to the particularist approach as a school of thought that stands in opposition to the universalist ideal, it is necessary to address some objections to the universalist ideal. Dembour, for example, who gathered the criticisms leveled at the concept of human rights, which is the practical equivalent of the universality ideal, into three categories, emphasized that the universality claim of human rights is abstract, and the structure that focuses on the individual is problematic (Dembour, 2006, p. 6). Another dimension that is questioned is how widespread the claim of universality is, given its historical and Western foundations. According to Wallerstein, who made one of the most severe attacks in this regard,

> (…) the universalism of the powerful has been a partial and distorted universalism, one that I am calling 'European universalism' because it has been put forward by pan-European leaders and intellectuals in their quest to pursue the interests of the dominant strata of the modern world system (Wallerstein, 2006, p. xiv).

Therefore, Wallerstein, who claims that what is meant by universalism is a European universalism with origins in Western culture and ideas, believes that a new universalism free of its Western-centered roots is both essential and desirable[55] (Wallerstein, 2006). The concept of human dignity, which is one of the fundamental tenets of the universalist ideal, has also been attacked as a product of Western culture's accumulation of thought. The monism critique leveled against the idea of the modern subject and the universalist approach has similar content to this critical approach. Dicke (2007), for example, said that the concept of human dignity was solely employed by Christian and Jewish traditions, as well as Enlightenment philosophy, and that it was drawn

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[55] According to Wallerstein, "the struggle between European universalism and universal universalism is the central ideological struggle of the contemporary World" (Wallerstein, 2006, p. xiv)

from these traditions' human understandings. Accordingly, the human dignity approach conforms to the privileged and unique status that human beings are accorded in these traditions.

Consequently, the fact that what is meant by human dignity in Western society is the determined essential features and status of human beings has been a major topic of controversy. The claim to universality and uniformity of moral standards is emphasized by the idea of a universal rational human nature and human dignity based on it. This claim implies that only one way of living is right and that those who can accomplish this *right* and thus *moral* way of life are superior to those who cannot. This approach, which identified universal standards in Western moral values and truths, became the foundation of Western expansionism's legitimacy. On the other hand, objections claiming that the values that are fundamental to human rights are not universal, but historically, culturally and regionally relative, have been put forward with the claim that there cannot be values and principles that will cover all people. It is frequently highlighted in these criticisms that moral judgements that are considered to be universal are molded by prevalent beliefs in the culture in which they emerge (Kao, 2011). Hence, there has been widespread criticism of the concept set theorized by the idea of the modern subject and Enlightenment philosophy, which is the root of the universalist approach. Thus, the universal critique and the critique of the Enlightenment and modernity were carried out in parallel. In this perspective, the concept of particularity as a critique and antithesis to universality might be viewed as an attempt to overthrow the principles it opposes. Consequently, the philosophical background and basic elements of the particularist method, another proposed strategy for comprehending and managing human coexistence activities, are provided in the next subsection. In this way, it is hoped to offer a different perspective that provides the modern subject idea its character.

2.2.2. The Particularist Objection

The particularist approach is another prominent approach to comprehending and organizing people's coexistence practices. The importance given to new categories of belonging

and distinctions that emerge as individuals and groups redefine their own positions is the focus of this approach. Hence of the social and political climate transformed by autonomous and free individuals as modern subjects, new categories of belonging have shaped the modern philosophical-political debate. In the seventeenth century, the earliest systematic examples of the particularist approach emphasizing heterogeneity, historicity, and pluralism in opposition to a universal humanity and monist notion of human nature can be discovered (Parekh, 2000). A careful look into the philosophical background of the particularist approach, which has emerged with variations such as the policy of difference, the policy of recognition, multiculturalism, and the politics of identities in the modern age, will provide a deeper insight into identifying the problem areas that all these variations have in common.

The philosophical roots of the theoretical shift that resulted from the intricate interplay of social, scientific, and political revolutions are as old as the emergence of its opposite, universalist thought. Objections to universalism have philosophical roots that can be traced back to Ancient Greek philosophy. The Nominalist movement continued these concerns, which were led by skeptical philosophers and Sophists. In this regard, nominalist thinkers can be regarded as a fundamental source of particularist philosophy, as they contend that the essences that universalist philosophers usually refer to are fiction and have no reality. It is impossible to talk about the essence or universality of things, according to nominalist philosophers who contend that universals do not exist and that our definitions and notions are linguistic constructs. Thus, everything is made up of singularities. Universals, according to the nominalist viewpoint, are mental products generated by humans to make specific objects more understandable. This is an inventive activity, and humans use mental categorizations, aggregations, or the development of universals in order to grasp the diversity of singulars (Armstrong, 1978). Essences and universalities, in nominalist terminology, have no actuality and are logical creations and inventions, according to this viewpoint. According to nominalism, as Armstrong puts forward, "all things that exist are only particulars" (Armstrong, 1978, p. 12). In this regard, one of the most fundamental objections to

essentialism and universalist thought has been presented by the nominalist perspective, which asserts that universals exist only in human thinking and design. With its emphasis on the social and historical context and source of science and scientific knowledge, the nominalist approach, which has left an indelible mark on the history of philosophy, particularly with its criticisms of Scholastic philosophy and the Problem of Universals, has made an important contribution. Based on the criticism it presents to universalism and essentialism, nominalism can be seen as one of the primary features of the particularist tradition, with a perspective that is the root of philosophical movements such as historicism and hermeneutics. In this light, the nominalist tradition can be seen as a mirror of the particularist school of thinking, which is concerned with existence, knowledge, and language.

The particularist approach is in opposition to universal values and an abstract vision of the human being as the bearer of these values, which began to be systematized in the continuation of nominalist philosophy, especially with the Enlightenment period. Hence, the concept of particularity presents a specific category of communities that highlights the primacy and supremacy of particular values and rights. Defending belonging, particularly cultural, sexual, and ethnic belonging, is the understanding of particularity, which emphasizes the importance of diversity and hence of multiple types of belonging, as opposed to the understanding of equality, which emphasizes universality. The idea of particularity, which is centered on conceptions of plurality and diversity caused by differences and belonging, is intellectually intensifying, particularly in criticism of the Enlightenment and the modernism project. Therefore, understanding the particularist approach, which is one of the proposed solutions for the organization of differences in social life and hence the idea of living together, requires a detailed examination of its philosophical roots. In this context, Vico provided one of the first[56] complete challenges to the

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[56] Prior to Vico, Ibn Khaldun gave a comprehensive critique of universality and a historicist perspective, and is credited as the pioneer of modern historiography, sociology, demographics, and economics (Dale, 2006; Jean David, 1971; Spengler, 1964). Ibn Khaldun stressed the sociality and historicity of human beings in his work *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomena), emphasizing the impact of geographical distinctions on human life, as well as the roots and relevance

universalist approach's analysis of knowledge, method, and society in the history of western philosophy[57].

Vico stated that geographical location and historicity are efficient in the creation of distinct types of belonging and social structure, citing inequality in society as opposed to the ideal of universal equality and the historicity of humans as opposed to an abstract human design[58] (Bayer & Verene, 2009). Vico believes that each society is based on a unique culture and that each *nation* is distinct[59]. Vico begins with the premise that humans cannot be separated from their social and historical circumstances; contractual theories, according to Vico, portrayed the image of a human being at a specific geographical location and historical moment as a fixed state of nature (Miller, 1996). Vico's approach, which criticizes the idea of a universal human nature based on such a human image, proposes that human nature is a historical construction that develops and changes over time, rather than a natural, fixed, and static structure.

Vico challenges the modern subject and scientific method thinking formally conceptualized by Descartes as one of the most fundamental sources of universal and rational understanding of human nature. Vico focused on the method by which the society and cultural world created by humans should be examined in his work The First New Science, emphasizing the idea that knowledge emerges not through clear and distinct ideas but through human practices, thus aiming to put forward a basic method explanation against Descartes. Vico aspires to develop

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of cultural diversity (see, Dale, 2006; Ibn-Khaldun, 2015). However, because this research concentrates on the history of Western philosophy, Ibn Khaldun's contribution is not discussed in depth.

[57] Vico, according to many philosophers, is a unique character who marked a turning point in the history of philosophy. Vico's unique place in philosophy's history was described by Isaiah Berlin as follows:

> *He exposed the inadequacy of utilitarianism before Kant, and of the atomistic view of society before Rousseau and Hegel. He distinguished the canons of certainty and judgment from those of both validity and demonstrable truth, discovery from invention, making from recording, the nature of principles, rules, laws, from that of propositions, the categories of cognition from those of the will, and anticipated ideas developed in the nineteenth century, and still more in the twentieth, by legal and moral philosophers and philosophical sociologists* (Berlin, 2013, p. 88).

[58] Ibn Khaldun was well aware of the consequences of a society's geography on that society, and he put it this way: *Geography is destiny* (Ibn-Khaldun, 2015).

[59] Vico, according to Parekh, was one of the first intellectuals to use the term *nation* in the modern sense (Parekh, 2000).

a new scientific method that focuses on the history and social sciences against the modern understanding of natural science, according to Bayer and Verene (2009). Vico (1988, p. 46), who coined the phrase "verum esse ipsum factum"[60] in response to Descartes' argument of *Cogito, ergo sum*, upheld the concept of practical knowledge according to Miner (1998). In this understanding of science, which is reflected in practical knowledge and focuses on humans historically, the approach that glorifies natural sciences or physics and mathematics is criticized.

Vico (2002) disputed the assumption that people can know everything with their rational capabilities, criticizing the scientism approach for ignoring the historical and social importance of human beings. This attitude, which opposes the characteristics of the modern subject that Cartesian knowledge puts to the fore, has taken a middle ground between the dogmatic and skeptical poles. For Vico, "man is not nothing nor everything" (Lilla, 1993, p. 37). Vico concentrated on the technique by which the social and cultural environment invented by humans should be evaluated in his work *The First New Science*, and he attempted to put forward a basic method against Descartes, whom he criticizes. Thus, Vico set out to develop a new scientific approach based on history and social sciences in opposition to the modern understanding of natural science (Bayer & Verene, 2009). Vico, who calls the concept that a society can be fully known through rational analysis a "pernicious rationalist fallacy", asserts that rational analyses addressing a universal and fixed human nature are insufficient to comprehend the social and practical (Parekh, 2000, p. 51). Departing from this point, he asserts that "the nature of things is nothing but their coming into being (*nascimento*) at certain times and in certain fashions. Whenever the time and fashion is thus and so, such and not otherwise are the things that come into being" (Vico, 1948, p. 58, XIV-147).

Vico attempted to fill a gap in Enlightenment philosophy by emphasizing the impact of historicity and culture on our knowledge and behaviors, focusing on human and human sociality. According to Vico, who believes that people can understand their own behaviors and reasons but

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[60] Eng.: The true is precisely what is made.

that universal laws of nature cannot be attained, the facts that can be learned must be specific truths that vary from society to society, in contrast to the universalist view. Thus, Vico believes that we will never fully comprehend nature, which is God's work, and that individuals can only know what they do (Vico, 1948). Vico's contribution to the understanding of humanism, which has resulted in a historical and specific study of people and society as opposed to an abstract and hollow analysis of people and society, is significant. Vico's humanism approach placed a strong focus on human imagination and memory, which were overlooked by the universalist approach (Weir, 1995). This emphasis allows us to categorize his philosophy as a stage in the journey from modern thought through romantic understanding to contemporary philosophy[61].

Vico has proposed a different epistemological understanding, which corresponds to human practice and draws attention to the effect of particulars, against Enlightenment epistemology, by emphasizing historical change by opposing the ideas of human nature and human beings with an unchanging essence, which forms the basis of universalist thought. Human potential emerges in cultures that achieve a balance between reason and religion, according to Vico, who highlighted the requirement of harmony between reason and religion against the rationalist perspective of the Enlightenment (see, Vico, 1948). Vico's stance, presenting an early example of criticisms of the Enlightenment, shows us that there cannot be non-historical subjects independent of their concrete conditions, social context, and their time. Vico's philosophy has been challenged, particularly from the perspective of contemporary particularist philosophy, despite its contribution to the particularist tradition. His theory, which sees cultural diversity as an intermediary stage in the transition to a homogeneous world, is at the focus of these attacks (see e.g., Parekh, 2000). Vico's philosophy also has an issue with Christianity and its Eurocentric emphasis. Vico glorified his religion (Christianity) and culture (Europe) by universalizing them, according to Parekh (2000).

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[61] Edward Said defines Vico's contributions and position as follows: (his) "ideas anticipate and later infiltrate the line of German thinkers I am about to cite. They belong to the era of Herder and Wolf, later to be followed by Goethe, Humboldt, Dilthey, Nietzsche, Gadamer, and finally the great twentieth century Romance philologists Erich Auerbach, Leo Spitzer, and Ernst Robert Curtius" (Said, 2014, p. xxiv).

Despite its flaws, Vico's philosophy can be considered one of the first and most important examples of the tension between universalism and particularism, as an important aspect of a particularist opposition to the modern subject idea of the universalist approach.

Herder is another name that broadens and intensifies the particularist approach, of which Vico is a pioneer. Herder, who opposes the Enlightenment's reason-centered subject concept, sees the world as a diversity (Sikka, 2013). This method highlights that the diversity in question cannot be appreciated through a reductionist approach and that it extends across all domains. This method is founded on the premise that each age and stage of life should be assessed in its unique context. The reductionist perspective does not give *the skepticism that nothing can be known* as an alternative. Herder attempted to show a way out of these two options. According to Herder, every age and geography is valuable in an interaction that feeds each other with his method, which is an objection to the Enlightenment's endeavor to establish itself at the center and absolutize its own principles. Herder (2002) stressed the inaccuracy of using today's criteria to judge history and communities. Consequently, the Enlightenment's concept of progress evaluated a culture or era in comparison to a presumed advanced civilization and age. Herder, on the other hand, argued that each age is a significant stage in the evolution of history. In line with this, Herder (2002) claims that tradition and climate shape each *volk[62]*.

Nations are a structure that is always evolving and differentiating, according to Herder (1803), who believes that nations, which are the founding elements of history, are like nature, a living and constantly forming organism. Distinct human societies can evolve as a result of changing cultures in different traditions and climates. Taylor argues that "Herder put forward the idea that each of us has an original way of being human: each person has his or her own 'measure'"‘" (Charles Taylor, 1994, p. 30). Examining the contrasts between diverse civilizations, Herder (see, Herder & Manuel, 1968) opposed the idea of Enlightenment as a search for a universal human

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[62] Herder uses the concepts of nation and volk to define a cultural community. Hann argues that "Herder used Nation and Volk as synonyms, and he sometimes added Cultur (sic) with an implication of congruence—but he did not actually use this last term in the plural'' (Hann, 2002, p. 261).

nature. According to Parekh (2000), Herder, who disagreed with Vico's idea of an abstract individual or human nature, claimed that this was fiction and emphasized the idea of a society created by tradition and changing over time. Thus, for Herder, the cultural community is the beginning point for moral and political philosophy (Herder, 2010). By focusing on the idea of cultural variation, Herder attempted to overcome Enlightenment universality, which was oriented on rational modern subject understanding with the goal of knowing everything: "Every culture was uniquely associated with the experiences of a Volk, its progenitor and historical bearer, and expressed the way in which its members understood and imaginatively interpreted these experiences" (Parekh, 2000, p. 67).

Humans are members of historical communities who live in distinct ways. Being a part of a cultural group, nation, Volk, or group is an essential trait for humans. According to Berlin, "the notion of belonging is at the heart of all Herder's ideas" (Berlin, 1980, p. 195). Herder's philosophy, which emphasizes the diversity and uniqueness of civilizations, can be seen as an opposition to claims of universality that overlook and minimize differences, abstraction devoid of context and history, and rationalism as a tool (Berlin, 2013). There is a close connection between humans and language, language and culture, according to Herder, who views distinctive and valuable cultures to be unity within themselves (see Herder, 2010): "Language is the mark of our reason" (Herder, 1803, p. 421). Hence, one of the most important sources of diversity is language, which shapes thought. Each culture has its own language: "Each language, each culture, expresses... a particular way of seeing and feeling, a distinct perception of the world, together with a certain manner of responding to its challenges" (Barnard, 2003, p.6). Accordingly, language influences the ideas, dreams, feelings, beliefs, memories, and minds of those who live in that society (Herder, 2010).

Herder developed a criterion for nationalism ideas that is still valid today (Özkirimli, 2010) by defining the main features of being a nation as having historical unity and having a language of its own. Herder views language as "a kind of organic force and memory, which grew in tandem with the mind of a nation", as Abberley puts it (Abberley, 2011, p. 46). Because thought is

determined by language, and each language is distinct, every community has a distinct way of thinking. A community's language encompasses more than just language as a linguistic instrument; it also includes customs, ceremonies, rules, and laws that are specific to society. For Herder, the only way to comprehend the society created by language is to comprehend the language itself and its evolution throughout history (Dumont, 1992; Herder, 2010).

While Herder opposes many aspects of the Enlightenment mission, he does find common ground with Enlightenment philosophy at some points. "Many would argue that Herder actually continued leading Enlightenment tendencies rather than breaking with them altogether", Mueller-Vollmer remarked, emphasizing this point (Mueller-Vollmer, 1990, p. viii). Although some thinkers claim that Herder was a part of the Enlightenment project (see, for example, Beiser, 2013), accepting this assumption requires completely ignoring Herder's Enlightenment objections. Accordingly, it is important to note that Herder critiqued Enlightenment thought in a variety of ways, despite the fact that, like other particularist philosophers of his time, he shared the objective of creating a better world and supported the exciting advancements of the Enlightenment (e.g., Vico and Montesquieu). While Herder viewed the Enlightenment's advances in disciplines such as science, technology, and education as favorable[63], he also "warned against the hazards of social disintegration in the wake of industrialization and urbanization" (Barnard, 2003, p. 5). However, claiming that Herder was a vehement opponent of the Enlightenment is also problematic. It's possible to claim that Herder shares some Enlightenment thought tendencies in the context of *humanity* (*Humanität*), while avoiding excessive relativism, which is one of particularist philosophy's dangers. Barnard (2003) also claims that Herder's theory includes universalist aspects within the scope of *humanity*. Herder, on the other hand, does not totally follow the Enlightenment's conceptual orientation in this regard and takes an alternative path. Humanity, according to Herder, is a manifestation of the belief that all human beings share certain qualities

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[63] Herder opposes the endeavor to apply the Enlightenment scientific method to all domains, particularly the social sphere formed by human action, rather than the development of natural sciences (Berlin, 1980).

and capacities (Parekh, 2000). Herder (1803), who believes that nature supplies humans with the ability to organize themselves, believes that people develop their qualities and talents in varied ways within their cultural communities. These features that are generated, recreated and reproduced within cultural communities distinguish people.

However, unlike Rousseau, it is impossible to conclude that Herder proposed a pre-socialization understanding of humans from this perspective. Herder believes that humans do not have a pre-cultural, pre-linguistic stage in their history (Herder, 2004b). As Church put it, "human beings have never existed apart from culture" for Herder (Church, 2015, p. 794). Humans have some features such as self-preservation and propagation of the species, but what sets humans apart from other living things is their ability to construct culture (Herder, 1803). Although human beings as a species share certain features, these characteristics are not universally permanent and uniform, according to Herder; people develop these raw traits within their cultural groups and multiply them by adding new ones. Therefore, human beings can be considered members of a species under the cover of universal humanity, but unlike universalist theory, the notion of humanity here is not abstract and without content, but is rich in cultural distinctions. Herder's understanding of mankind is that it is a product of tradition and historical accumulation, rather than an abstract design as in universalist theory. According to Herder, who believes that human beings cannot fully comprehend the concept of humanity, what needs to be done is to strive to comprehend each time and age using a method that takes into account its historical uniqueness (Herder, 1803). Cultures that are the consequence of "human imagination, creativity, and the search for self-understanding" can only be understood in this way, according to Herder's philosophy (Parekh, 2000, p. 72).

Herder's philosophy, which is a key source for the particularist tradition, is still relevant today, with its stress on differences and a very modern attitude to culture, despite certain criticisms. According to Parekh, who outlines the criticisms leveled at Herder in broad terms, Herder views the culture as a whole, with numerous belongings and diversity, and even does not believe that this

inner diversity is correct[64]; while he affirmed cultural diversity, he offered contradictory opinions on matters such as colonialism; Herder's cultures, which do not explain the interplay between civilizations, are mosaics with distinct boundaries and distinct cultures (Parekh, 2000, pp. 71-76). Aside from these objections of Parekh, one of the most common charges leveled at Herder is that he is an essentialist. According to Parekh;

> He [Herder] finds it difficult to resist the essentialist language of his age and contends that the uniqueness of a culture springs from the unique 'soul', 'spirit' or 'genius' of the Volk that created it. He does not explain how the community comes to develop a particular 'soul' in the first instance. And it also goes against his view that it is the culture, especially the language, that shapes and nurtures the soul of the community (Parekh, 2000, p. 75).

It is possible to state that Herder's philosophy, which is generally positioned within the relativist tradition based on his anti-universalism, could not avoid relativist thought (see eg, Sikka, 2013) in a way that preceding some of his contemporary liberal successors (see eg; Rawls, 2005, 2009; Raz, 2004), but included some universalist elements. As Sikka argues Herder,

> (…) did not entirely reject Enlightenment ideals and the universalism they entailed. Rather, in his accounts of language, climate, and religion, of the variability of human happiness, the nature of reason and the unfolding of history, Herder charts a complex course navigating between the poles of cultural particularism and universalism (Sikka, 2013, p. 3).

As Sikka points out, limiting his theory to a single name such as "relativist, universalist, or pluralist" is insufficient (Sikka, 2013, p. 40). Herder's complicated philosophy, which he developed at a period when the world was rapidly changing, dealt with human beings and cultural groups in all of their varied and hitherto overlooked facets. Herder's emphasis on human creativity and happiness, as well as his stress on traditions and myths, allowed him to reintroduce many areas of philosophy that had been overlooked by Enlightenment thought. These efforts, which emphasize the value of mythology, tradition, and human creativity in contrast to the Enlightenment's emphasis

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[64] Parekh comments on this issue as follows: "He cherishes a culturally plural world but not a culturally plural society" (Parekh, 2000, p. 73).

on rationality, might be viewed as protests against the reduction of humanity to a single dimension and its limitation as a rational entity (Berlin, 1980). With his perspective, Herder influenced his successors Hegel, Schleiermacher, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Mill, as well as the German Historical School with his understanding of history. Furthermore, his critiques of Enlightenment ideas, particularly of intellectuals like Hamann and Jacobi, serve as a foundation for German Romanticism and German Idealism. Because of his beliefs on culture and nation, many consider Herder to be one of the most important philosophers of nationalism[65] (see e.g., Barnard, 2003; Breuilly, 1995; Dumont, 1992; Kedourie, 1961). According to Higgins and Solomon, Herder's philosophy, which is related to multiculturalism because of its emphasis on other cultures, "attacked the Enlightenment in the name of what we would now call "multiculturalism, "defending the distinctive features of German culture" (Higgins & Solomon, 2004, p. 2).

One of the key criticisms of the particularist tradition is essentialism, which is the subject of the study's next section. Herder's and the particularist tradition's criticisms are significant in that they underline the importance of addressing categories of belonging, such as culture, for human social organization in a non-essentialist and non-naturalizing manner. Particularist philosophers have a negative reputation for grounding and explaining a particular thing or category based on a particular essence. Although Herder attempted to explore these belonging categories in a way that was far ahead of his time and practically identical to their contemporary successors, he could not avoid the essentialist objections. Some points in the understanding of the culture of Herder, who was criticized for having adopted cultural essentialism (see, Grillo, 2003; Parekh, 2000) can be defined as "The view that each culture has a definable core that makes it what it is, and that distinguishes it from any other", are the source of criticisms (Sikka, 2013, p. 6). This criticism,

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[65] With the end of the 17th century, there was widespread worry that the established cultural and political hegemony in Europe's old imperial institutions would crumble, and the dominant cultural identity would dissolve due to the complex social structure and shifting political climate. Minority societies, with their own languages and customs, began to voice out against the establishment, posing a serious threat to these old empires (e.g., Ottoman, Hapsburg). Herder drew attention to the relationship between language and culture and national consciousness during this period of social transition, and his work served as a foundation for nationalism doctrines.

which is frequently leveled toward multiculturalism, is directed at a method of thinking that assumes a fixed essence of a culture, places that culture at the center of social organization, and ignores the transition between cultures.

As Parekh points out, when Herder started talking about the "true" German people and the founding members, he created a space for these objections (Parekh, 2000, p. 73). Parekh (2000) argues that, Herder, influenced by Leibniz's metaphysics, defined culture just like Leibniz's monads; cultures, like monads, "were windowless and self-sufficient, viewing the world from within their own perspectives and possessing sufficient inner strength and vitality to resist and refract external influences. Each had its own telos and developed in a direction dictated by it" (Parekh, 2000, p. 68). Although Herder is opposed to the idea of one cultural group being superior to another, he has been criticized for not seeing the interplay between these cultures as positive. According to Parekh (2000), Herder does not consider intercultural exchange or diversity within a culture to be positive because it would jeopardize authenticity; as a result, he has a cultural worldview that is closed to the outside world. Hence, for Herder, who views a cultural community as an organic whole, it is critical that the society's authenticity not be tainted by external influences.

The relationship between the conception of culture, nationalism, and racism is another major criticism leveled at the particularist tradition. Various literary criticisms of Herder's worldview have been raised based on its association with racism and even Nazism (see e.g., Dover, 1952). These criticisms stem from the acceptance of parts of Herder's ideas about culture, nation, and Volk in an essentialist framework. When these ideas are interpreted as an introverted unity that rejects diversity, the result can be the most horrific experience in human history. To put it another way, viewing multiple forms of belonging as one-dimensional, homogeneous, natural, and fixed essences allows for practices that ignore distinctions and make coexistence impossible. Some of Herder's commentators and critics have identified his philosophy as one of the conceptual roots of these negative practices, based on his definitions of culture, nation, and Volk. One of Herder's philosophy's primary concerns has been the blurry boundary between these conceptions and

essentialism. These searches for links between essentialism and racism are not unfounded; several studies have demonstrated that there is a strong link between racism and an essentialist view of the world (see e.g., Fuchs, 2009; Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2002; Mandalaywala, Amodio, & Rhodes, 2018; Verkuyten, 2003). Hann (2002) also emphasized the link between cultural essentialism, biological determinism, and racism, emphasizing the hazards of a cultural essentialist perspective. The legitimacy of these objections in the framework of Herder's philosophy, however, is debatable. Despite certain essentialist statements, Herder investigated the notion of culture, which is at the basis of his philosophy, as a framework produced by human beings, as a philosopher who crossed the boundaries of different traditions and perspectives. As Sikka argues, "for Herder, cultures are the product of Bildung, of processes of education and cultivation involving the active exercise of specifically human, reflective faculties" (Sikka, 2013, p. 7). Furthermore, despite his essentialist approach to the concept of culture, he attempted to deal with culture as fluidly and in as many dimensions as possible within the intellectual atmosphere of his time. For example, Herder's view of culture, which was criticized by Parekh (2000, p. 78) as "ethnicization of culture", was praised by Berlin (1980) for highlighting the multiplicity of particulars in contrast to the Enlightenment's vision of universal humanity. While Herder's philosophy can be classified as essentialist in that it views culture as the primary determinant of social organization and the primary feature that distinguishes a human community, it can also be likened to the structuralist tradition in that it views culture as a structure created by humans. Thus, Herder's philosophy can be viewed as a unique attempt to examine the organization of human beings in the social realm, as an example of an endeavor to understand and explain the differences and commonalities among human beings. Because of his emphasis on some qualities shared by human beings as a species and his thinking of culture as a structure developed, it is conceivable to identify Herder's idea of culture as an example of reduced essentialism. Sikka, who examines the criticisms of essentialism against Herder, argues that;

Herder is actually not as strong a cultural essentialist as is sometimes thought. He explicitly acknowledges that cultures are not internally uniform, that they fuse to form new combinations, and that their evolution is shaped by interaction with one another.… (In addition), Herder denies that there are clear borders between types of things anywhere in nature, and it would be bizarre to attribute to him the belief that human cultures have 'essences' which are more definite and stable than those he assigns to natural kinds. He nevertheless does think that cultures have distinct characters in a weaker sense, resulting from identifiably real differences among histories, languages, geographies, forms of life, and beliefs (Sikka, 2013, p. 7).

Furthermore, it is debatable whether Herder's essentialist approach qualifies him for the label of racist. Furthermore, Herder's racial remarks can be considered almost anti-racist. Herder (1803), while disputing the idea of races, claims that humans are members of a single species. Berlin argues that as an embodiment of a particular language and thought, "a nation is made what it is by 'climate', education, relations with its neighbors', and other changeable and empirical factors, and not by an impalpable inner essence or an unalterable factor such as race or color" (Berlin, 1980, p. 163). Herder suggests that;

There are neither four or five races, nor exclusive varieties, on this Earth. Complexions run into each other: Forms follow the genetic character: and upon the whole, all are at last but shades of the same great picture, extending through all ages, and over all parts of the Earth (Herder, 1803, p. 298).

The concept of "genetic", which Herder employs in this excerpt as well as the rest of his work, has prompted some to accuse him of racism. However, as Barnard argues, Herder's concept of "genetic" differs from the meaning used by modern biology; accordingly, Herder "links 'genetic' not with biological but rather with cultural characteristics" (Barnard, 2003, p. 28). As can be seen in this excerpt, Herder, on the one hand, attempted to explain the differences in the world from a systematic standpoint, while also attempting to avoid the racist ideas of his time. Accordingly,

even though he was accused of racism, it was claimed that Herder's ideology was free of racism[66]

(see, Barnard, 2003; Sikka, 2013). "Above all, let one be unbiased like the genius of humanity

itself; let one have no pet tribe, no favorite people on the earth", Herder states in Letters for the

Advancement of Humanity (Herder, 2004a, p. 394). According to Herder, who believes that there

is no hierarchy between distinct cultural groups,

(…) humanity and cultural difference recognizes, and seeks to respect, both what all

human beings have in common and what distinguishes the peoples of the world from one

another. His stress on cultural variety does not deny, and in fact assumes, shared

characteristics identifying the species – language, reason, politics, work, art, morality,

religion – which take shape in different ways (Sikka, 2013, p. 248).

Herder (1803), who contends that having various languages, rather than a biological

concept of race, is the determinant of national differences, goes beyond avoiding the concepts

of race and racism, and he is also wary of "nationalist chauvinism" and "national fanaticism",

as Barnard puts it. (Barnard, p. 35, 2003). Herder emphasized the importance of human

people being able to create and live in a culture, rather than belonging to a race. Despite his

cautious position, the link between Herder's philosophy and racism or Nazism can be

explained by his essentialist tendency in his concept of culture, which allowed room for

relativism, or pluralism, as stated by Berlin in a softened way (1980). Sikka claimed that two

aspects in Herder's philosophy, which can be characterized as "the division of peoples into

distinct varieties and a correlative incommensurability of values", were effective in

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[66] Race understanding of Kant, who is in the universalist tradition, as Eze puts it, "is not only transcendentally hypostatized but also biologically essentialized" (Eze, 1995, p. 227). Bernasconi explains why he describes Kant as the "inventor of the concept of the race" as follows; According to him, Kant "the one who gave the concept sufficient definition for subsequent users to believe that they were addressing something whose scientific status could at least be debated" (Robert Bernasconi, 2001, p. 11). Kleingeld further claims that when Herder and Kant are compared in terms of racism, antisemitism, and misogyny issues, Herder is purer than Kant (Kleingeld, 2011). On the other hand, despite his racist ideas, especially in his latter writings and works on anthropology, it is plausible to argue that Herder's contemporary Kant was not as connected with racism as Herder. It's ironic that Kant, the most prominent philosopher of universalist philosophy, had racist sentiments, and Herder, one of the most important names in the particularist tradition, was aloof when it came to racism. Aside from the irony, this intriguing analogy provides another hint. Apart from the fact that they lived in the same historical period and region, the essentialist approach shared by the particularist and universalist traditions lies behind the association of these two great thinkers of opposite lineages with racism.

identifying him with racism, and demonstrated how this association was falsely based on Herder's philosophy (Sikka, 2013, p. .13). Hence, while it is impossible to charge Herder of racism based on his overall philosophy, his arguments, which are perceived as essentialist, set the framework for such accusations.

Herder's theory is crucial for demonstrating the differences and similarities between particularist and universalist views. Herder's philosophy, which reflects the conflict between the two extreme approaches in his notions and perspective, is examined within the particularist tradition, but his ideas can also be seen as an example of an attempt to transcend this tension. The critiques of Herder's philosophy are examined in depth in this section since they are akin to the criticisms leveled against the particularist approach. The main criticisms such as essentialism, racism and relativism directed at the particularist approach, which is one of the solution proposals for the practice of living together, are the main problems on the agenda of contemporary political philosophers. Herder's position is also significant in terms of his contributions to contemporary political philosophy in the context of organizing coexistence activities from this perspective. To explain the shifting position of humans in the social and political arena, it is necessary to examine the tension between universalist and particularist approaches, both of which are founded on the modern concept of the subject.

Therefore, the foundations of philosophical thinking and major philosophical tensions that are effective in the structuring of belonging and differences in the social field are focused on in the discussion carried out in this section. When considered in conjunction with the previous subsection's discussion of the evolution of the modern understanding of the subject, the tension between universalism and particularism reflects the various approaches proposed to comprehend and explain how humans relate to themselves, the world, nature, and other humans, as well as their position within this relationality. These alternatives provide a critical theoretical foundation for the repositioning of the subject, which is at the heart of the dilemma of cohabitation and diversity, in modern times, particularly in consequence of the scientific, social, and political revolutions. The

philosophical foundations of two different philosophical approaches that form the problem of belonging and examine the position of modern subjects in the social field, particularly in the socio-political field of the contemporary period, are also discussed in this subsection. These approaches reflect two different perspectives on how and according to which principles different belonging categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, language, class, physicality, and nation should be organized in the social sphere.

Thus, since the first philosophers of Western philosophy in Ancient Greece, the universalist approach has been influential in the process of human subjectivation and can be defined as the effort to reveal the universally valid essence of human existence, albeit with different conceptual backgrounds. The history of universalism, which dates back to the first philosophers and was systematically theorized throughout the Enlightenment, is a significant component of philosophical history. The Enlightenment, which marks a significant turning point in human subjectivation, is founded on the idea that knowledge, existence, and morality may be discovered by universal-autonomous reason and the scientific method. Consequently, one of the key purposes of the Enlightenment-era idea of universality is to manage the complexity encountered in the face of modern-era social, scientific, and political developments, and to identify the principles and norms that would organize the lives of all human beings.

Universalist philosophers' interest in conceptions such as *human nature* and *human dignity*, which may be attained by universally shared reason, was thus not restricted to epistemological and ontological deductions, but also profoundly influenced the social and political realm. The concept of human nature, which is based on the premise that humans have a universally shared essence, is a key component of the goal of establishing a proper social and political order. Universalism, which accepts the existence of a distinct essence that can be grasped by reason and that only human beings possess among all other beings, played a role in the process of human centralization in the theoretical field and placing it in a hierarchically superior position to all other beings. Different belongings and particularities are seen as distortions, obstacles, and deficiencies in reaching the

right way, and it is aimed to arrange these differences according to the universal truth and laws, based on the universal and abstract human understanding, which is considered independent of its context, history, and geography. The universalist approach, which has been criticized for presenting a Western way of life as a universally valid source of legitimacy, is important because it emphasizes some basic human rights that all people possess by being human.

The particularist tradition's criticism of universalism, which is examined in the study in terms of its antagonism to the universalist tradition, offers an alternative for organizing the new categories of belonging that have emerged in the social field during the modern period. Along with the subsection in which the particularist tradition is examined in terms of two prominent philosophers from the history of Western philosophy, the relationship of the particularist approach to universalism, particularly Enlightenment ideas, the aspects that the particularist approach differ from these ideas, and its general characteristics are examined. Vico and Herder's ideas are particularly noteworthy at this point in terms of their critiques of the universalist tradition and the new problem areas they have brought. Particularist thinkers such as Vico, Herder, Montesquieu, and Montaigne, according to Parekh (2000), emphasized the relevance of pluralism and the impact of belonging categories like culture on human social positioning. These intellectuals offered an alternative to Enlightenment thought, which was the prevailing approach at the time they lived, and were an essential source for contemporary philosophical criticism of the Enlightenment and modernism. Against the idea of a monistic, abstract, and ahistorical universalist ideal of humanity, Vico and Herder underlined the importance of plurality of distinctions across various cultures, feelings, traditions, and historicity. Vico's philosophy is crucial in terms of underlining the relevance of multiple categories of belonging and demonstrating how climate, geography, and historicity influence these categories of belonging. Vico presented cultural diversity units as independent nations in order to draw attention to the cultural diversity of diverse social structures. Vico questioned the problematic structure of the modern subject idea and the scientific method, emphasizing that human societies should be seen as a historical production in contrast to the

universalist tradition's naturalized and fixed conception of human nature. Vico emphasized the relevance of heterogeneity against the Enlightenment ideal of universality, criticizing the image of an abstract and ahistorical subject independent of social and geographical constraints. Vico has been criticized for seeing cultural diversity as a stage to be passed through on the way to a more integrated and homogeneous vision of humanity in the future, but it has contributed to the particularist tradition by emphasizing the value of various categories of belonging that allow for this diversity in human life.

Herder, who exemplifies the tension between universalism and particularity, was influenced by the circumstances of his time and place and reflected this tension in his philosophy. Unlike Vico, he viewed disparities as a fundamental aspect of the human species, rather than a phase to be overcome. Herder explored the contrasts between various cultures and showed membership in a cultural group as one of the main human characteristics, with his theories reflecting the universalism-particularism contradiction in the context of the notion of humanity. In contrast to Vico's Eurocentric perspective, Herder contends that each culture should be analyzed in the context of its historical moment and that each culture is valuable. Herder attempted to answer many problems that contemporary philosophy is still working with today by highlighting the relevance of historicity, geography, climate, and the distinctions that develop with their surroundings in the organization of human communities. Herder has been criticized for offering a self-contained notion of culture in his thoughts that do not affirm intercultural interaction. Herder, who lived during the Enlightenment and acknowledged the period's benefits while remaining mindful of the period's potential dangers, has displayed a significant accumulation in terms of developing the general framework of the particularist tradition. Thus, Herder has developed one of the first and most effective examples of a philosophical tradition emphasizing that concepts like culture, nation and Volk are not unimportant to a universal modern subject understanding, that feelings and traditions are not secondary to reason, and that differences are not unimportant or secondary to sameness and uniformity.

Herder, who was criticized for viewing culture as an integral structure free of internal variability, underlined the importance of respecting authenticity and cultural variances. Herder's essentialist orientation, or, to put it another way, the essentialization and naturalization potential of concepts like culture and nation that he set at the cornerstone of his philosophy, has been attacked in a variety of ways. According to this, the critique of essentialism that particularist thinkers who emphasize the relevance of human diversity in the social field is one of the most significant barriers before them. Although he expresses the notion of culture as an essential structure, it is possible to express the position of Herder, who limits his essentialist orientation by stating that this essential structure is built by human beings, as a kind of reduced essentialism. Herder demonstrated a shift away from the concept of race in its contemporary meaning and categorical differentiations naturalized through biology by emphasizing the importance of language, location, and climate in the separation of distinct cultural communities.

In this context, particularism, which arose as a reaction to the Enlightenment's universalist perspective, provides an alternative view of human coexistence by emphasizing the impact of diversity in social organization and emphasizing the importance of culture, historicity, and different circumstances. Both approaches are based on the modern idea of the subject, which has evolved throughout philosophy's history. Therefore, the endeavor to rearrange the social and political sphere's evolving structure is an interactive process with the process of human subjectivation and centralization. The conflict between universalist and particularist views, which attempt to characterize the altering new human situation from opposite perspectives, has raised plenty of issues that contemporary political philosophy is still grappling with. The debate over whether humanity's ability to live together in peace and harmony should be built on universal principles or the uniqueness of particulars is still going on. A more frequent direction in contemporary political philosophy might be recognized as the search for a third path that does not reject these two ways and strives to reconcile these various views.

The impact of essentialism is another topic that has been examined in the context of universalist and particularist views. One of the most pressing issues in contemporary political thinking that has yet to be addressed is the need to define belongings in a non-essentialist manner. As has been noted in the discussion thus far, the essentialist way of thinking, which will be addressed in depth in the next section, has a strong influence on the modern subject and the universalist-particularistic traditions. Thus, universalist and particularist traditions aimed at understanding and organizing human coexistence practices are both common in essentialist philosophy. Both the universalist tradition, which proposes the idea of universal human nature in the organization of social life, and the particularist tradition, which emphasizes different categories of belonging, have been chastised for assuming certain, fixed, naturalized, and non-interacting essences in the structuring of social activity. These assumptions are crucial because they emphasize the practical and political problems inherent in essentialism. The potential of examining various categories of membership in a non-essentialist perspective, such as culture, nation, or Volk, should be considered at this point. In relation to that, the criticism of neglecting and undervaluing the influence of particulars on the social sphere in the banner of a universal human nature or the design of humanity, or the essentialization of a particular culture (for example, *Western* culture), should be scrutinized with equal care. Culture, nation, and humanity are inextricably linked to social life today, and it is crucial to examine how these concepts might be viewed in a non-essentialist fashion in order to remove or at least decrease conflicts that develop in human societies' cohabitation practices. The goal of arranging belongings in a non-essentialist way is also the driving force behind searches such as identity politics, citizenship studies, multiculturalism theories, and, lastly, the politics of belonging, which is also the topic of this research. From this perspective, the next part discusses how essentialism works and is effective as a mode of thinking or belief system that influences the concepts targeted at arranging group coexistence practices. It is hoped that by doing so, the necessity of non-essentialist construction of communal living practices will be shown.

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CHAPTER 3

ESSENTIALISM IN PRACTICE

Human history is full of examples with attempts by humans and human groups to identify themselves and those who are not like them. From prehistoric paintings at the Altamira, El Castillo and Niaux caves to Shakespeare's Hamlet, or from Hinduism's pursuit of happiness to Jean Paul Sartre's Existentialism as an answer to the existential crisis of modern human beings, all these efforts can be read as an attempt to define and add meaning to the human being and the world outside. Humans, on the other hand, have always prioritized themselves and those who are similar to them in these pursuits: members of the same clan, those with the same skin color, those of the same sex, and/or those who speak the same language have always favored themselves over those who are different. The notion that human beings have a privileged position in the world of living things is quite old (Newmyer, 1999, p. 54). Humans' privileged status is frequently justified by a particular 'feature' of them or a search for an essence that defines who they are. Thus, various explanations for the alleged essence possessed only by human beings or a specific group of people have been proposed: the question of which of the various features such as the *ability to communicate*, *sharing experience*, *morality*, being a *rational* or *conscientiou*s being is the most basic feature of human has always been a captivating and intriguing question.

Investigating the traits that make us human, explaining *how exceptional we are*, and/or attempting to discover the essential element that makes an identity what it is has been one of philosophy's perpetual agenda items. From the search for the *arkhe* by natural philosophers to efforts to interpret the divine essence in the Middle Ages, from the effort to determine the position of the subject in the modern period to the tension between universalist and particularist

philosophies, examples of the essentialist approach can be found throughout the history of philosophy. Accordingly, essentialism, as a way of thinking and inquiring about how all known things have an essential reality behind them, has been one of the fundamental approaches in the history of philosophy (Hallett, 1991; Janicki, 2002). Essentialism, according to Sayer (1997), can take many forms; therefore, essentialism can be discussed in ontological, metaphysical, linguistic, logical and mathematical, psychological, and biological contexts. The impact of essentialism on political philosophy is another reflection of its roots in these fundamental debates. Essentialism has a significant impact on the general structure and shape of the political field, as well as on the relationships and conflicts that exist within it. This epistemological, ontological, and, for some, theological search[67] for essence is also the result of a belief system with political implications regarding the problem of people coexisting and how different categories of belonging should be structured in social life.

Consequently, the effects of essentialism in the social and political realms, as well as how essentialism developed in these fields and the processes it employs, are investigated and addressed in this section. The premise that essentialism occurs in the context of philosophies that seek to organize human coexisting practices and that shapes diverse political theories and discourses is explored in this review. The idea that essentialism impacts our attitudes and behaviors toward different individuals and groups, as well as our social categories and forms of belonging, has been investigated from this perspective. Accordingly, the primary goal of this section's study is to examine how essentialism originates in political philosophy and the processes through which it operates. The goal of this study is to explore the structure of essentialism as it influences

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[67] According to certain scholars, this study of essence in terms of who we are or what we are is also a theological study. According to Hannah Arendt, for example, the answer to the question *Who am I?* is straightforward: "…the answer to the question 'Who am I?' is simply: 'You are a man—whatever that may be'; and the answer to the question 'What am I?' can be given only by God who made man. The question about the nature of man is no less a theological question than the question about the nature of God; both can be settled only within the framework of a divinely revealed answer" (Arendt, 1998, p. 11). Augustine was the first person in the history of philosophy to approach this investigation of essence in its anthropological setting, according to Arendt (1998) in Human Condition. Augustine, according to Arendt, differed between two questions: "Who am I?" and "What am I?" (Arendt, 1998, p. 10) . The "great mystery" the "grande profundum", is which of these is the human being (Arendt, 1998, p. 11)

philosophy and social sciences, as well as its reflections on the practical field, rather than to defend essentialism or take the side of an anti-essentialist attitude. Therefore, it has been proposed that essentialism is a belief system with a dual-pronged effect, with its structure shaping political practices and discourses; the focus of the discussion was on the mechanisms of essentialism influencing negative attitudes such as prejudice and various forms of behavior. Essentialism, on the other hand, has been said to have a beneficial result, allowing individuals to identify with their ingroup and therefore establish a sense of belonging. To this end, the definition and breadth of essentialism in philosophical and social science literature are described in broad terms, followed by a discussion of the mechanisms by which essentialism operates in the political realm and the outcomes it produces.

3.1. Definition and Scope of Essentialism

Philosophy's history is the result of major ruptures and controversies, as well as a cumulative aspect of intellectual interaction. From this perspective, it is feasible to discuss a variety of issues that have arisen throughout philosophy's history, as well as to reduce philosophy's whole history to a few basic questions, ways of thinking, and belief systems. In some ways, this reduction is significant in demonstrating that many great minds converge on similar concerns, orientations, and views, albeit at different times and in different parts of the world. Of course, each new question is distinct in a variety of ways, including the context and period in which it was posed. However, it is possible to find notions and approaches, issues and orientations that have continuity in terms of sharing some fundamental qualities throughout the history of philosophy. Correspondingly, essentialism is one of the most fundamental philosophical views that philosophers have shared throughout history. Essentialism is a dominating belief system and an important method in the philosophical literature, with all of its ontological, epistemological, linguistic, sociological, psychological, and political components. Essentialism can be studied from a variety of perspectives or fields as it is a polyhedral concept. Approaches on essence can be distinguished

into three groups. According to Gelman and Hirschfeld, the essence is generally examined, "as a property of the real World, as an inevitable product of the human mind, and as a historical construction imposed on people for political ends" (Gelman & Hirschfeld, 1999, p. 404). Essences can be found in the world, language, mind, or culture, according to Gelman and Hirschfeld's taxonomy: "Essentialism could result from an interaction of two or more factors". (Gelman & Hirschfeld, 1999, p. 422). As Sayer (1997) indicates there is not only one *essentialism* and it differs in relating to its contexts or approaches. Essentialism may be studied from cognitive, developmental, cultural, and social perspectives, according to Haslam (2017). When it comes to the classification of the type and the degree of essentialism, one can find a large number of varieties. For example, when we investigate essentialist positions, we might come across the super-essentialist[68] position which premediates that all properties are essential to an individual substance (Cover & Hawthorne, 2008; Mondadori, 1973). Or, we can distinguish the origin essentialism as a less extreme form of essentialism (see also Forbes, 1985; Salmon, 1979) from sortal essentialism which is an essentialist position that argues that some sortal concepts epitomize essential properties of the things (see also Burke, 1996; Mackie, 1994). Constitutively, essentialism is a view, belief, or philosophical position that all things have an essence or a set of attributes that determines or identifies what they are. Gelman asserts that essentialism "is the view that certain categories have an underlying reality or true nature that one cannot observe directly but that gives an object its identity and is responsible for other similarities that category members share" (Gelman, 2004, p. 404). Fuss, on the other hand, defined essentialism as "a belief in the real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity" (Fuss, 2013, p. xi).

Gelman (see, 2004, p. 405; Gelman & Hirschfeld, 1999) highlighted three general variables that determine the definition, scope, and impact of essentialism: the location of the essence, the

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[68] Super-essentialist approach is often referred to Leibniz's philosophy (e.g., Mondadori, 1973). However, there is also some strong oppositions to this assertion that propounds Leibniz's philosophy as an example of super-essentialism (see Hunter, 1981; Sotnak, 1994)

essence's ontological type, and its *degree of specificity*. Accordingly, it is possible to talk about *metaphysical essentialism* if the essence is located in the world, and *representational essentialism* if it is located in human representations. In addition, essentialism can be classified ontologically as *sortal* (serving to define categories), *causal* (having consequences for category structure), or *ideal* (having no real-world instantiation); finally, essentialism can be classified as *specific* (their particulars are known and identifiable) or *placeholder* (their particulars are unknown and possibly unknowable) depending on the degree of specificity of the essence (Gelman, 2004, p. 405). Gelman and Hirschfeld (1999) argue that metaphysical essentialism quests for the existence of the essence in the world. On the other hand, representational essentialism problematizes the existence of the essence in *conceptual* (psychological essentialism), *linguistic* (nominal essentialism), or *cultural* (cultural essentialism) contexts. According to Gelman's classification, *representational essentialism* "addresses how people construe reality (in their belief systems, language, and cultural practices)"; the *causal essence* is "the substance, power, quality, process, relationship, or entity that causes other category-typical properties to emerge and be sustained, and that confers identity"; and *placeholder essentialism* "suggests that a person believes that there is some causal essence that holds a category together, without knowing just what that essence is (e.g. that all samples of water share some inherent, non-obvious property)" (Gelman, 2004, p. 405). Philosophers have examined the metaphysical component of the essence and explored the ontologically *sortal* or *ideal* form of essence throughout the history of philosophy. This philosophical quest has reinforced the idea that essence is a reality with ontological and epistemic qualities that must be uncovered. The search for the essence of the universe, beings and people has changed form, especially with the modern period, and shifted to the field of study of science such as biology, chemistry, genetics, psychology and cognitive. The struggle to comprehend essentialisms in the forms of representational, causal, and placeholder essentialisms, which is not independent of these deep-rooted philosophical debates and the studies of these new fields of science, has evolved into an interdisciplinary field of study encompassing practical philosophy, theoretical psychology,

sociology, and political science. Thus, examining essentialism's effect and operating mechanisms on people's languages, belief systems, cultural practices, and group processes can be defined as a study subject for which practical and social sciences seek answers. This chapter focuses on the development mechanisms and implications of essentialism in the social and political arena based on this definition and classification.

The issue of how to organize belongings and differences in the social domain without the standardizing and discriminating design of essentialism is a significant one that must be addressed. Because, following the birth of modern subject thought, affinities and differences have grown into a multidimensional and diverse state that cannot be gathered under the umbrella of a universal notion of humanity. The discourses and forms that arose from the essentialist belief system still exist, albeit at various levels, and will not vanish overnight[69]. It's critical to emphasize the importance of looking for alternatives rather than being divided along the essentialist axis. Thus, adopting an anti-essentialist perspective, omitting or devaluing the essentialist belief system's effective categories of belonging would not lead to a better understanding of social reality. As Phillips argues,

> (…) it is sometimes said that while essentialist constructs are, in a sense, category
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> mistakes – drawing the boundaries between peoples or things in the wrong place - there is
>
> not much point rubbishing them as analytically wrong, because once in existence, they
>
> become part of our social reality (Phillips, 2010b, p. 3).

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[69] Different belonging groups are at the advanced stages of the struggle for fundamental rights in some parts of the world, while in others, the struggles of these groups often become a struggle for survival. Therefore, diverse belonging groups continue to fight for survival even under the most severe of circumstances. While calls for LGBTIQ+ individuals' marriage rights have been observed in some countries' demonstrations, slogans such as 'We do exist!' demanding merely recognition of existence of different groups have been seen in other geographies (see, https://www.duvarenglish.com/we-do-exist-turkeys-lgbt-community-anxious-but-defiant-in-the-face-of-fresh-govt-attacks-news-56107). The *Black Lives Matters* protests began in the United States in 2020 and became effective. These protests can be seen as a current example of the struggle for survival of a diverse belonging group (see,-https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/how-the-black-lives-matter-movement-went-mainstream/2020/-06/09/201bd6-e6-a9c6-11ea-9063-e69bd6520940_story.html)

It is vital to comprehend essentialism, which is a part of social reality, and to demonstrate its working mechanisms. With such an effort, it is possible to comprehend the impact of essentialism, which comprises the activities of people and groups of people with philosophical origins. Thus, it's critical to avoid attempts to denounce essentialist practices and discourses without first attempting to comprehend them.

Conflict and polarization situations that occur as a result of the essentialization of belonging and differences necessitate a surge in anti-siege efforts. As Phillips argues, "it is in our political activities and discourses that essentialism is most alive today, and this where it most needs to be challenged" (Phillips, 2010b, p. 6). Instead of being caught up in the vicious circle of debating the presence or non-existence of essences, it is crucial to strive to understand essentialism, focus on the influence of essentialism on the political field and discourse, and try to raise consciousness by making this effect evident. First and foremost, it is important to recall the prominence of essentialism in the history of philosophy in general.

The extent and significance of essentialism can be seen in its tremendous influence on the history of philosophy, as discussed in the previous section. Essentialism, according to one perspective, is a product of Western philosophy's history, understanding of science and technology, and cultural accumulation (Fuss, 2013; also see, Gelman, 2005, pp. 14-15). This perspective rejects the form of essentialism that accepts essences and our knowledge of them as innate, natural, and given. Similarly, Gelman, who does not believe essentialism is natural and given, attacks the historical accident perspective, claiming that it cannot explain why preschool children essentialize (Gelman, 2005, p. 15). Departing this point of view, Gelman determined his position as "an evolutionary adaptation position, which posits that humans evolved a universal essentializing tendency because it is beneficial for interactions with the world" (Gelman, 2005, p. 15). Scrutinizing essentialism as an empirical phenomenon in the context of its manifestations in everyday thought, Gelman defined essentialism as "a cognitive predisposition that emerges early in childhood, particularly for understanding the natural world" (Gelman, 2005, p. 14). For him,

essentialism functions as an "early cognitive bias"; it is not a "historical accident" and is "supported and shaped by language" (Gelman, 2005, p. 7). Hence, essentialism is a cognitive disposition that develops early in life and is nourished and maintained by language.

Essentialism as a belief system has manifested itself in various forms throughout philosophy's history. According to the definition of essentialism often referred to in philosophy, all objects have some essentialist properties but the rest of the other properties are accidental. The intensity and the extent of these essential properties are varied by philosopher and/or by philosophical position. The presence of this way of thinking is spread across almost the entire history of philosophy. According to Fuss;

> (…)it is difficult to identify a single philosopher whose work does not attempt to account for the question of essentialism in some way; the repeated attempts by these philosophers to fix or to define essence suggest that essence is a slippery and elusive category and that the sign itself does not remain stationary or uniform (Fuss, 2013, p. 20).

According to Gelman and Hirschfeld, the notion of essence has been remarkably "pervasive across time (discussed at least over the past 2400 years), across radically different philosophical traditions (e.g., embraced by both Plato and Locke), and across cultures" (Gelman & Hirschfeld, 1999, p. 405). Essentialism, which has influenced a wide range of disciplines from philosophy to biology, sociology to psychology, and literature to political science, has a large literature of supporters and opponents. The arguments in Ancient Greek philosophy's burgeoning domains of ontology and epistemology provide the primary response to this large literature. Its origins as an ontological dilemma can be found in questions about what beings are, the nature of existents, and the ideas that characterize and name existents. This ontological debate, which may be traced back to the first philosophers' thinking, culminated in Aristotle. Although the early thinkers' philosophical notions were original, they bear substantial traces of the Greek intellectual tradition that preceded them, such as Homer's legacy, Hesiod's poems and fragments, and the mythical accumulation of Egypt and Near Eastern civilizations, as Taylor remarked (C. C. W.

Taylor, 2003, p. 1). According to this, the preparation of the first philosophy, and thus essentialist understanding, was the result of thinkers and artists who attempted to reveal the true reality behind the world of appearances through fairy tales, mythologies, and poems as different ways of understanding and explaining nature. The origins of essentialism, according to Popper (1999), can be traced back to animist views. Therefore, essentialism may be traced back to the first attempts by humans to find meaning in the universe and their existence. From this perspective, essentialism has a long history dating back to the desire to add infinity to one's own existence as a finite entity or the urge to discover a harmonic meaning in an otherwise chaotic universe. Thus, essentialism may be traced back to the earliest forms of understanding the world and the purpose of being.

Ionia, which is the birthplace of Western Philosophy, can also be regarded as the primary source of essentialist thinking. From Hesiod's *Theogony* and Pherecydes of Syros' *Theology* to Plato and Aristotle, trying to understand and explain the cosmos and the human being had been aimed at philosophical enquiries as a primary objective. As the founder of Western philosophy, Thales of Miletus was the precursor of thinking *Cosmos* without using mythical explanation.

Milesian thinkers found "a new, unprecedented way of theorizing the world" (Vamvacas, 2009, p. vii). According to Vamvacas, we can summarize its innovation in four statements;

> (…) beneath the apparent disorder and multiplicity of the cosmos, there exists order, unity and stability; unity derives from the fundamental primary substratum from which the cosmos originated; the cosmic reality, is one, and is based not on supernatural, but on physical causes; they are such that man can investigate them rationally (Vamvacas, 2009, p. vii).

Pre-Socratics have formed a logic based on their observations and perceptions of the world, and they think that there is a distinction between appearance and reality, as well as a fundamental structure beneath appearances. These thinkers concentrated on the problem of *arkhé*, attempting to explain the unity behind and underneath appearances rather than the diversity of appearances, which is incomprehensible and unexplainable. *Water* is the first substance of existence, that is *arkhé*, for Thales of Miletus, *apeiron* or 'indefinite' for Anaximander, which can be thought of as

an abstract principle not identical with any sensory substance, and *air* is the first substance of existence for Anaximenes (O'Connor, 1985). Later Pre-Socratic thinkers continued the essentialist approach of the Ionian philosophers, who constructed a monist cosmology, albeit in diverse forms. For Pythagoreans, for example, a human was a composite being made up of both soul and body. The soul was determined as an essential and fundamental component in this method, which is the outcome of dualistic human thought. This is also a significant development in terms of establishing a foundation for human nature. The idea that the essence lies in an everlasting and universal structure was further strengthened with this approach, which also impacted Plato. Another theory that gained traction at this time was that humans are capable of comprehending the essence of existence through their thoughts. To put it another way, whether the essence of existence is defined as a material or a formal element, the essence's existence has been recognized in some way.

Heraclitus and Parmenides, who centered their philosophy on the phenomenon of change, which Ionians and Pythagoreans, who attempted to explain the unity behind the multitude, were unable to fully explain, attempted to explain the phenomenon of change in the universe and the relationship between permanence and continuity (O'Connor, 1985). Heraclitus, who emphasized the idea of Logos as the law by which change occurs, put change at the core of his philosophy with the idea of conflict and unity of opposites. *Logos* can be thought of as both the universal law and the faculty of comprehension that enables humans to comprehend change and law. Heraclitus likewise believed that among all the changes and contradictions in the universe, there must be the first substance. Fire is the first substance that comes to mind for him.

Parmenides, who examined comparable issues, followed the essentialist approach, albeit from a different perspective than Heraclitus. Parmenides inspired all Ancient Greek philosophy and the history of Western philosophy by defining the general framework of the idea of *nothing comes from nothing*[70]. Parmenides, who argued for *being* against Heraclitus' emphasis on

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[70] Lt: *ex nihilo nihil fit.*

becoming, claimed that movement and change violate the idea of being and that anything that does not conform to the principles of thinking cannot be regarded as reality (see, 1991; C. C. W. Taylor, 2003). Thus, the *One* is the one true Being. This Being is an indivisible, identical structure in its whole. "Because the same thing is there for thinking and for being", according to this concept of being, which is one of the most fundamental sources of subject-object dualism on which modern subject understanding is built (Parmenides & Gallop, 1991, pp. 56-57). Throughout the Western metaphysical tradition, this approach has been read as embracing thinking as a subject act, and the idea of hierarchical positioning between subject and object has thus become one of the major acceptances of Western metaphysics.

Essentialism is a fundamental approach in Ancient Greek philosophy, as seen by these early examples of philosophy. However, it would be negligent to conclude this brief overview of essentialism's origins in Ancient Greece without discussing Aristotle. Because Aristotle's philosophy contains the most thorough and systematic example of essentialism theorization in the history of philosophy. Aristotle's essentialist influence is vital to the problems of definition and meaning of terms, according to Popper (1985), who is attempting to define the principles of an anti-essentialist philosophy. This influence can be seen not only in medieval thought but also in contemporary philosophy, including Wittgenstein, according to Popper, who names the Aristotelian approach the essentialist method[71] (Popper, 1985, p. 24). Accordingly, the terms Aristotelian essentialism and essentialism are frequently used interchangeably in the literature (see, Cartwright, 1968; Cohen, 1978; Loux, 1970; Tomberlin, 1971). According to Gelman, the notion of the essence "is captured in Aristotle's distinction between essential and accidental properties: the essential properties constitute the essence" (Gelman, 2005, p. 8). Accordingly, the classical definition of essentialism "represents the traditional Aristotelian understanding of

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[71] Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Frege, Russell, Husserl, and young Wittgenstein are among the prominent philosophers listed by Hallet (1991), who claims that the list of essentialist philosophers is quite large.

essence, the definition with the greatest amount of currency in the history of Western metaphysics" (Fuss, 2013, p. 3).

Essence, according to Aristotle, is the tangible, individual, existing item in its basic form, which he explores his understanding of the self extensively in his writings labeled *Categories* (1991) and *Metaphysics* (1995). The criteria used by Aristotle, who classifies entities as four different types in his work *Categories*, are as follows: Predicable of a subject (said of a subject) and present in a subject. Based on these criteria, Aristotle classified entities into four distinct types: primary substances (*prote ousia*) (here he refers to concrete particulars that are members of a species), non-substantial particulars (here he refers to attributes), secondary substances (*ousia deutera*) (here he refers to substances that unite the concrete particular under the name of a certain species or genus) and finally non-substantive universals (here he refers to the universals of qualities) (see, Aristotle, 1991, 2a13- 4b19). Hence, existence is a substance for Aristotle, serving as the foundation for distinct qualities or predicates.

The first and most basic category is substance, which requires nothing else to exist and maintain its existence. Aristotle defines substance metaphysically as the bearer of attributes and logically as the subject to whom predicates can be given, using the substance as a foundation for later determinations. Outside of the substance, there are nine categories that serve as the basic building blocks for grasping all of the attributes of objects in change and production as accidents, and they can only exist if the substance exists (see, Aristotle, 1991, 2a13- 4b19). The substance is the subject to which the remaining nine categories, such as quantity, quality, relation, place, basic quality, or predicates, might be attributed as accidents. Therefore, to exist is to be a specific type of substance. In particular, Aristotle reduces substance to the individual, individual being from a logical standpoint based on the categories of being.

To put it another way, what actually exists for him is primary substance as an individual being. It, the primary substance, is that which cannot be attributed to or affirmed about a subject, but to which everything else is ascribed and affirmed. Substance (form) and essence are not

separated in Aristotelian ontology, and they coexist (Witt, 1989). Thus, in Aristotle's philosophy, there is no such thing as a form without essence or an essence without form. Only from a logical standpoint, not ontological or epistemological, is a separation between substance and essence viable. In Aristotle's metaphysics, everything is either substance or various states of substance (Witt, 1989). These two notions are not synonyms, according to Aristotle, who normally employs the *ousia* in reference to the concept of substance and the eidos regarding the concept of essence. What actually exists, according to Aristotle, are the individual things made up of matter and form, who wishes to explain the shape and common traits of a complete class from the most general notion of essence, and individual concrete actuality and existence from the concept of substance.

In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle initially concentrated on issues like *What is Being?* and *What does it mean to exist for something?* These inquiries concern the essence of existence, which necessitates an all-encompassing and explanatory interpretation. In consequence, Aristotle's principal focus is on elucidating the essence of existence. However, Aristotle, who distinguishes matter from form, believes that there cannot be a form in nature that is empty of matter or a substance that is independent of form. Unlike Plato, there is no way to have a universe of forms, or ideas, outside of the sensory world. Accordingly, form exists in the sensory world as well as a component of substance, the essence of each unique substance. Hence, in Aristotle's philosophy, a universe without essences is impossible. Thinking, or the intellect in pursuit of truth, is the most basic human feature, according to Aristotle, who also established an idea of human nature as a result of his essentialist understanding. According to Aristotle, who believed that the mind has two dimensions, theoretical and practical, it is the theoretical mind's activity that defines the human being, distinguishes it from other beings, and makes human beings human (O'Connor, 1985). The history of attempts to grasp the essence of existence, as shown in the first examples of philosophy, is at least as old and rooted as the history of philosophy. The philosophical background revealed in the discussion on the development of modern subject understanding in the history of philosophy in the first part of the study also shows that essentialism is a fundamental approach, a belief system

that surrounds the history of Western philosophy. Hence, the history of essentialism can be used to assess the evolution of the modern subject. The shifting position of the subject in the cosmos, in society, and hence in philosophy illustrates essentialism's alteration and change. The ontological, epistemological, and logical content of essentialism has been formed by the philosophical accumulation that develops the concept of the modern subject.

This section and the debate in the previous section are structured as complimentary portions from this point of view, starting from the assumption that there is a fundamental connection between the formation process of the modern subject idea and the philosophical foundations of essentialism. In this context, it is reasonable to assert that the philosophical background, which is the source of essentialist thinking, provides a fundamental framework that has a direct impact on the theorizing process of the modern concept of the subject. The framework that allows the modern subject to be built in an introverted, excluding and marginalizing structure towards other beings who are different is fashioned by the essentialist belief system's negative outcomes. This framework is provided by the negative results of the essentialist thinking system, which essentializes and naturalizes some features of a subject and hence privileges them over others due to their essential characteristics. Thus, the essentialist belief system can be identified as one of the most fundamental belief systems that shapes the modern subject's position in the social and political sphere. As stated in the first chapter's discussion, philosophical interest in understanding the essence of the universe has gradually shifted to understanding the essence and nature of human beings, so that the moral and political content has become more visible rather than the ontological and epistemological emphasis in the search for the self. In this context, the political content of essentialism, which is one of the study's primary concerns, and how it manifests itself in the political arena are investigated in the next chapter.

3.2. Essentialism's Impact on Social and Political Domains

Essentialism is one of the most basic belief systems that people use to understand and explain themselves and the world they live in, as evidenced by its widespread influence since the beginnings of philosophy. Consequently, essentialism's influence was felt not only in ontological and epistemological debates, but also in the defining and organization of humanity's place in the world and in social life. From another perspective, the philosophers' quest for the essence of beings might be viewed as an attempt to legitimize and defend their own moral and political perspectives. According to Rorty (2009), the philosophical tradition that began with Plato and continued through the theorization of the modern subject has been in quest of a non-contingent essence that is unaffected by historicity and cultural contexts. Philosophers who employed the concept of essence to defend their political views on society attempted to place humans in an ontologically superior position to other beings[72] (Rorty, 1998). Essentialism can be defined as a political belief system with ontological and epistemological basis using this approach.

As interest in the discovery of the essence shifted to human beings and their social lives, or in other words, with the process of human subjectivation, the political content and outputs of essentialism became more obvious and heightened. Accordingly, the debate over essentialism, which has an interacting tripedal basis between ontology, epistemology, and linguistics, is a very important and effective problem area, with a political dimension that is not independent of these contexts. Problems of belonging and difference have increasingly dominated the social agenda, particularly since the nineteenth century. Since the end of the nineteenth century, philosophers and social scientists have debated the issues of belonging and difference, particularly in light of numerous characteristics such as nationalism, racism, and sexism. Studies investigating and debating the impact of essentialism on these many characteristics may be found throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The interest in political reflections of essentialism can be

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[72] Rorty (1998), who describes humanity as a dynamic creature with desires and beliefs, critiques Enlightenment thought's rationalist and positivist foundations of knowledge and truth.

determined, primarily through the confrontation between the two camps. These two camps can be summarized as accepting or perceiving essentialist discourses as valid (essentialism) and rejecting all forms of essentialism (anti-essentialism). These two camps carry some risks; for example, an anti-essentialist approach can reject all types of belonging and difference, while an essentialist approach can highlight and sharpen distinctions, effectively removing the prospect of various belongings living together. According to Phillips, "there are costs to denying as well as to exaggerating difference" (Phillips, 2010b, p. 10). From this perspective, there are two extremes that should be avoided in a study that focuses on the cohabitation of groups of people with various belongings: Denying or exaggerating the differences. In this setting, a line must be drawn that avoids utter rejection or amplification of essences while also attempting to comprehend and explain the political context of essentialism. Thus, essentialism, with its expressions in philosophy as well as other human actions such as science and art, must be examined not only as a component of a philosophical argument, but also as a belief system with critical outputs that shapes the political arena. Essentialism's negative political effects, which are a part of social reality and present themselves in numerous ways such as homophobia, xenophobia, and racism, can be explained through such an investigation.

The contrast between essentialism and anti-essentialism can be found in numerous sections of philosophy's history. For example, the opposition of essentialism to constructivism and nominalism, as well as the conflict between universalism and particularity outlined in the previous section, might be viewed as different aspects of this discussion. Fuss's (Fuss, 2013) analysis on the need to analyze each discourse strategically within its particular context, without characterizing essentialism as progressive or reactionary, good or evil, should be seen as another option when discussing this antagonism over the essentialist-constructivist dichotomy. Through this kind of approach, which is in line with the concept of *strategic essentialism* utilized by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), who is known for her postcolonial and feminist studies, the necessity of a kind of strategic use of essentialism in political and social spheres is emphasized while being

aware of the dangers of essentialism. Spivak's (1988) approach offered a strategic political posture to allow oppressed or minority groups, such as Subaltern, ethnicity, or gender groupings, to assert their subject status. Spivak emphasizes that this is a transient political position, as she wanted to build a field of struggle by creating a sense of unity and belonging among persons with a specific identity with this strategic step (Spivak, 1988). This political position emphasizes that, in some cases, it may be good for individuals to simply and briefly essentialize their group belonging in order to counteract the universalist perspective's global homogenizing and standardizing influence. Fuss, emphasizing that this is a risky position, argues that "in the hands of a hegemonic group, essentialism can be employed as a powerful tool of ideology domination; in the hands of the subaltern, the use of humanism to mime humanism can represent a powerful displacing repetition" (Fuss, 2013, p. 32). In later publications (see, Spivak, 1993, 2003), Spivak emphasized her disagreement with the use of the term *strategic essentialism* to rationalize essentialism and distanced herself from it. Consequently, this political attitude, which sought a middle ground between essentialism and anti-essentialism, had to recede against essentialism's dominating and expansionist framework. Despite Spivak's decision to stop using the concept, it continues to circulate and be discussed. Specifically, despite all of its negative connotations, the concept of strategic essentialism, which has lately been discussed in the context of Queer and Feminist Studies, points to specific theoretical demands.

Humans are divided into social structures and groupings based on religion, language, race, gender, and ethnicity. Individuals who identify as members of a group do so not only in consequence of their unique and singular identities but also as a result of and through their diverse and multidimensional belongings. Behind this perception of reality, which enables the individual to identify with the group of which s/he is a member and consequently, the consciousness of *We* lies in the individual, there is an ontological acceptance of certain characteristics that make up the category of *Us*: This acceptance is based on essentialism, a strong belief system that states there is feature(s) that make up *We* and these features distinguish *Us* from those who are not us, that is,

Others. Essentialism, according to Medin and Ortony (1989), allows members of a social group to believe that they share an essence or underlying truth with others (see, Gelman, 2005). Thus, understanding how people's beliefs that they share with others and that they have specific essences that distinguish them from others work is an essential problem area. As Medin and Ortony underline, "if people believe that things have essences, we had better not ignore this fact in our theories of knowledge representation" (Medin & Ortony, 1989, p. 183). This approach defined as *psychological essentialism*, "entails that people believe in the existence of essences, not that people have detailed knowledge regarding the content of essences, nor that essences exist" (Gelman, 2005, p. 22; see also, Medin & Ortony, 1989).

Belief systems that form our understanding of the past, present, and future and our belongings associated with these belief systems, as Charles Taylor argues, designate "a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being" (C. Taylor, 1994, p. 1). Essentialist and non-essentialist approaches are used to try to answer the question of whether belongings come from our biological structure or creation, or whether they are social and cultural creations, which will be discussed in detail in the next section. However, regardless of which side of the debate we approach this subject from, there is one fact that both sides agree on: We have belongings, or, to put it another way, individuals believe they have a specific belonging. From an essentialist perspective, acknowledging that our belongings exist/were created categorically limits new discussions and explanations. In general, the dispute over the existence of belongings is a boundary-pushing endeavor that is outside the scope of this research. The goal of this study is to look at how people's views about essences work in the social and political realm, rather than whether essences exist or not. In the social realm, it is critical to recognize the existence of differences and belongings. We have *belongings* in the world we live in today: There are various ethnic groups, ethnicities, gender identities, individuals with various qualities, and people in various age ranges. Therefore, in a discussion about essentialism in the social field, the question to focus on is not whether there are essences on an

ontological/metaphysical level, but rather what the essentialist belief system is and how it functions, which has been effective in the formation of differences and belongings believed to exist by people. The central problem of the next section is the cohabitation of these belonging groups, which are typically in conflict and polarization in social life. The question of how the mechanism that allows for these conflicts and polarizations between different belonging groups works, on the other hand, remains unanswered. This mechanism driving the formation of belongings can be described as an essentialist belief system.

Belief systems, in general, are the foundation of the stories we tell ourselves about reality, and every human being has a variety of them. As Usó-Doménech and Nescolarde-Selva argue, "As humans, we tend to use all these belief systems to varying degrees to cope with events in our lives. Ultimately, we need the world to make sense at some level" (Usó -Doménech & Nescolarde-Selva, 2016, p. 1). Because belief systems are frequently used in the same sense as knowledge systems or ideologies, it will be useful to examine the similarities and contrasts of this notion with other notions used in comparable contexts to better understand and explain belief systems. As Abelson (1979) argues, who examined the differences between knowledge systems and belief systems, although they have some common points, there are exact differences between the belief systems and knowledge systems. Abelson (1979) has sketched seven features which in practice seem to differentiate belief systems from knowledge systems; for example, "the elements (concepts, propositions, rules, etc.) of a belief system, (as distinct from knowledge systems) are not consensual" (Abelson, 1979, p. 356). These three concepts, according to van Dijk, who conducted extensive research on the concepts of ideology, knowledge, and belief, are distinct from one another. For Van Dijk;

> (…) beliefs are the building blocks of the mind. Knowledge in that case is merely a specific category of beliefs, namely, those beliefs 'we' (as a group, community, culture, instance or institution) take to be 'true beliefs', according to certain grounds or (truth) criteria (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 19).

Ideologies, according to van Dijk, "belong to the realm of social beliefs", as he explores belief systems and ideology concepts from the perspectives of social psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy (van Dijk, 1998, p. 29). Ideologies and beliefs, he claims, are inextricably intertwined, and ideologies are defined as social beliefs: Ideologies are "the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members" (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 7). From this perspective, beliefs are the name of the fundamental structure, while ideologies are the name of the social context in which this fundamental structure arises. Our views, as the fundamental structure, reflect and impact the social through ideologies. Belief systems have a broader framework in this context, which includes, but transcends beyond, and is the foundation of both knowledge and ideologies[73] (Van Dijk, 1998, 2000). As Van Dijk argues, "beliefs may be defined as units of information and information processing, just as much as they may be seen as the products of thinking, or indeed as the (mental) conditions and consequences of discourse and social interaction" (Van Dijk, 1998, p. 21). Thus, belief systems can be said to have two sources or dimensions, which are cognitive and social interaction.

One of the belief systems that comes from the relationality of cognitive and social interaction sources is essentialism, which determines the social hierarchy of individuals and groups (see, Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997). Essentialist beliefs, which are closely related to a set of cognitive mechanisms that shape in-group and intergroup attitudes and behaviors, as Haslam and Levy indicate "represent a set of ontological assumptions that capture some social categories better than others, that vary between people, and that appear to have important implications for attitudes" (Haslam & Levy, 2006, p. 471). Social and political interactions and repercussions of the essentialist belief system are not restricted to ontological and epistemological philosophical assumptions or approaches. When the focus of philosophy was transferred to humans and their life in the social domain, the essentialist belief system used by philosophers for their ontological

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[73] This research does not cover the ancient epistemological debate between belief and knowledge.

explanations of the world they live in remained effective. When it comes to the social and political sphere, essentialism, which is one of the attempts to find unity in the plurality and complexity of the universe, has devolved into a reduction of belonging and differences to a certain essence. Essentialism, as a belief system, provides a broad foundation for our understanding of the world, our existence, our belongings, and who we are. The findings of the research conducted by Haslam, Bastian, and Bissett "indicate that people understand some personality attributes in an essentialist fashion, that these attributes are taken to be valued elements of a shared human nature, and that they are particularly central to social identity and judgment" (Haslam, Bastian, & Bissett, 2004, p. 1661). Essentialism from the angle of political philosophy, "refers to a reduction of the diversity in a population to some single criterion held to constitute its defining 'essence' and most crucial character. This is often coupled with the claim that the 'essence' is unavoidable or given by nature" (Calhoun, 1997, p. 18). Accordingly, the essentialist belief system has a significant impact on defining our social status. The essentialist belief system has played a significant part in the process of human subjectivation, as detailed in the first chapter, which concentrates on the changing of human beings' place in the world of thought. The content and structure of human relationships with the world, other beings, and humans have been shaped by the various outcomes that have evolved in consequence of the essentialist belief system's contribution and mediation.

3.3. Outputs of Essentialism in Society and Politics

Our view of social life and our behaviors are based on belief systems that provide the background to our ideas and help us make sense of the world. As Purvis and Hunt argue, "(…) the way in which people comprehend and make sense of the social world has consequences for the direction and character of their action and inaction" (Purvis & Hunt, 1993, p. 474). The positive and negative outcomes of the source that essentialism supplies to our way of looking at the world might be addressed. Essentialism must be examined as a multidimensional belief system that is effective in

the organizing of social space, with both harmful and good consequences. For Gelman, who argues that essentialism has some positive cognitive effects;

> It provides a framework for making valuable category-based inferences. It encourages a 'scientific' mind set in thinking about the natural world, a belief that intensive study of a natural domain will yield ever more underlying properties. The many ways in which children essentialize the natural world reveal precocious abilities to categorize and benefit from categories (Gelman, 2005, p. 296).

In addition to essentialism's positive cognitive contributions, it's also conceivable to discuss its positive social outcomes (see, Verkuyten, 2003). It is also important to emphasize essentialism's beneficial results in terms of building a basis of togetherness for members of subaltern, minority[74], or vulnerable groups, as well as making it possible to belong to a group for people in general. Essentialism is also one of the fundamental belief systems that allows members of a group to identify with one another and hence have a sense of belonging to that group. According to Mandalaywala, Amodio, and Rhodes, there are researches in the literature that suggest that belonging to a group has a good impact on academic accomplishment, mental health, and physiology (Mandalaywala, Amodio, & Rhodes, 2018, p. 467). In-group identification, which is one of the positive results of the essentialist thinking system, has a substantial impact on people's political participation, according to findings (Kawakami & Dion, 1993; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Lalonde & Cameron, 1993). It is a reality that individuals have belonging, that is, identification with a group, an identity, or a category, and that this phenomenon has positive consequences on individuals, as explored in depth in the next portion of the study, which focuses on the notion of belonging. From this point of view, it is possible to argue that people see an affinity with other people who are similar to themselves, share some common features, values, historical background, and have the same geographical roots, and therefore they tend to essentialize some features as

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[74] It is possible to say that among minority groups, identification with the ingroup is more profound. Verkuyten and Brug discovered that ethnic ingroup identification is more common in members of the minority community than in members of the majority community in their research of adolescents from minority and majority communities in the Netherlands (Verkuyten & Brug, 2004)

common ground with these people as the basic component of the group. The origins of this trend can be traced back to evolutionary, cognitive, and historical changes and interactions. The categories of belonging that emerge from a particular cognitive schema provide a safe haven where people can feel at ease, at home, and secure. Individuals have wanted to belong to a group of people with whom they share many characteristics, such as language, culture, customs, a shared past, and a shared future, that make up this safe haven. The need to belong has been described as one of the most basic human needs in Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs. According to Baumeister and Leary, "the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 497). Many variables, structures, and motivations that are formed under the influence of the essentialist belief system can have positive effects on human beings, according to this viewpoint. As Mandalaywala argues, "essentialist beliefs actually lay the foundation for progressive movements, such as feminism, multiculturalism, and gay rights, that seek to establish the existence, fundamentality, and immutability of minoritized and often stigmatized identities" (Mandalaywala, 2020, p. 56). Accordingly, it is a positive outcome in some ways, such as when persons with a minority group identity or oppressed belonging are organized around a common essence so that they may fight for solidarity and rights. This output, however, has the potential to become a tool of coercion for individuals who do not meet the self-definition of a strong group belonging, specifically those who are different. This topic is debated in a variety of settings, particularly because of the risk it poses to minorities within minorities (see e.g., Bader, 2005; Eisenberg, 2005; Eisenberg & Spinner-Halev, 2005; Kymlicka, 2004; Moore, 2005; Reich, 2005). Similarly, the prospect that a group of people assembled to struggle for progressive rights around an *essential* category of belonging could evolve into a structure closed to diversity over time is always present. Essentialism presents a delicate theoretical and practical line that must be treated cautiously due to its dangerous character.

Essentialism's negative consequences, on the other hand, are just as effective and significant in the social, political, and psychological elements of human existence. The essentialist

belief system has some negative consequences that allow people to accept a certain trait, category, or allegiance as natural and privileged. For Gelman, essentialism,

> (…) encourages and justifies stereotyping of social categories (including race, gender, and sexual orientation), it perpetuates the assumption that artificial distinctions (such as caste or class) are natural, inevitable, and fixed. Relatedly, it poses obstacles to a complete grasp of evolutionary biology, as it implies that each species is fixed and immutable, not allowing for the possibility of evolutionary change over time (Gelman, 2005, p. 296).

The application of so-called biologically essential, or natural, distinctions to social distinctions can lead to major contradictions between differences. The biologicalization or naturalization of what is social allows for the deepening of distinctions. As Mandalaywala puts it,

> (…) applying our essentialist intuitions from the natural world (e.g., viewing mice and tigers as two distinct and fundamentally different species) to the social world (e.g., viewing White people and Black people as two distinct and fundamentally different species) can lead to problematic ideas (Mandalaywala, 2020, p. 197).

For Allport, who pioneered the studies on the notion of belief in essence in group categorization,

> One consequence of least effort in group categorizing is that a belief in essence develops. There is an inherent 'Jewishness' in every Jew. The 'soul of the Oriental', 'Negro blood', Hitler's 'Aryanism', 'the passionate Latin'—all represent a belief in essence. A mysterious mana (for good or ill) resides in a group, all of its members partaking thereof (Allport, 1954, pp. 173-174).

Many studies on the impact of essentialism on negative attitudes and behaviors including prejudice and discrimination can be found in the literature (see, Allport, 1954; Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2002; Mandalaywala et al., 2018; Rothbart & Taylor, 1992; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). Furthermore, essentialism can be said to provide a crucial backdrop in explaining group stereotypes (Bastian & Haslam, 2006). According to Gelman,

"stereotyping borrows the language and conceptual framework of essentializing" (Gelman, 2005, p. 13). It is feasible to establish a substantial link between essentialist beliefs and discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes and behaviors from this perspective (see, Haslam & Levy, 2006; Haslam et al., 2002; Haslam & Whelan, 2008). According to Haslam, Rothschild, and Ernst, "essentialist beliefs —beliefs that a social category has a fixed, inherent, identity-defining nature—are indeed associated in this fashion with prejudice towards black people, women and gay men" (Haslam et al., 2002, p. 87).

Morton, Hornsey, and Postmes (2009) conducted a social psychology study that found a strong connection between prejudice and essentialism. The findings of this research "demonstrate that prejudiced people endorse essentialism when it can be used to exclude others (who they want to exclude), but reject essentialism when it is used to exclude them" (Morton, Hornsey, et al., 2009, p. 1). It is feasible to suggest that essentialist beliefs are linked to prejudices and preconceptions regarding people of different cultures, ethnicities, sexes, and genders, in other words, people and groups with different belongings than ourselves. In their cultural comparison research, Estrada, Yzerbyt, and Seron found that those with high essentialist beliefs tended to explain intergroup differences on a biological basis (Estrada, Yzerbyt, & Seron, 2004). One of the key strategies utilized by essentialism is naturalization, or the attempt to explain intergroup differences on a biological or genetic basis. Biological or genetic references are frequently used to naturalize categories of difference based on race, ethnicity, or gender (Bastian & Haslam, 2006). Naturalization of differences, or biological determinism, which is a kind of essentialism, can have the most catastrophic effects of essentialism (Keller, 2005).

Various researches have looked into the impact of essentialism on the emergence of racial prejudice (see e.g., Hirschfeld, 1996; Mandalaywala et al., 2018; Verkuyten, 2003). Mandalaywala, Amodio, and Rhodes indicate that "essentialist beliefs increase prejudice toward Black people because they imply that existing social hierarchies reflect a naturally occurring structure" (Mandalaywala et al., 2018, p. 461). The findings of another study examining the

relationship between essentialist belief and nationalism show that essentialist beliefs "lead people with low nationalism to interethnic bias as well" (Tsukamoto, Enright, & Karasawa, 2013, p. 518). Similarly, researchers have found a link between essentialism and prejudices toward homosexuality (Haslam & Levy, 2006). Another detrimental consequence of essentialist beliefs can be seen in the adaptation and integration of immigrants into the societies to which they have migrated. Based on the findings of their studies, Chao et al. (2007) claim that essentialist ideas are a major barrier to social integration. Departing from this point, Haslam and Whelan argue that "essentialist beliefs undermine the social and cultural integration of immigrants from both host and immigrant perspectives. They accompany greater anti-immigrant prejudice and distancing among the former and greater marginalization and separation among the latter" (Haslam & Whelan, 2008, p. 1301).

Through attitudes and discourses shaped by the essentialist belief system, human communities consisting of individuals with differences and belongings have been desired to be organized according to an essence with a natural privilege or superiority, as studies in the field of social sciences on the negative outcomes of essentialism show. In these attempts at organization, an ethnic group, a race, a cultural group, or a gender group is sometimes acknowledged as the core, and various belonging groups in society are situated according to this core. The practice of determining a society's privileged group can frequently manifest as a set of certain belongings. These essentially privileged clusters of membership vary by country and location; for example, in the United States, this essential group is known as WASP[75] (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant); in Turkey, it is known as LAHASÜMÜT[76]. Therefore, essentialism is a frequent practice in the political arena, with the premise that specific belongings represent the dominating inherent essence of the social group and the use of these categories in a group structure. One of essentialism's

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[75] In recent years, it has been suggested that the concept of WASP, which stands for privileged belonging cluster in the United States, be expanded. Schultz (2010), for example, suggested that the concept of WASP be expanded to include a heterosexual group.
[76] Baskin Oran (2007) proposed the term LAHASÜMÜT as an abbreviation for privileged belongings in Turkey, which refers to the Laic, Hanafi (a traditional major Sunni school/madhab), Muslim, and Turk groups.

biggest negative consequences, in this perspective, is that it makes inequities between groups seem natural and legitimate (Gould, 1997; Heyman & Giles, 2006; Mahalingam & Rodriguez, 2003). Thus, members of a group who have a privileged status in consequence of a natural feature that separates them from others acknowledge that these privileges are the result of a natural feature that distinguishes them from others. This condition provides a solid foundation for justifying social inequity.

Individuals who belong to a certain class or caste, for example, may assume that a quality they share with other members of that class or caste is the legitimate basis for their status. The reason why those who lack this vital feature are in a poorer position is also justified by their lack of possession of this feature. It is possible to determine that there is a significant relationship between having beliefs in essences and dehumanization based on some studies focusing on the psychological dimension of essentialism in the literature (see, for example, Haslam, 2006; Kronfeldner, 2020; Leyens et al., 2003; DL Smith, 2011, 2014). The notion of dehumanization with its cognitive and behavioral aspects, as Smith argues, "is the belief that some beings only appear human, but beneath the surface, where it really counts, they are not human at all" (D. L. Smith, 2011, p. 5). It is possible to determine that different and foreign people are positioned beyond the borders of humanity as a result of dehumanization, which may occur in consequence of the belief that some human groups that are assumed to lack certain essences are not evolved enough in terms of evolutionary, anatomical, physiological, cognitive, and mental aspects, and are culturally backward by nature. Kronfeldner argues that the focus of dehumanization practices can be divided in four categories; "physiological or anatomical differences, relational differences, behavioral differences, and unobservable differences" (Kronfeldner, 2020, p. 370). Based on these distinctions, a sequence of dehumanization practices might evolve, in which others are instrumentalized, their subjectivity and individuality are neglected, they are blocked, excluded, or destroyed, and they are compared to non-human animals (D. L. Smith, 2014, pp. 814-815).

Dehumanization behaviors can thus be seen as the most extreme practices that emerge as a result of the combination of essentialism's negative outcomes.

Another negative consequence of essentialism is that humans may limit their own potential (Heyman & Giles, 2006). Individuals might limit themselves according to the essence of a certain category of belonging, according to Gould (1997), if that category is determined by biological determinism, which is a type of essentialist approach. Individuals may choose not to practice an act due to the prospect of being positioned beyond the confines of essentialist categories in consequence of an activity they desire to conduct, or they may be prevented by members of their group or another outgroup by pointing out their essence's limitation. For example, women may limit themselves to this essence if the *essence* of femininity is defined using an essentialist perspective. If a cultural structure's *essence* of femininity is understood as a biological essence in a domestic context and from a fertility-related framework, women members of that culture may be required or forced to limit themselves according to that essence. Accordingly, a woman who does not want to have children or concentrates on her professional career may be chastised in the context of the essentially imposed notion of *femininity*, condemned by those who adopt the dominant cultural structure, and even excluded from the group; or she may give up her own desires in order to avoid reactions[77].

Essentialism is a fundamental belief system that has a profound impact on human interactions and positions in the social sphere, as evidenced by the previous debate, which looked at its definitions, political context, and negative and positive outcomes. Essentialism, as a belief system, can have a positive impact on the practice of coexistence through mechanisms that promote solidarity for the subaltern, minority, or powerless people, but it also has a very hazardous

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[77] The behavioral difference that occurs as a result of individuals' interactions with other members of their group or with other groups can be defined as a social effect (see, Turner, 1991). Individuals can modify their sentiments and thoughts in consequence of social influence, and they tend to conform to the group with the desire to not be excluded, to be loved, and to be accepted. Accordingly, the concept of social influence, which has been researched as a major problem area in social psychology since the 1930s, provides an important background for comprehending the process of constructing social borders by accepted essences. For the first and prominent studies in this subject, see; (Asch, 1951, 1955; Sherif, 1936).

structure that might lead to humanity's worst experiences. Essentialism provides a belief system with a vital purpose for the organizing of differences and belongings in the social domain, notwithstanding its dangerous nature. The essentialist approach, which accepts that the essence that makes something what it is is natural and given, has a number of negative consequences, including naturalization, homogenization, and placing a specific ethnicity, race, or gender in a superior biological or genetic position in a hierarchical classification. Essentialism provides a ground that reveals, fosters, and recirculates stereotypes, prejudices, discriminatory attitudes, and behaviors of subjects with non-subjects and those of us with the other, as many studies have revealed. From this perspective, examining the establishment of essentialism in the social field, particularly the mechanisms that lead to the emergence of its negative consequences, would provide a useful perspective for explaining how this belief system operates in the social field.

Depending on the substance of essentialized belonging, essentialism can manifest itself in various ways in the social realm. Essentialism, which is the root of a wide range of worldviews, ideologies, and attitudes, manifests itself in a variety of ways and defines the political landscape. Through anthropocentrism, speciesism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, homophobia, and racism, the expressions of essentialism can be identified, especially based on its negative results. These beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors acknowledge that the *I* is hierarchically separated from others due to an assumed essence. Therefore, species, breed, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or race is defined as the idea of *I* is thought to be dominant, superior, or privileged over others who do not have these ties. Anthropocentrism, for example, is a religious and philosophical viewpoint that believes that humans are at the center of the world or the most significant being; humans are naturally separated from nature and other species in nature, and are in a superior position. From this perspective, the exploitation of other living things and assets for the benefit of human existence, such as mineral resources, streams, seas, animals, and plants, which are not considered as *humanized* enough, can be justified (Boslaugh, 2013). Those who are outside of heterosexual orientation for homophobia, those who are outside of the ingroup for xenophobia, and those who are outside of a certain cultural

group, ethnicity, or race for ethnocentrism and racism are considered the other and the social space is organized accordingly, using the same mechanism as anthropocentrism, that is, the essentialist belief system. Discrimination, closure, or elimination practices, which are a more sophisticated form of discrimination, are frequently the result of these organizational processes. The social and political reflection of essentialism becomes a perspective, a manner of speaking and acting that places people at the center and gives them precedence and superiority over all living and non-living beings beyond this center, and it continues to work well. And essentialism's powerful and all-encompassing effect is made possible through a variety of processes.

The emergence of essentialism is made possible in many ways; cognitively produced, discursively embodied, and distributed mechanisms. The genesis of the essentialist belief system is built on specific aspects, which are frequently emphasized. For Kronfeldner, these elements loaded on the essences and group members can be listed as follows: Homogeneity, informativeness, inherence, naturalness, inalterability, non-observability, distinctness, and normality (Kronfeldner, 2020, p. 365). Thus, the essentialist belief system provides people and groups with a framework that is dictated by these aspects of the social sphere's organization. The essentialist paradigm provides a template that is very effective in terms of member inclusion and exclusion. Essentialism, which derives from the essences determined in the framework offered by these elements, acts in four different ways, according to Phillips:

> (…) (1) the attribution of certain characteristics to everyone subsumed within a particular category;..(2) the attribution of those characteristics to the category, in ways that naturalize or reify what may be socially created or constructed;..(3) the invocation of a collectivity as either the subject or object of political action ('the working class', 'women', 'Third World women'), in a move that seems to presume a homogenized and unified group;..(4) the policing of this collective category, the treatment of its supposedly shared characteristics as the defining ones that cannot be questioned or modified without undermining an individual's claim to belong to that group (Phillips, 2010b, p. 49).

Consequently, statements like *All Germans are disciplined* or *All women are maternalistic* fall within the first of the above-mentioned categories of essentialism. In these and related cases, a specific trait is generalized, and all group members are defined based on this supposed essence. Essentialism has a system that displays prejudices in this form. With Stangor's definition, "stereotypes represent the traits that we view as characteristic of social groups, or of individual members of those groups, and particularly those that differentiate groups from each other" (Stangor, 2016, p. 4). Thus, stereotypes are predetermined, oversimplified, and generalized cognitive frameworks for individuals of a group; they are the mental images that arise when we think of a group (Stangor, 2016; Yzerbyt & Rocher, 2002). As previously stated, stereotypes are one of essentialism's key outputs, and they serve as a particularly crucial foundation for discrimination and prejudice. From this perspective, it is conceivable to assert that the essentialist belief system and stereotypes are inextricably linked; numerous social psychology research on the subject have also been revealed (see e.g., Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Yzerbyt et al., 2001; Yzerbyt & Rocher, 2002; Yzerbyt et al., 1997). Stereotypes are the outcome of employing shortcuts like essentialism to make sense of the world. They are based on the belief that all members of a group share the same core. Hence, essentialism is one of the most useful shortcuts for comprehending and making sense of the universe. Essentialism's framework generalizes and freezes the differences and diverse categories of belonging with the processes it employs. According to Phillips (2010b), the preconceptions and generalizations that result from essentialism are not necessarily harmful, and that generalizations are even necessary for analyzing social and political concerns. The issue, she claims, develops as a result of an *overgeneralization*, which absolutizes preconceptions (Phillips, 2010b).

Phillips (2010b) established a second type of essentialism in which a specific essence is assigned to the category itself rather than the members of the group: *You are conservative because you are Iranian*, or *You are strong because you are a man*, for example. These assertions are predicated on the notion that the source of essence is the category itself. Accordingly, being a

member of a specific group determines an individual's essence. Not only race, which might be linked to biological or genetic determinism, but also social and cultural differences are naturalized in this sort of essentialism (Phillips, 2010b). This form of essentialism can be found, for example, in the ethno-culturalist interpretation of nationalism (see, Özkirimli, 2005; Özkirimli, 2010; A. D. Smith, 1991), which is discussed in length in the next section. The nation as a category of belonging is founded on a natural basis in many ethno-cultural examples, and the disparities between countries are naturalized. The essentialist process naturalizes the concept of culture in the same way as it naturalizes the concept of nation. Phillips argues that "the second way of thinking about cultural difference commits us to culture with a capital C, and casts culture itself as a protagonist. 'Culture' becomes the explanation, and people's activities the explanandum" (Phillips, 2010b, p. 54).

The collectivity that evolved with homogenization and generalization, which is also based on other forms, is now positioned as the subject of political activity in the third type of essentialism defined by Phillips (2010b). Because no policy can exist without collectivities, the question that needs to be addressed at this point is how the said collectivity is defined and established. This issue, which is examined in the study's last section on the concept of belonging, is one of essentialism's most crucial and dangerous mechanisms. The use of essentialism in the creation of the political subject can have harmful repercussions, such as legitimizing racism, as addressed in the context of Spivak's concept of strategic essentialism. Essentialism allows multiple categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, and others to be the subject of politics because of its adaptable structure that may take any form and the numerous mechanisms it employs. After a while, these political subjects, which are based on essentialist mechanisms, may become a pressure tool against diverse belonging groups within themselves or other collectivities. However, because collectivity is an essential prerequisite of sociality, the position of collectivity is critical. Based on this discussion, which includes the study's main problem, the search for a sense of belonging that is not exclusionary and dominating towards the different, and that allows for the coexistence of the

different, is directly related to the clarification of the essentialist belief system's functioning mechanism and determining a position on it. Phillips (2010b) describes the fourth form of essentialism as the possibility of collectivities becoming oppressive instruments. Essentialism, according to this, polices a predetermined collectivity and hence emphasizes the unquestionability and unchangeability of the collectivity established with a fixed, unchanging essence. Phillips gives the following statements as examples of such a mechanism: "you're not really a lesbian if you also sleep with men; you're not really working class if you like opera; you're not really a Muslim if you tolerate non-believers" (Phillips, 2010a, p. 80). Essentialist practices that utilize the fourth type mechanism become normative, limiting, and coercive for collectivity.

Various essentialist mechanisms, which manifest themselves in the organization of various categories of belonging in the social and political domain, are interconnected. Therefore, stereotypes may be effective in the emergence of prejudice and discrimination, overgeneralizations may be effective in considering a collectivity as a political subject as an unchanging and natural structure, and beliefs in the homogeneity of a group may be effective in suppressing other different groups. Sayer (1997) has classed essentialist approaches similarly to Phillips' categories of essentialism. Strong or determinist essentialism, claiming that everything has an essence, is "always wrong and often dangerously misleading", according to Sayer, who separates essentialist approaches into "strong" and "moderate" (Sayer, 1997, p. 453). Moderate essentialism, according to Sayer, should be viewed as a non-deterministic alternative and not necessarily "misplaced": "A moderate, non-deterministic essentialism is necessary for explanation and for a social science that claims to be critical and have emancipatory potential" (Sayer, 1997, p. 453).

Following an examination of the many kinds of essentialism, a closer examination of the mechanisms involved in essentialism's genesis would be beneficial. These mechanisms act openly or implicitly, often in relation to one another, in the aforementioned kinds of essentialism. Fuchs (2009) investigated essentialism mechanisms and attempted to identify them. Essentialism, according to Fuchs (2009), makes static typologies and fixed classifications, does not allow

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changes and variations, makes binary distinctions as either-or, assumes opposite/opposite poles, sets sharp boundaries, is reductionist, and is based on a hierarchical acceptance with its mechanisms emerging in the field of cognition and discourse (Fuchs, 2009, pp. 12-16). Essentialism, along with its ontological and epistemological basis, presents a belief system that is significant in the organization of the social field and the management of interpersonal relations, according to Fuchs. The essentialist belief system has a sophisticated network of procedures that reaches from the most basic issues to the most complicated network of relationships (Gelman, 2005). "Essentialism is a pervasive, persistent reasoning bias that affects human categorization in profound ways", says Gelman (Gelman, 2005, p. 6). In a similar vein, Hallet (1991) claims that essentialism is the most prominent and significant aspect of Western philosophy, identifying four qualities to support this claim. Hallett (1991), like Gelman, highlights essentialism's pervasive effect. Essentialism, according to Hallet, has four prominent characteristics: *Its pervasiveness, importance, error, and persistence* (Hallett, 1991, p. 125). Essentialism, according to this, provides a foundation that spreads to human beings' understanding of language, existence, knowledge, morality, and politics, affecting and shaping all of these areas through its over-generalizing, reductive, and reification, and hence erroneous and risky structure. Phillips and Sayer's classifications also illustrate that, rather than rejecting essentialism outright, it is preferable to recognize and eliminate problematic and even dangerous reductionist, over-generalizing, reifying, deterministic varieties of it, as well as take precautions against them. It might be argued that essentialism should be used by controlling the positive outputs of essentialism, particularly when it comes to differences and belonging categories. Essentialism is defined by Gelman as "an early cognitive bias", and according to her research, humans have a strong predisposition to explore for hidden qualities underneath objects as early as childhood (see, Gelman, 2004; 2005, p. 7; 2009). Thus, essentialism is more than a necessity; it is a fundamental orientation of human existence. From this perspective, it is critical to find and comprehend essentialism in all of its forms. Essentialism is a living belief system with numerous mechanisms that can be deployed in diverse

combinations. This process, which begins with the cognitive field's knowledge of the complex and multidimensional environment in an organized and coherent manner through stereotypes and generalizations, circulates and spreads through language expressions. As established stereotypes and generalizations are embodied in the practical field, for example, as political subjects, essentialist beliefs begin to solidify. Hence, we can deduce that essentialism as a belief system has a structure that arises in the cognitive field at a young age, grows stronger and more prevalent with discourse, and consolidates with our actions.

Therefore, in today's society, when social polarization is expanding over the globe, it is necessary to be always aware and skeptical of essentialism. Inter- and intra-communal disputes are being exacerbated by increasingly diversified varieties of political and social polarization (Esteban & Schneider, 2008); polarization is increasing on a daily basis, ranging from issues of justice to economic, political, and social injustice, from the environmental crisis to power imbalances between different belonging groups. From this point of view, essentialism is important as it provides a fundamental belief system to opposing groups that reify, ignore and discriminate against each other through its negative outcomes that eliminates the possibility of a possible dialogue, reconciliation or communication between *me* and the *other*, *us* and *them*, immigrants and anti-immigrants, those who struggle with the climate crisis and those who ignore it, those who benefit from the economic and social order and those who demand a social change. It could be argued that the essentialist mechanisms described in this section have an impact on everyone, including women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, immigrants, blacks, majority minorities, those with beliefs and political views that differ from the dominant religious or ideological view, and so on, when it comes to discrimination, unequal, and unjust policies. While attempting to deal with essentialism's problematic and dangerous mechanisms, it should be debated whether it is possible and necessary to entirely eliminate essentialism, given that it is a fundamental cognitive tendency that pervades all aspects of existence. Essentialism operates in an area that is far too large to be completely excluded from the social and political realm, as the review in this chapter demonstrates;

the essentialist belief system's influence on the production of language, cognitive categories, and schemas cannot be overlooked.

The grouping of the similar in social life, as well as the concern about the different ones, may have numerous anthropological, psychological, and cognitive underpinnings. Furthermore, the essentialist belief system is a critical component in the creation of social collectivities. However, the rise of numerous discriminatory practices as a result of the essentialist belief system's problematic mechanisms is a reality in the world we live in. Thus, it is critical to understand the harmful mechanisms of the essentialist belief system and to try to avoid them, particularly in early childhood education, and to design policies to address this. For the possibility of coexistence of differences, it is critical to avoid the constructions of the category of belonging, in which the essentialist belief system is effective, and to purify such established categories from the language and rules of social and political organization. This part, which focused on the essentialist belief system, attempted to underline the importance of essentialism for the social and political sphere by presenting the philosophical and social science underpinnings of this necessity.

Furthermore, in addition to being aware of the dangers of essentialism, one should be conscious of the dangers of anti-essentialism. When it comes to anti-essentialism, the relationship between subjectivist or relativist perspectives is the first thing that comes to mind. The dangers of relativism and subjectivism, which universalist philosophers have strived to avoid since the beginning of Western philosophy, must be emphasized, especially in the face of social and ethical issues. Can violence against women in a culture, a kind of social organization such as the caste system, or sexual abuses of infants that are regarded justified within a given cultural structure be intervened based on a relativistic approach? Is there any chance that someone with a relativist or subjectivist viewpoint would interfere in such a situation? Based on which values and criteria will they be able to perform an intervention? Is not relativism a precursor to indifference?

Another issue that relativism or subjectivism, which is a possible outcome of an anti-essentialist approach, may face is the absolutization of differences and the difficulty of offering a

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coherent policy in the face of differences. It is possible for a perspective that emphasizes the relative and subjective nature of belongings to be oriented in a way that renders differences absolute and communication impossible. Individuals or groups of people have similarities and differences, and a relativist/subjectivist approach can stress and sharpen the differences while preventing the similarities from being disregarded, preventing cohabitation with the difference. It may also be difficult for people who share a sense of belonging to gather together to establish a collectivity, or to propose universal unity within the context of a given view of human nature, from an anti-essentialist perspective. As the universalist-particularist tension discussed in the previous section shows, both poles of essentialism can be problematic. The essentialist orientation in the idea of a universal conception of human nature and the essentialist orientation that secures the absolutization of particulars and restriction to rigorous boundaries might be compared to the two-faced Janus. From this perspective, any endeavor to evaluate essentialism in the social and political realm and find an alternative to it should be mindful of the possible repercussions of anti-essentialism. It is critical that today's socio-political debates and proposals concentrate on the possibility of people living together despite their differences, attempting to resolve the tensions between universalism and particularism, essentialism and anti-essentialism, and expanding similarities and commonalities while not ignoring differences. For several decades, the critique of essentialism has been a major topic in contemporary social science literature; many different fields of study, including post-structuralism and post-colonialism, ethnicity and nationalism studies, critical race theory, and queer theory, have focused on the problems caused by essentialism's risky nature (Ball, 2010). It is critical to determine the impact of essentialism on the building of belonging for these and similar initiatives and to develop a distinct sense of belonging based on that conclusion. The construct of belonging that is influenced by essentialism, as well as the potential of a different understanding of belonging, are discussed in the next section. Based on Yuval Davis's conceptualization of *politics of belonging*, the pursuits in contemporary philosophy and politics that discuss the possibility of constructing a belonging that is constantly moving and

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transforming without being stuck in the duality of the self and other, and that is not confined to

fixedness are analyzed in this study.

CHAPTER 4

BELONGING, POLITICS OF BELONGING AND INTERSECTIONAL ALTERNATIVES

One of the most significant concerns in social sciences, political science, and practical philosophy is whether it is possible for humans to live together with their diverse belongings and the problem of organizing social space with the goal of fulfilling this possibility. The philosophical backdrop, significant approaches, and, in particular, the essentialist belief system that generated this problem were all thoroughly studied in prior sections of the study. Accordingly, in the previous section of the study, the concept of the modern subject, as well as the philosophical approaches that form it, were identified and investigated as a determining factor in the organization of the social field. The modern understanding of the subject has been handled as a result of significant radical social, political, economic, and scientific transformations, as well as a cumulative outcome of philosophy's history. The modern subject's theorizing process has been explored as a reflection of humans' attempts to make sense of themselves, position themselves, and organize social space. Accordingly, the ways in which different philosophical traditions questioned the issue were contrasted by focusing on the universalist and particularistic approaches that were effective in this process. The subject's position, or the subject's thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes toward those who are different from them, is the major point where these two traditions vary. Essentialism, as a belief system, lies at the root of attitudes and approaches toward people who are different, as the debate in the second half of the study revealed. Hence, essentialism has been investigated as a fundamental belief system that incorporates the theorizing process of the notion of the modern subject and impacts human beings' attitudes, behaviors, practices, and policies toward one another.

On the other hand, the politics of belonging are the systems through which essentialism is most evident and active in the social and political realm. The narratives and discourses that are used as political projects to determine the boundaries that divide the world population into *us* and *them*, the belonging of individuals living within the borders, the scope of membership in the community, and the social positions and roles of the members are all illustrations of the politics of belonging. This section primarily aims to study the effect of essentialism in the social and political realm, based on the idea that the essentialist belief system is the major mechanism that forms the outputs of the politics of belonging. It has been argued, from this perspective, that the politics of belonging molded by essentialism's effect shape attitudes and behaviors toward those who are different. The meanings of the notions of belonging and the politics of belonging, which are often muddled, as well as the impacts of these notions on people, have been thoroughly investigated to carry out this discussion. It has been examined how these processes originate in the concept of belonging and the politics of belonging, based on the investigation of essentialism's operating mechanisms. The formation of essentialism in nationalism, which is the most common kind of belonging politics in the modern period, has been investigated to exemplify and concretize this issue. Accordingly, it has been proposed that nationalism works in the social and political domain by essentializing a specific social location and category, and that this effect may be understood through nationalist discourse.

In this final portion, the study's overall discussion is centered on the importance of finding solutions that are free of the exclusionary dichotomy of modern subject understanding, distant from the negative outputs of essentialism that organizes the social space and not caught in the tension of universalism-particularism. The search for a solution based on this viewpoint has emerged as a critical requirement, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. The rise of this requirement has been fostered by world wars, ever-increasing conflict situations, high population growth, mass migrations, and many other drastic and rapid changes. One of the key reasons why the quest for solutions is still on the agenda today is the ever-increasing conflict and

polarization atmosphere. The importance of the notion of belonging, the problematic situation caused by the relationship between the politics of belonging and the essentialist belief system, and the idea of dialogical transversal politics as one of the solutions to this situation are discussed in this section, in which the search for solutions is evaluated based on the study's findings. This solution proposal was studied not as the final and most accurate point of view, but rather to underline the point of view required in the theoretical sphere and to analyze the feasibility for human communities to live with their various belongings. This review explores inclusive approaches that place a greater emphasis on the message and dialogue rather than the perspective that emphasizes the primacy and exclusive nature of the modern subject.

4.1. Definition of Belonging and Its Importance in Human Life

Investigating the practice of human coexistence and the conditions/situations that make this practice possible or impossible has long been one of the fundamental topics of human sciences and philosophy. The objective of building a society in which human beings, who have evolved into their current form in consequence of evolutionary processes and historical changes, can live together in peace or without conflict is a contentious issue in political philosophy. Many different disciplines, from philosophy to sociology, anthropology to political science, have explored the question of *the possibility of living together* from various perspectives. Accordingly, the discussion over whether humans can live together in a society founded on freedom, justice, and equality is at least as ancient as the history of philosophy. Furthermore, conflict situations that have arisen as a result of the climate crisis, diminishing resources, a rising and unequally distributed population, epidemics, and an unfair dominating economic system have exacerbated the problem of coexistence. One of the most convoluted and complex changes, especially with the transformations since the 18th century, can be summarized as the dilemma of the social and political positions of various types of belonging. This issue, which has a prolonging effect as the appearance of belongings in the political arena, their conflicts with one another, the boundaries between them

and efforts to overcome these boundaries, identities, and the problem of the relationship between *I* and *Other* is one of the most significant items on the agenda of our age's philosophical and political understandings. What does belonging imply in today's border politics, where, on the one hand, boundaries are becoming weaker and more permeable[78], while on the other, walls are being built to make borders impassable[79]?

It's never been easy to talk about belonging, with its multidimensional structure, even though it's become more complicated in our day. Even in Attica, the epicenter of Ancient Greek democracy, where the subject of politics was, for example, a small group of men of similar status, discussing belonging was a difficult and complex matter: In Attica, it was a big deal to determine who had what rights and what behaviors were legitimate for whom. Furthermore, despite disparities across city-states, belonging to the community was seen as "worthy and sacred" (*kalon kai semnon*) in Ancient Greek politeia and was highly valued (Manville, 2014, p. 3). The rules and extent of belonging to a community were also a topic of philosophical debate; for example, all thinkers of the age, from Plato, one of the oldest and most influential social analysts in the history of philosophy, to Aristotle, were deeply concerned with the organization of their cities and who may be involved in this organization. These philosophers were greatly concerned with the possibilities of coexisting and the challenges of who could be in what positions, despite the fact that the relatively small city-states they lived in had very few differences compared to today. The rise of modern subjects from various belongings with new rights demands has made the challenge of coexistence and the discussion of belonging a much more complicated subject in today's societies, which are significantly different from the city-states of ancient Greece. Now, the debate on the belonging of individuals and groups that claim rights and struggle to become subjects in the

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[78] One of the most prominent examples of such a development is the vision of a united Europe.
[79] Building a wall or barrier is not a contemporary execution; The Great Wall of China is the most famous and one of the oldest examples of that kind of practice. Another famous example for building a wall between borders is the Berlin Wall. After 30 years of its fall, there are several border barriers between different countries. In 2018, there are a total of 20 completed border walls in the world, seven under construction, one planned, and five proposed. For a detailed information; see, https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/countries-with-border-walls.html

social life of our age is far beyond the discussion of belonging in a city-state in Ancient Greece, which is based on *masculinity*[80] and *being free*. It is feasible to characterize the age in which we live as one in which individuals and groups with different belonging categories compete with one another on a variety of levels and planes. These struggles sometimes are conducted through violence and sometimes through laws. Until a short time ago, individuals were living as belonging to their small congregation without even being aware of their belonging as subjects of a kingdom. Today, many belongings such as ethnicity, sexuality and ideology, have been added to these local and religious belongings. Various factors such as football team, lifestyle or age in life are important categories of belonging that make us who we are. In this light, discussing the concept of belonging today necessitates taking into account a wide range of differences, identities, memberships, and spaces, as well as their relationality and multidimensionality.

Questioning one's existence, and where one belongs is a fundamental human activity; the results of this activity may be seen in a wide range of disciplines, from philosophy to history, from art to religion. According to Anthony D. Smith, the central dilemma in Sophocles' greatest tragedy, Oedipus Tyrannos (Oedipus the King), is the problem of identity, or the desire for a basic sense of belonging (Smith, 1991). According to Smith;

> I will know who I am: The discovery of self is the play's [Oedipus Tyrannos] motor and the action's inner meaning. But each 'self that Oedipus uncovers is also a social self, a category and a role, even when it proves to be erroneous for Oedipus. Only after the shattering revelation of 'who he is' does he begin to glimpse the meaning of his destiny (Smith, 1991, p. 3).

As human beings, we are always exploring who we are, what defines us, and what/where we belong; it is reasonable to say that, like Oedipus, we are looking for a sense of belonging. The desire to find a place in an ever-changing world where we belong is as old as human history.

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[80] Women, children, foreign settlers, and, of course, slaves were not considered true members of Athenian democracy (Heater, 2004).

According to Brody, the notion of belonging as a philosophical problem "is discussed in the history of philosophy at least since Heraclitus worried about how anything could persist through change" (Brody, 2014, p. 3). Heraclitus, who explored the idea of *change*, or at least its significance, discussed the possibility of a place or sort of a world-order [kosmos] for everything to belong with his doctrine of Flux and the idea of Unity of Opposites (Popper, 1947). The problem of change has been discussed with keywords like identity, difference, and unity since Heraclitus' contemporaries and great philosophers like Plato and Aristotle who came after him, sometimes from the perspective of ontology, sometimes from the perspective of epistemology, or, like medieval philosophers, based on religion. However, as Baumann points out, this search for belonging, which has existed throughout philosophy's history, has become more popular and apparent in modern times than in any other age (Bauman, 1996, p. 18).

Many factors have contributed to the complexity and labyrinthine nature of the problem of belonging; this change has become more painful as human beings who have lived in small groups for thousands of years have built large and complex social structures, and as the transformation from a small rural population to a large network society has occurred (Castells & Cardoso, 2006). In a very short period, people's sense of belonging has shifted from the constraints of a family, clan, or tribe to the constantly changing and growing network of a mass that is always online. With the theorization of the modern subject and socio-political developments, the idea of belonging has become more complicated and multi-layered, and it has a significant impact on the structuring of social and political spaces in the modern world. Being multiplied and diversified with this enormous transformation, the framework of belonging-centered debates that have affected the political field and shaping societies, has dominated the social sciences literature, especially in the last sixty years.

The concept of belonging, which is generally defined in social sciences with an emphasis on emotions and senses, is defined as "the feeling of being comfortable and happy in a particular situation or with a particular group of people" in Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2019). The

psychological aspect of the concept of belonging has received a lot of attention in the literature. Accordingly, whereas Schachter (1959) emphasized the importance of belonging in human interaction, Maslow (1968) positioned belonging in the middle of the Hierarchy of Needs alongside other social needs such as love, acceptance, and social life. However, Baumeister and Leary's conceptualization provides one of the clearest psychological formulations of this need. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), individuals need to belong and feel accepted. One of the most basic human characteristics, according to Pickett and Gardner (2005), is the need to engage in the social sphere and to be accepted by others.

The fact that humans have particular belongings as a result of socialization is both a need and a feature. In fact, as Baumeister and Leary (1995) pointed out, investigations have shown that when this need is not addressed, many physical and psychological disorders can arise. According to studies, people without social interactions have immune system issues, sleep disorders, drunkenness, suicidal tendencies, and hence a higher risk of death (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; DeWall, Deckman, Pond Jr., & Bonser, 2011). "When children are deprived of a sense of belonging, it has negative consequences for their well-being", says Over, who claims that our tendency to interact with other people begins at very early stages of personal development (Over, 2016, p. 1). According to DeWall and colleagues, "because belongingness is a core component of human functioning, social exclusion should influence many cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes and personality expression" (DeWall et al., 2011, p. 1281). Similarly, there is a correlation between the individual sense of interpersonal belonging, forming positive intimate relationships with others, having satisfying interactions with family and friends, and having a happy life and subjective well-being (see, Baumeister & Leary, 1995; McAdams & Bryant, 1987).

Baumeister and Leary, who provided a significant theoretical basis for the belonging studies with their The Need to Belong Theory, propose that "a need to belong, that is, a need to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of interpersonal relationships, is innately prepared (and hence nearly universal) among human beings" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 499).

Belonging is intertwined with interpersonal and group interactions. With a series of social psychology research that was conducted in the middle of the 20th century, it was possible to determine the relationality of the concept of belonging experimentally. Accordingly, in social psychology, studies[81] on the conforming behavior demonstrated by individuals for fear of being excluded from the group they belong to or the significance of group membership in interpersonal relations put an emphasis on the relational dimension of the concept of belonging. From this perspective, it is feasible to conclude that the concept of belonging provides a very constitutive framework that extends beyond the dimensions of emotions or feelings and shapes relationships among individuals and others, groups and other groups. Belonging/developing belonging can be defined in a variety of ways and in relation to a variety of objects. Belonging can refer to belonging to a family, a group, or a community, as well as belonging to a country, region, geography, or place. Socialization is one of the most significant characteristics of humans, as it is for many other creatures[82]. Human beings are in a relationship with other humans and living things from the beginning to the end of their existence in this socialization. Human beings who define themselves in various ways within this network of relationships may identify as members of a family, a community, a citizen of a country, a component of a nation, a fan of a sports team, a supporter of an ideology, and so on. Thus, in the network of social relationships they are in, persons discover who they are and define themselves.

The concept of belonging is frequently associated with the concepts of identity and citizenship, and it is occasionally used interchangeably with these terms. Belonging, on the other hand, has a distinct meaning and scope than identity and citizenship. To begin with, belonging is

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[81] For pioneering studies on this subject, see Kurt Lewin (1948), Resolving Social Conflicts: Selected Papers on Group Dynamics, New York: Harper and Row; Muzafer Sherif (1966), Group Conflict and Cooperation: Their Social Psychology. London: Routledge and Regan Paul; Michael Billig (1976), Social Psychology and Intergroup Relations. London: Academic Press; Hentri Tajfel (1982), Social psychology of intergroup relations, Annual Review of Psychology, 33(139); John C. Turner (1981) The experimental social psychology of intergroup behaviour. In J. C. Turner & H. Giles (Eds.), Intergroup Behaviour (pp. 66-101), Oxford: Blackwell.

[82] Humans are not the only social creatures in the world. Many living animals in nature have distinct sociability and interaction patterns, as well as various group processes and collaborations. Many studies of socialization in animals have been published (see, for example, Bernstein & Ehardt, 1986; Nature/Behaviour, 2016; Topál et al., 2005).

distinct from citizenship, which entails inclusion in the political superstructure in terms of rights and obligations, as well as participation in the processes that maintain it. While belonging is a criterion for deciding who will join a social organization, it encompasses more than membership, participation, rights, and obligations. In terms of rights and obligations, people can be members of a certain collectivity or citizens of a specific country. Yet, this does not necessarily imply that they have developed a sense of belonging to the collective to which they participate. For example, a Turkish-German person's indecision about which country to support in a sporting match between the Turkish and German national teams, or the sensitivity of a British national with Pakistani ancestry to political events in Pakistan, are too complicated to be understood within the framework of participation or rights and responsibilities. Furthermore, the notion of identity, which emerges and is a determinant in human socialization processes, and the notion of identity, which is a product of people's search for who they are, are closely related but not identical. The conceptions of belonging and identity, according to Anthias (2013), are conceptual instruments embedded in political discourses. Yuval-Davis suggests that "identities should be understood as specific forms of narratives regarding the self and its boundaries while identity politics are political projects of belonging promoted by specific social agents which construct specific collective boundaries around particular identity narratives" (Yuval-Davis, 2013, p. 11). On one, identity implies being identical, while on the other, it comprises being different. As Hall puts it, "all identity is constructed across difference" (S. Hall, 1987, p. 45). According to Connolly (2008), a certain identity and difference must be viewed as otherness; an identity requires difference to exist and must transform difference into otherness in order to ensure its own survival (Connolly, 1995). Thus, identity displays one's difference from others; the troublesome understanding of difference as otherness is particularly in relation to the functioning of essentialist mechanisms. When it comes to the issue of disparities, employing the concept of identity necessitates marginalization and closure. In this regard, the notion of belonging was favored over the concept of identity(s) with respect to the study's subject of differences.

Because, the concept of belonging encompasses a broader space that is not limited by the dichotomy of the identical and other, and includes emotional, social, and political dimensions. While identity refers to who we are, how we see ourselves, and how we appear to others, belonging refers to being a part of a group, being admitted into it, and forming ties with it. As Pfaff-Czarnecka suggests, "identity is a categorical concept while belonging combines categorization with social relating" (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2013, p. 6). Accordingly, belonging should not be confined to the concept of identity, which is crammed into the dichotomy of *I* and *Other*; belonging encompasses much more than identity. In this context, one could argue that the concept of identity has a structure that makes it easier to identify individuals and groups through a common essence. As Anthias stressed, "using identity claims in political struggles may have unintended consequences that return us to the fixities of universalist and essentialist identity claims" (Anthias, 2002, p. 496). Consequently, it is critical to prioritize the concept of belonging over the concept of identity produced by essentialist mechanisms in theoretical analyses. Anthias argues that "identity has a tendency to function as a disabling concept that limits the focus and moves the analyst away from context, meaning and practice" (Anthias, 2002, p. 493). While the concept of identity is more frequently employed in modern theoretical discussions on the issue of living together with differences, the concept of belonging, which encompasses a broader range than identity, is given less emphasis. The concept of belonging, which is mainly considered in terms of its emotional and psychological implications, presents an area that encompasses the content of the concept of identity but goes beyond it, and does so without getting stuck in the identical-different dichotomy that identity does. In a nutshell, in the context of the problem of cohabitation with diversity, the concept of belonging provides a field that interacts with the conceptions of identity and citizenship, but is wider and different from these concepts.

One of the dimensions of belonging, as a multidimensional notion, is the feeling of "being at home" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197). Belonging, as Ignatieff puts it, implies feeling safe: "Where you belong is where you are safe; and where you are safe is where you belong" (Ignatieff, 2010,

p. 6). With the feelings of being at home and safe, belonging tends to become naturalized, articulated, and politicized when it is endangered in some way (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As Ignatieff points out, belonging is more than an emotional commitment to a place, a group, geography, or a country; "belonging also means being recognized and being understood" (Ignatieff, 2010, p. 7). These are the fundamental characteristics of belonging that are politicized: belonging necessitates *being recognized* and *being understood*. Consequently, belonging is the result of a process of recognition, evaluation, and interaction that includes but goes beyond sensations like feeling *at home* and *secure*, and extends beyond the identity and social and emotional link we form with a position. One of the prominent thinkers who draws attention to the multidimensional structure of belonging is the social scientist Nira Yuval-Davis, who studies the concept of belonging in the context of political sociology and philosophy. When considering the concept of belonging, Yuval-Davis underlines the importance of distinguishing between belonging and politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2007, 2011a; Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, & Vieten, 2006b). According to Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, "the politics of belonging comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to a particular collectivity or collectivities which themselves are being constructed in these projects in very specific ways" (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, & Vieten, 2006a, p. 3). The politics of belonging, which incorporates the in question political projects, becomes a political process that allows belongings to emerge. The level at which belonging functions is related to the structure of these processes (Yuval-Davis, 2006). At this point, one could argue that the form of the politics of belonging is determined by the relationship between various levels of belonging and the essentialist belief system. To comprehend the relationship between belonging, the politics of belonging, and the essentialist belief system, it is necessary to look closely at the various levels of belonging and the relationship between these and essentialism.

4.2. Politics of Belonging and Essentialist Influence

Belonging is a multidimensional concept with various levels. According to Yuval Davis (2011b), there are three distinct analytical levels of belonging that are interconnected but not reducible to one another. These levels are the "social locations", "people's identifications and emotional attachments to various collectivities and groupings" and "ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging/s" (Yuval-Davis, 2011b, p. 5). In the construction of belonging, two or all of these levels are utilized. Accordingly, it is impossible to actualize a social location that does not highlight specific values, as well as not to resort to values for an identity that is not in relation with emotional attachments. From this perspective, it would be more realistic to think of Yuval-Davis' three separate analytical levels as components that complement one another. Between these three levels, belonging has a fluid, dynamic, and intersectional structure. As Yuval-Davis points out, "even in its most stable 'primordial' forms, however, belonging is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity – the latter is only a naturalized construction of particular hegemonic form of power relations" (Yuval-Davis, 2011b, p. 5). The dimension of diverse social locations is the initial level of belonging. Social locations serve as social grounds through which belongings are formed based on the characteristics and options available in social networks. When we highlight that we belong to a given race, class, nation, sexual identity and orientation, occupation, or age group, we are referring to a social location, and thus to a foundation where the perception of *We* is established. Social locations have interrelated implications with power relations and discourses that emerge at a historical moment. According to Yuval Davis (2006), being a woman, a person of color, middle-class, or Asian places you on a particular axis of power relations; these social locations are fluid and conflicting, and they alter over time. Consequently, the power dynamics between social locations, as well as the complicated link between intersectionality and other dimensions of belonging, are critical to the formation of our belongings. Furthermore, in the debate on differences, ignoring the intersectional relationship between these various locations and the multidimensionality of belonging causes

problems in assessing the issue of differences. To comprehend social locations, it is necessary to study the intersectional link between these locations and the power axes on which the differences are positioned in the social sphere. Hence, a particular social location does not give enough data politically; people's social locations must be understood in the context of power interactions across other axes and locations. The social substrate required for the formation of belongings is provided by social locations, which have a complex, fictional, and intersecting structure. With these characteristics, explaining social locations in a single power axis center is impossible. As Yuval-Davis suggests:

> Although discourses of race, gender, class etc. have their own ontological bases that cannot be reduced to each other, there is no separate concrete meaning of any social division. To be a woman is different if you are middle-class or working-class, a member of the hegemonic majority or a racialized minority, living in the city or in the country, young or old, straight or gay (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 200).

However, in practice, the inclination to ignore the intersectionality and complex interactional character of social locations is a common phenomenon. It is plausible to argue that the essentialist belief system is effective in the attempts to grasp a certain social location independent of various locations and power relations. This essentialist view of social locations tends to neutralize these locations' relation with one another and axes of power. Essentialism, which is a human cognitive inclination, promotes people's identification of themselves with a single category of social location (e.g., German, woman, Christian) through various mechanisms, as discussed in the preceding section. In the manner they emerge, social locations are closely related to essentialism. Social locations with such a relationship can be imagined in a non-intersectional and solitary form, separate from other levels. For example, social locations that are not designed in an intersectional fashion with other levels might become a breeding ground for belonging discourses that highlight race, ethnicity, color, or belief, leading to discriminatory practices. This tendency can be seen in the conflictual experiences of human history and even in

today. As a result, emphasizing the intersectionality of social locations and determining how these locations are related to one another is critical.

Yuval-Davis (2006, 2011b) highlighted the dimension of *identifications* and *emotional attachments* as the second level of belonging. The cognitive and emotional attachments axes are established on this dimension, according to Yuval-Davis (2006), on which the *I* and *Other* dichotomy and numerous identifications about who we are or are not, are built. The social locations into which we are born or position ourselves are formed on the narrative of *I* and *Other* with this dimension. At this level, which is shaped by the mechanisms of the essentialist belief system, identification and attachments are accomplished through typologies and fixed classifications created towards social locations. Fuchs (2009) mentioned different mechanisms of essentialism and emphasized that they evolved in the field of cognition and discourse, as discussed in the previous section. Thus, essentialism is most effective in the *identifications* and *emotional attachments* dimension among the levels of belonging. Essentialism's effective mechanisms in this dimension shape the structure of identification and attachment. Consequently, essentialism functions in settings where the intersectionality of social locations is overlooked and a particular social location is hierarchically naturalized, where a specific position is valued more and the social location with which one is linked or attached is essentialized. Identities that arise as a result of cognitive identification with a certain location are narratives that change over time, are constantly reproduced, and compete with one another (Yuval-Davis, 2006). These narratives are attempts at explanation and projections about the past, present, and future, according to Yuval-Davis (2003, 2006). These cognitive identifications may be personal or collective. Therefore, identities are narratives that people tell themselves and others about who they are and who they are not. From this perspective, identities might be seen as the counterpart of the identifications that are developed regarding social locations.

Belongings are linked to the cognitive, behavioral and emotional processes. Individuals' relationships with other people and other groups are determined by these processes. Belonging, in

this context, refers to structures that are not only linked to cognitive and behavioral processes, but also to emotional processes. People's behavior and thoughts are based on these emotional processes. Emotional processes can provide a fertile field for people to fight others for their belongings, even to the point of giving their lives. All belongings constructed under the influence of emotional processes are not always seen as equal in worth. Depending on the conditions and context, which belonging is more valuable can vary over time. Yuval-Davis (2006), elaborating on the threat perception, claims that when a sense of belonging is threatened, it becomes politicized and more essential. When the *home* is under threat, the sense of belonging associated with being at home sharpens, and can become the driving force behind political mobilization. In today's world, where social polarization is prevalent, it is possible to assess the utilization of discourses emphasizing that the country, namely the home, is under attack due to the presence of *Others* particularly by those who defend racist and discriminatory policies, through a sense of belonging and threat; this threat perception is also present when a group amplifies the dangers that their country confronts to enhance the political participation of its supporters. Belonging, which is at the heart of the political enterprise, becomes centralized and gains value and supporters as a result of these discourses highlighting threats. Discourses about the threat to one's sense of belonging frequently originate through the mechanisms of essentialist belief systems. Consequently, persons with anti-immigrant sentiments, for example, draw sharp and impenetrable borders between their and immigrants' social locations and identities and assume that their group and immigrants are divided into homogeneous camps. The harmful effects of essentialism are exposed through these and other mechanisms. Of course, essentialism's cognitive roots make it inevitable for the *I* to identify with others who are similar to himself/herself and form emotional attachments to them. Essentialism's positive outcomes are effective in the establishment of a *We* perception and a sense of group solidarity. The question, therefore, is how much the negative outcomes of the essentialist belief system, which is the source of discriminating attitudes and acts, affect these identities and loyalties. The situation in which a fiction of belonging, determined by the negative outputs of

essentialism, dominates the basis of political discourse and activity is the problem that needs to be solved.

Yuval-Davis defines ethical and political value systems as the third level of belonging. People begin to judge and evaluate their own and others' belonging at this level, according to Yuval-Davis (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011a, 2011b). Yuval-Davis (2006) claims that at this level, we no longer talk about belonging, but about the politics of belonging and that the political community's boundaries have been established, as well as how the people will be divided into *us* and *them*. It is possible to determine who will take place within the imaginary boundaries of the community of belonging, who will be from *us* and who will be from *them*, and thus the inclusive or exclusionary functions of belonging become concrete at this level of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The form of the social sphere is shaped by the ideals that are highlighted in the establishment of a certain belonging. Accordingly, which values such as freedom, equality, justice and solidarity are applied affect the scope and functioning of the belonging. However, for the practice of living together, a perspective based not on a single value, but on the interaction of values, gains importance. The pursuit of only freedom or only equality can be considered as a reduction of the potential of human beings to be able to live together. Indeed, the idea that freedom without equality and solidarity is not true freedom (see, Kaufmann, 2003) seems to be justified by the history of the world. Narratives concerning social locations and identities begin to be considered as part of daily life and discourses in this phase, where belonging is the subject of ethics and politics. Consequently, it's crucial to figure out how a sense of belonging emerges and evolves in discourse or everyday life. The following part, it is looked at how the politics of belonging arose in nationalist rhetoric in relation to the essentialist belief system, as an example. But first, a closer examination of the politicization of belonging would be beneficial.

It is vital to make constant references to values for belonging to gain visibility inside the community. The importance of maintaining consistency is crucial in this case. Because a consistent emphasis on values is crucial in ensuring that community members always experience a sense of

belonging and being persuaded. Members should feel as if the close connection made between belonging and values is a natural one, and they should never forget how vital belonging is in their lives. Those who belong to the community of belonging are validated ethically and politically by the recurrent relationship of belongings and values, whilst those outside the borders of this community are identified as missing these values, or even are positioned against them with their negative values. For example, while belonging to a given *Western* community is associated with ideals such as freedom, modernity, and prosperity, individuals belonging to a *non-Western* society can be associated with values that are diametrically opposed. Positive values promote membership in belonging communities or groups, while negative values are attributed to other communities. For the establishment and preservation of group identification, the relationship established between belonging and values is critical. Identification with a specific group produces outcomes including collective self-esteem, in-group favoritism, and prejudice (Brown, 2000; Herder, 2004; Jackson & Smith, 1999). Individuals who identify with a belonging group also identify with the positive ethical and political ideals associated with belonging, whereas non-members are associated with negative values. As Milanov, Rubin and Paolini argue, "membership in social groups does not only impact individuals' judgements about fellow ingroup members, but also influences their perception of other groups in the society and affects their interpersonal relationships in the everyday life" (Milanov, Rubin, & Paolini, 2014, p. 205). Accordingly, making assessments and judgements about ourselves and *Others* is a vital component of belonging to a group. Our membership in the community determines our identification with the group, which is effective in cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects, as well as our distance from the *Others* within the constantly repeated system of ethical and political norms.

When belongings that make decisions, speak, and evaluate through values are endangered, they become politicized (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2011a; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006b). In this environment, it should be continually stressed and reminded that the values of the group to which we belong are under attack, that we must take steps to protect these values, and that the sources of

the threat against *us* are devoid of positive values. It is vital to recall the condition of worry and terror generated by real or imagined threats to underline that belonging is continually under attack, especially in the emotional dimension. These practices of remembrance and reconstruction, which are carried out through narratives and discourses, are critical for the continuation of the politics of belonging. Emotional reactions such as anxiety and fear are released through perceptions of threat, as seen in reactions to immigrants as a different community of belonging, the attribution of an increase in crime rates to immigrants, and the fear that immigrants will take away the jobs and homes of the country's *true owners*. A certain understanding of the world is required to reveal the ethical and political ideals used in this phase of politicization of belonging. The essentialist belief system's mechanisms, which are particularly important at the first two levels of belonging, also have an impact on the functioning of the evaluations and judgments made at this level. Understanding belonging in an essentialist way allows the assessments and judgments made about it to be modified by the essentialist belief system's mechanisms. Thus, while a particular community of belonging is thought to have naturally and uniformly good values, people who are *Other* are thought to be born without them. If there are certain anomalies within the community of belonging, for example, individuals or an in-group that is claimed to be devoid of positive qualities, they either do not share the essence of *we* or have been essentially *corrupted* by external influences. Therefore, the core of the community of belonging becomes the primary predictor of ethical and political ideals at this phase. The politicization of the essence and the assignment of a moral value enhance the practice of essentialism's negative outcomes, such as racist, ethnic, or gender-based discrimination against others, dehumanization practices, and, more critically, acts of closure-destruction. Consequently, the use of essentialist mechanisms to construct *Others* who are devoid of ethical and political values and constitute a threat to *Us* allows for the establishment of exclusion and discriminatory acts against them.

In today's polarized political climate, our belongings and the politics of belonging play a significant role. Essentialism works on three separate analytical levels to shape the politics of

belonging. Accordingly, the essentialist belief system is effective in the social location and identification process, as well as the presentation of ethical and political values. Accordingly, the essentialist form emerges for both the belongings themselves and the scope and structure of the policies based on these belongings. Furthermore, three main dimensions that are effective in the positioning of the politics of belonging might be discussed. The politics of belonging can be temporal, spatial, and intersectional according to Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, and Vieten (2006b). Thus, the temporal dimension asserts that the politics of belonging are influenced by historical circumstances and the period in which they occur. The politics of belonging are situated in relation to the circumstances of the time period in question, as well as the historical, social, technological, and economic advances that make these circumstances possible (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006a). Second, the scope and impact of politics of belonging may differ spatially. The impact of a given belonging policy is not uniform, and it may manifest itself in different ways in different communities. The emergence of politics of belonging can be influenced by the geography of countries, cultures, historical and political dynamics in these geographies. In France and South America or in different parts of a country, for example, nationalism can take several forms. Third, the politics of belonging take place at multiple levels. Hence, the impact and repercussions of belonging politics on individuals and groups may differ. People living in the same place and time may not be influenced by the same politics of belonging in the same way. Individuals and groups from various backgrounds intersect in social locations, identities, and values; the community of belonging is founded on the difference caused by this intersection. Class, ethnicity, color, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and stage in the life cycle all intersect along various axes of power in society. With the coexistence of these temporal, spatial, and intersectional aspects, society might have a sense of *we*. Although the politics of belonging are at the intersection, it is important to remember that the politics of belonging also draw other lines. Every boundary necessitates the presence of a third party. According to the effect of essentialism on the politics of belonging, the structure and

permeability of borders that emerge or are reproduced with the politics of belonging may differ. The form of politics of belonging is determined by the magnitude of this effect.

The general structure of the notion of belonging, which has an increasing effect on the organization of the social and political field in the modern period, as well as the general structure of the politics of belonging and its relationship with essentialism, the definitions of belonging, the relationship between belonging and the politics of belonging, and the various analytical levels and dimensions of the politics of belonging are all examined in this subsection. According to the discussion, the politics of belonging have a framework that extends beyond and incorporates approaches focusing on identity politics or the notion of citizenship. Politics of belonging, which is more complicated and multidimensional than citizenship and identity politics, which are concerned with membership, rights, and obligations, is also concerned with emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes. According to Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran and Vieten, "politics of belonging encompass and relate both citizenship and identity, adding an emotional dimension which is central to notions of belonging" (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006a, p. 1). The politics of belonging, according to this, is the umbrella word for the discourse, ideology, and political projects that shape the relationships between those who are within its borders and those on the other side of the boundaries, as well as the structure of those borders. Although the politics of belonging, which employ essentialism as a cognitive bias, produce beneficial consequences such as collectivity, solidarity, and connection with the group, they may also be a source of conflict, discrimination, and exclusion. It is unavoidable to have belongings; even the feeling of belonging to a community, as previously indicated, can lead to a variety of favorable outcomes. However, one should be mindful of the impact of belonging and essentialist orientation on the politics of belonging, and one should seek a way of understanding belonging that is free of harmful impacts of essentialism. Essentialist mechanisms such as grasping the social locations and identities that make up the belonging in an essentialist form, ignoring the fact that people have many different belongings, naturalizing and homogenizing a certain belonging, and an essentialized belonging

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being the object of ethical and political evaluations are important to reveal in this context. It would be helpful to illustrate the relationship between the politics of belonging and the essentialist belief system, as well as examine the influence of this relationship in the social realm, to understand how essentialism shapes the politics of belonging. The relationship of essentialism with nationalism as a type of politics of belonging and a form of discourse, as well as the impact of essentialism in the social and political realm, has been investigated at this stage.

4.2.1. Nationalism as a Form of Politics of Belonging

For sure, nationalism has been explained in many aspects. However, making too much analysis on a concept can make us think that we know everything about it and nothing could surprise us; until a reality regarding this concept astonishes and awakens us. Nationalism came to be regarded as a tamed thought about 20-30 years ago, when certain thinkers had removed it from the "dangerous" category in the international politics dictionary. It will be helpful to read Fukuyama's (2006) insight on this subject, which catches attention with the phrase "The End of History", as it summarizes a peculiar approach to nationalism in the Western canon of thinking at the end of the previous millennium. Accordingly, Fukuyama (2006) discussed the growth of nationalism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union's territory and regarded it as the culmination of a long-overdue process, the result of long-ignored national identity demands, and the inevitable end of denial. Fukuyama (2006), who believed that nationalism was in constant and positive change, predicted that nationalist movements in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union would follow the Western European pattern. According to him, "…within the world's oldest and most secure nationalities, nationalism is undergoing a process of change. The demand for national recognition in Western Europe has been domesticated and made compatible with universal recognition, much like religion three or four centuries before" (Fukuyama, 2006, p. xx). However, unlike what philosophers like Fukuyama predicted, nationalism has not drawn its last

breath on the historical stage yet[83]. Or, as Gellner (1983), a significant figure in nationalism studies, anticipated, it is impossible to detect that nationalism has lost its old power and influence, at least in Western democracies, as a result of industrialization and increased national welfare. On the contrary, in the era we live in, nationalism remains one of the most powerful variables determining and shaping the global political climate. It's feasible to argue that these unproven predictions about nationalism are the consequence of analyses that overlook nationalism's discursive structure and essentialist belief system embedded in it.

Nationalism, which has not attracted philosophical interest for a long time[84], as a central problem, occupies the agenda of western societies following some events such as the *growing* strength of extreme right-wing parties[85], *increasing* support for nationalist political movements[86] or humiliating and discriminating acts against Black football players. Nationalism draws our attention only when it causes enormous losses of life, during periods of crisis and conflicts, or when thousands of people gather to protest the representation of an/other identity group. In these instances, Western societies start to discuss in a panic and ask questions such as: *Is nationalism on the rise*? This way of thinking, which comes to the fore in nationalist arguments, is based on the premise that nationalism is a tendency that emerges, increases and becomes powerful at certain historical moments. Accordingly, nationalism flourished in some parts of the world after World War I or the fall of the Berlin Wall. Those who think that nationalism becomes effective in peculiar

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[83] Functionalists, Marxist nationalism theorists, and intellectuals that advocate the modernist approach in general can all be found to have remnants of this idea. For more information: (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Özkırımlı, 2003, 2010).

[84] It is possible to argue that nationalism has lacked not only philosophical, but also an academic interest in general. For a more detailed discussion of why it took so long to see nationalism as a research topic, (see, Özkırımlı, 2013, pp. 13-14).

[85] Over the past decade, many European voters have increasingly rallied behind far-right nationalist ideas. Marine Le Pen in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands are among Western Europe's most widely recognized faces from this political tendency. We can give more example; Golden Dawn in Greece, Northern League (Lega Nord) in Italy, True Finns (Perussuomalaiset) in Finland, Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei - SVP) in Switzerland, Denmark People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) in Denmark, Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) in Austria, Progress Party (Framstegspartiet, FrP) in Norway, Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna, SD) in Sweden.

[86] More than 25000 PEGIDA (acronym for Patriotische Europaer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes- Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) supporters marched through Dresden on 12 January of 2015. PEGIDA is an umbrella group for German right wing, attracting support from mainstream conservatives to neo-Nazi factions and football hooligans.

historical moments argue that nationalism in Europe or the West, in general, has been on the rise recently, harming the established democratic environment: Symbols such as national flags and varying nationalist discourse are effective in these surge periods. Nationalism is viewed as a symptom or virus growing amid the world's escalating tensions, according to this perspective. However, instead of looking at nationalism merely through the backdrop of times of crisis or conflict during which it appears, examining the underlying worldview behind it, that is essentialism, may provide a useful tool for comprehending the prevalence and perpetual impact of nationalism. Accordingly, it is critical to understand nationalism as a form of politics of belonging established by the essentialist belief system's mechanics.

Nationalism organizes the social and political sphere and affects people's everyday life behaviors, making it the most effective form of politics of belonging in the modern period. Nationalism, which is developed at the level of a particular social location, such as a nation or ethnicity, originates in consequence of individuals' identification and relationship with that social location. Nationalism has temporal, spatial, and intersectional dimensions, as it manifests in behaviors such as demarcation and membership, as well as being the object of ethical and political evaluations of the national or ethnic identity with which individuals identify. Being German or Turkish, for example, does not imply the same thing for a woman, a homosexual, or an elderly person in this context. It is plausible to argue that nationalism, which arose in response to the conditions of the modern era, could take on diverse meanings over time and in different parts of the world. Consequently, while nationalism began as a goal to liberate an occupied country from imperialist powers a century ago, it may have evolved into a theoretical foundation for discriminating policies toward immigrants in the same geographies throughout time. Nationalism has a structure in which essentialism is effective at all levels and dimensions as a form of belonging politics. At this stage, a thorough examination of nationalism and its link to essentialism is required to demonstrate how ideas hypothesized as a type of belonging politics are embodied in the social and political realm, as well as to explain how belonging politics affect people.

The definition, scope, and history of nationality and nationalism are investigated from diverse angles in studies of nationalism, which is a relatively new discipline. In the 1920s and 1930s, social scientists began to study nationalism, which has had a significant impact on social life for about two centuries. The 1980s were the first golden age of nationalist studies (Özkırımlı, 2009). During this period, major nationalism theorists (such as Ernest Gellner, E. J. Hobsbawm, and Anthony D. Smith) published works, and nationalism studies became more prevalent and diverse. While nationalism has been examined as a marginal thought in some studies and is seen as a result of *separatist*, confrontational, and abnormal reactions of a group, it has been accepted as a legitimate and necessary thought in a context that can be used interchangeably with the concept of *patriotism* in some other studies. Moreover, nationalism is sometimes classified based on the power of the discourse owner and his or her position of power. The division made by Lenin, the Soviet Revolution's leader, between *Oppressor* and *Oppressed Nations* is an example of this approach (Lenin, 1977). In this context, it is feasible to discuss nationalism rather than just one type of nationalism; for example, nationalism might be viewed as a beneficial and necessary tool of historical development, or as a negative and oppressive tool of sovereigns. These and related viewpoints assert that nationalisms differ; some are good and necessary, while others are incorrect and even dangerous. Different dimensions of nationalism exist, which vary by location and time. However, it has a connotation that extends beyond dualities such as good-bad, West-East, North-South, forward-backwards, settled-marginal, and so on. American and French nationalisms, nineteenth-century and twenty-first-century nationalisms, Basque and Spanish nationalisms can all be considered independently. Despite their disparate looks, it is possible to find some characteristics that allow these various manifestations to be classified as nationalism. Accordingly, the most fundamental element that all nationalisms have in common is the essentialist belief system that underpins them.

From two different views, the relationship between nationalism and essentialism might be questioned. Accordingly, essentialist tendencies in nationalism theories or the functioning of

nationalism in the social field might be evaluated to determine the relationship in question. The question of nationalism's origin should be the focus of attention when determining essentialist tendencies in theories of nationalism. Nationalism can be classified into two different orientations about this question: Essentialist and constructivist approaches. Most of the theorists of nationalism discuss the concept of nationalism in the tripartite division, popularized by Anthony D. Smith, such as *primordialist* (or *perennialist*), *modernist* and *ethno-symbolist* approaches. According to Özkırımlı, this kind of classification is defined based on the *when* question: "When did the nations emerge?" (Özkırımlı, 2010, p. 203). Smith's categorization revealed three distinct orientations that may be investigated based on whether they are essentialist or not. Thus, it is possible to examine the primordialist and ethno-symbolist approaches, which are essentialist, and the modernist approach, which is non-essentialist, in other words, constructivist, as two separate orientations. Because, following Özkırımlı (2010), it is argued that the distance between primordialist (or perennialist) and ethno-symbolist approaches is not too far. The similarities between primordialists and ethno-symbolists have more significant outcomes than the differentiation. In Özkırımlı's words, "it is not clear why ethno-symbolism and perennialism should be treated as separate categories. What unites them is their belief in the 'persistence' and 'durability' of ethnic and national ties" (Özkırımlı, 2010, p. 203). When the main lines of these ideas are studied attentively, essentialism emerges as the common denominator that unifies these two orientations.

Primordialism, the first of the answers to the challenge of the origins of a nation, can be thought of as the nationalism approach with the most essentialist emphasis. This is because the primordialist viewpoint considers nations as natural formations that have existed since the dawn of time. According to Smith (2009), primordialism, the earliest nationalist approach, employs nations in the same way that races are used. Although the primordialist views differ in various ways, nations are considered to be an essential structure in each of them. The four primordialist approaches, namely "nationalist", "sociobiological", "culturalist" and "perennialist", according to Özkırımlı (2010, p. 50; see also, Smith, 2013), analyze nations as structures that are our natural

parts like our physical features, rooted in our instincts and genetic structure, believed to be the first and given, or continuing to exist with an unchanging essence since the beginning of time (Özkırımlı, 2010, pp. 51-60). Here, the emphasis is on viewing nations or ethnic structures as essences. This essence was envisioned as a one-of-a-kind, eternal, and homogeneous whole. Even while nations evolve over time, their essence remains the same, because it is this essence that defines them as a nation. The existence of the essence and the emphasis on this essence do not change, regardless of the nature of the essence, whether genetic, biological, cultural, or other. The nations that exist today, according to this perspective, are a continuation of nations whose essence is natural and given (Özkırımlı, 2009, p. 85). The primordialist perspective that dominated early nationalism studies by Pierre L. van den Berghe, Clifford James Geertz[87], Edward Shils and Adrian Hastings (Özkırımlı, 2009, 2010; Smith, 2017) blurs the boundary between ethnicity, nation, and race concepts, reinforcing the assumption that these concepts are essential.

Another example of the essentialist approach to nationalism can be seen in the ethno-symbolist approach. The ethno-symbolist method can be regarded as a counter-argument to the constructivist/modernist approach, which claims that nations are modern inventions and constructions (see, for example, Breuilly, 1995; Kedourie, 1961). Ethno-symbolist thinkers emphasize the influence of symbols, myths, and values that have been transferred from the past to the present in the emergence of national identities (Özkırımlı, 2010). They argue that the ethnic past is important in the history of nations and those nations do not emerge out of nothing as modernists claim. This approach, pioneered by Anthony Smith, attempts to reconcile the primordialist and constructivist approaches, stating that nations are a continuation of ethnicities with deep-rooted histories, but that nationalism is an ideological product of the modern age. For Smith, "while ethno-symbolists agree with the modernist emphasis on nations as active, purposive sociological communities embedded in particular historical epochs, they differ over the

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[87] It is necessary to position Geertz in a different place among other primordialist nationalisms. He argues that the essentialist perceptions and beliefs of individuals are the elements that make up a nation through blood ties, language and religion, which are not primary or essential in reality (Özkırımlı, 2009, p. 90).

periodization of nation formation and the role of ethnicity" (Smith, 2009, pp. 20-21). According to Smith, nationalism cannot be understood without first comprehending its relationship with the ethnic communities from which it emerged, as well as the impact this relationship has on the people who make up the community (Smith, 2009, 2013). Although Smith does not argue that the ethnic identities that formed the foundations of nations have remained unchanged throughout history, he does open the door to an essential interpretation of nationalism by expressing the concept of an *ethnic core* that allows us to distinguish nations from one another. According to him, for ethno-symbolists,

> (…) the first step is to search for the 'ethnic core' of the nation and trace its social and political origins, in the belief that nations are characterised by a degree of cultural unity and distinctiveness, which in turn draws much of its potency and durability from a conviction of ethnic solidarity (Smith, 2009, p. 45).

It is possible to discuss the intense influence of the essentialist belief system on the notion of nation and nationalism, as evidenced in primordialist and ethno-symbolist perspectives. Consequently, the origins of the groups that make up a nationality are based on countries and ethnicities as a natural, homogeneous, and stable structure, that is, on a particular essence, in the substantial part of the theories of nationalism. As suggested by primordialist views, these essential structures may have remained unmodified and undamaged. Or, as in ethno-symbolist approaches, these essential structures can be preserved by keeping a core that distinguishes it from other nationalities and ethnicities, even if it varies over time.

Unlike the modernist/constructivist theories of nationalism that argue that nations are a *modern construct* (Breuilly, 1995; Kedourie, 1961), an *invented tradition* (Hobsbawm, 2012; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012), "primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner, 1998, p. 1), or *imagined communities* (Anderson, 2006), primordialist and ethno-symbolist thinkers have considered nations as essential structures. Although the essentialist-non-essentialist distinction in nationalism studies demonstrates the

essentialist belief system's theoretical impact on how the concept of nation is handled, this type of analysis is insufficient to comprehend how nationalism interacts with essentialism in the organization of the social field and what effect it has on people. Furthermore, as Balibar (2005) points out, such categories are designed to make nationalism comprehensible as an ideology and a project obscure nationalism's discursive structure. For Balibar (1990), who argued that the studies on the theories of nationalism mostly focused on the problem of when the notion of the nation emerged, the main point to be focused on is to determine the conditions that constantly reproduce this discourse. It is plausible to claim that approaches that emphasize theory classification lead to the identification of good and terrible nationalisms, thereby enhancing nationalism's ambiguity. In the uncertainty that has evolved as a result of theoretical dichotomy, comparisons, and categorizations, it is impossible to determine the dominant, imposing, and excluding rhetorical framework of nationalism. Categorizing nationalism as good or bad leads to the normalization of one sort of nationalism and the marginalization of the other. When separatist movements' nationalism is described as *evil* and those trying to defend the state's integrity as *good*, one sort of nationalism becomes naturalized while the other is marginalized. From this perspective, classifying nationalism as *civilian* and *ethnic* nationalisms, as proposed by Hall (2003), or as French and German type nationalisms, as explored by Brubaker (2009), naturalizes a form of nationalist rhetoric. This ambiguity of nationalism leads to a conclusion that obscures and ignores its true impact and scope. From this perspective, it is critical to investigate the discursive structure, which is a common feature of various types of nationalism, to better understand how nationalism interacts with the essentialist belief system. The way nationalism functions in the social and political realm has a direct bearing on the discursive structure in question.

Essentialist belief systems, as we saw in the preceding section, gain strength and expand through discourse. Essentialism, which develops when a certain category or feature is positioned as natural, given, homogeneous, and hierarchical at the level of discourse, above those who lack this essence, is also a key aspect in the creation of nationalist thought. Essentialism, in this

perspective, is efficient in establishing the discursive structure of nationalism and becomes widespread in consequence of this discourse. According to Calhoun (1997), a study of nationalism theories can explain the various contents of nationalism as well as the processes associated with nationalism, but it cannot explain the form and discursive structure of the notion of nation and its impact. According to Calhoun (1997), who claims that nationalism has taken many forms over time and that we can now talk about different types of nationalism rather than just one, the common feature of these various nationalisms is that they all have a discursive structure. Thus, the common denominator linking anti-immigration sentiment in Europe, the love of the national flag in the United States, and ethnic separatist movements in South Asia are that they are all products of nationalist discourse. Özkırımlı defines "nationalism as a 'discourse', a particular way of seeing and interpreting the world, a frame of reference that helps us make sense of and structure the reality that surrounds us" (Özkırımlı, 2010, p. 206). Calhoun, one of the pioneers of such an approach, argues that;

> Nationalism is a discursive formation that gives shape to the modern world. It is a way of talking, writing, and thinking about the basic units of culture, politics, and belonging that helps to constitute nations as real and powerful dimensions of social life (Calhoun, 2007, p. 27).

The emergence of borders constructed between nations and the separation of people as *us* and *them* based on the nation concept is realized through nationalist discourse, which is the common point of diverse varieties of nationalism around the world (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Nationalist discourse, according to Balibar (2005), influences the forms of integration and legitimacy discourse among individuals who make up the nation, the nation's symbolic and territorial limits, and the nationalization process' framework. Nationalist discourse establishes and strengthens the nation's boundaries. According to Özkırımlı, three basic processes of nationalist speech that were effective during this period can be discussed. Accordingly, the nationalist discourse, "(1)…divides the world into 'us' and 'them; (2)…always looks back in time, seeking to demonstrate the 'linear time

of the nation', its undisputed diachronic presence; (3)…is also haunted by a fixation on territory, the quest for a 'home', actual or imagined" (Özkırımlı, 2010, pp. 208-209). Furthermore, as Özkırımlı points out, nationalist discourse, like other discourses, seeks power and dominance, and in the process "legitimizes and produces hierarchies among actors" (Özkırımlı, 2005, p. 33). Naturalization is another method used by nationalist discourse (Herzfeld, 2005; Özkırımlı, 2005). As Herzfeld underlines, "nationhood represents both a naturalization of political centralization and a 'culturalization' of nature" (Herzfeld, 2005, p. 78). In other words, the substance of *we* gains meaning and becomes naturalized through discourse in consequence of this national identity construction. This naturalization takes place against a biological or cultural backdrop, more specifically, in relation to a particular essence. It makes no difference if this essence is *imagined* or *created*; what matters is that this essence is circulated, justified, and legitimized as a *reality* through nationalist discourse. Finally, nationalism, according to Özkırımlı (2005, p. 33), "operates through institutions". Accordingly, nationalist discourse is taught, safeguarded, and spread through the institutions of the nation-state. Nationalist discourse is effective through the education given in schools, the history told, the anthems sung and the national holidays.

Nationalism is not a phenomenon that occurs solely when nation-states are being formed or in times of crisis, according to Billig (2002), who claims that it is constantly reproduced in everyday life. Nationalism is perpetuated and functions in all aspects of people's daily lives, often unconsciously. Individuals are continuously reminded that they belong to a nation, as symbols on coins and banknotes circulate every day, country maps are used to describe the weather in the media, and flags and symbols are shown on public buildings, and thus their collective national identity is strengthened (Billig, 2002). Members of the nation reconstruct their identity in this way, with the contrast between *us* and *them*, as they are reminded unconsciously every day. Billig suggests the term banal nationalism which is "introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced" (Billig, 2002, p. 6). The "unnoticed" flag hanging at the entrance of any public building, according to him, is the indicator of banal

nationalism, not the flags waving in the squares on national holidays or after the national football team's victory (Billig, 2002, p. 8). National identity, which is continually reproduced through nationalist discourse and symbols, essentially functions by defining *us* and *others* as Billig (2002) points out. Thus, rather than politicians' speeches or political party programs, small reminders such as the names of television shows and newspapers or identity cards serve as regular reminders of the essence that makes us distinct and distinguishes us from others. National identity allows for the perpetuation of a perspective of others through everyday behaviors and symbols that constantly remind us of the substance of *we*, *you*, and *they*. Nationalism is an expression of the common sense of belonging to a country that has taken root in people's minds and continues to exist in everyday life without being noticed most of the time. This common sense is the manifestation of a lifestyle that has become ordinary, with many visuals such as coinage, national anthems, flags, and other national symbols incorporated into daily life. From this perspective, we might conclude that nationalism is a way of life that encompasses our entire lives. According to Billig, "national identity is a form of life, which is daily lived in the world of nation-states" (Billig, 2002, p. 69). Thus, nationalism is neither an *aggressive ideology* that originates only in times of conflict nor a *fashion* that emerges or rises only during times of crises. Nationalism is a discourse that shapes our consciousness, gives us a sense of belonging in the world, determines our belongings, and guides our daily conversations, behaviors, and attitudes, from our cinematographic preferences to our attitudes toward being a sports fan, from our literary understanding to our social media preferences. As Calhoun argues, nationalism is "embedded in our entire view of the world - organizing citizenship and passports, the way we look at history, the way we divide up literature and cinemas, the way we compete in the Olympic games" (Calhoun, 1997, p. 1). Through nationalist discourse, the nation is used to identify individuals who feel a sense of belonging to one ethnicity or nation from those who feel a sense of belonging to another ethnicity or nation, and therefore to order the social space.

This perspective, which emphasizes that nationalism is a discourse that is constantly reproduced in daily life practices, demonstrates that national identity is the result of a process in which a physical, cognitive, and emotional separation between self and other is constantly reminded and established. Definition and determination of the essence that makes us *us*, as well as the reproduction of the national identity generated from this essence through nationalist discourse based on ethical and political ideals, can be considered a closure in this process. Closure occurs in three ways: *Physically, cognitively, and emotionally*. Physical closure can be established through borders and passports, cognitive closure can be done by establishing a categorical division between us and them, and emotional closure can be reached by appealing to emotions such as hate, rage, fear, and love among those who make up the nation. Every closure is a *de facto* exclusion, and it is via this exclusion that who stays in and who stays out is determined. Accordingly, one of the most prominent examples of how essentialism functions in the social field is the nationalist discourse, which is created around a structure that employs essentialist mechanisms and is thought to be essential. As thinkers such as Fuchs (2009) and Phillips (2010b) have determined regarding the mechanisms of essentialism, nationalist discourse also functions through classifications based on certain characteristics and typologies in daily life, the assumption of an unchanging essence (e.g., ethnic essence), a sharp distinction between *us* and the *other*, the reduction of social diversity to the homogeneous unity, and the argument that those who have a certain essence (e.g., members of a national identity) are hierarchically superior and valuable than those who do not have this essence (those with a different national identity). Accordingly, while nationalist discourse is outwardly active through nation-state institutions, it functions more intensely, and undetected, in daily life practices and social sphere structure, as Billig (2002) points out. The internalization of essentialism as a belief system by people allows the nationalist discourse to function unnoticed in daily life. Consequently, essentialism as a cognitive bias becomes the foundation of nationalist discourse, but it is also continuously reproduced by nationalist discourse and serves as a foundation for our perception of the world.

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In nationalist discourse, it is possible to find the beneficial effects of essentialism. Individuals can express their feelings of belonging to a certain nation and exhibit unity in the axis of this category, through nationalist discourse. In terms of fostering unity among a collectivity that shares certain qualities, disclosing a notion of belonging, and offering certain rights and gains to its members, nationalist discourse, as a view of the essentialist belief system, has good effects. However, as Calhoun (2007) points out, nationalist discourse shaped by essentialism's negative consequences impacts the views and behaviors of people who are members of a nation toward those who are not. Nationalist discourse sustains essentialist mechanisms in that it generates stereotypes for various groups by focusing on a single essence, exposing prejudice and discrimination against others. Furthermore, nationalist discourse, as a result of the essentialist belief system, employs essentialist mechanisms by naturalizing the nation or ethnicity, which is determined as the essence, sometimes biologically, and sometimes culturally.

The neglect of the multifaceted and intersectional structure of belonging in nationalist discourses is another factor that contributes to the dominant and current functioning of nationalism. In reality, a person (e.g., a woman, a Turkish woman, a lesbian, a liberal) who is from various social locations and has various belongings is positioned and identified with one of these locations through the nationalist discourse. Through the mechanisms of the essentialist belief system and discourse, the national or ethnic location positioned and identified with is essentialized at this point. When our essentialist sense of belonging to a national community is challenged, nationalism becomes more evident, and the impact of nationalist discourse grows in response to this threat. To keep alive and grow the loyalty and identity of its members, nationalist discourse keeps this threat perception on the table all the time. As discussed in the preceding section, nationalist discourse popularizes the idea of threat, which promotes group identity and shapes members' practices. A picture depicting the national liberation war on the wall of a school, a statue in the city square that we pass by every day, cemeteries, poems... The notion of threat in question, and thus our own *holy* ideals that *we* should safeguard, is constantly reminded through these and other means. The

institutions of the community of belonging and the practices rooted in daily life reinforce the warning that the *we*, the good, should be always vigilant to the trickery, attacks, and covert plots of the *others* who are bad. The existence of the *other* is compulsory and necessary for the continuation of the politics of belonging if belonging becomes politicized when it is threatened. For this reason, the nationalist discourse continuously reminds us of the *other*.

Another element of nationalist discourse is its ability to work together with a variety of ideologies and worldviews. As a political project, nationalism can easily create alliances with conservatism, racism, or gender-based discriminatory discourses. Nationalist discourse in a country, for example, might develop politics on the same ground, sometimes with racism, sometimes with a religious ideological orientation, and sometimes with both. While a Spaniard's nationalist discourse may be infused with Catholic components, a Frenchman's nationalism may devolve into racist anti-immigrant rhetoric. What allows this pass-through is that other collaborative ideologies or ideas also utilize essentialist mechanisms. The fact that the nationalist discourse can collaborate with other thoughts that see the world through the *I-Other* dichotomy and position a particular group as hierarchically superior and homogeneous in a static structure is because the same essentialist mechanisms are also active in these thoughts. The mechanisms of essentialism are at work regardless of whatever category the discourse promotes, whether it fosters national identity or ethnicity with nationalist rhetoric or a particular race with racism.

In most cases, categories such as ethnicity, nation, gender, and others cannot be considered apart from one another in the social sphere, and their discourses do not work independently of one another. As Yuval Davis underlines, "gender, ethnicity and class are intermeshed in each other and articulated by each other in concrete social relations. They cannot be seen as an additive and no one of them can be prioritized abstractly" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, pp. 7-8). Other categories of belonging are regarded as components of national identity, characteristics that make up the essence, in consequence of ethnicization or nationalization of a particular culture. Thus, the inclusiveness of *we* grows, and other forms of belonging become linked with national identity.

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Nationalist discourse, which is constantly reproduced in and through daily life practices, presents a complex way of understanding the world, determining its borders, those who live within and outside its borders and expanding its sphere of influence by cooperating with various aspects of essentialism. Accordingly, essentialism is not just a common point of primordialist and ethno-symbolist nationalism theories; essentialism, like all other discourses that influence the social domain, provides a network of mechanisms, a belief system, that is effective in the emergence and spread of nationalist discourse. Furthermore, depending on the degree of permeability of its boundaries, and therefore the influence and extent of essentialism that dictates the architecture of these borders, nationalism as a politics of belonging can take various forms. Nationalist projects can be classified as *Volksnation, Kulturnation, or Staatsnation*, according to Yuval-Davis (1997). These three kinds can be distinguished based on the effect of essentialism and the permeability of their borders. *Volknation*, as described by Yuval Davis (1997), represents forms of nationalism in which the borders are set by biological essence and the reference is generally made on the basis of race or ethnicity, emphasizing the sharing of the same blood and genetic origin. *Kulturnation*, on the other hand, is a type of nationalism in which the nation's symbolic heritage is constructed by references to language, religion, or traditions (Yuval-Davis, 1997). The last type of nationalism identified by Yuval-Davis, *Staatsnation*, concentrates on the citizenship dimension, membership rights, and obligations of those who belong to a community. Staatsnation is the least essentialist project form in this classification. Thus, essentialism becomes a more closed and impermeable project when it places belonging in a biological and deterministic context. It should be recognized, however, that the concept of citizenship is also exclusionary, and projects in the form of *Staatsnation* have arisen through essentialist mechanisms. Of course, in this project form, membership is in a structure that is defined by particular rights and obligations, and the boundaries are more permeable than in *Volksnation*. All of these projects, whether they focus on blood, culture, rights, or membership, eventually transform into exclusionary practices (Yuval-Davis, 1997; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006a). Although their permeability degrees vary, these projects, which

are built on the same subject understanding and essentialist principles, are identical in the adoption of exclusion practices. The fact that many of the world's *multicultural* and citizenship-based democracies apply exclusionary practices when it comes to immigrants is a glaring example of this. When it comes to the immigrant masses who are in a difficult situation, the exclusionary approach adopted by many countries, which claim to construct citizenship from a democratic and libertarian framework and to take human rights as the main reference point, is a phenomenon that needs to be investigated.

The structure of essentialism, which influences how human beings view the universe and organizes the socio-political sphere, is examined in this part, which concentrates on the essentialist belief system in general. This part tries to address the question of how and by what mechanisms essentialism, whose theoretical background dates back to the history of Western philosophy and is rooted in philosophers' ontological and epistemological debates, forms discourses that affect the social and political sphere. Accordingly, essentialism, which defines the positioning of belonging and differences in the social sphere and determines people's perceptions and understandings of belonging, is a complex belief system with positive and negative outcomes. Alongside its positive outcomes such as promoting individual solidarity, togetherness, and a sense of belonging to a group, essentialism has a number of negative consequences that reveal stereotypes, serve as a foundation for prejudice and discrimination, and facilitate various forms of exclusion and conflict. Essentialism is a belief system that changes the social and political environment through mechanisms such as exclusion/segregation, homogenization, overgeneralization and overreduction, and polarization, as detailed in the previous section. Essentialism arises as a "cognitive bias" in early childhood (Gelman, 2004; 2005, p. 7; 2009; Kinzler & Dautel, 2012), spreads through discourses, and strengthens through various practices. To demonstrate the effects and appearances of essentialism on discourses, this section focuses on the concept of nationalism as a form of discourse. The impact of essentialism on nationalism as a form of belonging politics has been studied in two ways: through reflections of essentialism in nationalism theories and its

impact on nationalism's discursive structure. The discursive structure of nationalism should be analyzed attentively to comprehend the main effect of essentialism on the theoretical framework of nationalism. From this perspective, it has been revealed that nationalism, as one of the most effective forms of belonging politics in the contemporary era, has become embedded in daily life routines through frequently undetected symbols and symbols. Other discourses claiming to structure the social realm with a categorical division between *us* and *them* similarly function effectively under the wings of the essentialist belief system. From this perspective, it has been revealed through the discussion in this section that essentialism is a fundamental belief system that has its roots in ontological-epistemological debates, but that transcends these debates and shapes how people interpret and make sense of the world, their daily lives, and that organizes socio-political space and gives content to our categories of belonging.

The impact of essentialism on various forms of coexistence is revealed in the discussion over nationalism as a form of belonging politics. The mechanisms of essentialism have a considerable impact on the modern subject's position, which is caught in the tension between universality and particularism, in the social realm. Accordingly, with nationalist discourse, the modern subject has begun to be defined as a member of a nation and is given content with the essentialist belief system's mechanisms. While this content is rooted in a sense of belonging among those of the same nationality, it also generated plenty of negative social, political, and moral attitudes and actions toward people of other nationalities. The subject's emergence as a member of the nation is a construction of belonging based on a sense of self and the fiction of *others*. This perception of self is adjusted to the positioning of the subject. Consequently, the basic problem will remain unchanged in a circumstance where the view of the subject created in an essentialist formation and its belongings does not change. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that to study the structuring of the social realm and the issues of living together with diversity, a different sort of understanding of politics is required in current practices of belonging politics. The essentialist politics of belonging, centered on modern subject understanding and stuck in the

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universalist-particularist tension, is a major source of the challenges encountered in the current organizational practices of the social field; the perception of politics that is based on essentialist mechanisms inevitably devolves into a practice of exclusion, a stark divide between *us* and *them*. In this context, the search for solutions to the problem in question, particularly the idea of dialogical transversal politics, which is proposed for the challenge of coexistence with differences, has been studied in the study's final and discussion section. The potential of transversal politics and how it offers an alternative to essentialist influence in the formation of the social field are examined in this final section.

4.3. Contemporary Debates on Belonging

Criticism and objections to the prevailing political understandings of our day are growing in an increasingly polarized social and political environment. People from various ideological positions, such as environmentalists, colored's, southerners, women, LGBTIQ+, locals, disabled, elderly, immigrants, poor, and others, amplify criticisms and objections in theoretical discussions. The demands of humans and human groups from varied backgrounds, such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, ability, and life stage, shape and affect the political climate today. New conceptual explorations and varied theoretical perspectives have arisen along with these criticisms. The common purpose of these new forms of politics is to safeguard neglected and thereby disadvantaged diversity, to provide them more space, and to give them a louder voice. One of the major issues of contemporary political philosophy is being the voice of excluded individuals or groups, in general, and making them exist in the socio-political arena. These others could be someone with different skin color, someone from a different ethnic or religious group, or someone who speaks with a different accent (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Others of our age refuse to be quiet, assimilated, marginalized, or even annihilated because of differences such as color, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and age. Thoughts and criticisms that arose in response

to widespread political understanding based on a homogeneous view of publicity are searches for an alternative kind of politics, and hence a different kind of life understanding. As Parekh argues,

> (…) although they are too disparate to share a common philosophical and political agenda, they are all united in resisting the wider society's homogenizing or assimilationist thrust based on the belief that there is only one correct, true or normal way to understand and structure the relevant areas of life (Parekh, 2000, p. 1).

These individuals desire a more inclusive politics in which their differences are acknowledged rather than ignored, and in which their differences are reconciled rather than marginalized (Kymlicka, 2001). Numerous different events, theories, and innovations have been effective alongside the general social developments in concretizing this desire and the domination of political agenda by various forms of belongings. The national liberation movements that started to rise especially with the second half of the 20th century, the 1968 movements[88], the Black Civil Rights in the US, the globalization that came into force with the dissolution of the bipolar world system, large-scale political and historical currents defending gay and lesbian liberation, and the criticisms of second-wave feminism, post-structuralism and communitarianism on the understanding of human and society in modern politics have resulted in numerous radical changes in the political field and made visible the demands of those who are *different*. This was a time when the voices of people who were different, that is, those who did not fit into the prevailing white, adult, Western, European, heterosexual, male, and citizen categories, began to be heard, drawing on deep-rooted philosophical discussions (Direk, 2005).

In the transforming world, the political and economic upheaval during the last two hundred years gave rise to many of the new identity demands associated with the changed citizenship policy. These demands and policies arose as a result of the challenge of coexistence among humans and groups of humans from various categories, and they now make up a significant portion of

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[88] The 1968 Movements, according to Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein (2012), were a turning point in which new social subjects such as women and homosexuals demanded recognition of their differences.

contemporary political literature. The centralization of the human subject in scientific, technological, economic, and social transformations, as well as the creation of a modern understanding of the subject, has heightened the debate about the organization in the social and political spheres. These discussions have found reflection in the world of ideas, particularly in the conflict between universalist and particularist philosophies. In this process, along with the changing social structure due to the world's increasing population and depleting resources, the demands of differences and new social categories have become the key issues that require urgent answers and draw attention. People are born into cultural communities and these cultures shape them, so different cultural backgrounds can present different value systems, according to the proponents of the particularist approach, who gave the first systematic examples of the theoretical approach that focuses on various categories of belonging and differences. These thinkers have influenced the theoretical construction of pluralism and new social categories, according to Parekh (2000), as they emphasize the importance of culture and difference as a form of representation, even though they did not offer a systematic and detailed theoretical analysis of pluralism.

Theoretical approaches that emphasize the difference in contrast to universalist approaches promoting emancipation and equality in the modern period have begun to be effective, particularly with the advent of modernity criticism in the 1960s. The battle of numerous new social categories to be visible in the social arena has resulted in this period. Ethnic structures, which became effective in the social field with the French Revolution, and nation-state status are two of the first significant gains in the field of differences. Another new social category that won significant advantages is women, who began to be visible in the political arena during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, and who pushed up against the androcentric world understanding with new demands[89]. New forms of belonging became more apparent in the socio-political realm

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[89] The political engagement of national identities and women's identities, as well as their public engagement as a social identity group, varies by geography. For example, whereas the nation as a social identity was active in Europe in the 18th century, it was plausible to discuss a modern national identity in Asia or Africa at the end of the 19th century (Romein, Clark, & Romein, 1962; Yeros, 2001). Women's participation in social life as political subjects varies both historically and regionally. Women's suffrage, for example, was granted in 1930 in Turkey, in 1947 in Pakistan,

as the twentieth century advanced. Many other social, political, and scientific factors contributed to the development of this phase: World Wars, Cold War (1947–1991), social movements in the 1960s, the end of the Cold War, the development of the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics and nuclear weapons, explorations in genetics, molecular biology, astronomy and engineering, advancements in medicine, transportation technology and information technologies are the examples of some of these prominent factors. The rising visibility and claims of various belonging categories as a result of socio-political and scientific advancements have been accompanied by the conceptual and theoretical interest in these topics. By the 1980s, it was possible to discuss a significant body of literature on differences, particularly on ethnicity, race, nationalism, sexuality, and gender.

Based on the aforementioned literature, two major themes in modern philosophical disputes can be identified. In this period, it is feasible to talk about a desire for overcoming the universalist and particularist tension, as well as a critique of modern understanding of the subject, generated by claims of new belonging categories. In the discussions raised by these quests and criticisms, it is possible to pinpoint the theoretical source of the contemporary conflictual problem of coexistence with differences. As indicated in the investigation of the philosophical background of the modern understanding of the subject and the universalist-particularist tension, there is a strong interplay between this theoretical background and the essentialist belief system. One of the fundamental issues of contemporary political philosophy has been the critique of this tension and backdrop, as well as attempts to overcome them. Laclau (2007), for example, looked at the contradiction between universalist and particularist approaches in the context of the problem of coexistence with differences and proposed a solution. Laclau (2007), who utilizes the concept of *hegemony* to argue that the social sphere is a discourse space, underlined the need for a new sort of politics that articulates diversity and equity. He argues that the tension between universalist and

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and in 1949 in Syria, which are regarded as Eastern societies from a Western perspective, while it was only acknowledged in 1944 in France and as late as 1971 in Switzerland (Sneider, 2010).

particularist approaches has existed in philosophical discourse since antiquity; examples of universalist-particularist tension include Plato's philosopher king, Hobbes' Leviathan, Hegel's master, and Gramsci's hegemonic class (Laclau, 2007). According to Laclau (2007), the issue is not making a choice between these two traditions, but the absolutization of the differences. Laclau (2007) stated that the universal should not be limited to a single and unchanging principle, a single meaning, or a single and absolute feature, interpreting the universalist approach as the universalization of European particularism. Laclau (2007) suggests that universality can provide a living space for the particular when it is not defined by any culture or identity.

Similarly, Wallerstein (2006) claimed that European universalism was the prevailing universalist viewpoint and proposed the concept of *universal universalism* instead. Accordingly, the universal understanding must be reinterpreted and de-essentialized, but the connection between the particular and the universal must remain; in this setting, hegemony emphasizes an agonistic political interaction process in which the relationship between the universal and the particular does not cease even when a common essence is reached or all differences are overcome (Wallerstein, 2006). According to Laclau (2007), who believes that *hybridization* is the domain in which modern political identities are formed, a particularism without a universal and a universalism without a particular will eventually reveal new essences and existing positions will remain. Based on this study, Laclau and Mouffe proposed the concept of "hegemonic universality" or "constantly evolving particularistic universality" in which particularity and universality are in an agonistic relationship (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. x). This approach exemplifies the struggle to construct a universal politics that embraces plurality and differences, which is a central theme in contemporary philosophy; these comments and suggestions can be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between particularism, which makes differences absolute, and universalism, which dismisses them.

The critique of modernity and the modern subject idea is the second significant theme in the literature, which focuses on differences in contemporary theoretical debate. Since the 1960s, the theoretical debate centered on the dichotomy between *I* and *Other*, whose philosophical origin

and evolution are addressed in the first half of the study, has become one of the most complicated central problems in social sciences. Furthermore, in the theoretical development of belonging and difference, it is possible to discuss two important sets of discussions that are related to one another: the first is transformation between the concepts of *redistribution* and *recognition*, and the second is the tension between modernism and postmodernism[90]. The transition between the notions of redistribution and recognition is notable in that it highlights the wide range of differences while also emphasizing the shift in the overall structure of theoretical discussions. In her research of differences, Nancy Fraser (2003) stresses this and mentions two types of social justice claims. She argues that the first of these, redistributive claims "seek a more just distribution of resources and wealth" (Fraser, 2003, p. 1): With the Industrial Revolution, redistribution-based demands for social justice became more prevalent; the political theoretical discussion on the redistribution issue began in the modern era when these demands were conceptualized, particularly with Karl Marx's philosophy and economy-politics and his idea of the class struggle. Such social justice claims can be seen in the conflict between rich and poor, North and South, oppressor and oppressed. Yet, the more dominant social justice claims of our time, according to Fraser (2007), are in the *politics of recognition* cluster[91]. The confines of social justice should be enlarged from distribution to struggles for recognition during this period, as it was underlined that social conditions had an impact not only on the allocation of resources but also on the intersubjective relations that covered the entire society[92]. As Lenz and Dallman pointed out,

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[90] In the final section of the study, the contradiction between modernism and postmodernism is briefly examined in the context of the organization of belongings in the social field.

[91] Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that claims for distributive justice have disappeared. On the contrary, Honneth and Fraser underline that "economic inequalities are growing, as neoliberal forces promote Corporate globalization and weaken the governance structure" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. II)

[92] The contemporary recognition debate refers to a series of debates centered on Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser about the struggle for identity and recognition. The fundamental point of debate is how to reconcile ideas like recognition and redistribution, as well as whether Hegelian phenomenological concepts like *struggle for recognition* provide an adequate philosophical foundation for understanding identity politics (see Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Fraser has added the representation dimension as a third dimension in her recent studies. These different dimensions are mutually entwined, reinforce each other, reciprocally influence and but none are reducible to the other. Fraser uses the slogan "No redistribution or recognition without representation" for this relationality (Fraser, 2007, p. 259).

In the 1980s, political theory in the West was characterized by a paradigm change from redistribution, a politics of structural difference, to recognition, a politics of cultural difference that focused on multiculturalist and feminist claims and notions of cultural group identities (2007, p. 5).

The demands that appear as recognition struggles within modern social movements stress the importance of moving beyond the distributive paradigm to create a just society. This demand reflects a turning point and paradigm shift in the social sciences and philosophy. The birth of postmodernism as a call for a radical cultural turn away from modernism is another component of this paradigm shift in the academic realm (Best & Kellner, 1997).

The increasing visibility of new social categories, particularly in the 1960s, as well as the changing social structure with their new demands for rights, increased the visibility of criticisms toward modernism even more. The insufficiency of modernity in realizing the ideal of living together in general, as well as the problematic characteristics of modernism's popular understanding of the subject, *I* and *Other* dichotomy and belongings, were underlined more firmly. Although a terminological definition is difficult to come by, postmodernism, as an umbrella term for these critiques of modernism, targets the order that rejects plurality and standardizes it. Postmodernism, in general, refers to a period of theoretical approaches that struggle with modern understanding and claim to complement or surpass it. During this epoch, a broad critique of modernism evolved in a variety of fields, including architecture, other branches of art, philosophy, religion, society, and culture. There are different approaches to this new phase; while some theorists (e.g., Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash, and Ulrich Beck) identify this period as *late*, *liquid*, *high*, or *second* modernity and argue that modernity is an incomplete-continuing process, others see it as a new age[93]. For example, despite the fact that many thinkers such as Habermas, Giddens,

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[93] The concept of Multiple Modernities was also brought up as a criticism of the Modernity project. This point of view opposes the generalization of the period known as modernity based on a single example, as well as the acceptance of a homogeneous modernity in theoretical debates. Therefore, modernity and Westernization are not synonymous; Western patterns of modernity are not the only ones, and a static understanding of modernity is misleading (see, Arnason, 1993, 2013; Eisenstadt, 1998, 2005; Sachsenmaier, Riedel, & Eisenstadt, 2002)

Bauman, Castells, and Benhabib are harsh critics of the modern period, they believe we are still living in it and that modernism has not yet been completed. Instead of seeing postmodernity as the end of modernity, Giddens (1991) argues that it is more meaningful to see it as a period in which modernity begins to understand itself. He argues that modernity has yet to be exceeded, and the current period is one of radicalization of modernism (Giddens, 1991; Giddens & Pierson, 2013). According to Benhabib (1992), modernism is still alive and well, despite its philosophical, moral, and political roots, the modernist mission is closer to solving differences-centered social and political problems than postmodern conditions.

Regardless of whether it claims to complete modernism or overturn it, this new phase, which began in the 1960s and is usually referred to as postmodernism, is significant because various belongings are placed at the center of the theoretical discussions. Postmodern thinkers bring attention to the challenges posed by modern philosophy's conceptual dualities and its epistemological roots. First and foremost, these concerns stem from a strong skepticism regarding the reality of universal, objective, and rational knowledge in the broadest sense. Acting on this skepticism, thinkers sought to deconstruct binary oppositions and the epistemic assumptions that underpin them. Consequently, postmodernism can be defined as the umbrella term for a wide range of criticisms directed at the modernity project, which is the product of a 250-year journey toward the enlightenment age's vision of a better society, a better life, and a better human being. Modernism, in general, has lost, according to critics such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and Richard Rorty, because claiming to put a reference point on the basis of the philosophical quest is a futile effort; and because there is no "inherently unifying element" or "ultimate truth" in the universe (Bressler, 2011, p. 119). As described by Bressler, the thinkers of this time largely agreed on themes such as skepticism or rejection of grand meta-narratives, the existence of a single truth and objective reality, and the existence of a constant and unchanging concept of the self (Bressler, 2011, p. 101). The idea that the project of modernity failed to realize the objective of *living together without conflict* and ended in frustration is at the heart of

postmodern criticism. There are understandable grounds for this way of thinking and critique of modernism, according to Benhabib (1992). For Benhabib, a modern form of life,

> (…) still perpetrates war, armament, environmental destruction and economic exploitation at the cost of satisfying basic human needs with human dignity, a form of life that still relegates many women, non-Christian and non-white peoples to second-class moral and political status, a form of life that saps the bases of solidaristic coexistence in the name of profit and competition (Benhabib, 1992, p. 2).

Theoretical approaches that emerged as a critique of modernity's deficiencies and gained a significant place in the world of thought after the second half of the twentieth century, focusing primarily on criticisms of the modern subject, such as the death of the subject/human (see, for example, Foucault, 2002), played a significant role in shaping and spreading the politics of belonging. Theorists of the postmodern philosophy tradition, as well as intellectuals like Foucault, have criticized the modern construction of the subject and its practical consequences. Evaluations of the contemporary subject, as well as the problematic aspects of this concept, were a major source of ideas in 19th and 20th-century philosophy. Contemporary re-readings of the modern subject can take the shape of harsh criticism/destruction, or it can take the form of filling in the gaps and mending the flaws in this notion. In this context, criticisms of the modern subject notion might be seen as a major source of theoretical approaches to the problem of living with differences. An example of these objections can be found in Foucault's criticism, which is directed against Kant's practical philosophy.

Foucault, who provides a contemporary and comprehensive critique of modern understanding of the subject that spans a wide area, has placed his own work in the context of Kant's critical theory and claims that Kant is the foundation of modern philosophy. Kant's critical philosophy, according to Foucault, has two goals. Thus, Kant's philosophy incorporates the roots of two important critical traditions of modern philosophy. The first is truth analytics, which looks at the possibility of true knowledge, and the second is the creation of a present-day ontology, which

is embodied in the question "What are we?" and questions the moment we live in (Foucault, 1982, p. 785). Foucault believes that discussing the present state of the subject is a product of modern philosophy and that Kant is an excellent illustration of this[94] (Norris, 1994). Foucault regards himself as a representative of the second lineage, which includes the philosophies of Hegel, Nietzsche, Weber and the Frankfurt School[95] (Foucault, 1984). "The question of contemporary reality alone" is a major issue for this tradition, of which Kant is the starting point (Foucault, 1984, p. 34). Foucault underlines the importance of Kant's question: "What difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday?" (Foucault, 1984, p. 34).

Foucault (Foucault, 1984, p. 39), who defines modernity as an "attitude" rather than a historical epoch, describes the concept of attitude as follows:

(…) a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an ethos (Foucault, 1984, p. 39).

Kant awoke philosophy from "the sleep of dogmatism" but then put it into another sleep, an anthropological sleep, according to Foucault, who believes there are important points to benefit from and criticize in Kant's philosophy, which constitutes the theoretical ground of modernity that gave the "attitude" to human understanding (Foucault, 2002, p. 372). Accordingly, one of Kant's critical philosophy's two purposes is a search for metaphysics that centralizes the subject, while the other is an approach that problematizes and examines the present. Foucault, who identifies his own philosophical enterprise with the latter, sees this attempt as part of a constructive philosophical tradition that needs to be completed. However, the opposite end of Kant's theory that Foucault finds problematic is at the heart of his critiques of the modern subject. Foucault criticizes

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[94] Kant's works on 'Enlightenment' and 'Revolution' are at the start of his practical investigations that problematize 'the present'.

[95] Despite his opposition to the idea of constructing a great philosophical system, Foucault attempted to give a comprehensive philosophical framework. According to some, Foucault, who created a contentious field with his recent Kant readings, made a fundamental shift in his philosophy, while he filled up some gaps in the understanding of the modern subject for others (see, Foucault, 1984; Norris, 1994).

Kant's concept of a universal, abstract moral human being with transcendence independent of space-time dimensions, and finds the idea of a subject reliant on a universal moral law that governs all life practices problematic. This critical perspective aims to incorporate time as a fundamental and transformative dynamic in the rational system in which the modern subject is constituted, bound by a universal moral norm that is unaffected by historical changes and particular variables. Therefore, history, which is regarded as a design field, has a framework and grows in dialogue with all elements of life (Falzon, 2014). This perspective argues the premise that the concept of a dynamic and historical subject originates from individuals' collective activities. In works like *The Birth of the Clinic and Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1998), who claims that we might attain the knowledge of subjectivation processes rather than knowledge of the subject, examined the subject, subjectivation processes, and their connection with power relations.

Foucault, who also rejects Kant's definition of autonomy as the ability to think and act through a universal mind free of all restrictions, says that in modern societies, individuals cannot acquire autonomy through their acts and that such an endeavor is futile (Foucault, 2002). At this point, Foucault (see, 1982, 2001, 2002, 2003) seeks to continue Kant's critique by adding historicity, highlighting the centrality of power relations, which are the drivers of human knowledge and actions and emerge with historical conditions. According to Foucault, who emphasized Kant's philosophy's lack of historicity, which has been noted by many thinkers, particularly the German Idealists, Kant's successors, historicity will serve as a function that prevents the subject from becoming fixed at one point and the particular from being lost in the universal. With this attempt, Foucault intended to go beyond Kant's critique, not to impose a limit on the concept of criticism, but to transcend it in quest of a new ethos (Foucault, 1984). Hence, for Foucault, criticism is thinking about and attempting to overcome limits. Enlightenment, which he considers an ethos, is an attitude that aspires to transcend our constraints, but according to Foucault (1984), the way to do so should not be regarded as determining an eternal essence for human

beings or confining human beings with a concept of *human nature*. This method aims to alter Kantian criticism by removing its introverted and constrained elements.

Foucault, unlike Kant, did not try to determine the universal structures of knowledge and action, criticizing Kant's philosophy for identifying the universal as the premise of knowledge and action. He attempted to present an archaeological rather than a transcendental philosophy by addressing the historicity of discourse that relates what we think, say, and do (Foucault, 1984; Norris, 1994). Themes like an overemphasis on reason, an abstract understanding of human beings, ignorance of particulars versus the universal, and lack of historicity come to the fore in this contemporary critical reading that focuses on Kant's philosophy and the modern subject. According to this viewpoint, power has historically spread to all domains, making it impossible for the subject to exist in a Kantian notion of autonomy. Therefore, the idea of a subject independent of power relations is merely the utopia of Kant and the Enlightenment idea. Departing from his archaeological and genealogical studies, Foucault attempted to decentralize the subject by examining it in the context of discourse and the effect of power, in opposition to philosophical understanding founded on a predetermined human nature or a given notion of humanity[96]. This perspective can be interpreted as a challenge to Kant's claim that a universal category of humanity, which lies at the heart of his theory, is a fixed and singular center.

One of the most fundamental problems in contemporary philosophy has been criticisms and objections to the modern subject. Habermas, for example, has also placed modern subject understanding at the focus of his critique. The monadological understanding of the subject, which

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[96] One of the starting points for the attempt to decentralize the subject can be found in Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche, who affected Foucault greatly, is also involved in the development of postmodern philosophy and the attempts to deconstruct modernity in order to transcend it. From this point of view, Nietzsche can be considered as a pioneer of the philosophical approach in which the language – this will be replaced by discourse later – that transcends subjectivity is at the center of theoretical activity, instead of a subject that controls and is at the center. Nietzsche can thus be considered as one of the beginning points of the decentralization of the subject by turning the focal point of theoretical endeavor into language. With the following remarks, Nietzsche criticizes the modern construction of the subject: "There is thinking, therefore there is something that thinks: This is the upshot of all Descartes' argumentation. But that means positing as 'true a priori' our belief in the concept of substance that when there is thought there has to be something 'that thinks' is simply a formulation of our grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 268).

began with Descartes, displays the idea of a pure presence without history and relation, according to Habermas (1987), who claims that the principle of subjectivity affects the modern form of culture. Following the approach of the young Hegel, one of the pivotal attempts in opposition to the idea of pure existence, Habermas highlights the young Hegelian emphasis on the uniting potential of intersubjectivity against the authoritarian embodiments of the subject-centered reason[97]. Habermas (1987) advocated the idea of intersubjective reason instead of the subject-centered reason instrumentalized by modern understanding, by offering negotiation, communication, and collective thinking and discussions against fixed goals and absolute. This is an example of a constructive approach, similar to Foucault's, that gives a critique of contemporary understanding based on modern underpinnings. As can be seen, either constructively or destructively, and frequently in a form that is nourished by modern roots, many contemporary philosophers have adopted the criticism of the reason-based subject put forward by modern understanding as a fundamental problem. In particular, the dilemma of the modern subject's centrality, which has been critiqued in numerous ways, has affected the field of political and practical philosophy. Together with its roots in the history of philosophy, the modern understanding of the subject, which shapes the discussion of belonging, has been influential in determining the relationship between *I* and *not-I/Other*, the relationship between human beings and other people and non-human beings, the interaction of human beings with nature, and humans' position in the world.

Criticisms toward modern subjects have also found a response in the politics of belonging, for example, in feminist thought (see e.g., Benhabib, 1992). According to some, western philosophy, from Plato to Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, has been a narrative of the story of the male subject's reason; the topic of "death of man" has found a feminist reaction in the form of "demystification of the male subject of reason" (Benhabib, 1992, p. 212). Other social categories,

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[97] Habermas argues that this emphasis in Hegel's early philosophy faded with time, and that the subject philosophy influenced Hegel's thinking as well (see Habermas, 1987).

such as hybrid belongings and queer movements founded by LGBTIQ+ individuals, are theoretically based on postmodern and poststructuralist criticisms of modernity, just as feminism is. Modern philosophers have highlighted that the human being, the subject of modernism, is a creation formed by social and discursive activities, rather than a universal reason detached from desires and history (Eagleton, 2013). Derrida, for example, emphasizes the necessity of understanding logos as a word or language, as opposed to reason-centered philosophy, which is the outcome of understanding logos as the reason (Derrida, Bass, & Norris, 2002). This is essentially a fierce rejection of the Western conception of metaphysics. The subject is a function of language rather than an independent and autonomous entity, as modernist philosophy implies; the subject is constituted by the use of language, according to this theory, which also serves as a foundation for postmodern criticism. The meaning of language does not represent something other than itself. meaning is already a function of language itself[98] (Derrida et al., 2002). These critiques of the modern understanding of the subject are ultimately the result of an attempt to theorize the appearances and demands of differences in the political-public realm. In conclusion, theorizing differences is the outcome of an attempt to comprehend and explain the new social structure that has evolved as a result of numerous transformations in the social, political, and scientific spheres. While discourses like fragmentation, difference, diversity, and pluralism gained significance as a result of this process, all political and moral discourses that deny pluralism and difference were firmly chastised.

Modernism-postmodernism and redistribution-recognition are common themes of discussion that focus on the potential of coexisting with differences. This perspective, which puts the rising and differentiating reality of belongings at the heart of the theoretical discussion, is an expression of the quest for a solution to the fundamental shift in the social and political sphere.

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[98] Derrida discusses the function of language departing from the concept of *différance*. For him, the meaning of language changes in time; the language is a system of signs based on distinctness and contrasts. It is impossible, he claims, to discuss a set of objects or phenomena that existed before language and are defined by language. Because there are just differences and acts of deferring, and the meaning is determined by the use of language (Derrida et al., 2002).

This search has revealed new perspectives, which are not stuck in the universal-particular tension and try to overcome the *I* and the *Other* dichotomy built on permanent and impermeable boundaries, against the position of the modern subject and the essentialist belief system. Understanding the multi-layered structure of the subject through dichotomies offers very limited space. The necessity to choose between various dualities limits our philosophical arguments. For example, according to Arendt (1998), the dichotomy between modern and postmodern conceptualizations of the subject is not enough; in other words, she aims to show that we do not have to choose between the sovereign-autonomous subject and the subordinated subject. Arendt (1998) neither placed the subject at the center of all possible actions nor passivized it as incapable of any action. She made the subject 'decentered' without subjecting it to any structure, discourse, ideology or hegemonic process. Thus, by including the 'Other' in the problem of the subject, she conceptualized subjectivity as 'subject in plurality' and tried to show that the subject can only exist through a 'positive' and 'concrete' relationship with the Other (Arendt, 1998). Various theoretical approaches that have been proposed for this goal can be discussed. In this context, it is crucial to examine the concept of intersectionality and the approach of dialogical transversal politics, which provide a fresh perspective on essentialist concepts of belonging politics. It is significant because it can reveal new pathways and possibilities for the relationship between social differences and essentialism.

4.4. Intersectionality and Dialogical Transversal Politics

The demands for new categories of difference effective in the social field have been placed at the center of the agenda of new views in philosophy and social sciences, which study alterations in the social and political field. The problem of the appearance of differences in the social domain has been attempted to be answered by the opposite poles of a dichotomy throughout the history of philosophy, as shown in the preceding sections. However, the organization of belongings in the social realm is a complicated issue that cannot be solved with the universal-particular conflict and

one-dimensional perspective that modern subject understanding has brought about. The problem's growing complexity and multi-layered nature have exposed the need for more complicated and multidimensional approaches to find answers. Many initiatives that have arisen in the previous few decades can be considered attempts to address this demand. Consequently, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau's Radical Democracy proposals, Homi Bhabba's idea of hybridity, Seyla Benhabib's modern identity criticism, Birkhu Parekh's critique of multiculturalism, and many more initiatives can be evaluated as expressions of this endeavor. The goal of this subsection is to look at the possibilities offered by the concept of intersectionality, which is one of the efforts for this initiative, as well as the dialogical transversal politics' approach to the essentialist impact on the politics of belonging.

The concept of intersectionality lies at the heart of the *dialogical transversal politics* approach. This idea, which gained steam in the social sciences, particularly in feminist literature, in the 1990s, is based on the idea that diverse categories of belonging, race, class, and gender, intersect, intertwine, and re-establish themselves through mutually affecting one another. Thinkers have regarded intersectionality theory as a method of analysis that needs to be discursively examined. In the realms of law, social justice, and knowledge production, intersectionality, with all its different interpretations, has revealed the inadequacies of the uniaxial and single-centered thinking process. Intersectionality is effective in social sciences from an interdisciplinary perspective, especially in philosophy, sociology, anthropology, feminist studies, women studies, ethnic studies, and queer studies.

According to Kathy Davis, "'intersectionality' refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power" (Davis, 2008, p. 68). Consequently, it aims to convey an inclusive intersectionality approach that is sensitive to differences within a particular category of belonging but emphasizes shared values rather than identities. This approach is based on the understanding that human beings are

multidimensional and multi-layered beings and expresses the aim to form a broad political alliance, based on the articulation of oppressed different positions. Intersectionality is founded on common ideals that acknowledge the significance of belongings for humans but not the social locations of belongings or the identities generated with these locations. According to Nash (2011), who investigated intersectionality in the context of the black feminism movement, the theorization of the idea of intersectionality can be split into three phases: The first phase began with the events of 1968 and lasted until 1987 during which the general discussion ground emerged; the second is the transition period, which saw intersectionality emerge as a concept with Patricia Hill Collins and Kimberlé Crenshaw's simultaneous research between 1988 and 1990; and the third is a period in which intersectionality began to be studied specifically in the context of different categories from 1999 onward. The first stage in the development of intersectionality was the coming together of various marginalized groups in response to social and political events (e.g., anti-Vietnam War protests, 1968 student and labor movements, anti-nuclear and environmental movements) and the effort to create a collective praxis. Although the movements of this period, which had a variety of demands and resources, lacked the theoretical foundation of intersectionality, they were made up of large organized and unorganized masses who understood the need of coming together. These masses, on the other hand, were generally focused on their differences or demands, and they had their own aims and agendas; the times they were living in were moving too quickly for them to consider the basis of solidarity and intersectionality.

The birth of the concept of intersectionality has been facilitated by the growing theoretical interest in these topics, as well as the growing categories and demands of diversity. Kimberley Crenshaw's 1989 article titled "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" is one of the most well-known publications from this period. Crenshaw (1989) proposed the hypothesis that mechanisms of domination operate together to marginalize women of color in this study, which was the first to use the term *intersectionality*. Crenshaw (1989), who believes that research from an intersectional perspective should be used to study the situation of women of color who are

excluded from anti-racist and feminist policies, argues that non-intersectional viewpoints cannot explain the oppression faced by women of color. Accordingly, intersectionality offers a framework that should be utilized in social justice practices. Crenshaw, who gives the traffic metaphor as an example of intersectionality, argues that;

Intersectionality is what occurs when a woman from a minority group...tries to navigate the main crossing in the city... The main highway is 'racism road'. One cross street can be Colonialism, then Patriarchy Street... She has to deal not only with one form of oppression but with all forms, those named as road signs, which link together to make a double, a triple, multiple, a many-layered blanket of oppression (as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2007, p. 565).

This approach, which contends that identities that affect our everyday practices and intensify dominance and marginalization should be approached from a different angle, underlines that domination is seen as intersectional and hence should not be considered independently from one another. It is crucial that early intersectionality research focused on women of color. Women of color were marginalized in consequence of the exclusion and discrimination they faced in every sector; they were not included as subjects in theoretical discussions due to racial and gender discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). The discussion focused on racial discrimination against men of color and gender discrimination against white women. According to Crenshaw (1989), race was largely overlooked in feminist theory during the nineteenth century. Crenshaw argues, based on a number of historical events and judicial cases in the United States, that the sexist and racist discourses to which women of color are subjected are rarely addressed in feminist and antiracist theory (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 159). Besides, the inequality faced by the most vulnerable women of color was mediated in both situations through the categories that could have been the subject, namely men of color and white women. This made it difficult to comprehend the magnitude of women of color's disadvantage. Intersectionality theorists, who believe that a feminist understanding drawing on white women's problems is insufficient to explain patriarchy

experienced by women of color, also argue that women of color experience racism in a different way from men of color (see, Collins, 1991, 2006; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). The concerns of Crenshaw and Collins are aimed at eradicating that marginalization. Women of color needed to be included in the re-evaluation of feminist and anti-racist policies and discourses. Consequently, intersectionality thinking, which highlights the limitations of one-dimensional, uniaxial approaches, would help us see the discrimination that people in the middle of intersecting belongings face, allowing us to detect and correct unjust situations.

Based on the practices of marginalization of women of color, Crenshaw (1991) stated that intersectionality manifests itself in three interacting aspects. These dimensions are *structural, political, and representational* intersections. In the structural dimension, intersectionality originates from the structural character of the differences and their positions. Therefore, because of their racial and gender position, colored women are thought to have a qualitatively different experience than white women. The political dimension of intersectionality focuses on how political practices and discourses marginalize members of the marginalized group. When current political struggles and demands do not take into consideration the disadvantaged group's condition, political intersectionality is at its most extreme. Crenshaw discusses "how both feminist and antiracist politics have, paradoxically, often helped to marginalize the issue of violence against women of color" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245). Representational intersectionality, on the other hand, focuses on the cultural formation processes of marginalized groups. Accordingly, it scrutinizes how the various positions of women of color are deemed invisible in narratives and representations, for example. According to Crenshaw, this state of invisibility is another "source of intersectional disempowerment" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245). This framework that Crenshaw developed reveals the dispersion and multi-layered nature of intersectionality. As a result, intersectionality can be defined as an attempt to investigate and transform human differences in diverse and complicated sectors spanning from discourses to legislation, from political project goals to theoretical debates. Detecting intersectionality in these multidimensional-complex

domains and proposing practices addressing them attempts to do more than just analyze the position of the disadvantaged; it also aims to transform it.

Collins (1991), discussing roughly concurrently with Crenshaw about intersectionality, listed six factors that affect the impact of transversal policy. These six points can be expressed as follows, based on Collins' (1991) analysis: First and foremost, transversal politics rejects *either-or* thinking in favor of a *both-and* approach. Second, the transversal policy embraces group fluidity rather than viewing groups as unchangeable, impermeable, and rigid entities. Third, the transversal policy necessitates critical self-reflection; that is, group members must be aware of their own responsibilities and singularities. Fourth, transversal politics acknowledge the historicity, interdependence, and relationality of groups. Fifth, it demonstrates that the groups' experiences are not the same, but that this difference is possible owing to variation in practices and power relations. Finally, transversal politics emphasizes the dynamism of intergroup coalitions.

Following its theorizing phase, Yuval-Davis' work has been influential in the process of spreading the concept of intersectionality. It is plausible to assess Yuval-Davis's approach as a solution to this study's primary challenge of coexistence with differences, as well as an alternative to the theoretical foundation that allows for the problem to occur. Her approach offers a viable alternative to the exclusionary universalist policies and essentialist identity politics discussed in the first section of the study. To substantiate this assumption, it is necessary to go beyond the theoretical roots of intersectionality and sketch out Yuval-Davis's method in broad strokes. To begin with, Yuval-Davis (1999) opposes generalizations about the locations of differences. Accordingly, the intersectionality approach argues that the diversity of societies, groups, or individuals is homogenized and trivialized by universalist and particularist generalizations (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Different positionings will result in different perceptions, all of which are important and incomplete, according to Yuval-Davis (1999), who claims that transversal policies are primarily based on an epistemological principle. Furthermore, this epistemological foundation on which transversal politics is built has a dialogical structure. For her, "in this epistemology, the only

way to approach 'the truth' is by a dialogue between people of differential positionings" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 95).

Self-construction necessitates dialogue. Dialogue that involves meeting the *Other* is a form of social contact that allows for the reduction or elimination of bias, discriminatory attitudes, and behaviors. Allport (1954), a pioneer in social psychology, discovered that intergroup contact increases knowledge about the outgroup and hence reduces prejudice. Pettigrew (1998), who developed Allport's social contact hypothesis with the Intergroup Contact Theory, claims that the social contact process between groups fosters empathy, provides insight into the ingroup, provides information about contacts, allows for emotional bonds to form, and allows for the evaluation of group judgments and worldviews. According to the findings of another large-scale study done by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), social contact between groups significantly reduces prejudice. From this perspective, it is plausible to assert that establishing a dialogue between differences is a significant tool in eliminating prejudice and discriminatory attitudes through more contact. Of course, the effectiveness of the dialogue will be determined by how it is set up and what methods are used. Consequently, the discussion fostered by transversal politics mechanisms provides a buffer against polarization which grows into hierarchical confrontations fostered by essentialism mechanisms, and in which people judge one another without listening.

Discussing how such a dialogue might work, Yuval-Davis argues that activists taking part in the dialogue, "should not see themselves as representatives of their constituencies (unless they were democratically elected and are accountable for their actions). Rather, they should see themselves as their advocates, working to promote their cause" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 95). Participants who must be aware of the multidimensional nature of their positionality must utilize this awareness in their interactions with members of their own group and other groups at all times. Activists and leaders in identity politics and multicultural politics frequently aim to represent their groups. This mentality, which makes positionality the primary focus of the dialogue, diminishes the task of establishing a relationship to a mere search for solutions to the issues of a particular

group of people. With this approach, which is centered on a groups' own positionality, a healthy dialogue cannot progress.

Second, Yuval-Davis (1999) believes that the priority should be the message itself, not the messenger, and that the belonging of advocates should not be of major concern. People who are *messengers* and participants in political dialogue should have a reflexive knowledge of their own belonging in this setting. According to Yuval-Davis, who names this kind of approach with the concept of "*rooting*", the participants in the dialogue "at the same time should also try to 'shift'-to put themselves in the situation of those with whom they are in dialogue and who are different" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 96). These two fundamental elements, "rooting" and "shifting", on which the transversal policy is founded, will allow "self-decentering" on the one hand while also preventing homogenization of the "other" on the other (Yuval-Davis, 1997, pp. 129-130). This method necessitates not trivializing the group belonging of people that are engaging in the dialogue. It's critical that people don't essentialize their ingroup so much that they become protective and defensive of their own sense of belonging. Essentialized belongings, as argued in the previous section, can lead to the dominance of ingroup differences and marginalized people. This necessitates a rooting and shifting practice that is continually evolving. The essentialization of belonging becomes a dominance that prevents disadvantaged inner groups from being visible and ignores their demands, as well as obstructing engagement with other groups. The crucial thing for transversal politics at this point is to establish a dialogue based on the significance of the message, not on positionalities. This message arises from shared values and aims, not from positionalities. As Yuval-Davis underlines, "transversal politics recognizes the differential power positions among participants in the dialogue, but it nevertheless encompasses these differences with equal respect and recognition of each participant" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 138).

The second principle on which transversal politics is founded is "the encompassment of difference by equality" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 95). Thus, while recognition is vital, differences must be considered in the context of equality, which is not hierarchical and requires respect for

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Others. Individuals from other belongings should respect and recognize each other's social, political, and economic positions as equals before engaging in dialogue. In other words, "differences are important, but on the other hand, that notions of difference should encompass, rather than replace, notions of equality" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 95).

This emphasis on equality is a rejection of the hierarchical construction of differences. As Yuval-Davis (1999; see also Yuval-Davis et al., 2006b) emphasizes, all the different positions that will enter into mutual dialogue are equal: No position, no belonging is intrinsically, epistemologically, etc. superior or inferior to another. Before engaging in dialogue, one respects the different positions of the other: "They assume a priori respect for others' positionings - which includes acknowledgement of their differential social, economic and political power" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 95).

The third principle on which transversal politics is based is the differentiation of positions, identifications and values. As Yuval-Davis (1999) emphasizes, people within the same category or collective identity are situated in different social divisions (e.g. class, gender, ability, sexuality, stage in the life cycle etc.). At the same time, even though they may have similar positions or the same identity, their social and political values may be very different. These different elements and multidimensional nature of belonging take us away from an essentialist and monist perspective: It shifts us towards pluralism and multidimensional perspectives. From these principles, transversal politics can be considered as an effort to establish the possibility of living together with all these differences, in pluralism and multidimensionality, emphasizing equality and respect.

As a starting point, this approach can address the intersection of disadvantaged groups and belonging categories, as well as those who are included in powerful groups due to certain of their positionalities. Accordingly, a white male might also be a victim of intersectionality; a white male may be discriminated against on the basis of class, or age, for example. However, as the marginalized group or positionality grows, so does the intersectionality. Discrimination faced by a Cameroonian migrant woman living in France, for example, increases the intersection points due

to her position of belonging. Identifying intersection points can help to ensure that disadvantaged individuals or groups are not left out of solidarity and struggle for rights. Women's movement demonstrations in various parts of the world have evolved into a battleground in which women of diverse ethnic groups, people of various sexual orientations, and people of various colors take part, reflecting the intersection in question.

The concept of intersectionality should be viewed as a challenge to the sameness-difference rationale that underpins discrimination. For example, in contrast to the idea of a rational and central modern subject independent of universal and concrete conditions, intersectionality underlines the significance of talking about Eastern women, working women, and women of color rather than a universal understanding of femininity. In this sense, intersectionality has a dispersive orientation that seeks to challenge the modern subject's homogeneous and reductive perspective. The human being, as the object of social and political practice, does not have the abstract, homogeneous, and holistic structure that is commonly thought of; power relations do not influence each human being in the same manner. However, thinking of intersectionality as a form of identity politics in contrast to the universal rational subject is also incorrect. The multidimensional aspect of identities, their articulated transitivity, and consideration of their fluid form, which cannot be reduced to an essence, are all emphasized by intersectionality. This viewpoint, which considers identities in terms of rights and justice, emphasizes the importance of moving beyond the prevalent sameness/difference dichotomy.

The emergence and development processes of power and power relations behind various categories of belonging are the subject of intersectionality. Hence, intersectionality should not be interpreted as an attempt to obscure the differences between belonging categories, but rather as a struggle against the structures, discourses, and policies that underpin them. The discourse domain, as outlined in the previous sections, is where the essentialist belief system is most deeply rooted and prevalent. At this point, intersectionality politics offers up significant scope for the discourse to be structured in a way that precludes the essentialist belief system's harmful outcomes. It is

critical to underline the importance of a political understanding that emphasizes the dialogue and intersectionality of belonging, as opposed to discourses of belonging politics like nationalism, which are based on *I-Other* universal-local tensions. Politics of belonging, such as nationalism, employ the mechanisms of the essentialist belief system's negative outputs to form our sense of the world and consciousness; as a result, they are discourses with a powerful impact that presents itself in all aspects of our everyday lives. Unlike the particularist orientation of politics of belonging, such as nationalism, the intersectionality approach strengthens the intersections between these differences by highlighting the common values of the categories of belonging and the dialogue ground they can share while discussing the rights of invisible differences.

Culture is not a homogeneous set of traditions, according to Yuval-Davis (1997), who criticizes the particularist approach that assesses the concept of culture from an essentialist point of view. Departing from the approach of Yuval Davis (1997), who believes that the particularization of culture is the ignoring of the dynamic and diverse structure of culture, addressing culture from the perspective of identity politics, which essentializes singular belongings, can have a political empowerment impact for marginalized groups such as women and blacks. According to Yuval-Davis (1997), this is accomplished by creating a hegemonic discourse about disadvantaged groups and individuals, which is then supplemented with multiculturalism policy. Based on Friedman's (1994) determination that the theoretical development of the concept of culture is realized through the debate between the universalist and relativist traditions, thinkers like Chatterjee (1986) and Yuval-Davis (1997) argued that both traditions examine culture from an essentialist perspective. The universalist-particularist/relativist traditions, as revealed in the earlier sections of the study, are similar in many ways. Both traditions become border policies as a result of the essentialist belief system. However, departing from the concept of intersectionality, culture should be seen as a "rich resource, usually full of internal contradictions, and a resource which is always used selectively in various ethnic cultural and religious projects within specific power relations and political discourse" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 38). The intersectionality method

can be seen as a counter-argument to "essentialized identity politics", which is founded on the assumption that essentialist identity and culture narratives and discourses are the guardians of hegemony's borders (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 66). As Butler (2015) points out, identity creation always leaves something out. Similarly, identity politics, according to Yuval-Davis, are centralist and exclusionary, and they thicken the borders between ethnic groups from an essentialist standpoint, absolutize the individual, and lock them in collective identities in an anti-democratic manner (Yuval-Davis, 2011b, 2013). As Yuval Davis argues, "transversal politics developed as an alternative to identity politics and are often aimed at establishing a collective 'us' across borders and boundaries, in which membership is bounded by solidarity that is based on common emancipatory values" (Yuval-Davis, 2013, p. 14). Finally, transversal politics offers an alternative to the traditional tension of essentialism embedded in the universalist and particularist traditions, with its orientation to diversity and adopting a critical approach against essentialism.

On the one hand, transversal politics is an expression of a critique of existing epistemic knowledge as one of the approaches to finding answers to problems of diversity and cohabitation. In contrast to an essentialist and monist approach, this fundamental epistemological critique highlights the value of various attitudes and perspectives. This is a demand for epistemological transformation, and the *truth* is conceived in a new light in this context. Knowledge based on only one thing, such as a person or a location, is not complete knowledge, according to Nira Yuval-Davis (1999). In this epistemological approach, as Yuval-Davis argues, "the only way to approach 'the truth' is by a dialogue between people of differential positionings" (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 95). The concept of *differential positionings* is stressed here, which refers to the interchange of ideas between two (or more) people who are in different positions. They are in opposing situations and have opposing viewpoints. Yet, the critical point here, according to transversal politics, is to offer this information up for discussion in mutual and democratic conditions (Yuval-Davis, 1999, 2006; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006b). Transversal politics is essential because it refers to an option that does

not get stuck in the *I* and *Other* dichotomy, does not limit different points of view, and tries to get beyond limited conceptions based on the concept of belonging, such as *identity* and *citizenship*.

Therefore, approaching the challenge of cohabitation with diversity from a one-dimensional axis like identities or an abstract notion of universality exposes a conflicting and polarized social and political space constructed by discourses formed under the influence of essentialism's negative outcomes. This phenomenon, which is supported by both theoretical and practical evidence, highlights the importance of recognizing that differences are made up of multidimensional, dynamic, and fluid belongings; we are multidimensional beings, not members of an essentialized identity or a particularized universality. From this perspective, it is vital to present a viewpoint that embraces the intersectionality of belonging and uses it as the foundation for transversal dialogue. This viewpoint derives from the need to create a social and political space that goes beyond the dichotomous limitations of the modern understanding of the subject, trying to resolve the contradiction between the local and the universal. The philosophical foundations of extreme division and conflict in the social and political realm constitute a very deep and complicated pile, as the problems addressed throughout this work demonstrate. Identifying the points in this pile that are the source of our difficulties and unraveling the knot generated by these points necessitates a philosophical study and an interdisciplinary approach. In socio-political spheres, such an approach will help to highlight the harmful effects of the essentialist belief system, which has a wide variety of intellectual resources and influence. This research is the result of a dedicated effort to achieve the goal of providing such a contribution. To that end, the underlying conceptions and philosophical basis that are effective in the organization of our age's social and political sphere are examined in this study. The modern understanding of the subject has shaped the theoretical accumulation in the structure of the social and political field, with its roots in the history of philosophy. Another factor that spreads and consolidates this effect, which can be seen in both universalist and particularist approaches, is the essentialist belief system's style of perceiving, interpreting, and explaining the world. The mechanisms and negative consequences of

the essentialist belief system as a major impediment to the coexistence of people with diverse belongings have been investigated from this perspective. With this review, the necessity for a conceptual network and understanding of politics that eliminates the negative effects of the essentialist belief system and so attempts to reduce negative practices like prejudice and discrimination is highlighted.

This study has a limited framework in terms of being a product of the theoretical accumulation based almost entirely on Western sources. In this respect, providing an intercultural context for the relevant problems and utilizing the products of non-Western philosophy may provide a fruitful development area for future studies on this subject. Like any study that attempts to examine a very fundamental and complex problem within the framework of a forced limitation, this study has had to leave some points out. Since it is not possible to include all the reflections of the history of Western philosophy, which has quite extensive literature, in the discussion, this study focuses on certain turning points and the ideas of some prominent philosophers. It should be noted that there are many philosophers or approaches that could not be included in this study within this limitation. In addition, measuring the impact of essentialism on the formation of categories of belonging in the social and political sphere through studies based on the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to be obtained through measurement-assessment tools can provide important information. At this point, it can be stated that determining the visibility of essentialism in racist, nationalist or gender-based discourses in the media, social media, or political debates through studies based on the analysis of these discourses would also be supportive of the conclusions put forward in this study.

The concept of *belonging* as a multidimensional and intersectional conception rather than notions like *identity* or *citizenship* was discussed, and the idea of a policy that will allow for coexistence was also questioned. With its multidimensional structure, the concept of belonging is crucial to the problem of coexistence. Thus, the notion of belonging provides an important conceptual space for the search for answers to the problem at hand, providing a larger basis than

the identity concept's two-dimensional structure and a more solid ground against essentialism's negative consequences. From this perspective, a strategy centered on the concept of belonging can be seen as a response to particularist approaches that claim to meet the rights and recognition demands of individual identities through a variety of strategies. Particularist approaches, as discussed in the first part of the study, place a certain *identity* at the center of the discussion, effectively essentializing and naturalizing one or more of the various/multidimensional belongings. However, we as humans are far too complex to be defined solely by single identities such as ethnicity, nationality, ability, sexuality, or life stage; we are all of these things and more.

Similarly, a belonging-centered approach differs from universalist approaches. Because such an approach must account for the fact that humans have a diverse range of belongings, are far too multi-layered and diverse to be contained within the confines of a single conception of human nature, and possess not only rationality or intuition but also emotions. Hence, the theoretical foundation that provides the sense of belonging has been examined in this study by disclosing many characteristics that make up belonging. The difference between the notion of belonging and the politics of belonging, which is established through the mechanisms of the modern subject and thus the essentialist belief system, and extended through its discursive structure, is then examined. Politics of belonging are discourses that are produced using the mechanisms of the essentialist belief system and that impact our daily lives, consciousness, and way of interpreting the world, as this examination of nationalism as an example of a politics of belonging illustrates. The deeply rooted and pervasive effect of the essentialist belief system is what makes the politics of belonging with its discursive framework so widespread. The criticisms and alternative proposals for this type of discourse, as well as the understanding of politics on which this discourse is built, are examined in this last section, which serves as the study's discussion and suggestion section. In this context, the intersectionality politics approach has been proposed as a possibility for coexistence with our diversity. It is critical to go beyond the modern understanding of the subject, which is a result of essentialist thought, as well as the dichotomy of particular-universal, *I-Other*, in which this

understanding is trapped. From this perspective, it is critical for humans to develop solidarity with nature, other living beings, and other human groups, as well as a cooperative relationship based on empathy, as an entity capable of constructing shared values of living together through dialogue. At this point, addressing and publicizing contemporary interests such as intersectionality politics, which analyzes the feasibility of said cooperation, is an essential and necessary goal.

Intersectionality politics is a policy that invites individuals from communities where national, ethnic, religious, class, and gender-based belongings are intensely conflicted, polarized, and without democratic institutions to dialogue, as well as people from the developed North and West and the developing South and East, in other words, people from all global axes. In our social and political world dominated by the politics of belonging, the efforts of feminists, environmentalists, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and many other rights defender groups and individuals intensify this call. On the one hand, as a result of growing social, cultural, economic, and political polarization, communities' borders are becoming thicker; on the other hand, as the social sphere becomes more heterogeneous in consequence of mass migration movements and globalization, the need for an intersectionality politics perspective grows. Differences and diverse belongings have long since established themselves in the social realm, and it would be pointless to expect them to return to invisibility and silence. However, *humanity*, which is far too diverse and dynamic to fit into the purview of a universal and abstract concept, shares far too much in common to be lost in the relativity of differences. It is undeniable that we have compelling reasons and pressing agenda items to begin a conversation by establishing shared values. Many important issues await us as humanity today, where the climate disaster has reached irreversible levels, more than three million people have died and more than 100 million have become ill[99] as a result of the global pandemic over a year (March 2020 to March 2021), and wars and conflicts continue to be experienced in addition to these crises. It is vital to discuss the multidimensionality and intersectionality of

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[99] For statistical data on COVID-19: Retrieved April 6, 2021, from https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/

belongings not only in developing and undemocratic countries, but also in many regions of the world where those who are different, especially migrants and refugees, are becoming more and more visible, thus increasing the number of politicized belongings that feel threatened by their existence. To build a coexistence that respects differences, it is crucial to seek an approach that tries to overcome the tensions between universalism and particularism, essentialism and anti-essentialism, and that attempts to enlarge similarities and solidarity while not ignoring differences. Despite the growing pessimism in the age we live in, it is important that while dreaming a society that aims to include differences and establish justice against discrimination, conflicts and dehumanization practices, also it is important to support and multiply those who can go beyond dichotomies.

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EIDESSTATTLICHE ERKLÄRUNG

27.09.2021

Hiermit erkläre ich, Özgür Uçar, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt habe. Ich habe keine weiteren Quellen oder Hilfsmittel verwendet und die Werke von denen ich wörtlichen bzw. inhaltlichen Stellen entnommen habe, als solche kenntlich gemacht und angeführt.

Özgür Uçar

Çanakkale/TÜRKEİ

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Personal Information

Date of Birth	27 Mart 1983
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Marital	Married

Education

2012-2022	**PhD,** Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg/Germany Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Matthias Kaufmann
09/2006- 02/2010	**Master of Arts**, Uludağ University, Bursa, Philosophy Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Işık Eren (3,65/4)
09/2001-01/2006	**Bachelor**, Uludağ University, Bursa, Philosophy (3,32/4)

Work Experience

Since 2021	**Lecturer, Istanbul** Arel University, Turkey
Since 2015	**Chief Editor**, ViraVerita International Journal
2016-2018	**Researcher**, Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg-ALMANYA (with support of Deutsche Forschung Gemeinschaft) **Lecturer,** Cyprus International University- Cyprus
2012-2015	**Research Assistant,** Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg-ALMANYA (with support of Deutsche Forschung Gemeinschaft)
2013-2016	**Project Assistant-** Inclusion and participation of young refugees-Peissnitzhaus E.v. Halle (Saale)/Germany
2011-2013	**Project Assistant-** "Teilhabe durch Engagement – Geflüchtete engagieren sich", Freiwilligen-Agentur Halle-Saalkreis e.V.
2010-2012	**Research Assistant,** Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg-ALMANYA (with support of DAAD)
2009-2010	**Education Program Coordinator -** Özel Idea Eğitim Kurumları (Private College in High school degree)-BURSA
2007-2010	**Executive and Education Program Coordinator-** Özel Nilüfer Eğitim Kurumları (Private College in High school degree)
2006-2007	**Project assistant-** Volunteer-European Volunteer Service Certificate Programme in "Breaking Social Isolation" Project School, Melsbroek, Belgium.

Conferences and Seminars

Uçar, Ö., & Kıral Uçar, G. (2020). *Ayrımcılığın psikolojik temelleri ve aidiyet siyaseti yaklaşımı*. Sözlü bildiri, the International Symposium On Multidisciplinary Approach Towards The Disadvantaged Groups (online), Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi 22-23.10.2020.

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Activities

2022 2018	**Editor,** ViraVerita: Peer-reviewed E-Journal of Interdisciplinary Encounters (ISSN: 2149-3081) Bildiğimiz Dünyanin Sonu/ The end of the world as we know it Volume 15 (https://viraverita.org/e-dergi/15)
2016	**Editor,** ViraVerita: Peer-reviewed E-Journal of Interdisciplinary Encounters (ISSN: 2149-3081) Göç/Migration Volume 8 (https://viraverita.org/e-dergi/6)
Since 2014	**Editor,** ViraVerita: Peer-reviewed E-Journal of Interdisciplinary Encounters (ISSN: 2149-3081) Adalet/Justice Volume 6 (https://viraverita.org/e-dergi/6)
Since 2012	Member of Editorial Board ViraVerita: Peer-reviewed E-Journal of Interdisciplinary Encounters (ISSN: 2149-3081)
	Researcher, Graduation Institute: Society, Culture and Motion-Halle
2009	**Member of Project Advisory Board**, 2nd Uludag Philosophy Seminars- Philosophy *of Law: Ethic and Political Approaches.*
	Project Review Committee- 3rd National Social Sciences Symposium of Uludag University.
2008	Project Review Committee- 2nd National Social Sciences Symposium of Uludag University.
	Project Review Committee- Uludag Philosophy Seminars- *The Philosophy in the 21th Century.*
2007	Project Review Committee- 1st National Social Sciences Symposium of Uludag University
2005	Congress Chair- 5th National Congress of Philosophy Students, Uludağ University.
2004	Organization Committee- 9th National Congress of Psychology Students

Language Ability

Turkish: Native,
English: C1,
German: B2

Scholarships

DFG, German Research Foundation
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Academic Interest

Belonging, nationalism, rights of disadvantaged groups, intersectionality, discrimination, citizenship theories, philosophy of art.