

Kant's conception of race and contemporary political thought¹

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ENG Abstract: Racial issues remained for a long time one of the marginal topics in political thought. However, in the last few decades racial questions have become a topic of discussion in political science. Modern debates about race in political science are quite multifaceted and concern both practical and theoretical issues. In this regard, participants in discussions often turn to the of thinkers of the past. Much of this research focuses on the specific issue of Kant's concept of race, which is often used as a pretext to label Kant as a 'racist' thinker. Why is it that Kant's concept of race has become so important for contemporary discussions of race in political science? Could the characterizing of Kant as a 'racist' have a negative impact on the perception of his political philosophy? Answering these questions is the purpose of this paper.

Keywords: Kant, race, cosmopolitanism, colonialism, contemporary political science.

Summary: 1. Kant's concept of race in the context of his political philosophy. 2. Kant's concept of race in contemporary political science debates. Conclusion. References.

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Historically, the modern concept of race, as a biological taxonomy that links physical differences to social hierarchy and political relations of dominance and submission, is a product of Modernity and the Enlightenment (Ages 1999). According to the dominant view among scholars, the origins of racism are definitely associated with the emergence of centralized states, nationalism, anthropology, and biological science in the modernity, in the late 18th century (cf. Seth 2020, 344), when the differentiation of people by race became increasingly important politically since it justified the right of white Europeans to colonize new territories and exploit people of other races. Paradoxically, it was during the Enlightenment, when the ideas of freedom, equality and human rights became central ideas, the foundations of the racial theories of the 19th and 20th centuries were laid, which influenced the perception of racial issues in early political science.

The concept of race has been part of the scientific discourse in modern political thought since the emergence and establishment of political science as an academic discipline in the second half of the 19th century. At the same time, racial issues have never been central to Western political thought, it was certainly impossible to ignore it completely, even if most political scientists preferred to avoid it. The main reason for this was that the very concept of race and racism were not considered by most political scientists to be a strictly political issue. However, in the last few decades, and especially after a number of political scandals and activities of such political and social organizations as 'Black Lives Matters' movement, the situation has changed significantly. Racial issues have become a topic of discussion and an important part of political discourse in many countries in the world. Modern debates about race and racism in political science are quite multifaceted and concern both practical and theoretical issues. The practical issues are related to social discrimination, infringement of rights and freedoms based on race. The theoretical issues are primarily concern questions of social inequality and political participation of ethnic minorities in society. Other theoretical considerations relate to mechanisms and institutions that could ensure equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity. In this regard, participants in discussions often turn to the figures of thinkers of the past. Their statements symbolize a certain position on racial issues, and allow the discussion of racial problems to be included in a broader scientific and cultural context. In recent years, one such figure has been Immanuel Kant, whose texts and lectures

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have been found to contain statements that, from the point of view of modern political correctness, can be characterized as racist.

Kant's 'racist' statements have become of the most popular topics of researchers in the field of Kant's anthropology, his social and political philosophy, due to their perceived scandalous attitudes (Eze 1995, Bernasconi 2001 and 2002, Mills 2005 and 2014, Willaschek 2020, Basevich 2020, Yab 2021, Schmahl 2021, Marwah 2022, Fleischacker 2023). Many of these researchers focus on the specific issue of Kant's concept of race³, which is often used as a pretext to label Kant as a racist thinker. In doing so, Kant's racist statements not only call into question his own ideas of the equality of all people and the universality of human rights⁴, but also the very idea of world citizenship and a world confederation, of which he is one of the main champions. Why is it that Kant's concept of race and a number of his statements regarding representatives of other races have become so important for contemporary discussions of race in political science? Could characterizing Kant as a 'racist' have a negative impact on the perception of his political ideas⁵, as well as philosophical ideas⁶ in political science? Answering these questions is important from several points of view. For political science, it is important for forming a balanced and objective picture of Kant's political philosophy. At the moment, Kant's views seem to be often distorted by labels like 'racist', which prevent an adequate perception of his fundamental political ideas, such as cosmopolitanism, human rights and the dignity of the human person. These ideas have value for us in themselves, regardless of the personal imperfections of the author from our own point of view, as to whether he had prejudices about other people, animals, plants or anything else. For Kant studies, answering these questions are primarily important for understanding that the problem of Kant's racial prejudices and their place in his philosophical system goes far beyond the concerns of Kant scholars alone. It may also be important for wider discussions and influence the agenda in political and other social sciences. This does not mean that Kant's racist statements should be ignored. It does mean that they must be understood in their personal, historical, political, and all other contexts in order to properly interpret their meaning. Addressing these reasons is the purpose of my paper.

The paper consists of two sections. The first section covers the political dimension of Kant's racial theory and examines it in the context of contemporary debates. The second section sheds light on the role of Kant's concept of race for discussions in contemporary political science. It explores what impact characterizing Kant as a 'racist' may have on the negative perception of his ideas in political science.

1. Kant's concept of race in the context of his political philosophy

Racial issues can hardly be called a key element of Kant's philosophy, rather, this topic was peripheral for Kant in comparison with his critical philosophy of the mature period and his later political, legal and moral philosophical ideas⁷. At the same time, Kant's theory of race and the racial prejudices contained therein was an inseparable part of his philosophy⁸, at least at a certain stage of its development. Moreover, there was a certain period of time (mainly the 1770-1780s) when it was one of the central themes of his anthropology. The main sources of our knowledge about Kant's views on race are his works of the 1760–1780s: *Observations on*

³ Here are some of the most important contributions made to the recent round of discussions around Kant's conception of race: Eze 1995, Larrimore 1999, Bernasconi 2001 and 2002, Hill/Boxill 2001, Mills 2005, Kleingeld 2007, Mills 2014, Yab 2021, Lu-Adler 2023.

⁴ Mills and some other Kant's critics argue that his idea of equality is not inconsistent – he is simply referring to equality among a specific group (whites) (cf. Mills 2005; Yab 2021). Kant defenders, mostly Kant scholars, do not deny the presence of racist statements in Kant, but at the same time they either claim that Kant's racial comments do not have any influence on his philosophy (for example, Wood 1999, Loudon 2000), or deny the influence of these statements on Kant's moral philosophy (Boxill, Hill 2001) or his anthropology (Terra 2013), or believe that Kant completely renounced his racist views in the late period of his life. This last point of view is shared by a number of scholars (e.g. Shell 2006, Fenves 2003, Muthu 2003, Muthu 2008, Muthu 2011, Kleingeld 2007), who argue that Kant's original concept of race, as presented in his works of the late 1770s and 1780s, underwent a major change during the 1790s. The possible impetus for this change is believed to be, for instance, the development of Kant's idea of cosmopolitanism in his later writings and the French Revolution.

⁵ for example, cosmopolitanism and world-civil order, world federation.

⁶ primarily Kant's philosophy of morality and law.

⁷ Despite the fact that Kant's essays containing racist statements cover a wide range of time periods from the mid-1760s to the early 1790s, these works themselves cannot be called central either in volume or in their significance in the system of critical philosophy. Even less so is the status of racist statements in the lectures on anthropology and physical geography published in the last decade of the philosopher's life, which were rather evidence of Kant's uncritical attitude to the empirical material obtained at second hand, which he used as examples (in addition to examples with animals) to illustrate to his listeners his concept of geographical determinism in natural history. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the assessment of Kant's racial theory and his racist statements as being secondary in the overall structure of his philosophy is contested by some authors (for instance, Marwah 2022; Lu-Adler 2023), who claim the essential importance and central role of Kant's racial theory for his critical philosophy. Nevertheless, this position still remains marginal and is not shared by the majority of Kant scholars (for instance, Wood 1999, Loudon 2000, Wilson 2007, Terra 2013).

⁸ On the question of the extent to which Kant's concept of race and his racist statements were part of his philosophy, the opinions of scholars who generally accept Kant's racist and Eurocentric prejudices sometimes differ greatly. Some, such as Robert Bernasconi (Bernasconi 2001, 2002), directly accuse Kant of racism, arguing that it has a major influence on key elements of Kant's philosophy (for example, its universalism). Others, for example Ricardo Terra (Terra 2013), while acknowledging Kant's acceptance of some of the Eurocentric prejudices of his time, argue that these prejudices of Kant as an everyman are not actually part of his anthropological theory and have no bearing on Kant's views as a scholar. There exist several options in between these extremes. Many Kant scholars have recently been more and more inclined toward distinction between Kant's 'ideal' and 'non-ideal' or 'im-pure' parts of his theory (see, for instance, Huseyinzedegan 2019, Valdez 2019, Basevich 2020). For instance, Dilek Huseyinzedegan argues that „The real Kant was racist, sexist, and Eurocentric; a real Kantian political philosophy, however, can hope to move beyond racism, sexism, and Eurocentrism and can hope to achieve a diverse cosmopolitanism if only we, the Kantians, first admit and analyze the distorted grounds and consequences of the past formulations in earnest.“ (Huseyinzedegan 2019, 167).

the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime (1764), *On the Various Races of Man* (1775), *Definition of the Concept of the Human Race* (1785), *On the Application of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* (1788)⁹. In addition, a separate, albeit brief, section on race contains *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), Kant's major anthropological work. In this writing Kant attempts to complete a difficult task, presenting his anthropological views and ideas in a scientific form, as a pragmatic discipline¹⁰. These were developed over several decades first as part of his course of lectures on physical geography, and then later as part of his lectures on anthropology, which he began to read at the University of Königsberg in the 1770s, and completed in the first half of the 1790s. This means that Kant's statements can be found over period of three decades. The earliest of them date back to the first half of the 1760s. So, in the fourth section of *Observations on the sense of the beautiful and sublime*, Kant, discussing the national character and citing Hume as an authority (Hume 1748 [1964], 253), argues that the black Africans do not have a feeling that goes beyond the absurd (läppisch) and do not have any talents (AA II, 241). Kant continues to use this condescending epithet in relation to black people¹¹ at a later time, as evidenced, for example, by the Collins's notes (1772/73) of his lectures on anthropology (AA XXV, 233).

The empirical basis for Kant's concept of race was largely provided by accounts of the travels of explorers, settlers, missionaries, traders, etc. – in the same way as most of his other knowledge was obtained about other peoples and countries (cf. AA VII, 120). In the vast majority of cases they bore the stamp of 'white' racism and Eurocentrism, dominant not only among the general public, but also in scientific circles. Moreover, the very concept of race, as a biological taxonomy that links physical differences to social hierarchy and political relations of dominance and submission, is a product of Modernity and the Enlightenment (Ages 1999). There is a fairly simple explanation for this. According to some scholars, the origins of racial theories and of modern racism are definitely associated with the emergence of centralized states, nationalism, anthropology, and biological science in Modernity, in the late 18th century (cf. Seth 2020, 344). The differentiation of people by race became increasingly important politically since it explained the superiority of European civilization at that time and justified the right of white Europeans to colonize new territories and exploit people of other races. Paradoxically, it was during the Enlightenment, when the ideas of freedom, equality and human rights became central ideas, the foundations of the racial theories of the 19th and 20th centuries were laid, which influenced the perception of racial issues in early political science. In this sense, Kant with his racist statements is rather a striking example of a thinker of his time who combined high moral ideals and some individual racial prejudices. Something similar can be found in Locke, Hume, and a number of other thinkers of the Enlightenment (cf. Bernasconi & Mann 2005, Garrett 2000). This does not mean that their philosophical ideas were racist in nature, but rather that the Enlightenment figures themselves were not perfect people in terms of their own ideals and needed to be enlightened themselves. It also means that the Enlightenment is a long process that can take more than one generation before humanity can divest itself of its prejudices.

It is unlikely that Kant's racial theory can be explained by the philosopher's attempt to justify slavery and colonialism, which was more typical of slave-owning powers, which Kant's Prussia was not. It was rather an attempt to answer the question of "why their nations had recently made such great technological progress and were able to spread their influence", and why other nations could not do the same (cf. Banton 1998, 24). In this context, racial differences resulting from different climatic living conditions might well seem evident in providing a scientific explanation for the external diversity of humanity and the differences in the level of development between the inhabitants of different parts of the Earth. In this sense, Kant's racial theory can be considered mainstream in the natural and protosocial sciences of his time¹². This for many of Kant's contemporaries fully justified the seizure of foreign territories and their transformation into overseas colonies, exploitation and enslavement of the local population. According to Thomas McCarthy, the very spirit of European expansion was theoretically reflected in Kant's racial theory; it already clearly shows "the chief characteristics of nineteenth-century racial "science": racial differences were represented as biologically inherited determinants of differences in talent and temperament" (McCarthy 2009, 26). The superiority of European civilization was justified during this period by the imaginary biological superiority of the white race, and this rather straightforward and primitive logical connection seemed quite justified in that era of geographical determinism. For Kant, other races found themselves either in the 'hothouse' conditions of too warm climate, or, conversely, in conditions that forced man to concentrate all his strength only on his physical survival. In this sense, Kant understands the racial hierarchy in an evolutionary way, considering all races to be parts of the same human species, but belonging to different kinds of the entire human race (AA XXV, 1186) and just standing at different stages of evolutionary development (AA XXV, 1196). This connection

⁹ Important sources to mention are also Kant's lectures on anthropology, which Kant gave at the University of Königsberg twenty-four times between 1772 and 1796, and his lectures on physical geography (forty-six times between 1756 and 1796). However, these lectures should be regarded only as valuable but auxiliary documents, with priority given to Kant's published works, in which the author consciously made his thoughts public.

¹⁰ To what extent Kant succeeded in this undertaking, is a matter on which Kant scholars differ in their opinions (see, for instance, Brandt 1999; Wilson 2007; Sturm 2009).

¹¹ According to Alexey Zhavoronkov, by calling the Negroid race using the word absurd (läppisch), Kant hints at their inability to control their feelings, which influence their judgments, which, in turn, interferes with the formation of a full-fledged character." (Zhavoronkov 2021, p. 90).

¹² A striking example of other similar theories is the racial theory of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1830), who studied the anatomical and morphological varieties of man. Blumenbach's theory was even in a certain sense more progressive from a scientific point of view. It claimed that, firstly, racial differences are only external and have no relation to the intellectual abilities of people, and, secondly, that they represent a continuous spectrum, so that it is impossible to draw firm boundaries between different human populations.

between races within the framework of modern anthropology could be compared with modern ideas about the Cro-Magnons, the most successful and developed branch of human evolution (their analogue in Kant's racial theory is the white race), Neanderthals, Denisovan man and other extinct branches of humanity, for which Kant designates Negroids, Mongoloids and Americanoids. In other words, if Kant can be accused of racism, then this is a 'secondary' or 'mediated' racism, based not on personal experience of communication with representatives of other races, but on the racist prejudices of other people, on whose stories, observations and experience he uncritically relied. His theory of race is grounded not in the justification of one race's representatives' right to oppress and exploit another, but rather in the goal of elucidating the inequality in the development of various human populations on the planet.

Kant's concept of race is definitely connected with his political philosophy, since both are based on his anthropology, understood in a broad sense as science of man and the world around him. More than that, Kant's interest in social issues in general, and in political aspects in particular, can be understood as a consequence of his anthropological reflections and ideas, being essentially part of clarifying the answer to the question "what is a man?"¹³ and what he represents as a "freely acting being" (cf. Salikov 2020). In this sense, Kant's concept of race and his political ideas both belong to his theory of human progress, nearly representing its different aspects, biological and social.

According to Kant, human races differ not only in their physical appearance. In his view, the same natural conditions that caused differences in physical appearance also determined the psychological characteristics of these population groups. That is their ability for rational self-development, self-organization in a social context, and to active participation in political life. In the *Menschenkunde* notes of his lectures on anthropology (presumably 1781-1782) Kant justifies this difference using the connecting criterion of the number of motives (*Triebfeder*) that prompt a person to more actively use their reason. As a result, the Native Americans turned out to be too lazy and passive. The Negroid race, according to Kant, although sensitive, is full of affects and energy and is capable of forming its own culture – but only the culture of slaves who need to be taught something. The Indian race (*Hindus*) has some incentives to develop in accordance with Kant's criteria, however its representatives can receive an adequate education only in the field of arts, not in the field of science (AA XXV, 1187). As a result, all three of these races are incapable of forming more developed and fair forms of political structure of society, such as a republic. Moreover, Kant considers the Americanoid, Negroid and Indian races as being not capable of a real fight against oppressors and the overthrow of tyranny. In other words they are not able to independently organize a revolution: "Whenever any revolutions have occurred, they have always been brought about by the whites, and the Hindus, Americans, and Negroes have never participated in them". (AA XXV, 1188). Kant argues that only the fourth race, the 'white' race, possesses the essential motivations and abilities (AA XXV, 1187). That's why, for Kant, only the white race is able and morally obliged to perform cultural, educational, and civilizing roles in regard to the other races.

Kant's thesis that only white race is capable of a revolution against oppression and tyranny was refuted already during his lifetime, when, as a result of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), rebel slaves were able to win their freedom and establish the Haitian Republic in 1804, the last year of Kant's life. According to Philip James Kaisary this „twelve-year revolutionary war of independence in the French colony of Saint Domingue that was, by turns, a slave rebellion, an anticolonial war, and a race war, shocked the Western world, reshaped the debates about slavery, accelerated the abolitionist movement, precipitated rebellions in neighbouring territories, and intensified both repression and anti-slavery sentiment on both sides of the Atlantic" (Kaisary 2008, 8). While there is not even a single mention of Haitian revolution in Kant's writings, lectures and notes, he most likely knew about this event, since he closely followed everything that concerned revolutionary France, and Haiti was a French colony¹⁴. Kant should also have been aware that the National Convention abolished slavery in all French colonies and granted civil and political rights to all black men living there. Kant's silence on these two events does not give us absolute certainty that they influenced his later views on race, which were much more complimentary to non-Europeans¹⁵. This may be the main reason for Kant's views changing over time, from his explicit prediction of non-white races' eventual extinction in *VA-Pillau* to his acceptance of their oppression in *Menschenkunde* and to his accusations of European nations' 'injustice' toward Native Americans and the 'Negro' race (AA VIII, 358) in *Perpetual Peace*¹⁶.

However, in the relationship between Kant's concept of race and his political philosophy, there is another visible pattern, that as Kant's interest in political issues intensifies, his interest in such a purely biological sign of dividing people into groups, gradually fades away. This thesis is confirmed primarily by a comparative analysis of the development of these two theoretical directions in Kant's lectures and published works. This analysis shows that Kant's interest in the concept of race peaked in the period from the mid-1770s to the mid-1780s, which is very clearly outlined by two of Kant's most 'racial' writings: *On the Various Races of Man*

¹³ This famous question is only found in the *Jaesche Logic* (AA IX, 25), an unreliable source of Kant's ideas. Nevertheless, its prominence among other questions in the field of philosophy (in its cosmopolitan meaning) is ultimately fully consistent with the general social, political, and anthropological orientation of Kant's interests in the latter half of his life.

¹⁴ Dilek argues that the only reason Kant remained silent about the Haitian Revolution is that it completely contradicted his theoretical positions, which held that black people were incapable of dignity, agency, or autonomy (Huseyinzadegan 2024, 9; See also Trouillot 1995). There is undoubtedly some truth to the claim that the Haitian Revolution went against Kant's thoughts about race. But Huseyinzadegan fails to see the potentially unintended consequence of this incident, which may have caused Kant to reevaluate the place of race theory in his anthropology and to reject its hierarchical character.

¹⁵ Cf. Kleingeld 2014, 64-65.

¹⁶ Cf. Zhavoronkov, Salikov 2018, 288.

(1775) and *Determination of the Concept of the Human Race* (1785). Interest in political issues in general, and cosmopolitanism in particular, also appears in Kant around the mid-1770s, but reaches its apogee and mature state in the late 1780s-1790s, when issues of race in Kant's writings take on mostly taxonomic meaning, only fixing external adaptive differences between people of different climatic zones and lose their political and social connotation. As a result, in *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view*, which was assembled using the content from his anthropology lectures and can be considered as the pinnacle of his thinking on race, Kant devotes only one short paragraph to the concept of race and does not go into great detail to explain it. Instead, he refers the reader to Christoph Girtanner's study *Concerning the Kantian Principle of Natural History* (1796 [2013]), as the only source that is required to give any kind of thorough explanation of the subject. Girtanner offers his readers a neutral account of the physical distinctions between races without delving into moral issues, so we can draw the conclusion that the late Kant gave up on his earlier anthropological attempts to draw a link between the description of each race's unique characteristics and a racial hierarchy founded on moral standards. Rather of going into great into about the nature of races, Kant focuses on the nature of the main European nations in his very brief comments. These comments provide another evidence of Kant's transition from racial to national concern (cf. Zhavoronkov, Salikov 2018, 289), from the purely biological and physical to the psychological, cultural and social. This demonstrates a move away from simplistic and straightforward biological and geographical determinism in understanding individual behavior and social organization to a more complex and comprehensive socio-political approach. The unit analysis now concerned nations, in other words, groups of people united by social and cultural affiliation into political entities – nation states.

2. Kant's concept of race in contemporary political science debates

The first systematic discussion of Kant's idea of race and his alleged racism began in philosophy in the late 1980s or at least the 1990s (since Eze 1995), although some observations and critical comments can be found in earlier studies (Moebus 1977; Sutter 1989; Neugebauer 1990). These discussions gradually involved more and more new participants and scholars from other disciplines. Moreover, since the mid-2010s, what initially began and developed as a purely academic debate has become a broad social debate that, even if it has not led to any significant conclusions, has helped to expand and accelerate academic debate. The current debate is no longer confined to the narrower confines of the history of philosophy, but extends across several social sciences, most notably political science. The present discourse is no longer confined to the more restrictive context of philosophy history, but rather encompasses several social disciplines, political science foremost among them. Thus, it is quite probable that the current philosophical controversy (see, for example, recent studies like Lu-Adler 2023) will have a lasting impact on how Kant's anthropological thinking and, in light of this, his philosophy in general, are received in political science in the future. It would be a task that has neither been formulated nor fulfilled in the previous, mainly historically oriented debate about Kant's racism, to take this reception into account from the perspective of philosophical research and, against its background, take a fresh look at the political aspects of Kant's anthropology.

In political science, the issue of Kant's theory of race and his racism is discussed primarily within the framework of international relations theory, political theory and philosophy, in the history of ideas and concepts. It features prominently in discussions of cosmopolitanism, migration and international politics (for instance, Kleingeld 2007 and 2012, Ypi 2014, Gani 2017, Valdez 2019, Yab 2021, Schmahl 2021, Acharya 2022), as well as within studies of colonialism and imperialism (for example, McCarthy 2009, Williams 2014, Kleingeld 2014, Flikschuh & Ypi 2014, Williams 2014, Valdez 2017, Eberl 2019 and 2021). The boundaries between these topics are actually quite arbitrary, since they are closely intertwined with each other, forming a kind of discourse continuum.

In international relations theory, the discussion of Kantian racism has become the basis for discussions of the deliberately non-universal, implicitly imperialist character of Kantian cosmopolitanism, including the ideas of perpetual peace and voluntary league of states (Yab 2021, pp. 189-229 – in favor of the interpretation of Tully 2008, against Kleingeld 2007 and Ypi 2014). The main question around which the debate actually takes place is whether Kant's theory of race influenced his theory of cosmopolitanism. This debate was initially initiated within the framework of philosophy (Bernasconi, 2001, 2002). However it quickly began to acquire political significance, especially under the influence of the rapid growth of political movements for the rights of national minorities in North America and Europe¹⁷, as well as the migration crisis, which has developed especially acutely in the last decade both in Europe¹⁸ and in the United States of America¹⁹. The debate about Kant's racism and the meaning of his racial prejudices is essentially a hidden attempt by some political thinkers and social activists to call on the modern political establishment in the West to revise its entire socio-political paradigm, since it retains remnants of colonialism and racial discrimination dating back to the era of the Enlightenment (cf. Bernasconi 2001, 2002). The quintessence of this paradigm, was Kant's political philosophy, his idea of a world federation, a world-civil state, equality and human rights. This does not mean that the "accusers" of Kant, and therefore of the modern liberal democratic paradigm, are against human rights or equality. Rather, they advocate a more universalist and egalitarian interpretation of this theory and corresponding socio-political practice.

¹⁷ such as, for example, 'Black Lives Matter' after 2014 in the USA.

¹⁸ for instance, the 2014-2015 crisis in the European Union.

¹⁹ for example, with public debates around the construction of a wall on the border with Mexico.

The most radical position regarding the relationship between Kant's theory of race and his cosmopolitanism is taken by James Tully in the second volume of his *Public Philosophy in a New Key* (Tully 2008). According to Tully, in his political philosophy, Kant combined two key ideas of the European Enlightenment, which, despite all their progressiveness, are a historical product of European colonial imperialism: "a social theory consisting of the stages of universal historical development of all peoples and societies, with Europeans at the highest and most developed stage; and a normative or juridical theory of the just and final ordering of all people and societies that would come about at the end of the historical development" (Tully 2008, p. 144). Tully essentially accuses Kant of Eurocentrism, European pro-colonialism and elitism. He argues that Kant's cosmopolitanism applies only to European states that are members of the peaceful league of European republics, which, by virtue of their development, are endowed with "the right to intervene militarily in any society that has not reached the state of a 'civil constitution' of European states, which is thus by definition posited as in a 'lawless state of nature', and to impose a Western-style constitutional order on it" (Tully 2008, p. 145). Ultimately, Tully suggests, Kantian cosmopolitanism justifies European colonialism and the exploitation of non-European peoples. This is because Kant believes that "the period of European colonial imperialism is an absolutely necessary stage in the development of the human species towards the end-state of a world system of European-style states bound together by global economic relations and international law and governed by a league of states exercising post-colonial informal imperial rule" (Tully 2008, p. 146-147).

Tully's position is generally shared by Jimmy Yab, another significant critic of Kant's cosmopolitanism. Supporting Tully's argument, Yab criticizes the proponents of the so-called "orthodox reading" of Kant's cosmopolitanism, among whose most prominent representatives he counts Paulina Kleingeld and Lea Ypi, accusing them in developing "their argument as if the "orthodox reading" of Kant's cosmopolitanism as expressing universalism were the only interpretative option" (Yab 2021, p. 196). In their papers, Kleingeld and Ypi argue that Kant's concept of cosmopolitanism is not related to his theory of race and his racist prejudices. They believe that Kant initially supported the idea of a hierarchy of human races and the leading role of white Europeans in establishing a progressive world order, but over time this position changed in his mature, late period, when most of his political and legal works were written and in which he precisely developed the ideas of world citizenship, world federation, equality and human rights (Kleingeld 2007, 2014, Ypi 2014).

Yab does not find the evidence for Kant's revision of his racial theory and its lack of influence on his concept of cosmopolitanism, given by Kleingeld and Ypi, to be sufficiently convincing. For him, Kant's racial theory is one of the main sources of Kant's cosmopolitanism. Yab argues that Kant's racial theory undoubtedly influenced his cosmopolitanism (Yab 2021, p. 190) and from this reason can well be considered as essentially a Eurocentric, 'white' and "a de facto exclusive (i.e. non-universal) form of right one" (Ibid). According to Yab, Kant's racial concept, although it does not justify colonialism, does justify the higher rank of the white race compared with other races, since the latter, in Kant's view, lacks certain natural predispositions to political self-organization and self-government. For Kant, Yab believes, these dispositions are fully endowed upon the white race, which for this reason has the right to legislate all non-white nations: "the rank is the result of the deficiency which is caused by natural predispositions, which in turn makes the Negroes incapable of governing themselves, and this is why the White race, because of the completeness of their natural predispositions, are entitled to legislate all non-White nations" (Yab 2021, p. 204). Also, according to Yab, the assertion of Kleingeld, Ypi and other 'orthodox readers' of Kant's cosmopolitanism, that is, in his mature period Kant abandoned his hierarchical racial theory, is extremely unconvincing. On the contrary, Yab suggests, Kant built his racial theory over decades as part of his anthropology course, which means that racial theory has a systematic and conceptual significance. This is precisely what gives Yab grounds to assert that "Kant is a fundamentally racist thinker, not because he made racist claims as many authors have asserted, but because he developed the anthropology, the philosophy and the politics of racism in a systematic way" (Yab 2021, p. 243).

It is obvious that the dispute between the party of Tully, Yab and other 'racial' accusers of Kant's cosmopolitanism and Eurocentrism, on one side, and the party of Kleingeld, Ypi and other 'anti-racial' justifiers, on the other, is far from over and, apparently, is just heating up. This is supported by the ever-increasing public outcry, which encourages more and more new participants from various fields of science, including political science, to speak out on this topic, for instance, discussions organized at the Belin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences in 2020 (see Schmahl 2021). The problem here is further complicated by the fact that so far neither party has been able to form a completely convincing picture, since the arguments of both parties, on the one hand, have a basis, but, on the other hand, ignore the arguments of the other side.

Essentially a continuation and another side of the debate about Kant's cosmopolitanism, with many of the same participants, is the debate about the relationship between Kant's theory of race and his critique of colonialism. Within the framework of these discussions, the position of Oliver Eberl seems very remarkable, which, in my opinion, largely manages to overcome the contradictions of "racist" and "anti-racist" arguments. Eberl's point of view is presented in his book, *Naturzustand und Barbarei: Begründung und Kritik staatlicher Ordnung im Zeichen des Kolonialismus* (Eberl 2021), and also related to it is the article "Kant on Race and Barbarism: Towards a More Complex View on Racism and Anti-Colonialism in Kant" (Eberl 2019). In these works, Eberl develops a rather ambitious program for the "decolonization of political theory" (Eberl 2021, pp. 58-65), in which he, among other topics, discusses Kant's theory of race in the context of the question of whether Kant's later legal theory and his theory of race are inconsistent in their understanding of colonialism (Eberl 2019). As Eberl himself notes, this question is of paramount importance for assessing the contribution of the Enlightenment to the colonial expansion of Europe and enslavement of indigenous and black peoples. In his article, Eberl discusses Kant's racial theory, drawing on the discourse of barbarism as a unique marker of racial prejudice and xenophobia in Kant's philosophy. According to Eberl, a chronological analysis of the

use of the concept of 'barbarism' in Kant's texts provides the key to understanding the evolution of Kant's views on race.

The conclusion that Eberl ultimately reaches from the chronological analysis of the use of the concept of 'barbarism' in Kant's texts is that while in the earlier period non-Europeans appeared as savages or barbarians in Kant's work, in the later period the concept of barbarism is used by Kant primarily in relation to white Europeans within the framework of his anti-colonial criticism. The very concept of race in the last phase of the philosopher's life and work is understood in a neutral, exclusively biological and taxonomic sense, simply as a kind of subspecies of a single human species. In essence, Eberl believes, Kant's racial theory and the racial hierarchy contained in it are trying not to justify, but to explain and explore the reasons for the colonial reality of the world existing in his time, created due to the superiority of the European nations of that time over non-European peoples "in state-based organization, a positive work ethic and technological advantage" (Eberl 2019, p. 408). This allows Eberl to conclude that Kant's anti-colonialism and his racial theory do not contradict each other, since Kant's racial theory does not contain real racial motives (Ibid). Kant uncritically perceives them in the early period from stories and reports of travelers, but is a naturalistic attempt to explain significant differences in the level of technological and socio-political development between white Europeans and non-white non-Europeans, existing in the 18th century.

Eberl's point of view, in my opinion, could fully satisfy both sides of the discussions about the role of racial theory in Kant's cosmopolitanism and anti-colonialism. It does not deny the presence and relative significance of hierarchical racial theory in Kant's philosophy, but emphasizes its gradual development into non-racist theory of races after 1785, consistent with Kant's late cosmopolitanism and anticolonialism (cf. Eberl 2019, 407). However, it is unlikely that Eberl's point of view, or any other interpretation of the role of Kant's views on race in his political philosophy, will become dominant in the coming years. The reason for this is that the figure of Kant has deep symbolic meaning for all participants in the discussion (cf. Mills 2005, 10). His political thought represents a kind of quintessence of the European Enlightenment and personifies a certain set of liberal ideas that form the basis of the dominant socio-political paradigm. This is precisely what Ypi and Flikschuh point out, themselves representatives of one of the main positions in this debate, according to which the target of "racist" criticism is not so much Kant, but modern cosmopolitan writings, which are considered by Kant's accusers as imperialist and Eurocentric (Flikschuh & Ypi 2014, p. 3-4). Kant, thus, "is made to stand in for the shortcomings of Enlightenment rationalism, universalism, imperialism—all frequently treated as more or less interchangeable terms of imperial discourse" (Flikschuh & Ypi 2014, p. 2). In this sense, the 'racial' criticism of Kant's cosmopolitanism carries with it a hidden criticism of Western liberal thought, and from an unexpected angle, essentially accusing one of the most egalitarian and anti-racist theoretical movements of being built on a false racist foundation. For representatives of "racist" accusations, Kant seems to be a convenient target, hitting which not only discredits the philosopher of the 18th century, but strikes a blow at all the colonial and racist remnants in modern society, which in one form or another continue to exist today. For them, Kant, apparently, represents not just the quintessence of the Enlightenment and Western liberal thought, but in general one of the main ideologists of the 'white' ruling establishment in the West. Liberal political scholars, defending Kant from racist accusations, see a completely different picture. For them, Kant symbolizes the entire complex of liberal democratic ideas of the Enlightenment with its ideals, humanism, ideas of human rights and international law, on which all that is most progressive in modern Western civilization rests.

Conclusion

Racial issues have been present in political thought for several centuries, at least since the Enlightenment, but for a long time remained marginal within the framework of political science. They were substantially ideologized or viewed as something non-political, rather related to anthropology and sociology. All this, obviously, did not contribute to the interest of political scholars in the study and discussion of racial issues until the end of the 20th century. However, in the last few decades there has been a significant surge in racial issues. It is noteworthy that this interest was initiated not from within political science itself, but from beyond. On the one hand, such a source was the growth of anti-racist socio-political movements and heated public debates in North America and Europe. On the other hand, the impulse came from borderline scientific disciplines, primarily from philosophy. There racial issues were the subject of lively discussions in the context of studies of one or another philosopher (Locke, Hume, Nietzsche, etc.). One of the most scandalous and most resonant of such debates was the discussion of the racial theory and racist statements of Immanuel Kant, which was almost immediately joined by political scholars.

The reason for this interest lies primarily in the significance of Kant's political and legal ideas both for modern political theory and for socio-political discourse. In a theoretical sense, this significance is due to its influence on contemporary liberal political theory, ranging from the concepts of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin and Robert Nozick to Hannah Arendt, Karl Popper, and Jürgen Habermas. In a symbolic sense, Kant's importance stems from his broad cultural acceptance as a symbol of the Enlightenment, its ideals and values, such as humanism and rationalism, human rights, human dignity and the equality of all, regardless of color, origin and religion. From an ideological point of view, Kant's political philosophy represents one of the cornerstones on which the modern liberal democratic paradigm rests and which largely determines the value and normative guidelines of liberal movements in the modern Western political establishment.

All this, on the one hand, makes Kant and his racial theory a convenient target for critics of liberal political theory and practice. On the other hand, these same circumstances motivate representatives of liberal

political views to 'defend' Kant. The label 'racist' would not only damage the perception of the political philosophy of Kant himself, his ideas of cosmopolitanism and world federation, but would also lead to a painful discrediting of the ideals of the Enlightenment and modern liberal values in the eyes of general public. This could open the way for truly racist, imperialist and discriminatory ideas, which, in the face of the collapse of previous ideals, could become dominant in political science and in socio-political discourse. That is why discussions about Kant's theory of race and his alleged 'racism' should be conducted with the utmost scholarly honesty, objectivity and impartiality, not trying to make him a racist bogeyman and also not justifying his racist statements, but trying to understand what role they actually played in his philosophical system.

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