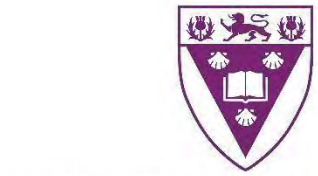

Changing lenses: The problems and potential of liberalism in South Africa

By

Chuma Songelwa

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Rhodes University

Supervisor: Prof Eduard Jordaan

Co-supervisor: Dr Thapelo Tselapedi

Department of Political and International Studies

Rhodes University

Makhanda

South Africa

February 2023

Abstract

This study seeks to understand why liberalism has limited attractiveness in democratic South Africa and to propose a form of liberalism likely to appeal to more South Africans. To lay bare the reasons for liberalism's lack of appeal, this study traces the history of liberalism in South Africa from the eighteenth century to contemporary South Africa. It argues that despite liberalism being the oldest and most enduring political ideology in South Africa and despite being the bedrock of South Africa's post-apartheid democracy, liberalism's historical complicity with racism continues to haunt it post-1994. In post-apartheid South Africa, neoliberalism has sustained the socio-economic inequalities and White supremacy of the past. Although these problems make liberalism unattractive in democratic South Africa, the ideas of Charles Mills are used to argue that liberalism has the potential to be an emancipatory ideology, including for the racial and economic victims of apartheid and its enduring legacies. The study concludes that there is potential for developing a Millsian 'Black Radical Liberalism' that can overcome the economic and racial conservatism that has saddled South African liberalism.

Declaration

I, Chuma Songelwa, hereby declare that the work outlined in this thesis was carried out at Rhodes University, Department of Political and International Studies under the supervision of Prof Eduard Jordaan and Dr Thapelo Tselapedi. This thesis has not been submitted at this university or any other university, this is my work in design and execution, and all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature: C.Songelwa **Date:** 15/02/2023

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation to the Andrew Mellon Foundation without whose scholarship this research would not have been possible. I am eternally grateful.

I would also like to thank Rhodes University for developing me as a person, a leader, and germinating scholar. Up to this point my time at Rhodes University has been replete with ups and downs but I will forever cherish this institution for the kind of possibilities is has opened for me. I can never fully express my gratitude to this institution, its staff and students who have all contributed to my development while I have been here. I owe whatever greatness that awaits me to this great institution "Where Leaders Learn".

My masters journey started with Professor Alexius Amtaika as my supervisor. Although due to his tragic passing in 2021 we could not complete this journey together, I am grateful for the fire he ignited in me and the confidence he inspired in me. I will always remember your words Prof when you said "never be a victim of intellectual docility".

I am eternally grateful also to Dr Thapelo Tselapedi who sacrificed his time and energy in supporting me though my proposal stage and in the initial stages of this thesis. Had it not been for your understanding and support in those early dark days this project would not have developed to what it has become.

I also wish to thank Dr Mandisi Majavu, who also contributed to the success of this project financially and intellectually. Again, this journey was made possible by such efforts. I thank you.

To Professor Siphokazi Magadla who was both my mentor (2022) and HOD in the Department of Political and International Studies, ndiswele imilomo elikhulu yokucacisa umbulelo wam

ngayo yonke inkxaso yakho neemfudiso. I have always appreciated your firm, measured but gentle approach with us as students in that department.

I am close to tears when I think of the unrelenting support I have received from my main supervisor Professor Eduard Jordaan. You believed in me and my intellect from my honours year. In the latter part of my Masters journey, especially in those instances when I had lost all hope, you not only took me under your intellectual wings but you almost held my hand and kept me going. I did not know how to develop my ideas into a thesis until you came along. Today I am proud to finally be at the end of that journey and you made it possible. I can never thank you enough. (Ok, I did end up teary after all – tears of gratitude).

I must also express gratitude to my parents Zolile and Bongiwe Sinxoto for raising and seeing my intellectual potential from when I was a kid. At first you prayed that I be the first one to obtain a matric but today I have gone as far as to produce and submit A Masters thesis at one of the best universities in Africa. Ndiyabulela bazali bam. I would never be here without you. But this is only the beginning of greatness to come.

I must also express gratitude to my brother Loyiso Phantshwa who inspired me to come to Rhodes University; and who played an immense role in raising me, guiding me and financially supporting me in all my years at Rhodes. I have no words to express my gratitude to you Nobetha.

Lastly, I must thank someone who has been more than my best friend, Putuma Balintulo. There isn't enough space here for me to express in detail all the ways and times when you have been my pillar of support. You stood by me even in the darkest of moments and helped to keep me going. Your constant unrelenting support made this project possible in many ways.

List of abbreviations

ANC: African National Congress

APS: Aborigines Protection Society

ARM: African Resistance Movement

BCM: Black Consciousness Movement

BSM: Black Student Movement

CRT: Critical Race Theory

DA: Democratic Alliance

EFF: Economic Freedom Fighters

FMF: Free Market Foundation

GEAR: Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme

ICU: Industrial and Commercial Workers Union

IMF: International Monetary Fund

LP: Liberal Party

MEC: Mineral Energy Complex

NP: National Party

PAC: Pan-Africanist Congress

PP: Progressive Party

RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme

SACP: South African Communist Party
SANAC: South African Native Affairs Commission

SANC: South African Native Congress

TNCs: Transnational Corporations

UCT: University of Cape Town

UP: United Party

USA (US): United States of America

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Puzzle of South African Liberalism

The post-apartheid South African constitutional framework is globally hailed as a progressive liberal one (Cardo, 2012; and Friedman, 2019). However, South African liberalism continues to be fraught with ambiguities, mostly inherited from its inconvenient past (Makola, 2014). This inconvenient past is one which is well represented by the politics of the 1950s in South Africa. As a response to the emergence of apartheid policy of the National Party (NP) at least three significant liberalisms became prominent. The first was led by the Liberal Party (LP), formed in 1953; the second by the Progressive Party (PP), formed in 1959; and the third, by the African National Congress (ANC), formed in 1912 (Maloka, 2014: 84). The LP and the PP were respectively made up of members who had broken away from the (liberal-centric) United Party (UP) that had lost the 1948 national elections to the National Party (NP) (Maloka, 2014: 84-5). While it is typically assumed that the ANC was both communist and nationalist (see Maloka, 2014: 85), the ANC mostly consisted of and represented Africans who subscribed to core liberal values but who were vehemently opposed to the racial divisions and inequalities of the South African society at the time (Freedom Charter, 1955).

It was during the 1950s that liberalism in South Africa became perceived to be more synonymous with whiteness (Maloka, 2014: 85). Liberalism in the post-1948 era was seen as an ideology designed to secure and perpetuate white privilege (Friedman, 2019). Because of this incomplete understanding of liberalism, there resulted two more misconceptions. The first is that because liberalism was associated with Whites and their politics, there is only one variant of liberalism (Friedman, 2019). Secondly, because there is only one version of liberalism and it happens to be White, racist and epistemologically ignorant, then it follows that no other version of liberalism is possible (Friedman, 2019).

These misconceptions have found their way into the democratic South Africa. This has occurred despite the fact that liberalism is the triumphant political ideology in South Africa post-1994, and indeed globally, post-1989. It is also irrespective of the fact that the ANC, whose core values have always been liberal, is both the dominant and governing political party since 1994 (Gardner, Undated: 34). Continuing to perceive liberalism as having just one variant and the ongoing association of this variant with White interests has given rise to at least four problems: The first is the belief that liberalism is for White people only, or, at best, those whose aspiration is whiteness. The second problem is an understanding that liberalism is innately racist, that is, liberalism is actually 'racial liberalism'. The third and resultant problem is that liberalism cannot be an ideology for non-Whites in South Africa (Friedman, 2019). Lastly, there remains the view that liberalism will remain conservative, that is, that it cannot be transformed or radicalized (Maloka, 2014; Friedman, 2019).

The South African past is not the only broad factor that limits our understanding of the potential of liberalism in present-day South Africa – we also need to consider global understandings of liberalism. The dominant variants of liberalism are and have arguably always been White-centric (Mills, 2017). Contemporary liberalism's neoliberal character has found a clear expression in the type of capitalism that has thrived in South Africa post-1994 (Terreblanche, 2018). This has meant that the post-apartheid state remains characterized by a rich White class and a minority of rich and politically affiliated Black elite who are surrounded by a sea of Black poverty (Terreblanche, 2018). In many ways, the structure of the South African economy has remained the same as it was during apartheid, most notable in its deep inequality and the very high levels of poverty and unemployment.

Thus, post-1994 South African liberalism finds itself in a puzzle: On the one hand, liberalism is often presented and defended as a progressive political ideology whose principles

contradicted and triumphed over apartheid and for being the bedrock of South Africa's post-1994 legal and political order (Jordan, Undated; Cardo, 2012; and Friedman, 2019). Such a view is not without merit, yet on the other hand, it struggles to understand and explain the challenges that liberalism in South Africa continues to face post-1994, most notably, the distaste with which liberalism is viewed among much of the South African population. Liberalism in South Africa has been unable to redeem itself from the challenges discussed above despite being the dominant political ideology post-1994. It will be my contention that there is room for a version of liberalism that can escape its racialism and economic conservatism to address South Africa's woes. The problem, however, is that liberalism continues to be shunned by the majority of the country's population (Friedman, 2019).

1.2. Research Question

This thesis asks the question: Why does liberalism have limited attractiveness in democratic South Africa?

1.3. Theoretical and Methodological Aspects

This study aims to do two things: firstly, to bring to the fore the racist and economically conservative elements within South African liberalism, and secondly, to suggest the possibility of a variant of liberalism that avoids the aforementioned problems. This would be a liberalism that is more progressive, able to address the economic and racial inequalities and problems that mark present-day South Africa.

This study is a philosophical reflection on the challenges confronting post-apartheid South African liberalism. It draws on some of Charles Mills' ideas to understand the puzzle discussed above and possible solutions to it. Mills was an American political philosopher whose writing on liberalism has mainly focussed on the American context. Mills' work on liberalism has not yet been explored adequately to help explain the challenges confronting liberalism in South Africa. While the relevance of Mills' ideas on liberalism will be explored in a later chapter, it is worth noting here that one of Mills' key ideas is that liberalism has many variants (Mills, 2017). Mills argues that this truth should be central in any conversation on liberalism. This has not been the case in South African political discourse where liberalism is often incorrectly perceived to be monolithic (Maloka, 2014 and Cardo, 2012).

Charles Mills' is one of the foremost critical scholars of liberalism in the world (LeSure, 2017; and Loggins, 2020). However, his work has seldom been used in South Africa to critically explain the racial character of liberalism and to also rescue liberalism from such a racial character. There are at least two main reasons for this. As alluded to above, the first is that Mills' work has been mostly concerned with exposing and challenging the racial nature of liberalism in the context of the USA. The USA, however, is a significantly different country to South Africa. For example, racially the USA is a predominantly White society, with non-Whites generally constituting the minority in the country. Moreover, the USA's White citizens constitute the cultural majority of the country. By contrast, South Africa is a predominantly Black society and has White people as the minority. Yet, due to colonisation and apartheid, post-apartheid South Africa is a society characterised by what scholar Aubrey Matshiqi argues is a phenomenon where "the numerical minority of the country is the cultural majority, while the numerical majority is the cultural minority" (News 24, 2021). It must be noted here that 'culture' is meant to represent the dominant political ideology employed in running the country and not individual native or clan cultures.

As mentioned above, the one problem has been that South Africa liberalism has mostly been understood to be a monolithic, white/racial liberalism (Egan, 2018; Friedman, 2019). In addition, South African liberalism is also read and treated as though it is unique and not comparable to other liberalisms due to the unique conditions under which it developed (Cardo, 2012; Maloka, 2014). As a result, many commentators on liberalism have mainly focused on either critiquing liberalism based on the assumption that it is monolithic and racist while others stand to defend it as a progressive ideology. Those who critique liberalism merely end at showing how ignorant and complicit liberalism has been to Black oppression and continued structural inequality post-1994. Such examples include the work of Eddy Maloka (2014), Pallo Jordan (undated works) and Nigel C. Gibson (2011). Those who defend South African liberalism spend much of their energy trying to demonstrate how enduring, progressive and triumphant liberalism has been. The South African Institute of Race Relations is one good example of the latter group (Msimang, 2022).

Consequently, little to no consideration of a clear theoretical framework has been developed in South Africa that seeks to address the challenges confronted by liberalism in theory and in practice while rescuing it from its "inconvenient past" (Maloka, 2014). In this debate, beyond acknowledging that liberalism has Western roots, very seldom has the discussion on how to deracialize liberalism drawn on thinking from outside South Africa. These two factors are important in helping us understand why Charles Mills' ideas have not been explored enough with regard to the South African situation.

However, what makes Mills' ideas worth considering is that in both the South African context and the US liberalism is the dominant political ideology (Cardo, 2012, Friedman, 2019). Further, in both contexts, liberalism is the oldest and most enduring political ideology (Cardo, 2012). Yet, again, in both contexts' liberalism has been accused of being a racial liberalism in that it has mostly worked to secure the interests of the respective White populations to the

exclusion of non-whites (Maloka, 2014; and Friedman, 2019). In the US, Mills has emerged as the foremost philosopher to theoretically make sense of such a phenomenon. He has not only exposed the racial character of liberalism in the US specifically and globally more generally, but has also been able to demonstrate the enduring usefulness of liberalism. Mills has come up with a theoretical framework that can rescue liberalism from its racist character and past. A similar task has not been undertaken in post-apartheid South Africa (LeSure, 2017). It is for this reason that Mills' ideas are worth considering for the South African context if liberalism is to continue to be the dominant political ideology post-apartheid.

There is a large body of work that Charles Mills has produced over the span of his academic career. Most of his most known work is best described as constituting Critical Race Theory (CRT) (LeSure, 2017; and Loggins, 2021). In CRT, Mills has spent most of his energy trying to expose the complicity and centrality of racism in liberalism. His well-known book from 1997, *The Racial Contract*, tried to demonstrate the centrality of race and racism in the social contract tradition. The social contract tradition is itself a strand of liberalism. *The Racial Contract* was also inspired by another critique of liberalism - Carol Pateman's 1988 book *The Sexual Contract*. Mills has written many other academic papers since but his 2017 *Black Rights-White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism* best lays out the centrality of race and racism in liberalism generally. According to Loggins (2020) *Black Rights* "joins such recent scholarship as Jennifer Pitts' *A Turn to Empire* and Duncan Bell's *Reordering the World* in showing that liberalism was far from a tradition sweeping away the darkness and irrational social hierarchies of the ancien régime." In *Black Rights*, Mills carefully lays out the argument for why liberalism both in the USA and globally has been theoretically and empirically racist. Yet he also lays out a theoretical framework by which liberalism can be rescued from its racist past thereby positioning it as a political ideology that can also work for non-white groups. It is ideas from these two central books from Mills that will be used in this study.

From the *Racial Contract*, this research will mainly draw from Mills' notion of 'epistemic ignorance' to explain the epistemic ignorance that characterises liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa. From *Black Rights*, this research draws from Mills' notion of a 'deracializing liberalism' together with how he critically exposes the centrality of racism in liberalism.

While Mills' notion of a racial contract has been widely used around the world by many scholars, his more recent *Black Rights/White Wrongs* has not yet received a similar level of attention. No works so far have tried to test the applicability of Mills' ideas on deracializing liberalism in a context other than the US. This is also partly due to the fact that *Black Rights/White Wrongs* was only published in 2017 and Mills' passing away in September 2021. It must be noted again here though, that Mills' key focus was always the US. It may not necessarily have been his goal to test the relevance or applicability of his ideas outside that context.

This thesis aims to apply some of Charles Mills' key ideas on liberalism to the post-apartheid South African context. First, Mills argues that liberalism is globally triumphant. Secondly, he argues that liberalism is not monolithic but is an umbrella term containing various strands bound together by a set of core values. These values are: individualism, freedom, egalitarianism, universalism, and the reformability of institutions of governance (Mills, 2017: 13). Thirdly, Mills argues that the version(s) of liberalism that have historically been and remain dominant globally are White and racist. In the fourth instance, Mills argues that liberalism must be deracialized if it is to be retrieved from mainstream White liberalism(s). To deracialize liberalism would be to develop or adopt a variant of liberalism that both unmasks the limitations of mainstream white liberalism and simultaneously advances the interests of those who have been marginalized. Lastly, Mills' notion of an 'epistemological contract' is used to demonstrate how post-1994 mainstream liberalism continues to uphold White supremacy by deliberately not recognizing its complicity to South Africa's enduring inequality.

This investigation takes the form of a desktop study that uses textual analysis of the literature on liberalism and on South African liberalism in particular. It will use key and relevant books, newspaper articles and speeches in order to investigate the main question of "Why does liberalism have limited attractiveness in (liberal) democratic a South Africa?"

1.4. Overview

Liberalism in South Africa is predominantly perceived to be White, racist and anti-Black (Maloka, 2014, Friedman, 2019). It follows that this variant of liberalism is considered to be the only one that exists and that none other can exist in its stead. As a result of this, liberalism is shunned upon by South Africa's majority of the population. At the same time, post-apartheid South Africa has employed a largely (neo)liberal framework (albeit with socialist elements) as both an antithesis of its past and the bedrock of its democratic polity. This research paper uses some of Charles Mills' ideas to try and understand why this puzzle exists and possible ways out of it. It seeks to understand the nature of the paradox that exists where on the one hand liberalism in South Africa remains the best preferred alternative to apartheid and the juridical premise of the post-apartheid polity. On the other hand, liberalism remains significantly unappealing to most South Africans.

CHAPTER 2 – LIBERALISMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reflects on the history of liberalism in South Africa. The chapter provides a rough chronological reflection on some key moments and prominent figures in South African liberalism to demonstrate that liberalism in South Africa has never meant the same thing to everyone. Two variants of 'Cape liberalism', as it is called in mainstream literature on South African liberalism, receive attention. One variant advocated for British imperialism through capitalism and racial segregation, while the other advocated for humanitarian approaches to British imperialism. The extent to which both doctrines of liberalism influenced the development of the South African state is discussed with some detail. Both of these liberal variants are understood as grounded in 'imperial liberalism' that conceived of racial difference between Europeans and non-Europeans as European or White superiority. This chapter further discusses the development and evolution of the ANC's African-centred non-racial version of liberalism. This chapter uses speeches and quotations from books and other documents in order to allow the various authors and historical figures to speak for themselves. As Nyoka, explains, the famous South African Anthropology professor Bernard Magubane also used this strategy in his writing in order to "enable the reader to savour the mood of times and thought processes of those who created what was tantamount to a slave-state in the first decade of the twentieth century" (2016: 907). This chapter, therefore contributes to this overall study by demonstrating the historical evolution of liberalism(s) in South Africa in relation to how the country itself developed. Essentially, it helps in showing how liberalism became embedded with racism in South Africa.

2.2. The emergence of an imperial liberalism in the 18th and 19th centuries

Emerging in the 19th century in what was then the British Cape Colony, which would later form part of the Union of South Africa, liberalism has been deemed the oldest and most enduring political tradition in South Africa (Cardo, 2012: 16). However, like all political ideologies, liberalism is also a product of a particular political context. Liberalism emerged in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries during and after the fall of feudalism (Jordan, undated: 28). Feudalism was a system that placed severe constraints on the individual (Jordan, undated: 28). Liberalism emerged as an ideology that sought to liberate the individual from secular and clerical authorities who imposed laws, customs and traditions that severely restricted the freedom of the individual. Consequently, in its land of birth, liberalism was primarily concerned with treating the individual as the ultimate political and social agent who would be afforded a number of fundamental rights.

In Southern Africa, however, the advent of liberalism is often linked to British imperialism (Vigne, 1997; Van Staden, 2019; Cardo, 2012). Nosipho Majeke's (the pen name of Dora Taylor) *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* (1986), points to the missionaries of the London Missionary Society as the bringers and forerunners of the liberal way of life to Southern Africa. As she puts it, "the coming of the missionaries to Southern Africa at the end of the 18th century coincided with the first occupation of the Cape by the British. The missionaries were a product and this was not accidental" (Majeke, 1986). Majeke's (1986) overall thesis is that these first missionaries, whose leadership was mainly made up of (liberal) members of the British Parliament, were central to the colonial subjugation and conquest of the indigenous people of Southern Africa. In this way, Majeke (1986) charges the liberal tradition of having been central to the colonisation of Southern African people, while at home it purported to protect the political freedom of the individual. Similarly, in his 1999

Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought, Uday Singh Mehta tried to understand how liberal thinkers could embrace the imperial conquest and domination of other peoples of the world while simultaneously embracing liberal enlightenment values of egalitarianism, universalism, and individual freedom, among others, in 18th and 19th century Europe.

Yet, unlike Majeke (1986) who does not go beyond describing the existence of this seemingly paradoxical relationship between liberalism and imperialism in the 18th and 19th centuries, Mehta (1999) provides a plausible explanation. According to Mehta, liberalism, although broadly referring to the same set of values, had two broad traditions in those days. The first tradition was almost solely led by Edmund Burke, and embraced 'difference' and values such as humility and pluralism (Mehta, 1999; also see Bentley, 2001). The second tradition, which was also the dominant tradition, according to Mehta, was unwilling and unable to recognize differences between cultures and simply reduced non-European cultures and races to 'backward', 'uncivilised' or even 'primitive' peoples (2001). This latter tradition consisted of respected thinkers such as John Stuart Mill, John Robert Seeley and John Locke (Mehta, 1999; also see Bentley, 2001 and Van der Pijl, 2014).

Thus, it was not that all liberals had become imperial by the 19th century, most liberals became imperial because, as Mehta puts it, "the urge is internal" in their very ideological position (1999: 20). Essentially, Mehta's argument is that, seen from the latter perspective, there is no actual paradox in the relationship between (dominant) 18th and 19th century liberalism and imperialism (1999). For Mehta, because this dominant liberal position could not appreciate difference, "liberals were unable to recognize and appreciate the political integrity of various non-consensual societies" (1999: 121). Thus, these liberal intellectuals saw no harm in and actually influenced imperial conquest (Mehta, 1999).

In light of Mehta's argument, we can already note that liberalism was not monolithic in 18th and 19th century Europe. In his 2021 book, *The Liberalism of Care: Community, Philosophy and Ethics*, Shawn C. Fraistat concurs that even in Europe, liberalism was context-specific. For Fraistat (2021) the liberalism that became dominant around the 19th century is different to that prior to it. Fraistat argues that the liberalism that prevailed in pre-19th century Europe was a variant that emphasised *care* and the general well-being of citizens including the most vulnerable members of a society (2021). In contrast to the one that preceded it, according to Fraistat, the liberalism that prevailed from the 19th century onwards is one that "suffers from a crisis of care" (2021). It is, therefore, this dominant, care-less and imperialistic version of liberalism that came to Southern Africa in the 19th century. As Nyoka notes, "in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery, imperialism became the most important political question in England of the 19th century" (2016: 911, also see Magubane, 1979 and 1996).

The dominant version of liberalism just described whose seeds were transplanted to Southern Africa in the latter part of the 19th century is referred to as "imperial liberalism" in this study. This is to distinguish it from the liberalisms that developed afterwards and whose variants were less grounded in imperialist ideas and ambitions. Imperial liberalism, grounded in Lockean private property values and liberal internationalism facilitated the domination of peoples of the non-European lands (Mehta, 1999 and Van der Pijl, 2014). As Cuthbertson points out, "Britain was at the heart of the tremendous movement of people, ideas and capital from Europe to the non-European world, which led to the domination of the lives of the people whose land was invaded" (1989: 81). In his 2014 *The Discipline of Western Supremacy. Modes of Foreign Relations and Political Economy*, Kees van der Pijl points out that British expansion was sold by the Lockean ideologues as 'humanitarian assistance' although in reality it was designed to secure British commercial interests.

By first constructing and presenting peoples of non-European lands as 'backward', 'barbaric and 'primitive', these liberal thinkers could justify British expansion and settlement as 'humanitarian assistance' or as the 'civilization mission' for non-European races to bring them up to Christ and Locke (Mehta, 1999 and Van der Pijl, 2014). Van der Pijl adds that from this ideological position, 'equality', as one of the central tenets of liberal thought, was reduced to mere 'formal equivalence' (2014: 5). Consequently, the imperial liberalism spread throughout the world by British imperialism could excuse its unequal treatment and domination of non-Europeans. If at a domestic (British/European) level 'formal equivalence' followed class lines, outside Europe it followed racial lines.

According to Jordan (undated: 18) in 18th century Europe, liberalism inevitably proved most attractive to the propertied classes of the emergent cities and the gentlemen farmers of the countryside. These groups had embraced liberalism because of its anti-feudal ethos which advocated against the achievement of high social status through birth rather than through merit or individual achievement (Jordan, undated, 28). However, at the same time, early liberals in Europe were known to be wary of those who did not own property (Jordan, undated, 28). This was because the unpropertied classes formed part of the poor and working class(es) and early liberals perceived them to be easily corruptible degenerates (Jordan, undated: 28). Unsurprisingly, the political rights and franchise espoused by this political ideology were to be primarily enjoyed by the propertied class and would only be extended to other classes based on merit and a perceived degree of civilization (Jordan, undated: 28). In other words, from this perspective, liberal equality was only 'formal'. Van der Pijl goes on to remark that "all equivalences (market exchange, the social contract, and the sovereign equality) are a matter of principle; the preoccupation with form has been a tell-tale sign of the bourgeoisie ever since" (2014: 5).

Consequently, when imperial liberalism was transplanted to the Cape Colony in the 19th century during British expansionism, it brought with it some of the attitudes embraced by the European propertied classes (Majeke, 1986; Cardo, 2012; van Staden, 2019). Yet, in addition to class stratification, imperial liberalism in the 19th century added the element of racism in the colonised world (Mehta, 1999). As Mehta's study in *Liberalism and Empire* has demonstrated, in the Indian context, imperial liberalism facilitated and justified the domination of Indian people by the British (1999). In the South African context, Emil Solomon Sachs, in his 1965 *The Anatomy of Apartheid* commented that even before apartheid White domination over Africans was primarily due to British imperial interests (1965: 11, also see Cuthbertson, 1989). Imperial liberalism was able to facilitate such domination because, true to its inability to recognize 'difference' and cultural pluralism, as argued by Mehta (1999), 'White-ness' became a source of personhood and therefore equality.

From this Lockean perspective, not possessing Whiteness, private property, not living under a government and therefore lacking rationality meant that one was uncivilised, backward and therefore, could not at that stage be afforded the same status as European property owners (Mehta, 1999). In this way, according to the imperial liberal doctrine, more than class, racial difference determined the superior position of Whites in British colonies (Magubane, 1996 and Nyoka, 2016). The argument being advanced here is not that imperial liberalism substituted classism for racism when it landed in Southern Africa. Rather, it is that in 18th and 19th century Southern Africa, race and not class, primarily determined positions of domination and subordination in European and African relations (Magubane, 1979; Ashforth, 1997; Cuthbertson, 2001; Gordon, 2001). In these relations, White or European meant superiority, while Africanness or Blackness meant inferiority (Magubane, 1996, Nyoka, 2016). As Nyoka puts it "White was synonymous with being civilized, so the so-called "Negro Problem" in the United States and the "Native Problem" in South Africa were local variants of world problems

brought to the colonies by European imperialists" (2016: 910). Therefore, the dominant liberal doctrine that came to Southern Africa in the 18th and 19th century was an imperial liberalism and a 'racial liberalism' (Ashforth, 1997).

According to Ashforth, "in relation to the domination of Africans by people of European descent, the imperial system should be seen as having both historical and analytical priority in relation to explaining other features of domination" (1997: 103). By the 1820s imperial or racial liberalism was being advanced in the Cape Colony by missionaries, mainly from the London Missionary Society (Majeke, 1986 and Cuthbertson, 1989). Due to this imperial/racial character, some of the earliest and well-meaning evangelists of (imperial) liberalism could advocate for African interests with British officials while also still holding onto the idea that Africans are backward, primitive and uncivilised (Majeke, 1986 and Cuthbertson, 1989). From this perspective, many early liberals in 19th century Southern Africa saw themselves as endowed with the responsibility to 'civilise' these non-European peoples (Cuthbertson,1989). During this process, more than just merely spreading the gospel, it was western, imperial and White domination that these missionaries were facilitating (Majeke, 1986 and Cuthbertson, 1989). Cuthbertson puts it more succinctly when pointing out that:

> *Protestant missionaries were in the forefront of those who transported western "ideas" to the colonial world. Increasingly, they became an integral part of the mechanism of imperialism, through the spread of the gospel and the promotion of trade. In the process, they assumed the superiority of their religion, their culture and the economic and political systems which had produced them. Missionaries and their agencies were therefore prime movers in the subordination of the lives of indigenes to the demands made by Western perceptions of the world* (1989: 81).

Liberal historian W.M Macmillan in his 1963 *Bantu, Boer and Briton: The Making of the South African native problem* saw missionaries of the 19th century Cape Colony as guardians of Coloured interests against exploitative White colonists. Similarly, Cardo hails Dr John Philip as an advocate of racial equality in the 1820s (2012: 16). Yet missionaries themselves subscribed to imperial liberalism while purporting to be advocating for racial equality (Cuthbertson, 1989). According to Cuthbertson (1989) these missionaries saw no contradiction between their imperial ambitions and their calls for liberal justice for the natives. In their doctrine of liberalism, equality was only formal and part of bringing non-Europeans up to 'equality' was through the 'civilising mission' (Majeke, 1986 and Cuthbertson, 1989).

In this way, the initial assumption is that the natives are not equal and thus imperial domination is integral to the process of bringing them out of darkness into civilization (Cuthbertson, 1989). Only once the natives are deemed to be civilised would they have actual 'equality'. Indeed, for imperial liberals, the civilising mission was targeted to those who were non-European and therefore, 'primitive' and 'barbaric' (Mehta, 1999; also see Nyoka, 2016). As Nyoka points out "even the seemingly unimportant notion of civilization is a politically and ideologically laden concept that is exclusivist and exclusionary insofar as it excluded those who were considered non-White" (2016: 911).

Consequently, when missionaries advocated for the rights of the natives against their fellow European governors in the Cape, it was not because they disagreed with the racist imperial project in general, it was the means by which the politicians sought to advance imperial domination that missionaries differed with (Majeke, 1986; Cuthbertson, 1989). As Cuthbertson puts it, "the expansiveness of Enlightenment ideas planted the early seeds of missionary imperialism" (1989: 81). Where Majeke (1986) attacks and rejects liberal missionary humanitarianism as a 'false humanitarianism', Cuthbertson (1989) shows that the driving ideology and role of the missionaries was not incongruent to that of the bigger imperial

project. As he puts it, "not only was evangelicalism inextricably tied to capitalist expansionism, but its militant proselytisation found a convenient ally in military conquest" (1989: 82).
Yet, because the missionaries were only but a group of many other adherents and evangelists of the racist doctrine of imperial liberalism, such racism underpinned all key policies and actions of imperialists. As Nyoka, drawing from Magubane (1996) points out, "racism was not only the responsibility of the settlers but it was also the responsibility of the British Empire, which owned the mines and was a direct beneficiary of cheap Black labour" (2016: 912).

Evidence of the racism integral in imperial policy outside the battlefield in the Cape Colony can be traced to the 1850s, under the governorship of Sir George Grey from 1854 to 1861 (Taylor, 1971; Gordon, 2001; Ngcukaitobi, 2018). Under Grey, imperial liberal views of African primitivity prevailed to the extent of grounding the Governor's health policy for the Africans in the Cape (Gordan, 2001). Thus, Western medicine itself became an integral part of the imperial project grounded in African primitivity (Gordon, 2001: 166). As Gordon observes, in the mid to late 19th century Cape Colony, "colonial medicine became embroiled in a new "modernising" project that constructed African medicine as its 'primitive' Other" (2001: 166).

According to Gordon, when Sir George Grey established the King Williams Town Hospital, his hope and intention was to transfer the responsibility for healing from Africans to "a corps of European or European-trained doctors loyal to imperial authority" (2001: 165). When Grey came to the Cape Colony in 1854 to be its governor, he brought with him Dr John Patrick Fitzgerald, a medical doctor who would be Grey's newly-appointed head of the Medical Department of British Kaffraria and Superintendent of Native Hospitals (Gordon, 2001: 165). Although Fitzgerald seemed more benign in his intentions and relations with Africans, he shared the dominant and racist view of the 'civilising mission' that Grey and mainstream

liberals of the time shared (Gordon, 2001). According to Gordon, although there is evidence to suggest that Fitzgerald had sincere and benign ambitions of providing medical services to sick Africans, his work was, in part, that of perpetuating British imperial dominance over amaXhosa (2001: 169). As Gordon puts it, "for Grey, (under Fitzgerald) the hospital was one in an array of colonial institutions which would demonstrate the benefits of European rule to the Xhosa. More precisely, he hoped it would weaken the resistance of the Xhosa to colonial rule" (2001: 169).

As such, by the 1850s the dominance of the racist and imperial variant of liberalism in the Cape Colony was secured. Unlike prior to Grey's governorship of the Cape Colony, during and after his leadership, imperial domination over amaXhosa was being achieved less through military conquest and the gospel but mostly through other more creative methods in the colonial arsenal (Gordon, 2001: 169-70; also see Ngcukaitobi, 2018). Western Medicine under Grey and Fitzgerald in the 1850s Cape Colony became one such method in pursuit of the 'civilising mission'.

In his 2018 *The Land is Ours: South Africa's First Black Lawyers and the Birth of Constitutionalism*, Tembeka Ngcukaitobi describes Sir George Grey as "the single most important agent of British imperialism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Africa (besides Cecil John Rhodes)" (2018: 18). Ngcukaitobi's work further demonstrates the way by which liberal imperialists such as Grey could on the one hand be seen to be advancing the interests of amaXhosa through Western medicine, education and commerce, while on the other being driven by racist and imperial ideas. According to Ngcukaitobi, Grey was sent to the Cape Colony to establish a government in order to accomplish the "civilising mission" (2018: 17). As the example of Grey demonstrates, the dominant liberalism in the Cape by the 1850s saw the supremacy of Europeans over Africans as a divine calling and not a contradiction. Addressing the Cape Parliament March 1855 Grey is recorded to have said:

> *we should feel that if we leave the natives ... shut out from our community of interest with ourselves, they must always remain a race of troublesome marauders, and that, feeling this, we should try to make them a part of ourselves, with a common faith and common interest ... a source of strength and wealth for this colony, as providence designed them to be* (Cited in Ngcukaitobi, 2018: 18).

That Grey's liberalism and policies encouraged cooperation between Europeans and Africans did not mean that this liberalism was not racist or imperial. Indeed, from Grey's liberal standpoint, cooperation between Europeans and Africans could be achieved if the primary assumption is the superiority of Europeans over Africans. As Ngcukaitobi puts it, "for Grey, coexistence between the races meant White supremacy, with Africans occupying a servile, inferior position" (2018: 18). True to its liberal roots in 19th century Europe, the Cape's liberal tradition in Grey's time, interpreted non-Europeanness to suggest inferiority (Mehta, 1989; Cuthbertson, 2001; and Ngcukaitobi, 2018). Yet, under Grey, instead of treating this (racial) difference and therefore inferiority as reason for apartness between Europeans and Africans, racial difference was treated as the justification for imperial conquest. As such, imperial conquest for Grey did not have to be achieved through the barrel of the gun in a battlefield (Tyler, 1971). Imperial conquest could be achieved by cooperating with and assisting Africans, albeit from a supremacist position (Ngcukaitobi, 2018).

For Ngcukaitobi, it was also under Grey that the foundations of the South African economic system were first laid (2018). According to Tyler, the most important consideration for British imperial leaders in the 1850s was the 'economy' (1971: 581). In British colonies, imperialism was less concerned with military conquest and more with the Empire's economic interests (Tyler, 1971). For Tyler, it was, in part, the British government's reluctance to spend more money on military activities from the early to mid-1850s that compelled Grey to invest more

in non-military methods of imperial conquest (1971: 581-2). Thus, the economic foundations laid by Grey in the Cape were also racial. His economic vision for the Cape involved using Africans as sources of labour, but Africans were not allowed to participate as equal competitors in the economy (Ngcukaitobi, 2018: 18-9).

According to Ngcukaitobi, towards this end, Grey initiated a mass industrial programme in the Cape which included the construction of roads, agriculture, the establishment of training centres and native hospitals and schools (2018: 18). In this plan, education and training was to be under the control and supervision of the missionaries (Ngcukaitobi, 2018: 18). The workers providing physical and cheap labour would be the indigenous African population (Ngcukaitobi, 2018: 18-9). In Ngcukaitobi's view the Cape Colony, he (Grey) believed, would be turned into a limitless reservoir of labour. The plan was that the Xhosa man "will be marched into the colony under their European superintendents, unarmed and provided only with implements of labour and will be marched out of the colony in the same manner when employment ceases" (2018:18).

2.3. Racial Liberalisms in South Africa's State-formation

If Grey laid the foundations of imperial, racial governance and economic relations in the Cape, Cecil John Rhodes perfected these (Sachs, 1965; Magubane, 1979 and 1996; Ngukaitobi, 2018). For Magubane, Rhodes was so intricately linked to British imperialism between 1870 and 1910 that through his political and economic activities in the Cape, by the turn of the 19th century "Rhodes was seen as South Africa itself or at least, a large part of it" (Magubane, 1996; also see Nyoka, 2016). Sachs, in his 1965 *The Anatomy of Apartheid,* in describing Rhodes' imperial role in South Africa, goes as far as to argue that "without a Cecil Rhodes and General Smuts, there would never have been a Verwoerd" (1965: 11). Thus, for Sachs,

even apartheid would not have been possible had it not been for the integral role that Rhodes played in advancing imperial and White domination in South Africa (1965).

As an arch imperialist, Rhodes' liberalism was an imperial liberalism, and therefore, racist (Sachs, 1965, Magubane, 1996, Cuthbertson, 2001, Nyoka, 2016). In 1877 Rhodes, together with other like-minded imperialists, formed a group called the secret society whose members became influential businessmen and politicians (Nyoka, 2016: 917). This group of men had adopted the imperial liberal doctrine that was prevalent amongst the property-owning class in 19th century Britain (Magubane, 1996; Nyoka, 2016). As Magubane points out, although sounding rather contradictory, "by the 1890s, being called a 'Liberal Imperialist' was a perfectly respectable compliment that denoted a respected school of thought" (Magubane, 1996; also see Nyoka, 2016: 917). Thus, true to the attitudes of liberals at the time in Britain and in the Cape, Rhodes was at times able to play the role of a sympathetic and progressive White man while at times he would be more overt in his racism towards Africans (Terreblanche, 2012).

Yet, for Magubane, although Rhodes was mistakenly seen as a non-racialist because he purported to be 'colour-blind', his 'colour-blindness' only applied in relations "between the British and the American Republic" (1996; also see Nyoka, 2016: 917). Rhodes' long-term international vision was of a world dominated by the British Empire, where all those of non-European descent would be subjects of the Empire through conquest (Magubane, 1996; Brown, 2015). It was a racist form of ideology in which Rhodes's vision was grounded and thus his 'colour-blindness' could only have been in reference to other fellow Whites (Magubane, 1996; Nyoka, 2016). Indeed, according to Robin Brown's 2015 *The Secret Society: Cecil John Rhodes's Plan for a New World Order*, Rhodes and his group of imperialists imagined and worked towards the total imperial domination of the world and the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire" (2015: 42).

For Hobson, this group of capitalist and imperial leaders which consisted of the likes Barnato, Rothschild, Rhodes and others; joined by a small group of American Jews, "represented the most highly organised form of international finance yet attained" by 1900 (1900: 6-7). As the economic and political controllers of South Africa, primarily through the control of the diamond and gold mining industries, the vision of this society, according to Brown, was the creation of "a new World Order" whose leader would be the British Empire through colonisation of non-White races (Hobson, 1900; Brown, 2015; Nyoka, 2016).

To this end, Brown cites Rhodes as writing that the *Secret Society*'s

> *true aim and object thereof shall be the extension of British rule through the world, the perfecting of a system of immigration from the United Kingdom, and of colonisation by British subjects of all lands where the means of livelihood are attainable by energy, labour and enterprise, and especially the occupation by British settlers of the entire Continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the Valley of the Euphrates, the islands of Cyprus and Canadia, the whole of South America, the Islands of the Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan* (2015: 42: also see Edwards, 2016).

Further, Rhodes' domestic vision for South Africa was that of a society characterised by unity between the English Whites and the Afrikaner Whites, with both groups reigning supreme over the non-White natives (Verschoyle, 1900; Magubane, 1996). This White supremacist polity in Rhodes's vision was to remain tied to and a part of the British Empire (Verschoyle, 1900; Magubane, 1996; Cuthbertson, 2001; Nyoka, 2016, Ngcukaitobi, 2018). According to Verschoyle, in an 1883 Cape House speech, Rhodes stated that "I have my own view as to the future of South Africa and I believe in a United States of South Africa, but as a portion of the

British Empire" (1900: xiv). The 'states' that Rhodes hoped and believed would constitute a 'united' South Africa would not include those of non-white races (Magubane, 1996; Cuthbertson, 2001; Nyoka, 2016: Ngcukaitobi, 2018).

Accordingly, where Rhodes and his fellow liberals referred to 'colour-blindness' or 'racial unity' in the South African context, this exclusively referred to the English and the Dutch (Verschoyle, 1900; Magubane, 1996). As evidenced in one of his 1888 speeches, Rhodes stated that "*we must endeavour to make those who live with us feel that there is no race difference distinction between us; weather Dutch or English, we are combined in one object, and that is the union of the States of South Africa, without abandoning the Imperial tie*" (cited in Verschoyle, 1900: xxvi). Therefore, seen through Rhodes and his contemporary liberals, two conclusions can be made about the dominant doctrine of liberalism at the turn of the 19th century. The first is that the dominant doctrine of liberalism in Britain and in the Cape Colony was an imperial liberalism and therefore, a racial liberalism. The second is that adherents of this doctrine envisioned the imperial dominance of non-European races by Britain at a global level and the domination of Africans by European English and Dutch settlers in South Africa.

It is against the latter background that towards the tail-end of the nineteenth century, after gold and diamonds had been discovered in the Transvaal and Kimberly respectively, liberals in South Africa became even more vicious towards Africans (Hobson, 1900; Magubane, 1979; also see Nyoka, 2016: 906). If initially the obsession of liberals was the military conquest and 'civilization' of Africans, by the second half of the nineteenth century, liberals both in Britain and in the Cape Colony became concerned with how they would force more Africans to provide them with cheap labour in the newly discovered minerals (Magubane, 1979, also see Nyoka, 2016). In his 1996 *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa, 1875-1910*, Magubane describes the period between the discovery of diamonds in

Kimberly in 1868 and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 as a phase of imperial advance in South Africa not equal to any other in the world" (also see Nyoka, 2016: 906). The discovery of mines and the profit that would be accumulated from these was of paramount importance to the British Empire which from 1880 was beginning to receive serious competition and contestation from other countries such as Germany, France and Italy for its imperial monopoly (Tyler, 1971; Magubane, 1996, Terreblanche, 2010; also see Nyoka, 2016: 905).

However, Africans, particularly amaXhosa, in the Cape were unwilling to work in the mines and also deemed this as against their culture(s) and their indigenous way of life. As Grey in the mid-1850s had envisioned, Rhodes would see to the turning of the African peoples into providers of cheap labour for the Europeans in the Cape and for the Empire (Ngcukaitobi, 2018: 18). Led by Rhodes, liberals in the Cape would pass the Glen Grey Act that sought to force Africans to work in the mines (Thompson, 1991; Thomson and Nicolls, 1993). According to Terreblanche, through the Glen Grey Act of 1894, Rhodes, the then Prime Minister of the Cape Colony "would force the Xhosas to the mines with a system of taxation" (2010). For Thompson and Nicholls, "the Act was intended to eliminate the communal tenure of land characteristic of Black Societies in southern Africa and replace it with individual tenure" (1993: 58).

The Act would also deny access to the people within its jurisdiction from accessing the common roll of electors for the Cape Parliament and instead be subject to a form of pseudo-representation through local councils (Thompson and Nicholls, 1993: 58-9). However, concerning the latter, it should be noted that the Cape Parliament was used to reducing the proportion of African voters in the late 19th century even before the coming into effect of the Glen Grey Act (Sisulu, 2002: 31). As Sisulu points out "each time African voting strength increased, the franchise qualifications were raised" (Sisulu, 2002: 31).

Having observed the Act's success, in one instance, commenting on the labour challenges experienced by Europe and the USA in the 1890s, Rhodes is recorded as saying: "if the Whites in South Africa maintain their position as the supreme race in Africa, the day will come when we shall all be thankful that we have the natives with us in their proper place" (Cited in Terreblanche, 2010). In his parliamentary speeches Rhodes envisioned that the Glen Grey Act would be the "bill for Africa" (Thompson and Nicholls, 2011: 58). This was reflective not only of Rhodes' own personal views on the relationship between Africans and Whites in the Cape but also those liberals who entrusted him and his fellow capitalists to lead the Colony (Hobson, 1900; Brown, 2015; Nyoka, 2016). Thus, by Rhodes' era, true to its roots, the dominant and governing liberalism in the Cape was one which saw 'Whites' as a superior race (to Africans) and Africans as a source of cheap labour for capitalist and imperialist purposes (Terreblanche, 2010; Ngcukaitobi, 2018).

Granted that imperial liberalism conceived of Afrikaners as fellow Whites, Afrikaners could also be beneficiaries of a liberal imperial economy on the basis of race (see Magubane, 1996; Ashforth, 1997; Cuthbertson, 2001; and Nyoka, 2016). Thompson (1991) shows how it was not merely the discovery of minerals that motivated the forcing of Africans into providing cheap labour (also see Thompson and Nicholls, 1993). According to Thomson, more than Rhodes' mining interests, it was mostly due to the need and demand for cheap African labour by Cape farmers that the Glen Grey Act became law (1991: viii). As Thopmson puts it: "the Glen Grey Act was a measure of the Cape Parliament, enacted at a time when the main economic interest represented there was the agricultural interest, particularly that of the Western Province farmers, through the Afrikaner Bond" (1991: viii). Terreblanche has referred to this moment as the period of the "alliance between Gold and Maize" (2002: 241).

In Thompson and Nicholls' view, concern about the demand for labour in the Cape had long been an issue but the Glen Grey measure was primarily to secure the agricultural interests of the Afrikaners in the Cape Parliament (1993: 61-2). In this way, imperial liberalism confirmed its position as the guarantor of White interests, regardless of nationality to the exclusion of Africans. As was with earlier liberals such as the missionary Dr Philip, for Cape liberals of Rhodes' epoch, it was race and not class or nationality that determined one's position in the socio-economic strata of the Cape in relations with Africans (Thompson, 1991; Magubane, 1996; Ngcukaitobi, 2018).

In his 1979 *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa*, Magubane writes that in the latter quarter of the 19th century "almost without exception, the gross inequalities in white settler societies came to be explained by the assertion that the colonised are biologically and culturally inferior" (1979: 4). Drawing from Magubane (1996), Nyoka points out that "the exploitation and oppression of Black people meant that they were not simply constituted "as the *Other* but as a species of *animal*" (Magubane, 1996: 4, Nyoka, 2016: 910), Therefore, more than class and nationality, racism was a central component of the dominant liberalism in the latter part of the 19th century Cape Colony.

Although other liberal critics of the capitalist and mining industry-controlling group were vocal against the wrongs of capitalists like Rhodes against both Whites and Blacks at the turn of the century, they also shared the racist imperial view that Africans were racially inferior to European Whites (Hobson, 1900). In his 1900 article *Capitalism and Imperialism in South Africa*, for example, respected liberal and critic of the capitalist group of Rhodes and others, J.A. Hobson denounced the manner in which Rhodes and other mining bosses and politicians were treating Africans in the mines (1900: 12). For Hobson, the 'compound' system used in Kimberly and other De Beers mines, "according to which a so-called voluntary contract is converted into a term of rigorous imprisonment with hard labour", was tantamount to "a gross

violation of personal freedom and liberty" (1900: 12). In the same article, Hobson denounced the mass employment of convict labour in the diamond mines because this relied on the mass imprisonment of non-Whites (1900: 12-3).

Yet, later in the same article, Hobson, like most prominent liberals of the time, reiterated his belief in British imperialism (1900: 27). Like the earlier missionaries of the early 19th century, the non-capitalist liberals in the Cape Colony shared the end of British imperialism in Southern Africa but disagreed with the means by which the government and economic elite sought to achieve this (Majeke, 1986, Ngcukaitobi, 2018). In his article, Hobson wrote that British imperialism in South Africa should reflect the "the desire to promote the causes of civilization and Christianity, to improve the economic and spiritual condition of lower races, to crush slavery, and to bring all parts of the habitable world into closer material and moral union" (1900: 27). This view of imperialism for Hobson, was the best alternative to the cruel capitalist "profit-seeking" kind of imperialism (1900: 27). As such, in his view, a humanitarian approach to imperialism better represented core liberal values such as 'personal liberty' and 'freedom' (Hobson, 1900). However, upon closer inspection, although different in approach, Hobson's imperial view was predicated upon the same notion of Africans being members of "lower races" (Hobson, 1900: 27). Although, like missionaries, he subscribed to the view that imperialism could be achieved through the Christianity and humanitarianism, it was still a racist imperial liberalism.

Similarly, it is important to note that although the Glen Grey Act became law of Parliament with the support of some of the liberals and Afrikaners, most of the critical voices that opposed the Act as racist and indeed disempowering to the natives, were liberal themselves (Thompson, 1991: viii; also see Thompson and Nicholls, 1993). One of Thompson and Nicholls' main theses is that anti-capitalist "Cape liberals" actually opposed and denounced the Glen Grey Act (Thompson and Nichols, 1993: 70). Therefore, they argue, although the Cape Parliament

passed the Act, "to see the Act as a measure approved by Cape 'liberals' is unfair" (Thompson and Nicholls, 1993: 70). For Thompson and Nicholls, if the capitalist group and the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape Parliament supported the Act, actual 'Cape liberals' identified as "friends of the natives" at best and "negrophilists" at worst, are those who denounced it (1993: 65). These 'real' Cape liberal parliamentarians, for Thomspon and Nicholls, included John X. Merriman, James Rose-Innes, J.W. Sauer, Herbert Travers Tamplin, William Hay, and John Charles Molteno (1993: 65-6).

While Thompson and Nicholls (1993: 65) argue that "the Cape 'liberal' attitude at the time was best represented not in the provisions of the Act but in the vigorous criticism to which it was subjected", this did not suggest that the capitalists were less liberal nor did it suggest that the critics of the Act did not agree with the broader racist British imperial programme in Southern Africa. At best, the difference in opinion on the Act between pro-capitalist liberals and the anti-capitalist group of liberals described by Thomson and Nicholls suggests at least two things. The first is that (Cape) liberalism, even amongst White liberals, was not monolithic and secondly, that even amongst White liberals of the Cape and Britain, some were pro-capitalist and others humanitarian (Hobson, 1900; Thompson, 1991; Thomson and Nicholls, 1993). However, both groups of liberalism subscribed to the bigger notion of British imperialism, which as has been discussed above, was racist. Both the pro-capitalist and the pro-humanitarian liberals in the late 19th century Britain and Cape Colony were the dominant liberalisms and both subscribed to imperial liberalism.

As James Heartfield has also demonstrated in his 2011 *The Aborigines' Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1837-1909*, pro-Christian, humanitarian liberal approaches to imperialism were equally racist and further justified and perpetuated colonisation of non-European peoples. The

Aborigines Protection Society (APS), established in 1837 was a socially infuential institution that sought to influence British imperial policy decisions in favour of the aborigines in South Africa, Australia, Fiji, Congo and Canada (Hearfiled, 2011). It did this mainly through the Colonial Office in London between 1836 and 1909 (Hearfiled, 2011; also see MacDonald, 2013). For Heartfield, the humanitarian approach such as that of the APS, instead of discouraging the imperial domination of the aborigines in British colonies, saw to it that "the road to Empire was paved with good intentions' ' (Heartfield, 2011; also see MacDonald, 2013). Thus, although the Moltenos and Merrimans cited by Thomson and Nicholls together with the other pro-Christian, humanitarian liberals such as those of the APS purported to oppose capitalist and militaristic evils against natives in British colonies, this did not imply that they opposed imperialism. For Heartfield, the anti-capitalist, anti-slavery, pro-native interest groups of White liberals subscribed to what he refers to as "imperial humanitarianism" or which they themselves referred to as 'responsible imperialism' (2011). Although different from the pro-capitalist liberals in approach, 'imperial humanitarianists' shared the racist belief of African racial inferiority and thus the need for British imperialism (Heartfield, 2011). In this way they also subscribed to the racist imperial liberalism.

It was this imperial liberal doctrine that prevailed and led to the Union of South Africa in 1910, a polity which resembled Rhodes' vision of a "United States of South Africa" (Verschoyle, 1900: xiv; Magubane, 1979 and Magubane, 1996). Alfred Milner, who succeeded Cecil Rhodes, had a similar vision for South Africa to that of his predecessor (Terreblanche, 2002: 245). In Milner's words "the ultimate end is a self-governing White community supported by well-treated and justly-governed Black labour from Cape Town to Zambezi" (Cited in Terreblanche, 2002: 245). Thus, the Union of South Africa, incorporating the four provinces of Transvaal, the Orange Free State, Natal and the Cape Colony, emerged as a racist and

segregationist polity and was led initially by White liberals from 1910 to 1924 and again between 1933 and 1948 (Thompson, 2001; Terreblanche, 2012: 48; Magubane, 1979 and 1996, Cuthbertson, 2001, Nyoka, 2016). As Magubane has observed:

> *In 1910 British policy makers at last attained their primary goal in South Africa. The South Africa Act united territories occupied by White people in a British dominion under a government which could claim to represent both White communities and which was led by men who were sincerely committed to a policy of Anglo-Afrikaner conciliation and cooperation. In withdrawing from South Africa, Great Britain left behind a caste-like society (1979: 53-4; also see Nyoka, 2016: 908).*

However, in a 1970 article, Ronald Hyam defended the Cape liberals who participated in the processes concerning and leading up to the Union Act by suggesting that liberals, contrary to popular belief, actually did take African interest into consideration during the few years (1905-1909) leading up to the passing of the Act. As he puts it, "from the moment the Liberal government came to power in Britain in December I905 there was constant preoccupation with the problem of trying to safeguard these" (African interests) (Hyam, 1970: 85). Following the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, Africans had hoped that the Cape Franchise would be extended to the Boer republics that had been defeated in the war (Sisulu, 2002: 32). However, Africans were to be disappointed when instead, liberals in both the Cape and in Britain actually sacrificed them "in the interests of White supremacy" (Sisulu, 2002: 32; also see Magubane, 1996).

In his response to this charge, Hyam argues that firstly, "British liberals did not consider franchise rights alone to be sufficient to secure adequate attention for African interests, and they decided that for the time being, the best way to represent African interests was through

'development of native institutions' (such as the Basuto pitso or national council) 'on native lines,' under paternalistic guidance, rather than through a 'hasty admission to political rights for which neither they, nor the whites, are as yet prepared" (1970: 86). Secondly, for Hyam, "although the Union of South Africa was the overriding British liberal objective, 'union' could be regarded as a way of improving the position of Africans" (1970: 86). With regard to the latter, Hyam argues that Cape liberals saw the unity of the White overlords as the best way to secure African interests and; White fears of a Black uprising would be lessened once White unity was achieved in South Africa (1970: 86-7).

Hyam's defence, however, cannot hold water on at least two grounds. The first is that the excuse that liberals would, rather than through the Union Act, advance African interests through the 'development of native institutions', can be disputed by drawing from Mamdani's 1996 *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. In this book, Mamdani demonstrates how British imperialism had long established pseudo 'native institutions' and policies such as customary law and native chiefs in order to rule over in order to firstly divide Africans into tribes and then to reduce them to providers of cheap labour (Mamdani, 1996; Ashforth, 1997; Thompson, 2001). Thus, there is not much evidence to suggest that these "native institutions" would have functioned differently from those that Mamdani described nor to suggest that the Union Act or its liberal advocates were less racist.

Secondly, as has been discussed above, although liberals, both the pro-capitalist and the pro-humanitarian, purported to advance and protect native interests in British colonies, they all subscribed to British imperial domination. In the context of the Cape, as has also been discussed above, even before the Rhodeses and the Milners, the idea of a South African nation dominated by European settlers with Africans as providers of labour had already been born as far back as the 1850s during Grey's governorship of the Cape Colony (Tyler, 1971; Cuthbertson, 2001;

Ngcukaitobi, 2018). Similarly, the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) of 1903-1905 chaired by Milner had already proposed in its 1905 report that South Africa should be a polity characterised by a territorial separation of Black and White land ownership. Further, the SANAC report had recommended that segregation would be secured through the systemic removal of 'natives' from urban areas to Black 'locations' (Ashforth, 1997; Thompson, 2001; Terreblanche, 2012; Cross and Chisholm in Nkomo, 1990: 47).

As Terreblanche adds, the report's recommendations became foundational to the infamous Natives Land Act of 1913 that saw natives being denied individual property rights (2012: 47; also see Ashforth 1997: 108; Thomson, 2001: 163; Cross and Chisholm in Nkomo, 1990: 47). The Union Act, therefore, was merely the manifestation of a vision whose seeds had been planted in the Cape as far back as 60 years before the passing of the Act (Cuthbertson, 2001; Ngcukaitobi, 2018). If the pro-capitalist liberals such as Rhodes led to the passing of the Glen Grey Act in 1895, in 1909 they ensured the passing of the Union Act, and thus establishing South Africa as a polity (Magubane, 1996; Ashforth, 1997; Thomson, 2001; Terreblanche, 2012).

As has been discussed above, the majority of these liberals were English-speaking and were significantly involved in the mining industry of South Africa although also cognisant of Afrikaner agricultural needs. Consequently, most of the racially discriminatory laws forcing natives into cheap labour for whites between 1910 and 1939 were in favour of this mining capitalist group (Terreblanche, 2012: 46-7). Essentially, the pro-capitalist liberals involved in what Terreblanche has referred to as the "Mineral Energy Complex" (MEC) not only laid the foundations but also politically and economically shaped South Africa in its first thirty years (Terreblanche, 2012: Thompson, 2001; also see Cross and Chisholm in Nkomo, 1990: 45). This they achieved by both being involved in politics and being in control of the mining industry as a 'core' industry of the South African economy (Terreblanche, 2012: 47). By

controlling both politics and the economy, for capitalist liberals, the South African polity had to be designed and function in congruence with capitalist interests, albeit for whites only. Citing Ashman et al (2011), Terreblanche points out that

> *"In the case of South African MECs, then, it is not simply the weight played by the mining and energy sectors that counts but also their determining role throughout the economy (and therefore, politics). One merit of this approach is its capacity to conceive of the state and the market as integral parts of a capitalist whole"* (cited in Terreblanche, 2012: 470).

Anievas and Nisancioglu, in their 2015 *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* argued that contrary to dominant wisdom, capitalism did not homogeneously develop in Europe nor in Britain specifically, but throughout the rest of the world with non-European influence. In the case of South Africa, it was the British imperial version of capitalism that predominantly underpinned state policy (Magubane, 1996; Terreblanche, 2012). Granted that this capitalism was imperialist, it was also racist, grounded on the assumed inferiority of Africans and other non-European races. As such, the policies and laws pursued by pro-capitalist liberals in South Africa's first three decades sought to achieve capitalist ends (Ashforth, 1997; Magubane, 1996; Terreblanche, 2012).

According to Thompson, after the South African Party, led by Generals Jan Smuts and Louis Botha, won the 1910 elections it "reached the conclusion that it was sound policy to come to terms with the gold-mining industry as the most powerful economic enterprise in the country and to build a coalition from both ethnic sections of the White South African population" (2001: 157-8). According to Terreblanche, the English-oriented governments between 1910 and 1939 worked closely with the mining industry and together designed key characters of the South African polity grounded on capitalist imperial liberal ideas. It was in this context that the 1913 Natives Land Act came into existence. In light of the labour needs of the capitalists, both

British and Afrikaner, Ashforth argues that the Land Act bifurcated South Africa (Ashforth, 1997: 108). This bifurcation was firstly achieved by dividing South African citizenship between 'Natives' and 'Europeans' (Ashforth, 1997: 108). Secondly, the bifurcation took the form of dividing South African territory between 'White-owned land' and 'Native or African-owned land' (Ashforth, 1997: 108; also see Thompson, 2001: 164-5). This bifurcation officially inaugurated the epoch in South Africa that became known as the era of 'segregation' (2001: 165). As per nineteenth century dominant imperial liberal ideas, Europeans were deemed to be superior and natives, inferior citizens (Ashforth, 1997: 108). Indeed, resembling Rhodes' Glen Grey scheme, natives in South Africa, following the Land Act, became "in a sense citizens, but not altogether citizens" (C.J. Rhodes cited in Ashforth, 1997: 108; also see Verschoyle, 1900).

According to these racist imperial ideas, because of their supposed inferiority, natives were not deemed to be individuals that could 'own land' (Ashforth, 1997; Thompson, 2001: Terreblanche, 2012). According to Ashforth, key to the subjection of 'Natives' was the idea of 'communal tenure' (Asforth, 1997: 108). For Africans, the land was deemed to belong to the entire tribe that an individual native belongs to and thus, custodianship of such communal land was given to the institution of a 'tribal Chief' (Ashforth, 2001: 108, also see Mandani, 1996 and Thompson, 2001). The tribal chief presided over a chiefdom that was essentially a labour reserve for the White capitalist class (Ashforth, 1997; Thompson, 2001). According to Thompson, apart from dividing the country between Europeans and Natives, "the Natives Land Act contained clauses designed to reduce all Africans in the White-owned rural areas into tenant and wage labourers. It prohibited Africans from paying rent to absentee landlords or from having the use of part of a White farm and sharing the produce with the owner" (2001: 165). The foundations laid by this Act were so strong that it was not until 1991 that Africans

could obtain rights to buy or sell property in White-owned land in South Africa (Ashforth, 1997: 108).

This chapter is not concerned with recounting the history and effects of the segregation era. What is important to note at this point is that post-1910, the South African state and its economy developed under unique conditions of racial segregation (Thompson, 2001: 164). Although Ashforth (1997: 103) has argued that the South African "state was never organised in terms premised upon notions of the inherent and permanent racial inferiority of Africans", this study maintains that by understanding the history of liberalism in nineteenth century Britain and the Cape Colony, together with capitalist interests of some liberals, the racial premises of the South African state become easily visible (also see, Ashforth, 1990). From a social contract perspective, by drawing from Mills, the South African state emerged as one resembling a racial contract, where race became a source of power, determining the rights and duties of citizens based on race.

It was particularly, with the influence of pro-capitalist liberals in the mining and agricultural sectors that South Africa was designed to be and functioned as a racialized polity (Magubane, 1996; Terreblanche, 2012; Nyoka, 2016; Cross and Chisholm in Nkomo, 1990: 45). As Thompson notes, "soon after the foundation of the Union of South Africa, the state gave legal effect to colour bars that had previously existed in the mining industry, in custom if not in law". Thus, starting with the Union Act, the Natives Land Act, the eventual abolishment of the Cape Franchise through the 1936 Native Representation Act together with the pro-White worker labour policies, pro-capitalist liberals together with the regimes between 1910 and 1948 succeeded in establishing a polity in which non-whites, especially Africans, would be reduced to mere providers of cheap labour (Magubane, 1996; Ashforth, 1997; Thompson, 2001; Terreblanche, 2012). By so doing, pro-capitalist liberals ensured the creation of a racial polity (Cross and Chisholm in Nkomo, 1990: 45.

Yet, while the pro-capitalist liberals were more influential in the establishment and socio-political design of the South African state, the role played by pro-humanitarian liberals during the 'segregation era' cannot be downplayed. Granted that pro-humanitarian liberals such as the missionaries came from the same ideological home as the pro-capitalists in that they both shared the bigger goal of European superiority grounded in British imperialism, their role in the segregation years was profound towards the evolution of South African liberalism. As Majeke's (1986) work has demonstrated, missionaries in Southern Africa were predominantly able to secure the conversion of natives to Christianity in the period following the latter's conquest. Similarly, according to Thompson, the period between the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the 1950s saw so much rise in Coloured and African conversion to Christianity such that a 1951 census revealed that about "59 percent of the Africans and 91 percent of the Coloureds were Christians" (2001: 156).

As briefly touched on above, being pro-humanitarian liberals, missionaries generally disagree with pro-capitalist approaches to imperial domination. As opposed to military conquest and the denial of fundamental human rights, missionaries believed education and not political or economic subjugation of native races, was the best approach to native civilization and the greater imperial project. Further, granted that the missionaries that came to South Africa during the segregation era were from Europe and North America, they predominantly did not share the overtly racist views and interests of the South African White population that either needed cheap Black labour or less Black competition in the working environment (Thompson, 2001: 156). Accordingly, given the government's failure to provide decent education to Africans, missionaries took it upon themselves to provide quality Western liberal education to Africans in mission schools such as Lovedale in the Ciskei, Adams College in Natal and later higher education in Fort Hare in 1917 (Thompson, 2001: 156). It was through these mission schools that Africans received an education that allowed them to become teachers, clerks, trade

unionists and even independent leaders of radical African churches that sought to counter white hegemony in South Africa (Thompson, 2001: 165).

It was under the auspices of this pro-humanitarian doctrine of liberalism that a predominantly African-centred doctrine of liberalism was able to emerge and develop in South Africa (Thomson, 2001; Sisulu, 2002). Through their prioritisation of Christian education as a tool of native civilization, missionaries helped create a class of Black educated elites some of whom were able to pursue tertiary education in Europe and in the United States (Sisulu, 2002: 32). According to Sisulu, as early as 1914, about 150 Africans had been able to pursue tertiary education in the United States through foundations laid by the missionary education (2002: 32). Thompson points out that by presiding over "an enormous benevolent empire" that could reach into all native reserves, by 1928 missionaries were operating approximately 48 missionary organisations in the Union of South Africa (2001: 172). As Sisulu points out, Christian education promoted the notion of a wider community embracing all Africans" and was thus able to generate, albeit unintentionally, a political consciousness that transcended ethnic and regional differences among mission-educated natives (2002: 32).

Despite strong opposition by the predominantly pro-capitalist White community in South Africa in whose view the education of Africans had to conform to the socio-economic standards reserved for the latter, missionary education of the 19th and 20th centuries in South Africa facilitated the birth of an African interest-centred doctrine of liberalism by Africans themselves (Cross and Chisholm, 1990: 47; Thompson, 2001). As they observe, missionaries were most criticised for "attempting to raise Africans on the shoulders of White men in a non-African environment and for educating them to participate in a social and economic life from which they were barred" (Cross and Chisholm, 1990: 48). Thus, while there had been very few White liberals such as William Philip Schreiner who denounced policies aimed at racial segregation such as the Union Act and the Natives Land Act (Jordan, undated: 29); it was with the

emergence of this class of Christian-educated natives that a liberal doctrine for Africans developed (Thompson, 2001; Sisulu, 2002: 32).

2.4. A non-racial African doctrine of liberalism

One of the earliest examples of the development of a non-racial African liberalism was the formation of an organisation in the Eastern Cape in 1902 called the South African Native Congress (SANC) (Sisulu, 2002: 32). According to Sisulu, SANC was formed in response to concerns about political rights and land by the then educated African elite in the Cape (2002: 32). The SANC would develop into the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912. The SANC, together with other non-White educated elite groups in what would become South Africa, organised themselves in Bloemfontein into a 1909 South African Native Congress (Sisulu, 2002: 32). From this meeting a delegation was chosen and sent to the British Parliament to challenge the then proposed Union Act but these efforts were unsuccessful (Sisulu, 2002: 32). Through such initiatives members of such organisations demonstrated that they did not oppose liberalism nor liberal values on the basis of being African. Instead, they disagreed with the racial discrimination they experienced from imperial liberals, both pro-capitalist and pro-humanitarian (Sisulu, 2002: 32). For example, in his speech on the 8th of January 1912, addressing a conference attended by other educated elites and chiefs, one of the founders of the ANC Pixley kaIsaka Seme stated that:

> *We have discovered that in the land of their birth, Africans are treated as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The White people of this country have formed what is known as the Union South Africa - a union in which we have no voice in the making of the laws and no part in the administration. We have called you, therefore, to this conference so that we can together devise ways and means of forming our*

> *national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges* (cited in Sisulu, 2002: 33).

For Ngcukaitobi, for these early mission- and overseas-educated African leaders of the ANC such as Seme, Henry Sylvester Williams, Alfred Mangena, Richard Msimang, Ngcubu Poswayo and George Montsioa the point of contention was not the creation of a South African polity but the inequality premised on the racialization of citizenship (2018; also see Madlingozi, 2018: 517-8). In their 1923 African Bill of Rights, apart from calling for the recognition of native rights to land and property ownership, in clause 5 of the Bill, the ANC stated that:

> *the Bantu, as well as their coloured brethren, have, as British subjects, the inalienable right to enjoyment of those British principles of the "liberty of the subject, justice, equality for all classes in the eyes of the law" that have made Great Britain one of the greatest world powers* (cited in Nthai, 1998: 142).

Thus, the kind of liberal doctrine espoused by these early leaders was not one that sought to separate Africans from British rule and influence but one that sought equality between all races in South Africa (Ngcukaitobi, 2018, Nthai, 1998; Thompson 2001). If the pro-capitalist and pro-humanitarian doctrines of liberalism treated racial difference as grounds for inequality, the ANC's doctrine of liberalism advocated for the equality of all South African citizens, irrespective of race. Yet, like pro-capitalist and pro-humanitarian liberals, leaders of the ANC also shared the idea that South Africa should remain part of the British Empire and that South Africa should be governed through British liberal values and principles (Nthai, 1998: 142; Thompson, 2001). Therefore, the liberalism that the ANC would adopt was one that rejected the central premise of imperial liberalism, one that treated mere racial difference between

Europeans and non-Europeans as an excuse for White supremacy (Nthai, 1998; Mehta, 1999; Thompson, 2001).

The doctrine of liberalism adopted and developed by the early ANC leaders was premised on liberal values such as justice, equality before the law, individual private property rights and equal education among others. Given that these leaders had been educated in Europe and in America, they appreciated Western values and philosophical ideas and believed they could be applicable to the African context. For example, reflecting on the life of Alfred Mangena, one of the first Native lawyers who had pursued a law degree in England, Ngcukaitobi writes:

> *while he was conscious of the virtue of an English legal education, he abhorred the racial prejudices of the English. A revolutionary to the core, he pioneered the use of the law as an instrument of revolution. The land of the Africans had been taken by force. But the law, if justly applied, could create the conditions necessary for coexistence and a shared prosperity among the races. His vision of a non-racial society, based on equality and the rule of law, is now commonly accepted* (2018: 84).

Ngcukaitobi continues:

> *Yet the hypocrisy of the British experience was not lost on him: English legal education was based on equality, the rule of law and the separation of powers, but in the colonies the reality was vastly different, as he well knew. There, racial inequality, abuse of power vested in colonial magistrates and rule by decree were standard practice. For Mangena, these represented an uncivilised way of life; true civilisation was not possible in the absence of equality and justice* (2018: 85).

While Mangena's life and experiences do not exactly represent those of his ANC contemporaries, his academic background and subsequent professional career give a good indication of the school of thought he and his contemporaries came from. Here he is used

merely to demonstrate the socio-political environment from which an African interest-centric doctrine of liberalism arose. Yet it must be noted that this version of liberalism developed by ANC leaders did receive harsh criticism from other Africans who had either moved away from Christian-based education or were drawing influence from pro-African movements overseas such as Marcus Garvey's 'Back-To-Africa' movement (Thompson, 2001: 176). In its early years and well into the 1940s, the ANC was largely led by clergymen, journalists and lawyers who, like humanitarian liberals, protested the government's injustices within the constitutional bounds of the Union (Thompson, 2001: 174). As Thompson explains,

> "*most of the time they adhered scrupulously to those cautious methods and modest objectives, lobbying sympathetic White missionaries, journalists, and politicians and protesting each instalment of discriminatory legislation from the Natives Land Act of 1913 through the Representation of Natives Act of 1936*" (2001: 175).

The leaders of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) formed in 1921 were among the biggest critics of ANC leaders referring to them as "good boys who were tied to the apron strings of White liberals" (Thompson, 2001: 176). Thus, in these early years, much of the criticism of the ANC's version of liberalism can be seen as being premised on at least two things: the first was the ANC's acceptance of Western/British supremacy, hence, protesting within or through constitutional means. The second was that although the ANC's version of liberalism advanced African interests and denounced racial discrimination, it did not reject Europeans nor European values (Thompson, 2001: 176). However, for Soske, it was not until the late 1950s that the ANC, in a reactionary form, formally adopted the idea of a non-racial democracy as part of its language (2016: 1).

Indeed, the loss of the 1948 elections by the United Party to the National Party and the rise of apartheid from the early 1950s was a watershed moment for liberalism in South Africa (Maloka, 2014; Soske, 2016; Van Staden, 2019). If liberalism up to that point was predominantly characterised by imperial liberal ideas of 'native civilization' and the use of constitutional means to express political dissent against the state, the 1950s saw the rise of radical, militant and somewhat nationalistic variations of liberalism (Snail, 2012; Maloka, 2014). That South African liberalism was divided into different dominant liberal doctrines from the 1950s is important on at least two grounds. Firstly, it demonstrates and confirms that South African liberalism was never monolithic as is often assumed. As Maloka rightfully points out "in its evolution, South African liberalism was never homogenous – its progressive potential was stunted and crushed during the apartheid period (2014: 242). The second is that although South African liberalism was predominantly imperial throughout its development and thus associated with White interests, a liberalism that advanced the interests of non-Whites – a non-racial liberalism – was possible.

2.5. Liberalism(s) during Apartheid

As a response to the emergence of the apartheid policy of the National Party (NP) this study argues that at least three significant liberalisms became prominent. The first was led by Liberal Party (LP) formed in 1953, the second by the Progressive Party (PP) formed in 1959, and third by the African National Congress formed in 1912 (ANC) (Maloka, 2014: 48). The LP and the PP were respectively made up of members who had broken away from the (liberal) United Party (UP) that lost the 1948 national elections to the National Party (Maloka, 2014: 84-5). While it is always assumed that the ANC was either communist, Marxist or socialist and even nationalist, this thesis argues that the ANC was actually made up of and represented mainly

Africans who subscribed to fundamental liberal values but who were vehemently opposed to the racial nature of the South African society (Thompson, 2001; Snail, 2012). This latter point will be explored further in some detail below. Of significance at this point is to note these three main traditions of liberalism that came to dominate, albeit in differing degrees, South African politics after the rise of apartheid until its demise in the early to mid-90s (Snail, 2012; Maloka, 2014; Van Staden, 2019).

According to Maloka, when the United Party suffered a second defeat to the NP in 1953 it became clear to liberals in general that apartheid was going to be around for some time (2014: 88). Maloka argues that in the 1950s White liberals in South Africa, particularly those who were humanitarian such as Alan Paton, saw themselves as a "third force" which served the role of being an alternative to the two opposing nationalisms (2014: 84). These two nationalisms for liberals were the National Party's Afrikaner nationalism on the one hand and the ANC's African nationalism on the other (Maloka, 2014: 84). The former was pro-Afrikaner economic empowerment and racial, while the latter was seen as African nationalism advocating for a non-racial democracy in a multi-racial society (Maloka, 2014: 84-5; Soske, 2015).

According to Van Staden the imperial liberalism that developed in the Cape Colony in the 19th century remained dominant even during the 1950s (2019: 279). As he puts it "by the 1950s, the Cape Province was still the heartland of South African liberalism". The Progressive Party (PP) was the primary custodian of this Cape version of liberalism premised on imperial values such as racial inequality and the '*civilising mission'* (Maloka, 2014: 87; Snail, 2012). The Progressive Party consisted mainly of conservative Whites and remained represented in the apartheid Parliament through Helen Suzman (Snail, 2012; Maloka, 2014). Until 1978, it advocated for a qualified franchise for non-Whites, drawing inspiration from the qualified

franchise practice of the Cape Colony (Cardo, 2012: 19; also see Magubane, 1996; Nyoka, 2016).

The 'Progressives' also adopted more constitutional means to voice out their opposition to apartheid and believed that Africans should also avoid violent and illegal forms of expressing dissent towards the NP government (Cardo, 2012: 19; Snail, 2012; Egan, Undated: 22-3). This soft and gradualist approach advocated for by liberals of the PP was largely dismissed as paternalistic and ambivalent by most Black activists (Maloka, 2014: 87; Van Staden, 2019: 278; Friedman, 2019; Egan, undated, 22-3). Further, although Thompson argues that in the 1960s to early 1970s Progressive Party's Helen Suzman "vigorously opposed every racially oppressive bill" in the apartheid parliament (2001: 206), the PP remained unattractive to most due to its attachment to the racial idea of a 'qualified franchise' (Snail, 2012; Maloka, 2014: 87).

The LP and those who subscribed to its ideals were perceived to be representing the most liberal and racially inclusive values in the 1950s (Snail, 2012: 26; Cardo 2012: Egan, undated). According to Egan, the LP advocated for a social democratic version of liberalism that became the dominant version of South African liberal thinking in the beginning in the 1950s (undated, 23). For Snail, although the LP had begun as a "purely White party" in its infancy, it soon attracted Africans to the extent that the latter ended up constituting the majority of the LP membership (2012: 26, also see Cardo, 2012, 19). The LP, unlike the PP, advocated for a universal franchise and a common-voters roll for all adult South Africans irrespective of race and creed (Maloka, 2012: 93; also see Vigne, 1997). Citing Vigne, Maloka shows that central to the Liberal Party's policy on the 'qualified franchise' was the desire to

> "*achieve the responsible participation of all South Africans in government and democratic processes of the country, and to this end to extend voting rights on the common roll to all adult persons*" (Vigne, 1997, cited in Maloka, 2014: 93).

According to Cardo, the LP also campaigned for socio-economic rights and the redistribution and deracialization of the South African economy (2012: 19). What further made the Liberal Party unique from both the ANC and the PP was its radicalism and militancy (Vigne, 1997; Snail, 2012; 26; Van Staden, 2019). Liberals within the LP adopted extra-parliamentary means such as calling for boycotts, sit-ins and the use of the press in defiance of apartheid policies and practices (Vigne, 1997; Cardo, 2012: 19, Snail, 2012; Van Staden, 2019: 279). By the late 1950s, liberals of the LP also saw the Post-World War 2 era as one in which political equality of all races needed to no longer be negotiated and if need be had to be fought for through the use of arms (Maloka, 2014: 96; and Friedman, 2019).

According to Snail, this radicalism and militancy of the LP can also be attributed to its communist members (2012: 26). As Snail observes, in the 1950s "the Liberal Party became a hiding place for South African Communist Party (SACP) members" (2012: 26). The latter included senior members of the LP such as the infamous Frederick John Harries who in 1964 planted a bomb in a suitcase in a 'Whites-only' section of the Johannesburg Park Station (Snail, 2012: 26; Van Staden, 2019: 279). White liberals of the LP together with White former members of the SACP would also jointly form the African Resistance Movement (ARM), an armed-wing of the LP, in order to militantly fight the apartheid system and bring about a non-racial society (Vigne, 1997: Snail, 2012: 26-7; Maloka, 2014: 96-7).

It must be noted however, that the global political climate in which the Liberal Party developed was one in which universalist notions of equality and justice were dominant, an environment conducive to the LP's radicalism and militancy (Thompson, 2001; Simpson, 2001: Burke, 2010). For example, Alan Paton's definition of liberalism captured the values shared by

members of the LP in South Africa and also those of the dominant views of liberalism around the world in the 1950s and 60s (Cardo, 2012: 17). As Paton put it, "By liberalism I don't mean the creed of any party or any century. I mean a generosity of spirit, a tolerance of others, an attempt to comprehend otherness, a commitment to the rule of law, a high ideal of the worth and dignity of man, a repugnance for authoritarianism and a love of freedom" (quoted in Cardo, 2012: 17). Indeed, although the LP would only last until 1968, its non-racial, social democratic version of liberalism, in line with the values outlined by Paton above, was in congruence with the dominant global political ideas inspiring the process of decolonization in Africa and around the world (Burke, 2010).

In his 2001 *Human Rights and the End of Empire: Britain and the Genesis of the European Convention*, Simpson argues that following the Second World War, the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the European Convention On Human Rights of 1950, and the subsequent anti-colonial movements, the language of racial inequality and freedom of all peoples began to gain traction globally. Similarly, in his 2010 *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*, Burke argued that events such as the Bandung Conference of 1955 demonstrated the extent to which countries from the Global South were instrumental in spreading the gospel of human rights for all peoples, the self-determination of all nations, and an end to racial discrimination in the 1950s and 60s. Thus, if at the core of such human rights activism the central aim was the reduction of state power over the individual (Simpson, 2001: 300), then the global context in which the radicalism of the LP and to a lesser extent that of the ANC emerged was a conducive one for such ideas.

As briefly mentioned above, common wisdom insists on the assumption that the ANC was socialist and, even worse, communist (Thompson, 2001: 216, Snail, 2012; Maloka, 2014: 84).

Secondly, and as a result of the association of ANC's and communism, White liberals in general assumed that the ANC was therefore anti-liberal (Thompson, 2001; Maloka, 2014: 84). According to Friedman (2019), to the extent that the latter became dominant wisdom, most Black South Africans began to shun Black people who regarded themselves as liberals in the 1950s and 60s (see Cardo, 2012). Yet, when carefully analysing some of the core values advanced by the ANC from as far back as its 1923 *African Bill of Rights*, to its 1943 *African Claims* and its 1955 *Freedom Charter*, the ANC espoused liberal values.

In its *African Claims* of 1943, Dr AB Xuma, then president of the ANC, made it clear that his liberation movement aligned itself to liberal values not only domestically in South Africa but as they were embraced by the rest of the Western world (Xuma, 1943). Like the liberals of the Liberal Party, the ANC's main point of contention with both conservative White liberals and Afrikaners of the National Party was primarily that citizenship and all rights that come with it were the sole preserve of Whites in South Africa (Sisulu, 2001; Thompson, 2001; Madlingozi, 2018; Friedman, 2019). Another significant point of contention by the African nationalists was that the wealth of the country should be shared equally by all those who live in South Africa irrespective of race and creed. None of these points of contention could be accused of being illiberal.

It is in this context that DR Xuma remarked in the *African Claims* (1943):

> *On behalf of my Committee and the African National Congress I call upon chiefs, ministers of religion, teachers, professional men and women of all ranks and classes to organize our people, to close ranks and take their place in this mass liberation movement and struggle, expressed in this Bill of Citizenship Rights until freedom, right and justice are won for all races and colours to the honour and glory of the Union of South Africa whose ideals-freedom, democracy, Christianity and*

human decency cannot be attained until all races in South Africa participate in them.

Key to highlight in the *African Claims'* Bill of Rights, Xuma added that: "*We, the African people in the Union of South Africa, urgently demand the granting of full citizenship rights such as are enjoyed by all Europeans in South Africa*" (1943). These remarks, therefore, serve to demonstrate that from the pre-apartheid years, the ANC had already positioned itself as the only genuine representative of Africans in South Africa. Those (African) interests were fundamentally grounded in liberal values and ideals. The ANC was only striving to have these (values) extended to African people as well. In the post-1948 years, despite facing the harsh conditions of Apartheid treatment, the ANC continued to advocate for an egalitarian society in which all were equal despite race, class or gender.

In its 1955 *Freedom Charter*, the ANC is famously known for declaring that "*South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White*". Similar to the Liberal Party, in the 1950s this version of liberalism was perceived to be radical as opposed to the dominant conservative liberalism from the Cape. As Jordan (undated: 28) points out "a South African nation, defined not by race, colour, creed or ethnic origins was considered an extremely radical idea during the mid-1950s." However, that this (liberal) idea was radical did not suggest that it was only a mere 'African nationalist' ambition and therefore anti-liberal. This is possible because liberalism can be both a progressive and a conservative force (Egan, Undated: 22).

In fact, during the 1950s, conservative liberals such as Margaret Ballinger, Alan Paton and Edger Brookes radically differed with the ANC's stance on the question of 'universal franchise' and the ANC's insistence on employing extra-legal mechanisms to resist the oppressive laws of apartheid (Maloka, 2014: 90). Yet with the liberals of the LP, the ANC was so similar in ideology that in 1962 then ANC president Chief Albert Luthuli would commend the LP's

policy of non-racialism as "*an act of courage*" and that for this they possessed greater moral authority than other White parties in South Africa (cited in Cardo, 2012: 18).

That a significant number of White liberals chose to solely perceive and treat the ANC as nationalist organisation did not take away from the fact that the latter was an adherent of liberalism both domestically and at the international level (Thompson, 2001; Maloka, 2014). Reducing the ANC to a mere nationalist party and to a degree equating it to the Afrikaner nationalists of the NP had at least two main consequences. First, this perception instilled the notion that liberalism was a 'White ideology' designed to secure the interest of Whites in South Africa to the exclusion and at the expense of non-Whites. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly for the purposes of this research, this sustained the impression that liberalism was monolithic and could not have other more radical variants.

Indeed, the idea that liberalism could have socialist elements seemed to be a foreign idea to South Africa's early liberals, especially those who subscribed to 'Cape liberalism' (Egan, undated, 23; Maloka, 2014). Alan Paton, for example, observing the radical, non-racial and redistributionist policies of the Liberal Party in 1961 is said to have enquired as to whether the LP "considered itself a liberal or socialist party" (Egan, undated, 23). Thus, for conservative liberals and consequently to most South Africans, there existed the notion that liberalism was only liberalism if it adhered to imperial liberal values.

Yet these imperial liberal values as has been discussed earlier were predominantly held by White liberals who primarily believed in the biological and thus racial inferiority of Africans to Europeans (Magubane, 1996; Ngcukaitobi, 2018; Nyoka, 2016). It was this insistence on seeing liberalism in essentially classical Lockean terms that this ideology became seen as White and not for Black people (Friedman, 2019). As Jordan (Year: 31) points out that "for

diametrically opposite reasons, both White and Black South Africans distrusted the liberals and found liberalism unattractive."

However, what Jordan and most commentators and critics of liberalism alike fail to mention or even observe is that this unattractive form of liberalism was only one form of liberalism, albeit the dominant one in South Africa. So inculcated was the idea that liberalism was innately anti-Black in South Africa in the 50s and 60s that Jordan Ngubane, himself a Black liberal and contemporary of Chief Albert Luthuli, was of the view that "We must at the very onset face the fact that to say a man is a liberal, is politically speaking in this country not to pay him a compliment. The non-European regards the word liberal as virtually synonymous with traitor or spy. Whether we like it or not we have a frightful reputation to live down".

It was these attitudes and assumptions that, regardless of how fundamentally liberal ANC policies and values were, leaders such as Luthuli would still not consider themselves as liberal (Maloka, 2014: 103). Yet, as Friedman (2019) rightly observes, liberalism must be understood in context. The version of liberalism espoused by the ANC and other non-White organisations during the apartheid era was liberalism as "influenced by their experience(s) as Black South Africans" (Friedman, 2019). It must be noted, however, that Friedman (2019) and Maimela (1999) both argue that variants of liberalism could also be found in other liberation movements such as the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), led by Robert Sobukwe, and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), led by Steve Biko. Interestingly, both the latter and the former criticised the LP for its identification of 'non-racialism' with 'colour-blindness' as serving to keep White privilege intact in that it was the very basis of the apartheid social order (Thompson, 2001; Gibson, 2011). Maimela (1999) insists that the BCM and Biko himself were neither anti-White nor antiliberal (also see Gibson, 2011: 50). What seems to have been a significant point of contention between these liberation movements and White liberalism(s)

was the mistrust centred on race and racialism which manifested in differing, and yet still, liberal positionings.

While the Liberal Party did not see the end of the 1960s, the ANC and the Progressive Party continued to represent their versions of liberalism albeit, under increasingly harsh apartheid conditions. Following South Africa's detachment from Britain in 1961, pro-capitalist liberals would continue to advocate for their interests through the Free Market Foundation (FMF) that was established in 1977 (Terreblanche, 2012: 49). The chief interest of the pro-capitalists during these apartheid years was the adoption of free-market capitalism and the curtailing of government interference in the economy in the South African republic (Terreblanche, 2012: 49; Van Staden, 2019: 299).

The irony however, is that while in the 1970s pro-capitalist liberals were advocating for less state interference in the South African economy, prior to apartheid, they had predominantly worked hand in glove with successive regimes in order to ensure that the South African polity and its economy favoured the White population (Terreblanche, 2012: 49). Additionally, pro-capitalist liberals after the 1950s had also conformed to the global political trends that were calling for the equality of all human beings. Whereas throughout the 19th century South African capitalism was premised on racial discrimination, in the 1970s the De Beers diamond company and the Anglo-American Corporation through the FMF advocated for the "inclusion of all races in the administration of the country" (Van Staden, 2019: 300). Indeed, Stephan du Toit Viljoen, who was the first president of the FMF, argued that for political conflict to be avoided and in order to create a conducive environment for a free-market economy, apartheid-based racial discrimination had to be abolished (Van Staden, 2001: 300).

However, Terreblanche argues that this call for free-market capitalism and calls for the dismantling of racial intergroup domination in South Africa by the FMF was hypocritical (2012: 49). For Terreblanche, the hypocrisy did not only stem from capitalists' change of stance

from racialism to non-racialism, but also in the fact that the FMF and the mining industry did not advocate for a new government that would reverse the effects of race-based capitalism and state-formation (2012: 49). According to the ideologies of free-market capitalism in South Africa, by embracing the latter but without the conditions of apartheid, life would become "less politicised, with the important decisions that affect people's daily lives being made by them individually or as communities" (Van Staden, 2019: 302).

Thus, indeed, the hypocrisy of the capitalist liberals in South Africa was that by promoting free-market capitalism, and consequently, limited government intervention in the economy, no government would be able to reverse the socio-economic harms that non-Whites had suffered as a result of capitalist and government sponsored racial discrimination. Attempts at reversing these injustices were going to remain the concern of those individuals and communities that had suffered them (Terreblanche, 2012; Van Staden, 2019). As will be discussed in a later chapter, the FMF was successful in achieving its primary goal of establishing a free-market economy following the demise of apartheid in South Africa (Terreblanche, 2012).

If the imperial liberalism of the British Empire in the late 1900s laid the politico-economic foundations of post-1910 South Africa, at least in part, neoliberalism of the American empire laid the socio-economic foundations of the post-apartheid South Africa (Terreblanche, 2012). According to Terreblanche, "the emergence of the American-led neoliberal empire in the early 1980s was very much to the detriment of those countries that were heavily indebted and that had also not been supported by Western Transnational Corporations (TNCs) to become industrialised" (2012: 25). This emergence of neoliberalism in the 1980s meant at least two things for the heavily indebted countries, most of which were in Africa and South America. Firstly, it meant that American corporations were going to be empowered by the American government to infiltrate countries in the global South "with greater aggressiveness and with

greater freedom" (Terreblanche, 2012: 26). Secondly, and particularly in South Africa, where capitalism had depended on mainly unskilled and semi-skilled cheap Black labour from as early as 1910, neoliberal capitalism from the 1980s onwards would primarily demand skilled labour for TNCs (Terreblanche, 2012). Yet, because the successive regimes of South African governments in collaboration with the capitalists had reserved good education and skilled labour for mainly the White population of South Africa, it would follow that the masses of uneducated and unskilled Black South Africans would be subjected to even more poverty even in the absence of a formal racialized polity. It is therefore, in part, under these conditions and those discussed before that for most South Africans liberalism remains an attractive tradition.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical overview of liberalism in South Africa. This overview traces liberalism from its inception in the Cape Colony as it was adopted from Europe, to the unification years, to 1948 during and after the dominance of Afrikaner nationalism all the way to 1980s when American-led neoliberalism was emerging. More than trying to chart a concise history of liberalism in South Africa, this chapter has tried to paint a picture of the developments and evolutions of the dominant liberalisms in South Africa's history. By reflecting on some key global and domestic periods, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate the political and economic interests that shaped the evolutions of different forms of liberalism in South Africa. In doing so, it has also demonstrated the extent to which the dominant liberalisms in South Africa were influenced by global developments and how these liberalisms in turn, shaped the development of the South African polity. In particular, by reflecting on the economic interests that shaped South Africa at the beginning and towards its conclusion, this

chapter has tried to demonstrate the extent to which liberal doctrines grounded in capitalism have been central to the development socio-economic conditions of the South African state. These socio-economic conditions contribute to the misconception that liberalism in South Africa is monolithic, always White-interested, and cannot be a useful ideological instrument for the majority Black and African population of the country.

CHAPTER 3 – THE RADICAL LIBERALISM OF CHARLES MILLS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with understanding and unpacking some Charles Mills' central ideas as they related to liberalism and the concerns of this study. These ideas are used in this study in order to help us understand the four challenges that confront South African liberalism post-1994, as discussed in chapter 1. To repeat: the first is the belief that liberalism is for White people only, or, at best, those whose aspiration is Whiteness. The second problem is the misconception that liberalism is innately racist, that is, liberalism is actually 'racial liberalism'. The third problem is that liberalism cannot be an ideology for non-Whites in South Africa. The fourth is the view that liberalism cannot be transformed. Using a Millsian perspective to understand these challenges to South African liberalism helps to provide an answer to this study's main research question.

This chapter outlines and discusses four important dimensions of Mills' thinking on liberalism. The first is concerned with why, according to Mills, we should bother studying liberalism considering its historical complicity with racism and other forms of oppression. The second section discusses what liberalism is, and what it is not, according to Mills. The key point in the latter respect is Mills' claim that liberalism is not monolithic. The third section addresses some of Mills' main criticisms of liberalism, specifically, this individualistic ethos of liberalism and the embeddedness of racism in dominant contractarian liberalism. The fourth section discusses how, despite the deep flaws that Mills identifies in liberalism, he provides some solutions to the problems he highlights - Mills believes that liberalism can still be retrieved and radicalized.

3.2. Why study liberalism?

This section is concerned with discussing why Mills argues that liberalism must be studied. The answer that is presented here comes mainly from Mills' (2017) *Black Rights/White Wrongs*. Mills' (2017; also see Snyder 2018) central argument in his work is that the dominant versions of liberalism have historically been complicit with injustices such as White supremacy, plutocracy and patriarchy. Mills (1997 and 2017) is particularly concerned with understanding the complicity of liberalism with racism and White supremacy, particularly in the USA.

However, Mills (2017) argues that there is a tendency by those who oppose these injustices to contemptuously reject liberalism because they cannot see it in isolation from the injustices it is complicit with. By rejecting liberalism due to this complicity, Mills (2017) argues that in both philosophy and elsewhere, liberalism tends to not be studied or even considered as a possible remedy to such injustices. There are three main but related reasons why Mills thinks liberalism should be studied. The first reason why Mills maintains that liberalism must be studied is that upon careful examination, one finds that liberalism's complicity with White supremacy, patriarchy and plutocracy "is a contingent function of group interests rather than the result of an imminent conceptual logic" (Mills, 2017). Mills (2017) argues that when studied closely, one finds that the dominant variants of liberalism, such as those of John Locke, Adam Smith and John Rawls, have always prioritised and organized the world in light of the interests of White males in particular.

Yet, for Mills (2017: 11), it is not the case that liberalism in its deeper and general philosophical sense is and can only be White male-centric. Liberalism, according to Mills (2017), can equally be transformed such that it acknowledges and addresses the struggles of those who have been victims of systemic racism, sexism and plutocracy. As such, Mills (2017) argues that for liberalism to be retrieved for a radical democratic agenda, it should be critically

examined and studied in order to reveal these often-masked conceptual realities. As he puts it in *Black Rights/White Wrongs* (Mills, 2017: 11), "my aim is to challenge the radical shibboleth that radical ideas/concepts/principles/values are incompatible with liberalism".

Secondly, Mills argues that liberalism ought to be studied because even in those instances where liberalism is itself the subject of criticism, discussions often take place within a liberal framework. A prime example of this is discussions on race and racism in the USA (Mills, 2017: 31). In these conversations, Mills (2017: 31) argues, the challenge is seldom ever against liberalism at a conceptual level but rather they typically focus on the version of liberalism that has been practised within the American context (Mills, 2017: 28). Citing Michael Dawson, Mills shows that "there is no necessary contradiction between the liberal tradition in theory and Black liberalism. The contradiction exists between Black liberalism and how liberalism has come to be understood in theory and practice within the American Context" (cited in Mills, 2017: 31).

In Mills' (2017) view, part of not understanding the source and nature of this contradiction is because those fighting racial oppression struggle to divorce liberalism from White supremacy. As Snyder (2018) observes, Mills' (2017) claim therefore is that studying liberalism helps to re-envision and transform it; and that this is "strategically savvy given its contemporary and worldwide purchase". Thus, critically studying liberalism for Mills serves as the first step towards re-investing in it as an ideology with an emancipatory potential irrespective of its shortcomings.

Thirdly, for Mills (2017: 28), a further reason why liberalism must be studied is because of its global attractiveness and dominance. In many parts of the world outside the West, liberalism is the dominant political ideology (Mills, 2017; Snyder, 2018; Cardo, 2012; Maloka, 2014; Friedman, 2019). After the end of the Cold War and the defeat of Soviet communism, there

seemed to be a global consensus on the preferability of liberalism and its expression through liberal democracy, individual freedom and free-market economics (Mills, 2017). Mills even goes as far as to argue that "liberalism is globally triumphant" (2017: 28). For Mills (2017: 28), this view is premised on the fact that irrespective of whether global debates lean towards realist, conservative, neo-liberal or social democratic normative justifications for the existing world order, these debates adopt a liberal framework. Due to its global attractiveness therefore, Mills (2017) argues that liberalism has to be studied even more critically such that "those seeking its transformation can position themselves in the ideological mainstream of the country" (USA) and most of the world where societies have been shaped by mainstream liberal values and principles grounded in the natural rights tradition.

3.3. What is liberalism?

Mills (2017:1) argues that liberalism must be understood in its original context. For Mills (2017: 11-12), to appreciate how liberalism can be radicalized, one must first have an appreciation of what liberalism is and what it is not. As such, in Mills' (2017: 28) view it is not enough to merely appreciate that liberalism is globally hegemonic and that normative justifications and critiques of the existing global order predominantly employ a liberal framework (Mills, 2017: 28). This section is, therefore, concerned with outlining Mills thoughts on his understanding and conceptualization of liberalism. In doing so, it begins by showing that, for Mills (2017), liberalism is contextual and thus has many different strands that sometimes complement or oppose each other.

According to Mills, liberalism contains competing, complementary and sometimes overlapping perspectives on the "moral foundations of the state" and thus on the rights and duties of citizens (Mills, 2017: 28). For example, from the early 1800s it was utilitarianism, espoused by Jeremy

Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick, that dominated liberalism (Mills, 2017: 28). Yet, after the Second World War, in light of growing calls globally for the prioritization of individual protections and calls for the independence of Europe's colonies, the natural rights inspired by Lockean and Kantian traditions became dominant within liberalism (Mills: 207: 28). Consequently, Mills argues that the initial question to be asked whenever one comments or generalizes about liberalism is: "what particular variety of liberalism do you mean?" (2017: 12).

Further, Mills (2017: 12) argues that it is important when dealing with liberalism to note that "liberalism is not a monolith" but that it denotes an umbrella-term for various positions. As Mills (2017: 12) sees it, when speaking or discussing liberalism it should not be assumed that it necessarily means the same thing everywhere and all the time. He argues that it may be prudent to rather speak of 'liberalisms' than to speak of 'liberalism'. This is to convey the idea that liberalism is a broad term referring to many sub-positions or doctrines (Mills, 2017: 12). For example, Mills points out that within liberalism there exists social democratic liberals on the left, and market conservatives on the right, while there also exists 'contractarian' liberals as well as those subscribing to 'utilitarianism' (2017: 12). There are also 'individualist' vs 'social' liberals, comprehensive vs political liberals, liberals that prefer *ideal theory* (Rawls, for example) versus liberals like Mills himself who support *non-ideal theory* (Mills, 2017: 12). There also exist patriarchal and feminist liberalisms, while there also exist racial and anti-racial liberalisms. It is thus not surprising that one may also find that there exist 'colour-blind' and colour-conscious variants of liberalism (Mills 2017: 12).

An appreciation of these variations of liberalism, for Mills (2017), allows room for those studying and seeking to redeem this ideology to radicalize it. This would be opposed to rejecting it due to the sins of only one or a few variants which may have created and are

maintaining structural inequalities and dominations of some groups (Mills, 2017: 12). An example of the latter for Mills (2017: 10) is liberalism in the US, which he accuses of being "historically complicit with plutocracy, patriarchy and White supremacy". It is also the case that not all variations of liberalism have been dominant or even represented equally in practice and in theory (Mills, 2017: 12). This means that generalizations about liberalism may not be true for all the possible variations of liberalism but for only one or some of them (Mills, 2017: 12). Therefore, according to Mills (2017: 13), while it is true that some dominant forms of liberalism have been conservative, racist, patriarchal and corporate, it does not follow that no other progressive, emancipatory and radical liberalisms may exist or be developed.

For Mills (2017: 11), liberalism speaks to a political philosophy as well as the institutions and practices that are characteristically tied to that political philosophy. Mills' focus falls mainly on philosophical aspects of liberalism (Mills, 2017: 11). Defining liberalism further, he adds, "liberalism is, broadly-speaking, that anti-feudal ideology of individualism, equal rights and moral egalitarianism" that emerged in Western Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Mills, 2017: 11). According to Mills (2017: 11-2), liberalism emerged in response to and challenged the dominant ideas and values that had been inherited from Europe's medieval past. Thus, both those on the right and those on the left wings of the liberal spectrum belong to the same ideological home irrespective of their respective positions within liberalism. This is because they all agree on the basic tenets such as 'equal rights', 'individualism' and 'moral egalitarianism'.

Mills' description of liberalism is congruent with and draws from the characterization of liberalism proposed by the respected British political theorist John Gray (Mills, 2017). For Gray (1986: x), liberalism has four main tenets – liberalism is 'individualist', 'egalitarian', 'universalist' and 'meliorist' (also cited in Mills, 2017: 13). Gray added that one may find that

there are yet again different conceptions of each of these four and how they should be construed and achieved (2017: 13). It may very well be common to all variations of liberalism that the moral primacy of a person is above any claims to social collectivity and in this way liberalism is ‘individualistic' (Mills, 2017: 13). It may also be that all liberalisms subscribe to the notion of ‘egalitarianism’ in that they all confer to all people the same moral status and nullify any legal and political moral hierarchies between people (Mills, 2017: 13). Liberalisms may also all generally agree on the notion of ‘universalism’ in that they all affirm the moral unity of human beings while paying less or secondary attention to cultural and other minor differences as well as voluntary associations (Mills, 2017: 13). In yet other instances, all liberalisms may be ‘meliorist’ in that they all share a belief in the reformability and improvability of political norms and institutions (Mills, 2017: 13).

However, all these shared values or what could be broadly accepted as the core tenets of liberalism in general, may be understood and achieved differently by the various types of liberalism and contexts (Mills, 2017: 13). This understanding of liberalism’s tenets further helps us appreciate that while all liberalisms may share some core values, this does not mean that they follow the achievement of such values in the same fashion. In this way one is able to investigate the means and ends of a particular variant.

3.4. Problems with liberalism

This section is concerned with discussing some of the key criticisms that Mills makes concerning liberalism in the context of the United States and globally. Four criticisms are of particular relevance to this study. The first critique is that liberalism has an ‘asocial, atomic individualist ontology’ and consequently cannot recognize groups and group oppression in its ontology (Mills, 2017: 15). The second criticism is Mills’ central claim that liberalism has historically been complicit with racism (2017: 29; see also Snyder, 2018). For Mills (Mills,

2017: 29), this variant of liberalism traces its roots to John Locke and Immanuel Kant in its preoccupation with individual personal protections, liberty and the restriction of personhood to White property-owning men. The third criticism of liberalism from Mills is that the natural rights tradition of liberalism, which has been globally ubiquitous since the Second World War, has been epistemologically ignorant. Finally, Mills (2017: 49) argues that the epistemological ignorance of liberalism has been inspired by John Rawls's 'ideal-theory'. In short, as will be discussed later, for Mills (2017:16), Rawlsian '*ideal theory*' perpetuates a liberalism ignorant of social oppressions such as racism and sexism because it presupposes a "well-ordered society." These are some of the challenges that beset contemporary liberalism and need to be clearly understood if liberalism is to be redeemed and shorn of its underlying racism.

3.4.1. The problem with liberalism is individualism

One of the criticisms against liberalism that Mills (2017: 13-4) addresses is that liberalism has an "asocial" and "atomic individualistic ontology" (2017: 14). The individualist ontology of liberalism is, for Mills (2017: 14), an old Marxist criticism of liberalism, often directed at social contract theorists. The criticism was specifically against the idea that in social contract theory 'individuals' in a 'state of nature' come together to form a society on the basis of a 'contract' for the protection of their lives and properties (Mills, 2017: 15). For critics, it is absurd to imagine that naturally independent individuals come together to form a society. For these critics, chief among whom Mills (2017: 14) cites Karl Marx, it is society that produces individuals and determines what is due to them, not the other way around (Mills, 2017: 15). Differently put, those who criticise the individualist nature of contractarian liberalism argue that human beings are "social animals" first, who possess the potential to develop into individuals (Mills, 2017: 14). In their view therefore, social contract theory is wrong from the

start in how it imagines and establishes the foundations of society by assuming individuals to be the ones that come together to form a society (Mills, 2017: 15). According to this critique, liberalism is premised on an unrealistic atomic individualist ontology that is fundamentally in contradiction with the nature of reality and consequently denies the central role of socialization in the structuring of society (Mills, 2017: 15).

Mills (2017: 15-16) also takes up another criticism, namely that due to this individualism, contractarian "liberalism cannot recognize groups and group oppression in its ontology". Yet, Mills (2017: 15-16) adds that it may even happen that a theory acknowledges that society shapes individuals; that same theory can also deny or ignore that group oppression may or does take place during the process of social shaping. According to Mills (2017: 16), Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* falls into this category. In Rawls' theorization of the social contract, it is 'a well-ordered society' that shapes and protects the individual (Mills, 2017: 16).

However, this theorization, like other contractarian traditions of liberalism such as utilitarianism, masks and denies the group oppressions such as those of women by men or non-Whites by Whites (Mills, 2017: 15). Mills adds that in Rawls's 'well-ordered society' social oppression would not be a matter of concern because the assumption is that 'well-ordered' societies do not have social oppression to begin with (2017: 15). In this way, the centrality of patriarchal or racial or class oppression, although central to the very process of social shaping, is denied (Mills, 2017:16). For example, Mills (2017: 15-16) points out that a Marxist perspective would hold that society shapes people but that society is shaped in such a way that it is class-dominated. Thus, if a theory does not acknowledge the classed nature of a society, then it simultaneously denies the oppression of the dominated class(es) of that society (Mills, 2017: 15-16).

Further, drawing from Anne Cudd's 2006 *Analyzing Oppression*, Mills (2017: 16) argues that societies guided by the Rawlsian '*ideal theory*' create and perpetuate the oppression of what Cudd refers to as 'non-voluntary social groups' (2017: 17; also see Cudd, 2006). According to Cudd (2006: 24), oppression is a group-based phenomenon that manifests itself as "an institutionally structured unjust harm perpetrated on groups by other groups through direct and indirect material and psychological forces". Cudd (2006: 44) describes a social group as a collection of persons who share (or would share under similar circumstances) a set of social constraints on action that are structured by social institutions. Although Cudd (2006) does not explicitly define 'social constraints', she argues these could include social norms, stereotypes, income, wealth, social status, and even legal rights and obligations. Thus, for Cudd (2006) voluntary social groups are those who voluntarily take on social constraints while nonvoluntary social groups are those upon whom the cause of social constraints is external to the members themselves. Essentially in Cudd's view, society directly or indirectly imposes social constraints upon those members of involuntary social groups.

For Cudd (2017`), and by extension Mills (2017), involuntary social groups such as dominated classes, victims of racism and or patriarchy in a Rawlsian society emerge because *A Theory of Justice* "leaves injustice virtually untheorized". While for Cudd (2006), oppression is an intentional group-based phenomenon, Rawls assumes that injustice or oppression is a mere negation of justice (Cudd, 2006: 24). This is largely because from the latter Rawlsian liberal framework, social groups that exist in relations of domination and subordination are not recognized. From the Rawlsian standpoint, social groups are conceived of as voluntary associations, not non-voluntary ones subject to oppression (Cudd, 2006; and Mills, 2017). As Mills (2017: 16) puts it, "to the extent that (mainstream) liberalism recognizes social groups, these are basically conceived of as voluntary associations that one chooses to join or not join, which is obviously very different from, say, class, race, and gender memberships". For Mills

(2017: 17), therefore, a further threat to liberalism is its perceived denial of the existence of non-voluntary social groups and group oppression. In this regard, Mills (2017: 16) then argues that it is the ignoring of this "ontology of group domination" embedded in liberalism that betrays not only *ideal-theory* liberalism espoused by Rawls but the liberal project in general.

3.4.2. Racism and contractarian liberalism

According to Mills (2017: 26), the contractarian version of liberalism inspired by Rawls' famous book, *A Theory of Justice* (1971) has been a dominant variant of liberalism for the past forty years. Mills (2017: 28) points out that for a century and a half from the 1800s onwards, it was the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill together with Henry Sidgwick that was dominant perspective on the moral foundations of the state and as the ultimate basis for people's rights. Although the natural rights tradition had previously been dominant between 1650 and 1800 (Mills, 2017: 28), following the tragedies of the Second World War such as the death camps followed by the subsequent decolonization movements beginning in the 1950s, natural rights and pre-social individual entitlements became prioritized again over and independent of social welfare and utility. It is this natural rights tradition that became revived by Rawls and has since been dominant as the moral foundation of the state and basis for the protection of individual rights (Mills, 2017).

However, according to Mills (2017: 29), the currently hegemonic contractarian liberalism, grounded in the natural rights tradition, has historically been a racial liberalism. More specifically, Mills (2017: 29) argues that through this racial liberalism, personhood, rights and duties of citizens, as well as the responsibilities of the state have all been racialized. According to Mills (2017: 29), where this hegemonic contractarian liberalism underpinned democracy, it has often given birth to 'Herrenvolk democracies' designed for and to the advantage of White

people to the exclusion of all others on the basis of race (Mills, 2017: 29). Mills (2017: 29) offers the USA as one such example. According to Mills, this racial liberalism can also be referred to as 'White liberalism' (Mills, 2017:29). This is because racial/White liberalism has historically limited and restricted personhood to White people only, primarily White men, to the exclusion of all other non-White people (Mills, 2017: 29; also see Mills, 1997). Under racial liberalism, property and even self-ownership were also restricted to the White persons only (Mills, 2017: 31). In Mills' (2017: 28-9) view, it is contractarian liberalism that has historically been a White liberalism and thus a racial liberalism.

While critical of contractarian liberalism and the 'contract' itself, Mills (2017: 29) does concede that the 'contract' is not to be taken as a contract in the literal sense of the word but as "an illuminating metaphor" and a thought experiment. Thus, in making sense of the social contract theory one should imagine a society that comes into being through a contract entered into by pre-social and pre-political but equal individuals (Mills: 2017: 29). This pre-social and pre-political state is typically known as the 'state of nature'. For Mills, there are at least two critically important things to take from this thought experiment. The first is that both society and the resultant polity of the contract are human constructs (Mills, 2017: 29). Second, and in relation to the latter point, it is that those individuals who contract are fundamentally free and equal in the 'state of nature' and must therefore also be equal in the resultant society and polity (Mills, 2007 and 2017). Thus, in a sense, the socio-political institutions of the polity must be premised on fundamental moral egalitarianism. Essentially, the goal of this social experiment is the creation of a polity wherein the personhood of all people is equally respected and their property protected. It is that moral equality in the state of nature that must translate into equal treatment of all the signatories (and beneficiaries) of the contract in the resultant liberal polity (Mills, 2017: 29).

However, in light of this understanding of the social contract tradition, Mills asks us to consider a situation where the personhood and rights of some persons have been systematically and completely disregarded (2017: 30). Such a disregard happens despite the social contract professing a commitment to the recognition and protection of everyone's equality and rights (Mills, 2017: 30). As he puts it:

> *What if entitlements and justice were, correspondingly, so conceived of that the unequal treatment of these persons, or sub-persons, was not seen as unfair, nor flagged as an internal inconsistency, but accommodated by suitable discursive shifts and conceptual framings? And what if, after long political struggles, there developed at last a seeming equality that later turned out to be more nominal than substantive, so that justice and equal protection were still effectively denied even while being triumphantly proclaimed? (Mills, 2017: 30).*

In this way Mills argues that although the contract proposes equality, this is betrayed by its hypocritical application where the rights of certain groups such as women and non-Whites are denied, not occasionally but systemically. Essentially, Mills (2017: 29) points out that the hypocritical application of the contractarian representation of the formation of socio-political systems denies the rights of other groups systemically, not randomly or by mistake.

Mills (2007 and 2017) argues that although the social contract was initially meant to be a hypothetical account of the origins of society and the state, in its actual manifestation, it has been a 'racial contract'. Thus, according to Mills (1997: 10) the 'contract' has been a racial contract in that it became "a set of formal and informal agreements or meta-agreements between the members of on subset of humans, henceforth designated by shifting) 'racial' criteria as 'White' and co-extensive with the class of full persons". The remaining subset of non-White humans were then categorized as belonging to a different and an inferior moral

status to Whites (Mills, 1997: 10). The non-Whites then have a subordinate civil standing in the society created through the racial agreement between Whites (Mills, 1997: 10). As Mills (1997: 11) puts it, "the general purpose of the contract is always the differential privileging of the Whites as a group with respect to the non-Whites as a group, the exploitation of their bodies, lands and resources".

For Mills (1997: 11-12), given that the racial contract is not one in which non-White people can be equal to Whites because it is a contract between Whites over non-Whites, non-Whites are actually the objects and not the subjects of the contract. In this way, for Mills (2017: 37) the contract manifests itself as a domination contract. Therefore, for Mills (2017: 30), mainstream Rawlsian contractarian liberalism must be exposed for its limitedness and inadequacies because in its theoretical foundations it would not allow us account for the systematically denied personhood of non-White 'sub-persons' in liberal polities such as the USA. The liberal framework in its current and mainstream form for Mills would not allow us to make sense of the fact that race and racism have underpinned the liberal framework from the outset (2017: 30). For Mills, it was on the basis of race that rights and duties had been afforded to some members of society (2017: 30). Importantly, Mills (2017: 30) suggests that in order to make sense of the normative discussions of the contract tradition, there is a need to appreciate not merely the 'ideal' and abstract social contract but really how it manifests itself as a racial contract in the United States and other multiracial pluralistic settler societies.

Further, for Mills, the mainstream racial contract is actually three contracts in one (1997:32). Understanding the racial contract as three contracts in one further helps in understanding how the social contract, in its manifestation, establishes and perpetuates racial inequality (Mills, 1997: 9). First, the racial contract is a moral contract; secondly, a political contract and thirdly, an epistemological contract. The moral contract is concerned with the foundation of the moral

code that guides and regulates the behaviour of citizens (Mills, 1997: 10). As Mills puts it, "the moral contract presents a pre-existing objectivist morality and thus constrains the terms of the political contract" (1997: 14). Therefore, this objective moral code, which is pre-social and found in the state of nature, predates any government and legal system that governs the resultant state (Mills, 1997: 10). According to Mills, it is in the state of nature that the Lockean 'freedom' and 'equality of all men' is restricted to Whites. This is because, in the state of nature, prior to the establishment of the state or society, that personhood is restricted to White people and while everyone else is regarded as sub-human (Mills, 2017: 10-1). For Mills (1997: 11), it is at that crucial stage of the moral contract that racial inequality begins, even before the state is established. It is this step that Mills (1997 and 2017) accuses Rawls of ignoring thus thereby creating the impression that pre-social morality ensures justice for all individuals in a society.

The political contract, on the other hand, serves to account for the origins of government and people's obligations to it (Mills, 1997: 10). The political contract is thus concerned with establishing society and the state (Mills, 1997: 14). The political contract is concerned with ensuring that any society, government and legal system that are established are premised on the moral code decided in the state of nature (Mills, 1997: 14). In this sense, the political contract or the formation of the state is really to codify a morality that already exists from the 'state of nature' (Mills, 1997: 15). Thus, the legal system presented as a conventional set of rules is actually the manifestation of the pre-state moral contract (Mills, 2017: 15).

It is the moral contract that specifies who is and what constitutes a person or personhood before manifesting this is manifested in the political contract (Mills, 1997: 15). Further, as Mills (2017: 15) puts it "what is right and what is wrong, just and unjust in society will largely be determined by what is right and wrong, just and unjust in the state of nature". Therefore, if a

state or society racially denies the freedom and equality of all men, this will be because this is what the colour-coded morality of the moral contract prescribes. For Mills "when in modern Western society people insist on their rights and freedom and express their outrage at not being treated equally" they are actually appealing to classical ideas of freedom, and moral egalitarianism found in the moral contract

Put differently, according to Mills (1997: 15), the state is essentially the practical, live and institutional manifestation of the moral contract. As with Locke and Kant, the moral equality or egalitarianism that the state seeks to protect stems from the moral contract that establishes society. This means that if the moral contract is the first contract, the political contract is a secondary contract resulting from the first. To Mills (1997: 15), it is important that one first appreciates what ideas, values and norms are shared before the state is formed if one is to consider what manifests after the formation of the actual state. If the state manifests itself as a racist beast, for Mills (1997: 15), this would be primarily because that is what those who contracted prior to its formation agreed upon (Mills, 1997: 15). The state's racism is thus not an anomaly, but is consistent with the moral contract that society had before the state and its institutions.

Lastly, Mills also argues that the racial contract requires yet another third and significant contract. This contract is concerned with "an idealized consensus about cognitive norms" and is in this way an agreement of some sort (Mills, 1997: 17). The nature and objective of this agreement for Mills (1997: 18) is that of misinterpreting the world and reality itself. The signatories and beneficiaries of the racial contract agree and learn to see the world wrongly and not for what it is, with the assurance that this wilfully mistaken perception will be validated by society. In this way, these signatories and beneficiaries are able to perceive and present racial

inequality as though it is the fault of those suffering from it or at best an unfortunate deviation from the norm, which is the absence of such injustice (Mills, 1997 and 2017).

Effectively, Mills (1997: 19) argues that on matters concerning race, "the racial contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions producing the ironic outcome that Whites will in general be unable to understand the world that they themselves have made". In order to establish and maintain the White polity then, the racial contract requires "a schedule of structured blindness" (Mills, 1997: 18-19). Mills (2017) refers to this epistemology of ignorance as "White ignorance" in so far as it requires whites to become blind and to misinterpret the realities of the world, thus absolving themselves of any responsibility for the inequalities and racism that manifests itself in their society and in the state.

The understanding of White ignorance is important for Mills because it allows space for us to understand the often-camouflaged ways by which 'White supremacy' holds itself in place by allowing and encouraging Whites to ignore the realities and centrality of race in the structural realities of liberal societies (Mills, 2017: 56 and 1997: 19). According to Mills, unlike other forms of group-based ignorance, White ignorance is different in that it is a direct result of the existence of racial categories, and the affording and enjoyment of personhood on the basis of those very hierarchical racial categories (Mills, 2017: 58). To the extent that White ignorance is premised on the editing of history, only highlighting White heroism, prowess and enlightenment, White evils and liability for structural inequality is downplayed (Mills, 2017: 57-58).

History is then told such that White privilege(s) and domination are seen as normal or as consequences of hard work, enlightenment or even more wildly, because God or the gods made it that way. Consequently, White ignorance is the kind of epistemology that encourages wilful and calculated misunderstanding of the world by Whites such that both an overt racist and a

non-racist White person can suffer from it (Mills, 2017: 57). Indeed, both overt racist and non-racist White people are able to create, support and perpetuate racial stereotypes about non-White people while both denying the complicity of Whites in the creation of those stereotypes and unjustly unequal socio-economic conditions (Mills, 2017: 57).

It is through these three respective contracts forming the 'racial contract' that 'racial liberalism' manifests and has maintained its dominance for Mills. Despite the dominance and endurance of this variant of liberalism, this type of liberalism is not the only variant of liberalism possible. As Mills sees it, liberalism is not only threatened by the deep embeddedness of racism in liberalism, it is further threatened by the fact that racial liberalism is understood to be the only variant of liberalism that exists.

3.5. Mills' responses to liberalism's challenges

This section is concerned with discussing Mills' responses to the above-mentioned challenges that confront liberalism. As opposed to rejecting liberalism due to the centrality of racism in its mainstream liberalism, Mills (2017: 13) argues that liberalism can still be redeemed for a radical agenda. First, Mills argues that liberalism must be understood as an umbrella-term, with a variety of liberalisms within it. Once one appreciates that liberalism is an umbrella term, then it becomes easy to see that contractarian liberalism, although dominant, is only one variant of liberalism (Mills, 2017). Secondly, for Mills, (2017: 15) it becomes easy to also appreciate that other variants such as utilitarianism and social democratic liberalism do recognize groups while appreciating the role of the individual in society. Further Mills points out that within liberalism there are variants that recognize and struggle against inequality and group oppression (Mills, 2017: 15). Finally, Mills argues that 'Black radical liberalism' is the best alternative to the currently dominant racial liberalism. As Lancaster (2017) observes, grounded in non-ideal

theory, Black radical liberalism recognizes and "emphasizes the corrective measures needed to repair a society already riven by injustice."

3.5.1. Liberalism as an umbrella-term

According to Mills (2017: 11-13), to argue that liberalism is an umbrella-term for a variety of positions is at the same time to make room for the redemption of liberalism. In Mills' (2017: 13) view, if liberalism is to be accused of causing and maintaining unjust inequalities, then that specific variant of liberalism must be challenged on its own and in context such that its responsibility for the creation and perpetuation of relations of domination and subordination may be exposed. As he puts it, "the historic domination of conservative exclusionary liberalisms is the result of group interests, group power and successful group political projects" (Mills, 2017: 13). In this way, finding one or two important variants of liberalism guilty does not automatically mean that all positions of liberalism are equally guilty of that one sin or that this "rules out the development of emancipatory, radical liberalisms" (Mills, 2017: 13).

For example, suppose that the currently dominant 'contractarian' tradition of liberalism is accused of being sexist in that it suggests and prescribes that those who form and govern society are 'property-owning men' to the disadvantage of, say, 'disempowered women' and their children – the argument made in Carole Pateman's *The Sexual Contract* (1988) and Ann Cudd's *Analyzing Oppression* (2006). It would not follow then that even feminist positions of liberalism that advance the empowerment and promotion of women's rights should and can be charged of the same crime one would the contractarian position. Consequently, contractarian liberalism is left alone, exposed and guilty of its own sins. This then allows room for further development of a group-conscious liberal position to flourish in theory and in practice. This is Mills' argument in this regard.

3.5.2. Some liberalisms do recognize groups

With regard to the charge that liberalism is individualist and does not recognize groups and group oppression, Mills' simple response is again to remind us that not all liberalisms can be accused of this shortcoming (2017: 15). For Mills, before one can consider whether indeed liberalism has an "anti-social, atomic individualistic ontology", one merely needs to remember that "not all liberalisms are contractarian" (Mills, 2017: 15). As he points out, utilitarian liberalism rests on different theoretical foundations, as does the late nineteenth century British liberalism of T.H. Green, a Hegelian social liberal (Mills, 2017: 15). Both the utilitarian and the Hegelian social variations of liberalism are premised on the existence and advancement of the society before that of the individual. Thus, there are variations of liberalism whose ontology is fundamentally and explicitly social (Mills, 2017: 15).

To radicalize liberalism therefore, is to call for a revisionist liberalism that will expose the existence of group dominations by taking into account the reality of the existence of nonvoluntary social groups. To radicalize liberalism would be to abandon racial liberalism and thus theorize and act outside the Rawlsian *ideal-theory* (Mills, 2017). By exposing the misleading predicates of *ideal-theory* in contractarian liberalism, Mills' (2017: 18) argues that revisionist, radical *non-ideal theory* liberalism would be able to make the "analysis of group oppression, the perpetuation of structured inequality, and their impact on the individual ontology, a theoretical priority". This radical liberalism would also be one that is able to recognize the degree of socialization by the dominant and oppressive social order and the ways through which those who are oppressed struggle against and resist the oppressive social order founded on *ideal-theory* (Mills, 2018: 20).

3.5.3. Black radical liberalism as an alternative to (contractarian) racial liberalism

Mills (2017: 26), in keeping with his thesis that not all liberalisms mean the same thing nor that they are premised on exactly the same theoretical foundations, argues that 'racial liberalism' has to be identified as a variant that developed in a certain context. In this way, for Mills (2017: 26-27), it becomes easier to understand the centrality of the role played by race in "writing and re-writing the most influential political philosophy of the nation's (USA's) history, from the overtly racist liberalism of the past to the nominally colour-blind liberalism of the present". In Mills' view, a non-racial liberalism would be an alternative to the nominally colour-blind racial liberalism of the present and further lead to the development of a society cognisant of both the centrality of racism in liberalism and the latter's capacity for facilitating the development of a non-racial society (2017: 28). Such a society, Mills argues, would be capable of honestly tackling racial inequality as opposed to one that pretends that it is not there to begin with (2017: 48). For example, according to Mills, in the US, liberalism has generally always been complicit with racism such that it has been difficult to see one in isolation from the other (2017: 26).

Accordingly, Mills argues that the best alternative to understanding the abstract and ideal social contract would be to first appreciate it as primarily a '*non-ideal* racial contract' (Mills, 2017: 30). Essentially, if the historically dominant contractarian liberalism, which Mills (2017: 32) argues manifests itself as racial or White liberalism, is one that has restricted full personhood to White people then 'non-racial liberalism' is the kind of liberalism that seeks to expose and address the limitations of White racial liberalism. A non-racial liberalism, which Mills (2017: 32) also refers to as "Black radical liberalism" recognizes the centrality of race, demands the correcting of the ways in which theoretically and practically, socio-political systems have been formed through racial liberalism. As Juliet Hooker (2018) observes, Mills

> *offers 'Black radical liberalism' as an example of a self-consciously non-racial liberalism that (a) recognizes White supremacy as central to the making of the United States and (sweepingly) the modern world, and (b) seeks to rethink the categories, crucial assumptions, and descriptive and normative frameworks of liberalism in the light of that recognition (also see Mills, 2017: 191).*

According to Mills (2017: 201), similar to how feminist liberalism is not only designed for females but for all liberals, including males, his Black radical liberalism is not intended to be exclusionary and particularistic to Blacks only. Instead, for Mills (2017: 201), Black radical liberalism seeks to adhere to standard values of liberalism such as egalitarianism and universalism thereby correcting the anti-egalitarian and anti-universalist ethos of mainstream White liberalism. As Mills (2017: 201) puts it, Black radical liberalism should be "accepted (though not uncritically, of course) by conscientious White liberals who are presumably also committed to such a correction, purging, and reconstruction of liberal theory".

Thus, although Mills' (2017: 201-2) discussion is generally influenced by his African American experience, he does not want this to be understood as implying that his Black radical liberalism should be reduced to interest-group politics. Instead, Black radical liberalism should be seen as "a principled integration of various possible revisionist liberalisms, guided by a norm of racial justice rather than determined by an unsavoury scrambling for competitive racial advantage" (Mills 2017: 202). Additionally, Mills (2017: 202) concedes that Black radical liberalism would also need to be developed by other people of colour and liberals in general, through their own experience of racial subordination through supplementation from other theorizations.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with outlining Mills' central ideas to be employed in this study in order to better understand and redeem liberalism. This study draws from Mills' ideas in order to try and understand and explain the challenges faced by South African liberalism post-apartheid. In this chapter Mills' ideas are discussed in reference to the context of the US, the focus of Mills' work. Broadly, this chapter discussed why liberalism must be studied, what liberalism is and is not, and some of the challenges that confront liberalism. Additionally, this chapter also discusses Mills' responses to these challenges and how he argues liberalism can be retrieved and radicalized for a radical agenda.

CHAPTER 4 –APPLICATION OF MILLS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter contains two broad sections. The first section is concerned with discussing how dominant liberalism(s) have shaped South Africa's socio-economic conditions immediately before and after 1994. In this section, this study seeks to account for at least three perspectives from which South African liberalism has almost been rejected as a White-centric ideology which has sought to maintain pre-1994 racial inequalities intact. These perspectives include economic perspectives that critique the neoliberal nature of post-apartheid economy in South Africa as influenced by the US and global Financial Institutions and how this economy perpetuates inequality in democratic South Africa.

The second perspective that has been critical of mainstream liberalism post-apartheid is largely characterised by those challenging South Africa's post-apartheid constitutional order and framework. The latter's main argument is that the largely praised post-1994 constitutional framework remains Eurocentric and is, therefore, incapable of facilitating historical justice for the previously oppressed majority. The third perspective is concerned with accounting for how academic circles, and particularly institutions of higher education in South Africa have also challenged the hegemony of a racial liberalism post-1994. The latter have largely concerned themselves with exposing the coloniality of knowledge and higher education institutions that are predominantly liberal in nature.

The second section in this chapter is concerned with applying Mills' ideas discussed in chapter 3 in order to address the challenges confronted by liberalism as the dominant and most enduring ideology in South Africa. Firstly, this section will show how, despite seemingly strong rejections of liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa, the ideology still needs to be critically

studied with intentions to rescue it from its historical complicity with racial inequality as Mills argues, although he does so from an American context. To account for how liberalism can be retrieved, this section reflects on the various doctrines of liberalism that have been discussed in this study to demonstrate that as Mills shows in the American context, similarly in South Africa, liberalism has similarly never been monolithic. This section will also reflect on Mills' 'racial contract theory' to demonstrate how South Africa's post-1994 society reflects that of its past in how it remains the most unequal society in the world. Seen through the lenses of the racial contract, it becomes easy to see why mainstream contractarian liberalism inspired by the USA, has been more idealistic, abstract and unable to transform South Africa for the betterment of her majority non-White population. Lastly, this section suggests Mills' proposed Black radical liberalism as an antidote to South Africa's seemingly unattractive mainstream liberalism(s).

4.2. How liberalism maintained racial inequality in South Africa post-1994

As mentioned above, this section concerns itself with reflecting on some of the dominant discourses that have sought to demonstrate how mainstream liberalism in South Africa has continued to remain a racial liberalism by facilitating past inequalities and privileges based on race. The central theme in this section is that, although by the 1980s it was clear in South Africa that the demise of apartheid was inevitable, and dominant liberal circles were overtly calling for the creation of a non-racial society, liberalism in South Africa has largely remained seen as a White liberalism. This section draws on three examples relevant to this study to demonstrate both how liberalism has shaped post-1994 South Africa and how as a result liberalism has been denounced as White-centric and anti-Black. These examples are drawn from those critiquing the neoliberal nature of the South African economy post-apartheid. The second criticism is

from those challenging the country's post-1994 constitutional order. The third criticism is drawn from the higher education sector in South Africa as exemplified by the #MustFall era that began around 2015.

Thus, it will be shown that economically, both local and international business interests facilitated the adoption of a neoliberal economy that intentionally or unintentionally, maintained racial inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. It will also be shown that it was with the victory of neoliberalism in the 1990s that the ANC abandoned its socialist liberal approach thereby causing many South Africans to further denounce liberalism as anti-Black. This section also discusses how South Africa's post-apartheid liberal constitutional order has been criticised and rejected as one facilitating a neo-apartheid by others. These circles go as far as to argue that an actual post-conquest, pro-African and anti-liberal constitutional arrangement still needs to be developed in South Africa if past injustices are to be corrected.

Lastly, it will be shown in this section that post-1994 South Africa has seen liberalism being attacked in an unprecedented way through calls for the transformation of higher education. It will be shown that liberal universities and higher education in South Africa have been criticised for upholding Eurocentrism and White supremacy in South Africa, hence the calls for transformation of this sector. Through these three examples, this section demonstrates the variants of liberalism that have been dominant in South Africa post-apartheid. The section also demonstrates how these liberalism(s) in post-apartheid South Africa have contributed to liberalism remaining unattractive to the majority of the country's population.

4.2.1. Neoliberalism in post-apartheid Africa and the perpetuation of racial liberalism

If British and South African pro-capitalist liberals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century played a pivotal role in establishing a racial polity in South Africa, by the end of the twentieth century, American and South African pro-capitalist liberals played one of the leading roles in establishing a non-racial one (see, Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003 and Terreblanche, 2002 and 2012). However, this non-racial society that pro-capitalist liberals envisioned in the late twentieth century would turn out to be seen as perpetuating the very racial inequalities of the then foregoing order (Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003 and Terreblanche, 2002 and 2012). Schneider (2003) has gone as far as to argue that while, indeed, the political environment did improve when South Africa became a non-racial democracy in 1994, pro-capitalist liberals ensured the endurance and survival of economic apartheid.

Although the political and economic actors had been influential in South Africa's establishment and evolution as far back as Cecil Rhodes' days, it was in 1986 when America became significantly influential to South Africa's politics once again (Redden, Jr, 1988; Terreblanche, 2012). According to Redden Jr, in September 1986 the United States Congress passed the comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 whose purpose was two-fold. First, the Act sought to impose sanctions against the apartheid regime in Pretoria which included the proscription of South African exports to the USA such as uranium, coal, agricultural products and Krugerrands amongst others (Redden Jr, 1988: 596). Secondly, the Act outlined future US relations with the ANC in South Africa (Redden Jr, 1988: 596). The intentions of the Act in this latter regard will be explored later. What is important to note at this point is that, according to Terreblanche (2012: 59) it was after the passing of the Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act that the business sector in South Africa became convinced that a political transition that included the ANC towards the creation of a non-racial democratic South Africa was inevitable.

As has been indicated in the previous chapter, through the emergence of the American-led neoliberal empire, Western corporations were to enter the markets of countries in the global South with much more aggressiveness (Terreblanche, 2012: 26). In order to achieve this, neoliberalism required a fairly stable political system internationally and domestically in all capitalist societies (Terreblanche, 2012). Thus, in order to bring neoliberalism to South Africa, the political environment had to be conducive, which essentially required the disbandment of apartheid (Terreblanche, 2012). As the US had influenced many Western countries from the 1950s, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act sought to influence post-apartheid South Africa to enter into two social democratic contracts (Terreblanche, 2012).

The first was a domestic social democratic consensus intended to advance socio-political stability in the domestic affairs of all capitalist countries (Terreblanche, 2012: 21). According to Terreblanche (2012: 21), the second contract that post-apartheid South Africa would have to enter was an international social democratic consensus designed to stabilise capital flows and economic relations between all capitalist countries. It was primarily under these conditions that for the American government and TNCs neoliberalism would function in South Africa. In this way, liberal capitalist interests in the USA more directly influenced the political developments in South Africa leading up to the end of apartheid.

Neoliberalism was not an unattractive idea to local capitalists in South Africa in the 1980s. As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, by the late 1970s, pro-capitalist liberals in South Africa were already advocating for free-market capitalism (Terreblanche, 2012; Van Staden, 2019). This had been primarily due to the fact that by the 1970s technological advancements in the economy required less unskilled but more skilled labour (Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). This meant that there was a growing need by capitalists to advocate for the relaxation of apartheid policies in order to allow for skilled Black labour to emerge thereby ensuring

economic growth (Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). Through neoliberalism, free-market capitalism was a given, all that was needed was a political environment conducive for this. According to Terreblanche (2012: 60) by the late 1980s, the leading pro-capitalist liberals in calling for a non-racial South Africa characterised by market fundamentalism in addition to the FMF were the South African Chamber of Business, the Anglo-American Corporation and Consultative Business Movement. However, for Schneider (2003: 28), to call for the relaxation of a formal apartheid for business interests is not the same thing as to argue for the total collapse of economic apartheid. For Schneider (2003: 28), "the move away from apartheid and toward a free-market philosophy can be seen as an effort to preserve economic apartheid instead of as part of the elimination of apartheid". In Schneider's (2003: 28) view, this is due to the fact that pro-capitalist liberals in South Africa in the late 1970s and 1980s saw that Whites could still preserve their high standards of living if formal apartheid was abolished and greater political rights were allocated to Blacks. In this way political unrest would be quelled and the superior economic status of Whites would be preserved (Schneider, 2003: 28). Essentially, as with Lockean liberalism of the 19th century, for capitalist liberals in South Africa in the 1980s, 'equality' in the post-apartheid South Africa would be reduced to mere "formal equivalence" (see Van der Pijl, 2014: 25).

In order to achieve these free-market neoliberal ambitions, capitalist liberals in the USA and in South Africa had to contend with the African National Congress (ANC) (Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). As briefly mentioned above, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, apart from imposing sanctions on Pretoria, outlined future US relations with the ANC (Redden Jr, 1988: 596). However, according to Redden Jr, for the Americans the goal of influencing the establishment of a free and democratic South Africa would happen with or without the ANC. As Redden Jr (1988: 597) demonstrates, in this regard the Act reads thus:

> *—Sec. 311 (c) The United States government will support negotiations between 'the representatives of all communities' in South Africa and the South African Government. However, 'if the South African Government agrees to enter into negotiations without preconditions, abandons unprovoked violence against its opponents, commits itself to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa', and the ANC refuses to participate, or to (1) 'abandon unprovoked violence', or (2) to 'commit themselves to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa' during such negotiations, then the United States 'will support negotiations that do not include' the ANC.*

Thus, it is clear that for the US, the ANC did not have to be part of the negotiations if its objectives were not in congruence with those of the US as expressed in the Act (Redden Jr, 1988).

The ANC had the advantages of being the oldest liberation movement in South Africa at the time; being the most dominant in terms of membership by the 1980s, and it had been supported internationally in London and militarily by the Soviet Union (Redden Jr, 1988). The ANC also had the advantage of being a liberal-leaning and predominantly Black political party although it had over time resorted to adopting extra-legal strategies in response to Apartheid (Redden Jr, 1988; Bond, 2000). Thus, in a context where the goal was in part to influence the establishment of the free and democratic South Africa, it was only convenient and perhaps strategic to have the ANC as one of the primary actors in the creation of such a polity (Redden Jr, 1988, 598).

The USA was happy to involve the ANC in the negotiations as long as the extra-legal strategies which the US referred to as “terrorist activities” against the South African government were to be aborted by the ANC. Additionally, and importantly, the liberals in America, seeing that the ANC’s doctrine of liberalism was more radical and socialist, as seen in its 1955 *Freedom Charter*, the ANC was required by the USA to “commit themselves to a free and democratic post-apartheid South Africa”. This was because the US liberals were sceptical of the ANC’s

commitment to a non-racial democracy owing to its relationship with the South African Communist Party (SACP) (Redden Jr, 1988: 598). This relationship with the SACP, for US liberals, created the wrong impression that the ANC may have become an agent of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s (Redden Jr, 1988: 598). It was in this way that US liberals would be able to influence not only negotiations that led to a democratic South Africa but also radically influenced the version of liberalism the ANC would adopt post-1994 (Redden Jr, 1988; Bond, 2000; Terreblanche, 2012).

The socialist and redistributionist liberal version of the ANC inspired by the Freedom Charter was of similar concern to capitalist liberals in South Africa in the late 1980s (Redden Jr, 1988; Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). As Terreblanche (2012: 60) points out, Dr Zach de Beer, who was as executive of the Anglo-American Corporation was appointed by the capitalists of the mineral and energy complex in South Africa in order to play a more active role in politics on their behalf. According to Terreblanche (2012: 60) one of de Beer's chief concerns was the ANC's socialist orientation. De Beer was worried that due its socialist orientation the ANC "may wish to throw out the baby of free enterprise with the bath water of apartheid" (cited in Terreblanche, 2012 60). Echoing the Americans, capitalists together with neoliberal economists in South Africa in the late 1980s put immense pressure on the ANC in order to have a largely unregulated free-market system (Schneider, 2003).

Indeed, the ANC eventually gave in to the demands of capitalist liberals by the early to mid-1990s. Although by 1990 Nelson Mandela had insisted that the Freedom Charter's demand for "the nationalisation of mines, banks and monopoly industries" was the policy of the ANC and that this position would not be change or even modified; it would not be long before the ANC shifted from this position towards neoliberal lines (Bond, 2000: 15-6; Ashman et al, 2011: 182). For Bond (2000: 55) in addition to Anglo-American, Nedcor/Old Mutual and Sanlam played some of the pivotal roles in ensuring the ANC's conversion from a socialist version of

liberalism to free-market fundamentalism. By converging with business interests in the 1990s, ANC leaders took a neoliberal turn. According to Schneider, when the ANC adopted neoliberal policies, many of its socialist and redistributionist ideas began to disappear from policy documents post-1994 (Bond, 2000; Schnieder, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). Although the ANC had adopted the redistributionist Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in order to combat the socio-economic inequalities of the past, by 1996 these socialist promises had been ruled out when the ANC government adopted the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) (Bond, 2000: 54; Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012:64-5).

Although this study does not go into detail in so far as discussing all the processes leading up to the adoption of GEAR and its consequences, it suffices to point out that it was this policy that signalled the victory of capitalist liberals in both America and South Africa. Through GEAR and subsequent policy initiatives, the ANC installed neoliberalism in South Africa (Schneider, 2003: 23; Terreblanche, 2012: 5). For Terreblanche (2012: 65), GEAR signalled the triumph of an "American economic model" whose core values were free-trade, anti-statist, privatisation, deregulation, fiscal austerity and market fundamentalism. As Asman et al (2011: 182) put it:

> *whilst the marginalisation of the White far right was a welcome development, the Government's adoption of the non-negotiable Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR) in 1996 signalled the crude resolution of any conflict over policy and the full embrace of neoliberalism. Through GEAR, the Government's stated macroeconomic priorities became the management of inflation, the deregulation of financial markets, tariff reduction and trade liberalisation as well as limiting government expenditure. The irony is that while the rationale for these policies was to attract foreign direct investment, their actual effect was to increase the outflow of domestic capital – even while the hoped-for investment inflows failed to materialise.*

As Terreblanche (2012: 65) observes, the exaggerated promises of the American neoliberal model in South Africa such as direct investment, non-racial employment and higher economic growth rates followed by a trickle-down effect to alleviate poverty did not manifest.

What did manifest was that, instead, GEAR symbolised the Americanization of the South African economy via the ANC (Terreblanche, 2012: 65-6). For Terreblanche (2012: 66) neoliberalism, despite its promises, would ensure that "the poorer part of the population was doomed to live permanently in a systemic condition of abject poverty". For Bond (2000 and Terreblanche, 2012) Mandela's dream of restructuring the political and economic systems of South Africa in order to address colonial and apartheid inequalities was not to be realised. According to Bond (2000) the adoption of neoliberalism led to the ANC to move from being perceived as an organisation fighting for everyone's liberation to being perceived as a vehicle for serving the interest of an elite few in post-apartheid South Africa. For Schneider (2003) in this way, neoliberalism's free-market ideology has replaced apartheid in preserving racial inequalities. Therefore, although it facilitated the emergence of a non-racial democracy with a universal franchise, neoliberalism has contributed to liberalism in general being perceived as racist and anti-Black by most South Africans who remain victims of historical injustices.

4.2.2. Post-apartheid liberal constitutionalism and the perpetuation of racism

According to van Staden (2019: 292) with the demise of apartheid, many liberals in South Africa were of the view that their work had been completed. This was because the post-apartheid constitutional order was premised on and enshrined liberal values (2019: 292, also see Cardo, 2012: 20). Some of the most notable liberal values that underpinned the 1996 constitution include legal equality of all citizens regardless of race, private property rights, the protection of civil liberties, rule of law and a separation of powers between the judiciary, legislature and executive (van Staden, 2019: 291). The post-apartheid constitutional order also

required the supremacy of the constitution as the law of the land. For example, section two of the constitution declares that "*this constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled*" (Constitution of RSA, 1996). In addition, a Constitutional Court was established as the most superior court in order to safeguard the constitution and to adjudicate on all constitutional matters (Cardo, 2012). Indeed, the emergence of the 1996 constitution was the victory of all of South Africa's dominant liberal doctrines (van Staden, 2019: 291; Cardo, 2012).

However, while liberal commentators in South Africa have praised liberalism for having offered the tools to overcome apartheid and establish a new non-racial democratic society (Cardo, 2012: van Staden, 2019), many have criticised the post-1994 liberal constitutional order as being Western and for sustaining past inequalities thereby sustaining White supremacy (Bond, 2000; Ramose, 2007; Matsiqi, 2018; Mngxitama, 2011; Madlingozi, 2017; Modiri, 2018). Indeed, in his *The Land is Ours* Ngcukaitobi (2018) goes to lengths in showing that the post-1994 constitution and constitutionalism have roots in the ANC's struggle against colonialism and apartheid. Ngcukaitobi (2018) has shown that the values expressed in the 1996 Constitution's Bill of Rights have their genesis in an anti-colonial and anti-White supremacist struggle in South Africa as it was expressed in the ANC's 1923 African Bill of Rights, the 1943 African Claims and the 1955 Freedom Charter.

Yet critics of liberalism such as Mngxitama (2011) have argued that "liberal attempts to address White supremacy reduce race and racism to a mere misunderstanding between friends" and in this way sustain the very White supremacy they purport to defeat. Ramose (2007: 324-5) has argued that the post-1994 constitutional order is not indigenous nor autochthonous and thus is unable to restore the dignity of Black South Africans. Similarly, Madlingozi, (2017) and Modiri (2018) have criticised the post-1994 Constitution as perpetuating the conquest of Black people in South Africa. This, for Madlingozi (2018) is not only due to the fact that inspiration of the

1996 Constitution has roots in Canadian and German constitutions, but also because this Constitution has not secured historical justice for the majority of South Africans and instead upheld the superior position of Whites in South Africa. Friedman (2021) has also commented that the 1996 Constitution is rightfully perceived to be Western because during the negotiations in the 1990s all the major liberal parties to the negotiations, including the ANC, showed interest in (Western) German and Canadian federalisms and not those of Nigeria or India who were formerly colonised like South Africa.

According to Ramose (2007) the post-1994 liberal constitutional order is unattractive because it has not been able to return the land that was systematically taken from Black people. Additionally, Ramose (2007), argues that more than not being able to restore the land and thus historical substantive justice for Black people, the post-apartheid liberal constitutional order has perpetuated the subordination of African sovereignties that were dominated during colonisation and apartheid. For Ramose, (2007: 310) the transition through compromises between various dominant liberalisms in South Africa sacrificed the whole point behind the struggle against colonisation and apartheid. As he puts it "the transition to the 'new' South Africa did not restore full, integral, comprehensive and unencumbered sovereignty to the indigenous peoples conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation" (Ramose, 2007: 319). In Ramose's (2007) view, although the post-apartheid liberal order constitutionally recognized the existence of traditional leaders and yet subjected them to constitutional supremacy means that the liberal project, even under the ANC, betrayed the fight for return of indigenous sovereignties.

Political commentator Aubrey Matshiqi (2018) has concurred with Ramose by arguing that true liberation for Blacks will only be realised when land has been returned to traditional leaders such as the then Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini and others. Thus, Ramose (2007: 319-20) argues, "the much acclaimed 'miracle' of change in South Africa is a basic source of

concern, since it sets aside the basic question of substantive historical justice in the name of compromise". Therefore, in Ramose's (2007: 320) perspective and words, "it is precisely the formal vacuous justice conceded to the indigenous conquered peoples of South Africa which is today the reason for the contestations that prevail in the country".

That the question of 'freedom' was reduced to a constitutional recognition of civil rights for all citizens did not suggest a break with South Africa's past for those critiquing the post-1994 liberal order (Ramose, 2007; Madlingozi, 2017, Modiri, 2018). For Mngxitama (2011), it is exactly for this reason that unlike Mandela and his contemporaries who opted to reconcile with the former oppressors, some Blacks post-1994 still see the need to "break the back of Whiteness" so that all can be truly equal in South Africa. The need to still continue to fight White supremacy for Mngxitama (2011) stems from the view that liberal arrangements and liberals themselves, regardless of skin colour, post-1994 have proven Steve Biko's suspicion that liberals misunderstand Black affairs. Liberal critics such as Mgxitama (2011) have gone as far as to argue that the post-1994 liberal constitutional order "inaugurated an anti-Black political and economic reality in South Africa that rendered Blacks a powerless majority".

Sharing these sentiments, Matshiqi (2018) has commented that although the non-racial political order established by the 1996 constitution has meant that Blacks are the political majority, this becomes futile when they still remain the minority economically, in knowledge production and cultural production. Until such fundamental changes occur, for Matshiqi (2018) South Africa continues to "belong to those who conquered it".

Similarly, in his 2021 *One Virus, Two Countries: What Covid-19 Tells Us about South Africa*, Friedman has argued that since 1994 South Africa has been legally one country with common citizenship. Yet, despite this formal equality for all citizens, according to Friedman (2021) South Africa remains a bifurcated society that "houses two worlds". For Friedman (2021), testament to this is that South Africa is the most unequal society in the world despite all these

seemingly progressive liberal values and institutions enshrined in the post-apartheid constitution. According to Friedman (2021), the end of apartheid did not translate to ending the divisions of the past but has instead created a situation where "the life of the dominating (White) group becomes seen as the norm to which all society should aspire". Under these conditions, and following its retreat on socialist and redistributionist policies in the mid-1990s, the ANC government for Friedman (2021), has preoccupied itself with trying to squeeze as many Blacks as possible into institutions of suburban (White) society, including the upper reaches of the economy, without fundamentally changing these.

In keeping with his thesis that South Africa's enduring past has bequeathed it two societies in one, Friedman (2021) argues that non-racial liberal democracy has not been able to eliminate racial divisions. As a result, Friedman (2021) suggests that the liberal values and assumptions whether in law, in the economy or in education, that govern mainstream political life are predominantly those of the White minority. Under these circumstances, Friedman (2021) argues, the rest of the (predominantly Black) population is expected to conform to the reality of this elite group whose centres of gravity are America and Western Europe. Similar to the dominant liberal traditions of the 19th and 20th centuries, in post-1994 South Africa, those still trapped by poverty and past injustices, are required to attain the standards of the minority (Friedman, 2021).

Further, Friedman (2021) points out that because the majority of the Black population lack the resources and power to influence mainstream political debates concerning the socio-economic direction of the country, it follows that policy and the economy remain the terrain of the predominantly White population and few elite politically affiliated Blacks. Unfortunately, argues Friedman (2021) and contrary to what many hoped a non-racial liberal democracy would bring about, Black largely remained "talked about, but never heard".

4.2.3. Racial liberalism in knowledge production and higher education

As Maloka (2014: 252) liberalism in South Africa has also been able to sustain itself through institutions of higher education, academic journals and the media sector in general. As he puts it "liberals in South Africa are well-armed as they control the ideological apparatus of the country. Not only do they have the media behind them, but they also control universities, academic journals, the publishing industry and the economy itself" (Maloka, 2014: 257). Friedman (2021) has pointed out that to the extent that liberalism in South Africa has been able to sustain past inequalities and thereby White supremacy, liberal Universities in post-apartheid South Africa still expected Black students to conform and adapt to the way things had always operated culturally and academically in these institutions. It was the rejection of this pattern of White dominance sustained by liberal universities that led to the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall student protests across South Africa (Friedman, 2021; Nyoka, 2016: 904). For Nyoka (2016: 904) the student protests were not an isolated confrontation of White dominance and racism in South Africa but were part of an everyday reality despite being over 20 years into non-racial democracy.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016: 4) the fact that the original epicentre 2015 and 2016 student protests in South Africa was a premier institution of higher education such as the University of Cape Town (UCT) was not a coincidence. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016), part of what ignited the protests, more than demands for academic fees to be reduced or not to be increased, was that UCT, like many other liberal South African universities, had "been struggling to transform itself from White domination to an inclusive one". Further, at UCT the student protests were sparked by the enduring presence of an imperial liberal ideologue, Cecil John Rhodes (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016: 4; also see Mpofu-Walsh, 2016). However, it was not just the mere presence of the statue of Rhodes that was being challenged but what the statue

was interpreted to be representing - an enduring legacy of liberal imperialism and White dominance in a democratic society (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016: 4). As Ndlovu-Gatsheni puts it "Rhodes' statue was correctly interpreted as a symbol of the 'metaphysical empire' that has outlived the 'physical empire'. Indeed, the student protests that began at UCT and spread to other University institutions in the country between 2015 and 2016 interpreted the predominantly White nature of these institutions as facilitating a neo-colonization or neo-apartheid (Ndlovu-Gathseni, 2016).

As briefly mentioned above, although the protests also took place in predominantly Black and Afrikaner universities such as Fort Hare University, Walter Sisulu University, Stellenbosch University and University of the Free State, at their core they were concerned with denouncing how universities in South Africa were complicit in perpetuating White supremacy. The understanding of the students was that the ever-rising fees, cultures, curricula and epistemologies found in these universities was a liberal project designed to alienate Black students from accessing an education that could help them change the structural conditions of the country.

As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016: 4) puts it, "by decolonizing' the university, students meant among others structural changes: curriculum change, epistemological paradigm shift from Eurocentric knowledge to African-centred knowledge; and a change of university cultures and systems that are alienating as well as increased and affordable access to education in general". Thus, these student protests could be interpreted and understood as challenging the way predominantly White (and often liberal) institutions were standing in the way of fundamental changes which 1994 had not been able to bring about. For example, at Rhodes University, a University still bearing the very name of Cecil Rhodes, the challenge advanced by members of the Black Student Movement (BSM) was that the institution remained "So White" albeit being a public institution open to students of all races.

Thus, more than fees, the student protests led by the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements should be understood as predominantly contesting the way by which liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa was retaining a system where history, reality and knowledge in general was being taught in such a way that it preserved White supremacy. Liberals and liberal universities, it was argued by the students, treated education and knowledge as though it was a privilege to be reserved for Whites and a few Black elites (Ndlovu-Gathseni and Zondi, 2016). Mpofu-Walsh (2016: 76) argues that although the Rhodes and Fees Must Fall protests challenged the enduring legacies of colonialism and apartheid, they saw South African universities in particular as untouched sights of "colonial glorification". Mpofu-Walsh (2016: 75) adds that the Rhodes Must Fall protests challenged the enduring legacies of liberal inspired White supremacy to the point of spreading to Euro-America. According to Mpofu-Walshe (2016: 75), these student protests had spread to Harvard University in the US and Oxford University in England by the end of 2015. Similarly, in these Euro-American institutions, as in South Africa, the protests challenged liberal institutions for maintaining symbols and cultures that glorified and celebrated symbols of slavery and White dominance through symbols such as statues and portraits of men such as Cecil Rhodes.

To the extent that these student protests symbolised a revolutionary moment in post-apartheid South African history where liberalism itself was challenged, Godsell and Chikane (2016) have argued that the 2015/16 student protests sought to reignite the radical reimagining of South Africa that the ANC had failed to achieve in the 1990s. Indeed, by incorporating the struggles of Black workers within Universities such as Wits, Rhodes and UCT, the student protests began to challenge neoliberalism and the commodification within universities (Godsell and Chikane, 2016: 55). If ANC liberals together with capitalist liberals in the late 1980s and early 1990s facilitated the emergence and eventual dominance of neoliberalism, the student protests in the mid-2010s contested the inequalities that racial inequalities that neoliberalism maintained post-

1994 (Godesell and Chikane, 2016: 55). As Godsell and Chikane (2016: 55) have observed, the students and Black university workers during these protests sought to achieve "the dream of a transformed society that breathes fairness, (substantive) equality, equity and social justice"

Ndlozi (2015) has concurred that the student protests were a challenge to liberalism itself in that in almost all university campuses, protesting students would block other non-protesting students from continuing with academic programmes while the protests were ongoing. This was done in order to bring the universities to a standstill until the demands of the students had been met in the various institutions (Ndlozi, 2015). Denying other students the right to attend classes and to other academic commitments was tantamount to denying those students their right to freedoms of choice, movement and association. This was against liberal values enshrined in the constitution of 1996 (Ndlozi, 2015). Indeed, for Ndlozi (2015), the disruptive and violent nature of the protests posed a threat to the very "core of the liberal establishment". For Ndlozi (2015) to the extent that some White liberals supported the protests, they called for the protests to be "peaceful" and to be conducted within constitutional bounds such that they do not lead to violations of private property and the rights of others. These liberal peace-calls, according to Ndlozi (2015), were merely interpreted as an attempt by liberals to co-op themselves in the struggle of Black students and workers. As Ndlozi (2015), points out, from the perspective of the students it was understood that liberal "if liberal narratives of peace were anything to go by, students would have not arrived at the mass hegemonic spectacle they demonstrated". Thus, the protests in this way, again symbolised the degree to which liberalism is not only unattractive but is also denounced as being White and lacking understanding of the struggles of the Black majority in post-apartheid South Africa.

What can be concluded from this section is that from the perspective of many Black South Africans post-1994, liberalism remains generally seen as an ideological tradition that seeks to

preserve the socio-economic inequalities of the pre-1994 era (Ramose, 2007; Ndlozi, 2015; Madlingozi, 2017). Indeed, although not limited to the three broad contestations discussed in this section, economically, constitutionally and indeed culturally and epistemologically, dominant liberal traditions in post-apartheid South Africa have been interpreted as being concerned with the preservation of White supremacy. Although neoliberalism, according to its advocates in the late 1980s and early to mid-1990s was different to imperial liberalism in that it sought to create a non-racial society based on a universal franchise, it has been perceived as perpetuating racial inequality (Bond, 2000; Terreblanche, 2012).

Similarly, and perhaps inevitably, a constitution whose primary goal was to establish free-market capitalism, albeit, in a non-racial society, has been seen as one concerned with denying the sovereignty of indigenous African leaders due to its Western, White-centric and individualistic values (Ramose, 2007; Matsiqi,2011; Madlingozi, 2017 and Modiri, 2018). In academia and university institutions, liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa has been conceived of as preserving colonial ways of knowing, excluding Black students and as a collaborator in the advancement of a neoliberalism that sustains the socio-economic conditions left by the legacy of colonisation and apartheid (Ndlozi, 2015; Godsell and Chikane, 2016; Mpofu-Wash, 2016; Ndlovu-Gtasheni and Zondi, 2016, Nyoka, 2016). Thus, generally speaking, from the perspective of most (non-White) South Africans, liberalism is essentially, White liberalism in that it seeks to secure Whites interests to the perpetual exclusion of the majority of the country's predominantly non-White population. Thus, it is often generally concluded that liberalism is not an emancipatory tool for Black people (Friedman, 2019 and 2021).

4.3. A Millsian (theoretical) approach to South African Liberalism

This section, in light of the foregoing discussion seeks to apply Mills' ideas as discussed in chapter 3 in order to understand how Mills would suggest South African liberalism could address the challenges it is confronted with in South Africa. As Cardo, (2012: 20) points out, one of "the biggest challenge(s) faced by liberals in our plural and unequal society is to find ways of accommodating diversity and addressing poverty while gaining the momentum of political support". This task, adds Cardo (2012: 20), in part, "requires liberals to meet majority aspirations and quell minority fears, which may seem at odds with one another, but which needs to be done if the liberal project is to succeed" in post-apartheid South Africa.

Similar to Cardo's (2012) view, based on the discussion in the previous section, this study argues that there are at least four challenges confronting liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa. The first is the belief that liberalism is for White people only. The second problem is the misconception that liberalism is innately racist, that is, liberalism is actually 'racial liberalism'. The third problem is that liberalism cannot be an ideology for non-Whites in South Africa. The fourth is the view that liberalism cannot be transformed. Ultimately, it is these challenges, stemming from the history discussed above that this study argues has resulted in liberalism being less attractive in post-apartheid South Africa, despite being the bedrock of the country's post-1994 political order.

However, Mills (1997 and 2017) offers useful theoretical tools with which liberalism can be better understood, retrieved and radicalised instead of being contemptuously rejected. Accordingly, Mills (2017) firstly, liberalism must be re-examined and studied such that we are better able to see what is good and bad about it. By studying liberalism, Mills (2017) argues that it becomes easier to see that liberalism is not monolithic. Instead, liberalism for Mills is context-specific and thus cannot be understood to be referring to the same set of values and

principles in all societies all the time. Indeed, the South African context, as has been discussed in this study, clearly shows that liberalism is contextual and adaptive.

4.3.1. A Millsian approach to conceptually understanding South African liberalism(s)

As has been shown, the liberalism that came to the Cape Colony in the 18th century was an imperial liberalism premised on the inferiority of non-European people. As such, this imperial liberalism was predicated on the idea that White people were superior to non-Europeans. Yet again, imperialism was also divided between pro-capitalist and humanitarian liberals. However, although pro-capitalist liberals were in support of and actually helped in the creation of a racial polity based on White supremacy in from 1910, by the late 20th century, it was these liberals that were calling for the creation of a non-racial South Africa. Similarly, the ANC's liberalism was, from the beginning, a liberalism that differed from imperial liberalisms in that it was non-racial. Additionally, the ANC's liberalism confined itself to constitutional forms of protest against racial oppression in its earlier stages, yet in the post-1948 era during Apartheid, the ANC, like the Liberal Party, adopted extra-legal forms of resisting White domination in South Africa. Lastly, as has been shown in this study, while the ANC's version of liberalism pre-1994 was predominantly a non-racial liberalism, in the post-1994 era, the ANC, due to its complicity in establishing neoliberalism in South Africa, is now predominantly perceived to be complicit in the perpetuation of White supremacy and Black poverty. As has been discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the ANC post-1994 has been predominantly understood to be complicit in the maintenance of past-socio-economic inequalities.

Mills (2017), however, helps us understand that, it is due to context and particular group interests that certain strands of liberalism become dominant. Thus, it is through revisionist approaches that liberalism can be better understood and its various strands appreciated. As

such, while mainstream perspectives like that of Cardo (2012) and van Staden (2019) or Marxist perspectives like that of Mngxitama (2011), Ramose (2012) and Jordan (undated) treat liberalism as referring to one thing, although from different perspectives, liberalism has always had various doctrines. For example, as this study has also tried to demonstrate, while common wisdom in South Africa suggests that the ANC has always been a nationalistic organisation, the ANC has actually always subscribed to liberal values. Thus, liberalism ought to be revisited so that the various strands can stand out and be understood in isolation from one another (Mills, 2017). In this way it becomes easier to isolate those strands of liberalism that have been complicit with white domination from those that reject the oppression of others on the basis of any assumed biological superiority by some social groups.

Similarly, it becomes easier, as Mills argues, to dismiss the idea that liberalism cannot have a radical and emancipatory potential in the context of South Africa. As has been discussed earlier, the ANC's and the Liberal Party's versions of liberalism in South Africa were attractive to most Black and some White liberals due to its non-racial stance. As Egan (2012: 26) has argued, just by reflecting on the history of liberalism between the 1950s and 1980s, one sees that "liberalism was varied, had radical potential and could indeed find common ground with liberation theology". Thus, an argument that suggests that liberalism cannot be radical and emancipatory in the South African context should be seen as both unsustainable and ignorant of liberalism.

Further, as Cardo (2012) and van Staden (2019) have demonstrated, liberalism in South Africa is the most enduring and currently dominant political tradition in South Africa. This is in line with Mills' (2017) assertion that liberalism is globally triumphant. In South Africa, liberalism, although it has become increasingly unattractive over the years post-1994, it remains the bedrock of South Africa's political order (Cardo, 2012, Friedman, 2019 and 2021; van Staden,

2019). While some have argued that the post-1994 political framework has to be based on precolonial African values and philosophies such as Ubuntu and have argued for the return of African traditional sovereignties (Ramose, 2007; Matshiqi, 2012), these views have not posed a serious threat towards replacing liberalism.

In addition, while the ANC has received much criticism from its adoption of neoliberalism thereby sustaining historical inequalities based on race (Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012), the ANC, being an old liberal-leaning organisation has remained the dominant party in South Africa since it took political power in 1994 (Friedman, 2019 and 2021; Van Staden, 2019; Gardner, undated works). Similarly, as Maloka (2014) has pointed out, even the second biggest political party in South Africa, the Democratic Alliance (DA) is the political home of most White and some non-White liberals in post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, not only globally but also more specifically in South Africa, the triumphant nature of liberalism cannot be denied. It is for exactly this reason that liberalism, as Mills (2017) argues, that liberalism ought to be critically studied now more than before. Additionally, Mills (2017) argues that liberalism has to be understood as an umbrella term for various liberalisms. Thus, instead of critiquing liberalism as though it is a single tradition, it is better to first always ask which version of liberalism one is referring to.

Yet, in so far as the general understanding of the liberal tradition itself, Mills (2017), drawing from Grey (1986), argues that liberalism must be understood as encompassing generally four primary tenets. These are: 'individualism', 'egalitarianism', 'universalism' and 'meliorism' (Mills, 2017). Thus, for Mills, liberalism should generally be understood as a political philosophy and political tradition that seeks to advance these values. As he describes it, "liberalism is, broadly-speaking, that anti-feudal ideology of individualism, equal rights and moral egalitarianism (2017:11). Egan (2012) has also argued that Grey's conception of liberalism is indeed the most relevant for the post-apartheid South Africa. For Egan, liberalism

should be understood in line with Grey's liberalism as a *modus vivendi* (2012: 22). For Grey (2000: 20) *modus vivendi*

expresses the belief that there are many forms of life in which humans can thrive...[it] accepts that there are many forms of life, some of them no doubt yet to be contrived, in which humans can flourish. For the predominant ideal of liberal toleration, the best life may be unattainable, but it is the same for all. From a standpoint of modus vivendi, no kind of life can be the best for everyone. The human good is too diverse to be realised in any life. Our inherited ideal of toleration accepts with regret the fact that there are many ways of life. If we adopt modus vivendi as our ideal we will welcome it (also cited in Egan, 2012: 22).

Therefore, through Mills' (2017) and Grey's (2000) conceptualization of liberalism, it becomes easier to understand what the liberal tradition seeks to achieve in its general sense. Further, Mills and Grey assist us in understanding that liberalism is contextual and that even its core values of individualism, egalitarianism and universalism may apply differently in different contexts (Egan, 2012).

4.3. 2. The Challenge of individualism and group rights in South African liberalism

The notion of liberal 'individualism' is often perceived as one of the reasons that liberalism is less attractive for many people in South Africa, especially the Black majority (Letseka, 2016). This for some commentators leads to liberal democracy being unattractive as well. According to Ake (1996: 132), for example, "liberal democracy assumes individualism, but there is little individualism in Africa". Makgoba (1998: 272) has also argued that "individualistic liberalism flies totally against the most things African societies have stood for and cherished - Ubuntu, humanism, tolerance, the elimination of racial and class division, and the emphasis on society". For Godsell (2016: 12), part of the reason why liberal individualism is a concern for most Africans is because mainstream liberalism insists that individuals are "the foundation, the constitutive element of humanity, not groups". This is a problem for most Africans because, as

Magkoba (1998) explains, not only are African societies premised on social units such as families, clans and nations, Africans have also been historically discriminated against racially as a group in South Africa. Therefore, any political ideology that denies group identity in correcting past injustices is not likely to advance the interests of those that have been victims of group-based discrimination (Makgoba, 1998; Letseka, 2016).

For Godsell (2016: 12), many White liberals obsess over fundamental individualism to the extent that there is a common expression among them where they ask "when can we finish with all this race stuff and just be South Africans?". According to Godsell (2016: 12) this stems from a White liberal idea that individualism is an antidote to racialism. Thus, for these predominantly White liberals, most of whom Godsell (2016: 12) suggests are linked to the DA, a commitment to liberalism and therefore, a non-racial society means that individual identities should be prioritised over collective (racial) group identities. Further, Godsell (2016: 12) points out that ironically, White liberal failure to understand group identity in South Africa is also characterised by the prevailing logic that holds that "only when the DA has a Black leader will they attract Black votes" For Godsell (2016: 12), this is a paradox indeed because, on the one hand, White liberals obsess about fundamental individualism while on the other hand, they try to win Black votes by having a leader that, by mere pigmentation, resembles those Black voters. Thus, it can be concluded that both supporters and critics of liberalism in post-apartheid South Africa still struggle to understand the role of liberal individualism vis-a-vis group identity.

Mills (2017), however, in keeping with his main thesis that liberalism is not monolithic, solves this problem by pointing out that not all liberalisms are fundamentally against group interests and group identities. For Mills (2017), Some liberal individualism also has to be contextualised. As an example, Mills (2017) argues that feminist approaches to liberalism, while acknowledging individual identity, are premised on group interests of primarily women as a

collective. Similarly, as with the examples of the history of the ANC and the Liberal Party in South Africa, the possibility of a liberalism that acknowledges group identities, particularly based on race is possible. However, as has been shown in the previous section of this chapter, the ANC seems to have only abandoned its pro-Black stance when it adopted neoliberalism. The latter necessitated a political arrangement that insists on fundamental individual civil protections in order for free-market capitalism to thrive (Bond, 2000: Schneider, 2003). However, this retreat by the ANC from the 1980s to the 1990s cannot be interpreted to mean that liberalism naturally cannot recognize group identities and interests beyond viewing them as voluntary associations.

Further, Mills (2017), drawing from Cudd (2006), points out that in order for liberalism to be able to correct the injustices of the past such as racial and patriarchal oppression, it needs to be able to acknowledge the existence of 'non-voluntary social groups'. This is because, For Mills (2017) any theory that seeks to undo historical injustices needs to first acknowledge that oppression is a group-based phenomenon. Thus, non-voluntary social groups, such as dominated classes, from a Marxist perspective; women, from a feminist perspective; or non-Whites from a critical race theory perspective, should be a fundamental part of a variant of liberalism that seeks to genuinely address historical injustices. As Godsell points out, in post-apartheid South Africa, "group-identity is about issues derived from and determined by race-based experiences" (2016: 12). Those experiences are tied to economic, religious, cultural and class interests.

Thus, to adopt a liberal perspective that is blind to these realities is to render liberalism an ineffective tool to address those past injustices. Friedman (2019) adds that part of the problem with mainly White DA liberals, for example, has been the idea that those amongst its leaders who call for redistributive policies in order to address issues such as the poverty confronting predominantly Black people are merely referred and reduced to 'nationalists' and not 'true

liberals'. This is ignorantly in spite of the fact that imperial liberalism in South Africa, from the 18th century up until 1994 was premised on exclusively advancing the interests of the White population. Yet, Mills (2017) argues that such attitudes should not deter those who still believe in the emancipatory potential of liberalism from developing a liberal theory that honestly acknowledges groups and group oppression. Not only is liberalism capable of this, but only a liberalism that acknowledges group oppression is capable of addressing historical injustices based on group oppression.

4.3.3. Liberalism, racism and the Racial Contract

The historical complicity of liberalism and racism in South African history has been discussed in great length and contextualised in this study. In regard to that discussion, it has been argued that capitalist and humanitarian liberals overtly created and sustained a racialized polity. Yet, mainly from the 1980s until and after 1994, dominant variants of liberals have internationally and domestically advocated for the establishment of a non-racial South Africa (Redden Jr, 1988; Bond, 2000; Schneider, 20003; Terreblache, 2012). However, as Egan (2012: 21) points out, liberalism in South Africa remains generally understood as a swear word. Thus, although liberalism is the most enduring and oldest political ideology that also constitutionally underpins post-apartheid South Africa (Cardo, 2012, Egan, 2012 and van Staden, 2019), it still remains seen as a racist ideology designed to protect White interests (Egan, 2012: Friedman, 2019). Ironically, this view is also shared by many of those in the ANC (Gardner, 36). According to Gardner (Undated: 36) "for many ANC members 'liberals' are still regarded as the enemy". However, this is mainly because of the enduring stereotype when one uses the term "liberal" to refer to another, this is interpreted as referring to predominantly non-Afrikaner Whites in post-apartheid South Africa (Gardner, undated: 36). That the ANC predominantly and most Black people still perceive liberalism to be White and racist is because the DA, a product of

the conservative Progressive Party (PP) is the political home of most White liberals. Thus, to a significant degree, that the DA, being the political home of many former members of the PP combined with the knowledge that the DA pushes a neoliberal agenda in post-apartheid South Africa, liberalism is seen as a White racist agenda to uphold and perpetuate White supremacy.

The extent to which other dominant liberal institutions such as the Free Market Foundation, the ANC and liberal institutions of higher education are accused of the same charge as the DA has been discussed already in this study. Therefore, it suffices to conclude that in post-apartheid South Africa liberalism is still predominantly perceived as a racist ideology, primarily designed to secure and protect White interests. Additionally, the historical complicity of liberalism with racism in South Africa has led to the sustained idea that liberalism cannot be transformed such that it addresses historical injustices and the enduring legacies of colonialism and apartheid that manifest themselves in current socio-economic issues confronting post-apartheid South Africa (Egan, 2012, Maloka, 2014: Friedman, 2019). As such, it is often concluded that liberalism cannot advance Black people's interests in the democratic South Africa.

Mills (1997 and 2017) however, argues that by understanding this historical complicity of liberalism with racism and White supremacist state development through the lenses of the 'racial contract' theory, we can better see the possibility of retrieving liberalism. Further, by understanding South African liberalism through the lenses of the racial contract, we can better account for why South African liberalism and the liberal polity have not been able to address White supremacy and racial inequality post-apartheid. For Mills (2017) it does happen that after long political struggles, there develops at last, a seeming equality that later turns out to be more nominal than substantive, so that justice and equal protection are still effectively denied even while being triumphantly proclaimed in constitution and political rhetoric. For Mills, this

is because the currently dominant and ubiquitous Rawlsian social contract tradition actually remains a racial contract.

As pointed out in chapter three of this study, according to Mills (1997), the racial contract can be seen as three contracts in one. There is the moral contract, the political contract and an epistemological contract. Thus, this study uses three sub-contracts to make sense of South African liberalism and its complicity with racism. How the three sub-contracts of the racial theory function can be summarised as follows: Firstly, according to Mills (1997: 14) "the moral contract presents a pre-existing objectivist morality and thus constrains the terms of the political contract". It is through this moral contract which Mills also refers to as the 'state of nature' where it is decided what constitutes personhood and therefore who qualifies as a person and a sub-person (Mills, 1997). It is at this stage where the rights, duties and protections of people are determined and denied to those considered to be sub-persons (1997). The moral contract therefore, determines how the emergent polity functions (Mills, 1997). Thus, the political contract is a mere physical and practical manifestation of the political contract because the political contract establishes the actual state or society. The epistemic contract is concerned with prescribing for its signatories and beneficiaries an "inverted epistemology" or an epistemology of ignorance. This epistemic or 'White ignorance' that allows its signatories to misunderstand the racist world or society that signatories to the racial contract are responsible for creating thereby absolving themselves of any responsibility for a racialized polity (Mills, 2017: 18-19).

By studying the history of liberalism in South Africa and its complicity with racism, it becomes easy to see how the 1910 South African state came about and why it became a racial polity that denied equality to non-White people. As discussed in chapter two of this study, when capitalist liberals such as Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit created a racial polity based on the supremacy of

White people, this was inspired by the imperial belief that Whites were the superior race and Blacks were inferior. Thus, from the perspective of racial contract theory, it is not surprising that South Africa emerged a racist state. However, this doesn't explain how post-1994 South Africa, although premised on non-racialism, has remained perceived to be sustaining White supremacy and her equality as only nominal and not substantive.

This phenomenon, from a racial contract perspective can be explained by appreciating that when the US congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in 1988 in an effort to end apartheid, establish a non-racial democratic South Africa and to introduce neoliberalism, the racial supremacy of Whites in South Africa was retained (Redden Jr, 1988, Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003 and Terreblanche, 2012). As such, although the 'new' moral contract of the 1980s advanced by the USA and capitalist liberals in South Africa purported to be non-racial, the kind of polity neoliberalism needed was one that would essentially perpetuate White supremacy (Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003 and Terreblanche, 2012). This is because neoliberalism, it was argued, would necessitate a social contract based on the general will of the people (Bond, 2000, Schneider, 2003). Secondly, advocates of neoliberalism in South Africa and abroad argued that neoliberalism would encourage economic competition between citizens, which in turn, necessitates a non-racial political arrangement (Bond, 2000; Schneider, 2003).

According to Bond (2000) besides the US government, internationally, the World Bank acted as a 'knowledge bank' in the processes leading up to a democratic South Africa in the late 1980s and early to mid-1990s. For Bond (2000: 155-6). The World Bank played a prolific role in the maintenance of the socio-economic status quo in South Africa in those years. The World Bank did this by not only offering financial (loan) assistance to the ANC government, but in that its conditions for supporting the transition in South Africa included the suppression of any

socialist or redistributionist policies even where such policies were necessary to reverse past injustices (Bond, 2000: 155). Similarly, and perhaps inevitably, trade unions and the ANC took a neoliberal turn in the hope that indeed, through a neoliberal economy, the economic growth would 'trickle down' thereby benefiting even the poorest of the poor (Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012).

However, the political contract that manifested post-1994 has demonstrated the idealistic and abstract nature of the moral contract that was agreed upon during the years leading up to 1994. As Bond (2000: 55-6) points out, in the years leading up to democracy "under South Africa's prevailing conditions, the search for an abstract social contract based on the General Will instead degenerated into a form characteristic of faltering economies on the world's semiperiphery: corporatism mixed with elements of populism, patronage politics and neoliberalism". Under these conditions in South Africa, poverty, high unemployment rates, and the retention of racial inequality characterise South Africa's post-1994 era (Terreblanche, 2012, 2019 and 2021).

According to Terreblanche (2010, 2012 and 2019) neoliberalism in South Africa was always bound to reproduce, if not, exacerbate pre-1994 socio-economic injustices because of at least two reasons. The first is that neoliberalism, unlike did not merely depend on a non-racial political arrangement. Neoliberalism capitalism, unlike its predecessor laissez-faire capitalism, required fairly skilled labour more than unskilled labour (Terreblanche, 2010 and 2012). However, apartheid's Bantu Education had been designed to achieve exactly the opposite in so far as the Black population is concerned (Terreblanche, 2010 and 2012). Consequently, this meant that in reality, in its manifestation post-1994 South Africa would be one characterised by high unemployment rates and inevitably poverty and mass criminality amongst the majority Black population. Secondly, the neoliberal arrangement agreed upon by Western and South Africa's capitalist liberals, the ANC as well as the trade union movements meant that what

would manifest in post-apartheid South Africa is retention of land and property by those who had acquired it through unjust racial dispossession (Bond, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). Hence, Aubrey Matshiqi's (2018) insistence that post-1994 South Africa still "belongs to those who conquered it".

Thus, by employing Mills' theorization, it can be concluded that the political contract that manifested in South Africa, the 1996 Constitution, was a manifestation of the moral contract agreed upon by the USA, international organisations such as the IMF and World Bank, and the ANC together with South African trade union organisations (Bond, 2000; Scnheider, 2003; Terreblanche, 2012). This political contract, in the form of the post-apartheid constitution which Bond (2000), Madlingozi (2017) and Modiri (2018) convincingly argue inaugurated a neo-apartheid in South Africa, is a product and not a surprise from a Millsian perspective of the racial contract. It was premised on idealistic and abstract Rawlsian contractarianism in how it was imagined that a 'just' society, different to the previous ones preceding it, would be established by adopting a non-racial constitution and simultaneously adopting a neoliberal framework.

This was indeed idealistic, falling into what Mills (2017) regards as the 'Rawlsian *ideal theory*' that assumes 'equality' without realistically taking into account historical injustices at a socioeconomic level. A constitutional arrangement premised on mere individual equality irrespective of race while not accounting for the group oppressions and inequalities resulting from racial discrimination was always bound to perpetuate inequality when observed from a Millsian perspective. Thus, in as much as the post-apartheid liberal constitutional arrangement has produced a politically non-racial polity; socio-economically, it has unfortunately facilitated the retention and perpetuation of what resembles a racial polity. Hence Friedman (2021) points out that South Africa remains a racially divided society, making it the most unequal in the world.

According to Mills (1997: 18), as chapter 3 discusses, "the requirements, of 'objective', cognition, factual and moral, in a racial polity are in a sense more demanding in that officially sanctioned reality is divergent from factual reality". Thus, an epistemic ignorance is a central component of a racial polity in that its signatories agree to see the world they have created wrongly. For Mills (1997: 19), the racial contract requires "a certain schedule of structured blindness and opacities in order to establish and maintain" a racial polity. Indeed, this is happening in South Africa post-apartheid and it can be demonstrated in at least two ways.

Firstly, on their part, White liberals, although they were at the forefront of bringing about a neoliberal economic order in South Africa, yet today they exclusively blame the ANC government for not being able to transform the country (Gradner, Friedman, 2021). For example, Martin van Staden of the Free Market Foundation, in a 2022 article titled *The ANC's Socialist thinking is crushing South Africa's Future*, has criticised the prominence of ministers such as Nkosazana Damini-Zuma and Thulas Nxesi for continuing to advocate for some socialist policies. As the title of his article suggests, the FMF's van Staden (2022) continues to exclusively see that continued inequality of South Africa as being perpetuated by some ANC members and not the neoliberal economic order that the FMF itself was central in bringing about. Equally, the DA has for long criticised the ANC's Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment policies as being central to South Africa's continued inequality (Saba, 2018). These constitute prime examples of how predominantly White liberals continue to employ epistemological ignorance concerning the country's history and reality. As Mills (1997 and 2017), White ignorance allows Whites to misinterpret the realities of the world which they themselves have created.

Indeed, as the previous section of this chapter has demonstrated, higher education student protests between 2015 and 2016 in South Africa have exposed and highlighted the extent to which predominantly liberal universities, and mainstream South African history from the

perspective of White liberals in South Africa continues to sustain racial inequalities by financially and culturally excluding non-White students (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Zondi, 2016; Mpofu-Walsh, 2016; Nyoka, 2016). The Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall student movements have exposed how liberals continue to perpetuate knowledge systems and epistemologies that construct Eurocentric-American liberal epistemologies to the exclusion of African-centric ones. In this process of reproducing colonial epistemologies, liberal universities and scholars in particular, predominantly absolve themselves of any complicity in historical racism and currently prevailing socio-economic relations in South Africa (Godesll and Chikane, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016; Mpofu-Walsh, 2016). In these discourses, liberals often apportion blame for past inequalities to apartheid, almost as though they were not complicit in those with apartheid policies or racial discrimination (Godsell and Chikane, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016).

However, in as much as Mills also refers to epistemic ignorance as 'White ignorance' to suggest that it is primarily an ignorance that Whites adopt in order to misinterpret realities of racial inequality in liberal societies, the ANC can also be accused of epistemic ignorance in post-apartheid South Africa (Gardener, undated works). In his paper titled *how liberal is the current ANC* Gardner (undated: 36) has pointed out that for many members of the ANC, to be liberal is still regarded as anti-Black and therefore to be an 'enemy'. For Godsell (undated) after Thabo Mbeki's ousting as the leader of the ANC and of the country, and since the leadership of Jacob Zuma, for most members of the ANC liberalism and neoliberalism are actually seen as an agenda that is being pushed by the DA and White capitalists to the disadvantage of Blacks. However, not only is this a misreading of its own history, the ANC, as has been shown in this study has not only always subscribed to liberalism but was also at the core of establishing a constitutional democracy characterised by a neoliberal economic arrangement that has resulted in the continuation of historical racial inequality (Bond, 200: Schneider, 2003; Terreblanche,

2012). Thus, by borrowing from Mills (1997 and 2017), it can be concluded that this constitutes an epistemological ignorance that assists the ANC as a fundamentally liberal organisation to absolve itself from the crime of maintaining racialized unequal socio-economic realities.

4.3.4. Towards a Black Radical Liberalism

As an alternative form of liberalism, seeing that mainstream contractarian liberalism is unable to offer an emancipatory liberalism conscious of historical injustices, Mills (2017) suggests "Black radical liberalism'. The problem however, is that due to Mills' unfortunate death in 2021, Mills had not yet fully developed the concept of Black radical liberalism and had suggested in *Black Rights/White Wrongs* that this would be part of his future project (Mills 2017). However, at the core of his idea of a 'Black radical liberalism' Mills (2017: 202) Mills argued that the primary concern of his proposed version of liberalism was to "produce a self-consciously anti-racist liberalism". This version of liberalism, although referred to, in part as 'Black' would not be exclusively for Black people only just as feminist versions of liberalism are not only for women. For Mills (2017), this Black radical liberalism would be a form of concoction of various liberal values and approaches based on the contextual experiences of those who have been victims of sustained racial inequality in liberal societies. In part it would socialist, feminist - since racial discrimination also has patriarchal elements and would also be redistributionist.

However, what is important to note is that Mills (2017) does not personally prescribe the limits of his proposed Black radical liberalism but instead opens the idea up to be co-developed by those who have faith in the emancipatory potential of liberalism but who also see the need to retrieve liberalism from its historical complicity with racism and White supremacy. As such, this study also does not concern itself with proposing a fully-fledged idea of how Black radical

liberalism would look like in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, this study suggests that that as Friedman (2019) has suggested, a liberalism based on Black people's lived realities in South Africa can still be developed seeing that the liberalism of the ANC, with socialist elements was largely defeated by the mid to late 1990s and replaced by neoliberalism, although very few micro-economic socialist elements remain (Terreblanche, 2012).

Additionally, this Black radical liberalism in South Africa could incorporate in part, Egan's (2012) proposed *modus vivendi* which not only acknowledges the contextuality of liberalism but also takes into account group interests in a plural society with a history of racial inequality such as South Africa. For Egan (2012: 23), a *modus vivendi* which can loosely be described as an arrangement or agreement designed to allow conflicting parties to co-exist peacefully also requires *modus intelligendi*. A *modus intelligendi* according to Egan (2012) is "a way of making sense of the past" and in order for South African liberalism generally, to survive much longer, it would need to adopt these two elements.

Further, Friedman (2017) has suggested that some elements of Richard Turner's radical version of liberalism could also provide a useful alternative for those seeking to retrieve liberalism from its complicity with race and White supremacy. For Friedman (2017), it was Turner's radical liberalism in the 1970s that inspired a lot of White university students and youth to protest racism in South Africa. For example, as Friedman (2017) reminds, Turner insisted that liberals in South Africa ought to be conscious of race and racial injustices that they have been complicit in. As opposed to being 'blind to race' Turner inspired young White students to challenge the decision by the University of Cape Town to not employ renowned anthropologist Archie Mafeje in 1968 in compliance with the Apartheid government which did not allow academic positions in White institutions to be given to Black people in South Africa (Friedman, 2017).

4.3. Conclusion

Therefore, it is such colour or race-conscious and radical elements, combined with socialist, redistributionist; and *modus vivendi* and *intelligendi* that this study proposes could be taken as some of the ingredients towards the creation of an emancipatory variant of liberalism that Mills (2017) refers to as Black radical liberalism. As Friedman (2018 and 2019) points out, the kind liberalism that post-apartheid South Africa needs, in light of the challenges it faces, some of which have been discussed here, and in light of its undeniable dominant nature globally and in South Africa, is one that is primarily premised on the experiences of Black people. A liberalism that continues to deny even the significance of race in a society such as South Africa is not bound to survive for long but will merely perpetuate the notion that liberalism is only a racial liberalism and cannot be retrieved for a radical agenda, as Mills (2017) argues is the case even in the American context.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUDING CHAPTER

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with three brief sections. The first section summarises the main argument or thesis advanced in this study. The second section is concerned with reflecting on and discussing some of the weaknesses of this study. The third section is concerned with discussing potential future research questions that may arise from this research.

5.2. Summary of the main argument/thesis

This study aimed to understand "why does liberalism have limited attractiveness in democratic South Africa". This question arises out of a context where despite liberalism being the bedrock of South Africa's post-apartheid legal and political order and also despite liberalism being the oldest and most enduring political ideology in South Africa (Cardo, 2012; Friedman, 2019 and van Staden, 2019). It has been shown that in post-apartheid South Africa, liberalism continues to be seen as a swear word due to its historical complicity with the interests of the White population to the exclusion of the predominantly Black South African population (Egan, 2012; Friedman, 2019). This study has shown that enduring historical complicity of liberalism with Whiteness or White's interests to the exclusion of non-Whites has its roots in British imperialism of the 18th and 19th centuries (Mehta, 1999). The kind of liberalism that was whose seeds were planted in the Cape Colony in the 18th century were premised on the version of liberalism that did not recognize plurality or difference. In this way, this variant of liberalism pioneered amongst others by John Locke interpreted racial difference to mean that Europeans were of biologically superior and civilised compared to peoples of non-European descent. Thus, as has been discussed, this dominant imperial variant of liberalism, as it also did in the

Cape Colony, held that the central duty of empire was to çivilize' non-Europeans who advocates of this doctrine considered to be 'backward' and 'uncivilised' (Mehta, 1999).

However, one of the main points raised in this study has been that liberalism is context-specific and has never been monolithic. In both Britain, its land of birth, and South Africa, liberalism before and after 1910, when the Union of South Africa was established, was largely dominated by two variants of imperial liberalism. The one saw capitalism as the best approach through which to achieve British domination while the other saw the humanitarian approach to imperialism as more viable. It has been argued in this study that both versions of imperial liberalism were racist in that they were premised on the notion of non-European inferiority. However, it was the pro-capitalist version of imperial liberalism that was more dominant and prevailed in establishing the Union of South Africa.

Accordingly, this study has argued that given that the foundational versions of South African liberalism were racist, the Union of South Africa emerged as a racialized polity inspired by a racial capitalist imperial liberalism. This racist imperial capitalist liberalism has survived and remained dominant from 1910, to the apartheid years and indeed post-apartheid. However, the more humanitarian version of liberalism survived, predominantly referred to as ''Cape liberalism. In the years between 1910 approximately, until the late 1960s, the humanitarian imperial liberalism remained racist in that while it did not completely agree with the exclusion of non-Whites on the basis of race, it required that non-Whites first attain qualifications such as Christian education, Western values and property in order to attain full personhood and therefore be accepted as an equal to members of the White South African population.

It has also been argued in this study that the humanitarian version of imperial liberalism inspired the development and evolution of another version of liberalism that was explicitly anti-racist, and called for the equality of all of South Africa's people irrespective of race. This non-racial version of liberalism chiefly led by the ANC subscribed to international liberal

values such as those found in the Atlantic Charter but it did not disagree with the notion of British imperial domination, at least not until South Africa became a republic in 1961. Thus, this study has pointed out that although dominant wisdom in South Africa suggests that the ANC was merely a nationalistic organisation, the ANC has always been liberal in its ideological orientation. The notion that the ANC was nationalistic was predominantly from white liberals who subscribed to the idea of a qualified franchise for Africans. Ironically, before and after 1994, many ANC members still regarded the word 'liberal' to be referring to the English-speaking whites in South Africa, whom it accused of establishing and perpetuating racism.

Yet, as has been argued in chapter 2, it was actually the Liberal Party (LP) that was more nationalistic and radical in its approach due to its predominantly communist White membership. Although the Liberal Party was established in 1953 and died in 1968, it played a significant role in providing a variant of liberalism that was more radical, militaristic and nationalistic to oppose White supremacy during the apartheid years. While its lifespan was less than twenty years, the LP attracted a lot of Black members. However, the LP, because of its predominantly White leadership, was still untrusted by many Blacks because by the late 1960s, the idea that liberalism was for whites only had already been cemented in South Africa. Indeed, regardless of these criticisms, the LP's existence and difference to the humanitarian and racist version of liberalism of the Progressive Party and that of capitalist liberals, serves as evidence that South African liberalism has never been monolithic nor have all variants of liberalism been White-centric and anti-Black.

However, post-1994, as this study has shown that liberalism continues to receive limited attractiveness due to sustained racialized socio-economic inequalities. This is because while liberal democracy was expected by many South Africans to establish a non-racial society in which all would be equal, this has not been achieved to the disappointment of the majority of

the country's population. This has largely been due to neoliberalism. This study has tried to show how from the 1980s the American government, International Monetary Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and domestic liberal institutions such as the Free Market Foundation to mention just a few, were able to cajole the ANC into implementing neoliberal economic policies.

While it was largely assumed that a neoliberal free-market economy would increase non-racialism and eventually irradicate past inequalities, the opposite was always bound to happen. This is because neoliberalism predominantly required skilled labour which unfortunately most black people did not possess by the 1990s due to apartheid. Neoliberalism, this study has shown, was bound to maintain colonial and apartheid racial inequalities because its predominantly Western and domestic advocates managed to convince the ANC to do away with its predominantly socialist and redistributionist policies. The ANC's socialist policies as enshrined in its 1955 Freedom Charter had the potential to uplift many Black South Africans from poverty.

As a result of these sustained racialised historical inequalities, most South Africans, as seen through the 2015 and 2016 student protests, seem to have lost faith in the emancipatory potential for liberalism. The predominant view amongst Black students, academics and political commentators is that liberal democracy and liberalism as an ideology have merely sought to sustain past inequalities. Similarly, and perhaps, ironically, a significant number of ANC members still see liberalism as an ideology for White people, despite this organisation being a fundamentally liberal organisation itself. This is also fuelled by the fact that the Democratic Alliance (DA), a self-proclaimed home of liberals post-1994, also considers Black political leaders who advocate for Black people's upliftment socio-economically as 'nationalist' even when they are within the DA itself. DA liberals continue to see pro-Black policies as nationalist even when they are advanced within a liberal framework (Friedman,

2019). Therefore, it is often concluded, liberalism is incapable of addressing the problems that Black people have and thus, no effort is ever made by this part of the population to retrieve liberalism from its inconvenient past in South Africa.

However, this study has borrowed Charles Mills' (1997 and 2017) key ideas to try and understand the problems that South African liberalism is confronted with and how to make sense of them from a theoretical point of view. By using these ideas, this study aimed to not only make sense of the challenges confronting South African liberalism but to also see how liberalism can be "retrieved for a radical agenda" to borrow from Mills (2017) himself. Mills has been used in this study to show that liberalism's historical complicity with racism is a product of group interests under certain contexts. Yet, this does not mean that liberalism cannot be retrieved such that it can be emancipatory for those who have been victims of racial oppression (Mills, 2018). At a theoretical level, this study has shown that some of the popular contests against liberalism such as individualism, inability to recognize group rights, colour blindness, racism and epistemic ignorance only represent the mainstream ubiquitous Rawlsian contractarian liberalism. However, not all liberalisms are contractarian, fundamentally individualistic and therefore unable to recognize group rights. Nor are all liberalisms racist, colour-blind and epistemically ignorant.

Accordingly, this study, by drawing From Mills (2017) has argued that there exists a potential for the development of Mills' proposed 'Black Radical Liberalism' in theory and in practice as an antidote to the currently dominant contractarian liberalism that perpetuates racial inequality while purporting to be non-racial. It has been pointed out that due to Mills 'passing before he could fully develop his proposed variant of liberalism, there already exist socialist, feminist, pro-Black, and radical theoretical and practical tools in South Africa which can be drawn from in the development of a South African version of a Black radical liberalism.

5.3. Reflections on the Study

While Mills (1997 and 2017) ideas are used as the theoretical foundation of this study, not all of Mills' criticisms and ideas have been explored for the purposes of this research. This study has limited itself to those ideas that are relevant to answering the research question of this study and those that offer an alternative comprehension of the liberal tradition. For example, this study has not gone into much detail concerning Mills' (2017) criticism of what he refers to as the Rawlsian *ideal theory* in as much as it is mentioned a number of times in this research, relevance, space and time constraints have not allowed for a comprehensive discussion of what is wrong with '*ideal theory'*.

However, in his Black Rights/White Wrongs, Mills (2017) dedicates an entire chapter to discuss in detail what he finds wrong with the John Rawls understanding of liberal justice and how it actually perpetuates racism. It is mainly in relation to the discussion on Anne Cudd's notion of 'non-voluntary social groups' that some discussion of ideal theory is found. Similarly, this study does not spend much time discussing the alternative that Mills (2017) suggests, which is '*non-ideal theory*'. Mills (2017) suggests that '*non-ideal theory*' is a theoretical predicate of his proposed Black radical liberalism.

Secondly, due to the unfortunate passing of Mills in 2021, without having time to develop a solid or concrete understanding of his proposed Black radical liberalism, this study has not been able to suggest exactly how this Black radical liberalism in South Africa would look. Instead, this study has, almost as Mills (2017) does, limited itself to suggesting possible ideas, concepts and liberal leaning ideas and theories that could be brought together to form contribute towards the development of a South African-centric version of Black radical liberalism.

Thirdly, another limitation of this study is that, in as much as it sought to follow the revisionist approach to understanding liberalism that Mills (1997 and 2017) adopts, it has limited itself to

studying those variants of liberalism that have been dominant in South Africa's history. However, for the purposes of developing a radical approach to liberalism, ideas such as that of Richard Turner as discussed by Friedman (2017), albeit not being dominant in South African history, are worth considering. South African history is replete with examples of liberal-leaning organisations, individuals and institutes whose variants of liberalism may not have been dominant but who may still offer useful insights to better understanding the nature of liberalism in South Africa. Equally, these less-dominant views of liberalism such as those of Black liberals such as Jordan Ngubane may be explored in order to retrieve liberalism from its inconvenient history with racism and racial inequality.

5.4. Potential future research stemming from this study

One of the interesting questions that this research study has not had the space to pursue is how compatible or incompatible liberalism is with the philosophy of Ubuntu. As this study has shown in chapter 4, those who challenge the Africanness and therefore relevance of liberal constitutionalism in South Africa often offer Ubuntu as the best alternative predicate of a postconquest constitution in South Africa (see Ramose, 2007; Sibanda, 2016; Madlingozi, 2017 and Modiri, 2018). In part, this view is based on the understanding that liberalism is primarily individualistic and thus does not recognize group rights and group oppression as has been discussed in this study. However, as Cudd (2006) and Mills (2017) have shown, liberal variants such as utilitarianism and feminism do prioritise group interests over the individual. On their side, advocates of decolonization often suggest that Ubuntu best appreciates the value of the collective, and can best facilitate both historical justice and reconciliation between South Africans. Yet, it remains to be seen as to whether Ubuntu and liberalism can be compatible in democratic South Africa.

Secondly, while this study suggests that liberalism has limited attractiveness to most South Africans post-1994 while also being the foundation of South Africa's democracy, this study has not explored the feasibility of an illiberal democracy in South Africa. While Harden (2014) has pointed out that there are illiberal elements in South Africa's liberal democracy, a comprehensive study has not been pursued to understand the extent to which a totally illiberal democracy may arise should liberalism continue to be denounced and rejected by most South Africans. With the rise of Marxist-Leninist organisations such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) that have received much support amongst many young and poor Black South Africans, and with the relative decline of the ANC as the ruling party combined with the stagnant growth of the outright liberal DA, it remains unclear as to whether South Africa's democracy will always remain liberal (Van Staden, 2019). It would be interesting to see how future research might provide insight into this concern that this current research study has not been able to pursue.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with providing an overview and summary of the main arguments made in this study. It has also provided a reflection on some of the limitations and perhaps weaknesses of this research study and to an extent, in light of these weaknesses, it has provided insights into potential research questions and topics that may be pursued. Research is never concluded and this chapter has served to demonstrate that this study has only been but a minute contribution and insight in an ocean of questions and concerns about South Africa's history, present and future with liberalism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Africa Check (2017) 'FACTSHEET: Social grants in South Africa - separating myth from reality', 28 February 2017., https://africacheck.org/fact-checks/factsheets/factsheet-social-grantssouth-africa-separating-myth-reality.

Ake, C. (1996) *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution.

Anievas, A. and Nisancioglu, K., (2015) *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press

Ashforth, A. (1990) *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa.* Oxford:Clarendon Press.

Ashforth, A. (1997) 'Lineaments of the Political Geography of State Formation in Twentieth-Century South Africa'. *Journal of Historical Sociology* vol. 10 (2).

Ashman, S., Fine, B., and Newman, S. (2011) 'The crisis in South Africa: Neoliberalism, Financialization and Uneven and Combined Development'. *Socialist Register*, vol. 47: 174–195. https://socialistregister.com/index.php/srv/articl.

Bond, P. (2000) *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa*. Scottsville:University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Brown, R. (2015) *The Secret Society: Cecil John Rhodes's Plan for a New World Order*. Cate Town: Penguin.

Burke, R. (2010) *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Cardo, M. (2012) 'The Liberal Tradition in South Africa: Past and Present'. Helen Suzman Foundation: Focus. 65. https://hsf.org.za/publications/focus/focus-65/03.%20M_Cardo%20-%20The%20Liberal%20Tradition%20in%20SA.pdf.

Cross, M. and Chisholm, L. (1990) 'The Roots of Segregated Schooling in Twentieth Century South Africa' in Nkomo M. O. (ed.) (1990) *Pedagogy of Domination: Toward a Democratic Education in South Africa*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

Cudd, A.E. (2006) *Analyzing Oppression*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cuthbertson, G. (1989) 'Van Der Kemp and Philip: The Missionary Debate Revisited'. Missionalia, vol. 17 (2): 77-94.

Dawson, W. H. (1963) 'Reviewed of *Bantu, Boer, and Briton: The Making of the South African Native Problem* by W. M. Macmillan, *White Capital and Coloured Labour* by Lord Olivier'. *The Economic Journal*, Sep., 1929, vol. 39 (155): 445-453.

Dladla, N. (2015) 'Book Review: *Friends of the natives: the inconvenient past of South African liberalism,'* https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC186318.

Egan, A., (2018) 'Remembering to think critically: Rick Turner 40 Years on by Anthony Egan, January 2018'. https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/remembering-think-critically-rick-turner-40-years-anthony-egan-8-january-2018.

Fraistat, F. C. (2021) *The Liberalism of Care: Community, Philosophy and Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friedman, S. (2017) 'The Nemesis of the Suburbs: Richard Turner and South African Liberalism'. *Theoria*, vol. 64 (2): 10-19.

Friedman, S. (2019) 'Liberalism in South Africa isn't only for white people – or black people who want to be white'. *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/liberalism-in-

south-africaisnt-only-for-white-people-or-black-people-who-want-to-be-white-125236.

Friedman, S. (2021) *One Virus, Two Countries: What Covid-19 Tells us about South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Gardner, C. (Undated works). 'How Liberal is the Current ANC?' Helen Suzman Foundation, https://admin.hsf.org.za/publications/focus/focus-65/06.%20C_Gardner%20-%20How%20Liberal%20is%20the%20Current%20ANC.pdf.

Gibson, N. C. (2011) *Fanonian Practices in South Africa: From Steve Biko to Abahlali base-Mjondolo*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu–Natal Press.

Godsell, G. and Chikane, R. (2016) 'The Roots of the Revolution, in Booysen, S. (ed.) (2016) *Fees Must Fall; Student Revolt, Decolonization and Governance in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Gordon, D. (2001) 'A Sword of Empire? Medicine and Colonialism in King William's Town, Xhosaland, *1856–189'. African Studies*, vol. 60 (2): 165-183.

Gray, J. (1986) *Liberalism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Harden, B.E. (2014) 'Assessing How Far Democracy in South Africa is Liberal or Illiberal'. https://www.e-ir.info/2014/03/06/assessing-how-far-democracy-in-south-africa-is-liberal-or-illiberal/.

Heartfield, J. (2011) *The Aborigines' Protection Society: humanitarian imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836–1909.* London: Hurst & Company.

Hobson, J. A. (1900) *Capitalism and Imperialism in South Africa*. Tucker Publishing Company.

Hooker, J. (2018) 'Book Review: *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism'*. *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 16 (3): 767.

Hyam, R. (1970) 'African Interests and the South Africa Act, 1908-1910'. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 13 (1): 85-105.

Jordan, Z. P. (2017) *Oliver Tambo Remembered.* Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan.

Jordaan, P.Z. (undated) 'Some Notes on Liberalism'. Helen Suzman Foundation: Focus 65. https://hsf.org.za/publications/focus/focus-65/05.%20ZP_Jordan%20%20Some%20Notes%20on%20Liberalism.pdf.

Lancaster, G. (2019) 'Book Review of *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*'. Marx and Philosophy. 7 March. https://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviews/16646_blackrights-white-wrongs-the-critique-of-racial-liberalism-by-charles-w-mills-reviewed-by-guylancaster/

LeBron, C. (2019) 'Book Review: *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*'. *The Philosophical Review,* vol. 128 (4) (2019): 532–536.

Letseka, M., (2016) *The Amalgamation of Traditional African Values and Liberal Democratic Values in South Africa: Implications for Conceptions of Education*., PhD Thesis, University of South Africa. https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/21805/thesis_letseka_m.pdf?sequence=1.

LeSure, A. (2018) 'Book Review: *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*'. *Political Theory*, vol. 46 (5).

Loggins, J. (2020) 'Book Review: *Black Rights / White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism'*, *National Review of Black Politics*, vol 1 (3): 440–443.

MacDonald, J. (2013) 'Book Review: *The Aborigines' Protection Society: humanitarian imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South Africa, and the Congo, 1836–1909'. Settler Colonial Studies*, vol. 3 (2): 248-253.

Macmillan, W. M. (1929) *Bantu, Boer, and Briton: The Making of the South African Native Problem*. London: Faber & Gwyer.

Madlingozi, T. (2017) 'Social justice in a time of neo-apartheid constitutionalism: critiquing the antiblack economy of recognition, incorporation and distribution'. *Stellenbosch Law Review*, vol. 28 (1).

Madlingozi, T. (2018) 'South Africa's first black lawyers, amaRespectables and the birth of evolutionary constitution – a review of Tembeka Ngcukaitobi's *The land is ours'. South African*

Journal on Human Rights. vol. 34 (3): 517–529.

Magubane, B. M. (1979) *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Magubane, B. M. (1996) *The Making of a Racist State: British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa, 1875-1910.,* Trenton: Africa World Press.

Magubane, B. (2007b) 'Whose memory—whose history? The illusion of liberal and radical historical debates' in H. E. Stolten (ed.) (2007) *History making and present*-day *politics: The meaning of collective memory in South Africa*. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute.

Maimela, M.R. (1999) 'Black Consciousness and White Liberals in South Africa: Paradoxical Anti-Apartheid Politics'. PhD Thesis submitted at the University of South Africa, 1999. https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/17296/thesis_maimela_mr.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

Majeke, N. (1986) 'The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest'. APDUSA. https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/role-missionaries-conquest-nosipho-majeke.

Makgoba, M. W. (1998) 'Opposition, difficulties, and tensions between liberalism and African thought in R. W. Johnson & D. Welsh (eds) (1998) *Ironic Victory: Liberalism in Post-liberation South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Maloka, E. (2014) *Friends of the Natives: The Inconvenient Past of South African Liberalism.* Durban: Millennium Publishing

Mamdani, M. (1996) *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Matshiqi, A. (2018) 'Colonisers have conquered far more than just the land'. *Business Day*, 10 July. https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/columnists/2018-07-10-aubrey-matshiqi-colonisers-have-conquered-far-more-than-just-the-land/.

Mehta, U. S. (1999) *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mills, C.W. (1997) *The Racial Contract*, Cornell University Press: New York.

Mills, C.W. (2017) *Black Rights/ White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*., Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Modiri, J. M. (2018) Conquest and constitutionalism: first thoughts on an alternative jurisprudence. *South African Journal on Human Rights,* vol. 34 (3): 300-325.

Mngxitama, A. (2011) End to Whiteness a Black issue. *Mail & Guardian*. http://mg.co.za/article/2011-10-24-end-to-whiteness-a-black-issue.

Mpofu-Walsh, S. (2016) 'The Game's the Same: 'MustFall' Moves to Euro-America' in Booysen, S. (Ed) (2016) *Fees Must Fall; Student Revolt, Decolonization and Governance in South Africa*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Msimang, P.M. (2022) The IRR as False Witness: How the Institute of Race Relations Strategically Misinforms Us About Racism and Policy (as a Threat to Deliberative Democracy). *Theoria- A Journal of Social and Political Theory,* vol. 61 (1).

Ndluvu-Gathseni, S. J. (2016) 'Introduction: The Coloniality of Knowledge: Between Troubled Histories and Uncertain Futures' in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. and Zondi, S. (eds), (2016) *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa*. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J., and Zondi, S. (eds), (2016) *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa*. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Ndlozi, M. Q. (2015) The #FeesMustFall Movement, Liberalism and the Pursuit of Peace. *The Daily Maverick.* https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-11-09-the-feesmustfall-movement-liberalism-and-the-pursuit-of-peace/.

Ngcukaitobi, T. (2018) *The Land is Ours: South Africa's First Black Lawyers and the Birth of Constitutionalism*. Penguin Books: Cape Town.

Nthai, S. A. (1998) A Bill of Rights for South Africa: An historical overview. *Consultus*, vol. 11 (2):142-147.

Nyoka, B. (2016) Bernard Magubane's The Making of the Racist State Revisited: 20 Years On. *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 47 (8): 903-927.

Oftenburger, A. (2008) *Smallpox and Epidemic Threat in Nineteenth-Century Xhosaland*. African Studies, vol. 67 (2) (2008). Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Oftenburger, A. (2009) *The Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement in History and in Literature*. Yale University, History Compass 7/6 (2009): 1428-1443.

Pateman, C. (1988) *The sexual contract.* Stanford University Press.

Ramose, M. B. (2007) In Memoriam: Sovereignty and the New South Africa. *Griffith Law Review, vol. 16 (2): 310-329.*

Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Redden Jr, T. J. (1988) The US Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act of 1986: Anti-Apartheid or Anti African National Congress? *African Affairs,* vol. 87 (349): 595-605 Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society.

Saba, A. (2018) Has BEE Been a Dismal Failure? *Mail and Guardian*, https://mg.co.za/article/2018-08-31-00-has-bee-been-a-dismal-failure/.

Sachs, E.S. (1965) *The Anatomy of Apartheid.* Collet's: London.

Saunders, C. (1988) *The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class*. David Philip Publishers (Pty) Ltd: Cape Town.

Schneider, G. E. (2003) Neoliberalism and Economic Justice in South Africa: Revisiting the Debate on Economic Apartheid. *Review of Social Economy,* vol. 61 (1): 23- 50 Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable.

Sibanda, S. (2018) "Not Yet Uhuru"- The Usurpation of the Liberation Aspirations of South Africa's Masses by a Commitment to Liberal Constitutional Democracy. PhD thesis, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Simpson, A. W. B. (2001) *Human rights and the end of Empire: Britain and the genesis of the European Convention.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Sisulu, E. (2002) *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime*. David Philip Publishers: Cape Town.

Snail, M. L. (2012) Reflections on the development of Multi-racialism in South Africa: An historical overview. *Revista de Historia Actual*, vol. 10, (2012): 25-42.

Snyder, G.F. (2018), *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism*., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017. PP xxi +281.

Soske, J. (2015) The impossible concept: Settler liberalism, Pan-Africanism, and the language of non-racialism. *African Historical Review,* 47:2, 1-36.

Terreblanche, S. (2002) *A History of Inequality in South Africa: 1652 – 2002.* University of Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg.

Terreblanche, S. (2012) *Lost in Transformation: South Africa's Search for a New Future Since 1986*. MM Review Publishing Company: Johannesburg.

Terreblanche-op-ed-on-wealth-inequality-and-TRC-City-Press-January-2018. https://www.ekon.sun.ac.za/sampieterreblanche/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Terreblancheop-ed-on-wealth-inequality-and-TRC-City-Press-January-2018.pdf.

Terreblanche, S. (2018). The co-optation of the African National Congress: South Africa's original 'State Capture'*, Pambazuka News*, 25 January 2018. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/cooptation-african-national-congress-south-africas-original-state-capture-sampie.

The Freedom Charter, 1955. African National Congress. https://www.anc1912.org.za/the-freedomcharter-2/.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) - A Policy Framework. https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/the_reconstruction_and_development_programm_1994.pdf.

Thompson, L. (2001) *A History of South Africa 3Ed*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London.

Thompson, R. J. (1991) Cecil Rhodes, The Glen Grey Act, and The Labour Question in The Politics of the Cape Colony. Master of Arts Thesis, Rhodes University. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/145050099.pdf.

Thompson, R.J., and Nicholls, B.M. (1993) The Glen Grey Act: Forgotten Dimensions in an Old Theme. *South African Journal of Economic History,* vol. 8 (2): 58-70.

Tully, J. (2008) Modern Constitutional Democracy and Imperialism. *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, vol. 46 (3): 461-493.

Tyler, W. B. (1971) Sir George Grey, South Africa and the Imperial Military Burden, 1855-1860. *The Historical Journal*, vol. 1(3): 581-598.

Van der Pijl, K. (2014) *The Discipline of Western Supremacy.* Modes of Foreign Relations and Political Economy, vol. 3. Pluto Press: London.

Van Staden, M., (2019) The Liberal Tradition in South Africa, 1910-2019. *Econ Journal Watch*, vol. 16 (2): 258–341.

Van Staden, M., (2022) ANC's socialist thinking is crushing South Africa's future. Free Market Foundation. https://www.freemarketfoundation.com/article-view/ancs-socialist-thinking-iscrushing-south-africas-future.

Verschoyle, F., (1900) *Cecil Rhodes; his political life and speeches*, *1881-1900*. Chapman and Hall: London.

Vigne, R., (1997) *Liberals Against Apartheid: A History of the Liberal Party of South Africa, 1953-68.* Martin's Press: New York.