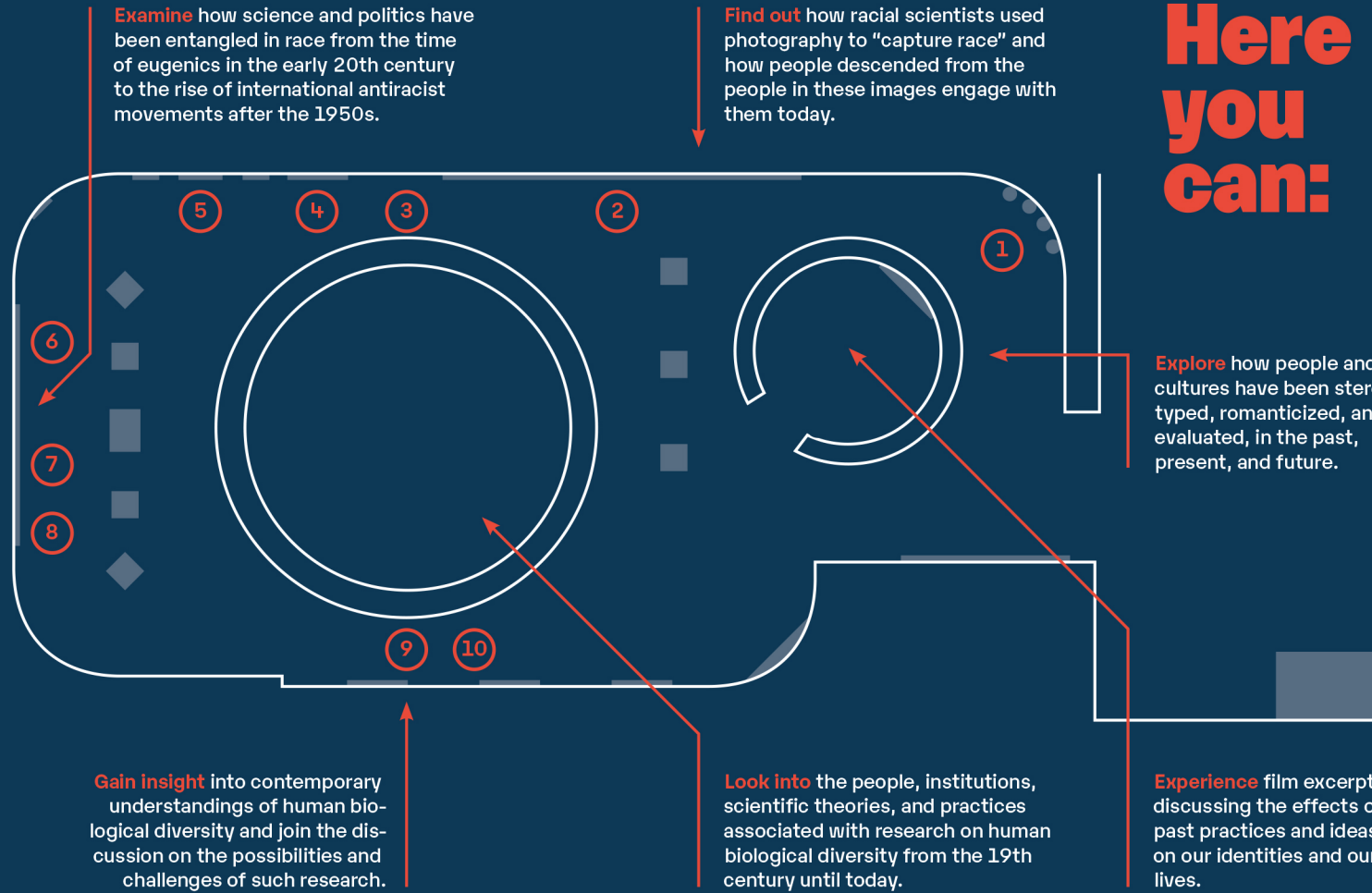


We all originate from Africa, where our ancestors lived over 100,000 years ago. We all belong to the same species, *Homo sapiens*, and our DNA is almost 99.9% identical. The amazing diversity we see as we look at each other cannot be grouped into human races. Our diversity is primarily individual and cultural. Our very small genetic differences follow geographic patterns, which reflect previous environmental challenges, encounters, and movements. They are a product of constant interactions between genes, environments, and social conditions.

But research on human biological diversity has a long and painful history. It has contributed in legitimizing slavery, colonialism, class differences, and nationalism. It has produced the fallacies of immutable human races and racial hierarchies that led to the discrimination, suffering, and even genocide. The heyday of scientific racism is over. However, outdated race science ideas continue to affect us, and racism still exists in our societies.



Examine how science and politics have been entangled in race from the time of eugenics in the early 20th century to the rise of international antiracist movements after the 1950s.

Find out how racial scientists used photography to "capture race" and how people descended from the people in these images engage with them today.

Here you can:

Explore how people and cultures have been stereotyped, romanticized, and evaluated, in the past, present, and future.

Gain insight into contemporary understandings of human biological diversity and join the discussion on the possibilities and challenges of such research.

Look into the people, institutions, scientific theories, and practices associated with research on human biological diversity from the 19th century until today.

Experience film excerpts discussing the effects of past practices and ideas on our identities and our lives.

From racial types to DNA sequences



From racial types to DNA sequences



1 In the 1830s, the University of Oslo acquired a series of 33 casts of phrenological "national" skulls. Phrenologists believed that human aptitudes and tendencies affected the anatomy of the brain and the skull, and suggested specific head shapes were typical of national groups.

Phrenological national skull. University of Oslo (UiO); Institute of Basic Medical Sciences. Photo: Håkon Bergseth/The Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology (NTM).



2 Phrenology was a precursor of physical anthropology. The latter became part of an international set of research fields, known as racial science, which classified and ranked humans in races. All Norwegians eligible for military service in 1920–21 underwent physical-anthropological measurements.

Norwegian recruit, 1920–21. Bryn H. Schreiner K.E. *Die Somatologie der Norwege nach Untersuchungen an Rekruten*. Oslo, 1929. Photographer unknown.



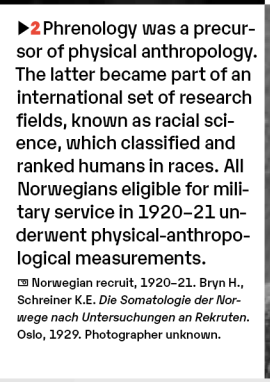
6 Race hygiene (or eugenics) was an international movement which sought to improve the biological qualities of humanity by securing more births from "superior" individuals, while reducing the births from "inferior" people. Many eugenicists aimed to protect the "Nordic race" against race-mixing.

Eugenics propaganda poster, UK (ca 1935). Galton Institute/Eugenics Society Archives, Wellcome Institute Library.

8 Racial discrimination around the world, and accumulating scientific evidence, prompted scientists, activists, and politicians to speak out against racism. Starting in the 1950s, UNESCO began issuing formal statements on race. These became a symbol for postwar anti-racism. Despite diverging opinions, the authors, leading science experts, agreed that humans be-

longed to the same species and that human groups did not differ in their innate capacities for intellectual and cultural development. Race became acknowledged as a social construction, but genetically defined races lived on until the 1970s. The struggle for equality still unfolds in our societies.

UNESCO Courier July-August 1950, UNESCO.



4 Anthropological racial science studied human evolution as well as the origins of human groups and whole nations. This could result in either excluding or including certain groups from the national community. In the 1920s, Norwegian anthropologists Kristian and Alette Schreiner measured and photographed Sami people in Tysfjord and the locals in Setesdal. They assumed the Sami as racially primitive and inferior, while Setesdal was seen as a core area for the "Nordic-Germanic" race, the presumed main element of the Norwegian people.

Inger Nikolaisdatter Tjikkom (f. 1879), with her children Sara and Peder, Tysfjord, 1914. University of Tromsø: Tromsø museum and Arran: Lulesami center. Photo: Johan Brun.

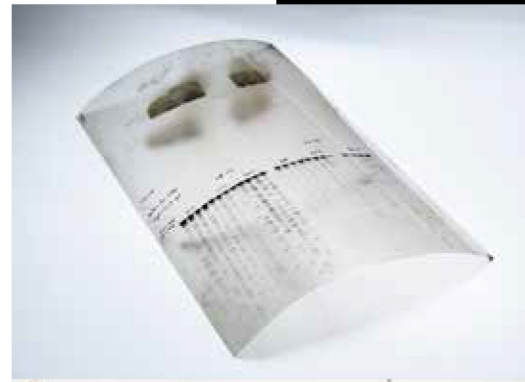
Torleiv Bjuggsson Aakre (1880–1972), Setesdal, 1921. UiO; Institute of Basic Medical Sciences/Norsk Folkemuseum. Photo: Kristian Emil Schreiner.



9 Racial thinking did not only have catastrophic human costs. It also led scientific research astray in mapping human evolutionary history and explaining the patterns of human diversity. The last two decades, genetic research has gone through a technological revolution and is now producing huge amounts of data on individuals and human groups and is changing our understandings of human history. However, research on human variation still raises difficult scientific, political, social and ethical questions. These are related to access to human genetic material, the language, methods and theories employed, and the interpretation of results.

DNA radioutograph. NTM. Photo: Håkon Bergseth/NTM.

Te Papa repatriation ceremony, 2014. US Embassy New Zealand.



3 From the end of the 19th century, museums and universities built up extensive skull collections for anthropological research. Measuring instruments were developed to measure the heads, bodies, and characteristics of living and dead people.

Eye color chart. UiO; Institute of Basic Medical Sciences. Photo: Håkon Bergseth/NTM.

7 In the center of Nazism stood the idea of a racially superior Nordic-Germanic people who had the right to expand at the cost of other races. Together with an intense hatred of Jewish people, this conception was a fundamental motivation for the Nazi genocide. Their policies were based on established racial hygiene ideas and gained support from

a number of scientists outside Germany. Scandinavia was considered the cradle of "Nordic-Germanic" race, while Norwegian racial anthropology was diligently quoted in Nazi propaganda literature.

Jewish children who survived Auschwitz, 1945. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Belarusian State Archive of Documentary Film and Photography. Photographer unknown.

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DNA radioutograph. NTM. Photo: Håkon Bergseth/NTM.

Te Papa repatriation ceremony, 2014. US Embassy New Zealand.



Drawing: Halfdan Bryn, *Über die Augentypen in Norwegen und ihre Vererbungsverhältnisse* (1927).

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