Seminar in Political and Social Theory: Recognition

2nd Term, Academic Year 2024-2025
Mondays, 13.00 – 15.00 (Seminar room 2, Badia)

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Description

Recognition is prominent in different theoretical domains of social and political theory, namely ontology, theories of action and theories of domination. Within ontological debates, recognition is often linked to the understanding of the specifically social nature of humans, when theories understand the subject as someone always already entangled in the recognition practices shared with others. As such, theories of recognition can be closely, if often critically, connected to theories of identity (or indeed: identification) and subjectification.

This, in turn, makes theories of recognition relate to theories of domination, as social roles, rank and status are negotiated through practices of recognition or misrecognition. Power relations are constituted not only through the direct effects of (mis)recognition but also through the underlying discourses and terms within which such recognition is authorised and granted in the first place. Consequently, theories of recognition also inform many symbolic theories of action, focusing, for instance, on practices of stigmatisation or the rituals of the everyday in which performances reconvene or also challenge subject positions and the terms in which they are constituted, such as gifts.

Finally, theories of recognition have become the base of normative theories of democracy and also international politics, be it for the conception of multiculturalism (e.g. Charles Taylor) or as an underlying ontology of a critical theory (e.g. Axel Honneth). This has led to a series of criticisms for their potentially missing integration of phenomena of domination and of (material) distribution.
The seminar is worth 20 credits.

Learning Outcomes

- Researchers will gain an understanding of different debates around recognition across social and political theory
- As recognition is used in ontological theories (identity), theories of social action (symbolic action) and theories of domination, researchers will become sensitive to the ways concepts can be part of translations across these theoretical domains

- Through the seminar readings, discussions, memos and their feedback, researchers learn to think their own research within and beyond concepts and theories of recognition

Format and requirements

The class will be run as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm. Sessions 2-10 will be introduced by researchers who inform and guide the seminar debates. Researchers taking the seminar as elective are required

- To prepare 3 position papers / short essays (at least 1500 words) over the course of the 10-week term after week 3, 7 and 10 (i.e. for each section of the seminar). The course convenor will provide individual feedback to each essay.
  Position papers allow a regular flow of information and communication, a continuous feedback between the student and the teacher. All short essays will receive written feedback. It offers the opportunity of a more person-tailored teaching, a quasi-tutoring, where your individual interests, curiosity, but also potential lacunae can be accommodated. For this reason, it is compulsory in these essays to include questions about things you did not understand, were not sure about, or which have spurred your curiosity and on which you would like to solicit feedback from the teacher.
- To prepare a presentation for at least 2 of the seminars. Handouts for the presentation should be distributed beforehand by Sunday latest.
  Presentations should assume everyone to have read the readings. The main aim consists in providing problematisations and debates for the participants in the seminar. This can include, but is not exhausted by: questions about clarifications and comprehension, problematisations of central issues, comparison with related themes of this or other seminars.
- To send for every session three questions on the readings. These questions should be submitted by Saturday noon, allowing the presenters to organise and to some extent integrate them into their presentations.

Schedule

Introduction
Session 1 (6 Jan 2025). Analysing recognition in social and political theory

Recognition as Ontology: Identity
Session 2 (13 Jan 2025). George Herbert Mead's relational self
Session 3 (20 Jan 2025). Fanon and the colonial self

Recognition as Symbolic Action
Session 4 (27 Jan 2025). Status
Session 5 (3 Feb 2025). Stigma
Session 6 (10 Feb 2025). The Gift
Session 7 (17 Feb 2025). Misrecognition and Symbolic Power

Recognition as Normative ideal
Session 8 (24 Feb 2025). Invisibility
Session 9 (10 Mar 2025). Redistribution or recognition? The Honneth-Fraser debate
Session 10 (17 Mar 2025). Subalternity

Seminars and Readings

Background readings for the entire seminar

Bartelson, Jens. 2016. "Recognition: A Short History." *Ethics & International Affairs* 30 (3): 303–21.

Caillé, Alain & Christian Lazzeri, eds. 2009. *La reconnaissance aujourd'hui*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Hirvonen, Onni and Koskinen, Heikki J., eds (2023). *The Theory and Practice of Recognition.* New York: Routledge.

Honneth, Axel. 2005. *Verdinglichung: Eine anerkennungstheoretische Studie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp (translated as *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea (The Tanner Lectures).* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, with rejoinders by Judith Butler, Raymond Geuss and Jonathan Lear).

Honneth, Axel. 2010. *Das Ich im Wir. Studien zur Anerkennungstheorie*. Berlin: Suhrkamp [translated as *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition*. London: Polity, 2012).

Ikäheimo, Heikki, Kristina Lepold, and Titus Stahl, eds. 2021. *Recognition and Ambivalence*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Iser, Mattias. 2023. "Recognition", in Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman, eds. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2023 Edition).*

Markell, Patchen. 2003. *Bound by Recognition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

McNay, Lois. 2008. *Against Recognition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Povinelli, Elizabeth A. 2002. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Ricœur, Paul. 2004. *Parcours de la reconnaissance: Trois Études*. Paris: Éditions Stock. (Engl. Translation: *The Course of Recognition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

Schmidt am Busch, Hans-Christoph and Christopher F. Zurn, eds. 2010. *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives.* Lanham/MD: Lexington Books

van den Brink, Bert, and David Owen, eds. 2007. *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

For encyclopedia and handbooks, see

Siep, Ludwig, Heikki Ikäheimo, and Michael Quante, eds. 2021. *Handbuch Anerkennung*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS Wiesbaden (XVIII, 504 pages)

For those interested in IR

Agné, Hans, Jens Bartelson, Eva Erman, Thomas Lindemann, Benjamin Herborth, Oliver Kessler, Christine Chwaszcza, Mikulas Fabry, and Stephen D. Krasner. 2013. "Symposium 'the Politics of International Recognition'." *International Theory* 5 (1): 94–176.

Bartelson, Jens. 2013. "Three Concepts of Recognition." *International Theory* 5 (1): 107-29.

Birnbaum, Maria. 2023. "The Costs of Recognition: Global Politics, Religion, and the Colonial History of South Asia." *International Theory* 15 (2): 323-50.

Lindemann, Thomas, and Erik Ringmar, eds. 2016. *The International Politics of Recognition*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ringmar, Erik. 2014. "Recognition and the Origins of International Society." *Global Discourse* 4 (4): 446-58.

2018. "Special issue on misrecognition in world politics: Revisiting Hegel." *Review of International Studies* 44 (5): 787–943.

Introduction

Session 1 (6 Jan 2025). Analysing recognition in social and political theory

- *Readings*

Pizzorno, Alessandro. 2008. "Rationality and Recognition." In Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating, eds, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, 162–73. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, Charles. 1992. "The Politics of Recognition." In Amy Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, 25–73. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Recognition and ontology: identity

Session 2 (13 Jan 2025). George Herbert Mead's relational self
- *Readings*

Mead, George H. 1934. *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (Part III: The Self, pp. 133-226).

- Additional readings

Blumer, Herbert. 1966. "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead." *American Journal of Sociology* 71 (5): 535–44.

Session 3 (20 Jan 2025). Fanon and the colonial self

Fanon, Frantz. 1952. *Peau noire, masques blanches*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, Introduction (pp. 7-14) & chapters 5-7 and conclusion (pp. 90-188) [translated by Charles Lam Markman: *Black Skin / White Masks*. New York: Pluto Press, 2008 [1952], pp. 82-181).

Additional readings

Bhabha, Homi K. (1986 [2008]). 'Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition (Forward to the 1986 edition)', in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press), pp. xxi-xxxvii.

Clark, T.J. (2024). 'Knife at the Throat', *London Review of Books,* 46, 18 (24 September 2024).

Recognition and Symbolic Action

Session 4 (24 Jan 2025, 15-17. Sala del Capitolo). Status
- *Readings*

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1994. *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil (pp. 14-29). English edition: 1998. *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (pp. 1-13). **Perhaps parts of Distinction**

Turner, Victor. 1977 [1969] *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (Chapter 5: 'Humility and Hierarchy: The Liminality of Status Elevation and Reversal', pp. 166-203).

- *Additional readings*

Session 5 (3 Feb 2025). Stigma
- *Readings*

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, N.]. Prentice-Hall. (147 pp.)

- *Additional readings*

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. "Appendix: Quelques questions sur le mouvement gay et lesbien." In *La domination masculine*. Paris: Seuil. (Translated as "Appendix: Some questions on the gay and lesbian movement", in *Masculine Domination*, transl. by Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 118–24.)

Lavergne, Cécile. 2023. "Estereótipos negativos e precaridade : Eboço de uma filosopfia do estigma (bell hooks, Simone De Beauvoir, Judith Butler, Toni Morrison)." In *Vidas Precárias Vidas Inventadas*, edited by Pedro de Sousa. Campinas, SP: Pontes Editores.

Link, Bruce G. & Jo C. Phelan. 2001. "Conceptualizing Stigma." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (1): 363–85.

Session 6 (10 Feb 2025). The Gift
- *Readings*

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1994. "L'économie des biens symboliques." In his *Raisons Pratiques. Sur La théorie de l'action*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, pp. 175-218 (Translated into English as: "The Economy of Symbolic Goods." In his *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 92–116.)

Ricœur, Paul. 2004. "La lutte pour la reconnaissance et les états de paix", in his *Parcours de la reconnaissance. Trois études*. Paris: Éditions Stock, pp. 319-55. [Translated into English by David Pellauer as "The Struggle for Recognition and States of Peace", in *The Course of Recognition*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005, pp. 219-246.]

- *Additional readings*

Davis, Natalie Zemon. 2000. *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hoffmann, Veronika. 2023. 'The Gift Model of Recognition', in Onni Hirvonen and Heikki J. Koskinen, eds., *The Theory and Practice of Recognition*. New York: Routledge, pp. 113-28.

Kustermans, Jorg. 2019. "Gift-Giving as a Source of International Authority." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 12 (3): 395–426.

Mallard, Grégoire. 2011. "*The Gift* Revisited: Marcel Mauss on War, Debt and the Politics of Nations." *Sociological Theory* 29 (4): 225–47.

Mallard, Grégoire. 2019. *Gift Exchange: The Transnational History of a Political Idea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mauss, Marcel. 1960 [1923-24]. "Essai Sur Le Don." In his *Sociologie et anthropologie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 143–279. (Translated as 2002 [1923-24]. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London, New York: Routledge (107 pp.). Or in the Expanded version with many annotations in 2016 [1923-24]. *The Gift*. Expanded edition, selected, annotated, and translated by Jane I. Guyer. Chicago: Hau Books.)

Special Issue: Marcel Mauss in International Relations. including

Heins, Volker M., Christine Unrau, and Kristine Avram. 2018. "Gift-Giving and Reciprocity in Global Society: Introducing Marcel Mauss in International Studies." *Journal of International Political Theory* 14 (2): 126–44.

Oates, John G., and Eric Grynaviski. 2018. "Reciprocity, Hierarchy, and Obligation in World Politics: From Kula to Potlatch." *Journal of International Political Theory* 14 (2): 145-164.

Ramel, Frédéric. 2018. "How to Understand International Society Differently: Mauss and the Chains of Reciprocity." *Journal of International Political Theory* 14 (2): 165–82.

Mallard, Grégoire. 2018. "The Gift as Colonial Ideology? Marcel Mauss and the Solidarist Colonial Policy in the Interwar Era." *Journal of International Political Theory* 14 (2): 183–202.

Session 7 (17 Feb 2025). Misrecognition and Symbolic Power (could be also in theories and then here Honneth and Democratic theory)

- *Readings*

McNay, Lois. 2008. *Against Recognition*. Cambridge: Polity Press. **Pages missing**

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003. "Violence symbolique et luttes politiques", in his *Méditations Pascaliennes*. Édition revue et corrigée. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. (Available in English as: "Symbolic violence and political struggles", in *Pascalian Meditations,* transl. by Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, pp. 164–205.

- *Additional readings*

Lavergne, Cécile. 2015. "Violence, identités et reconnaissance. Penser une philosophie sociale de la violence avec Pierre Bourdieu et Axel Honneth." PhD, U.F.R. PHILLIA (Philosophie, Information-Communication, Langage, Littérature, Arts du spectacle), Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense.

Renault, Emmanuel. 2017. *Reconnaissance, conflict, domination*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.

Recognition as Normative Ideal

Session 8 (24 Feb 2025). Invisibility

- *Readings*

(One more Honneth to set the stage)

Butler, Judith. 2021. "Recognition and the Social Bond: A Response to Axel Honneth." In *Recognition and Ambivalence*, edited by Heikki Ikäheimo, Kristina Lepold and Titus Stahl. New York: Columbia University Press, 31–53.

Honneth, Axel. 2001. "Invisibility: On the Epistemology of 'Recognition'." *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 75 (1): 111–26.

- *Additional readings*

Butler, Judith. 2008. "Taking Another's View: Ambivalent Implications." In Axel Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea (the Tanner Lectures)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 89–119.

Herrmann, Steffen. 2021. "Misrecognising Recognition. Foundations of a Critical Theory of Recognition." *Critical Horizons* 22 (1): 56–69.

Honneth, Axel. 2003. *Unsichtbarkeit. Stationen einer Theorie der Intersubjektivität*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp (Translated as:

Lavergne, Cécile, and Claire Vincent-Mory. 2020. "Les ambiguïtés de la reconnaissance. Le cas des luttes de visibilité des organisations de solidarité internationales issues des migrations (Osim)." *Terrains/Théories* 11.

Lepold, Kristina. 2019. "Examining Honneth's Positive Theory of Recognition." *Critical Horizons* 20 (3): 246–61.

Markell, Patchen. 2007. "The Potential and the Actual: Mead, Honneth, and the "I"." In *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*, edited by Bert van den Brink and David Owen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 100–31.

Schick, Kate. 2022. "From Ambivalence to Vulnerability: Recognition and the Subject." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 52 (4): 595–608.

Young, Iris Marion. 2007. "Recognition of Love's Labor: Considering Axel Honneth's Feminism." In *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*, edited by Bert van den Brink and David Owen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 189–212.

Session 9 (10 Mar 2025). Redistribution or recognition? The Honneth-Fraser debate
- *Readings*

Fraser, Nancy, and Axel Honneth. 2003. *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London, New York: Verso.

- *Additional readings*

Jones, Peter (2006). 'Equality, Recognition and Difference', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 9 (1): 23-46.

Markell, Patchen. 2008. "Recognition and Redistribution." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, edited by John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig and Anne Phillips, 450-69. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Session 10 (17 Mar 2025). Subalternity - The relationality of colonizer and colonized
- *Readings*

Nandy, Ashis. 1989. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. Delhi et al.: Oxford University Press (India) ("Preface", pp. IX–XX; "The Psychology of Colonialism: Sex, Age and Ideology in British India", pp. 1–63).

- Additional readings

Memmi, Albert. 1973 [1957]. *Portrait du colonisé. Précédé du portrait du colonisateur*. Paris: Payot [translated as *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. London: Earthscan Publ., 2003]