

2nd Term, Academic Year 2024-2025

Seminar in Political and Social Theory: Recognition

Given by Stefano Guzzini

Monday, 13:00-15:00

Theories of recognition are prominent in different theoretical domains of social and political theory. They touch questions of the ontological assumptions we make about what humans are. They understand the subject as someone always already entangled in the recognition practices shared with others. Any individual is fundamentally social. 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.

As it is obviously impossible to cover all these connections and few PhD researchers at the EUI work within political theory, the seminar will strive to touch those more related to social theory, which is directly related to empirical analysis. This could include (but to be confirmed) recognition and identity (George Herbert Mead, Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth), recognition and domination (Pierre Bourdieu, Frantz Fanon, Judith Butler) and recognition as symbolic action (Erving Goffman, Marcel Mauss, Victor Turner, Paul Ricœur). In the past, additional (and voluntary) ‘ad hoc seminars’ were organised to respond to particular interests of the participants.