

LIBERA UNIVERSITA INTERNAZIONALE DEGLI STUDI SOCIALI GUIDO CARLI

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On recognition in the contemporary world

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Abstract

In the strongly interconnected and interdependent world of today people are more directed to each other than ever before. At the same time the world is very unrestful and the conflicts remain the constant feature of the contemporary world, and this is in part because of the big injustices that historically shaped the world. One of the significant reasons for this is that some people, cultures, societies were systematically disrespected, we could say, they were not given proper recognition. Our aim is to explore the possibility for a more peaceful and just world. We see this possibility to be primarily based in the process of recognition articulated in a particular way at the global level, that considers the great diversity of cultural and societal backgrounds that constitute the world of today.

To explore this problematic and articulate better the place of recognition in the contemporary world we look at different features of human existence and societal features that shape the world.

We find the processes of power, that significantly and complexly shape the world, crucial in determining the possibility of recognition. We thus explore the concept of power primarily as a model for better understanding the global power relations, as these strongly determine the framework in which different cultural and societal identities are being constituted. We try to show that the apprehension of power is an important condition for the possibility of true recognition, as recognition is primarily regarded as the process of the constitution of the identity. Being thus understood, another highly relevant concept relates to the notion of recognition. It is the concept of values. Values are the central constituents of the identity of people. It is thus the values that we claim need to be recognised for the true constitution of the identities. In the world composed of different cultures and different societal backgrounds, different identities are being constituted, and thus the values that have to be

recognised may also largely differ across cultures and societies. We thus explored the concept of values and tried to contribute to the better understanding of the significant appearances of values across cultures and societies of the world. It is found that the structure of basic values is the same across cultures and societies, while the priorities given to these basic values differ. Also out of these differences in priorities of basic values, cultural and societal values seem to differ largely across the world. So, there is a potential for universal human dignity, but in the first place the differences in values need to be recognised, that is, primarily, they have to be understood and respected.

So, in the globalising world of today the relations through which diverse identities of the world are to be constituted, and thus given a chance for realisation (which is the basis for moral human beings), are strongly the relations between different cultures and societies that compose the world of today. These relations need to be the relations of recognition. In exploring the notion of recognition in some different theoretical conceptualisations, we propose a rough model of recognition in the contemporary world based primarily on the relations of intercultural and intersocietal recognition. These relations should be maintained among citizens, but also between groups and institutions. Parallely, largely following Hegel, we delineated the features of a recognition that is to appear vertically between the citizens and the potential political framework of the world. However, what was once the State for Hegel, we try to look today as the world. This relation of recognition we find primarily in the idea of more just global institutions that would respect the differences of cultures and societies, the institutions which would then be recognised also by the citizens of the whole world, so to maintain ethical relations among people from different cultural and societal backgrounds.

We found also important the exploration of the concept of cosmopolitanism as the relevant conceptual framework that relates to the idea of recognition in the contemporary world. We primarily revealed the importance of openness towards the Other, openness

towards other cultures, and the willingness to engage with Others, as a disposition that seems to better identify the possibility for recognition in the contemporary world.

Recognition is thus, primarily conceptualised as importantly relational process of mutual understanding and respect for the values of the Other, between different Others, and this featuring at different levels (individual, social/cultural and societal, that is the level of institutions), and where the relations of power are being delineated, an highly important process in the contemporary world, and particularly for the vision of it as a more just and peaceful world.

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