

RECOGNITION AND IDENTITY POLITICS

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Abstract

The thesis I propose is an opportunity to look at the foundations of identity politics from a philosophical perspective, namely from the perspective which is peculiar to the theory of recognition. In this respect the thesis is an elaboration of the links between recognition and identity politics investigating three issues in particular: the relation between (mis)recognition, personal autonomy and social justice, the articulation of this relation within the identity politics and the origin of the obstacles in forms of misrecognition that the identity politics face within certain communities.

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Table of contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The relevance of recognition for social justice.....	3
1.1 The demand for social justice	3
1.2 The emergence of the recognitional account of autonomy	3
1.2.1 The procedural account of autonomy	3
1.2.2 The substantial account on autonomy.....	4
1.2.3 The recognitional account of autonomy.....	5
1.3 The recognitional account of autonomy and identity politics.....	8
1.4 Recognition and identity formation	9
1.5 Self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem and their distortions	12
1.5.1 The distortions of the relation of self-trust	15
1.5.2 The distortions of the relation of self-respect	17
1.5.2.1 Marginalization	18
1.5.2.2 Exploitation.....	19
1.5.3 The distortions of the relation of self-esteem	20
1.6 Linking recognition and identity politics	23
Chapter 2: Identity politics and their interventions concerning injustices of misrecognition	25
2.1 Towards politics of recognition	25
2.2 From rights to social esteem: a historical perspective of the formation of the agendas of identity politics	25
2.3 Critics of the “symbolic-action” agenda of identity politics	28
2.3.1. Recognition or redistribution?	31
2.3.2 The general perspectives on social justice from the points of view of recognition and redistribution.....	36
2.3.3 Bivalent categories	37
Chapter 3: Misrecognition within the community and the possibility for solidarity	40
3.1 Ethnic identity politics and its multicultural failures	40
3.2 The liberal vs communitarian debate.....	42
3.3 Towards a liberal community based on emphatic solidarity	43

3.3.1 Factors contributing misrecognition.....	43
3.3.2 The notion of community	44
3.3.3 The first factor: the common sense of justice	46
3.3.4 The second factor:the regulative role of shame	48
Conclusion.....	54
References	55

Introduction

More than 50 years after their emergence, the role and the importance of identity politics is still under serious discussion. There are those who defend them as well as those that consider them to be superficial and product of late capitalism. The thesis I propose is an opportunity to look at the foundation of identity politics from a philosophical perspective, namely from the perspective which is peculiar to the theory of recognition. The theory of recognition has a long history in western philosophy dating back to Fichte's "Foundations of Natural Right" and the German classical idealism. However, in Fichte, recognition is not framed as moral attitude, but it is in Hegel's account of recognition, exposed first in his "System of Ethical Life" that we find the notion of recognition developed in its practical dimension. In his "Phenomenology of Spirit" through the struggle for recognition which lead to the famous master-slave dialectic, recognition is said to be a basic human need. The notion becomes especially popular in the post-second World War period with the famous lectures by Alexandre Kojève on Hegel's Phenomenology of Sprit in France. However, it was in Axel Honneth's book "Struggle for Recogniton" that it became articulated in light of the social movements that developed from the 60-ties, known as identity politics. This thesis is a further elaboration of the links between recognition and identity politics. Its focus is on three issues constituting these links: the relation between (mis)recognition, autonomy and social justice, the articulation of this relation within the identity politics and the origin of the obstacles that the identity politics face in cases of misrecognition in certain communities. Consequently, these issues are elaborated in three chapters. The first one named "The relevance of recognition for social justice" establishes at first links between the practical relations – to - self (self - trust, self - respect, self – esteem) and personal autonomy, showing the need for reconstruction of the classical notions of

autonomy into what I call the “recognitional conception of autonomy”. This conception I use further to provide an insight into the relation between recognition and social justice, showing how misrecognition of someone’s identity leads to different forms of oppression, which are elaborated systematically in this chapter. In the second chapter named “Identity politics and their interventions concerning injustices of misrecognition”, I give a brief history of the identity politics pointing out to their basic conceptualization, aims and the perceptions of how these aims can be realized. I state here three objections against the general agenda of identity politics, out of which I elaborate extensively one which I consider to be of central importance for conceiving the relation between recognition and justice within the agendas of identity politics. I refuse all the objection defending conceptualization of the agenda of what I name second strand in identity politics. The third chapter named “Misrecognition within the community and the possibility for solidarity” investigates the reasons for the failures of the identity politics in certain communities delimiting two important factors that in mine opinion contribute to the justification of misrecognition in these communities: the first one being the common sense of justice within a community which in turn determines the level of tolerance within that community and the second, the social emotion of shame which in turn creates also the possibility for solidarity between the members of a community.

The methodology I use in the research includes textual and conceptual analysis as well as discourse analysis. The first chapter mainly includes conceptual analysis of the notions of recognition, identity, identity politics, social justice, oppression, and their interconnections. The second and the third chapter continue further with an application of these analysis, through the identity politics, on the social context.

Chapter 1: The relevance of recognition for social justice

1.1 The demand for social justice

There is a prevailing tendency in contemporary political philosophy to treat social justice as fundamentally a matter of fair distribution of rights, liberties and social resources among individuals. The emergence of identity politics, however, challenged this mainstream discourse on social justice, broadening this concept in such a way that it incorporates the demands to look beyond distribution and see the experience of injustice by many groups as due to misrecognized identities. Their proposal amounts to the claim that “justice should refer not only to distribution, but also to the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation” [Young: 1993, 67]. The demand that social justice takes into consideration the institutional context in which individual capacities are developed had, as a consequence, the postulation of several challenges for some of the cornerstone conceptions in liberal democracies as well as for those of liberal political theory. The notion of autonomy, defined as a capacity or ability of an individual to pursue a life according to one’s own considerations (desires or reasons), was the obvious first candidate for revision.

1.2 The emergence of the recognitional account of autonomy

1.2.1 The procedural account of autonomy

If we take the above stated definition of autonomy as a starting point, then we may say that it is common to the so called procedural accounts of autonomy - of any kind (in the ahistorical variant advocated by Frankfurt [Frankfurt:1988], the minimal historical view of Dworkin [Dworkin:1988] or the historical view of Christman [Christman:1990]) - to focus on the “one’s own considerations”

part of this initial definition. Their effort is directed towards determining the internal conditions of autonomy by determining the conditions under which we take some consideration to be “ours”. Thus, they locate these conditions in the critical, reflective, exercise of one’s decision making capacities (cognitive capacities) through which one authenticates certain first order preferences (desires expressed in a proposition of the type “I want to X”) and second/higher order preferences (desires expressed in a proposition of the type “I want to ‘want to X’”), which can further be taken as ground in one’s own conception of a good life. What distinguishes the autonomous from the non-autonomous persons is that, in coherence with the procedure constituted by acting on first and higher order desires, the former acts on desires which he or she endorses or approves in a reflective manner as higher order preferences. If we generalize the procedural accounts we might say that they stress two internal conditions for personal autonomy: possession of reflective cognitive capacities and the critical endorsement or authentication of some considerations as higher order preferences. These accounts are content-neutral. They do not favor any values as bases of the good life which had to be acted upon, which, further, makes them plausible, for instance, for defense of the principle of liberal neutrality.

1.2.2 The substantial account on autonomy

On the other side the substantive theories of autonomy claim that it is of crucial importance to determine the content of these values when trying to determine whether someone is autonomous or not. Common for the substantive accounts of autonomy, is the claim that the conditions for autonomy proposed by the procedural views are not sufficient, since we find many counter examples in which the procedural conditions are satisfied but we still do not speak about autonomous persons. The individuals who favor and pursue a life in which invasions to their privacy are normal or the individuals who value subservience or unquestioned adherence to

tradition would certainly satisfy these requirements, but nevertheless under a substantive account they could not be considered as autonomous. [Oshana: 2006, 43]. So certainly the procedural accounts are right when they say that the autonomous person must be self-governing on bases of some values that he or she accepts through critical reflection. But something else is also needed since as we see a processes of socialization, for instance, can clearly prevent people for being autonomous persons by internalizing some values that diminish their autonomy. Thus, these account tend to either constrain the values that can be taken as basis for the conception of a good life (strong substantive account) or to specify further conditions which are necessary for authentication of our desires (weak substantive accounts). In the first case they reformulate, for instance, Mill's view on what the principle of freedom allows, specifying that "no autonomous person choses to be enslaved" thus postulating an intrinsic value on autonomy. In the second case they specify normative competencies (in the case of Wolf, Benson) from which all our normative commitments steam and which also determine our autonomous endorsement. These normative competences include the recognition of certain moral and political principles that need to be taken into account when endorsing certain consideration.

1.2.3 The recognitional account of autonomy

The procedural accounts with the focus on internal, psychological factors encounter serious problems to account for the influence that an environment can have on the processes of endorsement. These difficulties, on which the substantive accounts pointed out, are mainly difficulties concerning the socialization of persons in oppressive environments which raises the question of whether the higher order desires are the only relevant factor for determining the autonomy of a person and what insures us in the authenticity of our first-order desires in the first place? The problems with the substantive accounts is that in their strong formulation they seem to

have as a consequence the defense of an unacceptable, strong paternalism, while in their weak formulation, they do not trace sufficiently and in a consistent manner the consequences of the claim that certain moral and political principles need to be taken into account when considering something as an autonomous judgement. To take into consideration this principles in a consistent manner means to find a proper link between the internal and the external condition for autonomy of a person, which, however, in their accounts is missing. Thus although they pointed out to the external sphere as relevant for determining the autonomy of a person their insufficient insight could not properly satisfy the demands for social justice raised by the identity politics, since they simply go beyond autonomy conceive in this way. However, this link which is somehow missing from the substantive account, is provided by the recognitional account of autonomy.

In general, the recognitional account of autonomy, reveals the relational character of autonomy and is thus presents a kind of relational model of autonomy. Unlike the previously elaborated accounts which are exclusively or to a great extent individual-focused, the recognitional account of autonomy rather takes a more holistic perspective including also the environment and the interaction between the individual and its environment, especially as constituted by significant others. By considering the individual as embedded in certain context which has influence over the way its agency develops, the recognitional theory of autonomy emphasizes that of equal importance for personal autonomy as the critical exercise of our cognitive capacities and the endorsement of certain considerations about the good life, is the authority people attach to their judgments, which in turn depends on the attitudes they have towards one's self. Thus, it introduces among the procedural internal conditions for autonomy, the condition for developing of certain practical relations - to - self such as self - trust, self- respect, and self – esteem. All these relations will be explained in detailed later in this chapter when I demonstrate how the lack of development

of some of them due to misrecognition can be treated as a violation of personal autonomy and a kind of injustice. Here I would only like to justify the inclusion of the condition for developing these practical relations-to-self in the requirements for autonomy of a person.

The first point I would like to make in this respect is that the governing of a person according to his or her own consideration independent of the way that person regards itself or the way it establishes a relation to self, is insufficient to call that person autonomous. In order to account for the way a person regards oneself or the way it establishes practical relations- to – self, we need to investigate on the other side the engagement of that individual in relations of mutual recognition with (significant) Others. By entering the condition of establishing practical relations-to self in the requirements for recognition we acknowledge, in a consistent way, the fact that we speak about personal autonomy only by considering our relations to others. In this way we underline the relation between the individual and its environment and consider this relation as constitutive of the autonomy of a person. While the other models mention this fact about autonomy as “obviously true” it is not clear in which particular aspect of their theories they can consistently account for it from their formulations.

The development of the above mentioned practical relations-to-self, seen as conditions for personal autonomy, can be seen in the same time as a development of an attitude towards one’s identity. Since these relations depend on the mutual recognition between an individual and Others, we establish here a clear link between the recognized identity of a person and the possibility for its autonomy. Thus the second point I would like to stress in order to justify the introduction of the practical relations-to-self among the requirements for personal autonomy is that people’s autonomy is undermined due to misrecognition of their identities and in order to account for this violation of autonomy we need further condition on the side of its requirements.

Take for example the women which due to the oppressive environment in which she was socialized had internalized beliefs favoring servility and unquestioning of the authority of a husband, beliefs that child rearing is the only life-ideal for a women, or that voting on election is a “man’s thing” etc. Suppose that this women reflects on its condition and endorses the values she’s been following her whole life. She not only “wants this kind of life”, but she stresses that she “would always want to want this kind of life”. However, notwithstanding her claims, most people would not say that she is an autonomous person. The recognitional account of autonomy stresses the need to have insights into the process in which the women rationalized these values, into the understanding of her identity as a women, and the role of her understanding of this identity in determining moral commitments and conceptualizing the good life. Unpacking this understanding of her identity and taking into consideration her beliefs, that I mentioned above, may enable us to see that this person does not have an image of one self as an authoritative speaker or actor nor as a legitimate source for action which ultimately brings into doubts the authority of her endorsement of the higher-order preferences as a source of autonomy, and her personal autonomy in general.

1.3 The recognitional account of autonomy and identity politics

Similarly to the role that the identity of a women plays in the example above, our understanding of ethnicity, sexuality, race, can also have severe impact on our personal autonomy by undermining the development of some of the relations-to-self. By stressing the importance of this point concerning personal autonomy, the identity politics from the 60-ties, in their demands for social justice, tried to turn our attention to phenomena of creating injustice, whose origin could not be traced exclusively to distribution, but to misrecognition of certain aspects of the identities of individuals belonging to specific social groups.

In this respect the notions of recognition/misrecognition in par with the recognitional account of autonomy became situated in the heart of identity politics and were further used for articulation of the new claims concerning social justice.

It can be generally said that identity politics appeared as forms of political actions aiming towards emancipation of a social group from the different forms of oppression it is subjected to, due to identity characteristics that the dominant discourse in a society disvalues and prescribes to them as essential. In their core is the claim that the misrecognized identity of a person can be a reason for one to experience injustice and be subjected to different forms of oppression which in turn present a violation of his or her autonomy. Oppression became thus a primary term to analyze injustices as well as central category in their political discourse concerning social justice. What oppression inhibits is the development of personal autonomy by inhibiting the processes of establishing practical relations-to-self. The recognitional conception of autonomy sketched above highlights most appropriately all these violations of autonomy and points out to the role that relations of recognition play in the realizations of one's conception of a good life as well as to the need for disalienation of these identities. Before proceeding more concretely into the analysis of the way in which the development of practical relations to self can be undermined due to misrecognition of identities we must first throw light on the general relation between recognition and identity, and show the crucial importance of this notion for personal autonomy.

1.4 Recognition and identity formation

The theory of recognition provides us with epistemic as well as practical account of the formation of identities, personal as well as social. It treats our identities as steaming from a relation of mutual recognition, a relationship in which our identity is being constructed in a genuinely dialogical

fashion. As Hegel conceives, recognition designates an ideal reciprocal relation between subjects, in which each sees the other, both as its equal and also as separate from it [Hegel: 1802, 74]. That is why he considers this relation to be constitutive for subjectivity: one becomes an individual subject only by virtue of recognizing, and being recognized by another subject. Recognition from others is thus essential for the development of a sense of self and as such recognition is a basic social human need.

In other words this conclusion leads us to the claim that the self, according to the theory of recognition, is a product of processes of social interaction. In contrast to this theory there are philosophical insights concerning the formation of the self or identity which either does not consistently advocate a dialogical conception of the self (or does not advocate it at all) or completely negate the self as a fictive entity. Thus Korsgaard in reconstructing a Kantian position when investigating the sources of normativity claims that the reflective structure of the mind – the capacity not only to have desires but also to deliberate whether we should act on those desires, a capacity which she stresses as a distinguishing feature between us and other animals - is a source of ‘self-consciousness’ because it forces us to have a conception of ourselves” [Korsgaard:1996, 100]. The reflective distance from our desires according to Korsgaard forces us to have a conception of a *thing*, or of a “me” which is distinct from these desires. Here, Korsgaard seems to be right when claiming that it is our self-consciousness which is the base of our identity, however, as the theory of recognition as well as empirical psychological studies show it is very unlikely these self-consciousness in “monologically” developed, since the way how we conceive of ourselves does not only depend on ourselves but also on others, on how they perceive us and how we internalize their perceptions. Thus the attitude of the theory of recognition in this regard is that our self-consciousness or the self is developed through social recognition. Unlike Korsgaard,

Nietzsche, for instance, noted this social dimension of our self. In his critic to Descartes's "*cogito ergo sum*" he also noted the point that when people think about the reflexive capacities they tend to substantialize some kind of a "self" behind the thinking, which he considers to be just a social fiction. "The doer" – he says- "is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything". [Nietzsche:1967, 26; 1966, 12]. I mention here his skepticism towards the notion of the self not with the intention to deal with it in this thesis but simply because it rightly locates the self in its sphere of emergence, which is the social. Whether that makes it fictional or not is an issue for another occasion. If I thought, however, that it was the former I certainly wouldn't be bothering with identity issued in first place.

Unlike the social ontologies that work with autonomous, self-sufficient, free persons, imagined as abstracted from history, the theory of recognition points out to relations that a person has within a community, which influences the development of its autonomy, liberty, the aspects of its identities. Everybody has a race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity. However these social categorizations or identities are not neutral, but gain different meanings from community to community. Further, depending on the community, they gain different importance in the life of persons. Thus for instance, in certain communities, white men and women does not seem to belong to a "race" in the same sense as black man and women do, [Nicholson: 2008, 8], or heterosexuals to a "sexuality" in the same sense as homosexuals do. In this respect we shall acknowledge that one finds oneself as a member of a certain group and community, which already attaches different meaning to aspects of his or her identity. One also finds and experiences these meanings in the beginning as something given, as something which, through the development of a social life, one finds as constitutive of his personal identity to a different extent. As I will mention in more details in the last chapter this does not mean that one is completely trapped by these meanings or trapped in

certain communities that attach them. On the contrary. I understand the struggle for recognition of identity, the struggle that the identity politics lead, as an attempt to influence and change them where needed, where they are oppressive and diminish personal autonomy. Thus however, while I agree that people should be treated as individuals, free to pursue different life project and without stereotypes I also do acknowledge that groups exist, that we primarily found ourselves in them, and that they constitute in this way aspects of our identity. As Young notes even when people belong to oppressed groups, their group identifications are often important to them, and they often feel a special affinity for others in their group [Young:1993, 47].

In a long tradition starting from Hegel [Hegel: 1802; 2008] through Mead [Mead:1967] to contemporary scholars of the notion of recognition such as Honneth [Honneth: 1995, 2004], Fraser [Fraser:2000; 2003], McNay [McNay:2008], the development of a sense of self or the development of personhood is manifested through the development of the so called practical relations-to-self which include the relations of self -trust, self -respect self -esteem. On the other side to be denied recognition - or to be “misrecognized” - is to suffer an injury to one’s identity, a distortion of one’s relation to one’s self. These injuries of the practical relations – to – self as I already demonstrated in the previous sections of this chapter are in the same time injuries of one’s personal autonomy. In the upcoming sections of this chapter I give an analysis of these injuries, showing how the misrecognition of identity can cause injustice through different types of oppression.

1.5 Self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem and their distortions

Here we come to unveil the profound link connecting recognition and social justice. As it has already been mention in the previous section one of the requirements for autonomy was the development of a particular attitude towards oneself manifested in establishing relations of self-

trust, self-respect and self-esteem which in turn depend on relations of mutual recognition. These relations of recognitions are established in different institutional context such as: the family, the state, and the community. As Honneth remarks, “subjects in modern societies are reliant in their identity formation on three forms of social recognition, founded in the sphere-specific principles of love, of equal treatment in law and of social esteem”. [Honneth: 2004, 47] Thus a person lacking self-trust, self-respect or self-esteem suffers an injury to its identity, is unable to act as an autonomous person and consequently is subjected to some form of oppression. However, we must mention that there is a certain hierarchy between these practical relations – to – self. Depending on certain contexts, this hierarchy determines whether the lack of one of these relations diminishes or no personal autonomy and to which extent. Honneth claims that the autonomy of a person increases with each stage of mutual regard, starting from the self-trust granted through love in intimate relations and ending with self-esteem granted through social esteem and solidarity in a community [Honneth: 1995 ,93]. And certainly if we take into consideration for example the members of the women suffrage movement in the United States from the second half on the 19th century, or the activists in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States in the 50-ties we seem to have the right intuition that these women and people of color were autonomous although they did not have recognition concerning their equal treatment in law.

To meet this objection I will appeal to a distinction between several ways in which we speak about autonomy addressed by Feinberg as well as to the scope of autonomy. I will start from the second one. In terms of scope we can speak about autonomy as something attached to an act, a trait, a preference or decision of a person (like in “autonomous decision”, “autonomous action”) and here we are focused on its so called “local sense”. Such is the case for examples when we say that smokers who decided to quit smoking, but however continue to do so, are not autonomous,

meaning they are not autonomous in regard of this activity. However we can also speak about autonomy in a so called “global sense” as something which is attached to the status of a person through a certain period of time. The autonomy of a person is certainly not a characteristic that one either has or not in life, but something that is constantly being developed. Thus when we speak about a minor child as someone lacking autonomy we are using the notion in this sense. But, certainly while children lack autonomy that doesn’t mean they cannot ever become autonomous persons.

Concerning the ways in which speak about autonomy Feinberg makes a distinction between four senses. [Feinberg: 1989, 27-53] First, autonomy as a capacity to govern oneself which in a great part concerns the existence and exercise of some cognitive abilities such as those for decision making, understanding relevant information, anticipating consequences etc. Some take this sense of autonomy as a base for their account of “minimal autonomy”. The second is autonomous in the sense of having a “sovereign authority” conveying the idea that the “minimal autonomy” was used to establish an entitlement of some liberal rights that a person enjoys which include freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom to decide for ourselves etc. This means that we not only have a capacity but also a right to govern ourselves. However there are cases when a person has the capacities and the rights to govern oneself but does not have economic power to do so. Thus in the third sense, we speak about “actual or de fact autonomy” as different from the previously mentioned “personal sovereignty” sense. The forth sense is related to the “ideal autonomy” and is related to extraordinary achievement in sense of creating one’s own personality through conducting an authentic life-project. Needless to say that this sense of autonomy is reserved as a predicate to the personalities of only a few. Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Martin Luther King, Bayard Rustin and others – to meet the objection from above – are certainly among them in this

respect. And we usually talk about them as autonomous persons in this respect. However, when starting their activism, they and many of the members of the women suffrage movement or the Civil Rights Movement were not autonomous in the sense of having a “personal sovereignty” described above, which was the reason for their engagement in a struggle for recognition in the first place. With this reply to the objection above I now pass to an analysis of the link between the particular relations- to – self and autonomy.

1.5.1 The distortions of the relation of self-trust

A person endowed with self-trust is one which is recognized in intimate relationships such as those of love and friendship and has established due to this recognition a confident relation with his or her emotions. In this respect self-trust is developed when we recognize the individuality of the basic desires and needs of the significant other and also gain recognition for ours. A person lacking self-trust is usually a person whose physical integrity has been threatened or violated. Many psychoanalytical studies point out to the difficulties for a person lacking self-trust to establish a strong connection between his or her desires and actions, as well as to appropriate them as one’s own. As Anderson and Honneth report “there is strong clinical evidence that various forms of trauma ... resulting from rape or torture, cause individuals to view their own feelings with suspicion, and to distrust their own desires.” [Anderson and Honneth: 2004, 134].

However in many cases violence and especially rape does not only show violation of a personal integrity, but is also coupled or even maybe initiated by a misrecognition of certain identities. Certainly, any conception of autonomy considers violence, torture, rape to be violations of someone’s autonomy. However, long-lasting efforts by feminists have been made to show that, for example in rape, the autonomy of the women is not violated only by the injury of the women’s

body. "Rape does not only embody a physical act but includes also a subordinating sexuality. Rape as an act of violence is similar to other crimes of physical assault, but the meaning of this violence is unmistakably the demonstration of power over women. [Dorothy E. Roberts: 1993, 359]. Feminists, particularly in the United States tried for years to reform the rape law in the country in order for it to recognize this political aspect of rape injury, making rape a violation not only of the women's body but also of humanity. Unlike the other theories of autonomy, the recognitional theory proves to be appropriate to provide us with an insight and make an account of these demands for criminal law's protection of women's sexual autonomy, a demand which is difficult to be accounted for within the framework of the procedural notion of autonomy, which remains blind for the violation that initiates in a way, the violation of the physical integrity in cases of rape. I don't mean to say with this remark that the procedural conception cannot account for an extra physical violence in general, but only that due to its individual, psychological focus, it is condemned to miss these kind of relations of sexual subordination connected with the perception of women in certain social context. An example with maybe even more illustrative nature concerning this double violence occurring in these cases are the acid attacks against women, frequent in South Asia, which occur due to a rejection by a women to a man's sexual advancement or marriage proposal. In this cases we see a misrecognition of the identity of a women in all three spheres, as a result of which the victims in these cases suffer not only a distorted relation in respect to their own desires but also lack of self-respect and especially a lack of self-esteem due to further stigmatization. And while an autonomous person is more open to the transformation of his or her desires into reasons for action or actions - becoming thus more reason responsive - a person lacking self-trust is more inclined to self-suspicious, being not able to dynamically orient itself in its inner life and lead a life-project in a persistent way.

1.5.2 The distortions of the relation of self-respect

The talk about self-respect becomes possible when we move from the cells of primary socialization and intimate relations, towards the state as an institution. Here, it is through the recognition of rights that we gain a guaranteed respect and develop self-respect as autonomous persons and beings with dignity. What does developing self-respect amount to? Self – respect is developed when we experience the recognition of the moral obligations that the others have towards us and also recognize the obligations we have to others. An important aspect of our moral obligations towards the other is to grant one with the same authority to speak, as every other person. Conversely, self-respect is a characteristic of a person, steaming from the image one has of itself as an authoritative actor/speaker in the public sphere, and also - as Anderson and Honneth claim - of being “a legitimate source of reasons for acting” [Anderson and Honneth:2005, 132]. If we understand self-respect in this fashion then the distortions which the lack of self-respect transfers to the development of personal autonomy become straight forward. Namely, a person which lacks self-respect cannot see itself as a public agent, nor as a source that can give legitimate reasons for actions in public as well as private sphere, which, as I will show further, has as an extreme consequence the fact that person is not able to make decisions even about its own life. There are several factors that contribute to the lack of self-respect, which are of utmost importance for understanding the reasons that prevent development of self-respect and in turn development of personal autonomy. They include marginalization and exploitation as two ways of misrecognizing one’s equal status as citizen in certain society. In explaining both of these forms of oppression I will rely on Young’s insights expressed in her essay “Five faces of oppression”.

1.5.2.1 Marginalization

Marginalization (and social exclusion being the most extreme form of marginalization) is one of the most common forms of oppression. Potentially everybody can become a marginalized person during its life due to the bearing of some identity which puts one in a group that is excluded either from the production processes or from the reproduction or from the category of “normal” or excluded from power and influence. Such is the case with old people, unemployed people, with young people from different ethnicities, such as the Roma in Central and South Eastern Europe, with disabled people, drug users etc. Those marginal groups that are exposed to a process of permanent marginality ultimately become alienated and socially excluded.

Paternalistic behavior which contributes to the diminishing of self-respect to lowest levels is commonly expressed towards these marginal groups. Due to their dependence on the material or financial support by different social institutions, their needs are being ultimately constructed by medical centers, welfare institutions, which exercise control over their daily life. There are numerous cases in which due to this dependency their rights, such as for instance the right of privacy are suspended and consequently their autonomy violated.

This however does not mean that marginalization is proper only to those materially deprived, seeking institutional help, because as Young rightly notes even if “marginal people were provided a comfortable material life within institutions that respected their freedom and dignity, injustices of marginality would remain in the form of uselessness, boredom, and lack of self-respect.” [Young: 1990,55] This second aspect points out that marginalization goes beyond distributive issues and manifests a clearly cultural or symbolic, recognitional component. Thus although many old or disabled people have enough means of subsistence they nevertheless belong to marginalized groups. The common explanation is that this is due to the fact that they are culturally excluded

from the social contexts within which it is usually spoken about productivity, reproductivity or empowerment.

When speaking about the five forms of oppression, Young distinguishes powerlessness as a separate form of oppression. However, since I treat marginality as manifestation of disrespect towards someone due to considerations of production, reproduction, normality or empowerment, I account of powerlessness as a form of marginalization. It is a form of oppression which sets aside nonprofessionals from professionals, undermining the development of self-respect and the as well as the autonomy of the former. Thus it is especially common today that, unlike professionals, nonprofessionals are excluded from the authoritative status as speakers on different issues, and also lack respectability - in terms of esteem - which is reserved only for professionals. Cultures with high level of division of labor tend to reserve their respectability for the talk of professionals, regardless of the issues. It is worth to mention that the process of marginalization of nonprofessionals influences strongly the dynamic of racism and sexism. Due to this movement, we can say that while nonprofessional people of color are in many western societies subjects to marginalization in everyday life, professional man and women of colors are usually granted respectability.

1.5.2.2 Exploitation

Exploitation is the second form of oppression which undermines the self -respect of an individual, and thus its autonomy. It is a form of injustice in which the labor or the capacities of a person are used for the purposes of another whose level of empowerment is significantly higher than the one of the exploited. In societies with dominantly capitalist mode of production, exploitation is commonly institutionalized through the category of ownership of means of production through which an owner takes the control over the process of production, and consequently the labor. Due

to this ownership the production process depends mainly on his decisions which consequently affect the situation of the workers. It is not infrequently that due to these decisions hundreds of workers become all of a sudden subjects to material deprivation which in turn leads to undermining of their self-respect and their autonomy.

However, exploitation does not function only on the relation between workers and owners of capital, but contains racial as well as gendered dimension. As feminists pointed out, women's oppression is partly due to gender exploitation in which powers or labor is transferred from women to men. This type of gender exploitation certainly does not exclude women from exploitation as wage workers but stresses other cultural aspects of exploitation that go beyond the distributive considerations. These cultural aspects make women suitable for being pink collar workers, as Young notes, possibly responsible for caring the bodies of others, providing comfort and please, nursing, serving as waitresses etc. Another type of exploitation worth mention is the racial exploitation closely connected with the so called menial labor which Young characterizes as referring to works demanding low level of skills, which are low payed and in which the worker does not exercise any kind of autonomy since he receives all the directions for a supervisors. Needless to say that in multiracial societies these works are usually reserved for the people of color.

1.5.3 The distortions of the relation of self-esteem

In the end, the exercise of personal autonomy can also be prevented due to the lack of self-esteem. We gain self-esteem in relations in which we recognize certain capacities, skills or other characteristics of others and gain recognition for ours by them. The distortion of the relation of self-esteem is a result of a misrecognition manifested in stigmatizing an individual with the aim to

humiliate or denigrate. Due to this kind of stigmatization a person might lack a self-esteem or develop it only on a very low level. It is not difficult to see how this injury reflects on the lack of personal autonomy. A person lacking self-esteem is one who does not consider him or herself as worthy or valuable, which in turn makes it difficult for him or her to also value his or her life-projects as such. This was well shown with the example of the oppressed women in the previous sections.

It must be stressed that estimation in terms of recognizing some capacity of the other is always embedded in certain semantic networks which confer values towards aspects of someone's identity, acts, capacities. These values are not something that can be determined by an individual but something that is found as integrated within the community one acts in. Every community is constituted by a semantic or symbolic field which confers some values to our acts, which values, in return, influence our reflections concerning our projects. In this way a relation is established between the symbolic sphere of our community and our personal autonomy. Namely, whether one will be openly gay, whether one will live a traditional life in compliance with his ethnicity or religious belief, or whether one will feel comfortable with his disability in the public is a matter of how these life-styles are evaluated within the semantic networks with which one community operates. Certainly if the connotation of the term "openly gay" is filled with negative significance then living as such will also be considered as a life low value, contributing to a low level of self-estimation of a person.

In cases like the constitution of a meaning conferring network of a community, which is always value laden, contributes to the creation of a culturally dominant and subcultural strands, adding thus domination to the process of misrecognizing certain aspects of someone's identities. Domination emerges when as a result of repeated encounters with a stigmatizing gaze of a

culturally dominant other – one, whose identity and actions are positively valued within the semantic network of a community - the members of disesteemed groups internalize negative self-images, lower their self-esteem and are prevented from developing a healthy cultural identity of their own.

This domination of a culturally dominant Other, is identified by Young as a special form of oppression, which she names “cultural imperialism”. In her view, cultural imperialism favors dominant meanings in a given society and presents a strong tendency in silencing the groups that endorse different ones.

The means through which cultural imperialism is canalized are usually the stereotypical depiction in the popular media which tend to stigmatize certain races, genders or ethnicities. In this way certain characteristics are stamped from the outside to the imperialized as their essence, and it is commonly an essence which is derived from a trait of their bodies such that they cannot easily deny. They find themselves in the semantic network of the culturally dominant group which confers to them meanings about them, but these meaning are foreign to them, they do not experience them. Thus, when it is said that the imperialized groups internalize these views on themselves it is meant that they are at least forced to react on those depictions, by creating a counter-discourse concerning them selves. Due to this reaction they develop double consciousness, since they are defined in two different semantic networks: the one of the dominant other, which tends to present itself as universal and in which they are depicted usually as inferior in some respect, and theirs which is subordinate to the dominant, and cannot come to a possibility to be expressed within it. In a situation like this the cultural norms and meanings of the culturally dominant group become the normal, universal ones while all the others fall in groups with negative significance. Thus they are either rendered as negations of the normal meaning and values and

consequently deviant in one or another way or are rendered as normal but lacking something in some respect. In any case none of the groups of Others are being recognized.

When we reflect on the connection between this kind of misrecognition and personal autonomy we may conclude that stigmatization, denigration and humiliation as forms of misrecognition affect the self-esteem of a person in the sense that they prevent one's view of its life projects as meaningful or valuable. In this sense, as Honneth notes, "to the extent to which one lacks a sense that what one does is meaningful and significant, it becomes hard to pursue it wholeheartedly" because there is an antagonistic stand concerning the "pursuing of that way of life and thinking of oneself as doing something that makes sense". [Anderson and Honneth: 2005, 135]

When we now refer to the topic of social justice in relation to this kind of misrecognition, then we must conclude that a proper treatment of social justice must pay special attention to the meanings in the semantic network in which life projects are being formulated and consequently of the evaluative dimensions of such projects in these networks. Only in this sense individuals can be protected from stigmatization and provide self-esteem which is necessary for their development as autonomous persons.

1.6 Linking recognition and identity politics

The described three types of relations-to-self show the indirect role that relations of mutual recognition play in regard of the development of personal autonomy. Consequently they reveal the connection between the aspects of our identities, their misrecognition and social justice. It is in respect of these relations that I will try to evaluate, in the next chapter, the struggle for recognition initiated by the identity politics emerging in the 60-ties of the past century. And in the end, due to these relations we find integrated in their demands for social justice the need for intervention in

the social contexts which create conditions for distorting the relations-to-self and thus violating personal autonomy. In the next chapter I turn to the ways in which identity politics conceived of this intervention as well as to their critics.

Chapter 2: Identity politics and their interventions concerning injustices of misrecognition

2.1 Towards politics of recognition

When we transpose the three forms of misrecognition discussed above - whose consequences on self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem can be of crucial importance concerning the development of someone's personal autonomy - onto the political terrain, treating them as phenomena in constitutional liberal democracies which demand political action, we transfer from the epistemic and narrowly-practical considerations of recognition towards the politics of recognition. The distortions or injuries of one's autonomy that I described in the first chapter can be seen here in their full light. Since the topic of this thesis is the relation between recognition and identity politics the focus will be put on the possibilities for building self-respect and self-esteem through the mutual recognition of equal treatment before the law and social esteem. In this respect I will leave the notion of self-trust outside my consideration. This is due not because it is less relevant for the exercise of personal autonomy and consequently for social justice than the others – on the contrary - but because historically it was only indirectly connected with the movements that comprise identity politics. Certainly the three phenomena point out to three spheres in which injustice can occur. I will be focused only on the one occurring within the state and the community.

2.2 From rights to social esteem: a historical perspective of the formation of the agendas of identity politics

When thinking about the history of identity politics I think we can highlight that from the 60-ties in the United States we witness two strands of identity politics, whose aim is to cure the injustices of two types of misrecognition: one which aimed at curing the injustices concerning the

development of self-respect and the other towards the abolishment of the obstructions for building self-esteem. Historically, the first strand of identity politics aimed at securing rights that provide mainly women and black people with the opportunities they were denied to due to their gender and race. The second strand, however, was not concerned with the misrecognition undermining self-respect but with the misrecognition undermining self-esteem. Thus instead of the Women's Rights, Civil rights, and Gay rights movements the Women's Liberation, Black Power, and Gay Liberation movements sprang in the political arena, focusing especially on changing the meanings in the semantic networks which ascribed negative values primarily on their gender and racial identities. This shift in the struggles for recognition concerning the object of recognition presupposed a shift in the arguments that were used in the debate to pursue the desired recognition. Thus while the first struggle for recognition was leaded on the specifically emphasized premises of the natural equality of whites and blacks, man and women, homosexuals and heterosexuals, the second strand proceeded the struggle by emphasizing the difference between those identities, finding the denial of this difference in a way oppressive due to the cultural imperialism it subtly contained. Their basing of the struggle for recognition on the argument about their difference comes from the fact that although many women and black people gained access to institution due to the recognition of rights these rights could have been actualized only by more advantaged members of the Afro-American community or only some women which soon after become affiliated with middle class values and practices that were on the other side foreign to the younger generations of feminist or Afro-American activists. Especially the later, were soon identified with a specific strata of Afro - Americans, namely the poor, working class Afro – Americans, detaching themselves even more radically from the middle class values appropriated by advocates of the first strand of identity politics. Thus, these younger generations stressed the need not only for a

recognition of rights, but also for symbolic action, expressing very clearly the fact that they are conscious of the power which cultural imperialism has in diminishing their personal autonomy through different forms of stigmatization which ultimately lower their self-esteem: starting from the media through the educational system and the everyday life. As it was already mentioned in the previous chapter the stigmatizations which were coming from the media were manifested predominantly in stereotypical depictions, which the groups that were depicted usually find foreign to their own experiences of themselves as well as denigrating.

The need to react on these depiction was well conceived by the identity politics of the period: the rationale of the action was that any stamping of essence on the group coming from the outside is oppressive and abolishes the autonomy of the members of the group by preventing them to voice their own experience. The first point was thus to take this process of labeling in their own hands. As Linda Nicholson notes, this became the period when slogans such as “Black is beautiful” and “Sisterhood is powerful” became prominent in this process of deconstructing and, in the same time, reconstructing of the meaning of several identity categories [Nicholson: 2004,2] aiming towards a complete restructuring of the symbolic social order which was seen as a mean for establishing social justice.

Identity politics in this respect appeared as a political project with two interconnected aims: first, to deconstruct the stigmatized account on one’s identity due to which that person is subject to a form of oppression and second, to gain recognition for the destigmatized identity. This is the point in which a shift in the conceptualization of the social justice occurred due to the focus on the need for recognition in terms of esteem. As Nicholson rightly observes, unlike the previous movements which were focused on the demands for rights allowing them proper education, employment opportunities, voting etc., the younger generations saw their oppression in the symbolic

devaluation of their identities and thus stressed the fact that a just society cannot be established only by increasing the access to what was established as desirable, but also through changing the beliefs about what counts as desirable in the first place [Nicholson: 2004,3]. This kind of switch demanded particular cultural action in which the relation between the recognition and what was called identity politics became straightforward.

2.3 Critics of the “symbolic-action” agenda of identity politics

The change in the conceptualization of the identity politics was followed by critics from different political positions which in more sophisticated forms persist even today. Generally we can distinguish three different “camps” endorsing three different main objections towards identity politics and their focus on the recognition of difference through cultural change. The first one is comprised by objections coming from the conservative camp which stress that there is nothing special about being a woman, person of color, gay, person belonging to special ethnicity. What they do accept is the equality of all persons, women and men. Going beyond this recognition through the recognition of difference might ultimately cause segregation and “balkanization” within society threatening thus the persistence of a specific culture. Not to mention that the conservative critic is extremely opposed to the means which the advocates of identity politics propose in order to deal with forms of oppression due to unrecognized identities such as affirmative action as well as legal exemptions etc. The conservative views, thus, seem to be in agreement with the aspects of the view of the first strand of the identity politics but strongly disagree with the demands of the second. The left on the other side criticizes identity politics because of their engagement not to transforming the society as a whole, but only the social position of certain groups. This they stress will not bring any emancipatory results for the groups since the

cultural action does not do any distributional change in terms of improving our standard of living a decent life: phenomena such as exploitation and marginalization will still persist. The third camp is composed by the moderate critics which point out to problems that the “tribal” identification of identity politics can cause not only in terms of social division, but also in respect of essentializing or objectifying the identity of the members of the group. This means that the common practice of the advocates of identity politics to speak in the name of all members of a particular group or to generalize the needs of some in the group and promote them as needs of many, can be insensitive and ultimately annihilate the differences within the group, postulate some characteristics as essential which can also be find oppressive for the members of the group.

Although all of the objections deserve special attention I will address here only those of the second kind, which pose the question which Nancy Fraser has treated in considerable extent: recognition or redistribution? I will defend, when answering this objection, the agenda of identity politics directed towards recognition in terms of esteem as emancipatory in regard of the status of different social groups. Concerning the other two objection I can briefly state that first, the conservative objection cannot be understood otherwise than as a mean for preserving their political goals which are closely associated with preservation of the privileges enjoyed by the dominate culture as well as silencing all the voice that challenge its domination. As Blum concludes “their assault on multiculturalism and identity politics should be understood more in political than in intellectual terms” [Blum: 2010, 45].

Concerning the third objection it is commonly claimed that the identity politics have this “pathological tendency to treat people who share a particular trait as sharing the same identity in other respects too” [Parker: 2005, 56]. While on one side they acknowledge that racism, sexism, classism, and most other forms of historical oppression are ideologies and policies justified by

essentialism, they also, it is said, have the tendency to essentialize a certain detectable trait as defining for all the members of the group. Against this accusation I must emphasize that in the interest of the identity politics is first of all the creation of a counter-essentialist discourse. Through this discourse, which is a reaction against essentialism they try to "invert the historical categories of oppression into categories of celebration. This is often initiated by appropriating insults and turning them into acceptable, even honorable, labels." [Jarach:2004,3-4]. Thus, this counter-essentialization is a mean for deconstruction of the stigmas attach to the group and fighting oppression. In this respect it is false to maintain that with this discourse, these groups contribute to the further essentialization and separation within a community. That might be true, as Young says, only if we continue to perceive the difference. However it is exactly this association that the identity politics are trying to avoid with their demands for recognition of the difference of certain groups as equal and not as deviant. Consequently the claim that they are responsible too for essentialization cannot be justified. Another historical fact going against this accusation is that the second strand of identity politics is especially aware of the diversity or the differentiation within particular social group not accepting that there is some substantive essence or common "nature" which the members of the group share. Thus, for example, the members of an ethnic or a racial minority do not constitute a group which has a common nature, but it is acknowledged, that there are further differentiations according to the age, class, gender, etc., that might become main bearers of the identities of the members of these groups in another contexts.

Certainly there is much more to say about the conservative and the moderate objections towards identity politics. My brief comments on them intend only to point out in the direction in which their unjustified objections can be wholly revealed as such. I now pass to a more elaborate

discussion of the second objection which provoked in the past much interest within the theory of recognition.

2.3.1. Recognition or redistribution?

The common answer that the identity politics offered on the question how to remedy injustices of misrecognition especially when respect and esteem are concerned is to become engaged in cultural or symbolic change. These injustices of misrecognition can be corrected only through a general transformation of the “societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change everybody’s sense of identity” [Fraser:1996,7]. From part of the left this kind of remedy of injustices due to misrecognition was seen as partial in itself. How do we explain the power of these kinds of “symbolic” interventions to influence “real” socio-economic processes and make a change in society? Don’t they overstate the role of the “symbolic” and the cultural component in society? Don’t they wrongly detach culture from any material base and considers it simply as a manifestation of symbolic orders? How can cultural action settle our distributive concerns? Many opponents coming from the left insist further that identity politics is a counterproductive diversion from the real economic issues, and continue their line of criticism by stating that recognition of difference is just a “false consciousness,” and an obstacle in the establishment of social justice; what we should be concerned with in order to diminish injustice is redistribution. An emancipatory project should thus pay attention first to socio-economic emancipation.

According to this critic of the identity politics which has been in the past decades closely associated with the left, the root of the injustices that these groups are exposed to should be found in socio-economic phenomena such as exploitation and marginalization (understood mainly in its economic

dimension as being obliged to accept lower paid work or being denied access to income-generating labor altogether) as well as in deprivation (seen as denial of an adequate material standard of living). As an addition to these claims many join against the identity politics the fact that “marketization has pervaded all societal structure to such a degree that it can be considered as partially independent of such cultural patterns. Namely, it can be said that markets follow a logic of their own, which is neither wholly constrained by culture nor subordinated to it and as a result they generate economic inequalities that are not mere expressions of identity hierarchies.” [Fraser: 2000,111-112]

However plausible these objection might seem at first sight, they do not present, I claim, an obstacle for justifying the agenda of the identity politics. First of all, the concerns about redistribution should not be seen as something opposite, staying outside the range of the recognitional demands addressed by the identity politics, since the demands for recognition, which are at the heart of identity politics, acknowledge also the need for just distribution. The need for redistribution is thus acknowledged, for example, in the conception of recognition of rights which nourishes the self-respect of persons. As I mentioned in the previous chapter when discussing Feinberg’s distinction of the four senses of autonomy in order for a person to actualize one’s personal sovereignty it is certain that socio economic conditions should be satisfied. In this direction, the demands made by the identity politics cannot be considered as simply demands for “formal” recognition of rights, due to the simple fact that that kind of “recognition” might not be in the same time a full recognition of someone as a citizen.

The proponents of identity politics are aware of the fact that there is a possibility that many citizens in fact never actualize its rights. Take for example poor, materially deprived people who due to the lack of financial resources cannot allow themselves actualization of their rights in front of a

court. Or people with walking disabilities whose recognition in rights would not mean much if there are no conditions that allow them to exercise those rights such as special tracks, wheelchair ramps etc. In short the struggle for liberal rights certainly does not mean negligence of the struggle for socio-economic rights. The theory of recognition as well the identity politics of the past and the present acknowledge this fact and have into consideration that the exercise of personal autonomy presupposes some social or material conditions such as adequate food or shelter, level of education etc.

Thus, the construction of the relation between redistribution and recognition as one of opposition is one which cannot be justified, since there is no reason to treat the demands for recognition and redistribution within identity politics as anything but complementary. One possible objection to this argument is that this might be the case only with what I named first strand of identity politics which fought for equal respect. But that is not identity politics in the narrow sense of the term. The “real” identity politics are those that struggle for the recognition of difference and for them it can certainly be said that they are not concerned with redistribution, but specifically with recognition through cultural actions.

There are two problems with the objections of this kind. First of all, how we perceive identity politics and where do we historically locate them depends on which conceptual criteria are taken as defining them. I include the movements for Women’s and Afro-American rights in the category of identity politics due to fact that they not only pointed out to injustices that these groups suffered due to identity issues - and based their activities on the demand for respect of their identity - but also because these movements provided some of the fundamentals for the social movements that came in the following years and which are accepted as identity politics in the narrow sense. As such I think that these movements that gave the foundations of what will further be called identity

politics should also be included in the group of identity politics, at least in the broader notion of identity politics.

Second, even if identity politics were conceived to be only those aiming towards recognition of difference and the social esteem of certain aspects of identities, the burden of the proof that they cannot lead to emancipation due to the lack of concerns with redistribution is on the one who uses this claim against them. Namely one has to show that the forms of oppression which a person is subjected to due to the lack of social esteem such as stigmatization aiming towards humiliation and denigration have their origin in maldistribution and not in misrecognition of identity. However, I doubt that that is something which can plausibly be achieved. On the other side, if the proponent of identity politics, argues against this objection, it is sufficient for him or her to show, in order to justify their demands, that there are forms of oppression or manifestations of certain forms of oppression - of the types already described in the first chapter - which have their origin in relations of misrecognition of certain identity. Thus, the second argument against the critics coming from the left, concerning the emancipatory potential of identity politics, is based on exactly this demonstration. Let's take stigmatization for one such instance. There is no stigmatization if there is no value-laden semantic network which serves to confer positive or negative meaning to certain characteristics or acts of an individual within a community. These semantic networks within which stigmatization as a form of oppression emerges are culturally constructed steaming from the form of life of certain community. Thus all the oppression coming from stigmatization is primarily cultural, in the broader sense of this term.

However it is common for someone who raises an objection of the kind mentioned above to make a ranking of the different forms of oppression and to claim that stigmatization might be possible only within these semantic networks but the negative valuation of some characteristics within these

networks is a result of different, more basic forms of oppression, such as exploitation and marginalization.

Although the ranking of forms of oppressions seems to be a never ending discussion, even if we grant that exploitation and marginalization are basic forms of oppression on which all the others are built this does not render recognition irrelevant since there are certain forms of exploitation and marginalization which are due specifically to the disesteem of certain aspects of an identity. I have already mentioned this in the previous chapter on exploitation. Certainly the history of the talk about exploitation makes this form of oppression more suitable on first sight for its distributive understanding. However, the gender and racial exploitation that I pointed to, show that if we favor only this type of distributive understanding of exploitation we will miss many other aspect of exploitation. When we are speaking about women's oppression it is thus impossible not to mention a specific type of gendered exploitation frequently highlighted by feminists. If we take exploitation to mean a transfer of power (labor) for the purpose and benefit of other then within the specific forms of oppression of the women we find also women's exploitation due to the transfer of powers from women to men. It is partly due to this transfer that men have the power, freedom and status they enjoy in society. This fact pointed by the feminists is lost in the distributive accounts of exploitation as well as from the whole discourse about distributive justice, where the family structure is being constantly presupposed as a basic unit of distribution, not entering further into the relations concerning the division of labor within the family, the household labor, childrearing and whether they are just or not. Race oppression is also partly constituted by specific forms of race exploitation in which people of color are forced to accept jobs which does not demand particular skills and which in the same time are low payed, while the high paying and skilled jobs are reserved for white people. These examples show that exploitation cannot be generalized as due

only to maldistribution, but that also as the cases of gender and racial exploitation show it is possible as a result of other social processes and structural relations. They include the division of labor due to which power relations are launched between those that do a work, those for whom the work is done, how the work is compensated, how the results are appropriated etc. Thus in the end exploitation cannot be extinguished only by redistribution because not every exploitation has its root in unequal maldistribution but also in the institutional practices that enable it.

2.3.2 The general perspectives on social justice from the points of view of recognition and redistribution

This point about the gendered and racial exploitation as special forms of exploitation can be generalized in a way that can be used to talk about the conception of social justice, a conception about which so far in this thesis I was trying to avoid the talk. It is certain that the redistribution of goods, resources, opportunities covers great part of our commonsense understanding of the notion of justice. And it is common, as Anderson rightly notes, that some egalitarian theories of justice such as those of the luck egalitarians see justice as consisting only of “desirable distributive patterns” [Anderson: 2010, 2] However, not all cases of injustice, as I already point out to several times in this thesis so far, can be covered under the umbrella of distribution. By focusing only on distribution we first of all miss the evaluation of all the social structures which enable distribution and indirectly cause injustice. Second, by focus on the distributional aspect only we also miss the injustices that I pointed out to, which occur for instance in other spheres of recognition such as the family or which are tied with the linguistic and other symbolic dimensions of our practices and their value-leadenness within a community etc. In general we might say that when the injustices of identity, elaborated in the previous chapter, are concerned the redistribution has only

instrumental value to the extent to which it helps establishing mutual recognition and thus enabling in turn the establishment of practical relations – to – self. However not every social injustice is due to misrecognized identity. In this respect, speaking in general about social injustice we might say that redistribution and recognition are two separate views on social justice which sometimes intersect and support each other while at others reveal different perspectives. This seems to also be the base of Nancy Fraser conception of bivalent categories.

2.3.3 Bivalent categories

Arguing against the supposed opposition between redistribution and recognition Nancy Fraser comes up to the conclusion that the basic categories around which identity politics orbit such as gender, race, ethnicity etc. all share redistributive and “recognizable” components. So in a way all these collectivities can be treated according to her as bivalent collectivities.

If we take for example gender as an identity category, we can see that from the distributive perspective, it is currently treated as a basic organizing principle of the economic structure of capitalist society. On the one hand, it structures the fundamental division between paid “productive” labor and unpaid “reproductive” and domestic labor, assigning women primary responsibility for the latter. On the other hand, gender also structures the division within paid labor between high-paid, male-dominated manufacturing and professional occupations and lower-paid, female-dominated “pink collar” and domestic service occupations [Fraser: 1998, 19].

From the point of view of recognition “a major feature of gender injustice is the androcentrism understood as an authoritative construction of norms that privileges traits associated with masculinity and heterosexuality in the same time devaluating things coded as ‘feminine’ “ [Fraser: 1998, 19]. These norms are further being institutionalized and contribute to the creation of

androcentric views on marriage, personhood, rape etc. thus inflicting gender specific injuries to women. However, this androcentric normativity which privileges masculinity and heterosexuality is not having a devaluating effect only on the “feminine” but on any gendered perspective which is not masculine and heterosexual. The best illustration about their privileged status and the subordination of the other gendered perspectives we find in the cases of homosexual panic defense in the United States, from which we see that no justification can be found for challenging their domination. Namely on these cases a murder of a homosexual was justified under the claim of the murderer that he was in a condition of homosexual panic, a state which provokes unusual violence when there is a “homosexual advance”, which in turn was considered to be a contestation of someone’s masculinity.

The category of race, according to Fraser, is also showing bivalent characteristics as the category of gender: in terms of recognition, Eurocentric norms generate racially specific status injuries which members of racialized groups suffer, such as, “police assault, discrimination in housing, employment, and health care, media stereotyping, devaluation of cultural production, harassment in everyday life, exclusion or marginalization in public spheres” [Fraser: 1998, 19]. On the redistributive aspect, as I already mentioned in the previous chapter, when discussing racial exploitation, “race” functions as a category around which the division between menial and non-menial jobs are organized, the former being characteristic for the racialized group.

All these examples point out that the categories which are at the heart of identity politics themselves manifest aspects which demand cultural or symbolic remedies as well as a strong need for redistribution. Due to above said I conclude that the objections to identity politics coming from the left concerning their sterility when “total” emancipation is concerned to consider as unjustified and blinded since they do not recognize specific forms of oppression and consequently injustices

which are due to cultural structures which in turn, at least in some cases, even provide the context of the process of distribution.

Chapter 3: Misrecognition within the community and the possibility for solidarity

Liberal democratic societies proved to be a fertile soil for identity politics. Although there is a debate whether identity politics from the past “really” had or can have an emancipatory effect concerning certain identities, it seems - at least according to many human rights indexes - that some freedoms, in respect of certain identities in western democracies, have been achieved in comparisons to the years before the emergence of identity politics. However, identity politics do not have equally successful stories to share about their applicability in different context. In this chapter I elaborate some of the origins of the problems that identity politics face in liberal democratic societies in light of the phenomena of misrecognition. I point out to two factor that contribute to the misrecognition of certain identities, but whose possibility for reshaping can contribute to the creation of a more liberal community that can be favorable for the recognition of different identities with different ethical codes.

3.1 Ethnic identity politics and its multicultural failures

So far, I stressed the importance of recognition for the development of practical relations-to-self such as self-trust, self-respect and self-esteem which form one of the conditions for development of personal autonomy. I also explained the distortions of these relations -to- self that occur due to different forms of oppression coming as a result of misrecognition of aspects of one’s identity. I elaborated further the way identity politics tend to correct these injustices and defended their conceptualization proving that they are proper articulation of the demands for social justice of certain groups in society. Most of the examples I gave, referred to gender or racial identity politics. However, an important aspect of the identity politics is constituted by those actions which are directed towards acquiring emancipation of ethnic or national identities, emancipation which in

most of the cases in the past proceeded in violent conflicts between ethnic groups, as for example in the post-socialist and post-Soviet societies. When speaking about these ethnic identity politics we must note their ambivalent character. Namely, there is a thin line between understanding them as emancipatory, in terms of being a tool in the hands of minorities - which challenges the status-quo imposed by the ethnic majority in a society - or as part of a nationalistic or separatist discourse which usually was launched by and served the interest for material and political resources of different political elites in these societies [Leach, Brown and Worden:2008, 759]. In respect of the ethnic identities which emancipate themselves along other ethnic identities in a state - by gaining certain rights and freedoms - the identity politics were used in direction of establishing multiethnic, multicultural societies whose democratic functioning, especially in the post-Soviet and post-socialist cultures demonstrates many failures. Although, as Kymlicka points out multiculturalism demands transformation of the notion of citizenship in which historically subordinated groups will enter in new forms of cultural and political participation [Kymlicka:2010, 39], there is a tendency in many multicultural societies that the politics of identity is as a whole disfigured and misunderstood as some kind of apolitical celebration of differences through folk, dance, cuisine etc. [Kymlicka: 2010,38]. Needless to say that in many multicultural societies, for instance, in those newly formed on the Balkan after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, multiculturalism was misunderstood, and was used, mainly by the elites, in favor of their interest. The multicultural society which should have reformed the notion of citizenship, is there “still about to come”. This is in great part due to the fact that the ethnicities that comprise these societies, as a result of the history of mutual conflict and old stigmas, find it more proper to be apart than to communicate to each other and create a healthy political culture. I am mentioning these aspects of identity politics in order to point out to cases in which, if the last instance of the struggle for recognition of the

identity politics is understood as the formal or legal recognition of certain group rights for certain social groups, taken as guarantees for “protection of a group from the impact of external decision” [Kymlicka:1995, 35], then in most of the cases of multiculturalism, there is a possibility that this recognition is not sufficient for emancipation. It is commonly said that these cases of “failed” identity politics thus demonstrate that there is some inherent kind of hierarchy within the forms of recognition and that in order to speak of an emancipated group or personal identity we need to go beyond the recognition of equal legal standing, towards achieving recognition through solidarity within a community.

3.2 The liberal vs communitarian debate

There has been a considerable debate in the past between the liberal theorists and the communitarians concerning the relation between an individual or a self and a community, and the proper way to see this relation.

Communitarians claim that liberals, with its commitment to the freedom of the individual and equality does not recognize sufficiently the role that the community has in providing proper environment for exercise of those freedoms and establishing equality. Accusations against the liberal theories came in regard to their account of freedom, to their supposedly atomistic view on the self [Taylor:1985], to the value they give to community [Walzer:1983; 1987]. Thus the communitarian attacks on liberalism have been addressed on several fronts. What is common for most of them especially those concerned with the relation self - social environment is the claim that seeing the full implication of this relation demands that we acknowledge that personal autonomy is only possible in certain social environments and that this sort of autonomy can be

sustained only by a politics of common good. This means further that some substantive conception of this common good is needed that defines the life of a community in general.

I am stressing this communitarian account on the relation between an individual and a community just in order to distance myself from the same. As it is straight forward from the formulation of the recognitional theory of autonomy, the theory of recognition, which favors the dialogical conception of identity formation, pays special attention to the community as an environment in which certain liberties are exercised. The recognitional theory of autonomy I defended in the first chapter accounts in the best possible way, in my opinion, the idea that autonomy can be exercised only within certain social environment. However, while this stress on the social environment is common between the view I address and the communitarian view from above, I consider their supposed “full implication” of this view, which demands promotion of a substantive conception of good within a community to be simply false. The arguments against can practically be a reformulation of the arguments against the substantive conceptions of autonomy. Until the rest of the chapter, through the description of the factors that determine misrecognition, I would like to emphasize that this kind of treatment of the communal life - through some substantive good - plays central role in inhibiting the process of mutual recognition of certain identities.

3.3 Towards a liberal community based on emphatic solidarity

3.3.1 Factors contributing misrecognition

What I would like to expose until the end of this final chapter is a speculative, sociological picture concerning the aspects which, in general, prevent the recognition of certain identities within different contexts and consequently determine the failure of identity politics. If the highest form of recognition of an identity within a community is seen in the recognition of that identity given

in form of solidarity with the person possessing it, then I think we can distinguish two factors which prevent this form of recognition: first, the evaluation of the demand for recognition according to the common sense of justice of the community and second, the regulative effect of the emotion of shame within the community. Although both of these factors contribute to the misrecognition of certain identities, they can both be reshaped and used in a way that allows for recognition of these identities. In what follows I will give an account on these two factors, but before I proceed, I would specify the way in which I will use the ambiguous term “community”.

3.3.2 The notion of community

Communities can be defined in different ways. I will take a more or less deflationary stand towards what a community is and define it in terms of place or geographical location. Thus communities can be cities, villages or smaller geographical units. This definition of communities is useful for arguing the possible failures of identity politics since it does not say anything about the identity structure of the community, nor its cohesion and it allows for a dynamic conception of community which is open for new members and thus for changes in its dominant ethical conceptions. This is not the case for example with the so called psychological communities and the communities of memory whose membership seem to be almost rigidly defined.

As I already mentioned there are many cases when legally a minority or marginal group is recognized in rights (being entitled to different exemptions, assistances, subject to affirmative action, etc. [Levy: 2000, 125-161]) but still lacks social esteem and due to this misrecognition those groups are still in one way or another marginalized, exploited, humiliated and denigrated. If this is so, then we seem to come to problem in the theory of recognition since what the recognition of rights of someone means according to the theory is exactly the recognition of him or her as a

person with equal legal standing. With this recognition we grant certain equal dignity to that individual as person and treat him or her with respect. However when we move to a level of community we see that all this respect can easily come to nothing. The cases showing this are numerous. Take for instance lesbian, gay or transgender people living in different communities in Central and South Eastern Europe or the minorities composing the multicultural societies on the Balkan. They are all protected under the law and yet subject to day-to-day marginalization, denigration, exploitation, as well as harassment when exercise their autonomy and pursue the kind of life they want to pursue.

When speaking about the ideal of political community Dworkin defines the notion of community as something whose essence is the shared ethical code [Dworkin: 2000, 211]. This definition however, would not do much help from the sociological point of view I want to address, since it renders only a few groups with shared critical interests as genuine communities. Certainly, if every member of a community shares an ethical code, then conflicts that emerge due to coexistence of different ethical codes would be abolished from the start. Then the only talk about ethical pluralism that will make sense will be the talk about some inter-communal plurality and disagreements. However we do talk about disintegrated communities, and this is due to the simple fact that we tend to identify communities in the sense I mentioned above and that kind of sense does allow for conflicts in terms of the ethical codes-although some of them are misrecognized- due to the existence of more than one social groups. Communities with different ethical codes are in general communities where different social groups exist, defined by a sense of identity which comprises their common history, collective memory, social status etc. Social groups in turn constitute individuals in the sense that at least the person's ways of evaluating – as it has been shown in the first chapter - was being influenced by the affinities of a group.

3.3.3 The first factor: the common sense of justice

However, among the special aspects in the manifestation of the affinities of a group is the development of a so called common sense of justice, shared among the individuals in a group. I would like to point out to its existence through an analogy.

In his study of the English working class, E. J. Thompson introduced the notion of “moral economies” in order to grasp the “complexities of motive, behavior, and function” [Thompson:1971, 78] which develop within a social group, in particular in context of the English peasants who protested in the riots against rising food prices in pre- and proto-industrial England. By examining the “indignation and rage” of the crowd, he tried to reveal the “normative roots of the peasant’s political action” [Thompson:1971, 79]. According to Thompson these riots were acts which showed that there is a common political culture concerning the prices of inferior or essential goods on the market. These peasants were convinced that the traditional “fair price” was more important to the community than the “free” market price. Thus after the raise of the price they acted against the large farmers who sold their surpluses at higher prices outside the village although there were still those in need, within the village. As Thompson notes, these kind of actions by the rural people who were involved in the riots against the elevation of the food prices, embodied or were manifestation of a conception of justice which can be understood as a socially embodied historical factor which in part explains their mobilization as well as their behavior in general [Thompson:1971, 76-136]. This common sense of justice was rooted in the shared values and norms within their social groups and their communities and in this sense it determined their behavior.

In respect of the identity politics, a communitarian would certainly use this example of moral economies explained by Thompson to derive somehow different conclusion than those I would like to make, mainly going into the direction of the primacy of the well-being of the community over the individual autonomy. I am mentioning, however, this example with different purpose. Namely, as I said, my analysis of these two factors is in the first place descriptive, and I would only like to point out to the aspects of the communal social sphere which are responsible for the misrecognition of certain identities and the injustice towards certain social groups. I think that we can make an analogy between the reaction of the communities in this socio-economic sphere that Thompson described and the reactions of the communities in the ethical sphere when the recognition of other identities that incorporate other ethical codes are concerned. Like the case of the non-acceptance of the elevation of the prices by the crowd due to a common sense of justice developed within those groups, the misrecognition of certain identities seems to be also a product of the same sense. Communities containing majoritarian groups, especially with more conservative, traditional ethical codes, tend to absolutize their ethical views on the whole community due to their consideration that it is just that the majority group should shape the ethical outlook of a community. They strengthen this view with the claims that their cultural tradition defines the right path in life, which in turn should be preserved. That in order for that tradition to live we need a strong group and that only ethical homogeneity can preserve the group. Thus any identity proposing another form of life as viable option within the community is considered to be either a threat for the community - which community is identified with the majoritarian group – or a threat for the ethical homogeneity of the group and consequently - due to the previous identification - with the community. It is not uncommon that these identities are also treated as a non-normal way of life due to its otherness of the traditional, which is normal, or simply a wrong

path in life due to its otherness of the traditional path which is unquestionably, authoritatively the only right path in life. As Dworkin has successfully shown, none of these claims commonly addressed by communitarians can be justified on normative basis [Dworkin:2000, 211-237]. Yet, in my opinion, and from a more descriptive view, they do shape the beliefs of the groups and communities and thus are inhibiting the process of recognizing plurality of identities and consequently of life-styles within a community. They constitute the so called common sense of justice of a community and as such constitute a type of rationality that simply finds the misrecognition of the identity or aspects of the identity of the other justifiable. These claims appear as a tendency of expansion of the majoritarian code in a community, as a tendency to homogenize, assimilate the plurality in a community in favor of the dominant ethical code. The only way to influence this kind of rationality, in my opinion, is not by pointing out to arguments that will justify the rationale of the recognition from one or another point of view, but through the social emotions that regulate that community and mediate that rationality.

3.3.4 The second factor: the regulative role of shame

As it is commonly stressed by sentimentalists concerning morality, morality is not just about values, norms, duties, we have towards the others, but those values and norms have to be felt in order for them to be followed. In this respect emotions can support but also undermine different norms and obligations, contributing thus to their dynamics and the dynamics of our moral codes in general. It is worth acknowledging that there is a circle of emotions (social) which function as regulative principles of the moral and ethical life of a community. Coupled with the common sense of justice I described above, these emotions can contribute to the misrecognition of an identity by preventing the establishment of relations of solidarity within a group. However, a crucial point about them is

that they can also serve for establishing the opposite: a community, whose members have empathic solidarity for each other.

As I already stressed several times earlier in this text, the demand for recognition of one's identity is a demand for recognition also of a certain way of life, whose ethical horizon might significantly differ than the one of the majority of the members of a community. In this regard they can take a different stand towards that way of life which they might find unethical according to their convictions and manifest this conviction of theirs in different kind of actions (linguistic and non-linguistic) directed towards the bearers of those identities. This attitude always has some kind of emotional bearing since the context in which recognition for certain identity is demanded operates among others things also with certain social emotions. Thus, one of the central regulative emotions of this context, especially in traditional, more conservative communities is the emotion of shame.

Shame as a social emotion is inherent in our social interaction, and follows upon violation of what are considered to be strong moral concepts, which are most frequently those which the majority in a community considers to be central. Stressing shame as an emotional regulative principle in the moral and ethical order of a community, out of all social emotions, is neither arbitrary nor for illustrative purposes only. Shame is historically considered to be the counterpart of honor as a social emotion. Honor, as Taylor emphasizes, when elaborating the politics of recognition [Taylor:1992], is a mode of recognition in premodern societies, such that is only given to some persons, which is analogue to what we referred to in the first chapter as social esteem.

Shame as opposite of honor, need not necessarily be connected only to the violation of certain moral concepts, but it can also be related with the bearing of characteristics which are disvalued within a community, followed with denigration, humiliation and marginalization. Having in mind

these characteristics of shame as a social emotion, we might confirm Nussbaum's note that, shame is primarily a painful emotion [Nussbaum: 2004,173]. As she remarks further, societies "select certain groups and individuals for shaming, marking them off as abnormal and demanding that they blush at what and who they are". [Nussbaum:2004,174]. Due to this demand, in shame one feels inadequate, lacking some desired type of completeness or perfection [Nussbaum:2004, 184]. The consequences of shaming can take various dimensions from simple blushing, feeling uncomfortable with one's bodily or character traits to hiding, experiencing fear etc. All these behaviors closely related to shame, together with shame as a social emotion, constitute the second factor which contributes to the misrecognition of an identity within a community. Experiencing shame in these cases rationalizes the oppression and makes misrecognition acceptable for the subject of injustices.

Although it is plain how the emotion of shame regulates the behavior of persons whose identities are not esteemed in certain communities I would like to point out that beside this obvious negative side which shame has for the victim of some kind of misrecognition, shame can also have a constructive side, one that can help bridge the ethical discrepancies between social groups in a community and provide thus a possibility for genuine, full recognition.

As closely connected with the tendencies for expansion of the majoritarian ethical homogeneity in a community, shame as feeling of inappropriateness, proceeds out of this dominating tendency. I think that it is exactly this understanding of the structural relation between the tendency for expansion of the majoritarian ethical code in a community and its characteristic to define what should be considered as inappropriate (which creates the emotion of shame) that can be reshaped

and used for generating empathic solidarity between members with different ethical codes in a community. This empathic solidarity in turn opens the possibility for mutual recognition in a diverse – in terms of ethical codes of social groups – community.

To explain better my idea of empathic solidarity leading towards establishment of a liberal community I will use the model of solidarity proposed by David R. Heise. According to this model “an empathic bond arises when person *a* observes his own emotional response to *p* mirrored in the emotional response of person *b* to *p*” [Heise:1998, 199], where *p* can be some central figure, event or symbol to which *a* and *b* are related. Applying this model in our case renders the establishment of an empathic solidarity in a community possible due to the existence of the same emotional response of *a* and *b*, which is that of shaming, to *p* as an event of denigration, humiliation or marginalization. Rorty characterizes solidarity as something that should be seen as an “ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to *pain and humiliation* – and ability to think of people widely different from ourselves as included in the range of us.” [Rorty: 1989, 192]. I take humiliation and denigration as a pivotal, central phenomena in the development of empathic solidarity which present a verbal or nonverbal consequence of norms of an ethical code in a community which stigmatize the characteristics of what is rendered as Other, as inappropriate. This inappropriateness, which finds its emotional echo in the phenomena of shaming, is not something that is unknown even to the members of the majority in a community. As Nussbaum stresses, if not because of other reasons then simply because of the fact that “we all have weaknesses that, if known, would mark us off as in some ways ‘abnormal’, shame is a permanent possibility in our lives, our daily companion” [Nussbaum: 2004,173]. In this respect I think that

even the “in-member” of a community, who is only potentially subject of shame and not one who actually experiences shaming, is able to participate in emotional resonance with the other due to this potentiality, a potentiality which I think anyone has actualized during lifetime. “Seeing one's own emotions resonating in another person creates a unification in which self and other seem to be experiencing events with the same consciousness. Moreover, when *a* and *b* experience resonating emotions in response to *p*, they may experience consonant impulses to action with regard to *p*”. [Heise:1998, 199] It is at this point when we infer and bring to light the reasons for these emotional responses, for our shame, finding them in the feeling of inappropriateness forced by the dominating tendencies of the majoritarian ethical codes in a community. This creates possibility for *a* to act against *p* in such a way that it will help satisfy the demands of *b* to cut the denigration, humiliation and marginalization towards him/her. It is very unlikely that the members of any “in-group” of a community would have some kind of a direct action towards cutting denigration, humiliation and marginalization. However the existence of empathic solidarity helps these members to develop a perspective of “how does it feel like” or “to place oneself in the shoes of the other”. And taking the perspective of the other is already an act of showing respect [Williams:1973, 137] [Carter:2011,547], or at least an act which accepts the demands for recognition of the Other from a different point of view than the one according to which there is only one valid ethical code.

Further, as Frever remarks, every member of a community can also be ashamed of the humiliation that is caused to the misrecognized persons within that community and that kind of shame, as is in a way prerequisite and consequence of civilized societies. “This double shame is a proof of moral dignity and maturity. Those who cannot or will not be ashamed run the risk of collapsing into barbarism.” [Frever: 2015].

Experiencing the injustice of the Other opens space for participating in the process of shaming, which is in first place initiated by the expanding tendencies of the majoritarian ethical codes in a community. Understanding this structural relationship between the tendency for homogenization of this ethical code and the injustices that this tendency creates opens the door for establishing solidarity with the Other, recognizing ultimately its identity and abolishing the domination of the majoritarian ethical code. The mere experience of the injustice is not sufficient. It is the connection in shame, in this inappropriateness, potential or actual, in respect of humiliation, denigration, marginalization, exploitation which provides the means to ultimately recognize the identity of the Other in communal solidarity.

Conclusion

In the chapters above I offered a view on the multiple relations which recognition has with identity politics. To be more correct, I was focused mainly on the relations of misrecognition, their connection to social justice and the articulation of this connection inside the identity politics. While in the first chapter I pointed out to the ways misrecognition inhibits personal autonomy, in the last chapter I offered a view on the factors that in turn influence misrecognition. The second chapter presented a historical view on the identity politics, their agenda and justification of this agenda.

Within the thesis I defended a recognitional theory of autonomy which allowed me to account for reconceptualization of the notion of social justice that goes beyond the distributive demand. I used this connection of social justice as an interpretative tool in evaluating the identity politics in the second chapter. In third chapter I pointed out to the structural relation between the majoritarian ethical codes in a community and the emotion of shame. This relation which reproduces itself in every community was underlined not only as a reason for rationalization of misrecognition of an identity but also as a sphere for intervention that might lead towards the establishment of liberal communities: ones in which a plurality of different ethical codes, embodied in different life-styles can coexist in solidarity.

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