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The underestimated power of recognition

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I. Introduction

The Recognition-Redistribution dilemma concerns the contradiction between the remedies for cultural and economic injustices. While the former advocates recognition of individual differences according to certain inherent characteristics, the latter aims for parity in an economic sense, regardless of individual differences. The initial dilemma is now discussed in terms of the differences between the theory of relational equality and distributional theories. The question is, what does it take to guarantee a just society, and how do these spheres relate to each other? And here, we face various opinions concerning the value of both spheres. Do they stand in an equal relationship, are they independent of each other, or does one have priority over the other? In the case of recognition and redistribution, we face certain representatives who argue that what is actually needed is respect for individual status, which should guide any distributional thoughts, as proposed by Axel Honneth. Others, again, claim that both spheres deserve the same value, and sometimes it's redistribution to gain recognition and vice versa, as seen in Nancy Fraser. And others again argue that it's only distribution which has justificatory priority, and that this would be enough to enable mutual respect.

This thesis advances the claim that the theory of relational equality has justificatory priority over any distributional theories. The former has intrinsic value, which should guide, among other dimensions, such as laws, for example, also the distributional sphere, as it must be seen as a tool and therefore only contains instrumental value. This would mean that if we were to start with a supposedly fair distribution, to gain recognition, we are not able to get to the core of the actual problem, as it is rooted within the sphere of recognition. And that in turn would lead us to the conclusion that Honneth's solution must be seen as the correct one. I plan to show this through the following steps.

First, I will define what is actually meant by relational equality, respectively recognition. Within that chapter, I will also focus on the difference between recognition of status and recognition of identity (2). In contrast, I also want to discuss distributional theories and what economists understand when they talk about distribution (3). In the next chapter, I want to delve deeper into the various relationships between recognition and redistribution. Do they interact, does one have justificatory priority above the other, or can they be seen as on a par? Therefore, I will also focus on the solutions represented by Fraser and Honneth. Within that chapter, I also plan to discuss a few examples that are rather unknown, and I want to show which theory represents which view on the respective problems (4). Afterwards, I want to delve deeper into the Recognition-Redistribution dilemma, which is very closely related to the distinct relationships (5). Finally, I want to present three arguments for relational equality: two positive, which are in favor of relational equality, and one negative, responding to a counterargument of Fraser (6). The two former ones are called *the argument of institutions* and *the argument of ableism*, while the latter is called *the merger mistake*. Due to that, I plan to show that

recognition of status, as represented by the theory of relational equality, has intrinsic value, whereas distributional theories only have instrumental value. And therefore we must admit that Honneth's approach to a solution for the Recognition-Redistribution dilemma is actually the right one, and that it is recognition, respectively an equal status, which is needed first, to enable a just society.

2. Relational equality and recognition

At the very beginning of the thesis, I would like to discuss the theory of relational equality. Afterwards, I also want to dive deeper into the philosophical concept of recognition and focus on the differences between recognition of status and recognition of identity. For the sake of completeness, I want to mention that the term of recognition comes to us in various forms, like *relational equality*, *democratic equality*, *relational view*, *status-egalitarianism*, and many others. What is meant in the end is the dimension of recognition, and although it isn't the only one, relational equality represents one specific form of it.

2.1 Relational equality

In a nutshell, relational equality describes a quite broad conception or framework of justice, which tries to capture a long historical legacy of egalitarian thoughts and is built on social relations, which in turn should reflect some kind of basic moral acknowledgement.

Equality

Definitions of equality can vary, depending, for example, on the approach that we use as a basic thought for egalitarian theories or according to our imaginations of justice. Or they can vary when it comes to the discussion, which goods actually should be distributed. Equality as such is very often seen as a distribution of goods, in which everyone gets exactly the same amount of goods. Distributational egalitarians, for example, claim that each good, such as resources, money, economic opportunities, and so on, can be distributed. Further, this means that, for example, things like welfare can be distributed as well, although we may see it as an abstract term. We may also face a distinction, which inequalities we may judge as fair, respectively, if we can classify inequalities according to a certain level of injustice. In the best case, our judgments of unequal outcomes are based on rational considerations, which should reflect certain moral statements in turn.

What relational egalitarians like Wolff, Young, Scheffler, Scanlon, or Anderson have in common is that they claim that a just society is defined through individuals who relate to each other as equals. In short, the main point of that theory goes back to the idea that we must see equality based on social relations between equal agents. As it is mainly opposed to any kind of hierarchical relations, the basic thought is that every individual possesses the same moral value. This means that when we ask for social relations, it means that all individuals within a society should enjoy the same amount of authority, esteem, and standing, which will be explained in more detail in the following subchapter. And if we want to achieve that outcome, these agents must stay in equal relation to each other (Anderson 2012, 40–41). Relational egalitarians exclude all kinds of hierarchical forms of social relationships, in which certain people “dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean, and inflict violence upon others” (Gosepath 2021). So what relational egalitarians try to argue for is that each agent should possess the same moral value,

which includes dimensions such as authority, status, and standing, which in turn influence self-esteem. Or, like Anderson would put it, "On the relational view, the only comparisons that fundamentally matter are among those who stand in social relations with one another and in which the goods of equality are essentially relations of equal (symmetrical and reciprocal) authority, recognition, and standing." (Anderson 2012, 41).

For example, Samuel Scheffler claims that when we focus on interpersonal relationships, we must emphasize institutions and practices and their tasks, as they govern the goods within a society, between the relations of its members. Of course, distribution is an important task of these institutions, but not the only one. We will get back to the topic of institutions, their attitudes, and distributions later. Scheffler claims further that we must understand equality as a broader ideal that focuses on relations among society members. He starts describing the concept of relational equality by defining a relationship, such as a marriage. He claims that it would be natural to think that each participant deserves the same equal rights, duties, and responsibilities, embedded in values such as reciprocity and respect. Of course, that means that each agent has individual interests, needs, desires, and wishes, but that they are as important as those of other agents. When we apply that concept in a practical sense, this means that all these considerations of equality, in combination with the relevant characteristics within the relationship, work as guidance in decision-making. Or as Scheffler describes it, they work as an *egalitarian deliberative constraint*. So, according to important decisions, all those various interests of the concerned agents are as important as those of anybody else within the relationship. Therefore, they work as a restriction within a relationship (Scheffler 2015, 24–25).

In a negative sense, that would mean that there are no agents who are subject to any kind of violence, who are not marginalized, exploited, or dominated by others. They are not governed by any kind of cultural imperialism, which means they are free to run their own culture as they wish, but at the same time, they must respect other agents according to their inherent characteristics and individual cultures (Anderson 1999, 315). The only thing that results in the removal of those fundamental moral rights would be the commission of a crime. This is the only acceptable occurrence of denying anyone what is defined as the full value of a human being. However, even when we convict somebody of a crime, this doesn't mean that the removal of some basic rights lasts forever. There should be the possibility, with respect to a certain period, to regain status as a fully valued member of society. Within that period and irresponsible of the actual crime, of course, certain basic rights must be granted as well, such as nutrition, shelter, and medical care (Anderson 1999, 327).

Inequality

According to Elizabeth Anderson, relational equality can be clustered within a positive and a negative aim. The negative one can be seen in combating injustice, while the positive one can be defined in

creating a free society of equals. Mainly, this goes back to the fact that egalitarians have always been more successful in criticizing prevailing conditions than in defining their concrete suggestion. So the definition of what may be called egalitarian can be found rather in ways that combat injustices than in defining what they actually stand for (Anderson 2017, 37–40). This is what she calls the *egalitarian impulse*, as she claims that "... [Egalitarianism] is therefore a creative impulse, constantly generating new institutional forms in response to opposition" (Anderson 2017, 37). On the one hand, of course, through critique, but on the other hand, also through practical ideas and applications, which are in turn open to critique and restructuring.

Concerning the legacy of human history, we must admit that mankind tends to create inequalities, which makes egalitarian considerations more tangible in a practical sense. Anderson argues that societies tend to create inequalities; respectively, they tend to create hierarchies based on a social level. This includes all kinds of social injustice according to race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, religion, etc., which in turn tend to create a hierarchical relationship, like between monarch over subjects, master over slaves, colonizers over colonized, whites over persons of color, patriarchs over wives, and so on (Anderson 2017, 37). Therefore, Anderson concludes, if we want to fight and avoid inequality, we need to analyze these injustices to become aware of how they develop and why humanity creates them. This includes hierarchical tendencies and the way they work, as well as institutions that work in favor of or advocate for them, and those who work against them (Anderson 2017, 41). As many forms of injustice and inequality invite critical thinkers to analyze and define what's going wrong, this could explain why the negative aim of egalitarians may be much more important than the positive one (Anderson 2017, 43).

While focusing on the history of mankind, Anderson elaborates on five factors of inequality, which represent social hierarchies, that can be classified as follows (Anderson 2017, 48–49):

- Inegalitarian impulses
 - Any kind of superiority over others
- Ethnocentric opportunity hoarding
 - When certain groups manipulate institutions to gain esteem, authority, or standing.
- Identity groups' closure or segregation by elites
 - Any kind of exclusion from outsiders, in order not to share any privileges.
- Large scale
 - Larger groups, who have competitive advantages against smaller groups because of their scale.
- Inegalitarian ideology
 - In addition to raw power, you need to persuade people to stabilize the hierarchy.

Of course, they need not necessarily occur individually but may very well overlap. However, these five groups represent hierarchies according to three dimensions, which are related and joined as well. The first one is the hierarchy of authority, which is defined through domination based on an asymmetry of power over the subordinated group. The second one is the hierarchy of esteem through a relation of honor and contempt, where the advantaged group gets more respect because of a higher social position. At the same time, they treat people of lower rank with contempt and disdain. Finally, there is the hierarchy of standing, where certain members enjoy a higher social position according to other agents, who represent institutions such as the state, for example. That means they are more concerned with their interests than other members of society (Anderson 2017, 37–38).

The societal level

Starting from an interpersonal relationship, Scheffler goes further to examine what relational equality means for society. He claims that the idea of the deliberative constraint is just as important in a societal context, as each member has to respect the interests of others as well, which in turn works as a restriction according to important decisions. So, as every individual characteristic has to be respected, this counts as well for race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or class hierarchy. Scheffler admits that in the same way as in a relationship of two, there can be further problems in a societal version of relational equality. Like conflicting values, for example, which influence the creation of a constitution, of laws, and of various institutions, which in turn should represent a collective decision in the relevant sense. But there are also further problems, as society is way bigger than an interpersonal relationship. There is no face-to-face relationship, which means we must deal with a certain anonymity. And that in turn means that we may lack knowledge of others' needs, which also affects the process of collective decision-making, and the acknowledgement of the clear boundaries of the constraint. Nevertheless, the principle for the egalitarian deliberative constraint stays the same (Scheffler 2015, 35–37). On a societal level, we've already seen such egalitarian thoughts in practice. According to Anderson, communism as well as state socialism serve as examples to implement ideals of equality in a societal framework. Indeed, both ideas weren't very successful, which goes back to the lack of democracy as well as the lack of open and competitive markets. However, although both ideals failed, several lessons were learned, especially in the field of economics and political conditions. These can be seen as real-life experiences and not just as *a priori statements*. And among other things, some of their insights were implemented in the idea of social democracy (Anderson 2012, 52–53). As already mentioned, this contributes to the idea of a practical achievement of a just society. Even if certain ideas failed or turned out to be wrong according to certain dimensions, there are important lessons learned. These considerations improve the path to a just society and can be seen as self-reflection in a practical manner.

What does it mean for a democracy?

Nowadays, egalitarians focus on a more *cosmopolitan approach*, which means that they don't only focus on one single oppressed group. So they do not only emphasize one single ground of hierarchy at a time, like Marxists do, when they only combat class inequality, or like feminists who only deal with patriarchy. Muchmore, it can be seen as a very complex political aim, which, as we have already discussed, has learned from certain historical experiences, like communism or state socialism. So it has already abandoned any kind of utopian or communist idea of central planning and aims more for a democratic approach, which acknowledges open markets as well. It addresses all kinds of inequalities, such as age, disability, gender, sexual preferences, race, and so on. And it strengthens the assumption that distribution itself must be seen as a modest part of egalitarian thought (Anderson 2012, 42–43). I'll come back to this later. According to the idea of relational equality, every single individual has their intrinsic right to personal dignity. In turn, that means that in a democratic society, three key points must be fulfilled. First, there are political conditions, like the right to vote, hold office, free speech, and move. This means that any kind of social inequality must be prevented. Second, there are also civil conditions that must be avoided, like any kind of marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, or domination. And finally, there are some basic needs that must be fulfilled, like a certain level of clothing, education, food, and medical care (Gosepath 2021). When these conditions are fulfilled, they guarantee a certain level of dignity, which in turn should grant reciprocal respect, and which enables the agents to accept inequalities on personal dimensions like individual skills, intelligence, creativity, and so on.

This is a point that also Richard Arneson addresses, when he claims that all agents within a society are entitled as equal citizens within a democratic framework, and goods should be distributed in a way that every agent should be enabled to exist as an equal citizen, respectively as a functioning member of society. Further, the ideal of social equality based on moral considerations must be satisfied. So Arneson transmits it to equality of relationships, where agents should treat themselves mutually with equal respect, and that economic circumstances should be arranged accordingly to enable such a relationship (Arneson 2010, 28–29).

The acceptance of economic inequalities

There are certain circumstances where it does make sense to allow economic inequality, as long as it does not affect the individual, personal, and moral status of agents. The following parts may discuss some of these inequalities, which may be useful, productive, and maybe even desirable. However, the way between equal social status and the toleration of inequality at certain dimensions is a very thin path between too much and too little.

According to Richard Arneson, it is not easy to distinguish between bad and good distributional inequality. The main difference between unequal social relations we should reject and those we should advocate for is that the latter must describe an advancement of prioritarian goals. That means inequality can't be seen as intrinsically bad; rather, it is instrumentally bad. Therefore, it follows that if inequality produces the best possible outcome for a society, where disadvantaged people make the most use out of it, we should embrace it (Arneson 2010, 28).

Of course, relational equality doesn't mean that any kind of differentiation is forbidden or unjust, especially not within a capitalistic society, which represents meritocracy. But at least the framework must be compatible with an equal social status of the parties concerned. What is important, according to David Miller, is that each individual must feel like a valued member of the respective society. And that they should enjoy an equal standing with all the other members, which may override each other in certain other dimensions (Miller 2001, 239). These dimensions can encompass certain abilities, skills, intelligence, forms of creativity, and so on. And they can indeed create inequalities, as different skills from various agents should be supported and challenged. So when agents within a society respect themselves according to their various characteristics, this includes differences in skills. So if person A is very creative, especially when it comes to the arts, person B is very sporty and has talent in basketball, and C has an intuitive understanding of finance and numbers, they should be encouraged in their individual talents. Meaning that each agent gets respected and supported according to their inherent skills, and that can, of course, create inequalities in these respective dimensions. However, that shouldn't say anything about their standing as a person according to their status within society.

In a society that represents a perfect form of meritocracy, certain influential and powerful positions can be open to every single agent who is willing to invest the necessary effort. In a very similar way, this means that social equality can be a good instrumental value, but it must not be good per se. The same counts for any kind of competitiveness, respectively, the aim to win in sports or any other competitive games. In such cases, winning is not good per se, which means it is not intrinsically valuable. However, winning must be seen as an instrumentally good, as competition stimulates business. So the difference can be described through instrumental and intrinsic good. Equality can be good as a tool, as guidance, and as an aim, but it shouldn't be seen as intrinsically good in that way. Moreover, it should be seen as instrumentally good, as far as it produces a certain outcome (Arneson 2010, 38–40). The same counts as true for any relationship, such as a marriage or a friendship. So even when partners have the same status, of course, that doesn't mean they possess the same skills and talents. And it would only be natural that one partner supports the other in certain cases, where her skills are more advanced, or where she has an incredible talent (Arneson 2010, 40–42).

Anderson would agree, as she mentions, that there are indeed certain inequalities that must be accepted, although they do not legitimize any kind of unaccountable power. This would mean that they

refuse any transformation from inequality into material standing. But one example where inequality would be valid is hierarchies between certain offices, which are needed within a capitalistic society to enable efficiency and to make sure that the system works. These situations need careful handling for two reasons. First of all, within human history, it's turned out that especially bullies and narcissists tend to seek jobs at offices or institutions that represent some sense of esteem and power. But of course, these are exactly the kind of people that egalitarians don't want to have in these positions. So as Anderson claims, any kind of hierarchical administration – even if it is necessary – “tends to attract the worst and corrupt the rest.” (Anderson 2017, 54). This leads to the second problem, as these people possess greater power, but not in virtue of who they are, but in virtue of their positions. These are exactly those inequalities that relational egalitarians want to avoid (Anderson 2017, 54–55). However, as soon as offices are institutionalized, they turn into a *principal-agent* relationship, where commanders turn from sovereigns to servants of a certain group. So inequalities can be seen as legitimate in a certain version, as long as they are part of a wide range of competition, which should help diverse people to find a division in which they can contribute their skills and talents, and where they compete for earned esteem (Anderson 2012, 47–49). Or, like Anderson would put it, “the more individual competition is [...] the less unequal patterns of esteem reflect and constitute an esteem hierarchy.” (Anderson 2012, 49).

This is a point that also Scheffler acknowledges, as he claims that what is important within relational equality is not to equalize relevant attitudes. Rather, it is important to maximize them and to make sure that the parties concerned develop and unfold them to the fullest. Scheffler argues that if agents discuss the distribution of resources, they would be misguided by any kind of artificial distribution, such as a completely equal distribution of anything; much more, they must focus on the egalitarian deliberative constraint as a distributive formula. And that in turn should work as a representation of their individual interests. That means, if two agents have the same wishes, desires, needs, and so on, it is of course valid to distribute the relevant goods equally. But if they have various interests, it is not a good way to treat every good equally. Rather, they should, as mentioned, maximize the individual needs, and that must not necessarily mean a completely equal distribution of every good. If they respect their individual characteristics, the distribution develops out of the egalitarian deliberative constraint, making the former an instrumental and the latter an intrinsic value (Scheffler 2015, 31–33).

The distributional side

As already mentioned before, distribution is a very important part of equality, but not the only one; respectively, it shouldn't be seen as the root of all evil or the starting point of inequality. Since the late 1960s, history has witnessed a strong movement in the direction of culture, representation, and organization of civil society. Gays, lesbians, transsexuals, and other, fight for their rights, as they suffer from intergroup stigmatization. The core point is how these groups treat each other and how we see

the relationship between them. Therefore, it seems highly artificial and misleading if we only break this dispute down to distributive considerations (Anderson 2012, 53).

Anderson argues that relational equality is superior to the distributive concept, as it covers the history of egalitarian thoughts. Social relations are way too complex to be covered in a single formula of distribution. Nevertheless, you need equal distribution, especially when it comes to benefits and burdens. In that case, an equal (instrumental) distribution of burdens and benefits promotes (intrinsic) relational equality. That means that when we think of voting rights or any kind of law, we need equality in the sense that the same applies to everyone. This includes achieving benefits of being a member of society, like access to education, granting basic rights, providing infrastructure, democratic discussions, and so on. But on the other hand, this includes also some burdens, like paying taxes, respecting state authority, or, in Austria, the military and civilian services. In that sense, equality means that every individual should have the same number of burdens and benefits within society, so that we are capable of reaching exact equality in the mentioned sense. Added to this, everyone should be provided with the same benefits, and it should be avoided that wealthy people have more influence on political institutions. Further, a floor on income is needed to make sure that even economically poor people can live a worthfully life. On the other hand, we also need an income constraint to make sure that rich people don't get the ability to influence political affairs. Also, public education should be distributed in a just manner, so that it enables everybody to work on their individual talents and skills. In the end, Anderson takes a good call-back to the fact that certain politics failed in the past. She claims that egalitarians – or political philosophers in general – must make sure to be sociologically sophisticated. They must know how certain systems work before they can argue for a particular theory. Further, we must make sure that these theories are made to be practically applicable (Anderson 2012, 53–55).

Now, as we have defined the theory of relational equality, let's focus on the topic of recognition. Therefore, I want to show the difference between recognition of status and recognition of identity.

2.2 Recognition of status and identity

Indeed, recognition has always been a distinct subfield of moral philosophy. Although what is missing is a clear definition of the term as such, on the one hand, in everyday life, but on the other hand, also in philosophy (Honneth 2001, 44–45). Within the next paragraph, I want to show two different concepts of recognition: the approach of identity, as represented by Axel Honneth, and the approach of status, as represented by Nancy Fraser. Both of them start by giving a positive description, in contrast, for example, to one of Honneth's co-authors, Avishai Margalit, who defines recognition through a negative approach (Honneth and Margalit 2001, 127). But besides that fact, both differ in their description, as Honneth follows the path of identity, while Fraser sees the description within the field of status.

Recognition of identity

To describe what is actually meant by recognition, Honneth starts by defining the term *cognition*. Therefore, he begins by showing that very often in the history of mankind, the social superiority of dominant groups is shown by the fact that they do not perceive the dominated group. Which means that they treat them as being *invisible*. Of course, we have to distinguish between the intensity of not being perceived, as it makes a difference on the one hand of overseeing a friend at university, and if a professor doesn't greet the cleaning personnel due to his professorship on the other hand. The former one is rather harmless, while the latter must be seen as a disrespectful action, based on hierarchical differences. So the first stage of recognition can be seen in making people visible, respectively, making them cognized. That in turn leads to the question of what the actual difference between cognizing and recognizing is. And Honneth describes the latter as "individual identification by giving public expression, with the aid of suitable actions, gestures or facial expressions" (Honneth and Margalit 2001, 115). In that sense, we can see cognition like becoming visible, while recognition is rather an affirmation, which means that an agent within a society experiences social validity (Honneth and Margalit 2001, 112–15).

What we see here are two different steps. The first one is cognizing, where an individual is made visible, while the second one, where the cognition is transformed into recognition through certain actions, gestures, and facial expressions. Honneth uses the term *media* as an umbrella term to describe these expressions, as they *carry and deliver* recognition. And within the second step, this is where the ethical considerations, respectively the moral, come in, as recognition involves *to do justice* (the German meaning of: *jemandem gerecht werden*) to someone. At that point, Honneth refers to Helmut Plessner, who argues that the expression of recognition should be seen as an allegory of moral action. So in short, according to Honneth, all recognition starts due to the invention of the media, as, due to this process, mankind confirms social validity (Honneth and Margalit 2001, 116–18).

Within human behavior, we see a distinction between all kinds of *positive gestures* like lovely smiling, greeting respectfully, or a welcoming gesture, which represents affirmation. In contrast, the absence of any positive gestures must be seen as disrespect and misrecognition, which is a signal to the counterpart that he or she isn't appreciated as a valuable person as such. Therefore, recognition must be seen as "the expressive [...] demonstration of an assessment of worth that accrues to the intelligibility of persons." (Honneth and Margalit 2001, 124).

This means that individual identity is capable of forming itself through "stages of internalization of socially standardized recognition reactions" (Honneth 2004, 354). As a result, the individual agent should experience themselves as a valued member of society. The corresponding reactions grant that he or she is able to promote and live according to his personal characteristics, needs, and abilities, through patterns of approval by other society members. And this is only possible by normative

principles of mutual recognition. So the absence of recognition results in damage to these individual identity formations (Honneth 2004, 354).

Let's think about those negative situations where agents hurt each other physically. Where does physical injury transform itself into a moral injury? It is as soon as an action is meant to disregard an important aspect of individual well-being. To state things clearly, think of cases like raping or torturing, which must be seen as extreme cases of humiliation, as they are insulting the physical health, depriving the personal autonomy, and the personal trust in the world. Therefore, recognition must be understood as part of a relationship involving physical integrity, which is closely tied to the bodily existence of other agents who, in turn, reciprocate feelings of esteem (Honneth 2001, 48). So, as we have seen, physical integrity is inextricably linked to personal value. Now, let's see which dimensions can describe social relationships within a society.

The one that comes to our mind first is the social relationship embedded within the triangle of family, friendship, or love. Another relationship would be the one between the state and the individual agents, as the former grants the latter certain rights, combined with duties, which leads again to self-respect. The third dimension can be seen in the part of self-realization, which means the pursuit of various goals, the possibility to work on individual talents and skills, or just to follow someone's desires, which is very tightly connected to self-realization. Any injury to one of these three dimensions must be seen as disrespect or misrecognition. And therefore, what is meant by dignity and integrity can be defined through these three parts: love, legal order, and solidarity. So what Honneth argues for is a society in which people relate to each other as equals, although it must be granted that individual characteristics and features can develop and be worked on. So, on the one hand, all individuals have the same equal status, and on the other hand, individual characteristics, needs, skills, and interests can be pursued further (Honneth 2001, 49–51). These are the same important considerations that we have seen in the theory of relational equality (2). "If we allow ourselves to be guided by these social-theoretical premises, the consequence that results for me is that a political ethics or societal morality must be tailored to the quality of societally guaranteed recognition relations." (Honneth 2004, 354). In the end, the aim of recognition is fulfilled when an agent can be seen in public according to their inherent characteristics, without any kind of shame, through the valued reactions of their social environment. So the agent can show his personal traits openly and fulfill his or her potential, without any restriction. That means in the end, that he can form and develop his or her personal and individual identity (Honneth 2004, 355).

Recognition of status

At first glance, we are tempted to say that Fraser and Honneth see some things similarly, at least on a surface level. Although Fraser takes a different approach to recognition and how to define it, she acknowledges the importance of that dimension.

According to Fraser, the aim for recognition has to deal with two issues: the problem of displacement and the problem of reification. By the former, what is meant is that in light of expanding capitalism, the fight for recognition doesn't do much to change economic inequality, as it switches the focus to other problems. By the latter one, she addresses those cases where aims for recognition simplify and reify group identities, in the sense that they tend to encourage separatism, intolerance, patriarchy, and authoritarianism. However, she admits that not all forms of recognition politics are equally harmful, and some problems cannot be solved alone by redistribution. So she acknowledges that culture is a very important dimension, which interacts with, is combined and related to economic inequality. She claims that, if recognition is conceived correctly, it is able to remedy the redistribution of wealth and power and promote interaction, cooperation, and equality. And she aims for a new perspective on that dimension (Fraser 2000, 108–9). So far, this may remind one of Honneth's approach. However, we may find the actual differences in the details of both points of view.

What we have already seen in Honneth's approach, Fraser relates to Hegel as well when she discusses the idea that an agent becomes an individual subject only through mutual recognition with another agent. Any denial of recognition disturbs the relation to oneself and the own identity. In the same way, as groups aren't valued as equals, this disturbs the relation to oneself. So what we have seen in the former chapter is what she calls the *identity model*. But she claims that it is not sufficient to solve the challenges that we address in recognition (Fraser 2000, 109–10).

Another important problem of the identity model is that, according to Fraser, it reifies identity, as it produces pressure and stress on individuals to conform to a certain group. For example, if somebody doesn't fit exactly according to certain group characteristics, they get discouraged or equated with disloyalty to the actual group. For example, if women don't adapt to the feminist ideal, they get accused of not being beneficial or even hindering the effort for respect and acceptance. This means that, according to a single, simplified group characteristic, the identity model denies the complexity of people's lives. In such cases, the politics of recognition through Honneth's approach tends to reify group identity, as it works as a vehicle for misrecognition, due to a group's inherent struggle for authority and power to represent certain characteristics excessively (Fraser 2000, 112–13). In a practical sense, think of feminism, where efforts for acknowledgment and justice lead to pressure on group members to be *the right version of a woman*, which in turn leads again to a certain form of separatism (Fraser et al. 2004, 377). So the approach of aiming for a solution based on an identity

model of recognition fails, as it “encourages both the reification of group identities and the displacement of the politics of redistribution.” (Fraser 2000, 113). So, instead of focusing on identity, Fraser argues for a different approach, which features some key points that we have already seen in the theory of relational equality.

Instead of a group-specific identity, Fraser argues that we must define recognition according to the social status of agents. That means it is not about the identity of individuals; when we talk about recognition, it is much more about the appreciation of their social status. She claims that what is needed for corresponding appreciation is the status of individual group members as fully respected partners in any form of social interaction, which is very closely related to the theory of relational equality. So what Fraser argues for is the treatment of all agents through a status model, which is not reduced to questions of identity. In turn, we must see misrecognition as a form of social subordination, as preventing adequate participation as a valued group member in social life. It is the denial of being a fully accepted and respected partner in social interaction, because of social institutions and certain patterns of cultural value, which degrade certain people and deny them respect and esteem (Fraser 2000, 113–14). So we shouldn’t see it as “a free-standing cultural harm, but [as] an institutionalized relation of social subordination.” (Fraser 2000, 113).

As it is very closely related to Fraser’s point of view, it seems suitable to focus briefly on Stephen Darwall’s distinction of respect. As the idea that all people deserve respect, just because of the virtue of being, is not unproblematic, he distinguishes between two kinds of respect: *recognition respect* and *appraisal respect*. The former may be defined as the kind of respect to which all human beings are entitled just because of their existence. This means, simply of the fact, that one is human, he or she deserves some basic respect. And if I give some recognition respect to individuals, that means in turn that I recognize them as persons (Darwall 1977, 38–39). Additionally, Darwall mentions that “some fact or feature is an appropriate object of respect if inappropriate consideration or weighing of that fact or feature would result in behavior that is morally wrong.” (Darwall 1977, 40). This is what is meant by recognition respect. The latter one is what is related to certain skills, talents, character traits, or capabilities (Darwall 1977, 39–41). For example, if someone is a very good basketball player, she deserves respect for her qualities on the basketball court. This is not only about the skills of playing, like scoring baskets, dribbling the ball, and outplaying opponents. It is much more about some outstanding abilities, remarkable skills, or extraordinary talents. This is what is called appraisal respect, as it goes back to the positive admiration of certain far above-average abilities and characteristics.

Suitable for a Critical Theory, Fraser argues that misrecognition isn’t only about cultural discourses. Rather, the whole dimension is permeated by social institutions, which hinder the aims of equality. Think, for example, of racial profiling, the blaming of single mothers as social parasites, or the financial disadvantage of same-sex marriage. Each of these cases can be traced back to a cultural misrecognition,

which classifies some groups or categories as normal, while stigmatizing others, achieved through the power of social institutions. And – as we will see later on, in the chapter about the argument of institution – they can vary within their implementation, for example, as formal laws, as governmental policies, or simply through behavioral societal patterns. And each case denies some agents the status of being a fully valued society member (Fraser 2000, 114). That means, in turn, that redressing misrecognition means changing social institutions, depending on their initial patterns. Laws that create unjust outcomes need a legal change in the same way as unjust policies cry for a political shift. And although they differ, the abstract aim stays the same: redressing misrecognition via social institutionalized patterns (Fraser 2000, 114–16). According to Fraser, “the crucial point [...] is that on the status model the politics of recognition does not stop at identity but seeks institutional remedies for institutionalized harms.” (Fraser 2000, 116). Although Fraser admits that insight, we will see that a remedy through distributional theories is not suitable to distinguish between distinct roots of unjust outcomes (6).

Although Fraser's and Honneth's points of view are somewhat related, they differ in certain key points. Both acknowledge the importance of recognition, although they pursue a different approach. Fraser already claims status equality, while Honneth defines the three various spheres that agents should possess. Much more important is that Honneth claims that his approach can encompass distributional inequality in every case, as therefore he sees it as a subordinated dimension to recognition, while Fraser argues that there are cases where recognition alone can't be seen as a starting point for the higher goal of a just society. This traces back to her definition of a complex world, where economic inequalities can't be traced back to recognition one by one.

However, in one of the next chapters (4), we will see how the relationships between recognition and distribution, respectively, equality of status and distributional equality, can be described.

3. Distributional Theories and Redistribution

In contrast to relational egalitarians, I also want to briefly define distributional theories, as represented by Dworkin or Cohen, for example. In the first part, I want to delve a little bit deeper into the theory of luck egalitarianism, while in the second part, I want to discuss some economic issues concerning the point of redistribution. Before delving deeper into the theory, let me mention that contemporary distributional theories use various terms for the main part of their theories. Meaning that nowadays we face terms like *recipient-oriented*, *allocative*, *currency*, *equality of fortune*, or *distributive*, which, at the end of the day, all address the same issue, namely the (re-)distributive dimension. Luck-egalitarians, for example, can be seen within that dimension, as they claim that "Justice itself consists in a desirable distributive pattern." (Anderson 2010, 2).

3.1 Luck egalitarianism

According to Richard Arneson, the main claim of distributional justice is to compensate individuals for bad luck or misfortune. As some people experience good luck while others face bad luck, it is society's responsibility to compensate for these initial disparities. For example, some of us are born into favorable environments and wealthy families, equipped with certain advantages, and must therefore compensate for those who are victims of bad luck. In that sense, we redistribute from the lucky to the unlucky members of society (Arneson 2008, 80).

Luck egalitarianists rely on two core points within their argumentation. First of all, unlucky people should be compensated for outcomes beyond their control, and second, the mentioned compensation should be made out of the part of good fortune that lucky people possess. These core arguments can be traced back to a certain form of humanitarian impulse. When upright people see other persons suffering, take for example victims of an accident, we would claim that we are obliged, as more luckily persons, to help those who are in need (Anderson 1999, 290).

What is important to mention further is that there is a distinction which is crucial for luck egalitarians: the difference between *option luck* and *brute luck*. This distinction in outcomes describes various situations, for which humans, respectively individuals, can be held responsible according to their *voluntary choice*. In the end, this means that it makes a difference if someone decides on their own, or if he is just affected by happenings, which they haven't chosen in a sense of their personal domain of choice. In the former one, the category of option luck, we may classify those outcomes that an agent could have reasonably foreseen (Anderson 1999, 291).

So what is the role of the state, according to these considerations? As Anderson summarizes, luck egalitarians demand a combination of capitalism and the welfare state. They argue that the state should serve as a big insurance that grants its members certain securities against all kinds of bad brute luck. In

that sense, taxes, for example, are like insurance premiums, and all kinds of welfare payments should be seen as compensation for cases of brute luck (Anderson 1999, 292).

When we take a closer look at the idea of luck egalitarianism, we will find out that there are several differences, which manifest in detail. For the sake of simplicity, respectively, the aim of that paper, it is sufficient to distinguish between two approaches, which treat the question: what is it to equalize? One camp that focuses also on equality of welfare, like Arneson and Cohen, and one that only wants to equalize resources, like Dworkin and Van Parijs (Anderson 1999, 293).

3.2 The economic view of redistribution

When economists address the topic of redistribution, they raise numerous questions and employ various approaches. For example, they differ between end result and process equity. The former calls for redistribution through taxes and transfers as the main instruments. It involves a comparison of interpersonal gains and losses and raises questions such as how much should be redistributed? The latter one discusses questions like whether the framework seems to be fair, independently of the outcomes. So, equal opportunities for every member of society, for example, can be very closely related to equality before the law. Process equity aims for the elimination of barriers and organizes the framework for competition. The role of the government in that case is to make sure that every agent has a sufficient level of initial endowments and to encourage competition. This deals mainly with end-result equity; however, process equity is achieved if markets are perfectly competitive. The Pareto criterion, therefore, provides strong policy implications but lacks guidance for policy choices, as it only deals with outcomes, and not with the initial process to arrive at certain allocations of resources. That means it doesn't encompass any concept of justice, which means, in turn, that even a highly unequal allocation can be efficient (Winner 2022, slides 3-5).

As Jonathan Gruber notes, first of all, it should be the role of the state to care about distribution, as the private sector is unlikely to be able to provide it. Here we face the same problem as with other public goods: the free-rider problem. In that sense, consumption of the poorest can be seen as a public good: Rich people would like the poor to consume more; however, they would wish that others would bear the costs. This would mean one would be happy to see poor people consuming more, which can be seen as a benefit, without bearing the costs of that increased consumption. And if everybody felt that way, there would be no redistribution at all. So we may see the role of government as an important institution to distribute (Gruber 2019, Chapter 17).

One question that would be important to address further is whether we should care about relative or absolute deprivation. Should the government care about how much poorer people possess, compared to rich people, or compared to a certain absolute standard? At first glance, it seems intuitive to argue that it is about an absolute value, because if poorer people were capable of consuming at an acceptable

level, why should it matter how much rich people possess in comparison? However, there are reasons to consider relative income as well. For example, think about a poor family in the year 1975 and the year 2025. Not only technical equipment (computers and mobile phones, for example) completely changed within that period. There are other goods we would nowadays classify as necessary. So the line of poverty can be seen as a typical consumption bundle; however, this would lead us towards relative measures (Gruber 2019, Chapter 17.1).

When we want to classify redistribution, we can do so using two different approaches. The first one distinguishes between categorical and means-tested programs: The former ones are those approaches that care about demographic characteristics, like disability, for example, or single motherhood. The latter one is dependent on the income and asset level, which means that only people who are below a certain poverty line are affected. These approaches, for example, are very common in the United States. Additionally, within the second approach, we have to think about what redistribution should look like. Should we focus on cash welfare programs, or on in-kind welfare programs (such as food stamps, nutritional programs, or public housing, for example)? The former one may be more efficient, as people will use money according to their individual preferences and needs, while the latter one already sets a certain framework of how people's needs are met (Gruber 2019, 17.2).

When we want to redistribute, we also face certain technical problems. One famous example is defined by Okun and his leaky bucket. When money must be carried *from the rich to the poor*, it seems like carrying water in a leaky bucket. Some of the resources that should be redistributed simply get lost within the system and the corresponding process. However, these considerations go hand in hand with the question of what level of leakage a society is willing to undertake for a certain income transfer. This means that the poor will not receive all the money that is taken from the rich. In the end, there are three big pillars of leakage when we think of Okun's leaky bucket. The first one is the administrative costs of enabling the transfer. The second one is the fact that any taxation lowers the returns of work and savings, leading rich people to reduce their effort in work and put less money aside, which can be seen as a deadweight loss from taxation. The third one can be seen as a moral hazard effect on poor individuals, as any kind of redistribution raises incentives for individuals to be poor, to fulfill the criteria for the transfers. For example, when agents reduce their labor supply to qualify for cash welfare instead of earning money (Gruber 2019, Chapter 17.3).

However, if we want to measure inequality in a society, we are confronted with certain conceptual issues as well. What is an appropriate indicator? Should we focus on income, wealth, consumption, or leisure? Which units should we focus on? Individuals or households? Which definition should be used? Gross income or disposable income? What kind of income and wealth should be included? Wages, capital gains, fringe benefits? What period should be measured? Monthly, annually, or lifetime (Winner 2022, slide 16)?

If we put our focus on end-result equity, I want to discuss two important economic concepts, which are the *Lorenz curve* and the *Gini coefficient*; both are very closely related to each other. They are useful tools, at least if you want to measure, show, and compare inequality. The Lorenz curve works as a graphical representation of wealth distribution within society. So it illustrates the cumulative share of wealth held by the cumulative percentage of the population, starting with the poorest and ending with the richest. It can be very helpful in forming a picture of the extent of inequality. The X-axis represents the cumulative percentage of the population, while the Y-axis represents the cumulative percentage of wealth. If society would represent perfect equality, the Lorenz curve would look like a perfectly straight diagonal. Which means that each percentage of the population holds the same percentage of total wealth. However, usually the Lorenz curve lies beneath the diagonal, showing the real distribution of wealth. The further away the line is from the diagonal, the more unequal the distribution of wealth. Economists can compare the Lorenz curve from various years to show if inequality within a country, for example, has grown or not. Both care about a certain state, at a certain time, but tell us nothing about equality of opportunities, for example. The Gini coefficient is a number between 0 and 1 that shows how equally or unequally income is shared in a country. It is based on the aforementioned Lorenz curve and defines the ratio between the area between the Lorenz curve and the line of perfect equality, and the total area under the line of perfect equality. A higher number means more inequality (Trapeznikova 2019, 5–7).

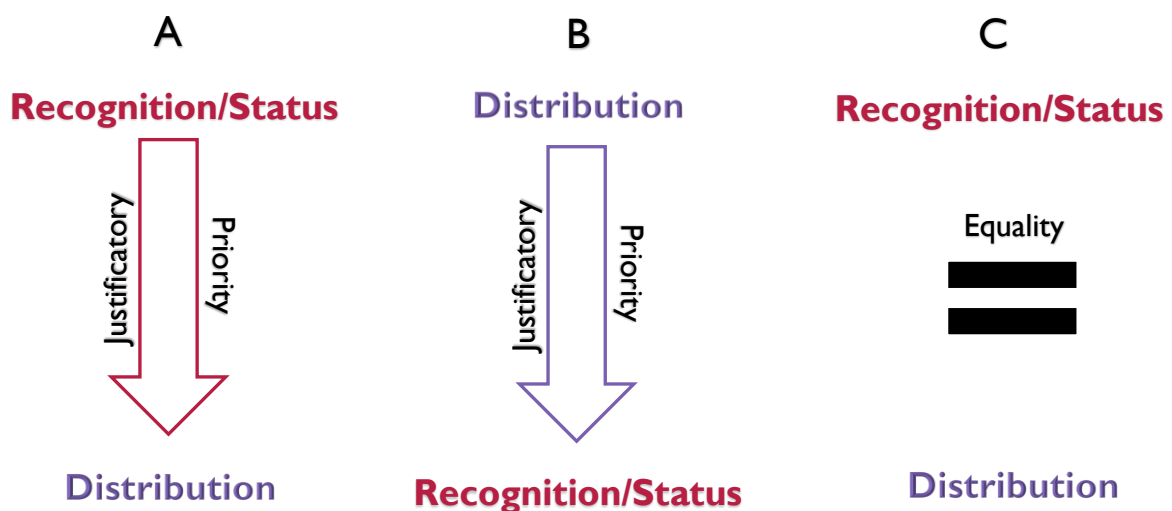
After discussing redistribution, I now want to discuss various relationships between the two dimensions of recognition, respectively, status and distribution.

4. Various relationships between Recognition/Status and Distribution

In this section, I want to focus on the distinct relationships between the sphere of recognition, respectively status, and the distributional sphere. Within the first part, I want to focus on the various relationships between the two spheres and their representatives. To make these considerations more tangible, I also want to show two rather infamous examples in the second part of that chapter, to illustrate the various points of view.

4.1 Relationships

First of all, some representatives claim that recognition of status has justificatory priority over the distributional dimension (A), which means that the latter should be guided by the former. Vice versa, there are those representatives who claim that distributional theories have justificatory priority over the dimension of recognition and status (B). Furthermore, we may see that there are also representatives who claim that both spheres stand in an equal relationship to each other (C). For the sake of simplicity, let me briefly mention that there are also representatives who claim that both spheres have nothing to do with each other and are completely independent. As this claim is not very likely, not yet discussed, I don't want to focus on the last possibility within the next sections. However, what I want to address are two rather infamous examples of inequality and define how they can be interpreted through the various approaches (4.2).



So, within the next chapters, I want to discuss those three possibilities and show which of them is represented by Fraser and Honneth.

A: Recognition > Distribution

Many representatives claim that the dimension of recognition, respectively, the theory of relational equality, is able to encompass any kind of injustice. In detail, they argue that recognition has intrinsic value, while the distribution sphere may just be seen as a tool and therefore *only* has instrumental value. This means that the sphere of distribution is important, but only insofar as it strengthens an equal status of individuals. In this sense, the dimension of recognition is also the root of any injustice, which means that if we want to achieve a just society, we must aim for an equal status among its members, independent of color, culture, gender, sexuality, ability, and so on.

What relational egalitarians further have in common is that they claim distributional inequality must not be bad per se. Remember that relational egalitarians claim that relational equality has an intrinsic value, in contrast to distributional equality, which must be seen as an instrumental value. This means the former guides the latter, and in turn, that means that any kind of distributional inequality is accepted, as far as it promotes relational equality. Think, for example, of various skills and talents that require various encouragement and support.

One representative of that relationship is Axel Honneth, who claims that the dimension of recognition can encompass all kinds of injustices. To use his own words, he states, “I am convinced that the terms of recognition must represent the unified framework for such a project.” (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 113). So his task is to show that any injustice can be subsumed under a well-founded claim of recognition. Honneth argues that the cultural dimension, respectively, the remedy in cases of recognition, can encompass all kinds of injustice, on the economic as well as on the cultural level. This includes the view that recognition has intrinsic value and therefore priority over redistribution, which should be seen as a tool.

Honneth advocates for a single framework based on a differentiated theory of recognition. He argues that this approach is better able to combine social injustice with the normative goals of emancipatory movements. Further, it avoids creating a gap between symbolic aspects on the one hand and social reality on the other. He claims that any kind of feelings of injustice must be seen in the end as experienced as injuries to the sphere of recognition. And of course, this also counts for any kind of economic injustice, which is also a manifestation in denied recognition (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 113–14). However, he argues that there isn’t just one single sphere of recognition, as this would indeed not be possible to cover all challenges of the dimension of distribution (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 151).

Rather, he proposes to introduce a plurality of three equal-ranking principles of social justice, based on the already mentioned spheres of love, equal treatment under the law, and social esteem. The combination of these three spheres can be seen as principles of recognition. And in the end, it depends on the relevant concern, which principle we rely on. So when we talk about any social relationship, the

principle of need takes precedence. When it comes to legally shaped relationships, like treatment before the court, the principle of equality takes precedence. And finally, when it comes to cooperative relationships, the principle of merit takes precedence (Honneth 2004, 358). If these three spheres interact, agents are able to gain a higher degree of individuality because they can learn more about their own personality through various patterns of recognition. This enables them to develop their personal individuality. And what we see further is a process of individualization in light of personality portions on the one hand, and the process of social inclusion on the other hand (Honneth 2004, 360).

B: Distribution > Recognition

For the sake of completeness, some theories claim that distribution has justificatory priority over the sphere of recognition. In contrast to the former approach, they claim that it is the distributional dimension that has intrinsic value, and that the sphere of recognition *only* has instrumental value. That means, of course, that they appreciate and value recognition, but only insofar as it enables equal distribution. And in the same sense, they claim that if we want to achieve a just society, we must aim for equal distribution. Very similar to the former case, we must again admit that there are certain inequalities in status which are accepted, as far as they promote distributional equality. So, as the former should be guided by the latter, they accept any inequality in status, respectively the inequality in recognition, as far as it promotes an equal distribution. As already mentioned, the view of luck egalitarians would fit perfectly within that relationship.

For example, we may face certain representatives, such as Richard Arneson, Gerald Cohen, Ronald Dworkin, or Thomas Nagel (Anderson 1999, 290). However, neither Fraser nor Honneth argues that the distribution sphere would be able to encompass all kinds of injustices; therefore, I don't want to delve deeper into that view.

C: Recognition = Distribution

The third pillar claims that distribution as well as recognition have intrinsic value, and that they are equally important. In that sense, none of these dimensions has justificatory priority over the other, and it depends on the respective inequality, which approach, respectively, which remedy, can guide the other. So, depending on the case of inequality, it is sometimes recognition that is needed to gain distribution, and sometimes it is an equal distribution to gain an according recognition. None of these dimensions can be seen as dominant compared to the other, and we need to discover which one is needed.

Nancy Fraser can be seen as a representative of that dimension. She claims that both theories failed – the strict distributional and the strict recognition theory – so she introduces an expanded conception of justice. She admits that her status model acts within a larger social framework, which defines society as various complex fields that encompass cultural forms and the economic order at the same time.

However, she claims that especially within our capitalist society, both dimensions are decoupled, meaning that the cultural aspect doesn't strictly dictate economic outcomes one by one, and that economic inequalities don't reflect status hierarchies in the same ratio. And therefore she concludes that the status model alone isn't able to overcome any kind of distributive injustice. However, both spheres cannot fully be separated, which means that one dimension can't be completely understood in isolation from the other. And that leads to her conclusion that we must consider both dimensions at the same time, with an equal value, if we want to enrich what she calls *participatory parity*, to redress any kind of injustice (Fraser 2000, 117–19).

Between all those representatives of a remedy in the way of recognition, she argues that we may distinguish between those who acknowledge the dimension of redistribution but see it as a minor sphere (A) and those who completely ignore it. Fraser claims that both end up in displacing redistributive claims. For example, the latter one misses the link between on the one side androcentric norms that devalue any female activities and low wages of female workers on the other side. Or they tend to overlook the institutionalized social-welfare system, which is based on heterosexist norms, and therefore challenges the legitimacy of homosexuality, leading to a rejection of resources and benefits to gays and lesbians (Fraser 2000, 110). "In this climate, I concluded that the politics of recognition was no longer supplementing and enriching the politics of redistribution. On the contrary, the former was displacing the latter, and [...] I argued that we should resist the displacement of redistribution by recognition by developing an integrated conception of justice that could encompass defensible claims of both types." (Fraser et al. 2004, 376). So in that sense, the politics of redistribution may be called displaced. The former one doesn't deny the actual link between both spheres, but they claim that maldistribution is just a secondary problem of misrecognition, like Honneth does. Therefore, they conclude that maldistribution can be remedied by recognition and that we don't need an explicit policy of redistribution. Fraser states that this opinion can be seen as the opposition to Marx, who claims that only fair redistribution is needed to create recognition (B). However, Fraser argues further that the world they describe is not real, as we cannot translate problems of identity into economic problems, as they can't be transformed one by one. Of course, if we were to live in such a world, both dimensions could be remedied by one single stroke, but that's not the case. On one side, because markets follow a logic of their own, and on the other side, because they cannot fully be created by culture, nor subordinated to it. So the inequalities that we see in real-world scenarios cannot fully be seen as an expression of hierarchies of identity (Fraser 2000, 111–12).

In her view, distribution and recognition are two distinct points of view on justice, with equal ranks, and the normative core of her approach is called *participatory parity*. This idea includes two key aspects: the objective and the intersubjective condition. The former grants equal material resources to each participant, which enables them to gain a certain independence and to find a hearing, respectively giving

the agents a voice. The latter, in contrast, means that social institutions must show equal respect for all various agents and ensure equal social esteem. Neither alone is sufficient, as it needs both key aspects. And usually, the objective condition leads to a discussion about redistribution, while the latter shifts the focus to the topic of recognition (Fraser 2001, 29–30).

Especially when it comes to the topic of identity and status, she claims that the former isn't able to address claims of recognition adequately, as they would only be granted if they enhanced self-esteem. So she concludes that, for example, "racist identities would seem to merit some recognition, as they enable some poor Europeans and Euroamericans to maintain their sense of self-worth by contrasting themselves with their supposed inferiors." (Fraser 2001, 32). Of course, not all inequalities are unjust, whether cultural nor economic injustices, which deal again with the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic worth. Fraser goes further to claim that her idea of participatory parity describes the fitting criteria for claims of both dimensions. This means that individuals who feel unjustly treated – whether they belong to the recognition or the redistribution sphere – must show that certain arrangements deny them equal conditions (Fraser 2001, 32–33).

Even if there are indeed valid injustices, as soon as it comes to invalid injustices, there may be different ways for remedy. For example, think about the financial discrimination against same-sex marriages. One kind of remedy would be to grant the same rights to gays and lesbians as to heterosexual relationships. The other remedy would be to deinstitutionalize heterosexual marriage, meaning that we should separate any entitlements from marital status (Fraser 2001, 33–34). Fraser argues that

Such tactical considerations aside, the case of same-sex marriage presents no difficulties for the status model. On the contrary, it illustrates a previously discussed advantage of that model: here, the norm of participatory parity warrants gay and lesbian claims deontologically, without recourse to ethical evaluation – without, that is, assuming the substantive judgment that homosexual unions are ethically valuable. The self-realization approach, in contrast, cannot avoid presupposing that judgment, and thus is vulnerable to counter-judgments that deny it. Thus, the status model is superior in handling this case. (Fraser 2001, 34).

In a nutshell, Fraser claims that the whole discussion must not be seen as an either/or choice between the remedies of redistribution and recognition. What is needed is a solution that is able to encompass both dimensions at the same time, which is possible if we focus on a status model instead of an identity model. Further, we must see both dimensions as two mutually irreducible, but different points of view on the bigger aim of justice, with the same value and equal importance. And in light of the idea that some injustices are indeed valid, we must rely on the concept of participatory parity, which can

distinguish between valid and invalid claims. So Fraser represents the idea that it is possible to pursue both dimensions without ending up in any kind of philosophical schizophrenia (Fraser 2001, 38). This means that in the end, both dimensions have equal value, and that neither of them is superior to the other.

4.2: Examples and interpretations

As the mentioned relationships may seem quite abstract, it makes sense to focus on certain examples to make the main point more tangible. In the very beginning of their joint book, Honneth and Fraser start with a thought experiment to focus on two extreme points of the Recognition-Redistribution spectrum. For the distributional part of the spectrum, they focus on the Marxian conception of the working class, while for the extreme point of recognition, they describe homophobia, respectively, the social division of heterosexuals and homosexuals within society (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 16–18).

We may find plenty of literature that deals with the two injustices mentioned. And each of them is equally important and noteworthy. However, I will refuse to deal with these highly discussed topics for two reasons. First of all, as there is already a lot of literature, I think it could be important to focus on other injustices, which are less prominent or not that much discussed. Second, I think some more suitable people can more easily relate to injustices like homophobia or exploitation, as they have personally experienced them, or have at least come in contact with them, more than I can imagine.

This leads to the idea that I want to discuss two injustices of these extreme points of the spectrum, that I have witnessed or at least, that I am related to. Therefore, I decided to focus on the expulsion of the Protestants from the *Salzkammergut* for the recognitional end of the spectrum. As I grew up in Bad Goisern, which is located in the center of the *Salzkammergut*, I witnessed the important meaning of my ancestors, which is still noticeable today. For the distributional side of the spectrum, I will focus on the so-called *Basel Accords*, which play a highly important role in the banking sector. As a former banker, I witnessed the effects and consequences of these policies, which were usually implemented to save big banks from collapse, but meanwhile tend to create economic injustices.

Expulsion of Protestants

To show the recognition sphere of the spectrum, I decided to shed light on a less prominent topic: the transmigration of Protestants from the inner *Salzkammergut*. As my ancestors are Protestants in Bad Goisern, I feel related to the evictions of the 18th century. Although it was nearly 300 years ago, the topic is still present and important for the inhabitants. Second, I think it serves as an example, which is worthful to put the focus on, as there are, away from the *Salzkammergut*, fewer people who know about the forced displacement. Transmigration serves as a good example to show cultural injustice, as displacement has its roots within the misrecognition of religious freedom. Although both dimensions

are intertwined, especially within a practical sense, we may see the remedy in a corresponding appreciation.

The term *transmigration*, respectively its synonym *translocation*, is nothing else than a euphemism for deportation. The actual term was used to try to downplay the deportations, which were often carried out violently and under duress. Transmigration usually had three different aims, which were rarely carried out peacefully (Steiner 2014, 249–50):

- Punish people from other confessions
- To deport the important spokesmen
- And to support colonization efforts which already taken place in Siebenbürgen, which was the target region.

In the year 1731, an *edict of expulsion* was passed, based on the law of the *Westphalian treaties*, which led to the expulsion of around 20.000 Protestants in Salzburg. Driven by these political developments, inhabitants of the Salzkammergut also tended to leave their country to practice their faith freely (Eichmeyer 1982, 11). Erroneously, the *Salzamtman* Graf Ferdinand von Seeau guaranteed them free migration to countries where the Lutheran doctrine of faith was acknowledged. When more than 1.200 Protestants declared their intentions to leave the country, Emperor Charles VI, as well as Maria Theresia, were more than shocked about such a high level of emigration. If these high numbers of potential migrants were to leave their territory, they would again lose taxpayers, like in the emigration from the Salzburg Protestants. Therefore, he declared that there would be no more emigration, but instead he ordered the so-called *transmigration* to Siebenbürgen in Rumania. This enabled them to deport the Protestants, but at the same time kept them as potential subjects and taxpayers (Steiner 2014, 258–60).

At that time, it was one of the most remote areas of the *Habsburg Empire*, and there, Protestants were able to practice their faith because the Reformation took place before the Habsburgs entered the region. Protestants in Salzkammergut had to face a horrible decision: to transmigrate into complete isolation or turn away from their personal faith (Eichmeyer 1982, 11).

One of the most disturbing instruments can be seen in the treatment of children, as they were separated from their families. Besides the fact that this decision was a juridical injustice and against Westphalian law, they argued that children can't choose a religion. So they aimed in a first sense for the thwarting of any kind of migration, and – if that wouldn't be possible – to limit migration to the parental generation. Another broken guarantee can be seen in the treatment of individual wealth. The authorities guaranteed that any kind of assets should be forwarded to them. However, in most cases, they only received, if at all, only partial amounts of their wealth (Steiner 2014, 254–56). From 1752 to 1758, 19 deportations with more than 2.000 Protestants were carried out, where about a third of

them died because of the consequences of transmigration and due to the harsh living conditions in Siebenbürgen (Eichmeyer 1982, 11). From then on, many people who stayed in the Salzkammergut practiced their faith in secret meetings deep in the mountains. Nowadays, the *Kalmoos-Kirche* and the *Schwarzenbachloch* still show some of these secret spots, where Protestants met to practice their faith (Eichmeyer 1982, 9). They are highly important for the Protestant populace and serve as important places to remind them of the injustice that their ancestors witnessed.

What we see here is an extreme form of religious devaluation, which is rooted in the lack of recognition of different individuals and the absence of freedom of faith. This led to the legal implications, seen in the edict of expulsion and the declaration of the emperor. Due to that description, the remedy for injustice can be seen in terms of recognition, and therefore it stands for the respective dimension of the dilemma.

When we focus on interpretations according to the various approaches, we may start with relational egalitarians (A), who would classify this injustice as a classic case of misrecognition. Due to the devaluation of the Lutheran faith, we see disrespect in its comparatively worst form. This devaluation of the Protestant faith, respectively the corresponding culture, leads to other injustices like expulsion by law and economic exploitation. The root of evil, as relational egalitarians, or Axel Honneth, for example, would see it, is misrecognition, which leads to injustices in other spheres, such as the legal branch and the economic sphere. So, according to that view, what is needed first – and what has justificatory priority – is recognition of status to gain justice. So if Protestants were appreciated according to their faith, this would lead to fair treatment in legal ways and in economic concerns.

However, I would claim that even Nancy Fraser and her framework of a dualistic approach (C) would agree to that kind of remedy. As already mentioned, in her approach, both dimensions are equal and have intrinsic value. Therefore, sometimes it is recognition that is needed first to gain corresponding distribution, and sometimes it is an equal distribution that is needed to gain a corresponding recognition. As this kind of remedy is rooted pretty clearly in the cultural dimension, she would probably agree with the solution shown above. However, there is another example where representatives of both theories would disagree. But before I want to delve deeper into the Basel Accords, let me briefly explain how strictly distributional theories would classify this case.

Distributional theories (B) would address the respective consequences, which means that they would argue for equality of chances, for example. So in that sense, it shouldn't matter if we see Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, or Jews, as long as they have an equal distribution of opportunities, chances, and possibilities, as well as equality before the law. As already mentioned, the distributional sphere has justificatory priority and must be the aim they want to achieve. A corresponding sphere of recognition is only important as far as it provides distributional equality. However, within the next chapter, I want

to argue that this kind of remedy misses the actual point. Nevertheless, I think the example of religious devaluation shows how distributional egalitarians miss the core of certain injustices. Because equality of opportunities, of economic conditions, and equality before the law do not necessarily mean equality of status. One of the latest examples in that relation shows pretty clearly what I mean. In 2019, the *Karfreitag*, as the most important holiday of the year for Protestants, was abolished. The reason, therefore, was that we aim for parity before the law, which means every religious group should face the same legal holidays. However, that doesn't mean much when the *Karfreitag* has incredible meaning for Protestants, as they value it as the most important day of the year, opposed to Catholics. So distribution may be equal, but that doesn't mean that we show respect to Protestant culture and the corresponding holidays. However, let me focus on another rather unknown example from the distributional sphere.

The Basel Accords

To define the economic sphere of the spectrum, there are numerous well-known topics, which are very often mentioned, highly discussed, and described in detail. Of course, especially from those who are confronted with these injustices. The Marxian conception of the exploited working class, the gender-pay gap, or the financial discrimination against same-sex marriage serve as quite famous cases. However, there are also examples that define economic injustices, which are not very prominent, and which are therefore in need of an open discussion.

One of these topics is the impact of the so-called *Basel Accords* on private borrowers. To start from scratch, let me mention that private property in terms of real estate assets can be viewed as a very good path out of poorer conditions and a way to avoid poverty, especially in old age. The problem is that people from poorer backgrounds often don't receive any starting capital from their parents or other family members. This means that a relatively large proportion of wealth must be financed through credit or a loan. And here, the Basel Accords come into play.

Let's briefly reconsider why these laws have been passed. The so-called *Basel Committee on Banking Supervision* (short: BCBS) was founded in 1974 to deal with the increasingly complex financial risks in a more and more globalized world (Milano and Zugliani 2019, 165). In the year 1988, we faced the bankruptcy of the so-called *Herstatt Bank*, which also had effects on other institutions, besides big banks and their customers. When a big bank collapses, this has of course also effects on other institutions, for example, the state, which has to help with tax money. Think, for example, of the *ÖVAG* in 2012 or the *Hypo Alpe Adria* in 2009, which serve as prominent examples and are located in Austria.

To avoid further bankruptcy and additional chain reactions, one felt forced to consider certain regulations for big banks, with the bigger aim of enhancing global financial stability due to an improvement of banking supervision worldwide. Therefore, the first version of the Basel framework,

commonly known as Basel I, and based on the so-called *Basel Capital Accord*, was implemented, which, among other things, included an equity ratio of 8%, and became a general standard over time. The European Union and several other countries also referred to these laws for their financial resolutions. In the year 2004, we witnessed a modification, as with the implementation of Basel II, the aim was to differentiate between certain risks. The idea was born that the equity ratio should be dependent on the risk of the respective loans. So, when a business is riskier, you need a higher equity ratio. Nevertheless, Basel II could not deal with the effects of the subprime crisis in 2007. Therefore, new regulations were passed with the implementation of Basel III. Concretely, we faced higher capital requirements for big banks (Milano and Zugliani 2019, 164–66).

Private borrowers, of course, also faced implementations like higher capital requirements, risk-sensitive interests, and stricter assessments according to job-certainty or frequency of moving, which in turn has an influence on individual creditworthiness.

In the end, this would make it harder for private borrowers to access credit and would entail higher costs. So what we witness here is a spillover, where more stringent conditions for large banks are passed on to private credit owners, making it especially difficult to access credit for people with low- or middle-income. The next problem could be that those credit applicants who weren't granted a loan could now search for other questionable institutions. This would create an additional threat to the housing market (Kroszner 2024, 25).

In a nutshell, we face economic injustices according to the valuation of various loan applicants, which are mostly reflected in interest rates and other fees (Kroszner 2024, 32). Concretely, that means people from poorer economic conditions are disadvantaged compared to others, who already have a certain amount of equity. For the sake of completeness, we must admit that this outcome has its roots within a security idea, which is to protect major banks and their customers in the event of a total financial collapse. However, in the end, these laws lead to economic discrimination against people with low income and help to widen the gap between the rich and the poor. And it is a certain form of economic injustice, which is indeed not very prominent, although it has been applied every day for decades. The remedy for that kind of injustice seems to be equal rights for all credit applicants.

Critics may now argue that the security considerations legitimize these injustices, especially within a meritocracy. However, that is not true, because any bank office is mostly listed in the land register with about 130% of the loan amount. So any risk of default is covered by this insurance, independently of the creditworthiness of the potential borrower. That would enable bank offices to treat any customer equally, without neglecting any considerations of security. However, let's focus on the three various relationships between recognition and distribution to emphasize the difference between these approaches.

As this injustice is apparently an economic one, let's start with distributional egalitarians (B), who would probably argue that what we should aim for is parity in an economic sense. In detail, that would mean that any credit applicant should get the same conditions, independently of financial background, creditworthiness, or economic potential. As we already know, they classify the distributional sphere as intrinsically valuable. Therefore, this dimension should enable equality of status, respectively, corresponding recognition.

As Fraser, respectively, her dualistic approach (C) tries to combine both spheres, she would probably agree, as it is a quite clear economic injustice, which seems to call for an appropriate remedy, which would mean economic parity. In her dualistic approach, both spheres are valued equally, and neither of them has justificatory priority. That means sometimes the remedy calls for recognition first, to gain a fair distribution, and sometimes an equal distribution would enable a corresponding recognition, like in the mentioned example. Therefore, I think she would agree to the solution shown in the paragraph above. However, I want to claim that relational equality would again be able to go one step further.

What relational egalitarians (A) argue for is equality of status, according to certain inherent characteristics. In our case, the first step would be to classify this injustice as a spawn of missing recognition, in the case of economically weaker credit applicants and people with low income. So, economic injustice goes back to a devaluation of a certain status of individuals. When we start to recognize that there are indeed various economic backgrounds, which shouldn't say anything about the status of individuals, this must lead to a corresponding equal economic treatment in the sense that every potential borrower must be granted the same conditions. So in that sense, economic conditions serve as a tool with instrumental value to gain the higher goal of an equal recognition of individuals with different statuses. So, starting from differences in financial strength, we must grant equal status, which leads to equal treatment through the legal branch, as represented by the laws, and equal treatment through bank offices in lending terms.

As we have now seen that there are varying relationships between both spheres, and that they evaluate cases differently, let me now go to a quite prominent example, related to the various relationships: the Recognition-Redistribution dilemma, discussed between Fraser and Honneth.

5. The Recognition-Redistribution dilemma

In the next section, I will focus on a widely discussed topic closely related to the aforementioned relationships: the Recognition-Redistribution dilemma. After explaining the details, I would also like to address two frequently mentioned examples: gender and race.

The Recognition-Redistribution dilemma concerns the apparent contradiction between the socio-economic aim for equality and the cultural goal of recognition of marginalized groups and minorities. In today's complex world, injustice can have many different faces and take various forms. For example, think about racism, the gender pay gap, misogyny, homophobia, economic exploitation of the working class, religious devaluations, ableism, and other kinds of discrimination. And if we now want to classify those injustices, we can do that on two different axes or dimensions, which in practice very often overlap.

The first one could be called the dimension of cultural or symbolic devaluation, which includes cultural domination, disrespect, and nonrecognition. It faces those incidents where a certain group doesn't receive the acquired respect according to their inherent characteristics. For example, think about racism, misogyny, ableism, homophobia, or any kind of religious devaluation, like we've seen before, through the example of the Protestants. The remedy for those kinds of injustice can be seen in cultural or symbolic change, summarized by the term *recognition*. This boils down to a transformation of societal perception and leads to the appreciation of cultural diversity. In that kind of remedy, we want to value certain characteristics and promote group differentiation. However, as there are plenty of definitions of cultural injustices, for the thesis, it is only necessary to describe them as distinct from the second, socio-economic dimension. Within that dimension, we see any kind of economic injustices, such as deprivation, exploitation, or economic marginalization. It includes economic injustice like the gender-pay gap, the Marxian conception of the working class, unpaid care-workers, or financial discrimination against same-sex marriage. Another example would be the case of the Basel Accords, as we've already seen before. The remedy for those cases must be seen in terms of *redistribution*, or *distribution*, which describes a process of economic (re)structuring. This includes equal payments as well as redistributing income or reorganizing the division of labor. It boils down to a fundamental transformation of the economic system of a society (Fraser [1997] 2014, 13–15).

With both spectrums in mind, let us now see why there is a conflict between the remedies for recognition and redistribution. For the former, it seems that we aim to value specific characteristics of certain disrespected groups. So, what we want to go for is a differentiation based on certain inherent characteristics. Therefore, what we strive for and what we advocate is a group differentiation, or as Fraser calls it, "valorizing the group's "groupness" by recognizing its specificity." (Fraser [1997] 2014, 19). For the latter one, the distributional aim, we want to achieve equality by overcoming economic

injustices. In that case, we aim for parity and want equal economic conditions without any kind of group differentiation. Or, as Fraser calls it, "to put the group out of business as a group." (Fraser [1997] 2014, 19).

In our modern society, both axes overlap and are intertwined, as many people have various characteristics and belong to more than just one marginalized group. At the same time, both spheres interact with each other and can create a vicious circle where they mutually promote the negative outcomes of each other. So, what does it take to ensure justice and parity? Recognition, on the one hand, emphasizing certain inherent characteristics, tends to promote group differentiation, while redistribution, on the other hand, tends to promote the opposite. So both remedies aim at mutually contradictory aims. And people who suffer from both, especially in a practical sense, will aim for both (Fraser [1997] 2014, 16). Does it provide a solution to *put the group out of business of a group* as in the actual goal of redistribution, or is it to *put the "groupness" into the actual solution*, like in the aim of recognition? This is what's called the Recognition-Redistribution Dilemma.

5.1 Examples

When we think of injustices in a practical sense, both dimensions are interdependent and even exacerbate the negative outcomes, as many people have various characteristics and belong to way more than just one marginalized group. And we can see recognition and redistribution as two endpoints of a spectrum. Within the middle of that spectrum, we face what Fraser calls *bivalent collectivities* (Fraser [1997] 2014, 19), for example, race and gender, which I will discuss in the next paragraph.

Race

The example of race represents a class-like injustice, as people of color may disproportionately experience low-paid work, combined with pejorative status, and higher-paid, professional work held disproportionately by white people. Among other things, this goes back to the historic legacy of colonialism and slavery. Nowadays, race also influences access to certain labor markets as it degrades black people and excludes them from a productive system. Overall, this generates a mode of exploitation, constituting race as a political-economic differentiation provided with certain class-like characteristics. So what would be the remedy in that case? On the one hand, it represents distributional injustice, which demands redistribution as a remedy, and again, this would call for putting race out of business as such. But that's only one aspect of race, because it isn't only political-economic, it has a cultural dimension as well. This side of racism is more like sexuality than class and is known as *Eurocentrism*. It means focusing on the European part of history as the main part and the driving force of progress, which privileges features associated with *whiteness*, including racism, in the sense that it devalues people of other colors and cultures. And it can be seen in the harms suffered by people of color, such as stereotypical depictions, or devaluation in all spheres of everyday life, like marginalization,

denial of full legal rights, or equal protection. All these injustices must be seen as misrecognition. And again, the remedy, therefore, would be recognition of devalued group specificities. So in the example of racism as a bivalent collectivity, we face a political-economic as well as a cultural dimension. Both dimensions are institutionalized in the state, respectively, the economy, but also within customs, certain beliefs, and cultural habits of our society. So when we want to change racial injustices, we must focus on the political economy and the culture. But as race has an intrinsic bivalent character, it is the actual source of the dilemma and requires a remedy of both dimensions, or as Fraser again calls it: for the redistributive dimension, we must put race out of the business as such, while for recognition, we must value certain group specificities. And as we may see, both goals are not easily pursued simultaneously (Fraser [1997] 2014, 21–22).

Gender

The situation is very similar to gender as a bivalent collectivity. On the economic spectrum, we may face two major problems. The first one can be seen as the gender pay gap, which describes situations where women earn less money for the same job as male workers. So women face a lower salary compared to male employees. The second one is about unpaid care workers. A job that is disproportionately held very often by women, while at the same time, the male part of the relationship is employed in paid jobs. So when it comes to care-work of family members, women very often have to stay at home, having no chance to earn their own money, and are therefore financially dependent on their husbands. Both problems describe the economic side of the spectrum. So what we see here is a structure that creates gender-specific exploitation. Again, we see gender provided with certain class-like characteristics. However, the remedy can be seen in the elimination of any kind of economic or financial differences, in short, redistribution. But again, this describes only one side of the coin. The other dimension of the spectrum is defined by those cases, where we see a cultural differentiation, which is again better known as *androcentrism*. That means any kind of privileges that are associated with masculinity, also known as cultural sexism. Examples of those kinds of injustices are sexual assault, sexual exploitation, pervasive domestic violence, or stereotypical depiction in the media. And all these injustices can be seen as misrecognition, which in turn means that what's needed as a remedy is recognition. Both dimensions of gender are institutionalized within the state, but also within the economy, which means that they can easily create a vicious circle (Fraser [1997] 2014, 19–21). In the case of feminism, for example, we see activists who claim that redistribution is the only acceptable remedy to problems like the gender-pay gap, while there are as well feminists who see gender as a social dimension, aiming to recognize the respective differences (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 8). And again, we have to ask how we should address both problems at the same time.

As already mentioned, Honneth and Fraser argue for two distinct solutions to the problem, which trace back to the aforementioned relationships between the two dimensions. In the following part, I

want to show why I would agree with Honneth and argue for the underestimated power of recognition and why I think it has justificatory priority in contrast to the dimension of distribution.

6. The underestimated power of recognition

Within that chapter, I want to focus on three core arguments that are in favor of the theory of relational equality, argue for their justificatory priority, and dismiss distributional theories. The first two are positive arguments, named *the argument of institutions* and *the argument of disability*, while the third one – *the merger mistake* – can be seen as a counter-argument, respectively a rebuttal to a claim, that Fraser mentions in the shared book with Axel Honneth. In my opinion, the former ones show very clearly why the recognition sphere is superior to the distributional sphere, while the rebuttal weakens an argument in favor of the dualistic approach.

6.1 Positive arguments

Let me discuss two arguments that are in favor of relational equality, which show that it has justificatory priority in contrast to distributional theories, and which further aim to show that only the recognition of individual status is able to get to the core of certain injustices.

The argument of institutions

Within the next paragraph, I'll present an argument, relating to Christian Schemmel, that aims to show that we as a society care about interpersonal relations over and above our considerations for certain distributions of goods. In short, he claims that the "attitudes of social and political institutions towards people expressed in the way such institutions treat them are relevant to justice, and they are not ultimately reducible to distributive considerations." (Schemmel 2021, 38). Let us begin by rephrasing his thought example, where he distinguishes between certain forms of injustice. (For the sake of completeness, he refers in turn to Pogge 1995.) So we must imagine five different scenarios according to the distribution of a very important nutrient, which he calls vital nutrient V, which tends to promote good health, and where certain groups are treated differently (Schemmel 2021, 27–28):

- In the first scenario, the shortfall of the vital nutrient V is officially mandated by law. So there is a certain group that gets discriminated against according to the distribution of the healthy supplement. For example, certain people with the same inherent characteristics are not allowed to buy V.
- The second scenario describes a situation where sellers of the nutrition refuse to sell it to certain groups of people, which is, at the same time, legally authorized.
- In scenario number three, there are social institutions that foreseeably and avoidably let a shortfall happen. Due to that, people of a certain group who share the same characteristics suffer from a lack of access to nutrition.
- In the fourth scenario, some sellers refuse to sell the nutrition to certain people, although it is officially forbidden by the state authority. However, it is not pursued further by anyone.

- The last scenario describes a situation where a shortfall is produced by a natural defect, but although it could have been avoided by social institutions, it hasn't.

According to Schemmel, we face two dimensions within that example, which are, on the one hand, the way institutions cause inequalities and the attitudes that are reflected in the actions. What is important is that there are attitudes of social institutions that can't be reduced to distributive considerations. So if we compare these various scenarios, we face hostility in the first and contempt in the second and fourth scenarios, although it is not the same kind. The last scenario can be seen as neglect, which in turn represents the problem of anonymity, and which has already been discussed earlier. So, through the view of attitudes, we can classify those injustices from hostility to neglect, which in turn adds a certain status to the affected groups. And that describes a difference in the quality of interpersonal relations, which is exactly what relational egalitarians try to object (Schemmel 2021, 38–40).

So when actions are carried out correctly, they must be seen as expressions of institutional attitudes. And if these institutions treat certain groups as inferior members, they fail to express the necessary respect, respectively, the required recognition. "The point of this view is that we do not only have to distribute properly, we also have to treat people properly while doing so: the latter considerations function as constraints on the former." (Schemmel 2021, 51). So the main point is that when we focus purely on recipient-oriented theories, or distributional equality, we fail to focus on the attitudes that are expressed through institutions in the treatment of individuals and groups (Schemmel 2021, 44–51). This example shows that distributional theories do not get to the core of injustices, which is the missing recognition of individuals, respectively, whole groups of people. Even when we aim for a just society, in the sense that we distribute equally, this will not help us to distinguish between the various injustices of the V example.

In the next paragraph, I'll use ableism as an example to show why relational equality is better suited to get to the core of injustices than the distributional approach.

The argument of disability

Unfortunately, ableism is also an inherent injustice in various parts of our society. The core problem, at least according to Elizabeth Barnes and many other disability rights activists, lies in the point of view that disability must be seen, compared to other people without disabilities, as a bad difference. In contrast, they argue that we must see it as a natural part of human diversity. Instead of being afraid, feeling pity for, or showing compassion, it should be a difference that should be celebrated, recognized, and appreciated, rather than *cured* and pitied. Barnes argues that we must see disability as a *mere difference* to any other human characteristic, like hair color, height, sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, and so on. We shouldn't see it as an abnormality, a defect, or a departure from *usual* functioning. So the problem of disability lies within the societal treatment of disabled people, which represents implicit

ableism. This would mean, in turn, that if we as a society were in a state of mind that wouldn't be inherently ableist, any kind of disability itself wouldn't pose a problem. But as social and political institutions, like workplaces and public offices, tend to be ableist, disability isn't just a mere difference in our society nowadays. It must be seen as a bad difference because society made it as such (Barnes 2014, 93). However, we must admit that there are plenty of reports which show that people had incredible positive experiences, only because of disability, no matter if they faced disability from birth or due to any happenings during their lifetime. Think of a conscious way of life, of finding one's calling, of inclusion, and being part of a certain community.

Interestingly, this is a key point that also Anderson addresses, and she claims that the distributive view cannot deal with this key point appropriately. She refers back to the example of deaf people, who identify themselves as part of a certain deaf community. What's interesting is that as part of such a society, they deny any kind of intrinsic choiceworthiness of hearing. So what they aim for is to humble the hearing society, which in turn claims that if any person isn't able to hear, his or her life is less worth living. "[Disabled people] do not ask that they be compensated for the disability itself. Rather, they ask that the social disadvantages others impose on them for having the disability be removed." (Anderson 1999, 334). They want their own lives to be acknowledged, without any kind of pity, living their personal lives with dignity. What they want is not any kind of compensation, which would be the conclusion of distributional equality. Instead, they fight for the removal of any kind of communication, which disables them from being an equal part of societal communication. And what we see here is that if disabled people are excluded from society, the remedy is inclusion (Anderson 1999, 333–34).

Instead of changing the outcome like in the aim of a theory of distributional equality, the remedy is valuing a person's dignity, which is possible with a theory of relational equality. Because what the former would care for is a change in the actual outcome, denying the value of an intrinsic disabled life, while relational equality would care for individual dignity, enabling persons with disabilities a worthwhile life within society, with no hurdles compared to other people.

6.2 Negative arguments

Finally, I also want to address a rebuttal, which I call the *merger mistake*, which concerns a claim of Fraser, where she tries to argue in favor of distributional theories.

The merger mistake

In short, Fraser claims that not all maldistribution is a byproduct of misrecognition. To illustrate that claim, she focuses on a white male worker who lost his job due to a speculative corporate merger. She concludes that the injustice has little to do with misrecognition. Moreover, we must see them as a result of economic relations in combination with the aim of profit maximization. Therefore, she goes

further to conclude that a remedy for those kinds of injustices must reach beyond the cultural dimension to examine the composition of capitalism. As these economic patterns work beyond culture, we must find a remedy, rooted in the economic system, to gain full parity and equality (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 35).

And there are several disagreements that I want to address now. First of all, I think the whole sticking point between Fraser and Honneth concerns exactly the distinct conception of the two dimensions. As Fraser only addresses this important and illustrative example as a small side-chapter, I think her reply is rather thin and not discussed in detail. Further, I think that the example and her conclusion are both misleading for several reasons. As the mentioned example of a speculative corporate merger is too superficial, we must distinguish at least two different cases.

The first one is where the merger is truly a result of pure speculation in the sense that some shareholders or managers only care about their own profit, representing the typical stereotype of a greedy capitalist. Of course, these cases exist in the real world. However, the problem isn't the typical utility maximization of a single individual, represented through the greedy capitalist, much rather it is the lack of corresponding laws, which should be guided by ethical considerations like the aim for recognition. Because we know that people tend to maximize their own profits without any consideration of negative outcomes for others. So, to grant rights to – in that case – the working class, represented through the white male worker who lost his job, is to value their inherent status. So, as this case represents an economic injustice, the initial root is located in the lack of fair and just laws protecting personal status. Therefore, we must indeed secure the legal sphere as well as the economic demands of the worker, in relation to the capital interests of shareholders and managers. However, these are instrumental values, which are guided by the intrinsic value, respectively, the status of the white male worker. And that in turn means that the corresponding description of recognition is indeed able to encompass the economic and the legal injustice.

The second case is when we face mergers that are indeed a result of economic efficiency. In such cases, people lose their jobs, maybe because demand is decreasing, costs are increasing, or other economically aggravating circumstances. If people lose their jobs, this is because of the law of supply and demand, which is clearly rooted in the branch of economics. However, we wouldn't classify that as a case of classic injustice, although it is a sad and serious situation. But again, the field of recognition seems to provide a solution. Because if we grant unemployed people a certain status, meaning that we guarantee them social safety and a health system independent of their employment, this would be an instrumental solution, guided by the intrinsic value of their status. Further, what we need to provide is the possibility and support to find a new workplace, and unemployed people must be recognized as equal agents within society. So again, the sphere of recognition can encompass the economic situation, as far as it is defined in a way that guarantees corresponding recognition.

In a much abstract sense, we must admit that we as a society know how the economy works. And this includes cases where people will lose their jobs, without any kind of bad intention of others, like profit maximization at any price, exploitation, or oppression. These considerations include two conclusions: first of all, being unemployed says nothing about your status or your spot within society. Second, as these cases can happen to anybody, we must grant certain safety nets to guarantee that they live a worthwhile life, according to their status as a fully accepted and valued member within society. All these considerations trace back to the dimension of recognition; however, they fight economic cases, which can – but may not necessarily be – unjust.

7. Conclusion

What we have seen within the last pages is that there are various types of injustices, which can be abstractly structured on a cultural and an economic dimension. While the former includes cases like misogyny, ableism, religious devaluation, or racism, the latter contains financial discrimination, the gender pay gap, or the Marxist conception of the working class. What does it take to overcome those different cases? The answer to that question can be found in various theories, which aim for different approaches like recognition of status, respectively (re)distribution. And that, in turn, goes back to the various relationships between the two dimensions.

If we want to narrow that down to the three largest groups, there are those representatives who argue that the distributional sphere has justificatory priority over the recognition of status. Vice versa, some representatives argue that the dimension of recognition has justificatory priority over the distributional sphere. And finally, some representatives argue that both theories stand in an equal relationship with each other. Depending on which pillar we aim for, we'll find different solutions to various problems. Distributional theories, for example, claim that they can overcome any kind of injustice, arguing that the distributional dimension is intrinsically worthwhile, and therefore able to guide the sphere of recognition, which in turn only has instrumental value. In contrast, there are also representatives of the theory of relational equality, who claim that the recognition of an equal status of individuals can overcome any kind of injustice. Therefore, an equal status has intrinsic value, in contrast to the distributional dimension, which only contains instrumental value. And finally, there are those representatives who think that we need some kind of hybrid solution, as both dimensions contain intrinsic value.

The Recognition-Redistribution dilemma constitutes a problem that is related to that discussion. It states that the two dimensions cry for various remedies, which contradict each other. Recognition, for example, emphasizes certain inherent characteristics and tends to promote group differentiation, while redistribution, in turn, tends to promote the opposite. So the goal for both solutions aims at different remedies, which contradict each other. Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth argue for different approaches, based on their standpoint, according to the various relationships of the distinct dimensions. Honneth claims that it only needs recognition to overcome any kind of injustice, while Fraser argues for a dualistic approach, claiming that both dimensions have intrinsic value. Within the last pages, I tried to argue for Honneth's approach, as I showed that redistribution will not get to the core of the problem, like in the argument of disability or the argument of institutions. Further, I tried to show that when we want to start with a distributional approach, we are misguided by a superficial view, like in the merger mistake. And again, we will not get to the core of the actual injustice.

Therefore, we must agree that Honneth's approach to a solution is the right one, and what it takes, as described through the theory of relational equality, is recognition of status to overcome any kind of injustice. An equal distribution can be part of a solution, but it must not necessarily be, as it only contains instrumental value. That means even an unequal distribution may be just as far as it promotes equality of status. And there may be differences in color, religion, ability, skills, color, gender, sexual preferences, and so on. But in the end, they shouldn't say anything about the status of individual people, meaning that what must be granted is equality of status.

Abstract

English

The Recognition-Redistribution dilemma, originally developed from the concept of a Critical Theory, has become a big topic of its own. Nowadays, we face certain injustices like misogyny, ableism, racism, and any kind of religious devaluation on the one hand, and financial discrimination, the Marxian conception of the working class, or the gender pay gap on the other hand. The former may be called cultural injustices, while the latter ones can be described as economic injustices.

However, the actual dilemma results in remedies for both of them. While cultural injustices go back to the devaluation of certain groups according to their inherent characteristics through nonrecognition, the remedy seems to be the recognition of certain group characteristics. The latter goes back to a different treatment of certain groups in an economic sense, where a remedy would call for equality, without any kind of differentiation.

In a nutshell, that would mean we aim for the valuation of certain differential characteristics of particular group members as the goal of recognition, while what we want to achieve in an economic sense is parity, without any kind of differentiation. These two aims contradict each other, which has been discussed in many papers, especially within the third generation of the Frankfurt School, between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth.

Each of them presents their own solution to the dilemma in various publications. As both dimensions overlap and are intertwined, Fraser claims that what's needed is a so-called dualistic approach, which serves both dimensions at the same time. So in certain cases, we start with redistribution to gain recognition, and vice versa. Honneth, on the other hand, claims that recognition can encompass all kinds of injustices, no matter if economic or cultural. So, which solution should we rely on?

While the topic has reached its climax through Fraser and Honneth, the discussion concerning a just society has moved on and addresses other theories like the dispute between relational and distributive egalitarians.

This thesis aims to discuss the idea of relational equality and argues for its strength, respectively, its justificatory priority above any distributional theories. Relational egalitarians claim that a just society can be defined through the relations of its members. Outgoing from a committed relationship or a marriage, they claim that each participant has the right to their dignity according to his or her personal interests, wishes, desires, talents, and needs. When we see that as a starting point for defining an equitable relationship, we can go further, applying the concept at a societal level.

In the same sense as important needs work as guidance, this should hold as well for society, although we may face certain problems on that broader level. Indeed, inequalities as such can occur, especially within a democratic and capitalistic society. Further, as various talents aren't distributed equally, they should be supported and encouraged individually. But in the end, the inequalities mentioned shouldn't say anything about the status of an agent. However, distribution as well as the legal level work as an instrumental value, while relational equality as such can be seen as an intrinsic value. So the former will be guided by the latter. Therefore, distribution may be an important goal, but not the only one. And at the same time, an equal distribution can be a solution, but it must not necessarily be.

If we agree on the idea of relational equality as a just society, we may apply that to the initial dilemma. Another question that this paper tries to answer is, if we agree on a just society according to relational equality, what does that mean for the Recognition-Redistribution dilemma? What this thesis wants to argue for is that we will find out that Honneth is right, and what's needed first is recognition to overcome any kind of injustice. This enables us to treat distribution as a sub-goal of recognition, as an appropriate definition of the latter can encompass all kinds of injustices.

Deutsch

Das *Recognition-Redistribution dilemma* entwickelte sich ursprünglich aus der Idee einer Kritischen Theorie heraus und wurde mit der Zeit zu einem eigenständigen Thema. Heutzutage sehen wir, dass Ungerechtigkeit sehr viele verschiedene Facetten annehmen kann. Beispielsweise Misogynie, Ableismus, Rassismus oder unterschiedliche Formen religiöser Abwertung auf der einen Seite, und finanzielle Diskriminierung, das marxistische Konzept der Arbeiterklasse oder den Gender-Pay-Gap auf der anderen. Erstere können als kulturelle Ungerechtigkeiten klassifiziert werden, während letztere als ökonomische Ungerechtigkeiten bezeichnet werden können.

Das eigentliche Dilemma entsteht aus den jeweiligen Lösungsansätzen der beiden Dimensionen. Kulturelle Ungerechtigkeiten beruhen auf einer Abwertung inhärenter Charakteristika durch fehlende Anerkennung und verlangen somit nach einer entsprechenden Wertschätzung. Materielle Ungerechtigkeiten wiederum beruhen auf einer unterschiedlichen Behandlung gewisser Gruppen in ökonomischer Hinsicht, was bedeutet, dass ein entsprechender Lösungsansatz nach Gleichbehandlung ohne jegliche Art von Differenzierung verlangt.

Zusammengefasst bedeutet das, dass wir einerseits zwar als Ziel die Wertschätzung von unterschiedlichen Charakteristika der jeweiligen Gruppen benötigen, andererseits aber auch auf Gleichheit im ökonomischen Sinne abzielen und jegliche Art der Unterscheidung vermeiden wollen. Diese beiden Ziele widersprechen sich, was wiederum in verschiedenen Artikeln diskutiert wurde, insbesondere innerhalb der dritten Generation der Frankfurter Schule, beispielsweise zwischen Nancy Fraser und Axel Honneth.

Beide präsentierten ihre eigenen Lösungsansätze für dieses Dilemma in verschiedenen Publikationen. Da sich beide Dimensionen überschneiden und überlappen, argumentiert Fraser für einen dualistischen Ansatz, der versucht, beiden Sphären gerecht zu werden. Das bedeutet, dass wir in manchen Fällen mit Umverteilung beginnen müssen, um Anerkennung zu erreichen und umgekehrt. Honneth hingegen behauptet, dass eine entsprechende Anerkennung dazu in der Lage ist, sämtliche Arten von Ungerechtigkeit umfassen zu können, unabhängig davon, ob es sich um ökonomische oder kulturelle handelt. Auf welchen dieser Lösungsansätze sollten wir also vertrauen?

Während das Thema seinen Höhepunkt durch Fraser und Honneth erreichte, hat sich die Debatte um eine gerechte Gesellschaft weiterentwickelt, zum Beispiel zur Diskussion zwischen *relational* und *distributional egalitarians*.

Diese Arbeit diskutiert die Theorie der *relational equality* und argumentiert für deren Stärke, beziehungsweise ihrer Priorität vor jeglichen Verteilungstheorien im Hinblick auf Fragen der Gerechtigkeit. *Relational egalitarians* behaupten, dass eine gerechte Gesellschaft nur durch die Beziehung ihrer Mitglieder unter- und zueinander gewährleistet werden kann. Ausgehend von einer festen Beziehung oder einer Ehe, wird behauptet, dass jede:r Beteiligte das Recht auf eine entsprechende Wertschätzung basierend auf ihren oder seinen persönlichen Interessen, Wünschen, Talenten und Bedürfnissen hat. Wenn wir diese Idee als Ausgangspunkt für die Definition einer gerechten Beziehung hernehmen, können wir das Konzept auch auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene anwenden.

Im gleichen Sinne wie jegliche Bedürfnisse als Richtwert fungieren sollen, sollte dies auch auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene gelten, obwohl wir aufgrund der breiten Masse mit verschiedenen Problemen konfrontiert werden. Tatsächlich können Ungleichheiten auftreten, besonders in einer demokratischen und kapitalistischen Gesellschaft. Da Talente unterschiedlich verteilt sind, werden diese auch unterschiedlich gefördert und unterstützt. Aber die besprochenen Unterschiede dürfen im Endeffekt nichts über den Status einer Person aussagen. Verteilungsfragen, genauso wie beispielsweise auch die Gesetzeslage, verfügen somit über instrumentellen Wert, während die *relational equality* als intrinsisch wertvoll angesehen werden kann. Das bedeutet, ersteres wird durch letzteres geleitet. Daher kann eine entsprechende Verteilung zwar als ein wichtiger Teilbereich gesehen werden, aber nicht als eigentliches Ziel. Und gleichzeitig kann eine Gleichverteilung zwar eine Lösung darstellen, muss aber nicht zwingend als solche gesehen werden.

Wenn wir uns auf die Theorie der *relational equality* im Hinblick auf eine gerechte Gesellschaft einigen, können wir diese auch auf das zuvor besprochene Dilemma anwenden. Eine weitere Frage, die diese Arbeit beantworten möchte, lautet daher: Was würde dies für das Recognition-Redistribution Dilemma bedeuten? Diese Arbeit vertritt die These, dass Honneths schlussendlich Recht behält, denn was es in erster Linie braucht, um jegliche Art von Ungerechtigkeit zu überwinden, ist eine

entsprechende Anerkennung. Das ermöglicht uns, Fragen der Verteilung als sekundäres Ziel zu betrachten, da eine entsprechende Definition von Anerkennung sämtliche Arten von Ungerechtigkeiten umfassen kann und somit den ersten Schritt hin zu einer gerechten Gesellschaft bedeutet.

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