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Recognition and the Media

Rousiley C.M. Maia



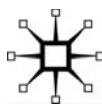
Recognition and the Media

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Rousiley C.M. Maia

*Associate Professor, Department of Social Communication,
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This book is dedicated to my son and daughter, Rafael and Gabriela, and my students who pressure me in an everyday basis to see the world and the future in new ways.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Since my first contact with Axel Honneth's work in 1998, *The Fragmented World of the Social* and *The Struggle for Recognition* have struck me as an intriguing social-theoretical project. The specific aim of Critical Theory to not only provide sophisticated conceptual tools to explain social phenomena, but also supply a critical impetus for identifying social resources for practical transformation of current forms of domination, has always appealed to my political and moral concerns in both my academic and personal life. Meanwhile, the experience of teaching political communication, democratic theory and public sphere issues in combination with daily communicative practices – via traditional mass communication, fictional and non-fictional programs, the Internet, social networking sites – pressured me to look through the lenses of Critical Theory upon everyday interactions as a “pre-scientific realm of moral critique.”

Today an interconnected and hybrid media environment shapes people's interactions in different spheres of everyday life – intimate, social, and political. Identity-building and conflicts regarding social recognition; disputes in the public sphere for the negotiation of individuals and groups' claims, rights and achievements; mobilization and social learning in the broadest sense, and finally institutionalization and governance processes, cannot be fully explained without seriously taking into consideration the role of the media in these dynamics. For some, the media undermine democratic processes and the achievement of justice; for others – and I align myself with this group – the media play an ambivalent role that can at times enhance these prospects. Thus, I contend that media structures, formats or genres, practices, operations of power and influences in each particular situation should be surveyed, and not presumed. In this book, my collaborators and I explore this complex landscape, focusing on some interfaces between particular types of media and struggles for recognition.

The project of this book started several years ago. In 2008, I published the book *Deliberação e Media* [Deliberation and the Media], which examined different cases of mediated deliberation. The subsequent *Deliberation, the Media and Political Talk*, published in 2012, situated the media within the deliberative system and moved towards the investigation of ordinary people's discussions on conflicting discourses displayed

in the media arena. While keeping Habermas's discourse ethics and a number of normative controversies among deliberative theorists in the forefront of my research concerns, these previous works also included case studies of conflicts among group identity differences, and the contestation in the public sphere for democratic inclusion and greater social and political justice. The intention to undertake the project of *Recognition and the Media* arose in connection with the conclusions that I arrived at in these investigations.

In particular, several research projects carried out by my graduate students and postdoctoral researchers on minorities and disadvantaged groups – most of them organized within the framework of deliberative theory – greatly influenced me to delve into Honneth's program to reframe research questions. The effort to understand the three forms of recognition postulated by this philosopher, each of which contains potential motivation for social conflict, led me to further this approach within empirical research. While Honneth's theory has become increasingly influential in the last decade, it has been explored primarily in articles and books on social and political philosophy and political theory. My aim in *Recognition and the Media* is to explore Honneth's program about recognition by marking key elements of this approach, in conjunction with empirical experiences of a number of different disadvantaged groups. This book also attempts to situate the role of the media in struggles for recognition, in dialogue with political communication, and in media literature.

A sabbatical leave at Boston College in 2011 allowed me to sketch, from the recognition-theoretical approach, the direction of the research presented in this book, the way to look at problems regarding empirical material in each chapter, and debates focusing on certain controversial issues in Honneth's work. This book presents both my own scholarly work and that of my former and current graduate students – Ana Carolina Vimieiro, Danila Cal, Regiane Garcêz, Ricardo Mendonça, Thaianne Rezende – as well as a postdoctoral scholar, now my colleague, Simone Rocha. I am most indebted to them for their collaboration and enthusiastic discussions.

My thinking on the matters presented in *Recognition and the Media* has evolved in the last three years through debates with my students and other participants in the Research Group on Media and the Public Sphere – EME/UFGM – and my deepest thanks go to these individuals. It is impossible to list the vast number of people I am indebted to, but I would like to mention those who worked on the theory of recognition – Ângela C. S. Marques and Márcia Cruz. A special thanks is due

to my current graduate students for their tireless help and commentary on drafts of this book, Danila Cal, Regiane Garcêz, Vanessa Veiga, Diógenes Lycarião, Alicianne Oliveira, Patrícia Rossini, Gabriella Hauber and a postdoctoral researcher, Bráulio Neves. I am profoundly grateful to my undergraduate students Rodrigo Miranda, Diego Bemquerer, Aline Cabral, Ana França, Anne Júlia Rocha, Camila Marques, Isabela Guimarães, Laís Oliveira, Raíssa Fernandes, Letícia Garcia and Cynthia Oliveira, who assisted with the review of the literature and preparation of this book. A special word of thanks is due to Diego Bemquerer for choosing the cover image. I owe thanks to Geesje Henry, Adriane Reams, Deborah Murray and Ricardo Bibiano, who provided invaluable revision and editorial assistance. I am grateful to Andrew Baird and Sara Crowley-Vigneau, my editors at Palgrave Macmillan, for their good work.

Several talks and participating in conferences have helped me improve my ideas, by providing me with the opportunity to share them with others. The first prospect of this book was presented during the MRAP seminars held at Boston College in February 2011, and I thank Bill Gamson and Charlotte Ryan and all “MRAPers” for their suggestions. Chapter 5 is partially based on a conference delivered at the ICA Conference, in Roubaix, France, in March 2012, and I’m grateful to François Cooren and Bernard Miège. I was also able present this topic at the XIV Jornada Multidisciplinar Mídia e Cidadania [Multidisciplinary Meeting on Media and Citizenship] at the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP), Bauru-SP in May 2012, and I would like to thank Murilo Soares for this platform. I am grateful to Marcus Lima for organizing the I Colóquio em Mídia, Reconhecimento e Participação [First Colloquium on Media, Recognition and Participation] at the Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia (UESB), Vitória da Conquista-BA in June 2012. While participating in a working mission at the Seminar für Medien-und Kommunikationswissenschaft at Mannheim University in Germany during the summer of 2013, I had the opportunity to discuss Chapter 6 and Chapter 10 with Hartmut Wessler, Eike Rinke and many students and professors who encouraged new insights and comments. Jürg Steiner has been a stimulating conversation partner on issues of conflict, everyday talk and deliberation and he has made generous comments regarding some of the book’s chapters. Several chapters have already been presented in scientific forums: Compós (Juíz de Fora, Brazil); ICA (London, UK; Seattle, US); and ABCP (Gramado, Brazil).

This book is the result of a series of research projects, under my coordination, that have received funding from different Brazilian research agencies (CNPq, CAPES, and FAPEMIG). Three chapters draw on previously

published work, and I am grateful to my publishers for permission to include reprints from the following:

- Maia, R. C. M. & Cal, D. (2014). Recognition and ideology: assessing justice and injustice in the case of child domestic labor. *Journal of Political Power*, 7, 63–85.
- Maia, R. C. M. & Garcêz, R. L. O. (2013). Recognition, feelings of injustice and claim justification: a case study of deaf people's storytelling on the internet. *European Political Science Review*, 1–24. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1755773913000143>
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List of Abbreviations

ABGLT	Association of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals
APAE	Association of Parents and Friends of the Exceptional
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDL	Child Domestic Labor
CUF	Central Única das Favelas
DQI	Discourse Quality Index
ECA	Child and Adolescent Statute
FENEIS	National Federation for the Education and Integration of Deaf People
ILO	International Labor Organization
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
MORHAN	Movimento pela Reintegração das Pessoas Atingidas pela Hanseníase
PETI	Program for Eradicating Child Labor (Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil)
PETID	Program for Eradicating Child Domestic Labor (Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil Doméstico)
SNSs	Social Network Sites
WFD	World Federation of the Deaf

Introduction

In recent years, the notion of recognition has gained a central position in debates about multiculturalism, identity politics, problems of rights and justice, and the struggles of groups facing poor income distribution and cultural undervaluation. Axel Honneth's book, *The Struggle for Recognition*, which was published in Germany in 1992 and translated into English in 1995, generated a wide range of inquiries and investigations in diverse domains in the philosophical, social and political fields.¹ Several scholars have argued that Honneth's theory could revitalize the Frankfurt School tradition by bringing new insights into the assessment and analysis of contemporary society. While Honneth endorses Habermas's linguistic turn and the substitution of the subject-object model of cognition and action for an intersubjective model, he attempts to ground his critique in experiences of misrecognition as the normative and motivational force behind struggles against injustice. Honneth seeks to broaden the scope of social criticism by evincing social conditions that are necessary for humans to flourish and reach the social recognition of individual needs, rights, and contributions for a society.

This book aims to investigate some of the interfaces that the theory of recognition establishes with political communication and media studies. Although the theory of recognition has fostered a strong debate in philosophy, social theory, and political theory throughout the past decade, most of these discussions have been associated with the notion of face-to-face interactions. In contemporary, complex, multicultural societies, struggles for recognition to a large degree are – and need to be – mediated. The process of mediation that is employed by the media is unavoidable for the expansion of relationships of recognition or misrecognition.

This raises concrete questions not only about forms of representation and discourses in the media, but also about broader social and cultural interactions through which people interpret media materials in their daily conversations and cultural and political practices. Intersubjectivity and identity processes that emerge from these interactions cannot be satisfactorily explained without taking into account the role of the media. Likewise, no sufficient explanation can be given about how the public sphere and public debates are shaped as socially-wide processes. The same is true for how public interest is mobilized or collective learning processes arise in current conditions, without taking into account the interfaces that the media establish with these dynamics. Nonetheless, few studies² have sought to align the literature on recognition with that focusing on communication and media studies. This book, which is a result of seven years of research, aims to fill this gap and show how Honneth's theory brings a new perspective to dealing with traditional concerns of critical theory. This includes delving into the industrialized dissemination of images and discourses and changes in people's identity, the relationships that mass communication establishes with reification and ideology, and the role of the media in the social struggles of marginalized and exploited groups.

This book presents theoretical and empirical research. Honneth's theory has provided the most basic concepts that frame our perspective and empirical analysis. While this German philosopher's work has inspired much of the interest in and debate about recognition, there are different understandings of this concept that are based on distinct traditions of thought that are not necessarily compatible (Connolly, Leach, & Walsh, 2007; Fraser, 2001, 2003a, 2004, 2005; Hobson, 2003; Markell, 2003; Seymour, 2010; Taylor, 1994). Thus, we utilize Honneth's program in order to ensure a coherent theoretical grounding to our research and internal consistency across the set of empirical cases.

Besides my own scholarly work, this book involves the research of five of my current or former graduate students and one post-doctoral researcher. As empirical researchers, our intention is not to engage in the current debate with scholars working on the theory of recognition in purely theoretical terms, but we seek to examine some normative controversies in order to craft our inquiry using specific empirical case studies. Our first effort with this book is to promote an interplay between theoretical insight and empirical investigation. We focus on six controversial issues related to the theory of recognition: (a) the morality of recognition and disputes regarding the notion of identity in Honneth's program; (b) the concept of "ideological form of recognition"; (c) the

role of emotions in social conflicts; feelings of injustice and claim justification, exemplified by the actions and words of the oppressed; (d) moral disagreement and the multiplicity of “others” in struggle for recognition; (e) the concept of non-recognition and misrecognition; and (f) the notion of moral progress. We bring these key issues into the current debate on the theory of recognition through a rich set of struggles experienced by disadvantaged individuals in the real world. These examples include slum-dwelling adolescents, leprosy patients, people with disabilities, women exposed to child labor exploitation, deaf individuals, lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer (LGBTQ) and black women.

A secondary aim of this book is to align the literature on the theory of recognition with the literature on political communication and media studies by focusing on some interfaces between struggles for recognition and processes of technological mediation. The term “interfaces” is meant to convey the idea that any analysis in the communication field must begin by breaking down the generic term “the media,” which is commonly used by commentators and many sociological and political scholars. It should be acknowledged that “the media” is a highly differentiated field with several types of media organizations, cultural norms, modes of address, and legal and technological features.

Theory focusing on communication, as well as research on media practices, has grown tremendously over the past eight decades and internal sub-fields have become internally more diversified. Founders of the Frankfurt School of thought – particularly Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin – were particularly concerned with the rise of the mass media, the massification of culture, the fetishization of commodities, and their consequences for shaping individuals’ beliefs and behavior and social change alike. While first generation thinkers have produced a lasting influence on the media field, and renewed readings of their writings often underpin contemporary concerns, theoretical traditions have evolved as a result of advancing theories, models, and evidences. This has also generated ongoing debates among research communities and the development of a constellation of events.

Different from the mass communication era – whose communication models were characterized by the traditional mass media being organized in a centralized way with the elite operating as gatekeepers and holding a communication monopoly – my collaborators and I support the view of an interconnected and hybrid media environment in this book. The issue at stake is not solely the growing technological complexity of the Internet and social networking sites that has produced an interconnected

media system that encompasses different types of media with multiple logics. Since media technologies co-evolve through users' practices and become part of the institutional organization of society, advancements in digital technology have produced several changes in the mass media environment itself, as well as in everyday life.

This book is organized into three parts. Each part begins with a theoretical chapter that surveys different sub-fields of political communication research, along with their contributions addressing recognition matters. This is followed by two empirical case studies built from a recognition-theoretical perspective. In the first part of the book, I deal with the literature on mass media representation and its impacts both on an individual's self-perception and cultural milieu. Fictional and non-fictional media material produce images, texts, and discourses that stereotype, exclude, and disrespect members of disadvantaged groups. Throughout the book, I retain the basic intuition of the Frankfurt School's first generation of thinkers to defend the view that mass media organizations relate to the larger cultural environment as both a reflection and producer of cultural and political meanings. However, following the linguistic turn and the pragmatic paradigm of social interaction, I explore key contributions of contemporary political media literature to explain how people use and experience mass media content. Through empirically-based studies, my collaborators and I delve into how oppressed individuals perceive mass-mediated content when viewing themselves and others. We focus on opportunities that allow for conflictive engagement with public concerns, social patterns of representation, and hierarchical evaluation.

In the second part of the book, I draw on the literature of the interconnected media environment and interactions through the Internet and social networking sites (SNSs). In the networked media environment, people combine various types of media into their routines; online conversations that share information with potential for global networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn); checking information through Google, blogs, and collaborative forms of peer-generated information; and divulging videos and creative products on YouTube and Flickr. I survey online media from three perspectives: (a) as sites for self-expression and identity-building; (b) as sites for everyday political discussion; and (c) as sites for online political activism and mobilization. The empirical case studies explore the use of online platforms by traditional social movements and ordinary individuals to divulge issues of concern and engage in discussions regarding emotional commitments, needs, rights and achievements. These studies also explore digitally-enabled activism.

The third part of this book involves an inquiry into the possibility of observing progressive change in the mass media environment as a reflexivity process of struggles for recognition structured within the fabric of everyday life. Instead of asking how the mass media affects social change, we asked how people struggling for recognition, including mobilized publics, change media organizations and media performances. I survey the literature on the activism of mobilized publics that seeks to hold the media accountable through mechanisms of public and social responsibility. The empirical cases investigate changes in patterns of the representation of disadvantaged groups, as well as alterations in “public concerns” embodied by norms and public policies that are expressed in news media coverage at the time.

In our research group, we used several methods. A detailed explanation of the research design in each case will be presented in respective chapters. To investigate news media material, my collaborators and I applied content and frame analysis to identify and measure discourses on recognition issues. We also engaged in in-depth qualitative reading of the media material.³ In cases involving face-to-face conversations, we employed a “focus group” technique in order to create interactive contexts. The main aim was to capture how meaning is collectively constructed, contested, and rebuilt from the perspective of study participants in a given group.⁴ When assessing people’s expressions in an online environment, we used techniques designed to investigate computer-mediated communication, particularly everyday talk and discursive exchange.⁵

My goal for this book is that it helps to further research in three main aspects. My first aim is that it contributes to advance empirical research on dynamics of recognition. Some problems of moral and social philosophy are not easily (or directly) connected to sociological and political empirical investigation. While there is extensive literature dealing with conceptual and normative questions of recognition, not until recently have studies started exploiting these topics for understanding these phenomena in the social sciences.⁶ This book attempts to promote a mutual dialogue between thinkers who work with the philosophical literature on recognition and empirical social and political researchers who study the media, democracy, public sphere, identity, minorities, civic engagement, and social movement.

A secondary hope for this book is that it helps to increase awareness among researchers about the interfaces between struggles for recognition and the media system. By using various media material – such as news media texts, fictional TV programs, TV shows – as well as

digital-mediated communication on web sites and SNS platforms – this book attempts to give a systematic assessment of the opportunities and constraints of media practices in the real-life conflicts experienced by people. Thus, this research can shed some light on an important but neglected issue.

Thirdly, this book has the potential to promote a combined diagnosis of a set of different cases of struggles for recognition. In contrast to most anthologies that present stand-alone case studies, this book assumes an integrated perspective. The authors, who share a common theoretical framework and belong to the same research group, examine specific problems in the theory of recognition, as well as particular interfaces between the struggle for recognition and media practices. In composing this book, I re-interpreted data provided by my graduate students' research, in order to relate empirical data to philosophical problems or controversies. We believe that this type of procedure allows the reader to move beyond individual cases towards theoretical and empirical evidence accumulation.

The overall objective of this book is to shed light on possible connections between Honneth's theory of recognition and political communication theory and research. Since the context of this work addresses Brazilian society, our research reveals the workings of particular institutions and conflicts of shared forms of life. Brazil has become well known for innovations in participatory institutions with an effective capacity to attract the participation of poor citizens and distribute public goods. Therefore, this book utilizes a setting other than the well-studied cases of the US and Western Europe and has the potential to highlight some of the dilemmas associated with the media in struggles for recognition. Although we do not make a comparative study, we believe this analysis could raise new relevant questions for a recognition-theoretical research agenda.

The structure of this book

Chapter 1 aims to present Honneth's theory of recognition as a research agenda. This chapter contextualizes Honneth's work within the tradition of the Frankfurt School and presents a schematic reconstruction of the major lines of his research program. The purpose of Chapter 1 is not to engage in the current controversial debate, but to give an overview of Honneth's concepts in order to pave the way for establishing what should be regarded and investigated as a struggle for recognition. In anticipation of the analyses in subsequent chapters, I also outline

some theoretical disputes among recognition thinkers and show some connections that can be drawn between these controversies and media practices. I contend that the controversial nature of Honneth's theory of recognition makes it a more interesting concept to study empirically.

The first part of this book investigates how individuals make sense of mass media-based representation under specific conditions. Chapter 2 explores the mass media as a site of struggle and discusses why fictional and non-fictional representations matter for a recognition-theoretical approach, as well as a social research agenda. Following this, I survey the main theoretical contributions to conceptualize a set of social, cultural, and structural conditions, along with psychological and cognitive mechanisms that help to explain how people use and experience mass media contents.

Chapter 3, which is co-authored with Simone M. Rocha, deals with the morality of recognition and investigates how adolescent slum dwellers make sense of their representation in a TV Series, *Cidade dos Homens* (City of Men). This series was developed by a non-governmental organization (NGO), Nós do Cinema, in partnership with Rede Globo (Globo TV), Brazil's largest television network. Its declared purpose was to promote a more positive symbolic representation of slum dwellers and a more complex understanding of their daily lives in order to challenge prejudices in Brazilian society against low-income populations. To assure greater proximity with everyday life in the slums, the cast consisted mostly of slum dwellers. The following questions guided our study: What is the personal identity that adolescent slum dwellers develop when facing the meanings conveyed in the television series? What judgment did the producers of this series have about the community that was relevant to these adolescents? What counts as recognition? Is there a difference between the self-understanding of adolescents from different slums? To develop our study we organized focus groups with adolescents in slums of Rio de Janeiro (Morro Santa Marta, the location where the series was filmed) and Belo Horizonte (Barragem Santa Lúcia). Findings show that the attitude of "recognizing" or "being recognized" does not reach a stable end point. The adolescents were able to detect distorted recognition and vocalize which of their moral expectations were violated, but they found it hard to agree about what recognition demands in a positive manner.

Chapter 4 focuses on the "ideological form of recognition" and examines child domestic labor (CDL) in Belem, a city in the north of Brazil. The chapter, co-authored with Danila Cal, investigates what oppressed individuals identify as harm and injustice in the light of

public discourses, as well as their personal experience. This study draws on data from (i) local news articles on CDL from 2000 to 2004 and (ii) focus groups with women who were housemaids in their childhood. Findings show that local media professionals acted as agents of advocacy to defend the needs and rights of children and adolescents. For their part, on reflecting about the discourses in the newspapers, the women challenged these discourses and qualified CDL as a good or useful opportunity to gain autonomy and to integrate more positively with society. This chapter argues that Honneth's concept of the "ideological form of recognition" has great theoretical strength in explaining oppression in a way that avoids adding subjugation to disadvantaged individuals. However, his account still needs clarification in order to explain how oppressed individuals can overcome ideological forms of recognition. This work contributes to showing contradictory logics in the spheres of love and work in CDL and an advanced understanding of the role played by justice advocates for ideological critique.

The second part of this book analyses online interactions on the Internet and SNSs. Chapter 5 revisits approaches used for understanding how the Internet and related digital technologies have penetrated everyday life and focuses on how online interaction involves practices across different spheres of a relationship – intimate, social, and political. In order to construct a perspective capable of encompassing different dimensions of struggles for recognition in a networked media environment, I survey sites for: (i) self-expression and identity-building; (ii) everyday political discussion and deliberation; (iii) political activism and mobilization.

Chapter 6, co-authored with Regiane L. Garcêz, deals with the role of emotion in politics. The storytelling of deaf people is gathered from two virtual environments: (a) the website of the main Brazilian organization for deaf persons (FENEIS) and (b) Orkut, an online social network. This chapter evinces that subjects not only articulate feelings of injustice or claims for recognition in everyday experience, but also that they usually engage in interpretation, judgment, and justification of such claims. We endorse Honneth's view that "feelings of injustice" are an important source for the intelligibility of injustice and that disadvantaged individuals need to build a "shared interpretative framework" in struggles for recognition. However, we argue that Honneth's approach needs a more nuanced account of discursive justification in order to deal with dissent and moral disagreement. We suggest that Honneth's approach of subjective reaction to injury as a violation of conditions to practical identity can be brought together with notions of discursive justification in the

Habermasian fashion. This type of articulation can better equip scholars concerned with practices that aim to overcome injustice.

Chapter 7 focuses on how individuals and groups engage in episodic struggles for recognition not only with the “other,” but with “multiple others,” in a complex web of relations in society. The chapter’s co-author, Thaiane A. S. Rezende, and I investigate how an expression of racism and homophobia made by a Brazilian deputy on a TV program aroused collective emotion and prompted digitally-enabled activism in Brazil. The chapter concentrates on how demands for recognition were expressed and how dialogue and conflict were shaped on: (i) a generic online domain that can focus on any topic or theme – the *Youtube* webpage providing access to the video of the TV Program; (ii) a feminist blog, *Escreva Lola Escreva* (“Write Lola Write”), and a male-aimed blog, *Papo de Homen* (“Talk of Men”); (iii) Facebook, an environment related to a circle of relatives and friends. Findings show that platforms with distinct affordances provide different opportunities and constraints for people to frame personal expressions, engage in debates, and deploy protest mechanisms. Evidence suggests that people who seek recognition engage in moral conflicts, in a conflictive field of respect as well as disrespect, in which they are not completely free to decide what order of justification they will use in order to attempt to solve a certain problem, or challenge a particular judgment.

The third part of this book investigates the dynamics through which the mass media environment may incorporate the moral perspective that results from struggles for recognition in the long run. Chapter 8 looks at factors that help to explain progressive changes in the mass media environment from three perspectives: activism of media professionals; civil society mobilization to advance media professionals’ learning processes, media monitoring, and criticism; and alternative media. The chapter seeks to explain the conditions under which mass media organizations and performances are linked to mechanisms of public and social accountability. It contends that claims for recognition can be accommodated and balanced in different ways among operations of power in media organizations.

Chapter 9, co-authored with Ricardo F. Mendonça, addresses an often neglected and dangerous form of misrecognition – the effacement of the struggle in itself. Drawing on news articles about the leprosy issue in two national Brazilian newspapers from 1998 to 2007, the chapter investigates how political conflicts involving leprosy patients emerge in journalistic coverage. The analyses focus on two central struggles: (a) the future of leprosy colonies and (b) access to financial support. Results

show that voices from the Movement for Reintegrating People Afflicted with Leprosy (Movimento pela Reintegração das Pessoas Atingidas pela Hanseníase or MORHAN) and other critical civic actors linked to this movement are neglected. The social movement's agency to define injustice and to propose remedies is overlooked and solutions for people with leprosy appear merely as government measures. The chapter argues that the media depoliticizes the issue and may hinder the progression of struggles by presenting problems and achievements without articulating them as conflicts. By obfuscating tensions and controversies, journalistic reports suggest the existence of an end, after which other forms of oppression become harder to unveil. Thus, non-recognition may emerge from a type of apparent recognition.

Chapter 10 discusses the notion of moral progress in the theory of recognition. The chapter, co-authored with Ana Carolina Vimieiro, uses frame analysis to investigate transformations in the portrayal of people with impairment, as well as in public discourses on the issue of disability in the major Brazilian news media from 1960 to 2008. Chapter 10 addresses three controversies: the notion of progress as a directional process; the problem of moral disagreement and conflict of interest in struggles for recognition; and the processes of social learning. The chapter argues that Honneth's program offers sophisticated theoretical guidance to observe and critically interpret emancipatory projects in contemporary politics based on ideas of individuality and social inclusiveness. By articulating empirically-based arguments and Honneth's normative discussions, this study concludes that one can talk on moral progress, without losing sight of value pluralism and conflict of interest.

The conclusion summarizes the book's findings and shows the differing roles played by the media in struggles for recognition. This chapter synthesizes empirical results by taking into account themes of the theory of recognition, thus regarding the dynamics of social conflict in the media environment, and real-world constraints as well as opportunities. The conclusion also assesses the implications of our findings for further studies on the media and recognition.

Notes

1. See for example, Busch & Zurn, 2010; Cooke, 2006, 2009; Deranty, 2009, 2010; Deranty & Renault, 2007; Forst, 2007a, 2007b; Fraser, 2010; Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Ikäheimo, 2009, 2010; Kompridis, 2004, 2007; Laitinen, 2002, 2009, 2010; Markell, 2003; McBride, 2009; O'Neill & Smith, 2012; Owen, 2007, 2008; Petherbridge, 2011a; Roberts, 2009; Rogers, 2009; Seglow, 2009; Thompson, 2006; Thompson & Hoggett, 2011; Thompson & Yar, 2011; Tully 2000, 2004;

- van den Brink & Owen, 2007; Yar, 2003, 2011; Young, 2007; Zurn, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2010.
2. Garcêz & Maia, 2009; Kulick & Klein, 2003; Mendonça, 2011.
 3. The authors have profited from many insights derived from Critical Discourse Analysis – especially in regards to a critical assessment of power and social inequality, as well as social and political contextual stances (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1995a, 1995b, 1998; Maia, 2012e; van Dijk, 1991, 1993; Weiss & Wodak, 2003).
 4. Barbour & Kitzinger, 2001; Bryman, 2001; Gamson, 1992; Maia, 2012a; Walsh, 2004; Warr, 2005.
 5. Black, 2008; Graham, 2008; Kies, 2010; Polletta & Lee, 2006; Steiner, 2012a; Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen, 2004.
 6. Aranda & Jones, 2010; Calder, 2011; Couch, Pitts, Croy, Mulcare, & Mitchell, 2008; Cox, 2012; Kleist, 2008; Noble, 2009; Norris, 2012; O'Neill, 2012; Seglow, 2012; Yar, 2012; Zurn, 2012.

1

Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition as a Research Program

This chapter contextualizes Axel Honneth's work within the tradition of Critical Theory. I begin by briefly discussing the placement of Honneth's project within the Frankfurt School of thought. Secondly, I present a schematic reconstruction of the major lines of Honneth's program from his earlier writings. Finally, I show some of the major implications of Honneth's theory on critical social research. This chapter has a survey-like nature in order to pave the way for conceptualizing what should be regarded and investigated as a struggle for recognition. Chapter 1 also outlines some controversial issues in Honneth's program that have served as a background for my collaborators and I to craft our inquiry in connection with political communication and media studies. The final component of this chapter presents how we have organized our empirical research.

Placing Honneth within the Frankfurt School tradition

The location of Honneth within the Frankfurt School tradition is still debated. Internal currents of thought in Critical Theory have developed in different directions; there are a number of disagreements within each generation, and theories intertwine and constantly change throughout various periods of time. However, the dialogues also share some common features and maintain a certain sense of continuity (Anderson, 2011; Deranty, 2009, 2011; Petherbridge, 2011b; Renault, 2010). The attempt to locate Honneth within the Frankfurt School tradition provides a useful point of entry into the thinker's research program, despite the unavoidable oversimplification of unifying themes and differences, along with the difficulty in addressing generational perspectives.

Although Honneth perceives himself within a broader tradition than that of Critical Theory alone, there is an agreement among scholars

that his work has the features of a third generation (Anderson, 2011, p. 32; Deranty, 2009, 2011; Petherbridge, 2011b; Schmidt am Busch, 2010, p. 277). A central feature in Honneth's program is the attempt to place the notion of conflict between social groups and social struggle at the center of social philosophy, and thus, to advance the analysis and critique of domination. His program has been seen as oriented to give greater texture to social theory – to “re-socialize” the normative theories of political justice and democracy (Kalyvas, 1999, p. 103; Zurn, 2010, p. 9). Scholars have also read Honneth's work as an attempt to articulate domains that typically tend to be treated separately, such as critical sociology and political theory (Renault, 2010, p. 247), as well as the historical and normative branches of political theory (Deranty, 2009).

In developing his theory of recognition, Honneth takes a path that in some points is close, and in others moves away from the program set forth by the first generation of the Frankfurt School, particularly in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, as well as Habermas during the second generation. An evocative suggestion for understanding Honneth's program is provided by Jean-Philippe Deranty (2009, p. 350, 2011, p. 84) and Emmanuel Renault (2010, p. 241). These scholars argue that, on the one hand Honneth uses Habermas's theory of communicative action and the view of intersubjective social integration to go against the dialectical materialism and functionalist premises of the founders of Critical Theory. Honneth, on the other hand, uses the Marxist perspective of class struggle and the experience of being subjected to domination, in order to criticize Habermas.

Early writings

Honneth attempts to develop a sociologically-oriented critique of social domination by returning to the first generation scholars of the Frankfurt School in his *Critique of Power* (1991). He rejects the negative understanding of modernity and the reductionist conception of reason interpreted only in terms of instrumental rationality. Honneth challenges the explanation of the cultural industry and the more general thesis of a fully administrated society that gives rise to obedient subjects passively integrated into the social order. Instead of this, he retains a basic view of the centrality of class struggle by giving it a culturalist appraisal. To the German philosopher, the reproduction and integration of society are intrinsically tied to an “ongoing cultural conflict” interpreted in terms of permanent struggle for recognition – an inspiration that is also extracted from Pierre Bourdieu's social theory. In Joel Anderson's words, Honneth provides an account “that emphasizes that society reproduces

itself through the often-conflictive interaction of real social groups, which are themselves the products of ongoing activities of interpretation and struggle on the part of participants” (Anderson, 2011, p. 48).

The rejection of pessimistic interpretations of modernity can be seen as one important pillar in Honneth’s overall project from the outset (Deranty, 2009, pp. 378–404, 2011, pp. 60–62; Zurn, 2010, p. 7). He regards modernity as a historical evolution that also gave rise to fundamental norms of value pluralism, individual freedom, and rights. In this sense, he fully embraces Habermas’s major contributions – the intersubjective linguistic turn and a communicative theory of society. He uses these concepts to defend the argument that post-traditional society is integrated through conflicts between plural ethical values and growing demands for recognizing valid claims for individualization and different forms of life. Honneth follows Habermas’s thesis that conditions for social emancipation are not to be observable through social labor, as in the Marxist paradigm, but rather through social interaction, as in the Communicative Action paradigm. As a result, he focuses on the constraints and inequalities inherent to institutionalized social life. By broadening the view of the exploration of labor to “permanent struggles” among culturally integrated groups, Honneth seeks to develop a theoretical approach capable of apprehending a full range of social suffering.

In *Critique of Power*, Honneth draws on Foucault to give greater attention to the role of power at the micro level of everyday interactions and to elucidate the relational structure of social domination in the lifeworld. Once again, Honneth takes an action-theoretic account of struggle and does not see social institutions as totalizing forms of power solely with disciplinary functions. He also recognizes institutions as results of social conflict and public debates that configure, maintain, and transform these institutions. To develop a reflexive critique of power, Honneth assumes that subjectivation is structurally conditioned by socialization; and, while understanding the interactions in everyday life as a realm of moral criticism, he attempts to further reconstruct the approach to practical reason based on a comprehensible theory of intersubjectivity.¹ This move allows him to conceive the social as a domain of strategic *and* communicative action, as well as to develop an antagonistic *and* normative explanation of social integration.

The theory of recognition

The Struggle for Recognition, which is considered Honneth’s mature project, develops an intersubjective and normative account of both

social interaction and institutional practice. Honneth draws on Hegel's Jena philosophy of recognition and combines it with anthropological features extracted from the work of G. H. Mead and Donald Winnicott. Beginning with the premise of radical intersubjectivity, Honneth, like Habermas (1993, p. 109, 1995, p. 199), posits that the formation process of subjectivity and socialization is deeply intersubjective and marked by vulnerability (Anderson & Honneth, 2005; Honneth, 1995, p. 262, 1996). He attempts to show that fundamental preconditions for successful subject-formation are related to three spheres of intersubjective relations of recognition – love, law, and achievement, which is a reference to Hegel's divisions between family, state, and civil society. Honneth elucidates that individual's subjectivity, autonomy, and agency are built *in* and *through* relations of reciprocal recognition with others in these spheres of interaction. The core idea is that specific patterns of recognition enable individuals to acquire, or obstruct individuals from acquiring, self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem; these forms of practical self-relation are interconnected and necessary for full self-realization.

The first sphere of recognition consists of primary relationships constituted by strong emotional attachments among parent–child, lovers, and friends (Honneth, 1996, p. 95). Successful affirmation of autonomy and affective bonds in this relationship of mutual recognition, while marked by permanent tension between the poles of dependency and independence, establishes the most basic conditions for subjects to develop the necessary self-confidence for engaging in social life. In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth seems to treat the first sphere of affective relations with trans-historical anthropologic features. He makes it clear in his latter writings nevertheless that parents' expectations of their offspring, as well as lovers' expectations with their partners, are the result of historical development. "The recognition that what individuals reciprocally bring to this kind of relationship is loving care for the other's well-being in light of his or her individual needs" (Honneth, 2003a, p. 139). In his recent works, Honneth further develops his explanation of the tensions and anxieties present in reciprocal affirmation of autonomy (Deranty, 2011, p. 83; Honneth, 2011, p. 394; Petherbridge, 2011b, p. 26).

The second sphere of recognition is based on the principle of universal equal rights among individuals. In Honneth's account, legal equality, one of the most important achievements of modernity, takes the form of reciprocal recognition; it implies a cognitive attitude in which subjects reciprocally recognize each other in terms of moral accountability.² Such an attribution of moral responsibility does not designate any fixed right;