UDK 321.01
https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2302257I
Original Scientific Article
Received 10.04.2023. Accepted 07.05.2023.

PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIETY
VOL. 34, NO. 2, 217–374

To cite text:
Ivković, Marjan (2023), "Recognition as a Counterhegemonic Strategy", *Philosophy and Society* 34 (2): 257–272.

Marjan Ivković

RECOGNITION AS A COUNTERHEGEMONIC STRATEGY[1]

ABSTRACT
Building on the analyses of cultural hegemony in the works of Nancy Fraser and Wendy Brown, I argue in the paper that the historic bloc (order of cultural hegemony) of post-Fordist capitalism is characterized by a particular dynamic between several 'axes' of hegemony that gives rise to the 'paradox of engagement/disengagement'. The 'progressive-expertocratic' axis of hegemony creates a subject-position of the 'engaged self', a figure embodying a certain promise of political agency that is simultaneously obstructed by other, depoliticizing axes of hegemony. This dynamic is conducive to the rise of contemporary right-wing authoritarianism, which purports to fulfill this promise of political agency through a series of displacements – the counterhegemonic left, I argue, has so far not formulated an effective alternative to this strategy. In the second part, I explore the potential of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition, in particular his concept of 'interpersonal respect', for grounding a left strategy of connecting (mutually articulating) the hegemonic figure of the 'engaged self' with a progressive politics of social transformation. To that end, I elaborate Honneth's perspective by means of an argument about the role of trust in the context of societal crises that Igor Cvejić, Srđan Prodanović and I have recently formulated.

KEYWORDS
hegemony, post-Fordism, engagement, recognition, respect, trust

In this paper I start from a question that has defined the project of critical theory since its outset, in the 1930s no less than today: why has the counterhegemonic left in contemporary capitalism been less politically successful than the authoritarian right (the fascist one back then and the populist one of today)? This is the question that propelled the creation of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research and the multidisciplinary project of the original critical theory – likewise, the contemporary version of the question informs much of

1 This article was realised with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, according to the Agreement on the realisation and financing of scientific research.

Marjan Ivković: Senior Research Fellow, University of Belgrade, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory; marjan.ivkovic@ifdt.bg.ac.rs.

the current debate in critical theory. An example might be the recent insightful exchange between Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi, *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory* (Fraser, Jaeggi 2018) and, in this modest attempt to contribute to the debate, I will rely on some of Fraser's arguments, both recent ones and some made a while ago. In formulating a preliminary answer to the above question (and a corresponding 'remedy' for the left's lack of success), I will complement Fraser's perspective with that of Axel Honneth, more precisely, with some key aspects of his theory of recognition.

Ever since the debate between Fraser and Honneth *Redistribution or Recognition?* it has been widely assumed that Honneth's perspective is incompatible with the Marxian paradigm of conceptualizing and contesting capitalism (Fraser, Honneth 2003; Geuss 2008; McNay 2008; Van den Brink, Owen 2007). This is chiefly due to the social-theoretical disagreement between Fraser and Honneth about whether capitalism is built on two logics of action-integration (systemic and social) or only one (social). In this paper I argue, in contrast, that Honneth's concept of recognition can be fruitful for theorizing the political strategies of a counterhegemonic struggle in conditions of present-day, post-Fordist capitalism, since Honneth's recognition pertains not only to structural (in)justice but also to human subject-formation. In the first part, I build primarily on Nancy Fraser's perspective to outline the main aspects of the historical bloc (order of cultural hegemony) in post-Fordism, and I focus on one of them in particular – what I term the 'paradox of engagement/disengagement', which means that some 'axes' of articulation of the post-Fordist historical bloc create the subject-position of an 'engaged self' while other ones simultaneously obstruct the realization of the agency potential inherent in this position.

This mechanism, I argue, simultaneously fosters and disappoints people's expectations of having a certain form of political agency, thereby pushing them toward right-wing authoritarianism which promises the realization of such agency in the form of membership in a homogenized collective agent which has the power to symbolically 'reconstruct' the existing social reality. The carriers of counterhegemonic struggles (the democratic-socialist left in post-Fordism), on the other hand, have so far not articulated an effective progressive alternative to this strategy, as their normative claims have been overly focused on what might be termed the 'prerequisites' of political agency (political and social rights) rather than motivating factors of agency. I argue that Honneth's perspective can provide some conceptual tools for redressing this, in particular his concept of 'respect' as a mode of recognition, which stresses people's needs to be recognized as 'morally responsible' actors. A successful counterhegemonic struggle has to respond to the post-Fordist promise of political agency by translating the hegemonic figure of the 'engaged self' into that of the 'engaged citizen' – here I try to elaborate Honneth's arguments by drawing on some recent work done in collaboration with Igor Cvejić and Srđan Prodanović (Cvejić, Ivković, Prodanović 2022).

I Neoliberalism, Expertocracy and Protection: The Contours of Post-Fordist Hegemony

In the perspective of Antonio Gramsci, cultural hegemony is produced through the assembling of the *historic bloc*, a particular configuration of diverse societal entities which belong to both the 'base' and 'superstructure' of classical Marxism, such as the forces and relations of production, social groups and discursive formations. For Gramsci, there are two-way causal relations between these entities, not simple determination of the superstructure by the base. Hegemony can be understood as the 'cement' that holds the historic bloc together, a grammar of social life that enables the mutual translatability of various elements of the bloc, a "[r]egulator (*ordinatore*) of the ideology which provides civil society and thus the State with its most intimate cement" (Gramsci 1995: 474).

A great variety of contemporary theorists within the neo-Marxian paradigm broadly speaking have elaborated the Gramscian concept of hegemony (see Althusser 2014; Joseph 2017, 2002; Hall 1986; Laclau, Mouffe 1985; Williams 2005). Nancy Fraser, whose perspective I find fruitful for the purposes of this paper, defines hegemony as the construction of a 'political common sense' in the public sphere of capitalist society, a particular grammar of political claims-making. Political claims that are formulated within this grammar are treated as legitimate and meaningful, whereas those that are not are rejected as illegitimate or nonsensical. While Gramsci still gave a certain causal primacy to the 'base', more precisely to the relations of production in capitalism, Fraser renounces such vestiges of economism and argues that historic blocs *are* essentially configurations of publics, "[c]oncatenations of different publics that together construct the 'common sense' of the day" (Fraser 1989: 167). The boundaries of this common sense at a given moment coincide with the scope of phenomena that are widely accepted as *political* in the discursive sense of the term – as contested across a broad range of publics – as opposed to what is 'economic' or 'private' (domestic) on the other. Counterhegemonic struggles, concomitantly, are not simply struggles to include this or that political claim that is 'outside' of the hegemonic grammar into it, but are struggles to transform the grammar itself, and thereby also reassemble a different one. For something to qualify as a counterhegemonic struggle, therefore, it is necessary that a number of distinct political actors with particular agendas coalesce into a unified force that challenges the prevailing political common sense.

Fraser identifies four historical stages of capitalism, to which four historic blocs correspond: the mercantile, liberal, state-managed (Fordist) and neoliberal (post-Fordist) – the latter two being the primary objects of her analysis (see Fraser 2022, 2017; Fraser, Jaeggi 2018). In theorizing hegemony in Fordism and post-Fordism, Fraser relies to a great extent on the perspective of the influential Hungarian neo-Marxist Karl Polanyi. Polanyi's key argument in his seminal work *The Great Transformation* is that the capitalist market economy is intrinsically beset by a paradox. It naturally strives to fully commodify the

entire social reality, including what Polanyi considers to be the fundaments of society: land, labour (people) and money. However, the forces of marketization cannot do so completely because, if they succeeded in fully commodifying land, labour and money, they would have completely destroyed all three of them, ravaging the natural environment, disintegrating communities and destroying livelihoods through the wild fluctuation of prices. This paradox gives rise to a unique historical dynamic in capitalism: a capitalist society is, according to Polanyi, constantly torn apart by the push and pull of two opposite forces, the *movement* of capital trying to commodify everything, and the *countermovement* of the rest of society trying to protect itself from full commodification – meaning destruction – and thus giving rise to various forms of social *protection* (Polanyi 2001).

What Polanyi erases from view, Fraser argues, is a key third dimension of political conflict in capitalism – struggles for the *emancipation* of social groups, other than the conventional 'working class', who are oppressed both culturally and economically, including women, peasants, serfs, slaves, inhabitants of shanty-towns and racialized peoples, "for whom a wage promised liberation from slavery, feudal subjection, racial subordination, social exclusion, and imperial domination, as well as from sexism and patriarchy" (Fraser 2014: 9). These groups have historically fought against regressive forms of social 'protection', but they did not endorse the free-market ideology either – they constitute what Fraser considers to be the 'third pole' of a three-dimensional capitalist conflict dynamic, not a double movement but a *triple* one of commodification-protection-emancipation (Fraser 2017). Each pole of the triple movement gets its concrete political shape in a given socio-historical context not only from its internal telos but also from its relations with the two other poles. Marketization can, *contra* Polanyi and in line with Marx, bring not only destruction and disintegration but also liberation from status-based forms of domination; in shielding communities from marketization, the forces of social protection may also shield forms of domination inherent in these communities; finally, in struggling against status-based forms of domination, agents of emancipation can also dissolve the basic solidarities that bind communities together, thus helping (often inadvertently) set the stage for marketization.

In Fraser's interpretation, emancipatory movements have, since the end of World War II, been internally splintered between factions which fought against culturally based forms of domination (the protection pole) without much consideration for the marketization pole (or even endorsing marketization) – these are the liberal factions of emancipatory movements such as feminism and anti-racism – and factions which simultaneously fought both oppressive forms of protection *and* marketization, which in effect meant they were fighting for transforming the ethical substance of protection – here we recognize the socialist and social-democratic currents of these same movements. The historic bloc of Fordist (state-managed) capitalism consisted in the mutual articulation of the poles of *marketization* and *protection* within the triple-movement model in opposition to the third pole of *emancipation* – this is what Fraser terms a

'two-against-one alliance' within the triple movement. The post-Fordist stage, in contrast, is marked by a different two-against-one alliance: the assemblage of what Fraser terms a 'progressive neoliberal' historic bloc, one in which the poles of *marketization* and *emancipation* become mutually articulated, through the combination of 'progressive' (liberal) politics of cultural recognition and 'regressive' (neoliberal) redistribution, at the expense of *protection*. This has occurred through a process of gradual convergence, over the past several decades, of the liberal currents of feminist, anti-racist and LGBTQ-rights movements and the more progressive elements of the economic elite in financialized capitalism – what Fraser sees as a 'dangerous liaison' in which the "emancipatory critique of oppressive protection has converged with the neoliberal critique of protection per se" (Fraser 2017: 39).

Fraser's analytical model helps explain the ascent of right-wing authoritarianism over the past decade. The 'dangerous liaison' of dominant currents of emancipation with forces of marketization prepared the ground for the key discursive strategy of right-wing authoritarians: the discursive fusion of principled leftists and (progressive) neoliberals in the figure of the 'cultural totalitarians' bent on destroying traditional lifeworlds through the policing of language and thought. The 'subversive' appeal of right-wing authoritarians stems from the following premise: if marketization is wreaking havoc on the entire social reality, and if emancipation has 'teamed up' with marketization, anyone who rejects marketization must naturally turn to (traditional, oppressive) forces of protection. As Fraser puts it in conversation with Rahel Jaeggi,

> So, yes, it is both recognition and distribution – or, better yet, a specific way in which those two aspects of justice got interlinked in the era of financialized capitalism. Right-wing populist movements are rejecting the whole package. And, in so doing, they are simultaneously targeting two real, consequential components of a single historic bloc whose hegemony diminished their chances – and those of their children – to live good lives. (Fraser, Jaeggi 2018: 205)

This thesis is appealing, but it does not provide a clear enough explanation of why the radical-emancipatory movements in post-Fordism have fared considerably worse than forces of oppressive protectionism, given their strong and sustained critique of marketization. To try to understand this, we should consider a dimension of post-Fordist hegemony which Fraser's triple movement model neglects to an extent: that of expertocracy, the discursive logic of translating political (normative-contested) issues into depoliticized matters of expert analysis and administration. Discourses of expertocracy have been an important element of both the post-Fordist historic bloc (see e.g. Boltanski 2011) and the Fordist one, and Fraser had actually thematized their role in some of her early works that conceptualize the 'struggle over needs' in capitalism, which deal with the politics of need interpretation in the 'late capitalism' of the 1980s United States (Fraser 1989).

The struggle over needs is a symbolic struggle within a discursive arena that Fraser terms *the social*, by which she means the space which is 'a site of

discourse about people's needs', in particular those needs that have 'broken out' of the domestic and official economic spheres (Fraser 1989: 156). Within the sphere of the social in late capitalism, three principal discourses of need interpretation clash – *expert discourses* which transform the political process of need interpretation into depoliticized need administration, discourses of *oppositional movements* which aim to politicize hitherto nonpolitical needs confined to the domestic and official economic spheres, and *reprivatization* discourses which aim to depoliticize newly politicized needs by re-embedding them into their original spheres. Instead of the triple-movement model of marketization-protection-emancipation, here we encounter the triad of expertocracy-reprivatization-emancipation.

There are some social-theoretical differences between these two conceptual schemes, the 'mature' and 'early' one: the triple-movement scheme should encompass both the systems-theoretic level of structural dynamics in capitalism (such as commodification and redistribution) and the action-theoretic level of hegemony construction, while the 'struggle over needs' scheme is largely action-theoretic. However, the basic premise of the theory of hegemony, as we remember, is that there are two-way causal links between the 'base' and 'superstructure', i.e. the structural and action-theoretic planes. The early Fraser recognizes this as she argues, in the context of redistributive welfare programs, that the discursive is constitutive of the structural: "By the discursive or ideological dimension, I do not mean anything distinct from, or epiphenomenal to, welfare practices; I mean, rather, the tacit norms and implicit assumptions that are constitutive of those practices" (Fraser 1989: 146). I would therefore argue that the two analytical schemes can be fruitfully combined to develop a more complex model of hegemony construction in post-Fordist capitalism.

If we map the struggle over needs scheme onto the triple movement one, we may observe that the discourses of 'reprivatization' from the struggle over needs scheme correspond to both 'marketization' and 'protection' poles of the triple movement one – and the same goes for expert discourses. First, we have what might be termed 'regressive marketization' discourses, for example ones which defend 'prerogatives of private ownership' and thereby depoliticize issues (e.g. questions of workplace democracy) by defining them as matters of private (capitalist) property. Second, there are also 'regressive protection' discourses which aim to depoliticize issues (e.g. family violence) by defining them as matters pertaining to the 'domestic' sphere. Third, there are 'regressive expertocratic' discourses which aim to depoliticize issues (e.g. a corporate merger or a question of redistributing surplus value) through defining them as non-political matters of scientific management or impersonal market mechanisms. Fourth, we have 'progressive neoliberal' discourses – as the mature Fraser reminds us, there are liberal currents of emancipatory discourses that have proven compatible with reprivatizing and expert marketization, if not with reprivatizing protection (the radical and socialist currents of emancipatory discourses are counterhegemonic and therefore outside of the historic bloc). Finally, the fifth

element of the historic bloc is what we might term 'progressive expertocratic' discourses, and these require some attention for the purposes of our argument.

The French sociologist Luc Boltanski zooms in on the technocratic dimension of post-Fordist hegemony as he conceptualizes 'complex domination' in post-Fordism as a form of what I have termed progressive expertocracy (Boltanski 2011). Although Boltanski sees expertocracy as a largely top-down phenomenon, he suggests that complex domination comes into being in a manner similar to Fraser's progressive neoliberalism – through the fusion of *liberal-emancipatory* and *expertocratic* discourses. Rather than the figure of the 'ruling expert' (the axis of regressive expertocracy), progressive expertocracy discursively shapes an ideal of synergy between experts and citizenry, both dedicated to solving pressing societal problems. If the progressive-neoliberal axis fashions the subject-position of the 'entrepreneurial self', the progressive-technocratic one, we might argue, produces the 'engaged self', the actor who is called upon to interiorize elements of expert discourses broadly diffused in the public sphere (e.g. climate science) and act in a politically responsible way. The icon of progressive expertocracy has for some time been the 'ecologically conscious' individual, more recently joined by the 'responsible citizen' in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The subject-position of the 'engaged self' therefore instills a certain 'promise of agency' in social actors that goes beyond the classical liberal-democractic conception of civic life. This is a promise of *political agency* along the lines of participatory democracy in which citizens and experts cooperate to solve problems – albeit one in which the experts are tasked with defining the problems and respective remedies. The promise of agency is systematically obstructed, however, by the hegemonic axes of progressive neoliberalism and regressive (top-down) expertocracy. The first one depoliticizes (economizes) key aspects of social reality that would have to become political (normatively contested) if we wanted to truly solve problems such as climate change –for example, the key issue of the investment of societal surplus, which, as Marxists remind us, is currently decided by the capitalist class through markets for capital goods (see Fraser 2022). In addition to depoliticizing key areas of social life, progressive neoliberalism also perpetuates distributive and status injustices that obstruct the realization of the 'engaged self' by denying people the necessary material and symbolic resources for getting engaged. Finally, the axis of regressive expertocracy operates in such a way as to exclude ordinary, non-expert citizens from taking part in the solution of complex societal problems, while constructing them discursively as both uninformed and *irresponsible*. The result of this dynamic is that post-Fordism does not just create a situation of 'broken promises' in terms of social justice and personal self-realization, it also creates a sense of unfulfilled promises of political agency.

I would argue that this less explored dimension of social disappointment in post-Fordism is important for grasping two things: first, the relative political success of the forces of right-wing authoritarianism (the hegemonic axis

of regressive protection)[2] and failure of radical-emancipatory discourses (the counterhegemonic left); and second, the political strategies that the counterhegemonic left needs to employ to reverse this trend. With respect to the first point, I would argue that the unfulfillment (systemic obstruction) of the promise of political agency in post-Fordism is an important factor contributing to the success of right-wing authoritarianism, a factor that synergizes with the unfulfilled promise of social justice but also plays a distinct role within this dynamic that helps clarify the appeal of these political actors. As I remarked earlier with respect to Fraser, the broken promise of social justice would, on its own, have a roughly equal chance of directing people disillusioned with post-Fordism toward the counterhegemonic left (for example, Bernie Sanders or Jean-Luc Mélenchon) as to the authoritarian right (Donald Trump or Marine Le Pen). It is the broken promise of political agency that the authoritarian right has so far capitalized on politically more successfully than the left. The process of 'appropriating' the promise of agency inherent in the 'engaged self' figure requires, I would argue, a double political displacement on the part of the right: first, the right translates the participatory-democratic ideal of the engaged self into the regressive-participatory ideal of membership in a homogenized collective which acts decisively to solve pressing societal problems; second, it displaces the process of solving these problems from a structural to a discursive plain, as it essentially defines the task of fixing society in constructivist terms, as a process of discursively reconstructing the social reality that has been shaped by the totalitarian 'alienated elites' of progressive neoliberalism. It is the combined effect of this double displacement that creates the sense of empowerment in social actors that Wendy Brown, as I interpret her, tries to pin down with the concept of *authoritarian freedom*.

Brown has explored the mutual articulation of neoliberal and neoconservative discourses in her account of the paradoxical phenomenon of 'authoritarian freedom' as neoliberalism's 'Frankenstein' – a concept that sheds light on the political logic of right-wing authoritarianism (Brown 2018). Brown conceptualizes the amalgam of authoritarian freedom as the product of 'twin logics of privatization' that can be identified in the ongoing neoliberal revolution, the neoliberal economic one and the neoconservative cultural ('familial') one:

2 Right-wing authoritarianism or populism is sometimes viewed as being outside of the current historic bloc – Fraser also inclines toward treating it as non-hegemonic (if not counterhegemonic) in the sense of challenging 'progressive neoliberal' hegemony from the right (Fraser 2022; Fraser, Jaeggi 2018). I am closer to authors such as Wendy Brown who treat this political movement as part of the historic bloc, for a number of reasons – the two most important ones being: 1) it does not challenge the core aspect of the hegemonic political grammar – that the structural transformation of the market economy is both impossible and undesirable; and 2) it plays a crucial function in defusing and displacing the normative claims of ordinary social actors for such structural transformation, which puts it into a relation of a dynamic (agonistic) equilibrium with other axes of the post-Fordist historic bloc, rather than outside it.

> At this point, it is easy to see how sometimes viciously sexist, transphobic, xenophobic, and racist speech and conduct have erupted as expressions of freedom, challenging the dictates of "political correctness". When the protected, personal sphere is extended, when opposition to restriction and regulation becomes a foundational and universal principle, when the social is demeaned and the political is demonized, individual animus and the historical powers of white male dominance are both unleashed and legitimated [...] Meanwhile, left opposition to supremacist sentiment is cast as tyrannical policing rooted in the totalitarian mythos of the social and drawing on the coercive powers of the political. (Brown 2018: 67)

Through an analytical lens that combines Fraser and Brown, we could argue that the forces of counterhegemony have been less successful in politically mobilizing the disappointment generated by post-Fordism because they have so far focused almost exclusively on the unfulfilled promise of social justice at the expense of that of political agency. An important aspect of the figure of 'engaged self', we remember, is that she is discursively shaped as a 'responsible' actor, someone who is prepared to invest time and energy in grappling with societal problems. It is this element of nominal 'respect', I would argue, that constitutes the moment of (unrealized) empowerment in the engaged self. Insofar as the left has articulated ideals of participatory and deliberative democracy to complement those of economic redistribution and cultural recognition (for example, the Occupy movement), these have for the most part been treated as prerequisites of agency – fair procedures that guarantee equal participation – rather than contexts in which people are trusted as responsible actors. A counterhegemonic struggle requires a more effective progressive alternative to the authoritarian right's strategy of promising agency as membership in a homogenized collective 'reconstructing' society. And it is with respect to this task, I would argue, that Axel Honneth's theory of recognition has some important resources to offer.

II Recognition as Respect: Combining Political Theory with Moral Psychology

Axel Honneth's theory of recognition has evolved over the past decades into a comprehensive perspective within 'third-generation' critical theory that purports to explain the social structure, dynamics and processes of subject formation (Anderson 2000, 2011; Deranty 2009). In contrast to Jürgen Habermas' two-dimensional conceptualization of 'reason' within social reality (communicative and functional), Honneth articulates a new 'foundational' concept which fuses explanatory and normative purposes – intersubjective *recognition*, understood as the universal precondition of human self-formation. Honneth's key social-theoretical premise, which resonates considerably with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic domination, is that social reality is a field of 'symbolic struggles' and temporary compromises between social groups which allow for a particular institutional order to take shape on the grounds of a fragile normative 'consensus' (Honneth 2011: 410-411).

In developing his theoretical system, Honneth has relied on an interpretation of the early Hegel's account of the 'struggle for recognition' (*Kampf um Anerkennung*) as a historical mechanism for expanding the contents of human 'ethical life' (*Sittlichkeit*). In order to formulate a theory of the subject which complements the Hegelian social ontology, Honneth draws on American pragmatist social psychology, particularly George Herbert Mead and John Dewey, and on the psychoanalytic theory of 'object relations', primarily Donald D. Winnicot's and Jessica Benjamin. Honneth argues, in contrast to Habermas, that social actors engaged in symbolic interaction do not merely strive towards an understanding free of coercion, but that, more fundamentally, they expect a certain positive attitude from their interactive partners that Honneth terms recognition (Honneth 1996). Expectations of recognition are framed by a historical normative order of interaction (an institutional system), which itself presents a temporary resolution of conflicts between social groups over the institutionalization of evaluative patterns (patterns of recognition). Honneth argues that "[w]e should understand recognition as a reaction with which we respond rationally to evaluative qualities we have learned to perceive in human subjects to the degree that we have been integrated into the second nature of our life-world" (Honneth, 2002: 510).

Social actors' experiences of the *violation* of their moral expectations can be understood through the prism of the early Hegel's social philosophy as particular expressions of *universal moral-practical claims*. In Honneth's view, the fulfillment of these claims is a precondition for the establishment of an 'undistorted' individual self-relation: "It is individuals' claim to the intersubjective recognition of their identity", Honneth argues, "that is built into social life from the very beginning as a moral tension, transcends the level of social progress institutionalized thus far, and so gradually leads via the negative path of recurring stages of conflict to a state of communicatively lived freedom" (Honneth 1996: 5).

There are, according to Honneth, three basic human needs for recognition that correspond to the early Hegel's concepts of love, legal equality and 'honour', and thus three basic types of normative claims. The first among them is the claim to the *affection and care* of the relevant concrete others. However, as one starts participating in the wider realm of social interaction, one needs to acquire a more stable anchoring of one's sense of self, in a *general* acknowledgement that one is an accountable and responsible person. As Honneth argues, the early Hegel's concept of the universal human need for reciprocal, symmetrical recognition can be interpreted, by means of George Herbert Mead's social psychology, as the need for *respect* of one's moral autonomy, and its fulfillment enables an individual to develop a basic sense of *self-respect*. The third fundamental moral-practical need corredspnds to the early Hegel's concept of 'honour' – while the claim to moral respect in Hegel corresponds to the need for personal autonomy in Mead, the quest for 'honour' in Honneth's view resonates with Mead's concept of the fundamental human need for 'self-realization' through the obtainment of *cultural esteem* of one's personality. Here I would like to briefly focus on the second dimension of Honneth's theory of

recognition for the purposes of my argument – the basic human need for respect from others.

Joel Anderson gives a succinct interpretation of Honneth's concept of recognition as respect:

> As Honneth understands it, self-respect has less to do with whether or not one has a good opinion of oneself than with one's sense of possessing of the universal dignity of persons. There is a strong Kantian element here: what we owe to every person is the recognition of and respect for his or her status as an agent capable of acting on the basis of reasons, as the autonomous author of the political and moral laws to which he or she is subject. To have self-respect, then, is to have a sense of oneself as a person, that is, as a 'morally responsible' agent or, more precisely, as someone capable of participating in the sort of public deliberation that Habermas terms 'discursive will-formation'. (Anderson 1996: xiv–xv)

The intersubjective, social preconditions for developing self-respect in this sense are legally guaranteed *rights*, which Honneth defines as institutionalized patterns of interpersonal recognition: "What gives rights the power to enable the development of self-respect is the public character that rights possess in virtue of their empowering the bearer to engage in action that can be perceived by interaction partners" (Honneth 1996: 120). In Honneth's perspective, a crucial dimension of historical progress is to be found in the struggle for expanding the scope of legally guaranteed rights, i.e. the scope of what it means to be respected as a morally responsible agent: "The cumulative expansion of individual rights-claims [...] can be understood as a process in which the scope of the general features of a morally responsible person has gradually increased, because, under pressure from struggles for recognition, ever new prerequisites for participation in rational will formation will have to be taken into consideration" (ibid.: 114–115). The historical expansion of the scope of rights through a series of struggles for recognition can roughly be divided into the stages of basic human rights (the emergence of modern positive law), political rights (the advent of liberal democracy) and social rights (the creation of the welfare state).

So what is the difference between Honneth's concept of respect as a dimension of interpersonal recognition and the more conventional political-theoretic norms of human, civic and social rights? Honneth's respect is not solely a political-theoretic but a *moral-psychological* concept as well (Deranty 2009; Fraser, Honneth 2003), as it plays a prominent role in his theory of human subject-formation. This, on the one hand, renders his perspective normatively 'thick' (substantive) and difficult to defend on purely proceduralist, deontological grounds, but it also makes it fruitful for thinking about political strategy in times of post-Fordist hegemony. For Honneth, people don't just need respect as a socially provided *precondition* of agency (as in participatory and deliberative democracy), they need respect as a *motivating factor* of agency – or what I earlier termed 'a sense of empowerment'. Respect is what enables people to develop a 'healthy moral-practical self-relation' in the dimension of political participation, and therefore to feel empowered to exercise their agency.

This is why there is an element to Honnethian respect – we might call it the *trust* element – which cannot be reduced to the legalistic language of 'rights'. People are fully respected only when they both have institutionally guaranteed rights and are trusted as morally responsible agents. It is perfectly conceivable that people in a given political community have the full spectrum of human, political and social rights 'on paper' but are still not trusted in the above sense of 'being capable of participating in discursive will-formation'. A case in point could be the current crisis in France around the issue of the increase of the retirement age from 62 to 64 years through an executive presidential decision. The increase of the retirement age is justified by the French President Emmanuel Macron as the necessary response to a pressing societal problem – growing pension deficits caused by demographic changes (rising life expectancy and the consequent ageing of the population). The citizens of France were arguably not treated with respect in the Honnethian sense in this case – they were not treated as morally responsible agents who can be trusted to comprehend the severity of the crisis and debate about a rational solution to this problem (whether in the form of raising the retirement age or substantively restructuring the French economy, for example). Instead, the executive decision is a manifestation of what I termed 'regressive expertocracy', an assumption that citizens would act irresponsibly if they were consulted on complex societal issues (for example by means of a referendum), in the form of a knee-jerk rejection of any change to the status quo. Therefore, although France is one of the most developed western welfare states with a wide spectrum of political and social rights, its citizenry does not enjoy respect in the full sense of Honneth's term.

The open-ended nature of the historical evolution of interpersonal respect means there is no reason to assume that the normative contents of respect cannot (and will not) evolve further. One possible line of further development was suggested by Honneth himself in some of the works written after *The Struggle for Recognition*, in which he has engaged in expanding his theory along the lines of a participatory-democratic political model which combines Deweyan pragmatism with the theory of recognition. In 'Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation', Honneth interprets John Dewey's theory of democracy as arguing in favour of a social order of 'cooperative self-realization'. In contrast to Hannah Arendt, Honneth argues, Dewey's critique of the classical liberal perspective rests on a fundamental pragmatist conviction that 'communicative freedom' is not embodied in linguistic interaction as such but in the "communal (*gemeinschaftlich*) employment of individual forces to cope with given problems" (Honneth 2007: 222). Honneth distinguishes between Dewey's early conception of democracy which hardly differs from the insights of the young Marx, and his mature political theory in which Dewey grants autonomy to the realm of the *public debate*. The latter is conceived within Dewey's perspective as a "medium through which society attempts to process and solve its problems" (ibid.: 234).

Of the three basic dimensions of recognition – love, respect and esteem – Honneth's Deweyan political ideal clearly depends to a great extent on the existence of egalitarian and solidary relations of interpersonal *esteem*, recognition

of one's capability to contribute to the common good. Honneth stresses that democracy as reflexive cooperation requires not only a just and 'cooperative' division of labour, but a whole range of associations in which individuals can put their skills into the service of the wider community. But Honneth perhaps slightly neglects the extent to which relations of interpersonal *respect* are also crucial within his political ideal. Democracy as the 'communal employment of individual forces to cope with given problems' requires, of course, that we esteem each other as persons who possess valuable and mutually complementary skills with which we can contribute to the resolution of those problems. But it also requires that we *trust* each other as morally responsible persons who understand the gravity of these problems and are willing to engage in the cooperative process of their solving.

III From Engaged Selves to Engaged Citizens

This is by no means a self-understandable requirement that is already encompassed by the existing norms of interpersonal respect in liberal democracy, especially in light of the fact that the 'given problems' we are supposed to resolve are often completely new to us and we first have to understand what it is that we are facing (for example, the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change or the demographic crisis in France). In other words, we first have to be willing to direct an amount of *sustained attention* to these novel problems and try to reach some kind of intersubjective, communal understanding of what they are and what will be required to overcome them. In such situations, expert discourses are important but clearly insufficient for understanding the political implications of the crisis – including the legal and political-theoretic terms we normally rely on in the public sphere. In such situations of low 'semantic security' (Boltanski 2011), the key factor is people's *mutual awareness* that they are morally responsible agents who will do their best to reach an understanding of the crisis and resolve it – in other words, the key factor is interpersonal trust. As Cvejić, Prodanović and I have argued, a 'call of trust' (expression of interpersonal trust in the context of a major societal crisis) is a positive forward-looking attitude that plays not just a normative, but a motivational role: "What is important to notice is that it is not solely to the *content* of a normative recommendation that the 'trustees' are invited to respond. A trustee is, above all, invited to feel as a respected fellow member through a call, but at the same time, a call 'pushes' the *significance* of the event on the trustee"[3] (Cvejić, Ivković, Prodanović 2022: 7). In contrast to the subject-position of the 'engaged self' of progressive expertocracy which presumes a high level of semantic security, as she relies on existing expert discourses, the 'trustees' from the above quote have to engage in the very definition of the situation – to 'author' the rules of engaging with the problem at hand – and we might therefore call them 'engaged citizens'.

3 See also Igor Cvejić's and Srđan Prodanović's contributions in this special section.

The figure of the engaged citizen, I would argue, is crucial for Honneth's political ideal of democracy as reflexive cooperation, and it adds an additional normative layer to the norm of interpersonal respect – namely the imperative that we recognize each other as morally responsible agents in the sense that we trust each other to be attentive to the significance of the newly emerging societal problems and open to reaching an uncoerced understanding about them even in conditions of radical uncertainty. To return to the above example of the pension crisis in France, it is precisely this dimension of respect – trusting people to be engaged citizens rather than post-Fordist engaged selves – that was lacking in the government's approach to the crisis.

This finally brings us back to the question of counterhegemonic strategy in post-Fordism, more precisely the question of how to progressively exploit the paradox of engagement/disengagement that is created through the combined effects of progressive expertocracy, on the one hand, and progressive neoliberalism and technocracy on the other. I am now in a position to make more precise the earlier suggestion that the left requires a 'politics of respect' by means of the Honnethian concepts I have outlined. The democratic-socialist left has been developing the ideal of postcapitalism primarily in terms of what I have called the 'rights' dimension of Honnethian respect – in particular the dimension of social (welfare) rights as prerequisites of agency, and the norm of participatory democracy as a set of fair procedures establishing equal rights to exercise political agency. But the left has paid insufficient attention to what I termed the 'trust' dimension of respect – recognizing people as engaged citizens who are morally responsible in the sense of being attentive to pressing societal problems, especially the *newly emerging* problems which have yet to be fully understood and collectively interpreted. It is such politics of respect that could actualize (and radicalize) what I earlier called the sense of empowerment inherent in the hegemonic figure of the engaged self that stems from the progressive-expertocratic discursive construction of this figure as a responsible' agent.

In terms of counterhegemonic strategy, respecting people as engaged citizens therefore means mutually articulating the promise of political agency created by progressive expertocracy with radical-emancipatory discourses such as democratic socialism. What is specific about respecting people as engaged citizens, compared to conventional notions of participatory democracy, is the premise that people can be trusted to act responsibly even in situations where democratic deliberation is difficult due to the fact that there is little 'shared semantics' in the form of already sedimented interpretations of a given (new) societal problem (Cvejić, Ivković, Prodanović 2022). Strategically speaking, respecting people as engaged citizens can present a politically effective alternative to the hegemonic agents of 'authoritarian freedom' – right-wing authoritarians – as it presents a direct, rather than displaced, realization of the unfulfilled promise of political agency in post-Fordism.

References

Althusser, Louis (2014), *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, London: Verso.

Anderson, Joel (1996), "Translator's Introduction", in Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. x –xxi.

—. (2000) "The Third Generation of the Frankfurt School", *Intellectual History Newsletter* 22 (1): 49–61.

—. (2011), "Situating Axel Honneth in the Frankfurt School Tradition", in Danielle Petherbridge (ed.), *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 31–57.

Boltanski, Luc (2011), *On critique: A Sociology of Emancipation*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Brown, Wendy (2018), "Neoliberalism's Frankenstein: Authoritarian Freedom in Twenty-First Century 'Democracies'", *Critical Times* 1 (1): 60–79.

Cvejić, Ivković; Prodanović, Srđan (2022), "Contingency and Social Change: Collective Engagement in Conditions of Radical Uncertainty", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*: 1–16 (online first).

Deranty, Jean-Philippe (2009), *Beyond Communication: A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy*, Leiden: Brill.

Fraser, Nancy (1989), *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

—. (2012), "Can Society be Commodities all the Way down? Post-Polanyian Reflections on Capitalist Crisis", *Economy and Society*, 43 (4): 541–558.

—. (2017), "A Triple Movement? Parsing the Politics of Crisis after Polanyi", in Marian Burchardt, Gal Kirn (eds.), *Beyond Neoliberalism: Social Analysis after 1989*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

—. (2022), *Cannibal Capitalism: How our System is Devouring Democracy, Care and the Planet – and What We can do about It*, London: Verso.

Fraser, Nancy; Honneth, Axel (2003), *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, London: Verso.

Fraser, Nancy; Jaeggi, Rahel (2018), *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Geuss, Raymond (2008), "Philosophical Anthropology and Social Criticism", in Axel Honneth (ed.), *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 120 –130.

Gramsci, Antionio (1995), *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hall, Stuart (1986), "The Problem of Ideology – Marxism without Guarantees", *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10 (2): 28–44.

Honneth, Axel (1996), *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

—. (2002), "Grounding Recognition: A Rejoinder to Critical Questions", *Inquiry: an Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 45 (4): 499–519.

—. (2007), *Disrespect: the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

—. (2011),"Rejoinder", in Danielle Petherbridge (ed.), *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays*, Leiden: Brill.

Joseph, Jonathan (2002), *Hegemony: A realist analysis*, London: Routledge.

—. (2017), "The hegemony of governmentality: Towards a research agenda", *All Azimuth* 6 (2): 5–18.

Laclau, Ernesto; Mouffe, Chantal (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical-Democratic Politics*, London: Verso.

McNay, Lois (2008), *Against Recognition*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
Polanyi, Karl (2001), *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time*, Boston: Beacon Press.
Van den Brink, Bert; Owen, David (2007), *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Williams, Raymond (2005), *Culture and Materialism*, London: Verso.

Marjan Ivković

Priznanje kao kontrahegemona strategija

Sažetak

Gradeći na temeljima analize kulturne hegemonije u delima Nensi Frejzer i Vendi Braun, u ovom radu argumentujem da se istorijski blok (poredak hegemonije) postfordističkog kapitalizma karakteriše specifičnom interakcijom nekoliko 'osa' hegemonije koja proizvodi 'paradoks angažmana/dezangažmana'. Osa hegemonije koju nazivam 'progresivno-ekspertokratskom' konstituiše subjektnu poziciju 'angažovanog sopstva', figuru koja otelovljuje određeno obećanje moći političkog delanja koje je istovremeno opstruirano drugim, depolitizujućim osama hegemonije. Ova dinamika pogoduje rastu savremenog desnog autoritarizma, koji pretenduje da ispuni ovo obećanje moći političkog delanja kroz seriju određenih izmeštanja – kontrahegemona levica, sa druge strane, nije do sada formulisala efektivnu alternativu ovoj strategiji. U drugom delu rada, istražujem potancijal teorije priznanja Aksela Honeta, prevashodno njegove koncepcije 'interpersonalnog poštovanja', kao teorijskog temelja leve strategije povezivanja (međusobne artikulacije) hegemone figure 'angažovanog sopstva' sa progresivnom politikom društvene transformacije. U tu svrhu, elaboriram donekle Honetovu perspektivu pomoću argumenata o ulozi poverenja u kontekstu društvenih kriza koje sam nedavno formulisao sa Igorom Cvejićem i Srđanom Prodanovićem.

Ključne reči: hegemonija, postfordizam, angažman, priznanje, poštovanje, poverenje