

18–19.03.2021

**University of Warsaw
Faculty of "Artes Liberales"
Dobra 72, Warsaw**

The conference will be a space for discussion among invited specialists from various fields of the humanities and social research. The theses discussed will concern the meanings and manifestations of recognition. We are interested in historical illustrations, philosophical and sociological approaches, and the possible contemporary application of this category in theoretical reflection and empirical studies. Furthermore, we would like to discuss recognition in its broad social context, which can be imagined in various ways – one of them being the concept of class.

- Recognition as a theoretical category (philosophical panel).
- Historical and contemporary illustrations of recognition (historical-sociological panel).
- Recognition as a social problem (sociological-historical-economic panel).

CLASS(LESS) SOCIETY & RECOGNITION GAP INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Keynote speaker
Prof. Michèle Lamont
Professor of Sociology, Harvard University



Faculty of "Artes Liberales"
& Institute of Sociology
University of Warsaw



POLISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

CLASS(LESS) SOCIETY AND RECOGNITION GAP? INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Conference Program

There are 25 minutes for each paper, with additional 5 minutes for brief questions and clarifications. Every session ends in a 30-minute discussion.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84918402871>

Thursday, March 18

10.30–13.00: Philosophy

Szymon Wróbel (University of Warsaw)
The Bourgeoisie as Humanity or Inter-Class

Tomáš Korda (Charles University, Prague)
Spirit and its Struggle for Recognition

[5-minute break]

Andrzej Gniazdowski (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Aidós and the Constitution of the Public Sphere

Andrzej Leder (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Recognition and Desire: Two Lacanian Models of the Strive for Recognition – Two Types of Political Behavior

Discussion (moderator: Marek Węcowski)

14.00–16.00: Theoretical Sociology

Marta Bucholc (University of Warsaw)
Tactical Boundary-Setting in the Struggles for Recognition

Aleksander Manterys (University of Warsaw)
Social Recognition and Microsociology

Caius Dobrescu (University of Bucharest)
Recognition and Secularization, With Case Studies on Genocide Narratives

Discussion (moderator: Andrzej Waśkiewicz)

16.30–18.00: Keynote Lecture and Discussion

Michèle Lamont (Harvard University)

New Engines of Hope after the American Dream – Finding Recognition in the New Gilded Age

Friday, March 19

10.30–13.00: History and Literature

Marek Węcowski (University of Warsaw)
Ancient Greek Aristocracy as a Historical Problem

Karolina Filipczak (University of Warsaw)
The Identity and the Struggle for Recognition: The Problem of Race and Recognition in Latin America

[5-minute break]

Andrzej Waśkiewicz (University of Warsaw)
Gentleman's Leisure, or a Quest for Recognition

Stanisław Krawczyk (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)
Popular Authors in Search of Recognition
On the Polish Field of Science Fiction in the 1980s and 1990s

Discussion (moderator: Jerzy Axer)

14.00–16.00: Empirical Sociology

Henryk Domański (Polish Academy of Sciences)
Stratification of Culture as a Factor in Class Distances

Piotr Kulas (University of Warsaw)
Recognition Gap and Polish Society
Presentation of the Preliminary Findings on the Distribution of Respect

Adam Mrozowicki (University of Wrocław), Jan Czarzasty (Warsaw School of Economics)
Class Boundaries in Poland: The Experiences and Identifications of Young People

Discussion (moderator: Stanisław Krawczyk)

16.30–18.30: Dystrybucja szacunku w polskim społeczeństwie. Debata panelowa

The conference will end in a Polish-language debate on the distribution of respect in Polish society. We aim to show that both respect and recognition should be issues of wide interest in the public sphere, not just in academia.

Edwin Bendyk, author, „Polityka”, President of the Batory Foundation
Ludwik Dorn, sociologist, former Marshal of the Sejm
Anna Giza-Poleszczuk, University of Warsaw
Julia Kubisa, University of Warsaw
Paweł Śpiewak, University of Warsaw
Moderator: Piotr Kulas

CLASS(LESS) SOCIETY AND RECOGNITION GAP? INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Book of Abstracts

Keynote Lecture

Michèle Lamont

Professor of Sociology and of African and African American Studies

Robert I. Goldman Professor of European Studies

Harvard University

New Engines of Hope after the American Dream

Finding Recognition in the New Gilded Age

In the context of COVID, growing inequality, and political polarization, I am writing a book that diagnoses some of the current challenges facing Americans and offers a way forward. This is achieved by drawing on survey data and interviews with boomers, Gen Zs, and leading “agents of change,” who are producing new narratives in entertainment, comedy, advocacy, religion, art, journalism, impact investing, and other fields of activity.

Neoliberal scripts of self, based on criteria emphatically centered on material success, competitiveness, individualism, and self-reliance, are increasingly associated with poor mental health across classes. Agents of change offer alternatives: they are promoting narratives of hope that emphasize inclusion, diversity, sustainability and authenticity – as part of an increasingly salient “politic of recognition” that broadens cultural citizenship and thus affects exclusion and inequality.

I aim to understand how their influence takes shape through “recognition chains” that mobilize philanthropy, new social movements, social media, and more. Drawing on collaborative papers, I also analyze how Gen Zs make sense of growing inequality and COVID, and find/produce hope during this period of high uncertainty by drawing on available cultural repertoires.

Marta Bucholc
Faculty of Sociology
University of Warsaw

Tactical Boundary-Setting in the Struggles for Recognition

It is my assumption that recognition, whether in its normative or psychological dimension, implies setting a boundary between the subjects. Taking as my starting point Georg Simmel's classical essay on secrecy, I explore the role of exclusion and exclusivity in the processes of claiming and granting recognition, to argue that setting a boundary is a fundamental relation aspect of recognition. Therefore, boundary-setting is also an indispensable tactical move in the struggles for recognition, and to attack the boundary in order to reset it is a basic form of claiming recognition. I illustrate my point with historical-sociological analysis of recognition struggles, drawing on Norbert Elias's study of the European process of civilization. I discuss the strategic uses of social habitus in boundary-setting. My main focus is the role of group self-reflection as a necessary condition for successfully employing the habitus in order to claim and deny recognition in social relations.

Caius Dobrescu
Faculty of Letters
University of Bucharest

Recognition and Secularization, With Case Studies on Genocide Narratives

The paper will develop a notion of recognition (gap) in close association with the process of secularization. Its premises are set within the family of theories (Peter Berger, Charles Taylor, William E. Connolly) which define secularization not as secularism, i.e. as linear de-spiritualization of social life, but as suspension of the symbiosis between a hegemonic religious discourse and coercive power. This autonomy generates a whole sphere of options, including not only the foundational principles, but also the manners of assuming and performing them. Secularization confronts us with the seeming paradox of incommensurable species of truth and evidence, which nevertheless are forced to co-exist and to reach, or at least experiment with, some forms of mutual recognition. This (gap of) recognition between foundational, core beliefs becomes ever more significant and influential as traditional divisions of class, and even gender and race, fade to a certain degree, or are swept to the back of the public stage.

Considering the different meanings of "recognition" (identification, praise, mutuality), the paper will ask the question of their connection to secularization through border-cases such as the tensions between Holocaust and Gulag genocide narratives.

Henryk Domański
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
Polish Academy of Sciences

Stratification of Culture as a Factor in Class Distances

The goal of this analysis is to establish whether lifestyle is treated in Polish society as a factor conducive to the forming of class divisions. The data comes from a nationwide study carried out in Poland in 2019. Basing on the respondents' answers regarding the criteria of social superiority and inferiority, I try to find to what extent musical tastes, educational strategies and patterns of lifestyle can shape class stratification, and how these relationships are defined by the intelligentsia, owners, workers, and farmers. The results of the analysis indicate that in people's mind lifestyles and the practicing of culture are shaped by class inequalities. It may be interesting to note that these relationships are seen similarly by the intelligentsia and by members of the lower classes.

Karolina Filipczak
Interdisciplinary Doctoral School
University of Warsaw

The Identity and the Struggle for Recognition: The Problem of Race and Recognition in Latin America

The problem of Latin American identity is closely related to the issue of race. It was conceptualized in many ways and it was one of the most important categories used to define Latin American otherness and distinctiveness. One of the interpretative proposals of this problem appeared in the philosophical reflection of José Enrique Rodó. The Uruguayan essayist based his interpretation of cultural distinctiveness on racial distinctiveness. The Latin American race, built on *a great ethnic tradition*, was to be the source of Latin American identity. However, the author did not raise the issues related to the problem of autochthonic population or of black community in Latin American countries. Instead of this he proposed a concept of the spiritual race. The issue of the real mixture of races was taken up by one of the most famous *arielistas* – José Vasconcelos. It was taken up in his concept of *the cosmic race*, the most famous concept of this author. The New Continent was to be the source for the new *cosmic race*, a mixture of all the races known so far, which was to go beyond the limitation of all the others. This interpretation of the problem of the race, which has as its source Rodó's thought, met with criticism as extremely racist.

The construction of such a concept resulted from the necessity of creating a strong identity that could claim to be valid and recognized by other communities. It is possible to connect this issue with the struggle for recognition in the perspective presented by Axel Honneth. The recognition of asymmetrical relations between communities – the Latin American community recognized the domination to which it was subjected on the part of the global hegemon – made it necessary to construct an identity that, on the one hand, could be sufficiently distinct to be noticed and, on the other hand, could develop its own horizon of values and means of symbolic violence to win the struggle for recognition.

Two proposals – that of Rodó and that of Vasconcelos – present two scenarios of the effect of the struggle for recognition of cultural identity. On the one hand, in the case of Rodó's perspective, there is a risk of losing the distinctiveness and dissolving the entity that fought for recognition. Achieving full assimilation fulfils claims by annihilating the group which made them. Vasconcelos' proposal realizes a scenario that Honneth seems to fear. Granting claims to strong cultural distinctiveness, which has undeniable needs for domination, is associated with an escalation of cultural conflicts and misunderstandings. Creating too strong distinctiveness makes communication and recognition impossible. These two practices seem to be insufficient and not achieving their purpose.

an instrument to seek recognition in the dimension which Honneth calls solidarity. Discussed interpretations of the problem of race can be read as a search for opposition to the dominant consensus, which concerns the values regulating recognized cultural models. The two presented strategies in their basis have the same aim – to get the community out of a peripheral position and create a horizon within which members of the community could expect an increase of the respect shown to them.

Andrzej Gniazdowski
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
Polish Academy of Sciences

Aidós and the Constitution of the Public Sphere

The aim of the paper is both historical and critical. It consists, on the one hand, in the contribution to the history of the idea of recognition by indicating the roots of this modern theoretical category in the Greek concept of *aidós*. What is aimed at here, on the other hand, is not only the reconstruction of the original, complex meaning of that Homeric word, translated into modern languages, among others, as shame, shyness, timidity or respect. The object of the reconstruction in the paper will be not only the significance of that emotion within the Greek pre-modern moral world, but also its role in the constitution of the idea of democracy itself. It will be argued here, primarily with reference to the analysis of the anthropological foundations of democracy, delivered by Klaus Held in his *Phenomenology of the Political World*, that the concept of *aidós* denotes the passive emotion, which can also be interpreted as constitutive for the contemporary public sphere. Understood as an antonym of boldness or audacity, *aidós* will be considered in the paper, with reference also to Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, to be the *pathos*, which compels one to refrain from "showing oneself" in the world in order to leave the room for showing themselves to the others. Insofar as the *aidós* is presented within the phenomenology of the political world as both emotion, which allows democracy to emerge, and habitus or a political virtue, which prevents breaking down of democratic, i.e. non-violent, intersubjective relations, the critical aim of the paper consists, first, in examining the limits of this theoretical standpoint in terms of the theory of recognition, and then, in an attempt to interpret the anthropological premises of the concept of recognition in the light of the pertinent phenomenological investigations.

Selected literature

- Arendt, H. (1982). *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Cairns, D. L. (2002). *Aidós. The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature*. Clarendon Press: Oxford.
Held, K. (2010). *Phänomenologie der politischen Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
Kant, I. (2000). *The Critique of the Power of Judgement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Vollrath, E. (2003). *Was ist das Politische? Eine Theorie des Politischen und seiner Wahrnehmung*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

Tomáš Korda
Department of Political Science
Charles University, Prague

Spirit and its Struggle for Recognition

The paper is divided into two parts. The first part introduces Hegel's concept of recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and marks out the advantages of this particular notion of recognition. It tries to go beyond a basic 'sociological' insight that in the notion of recognition we find the handy theoretical tool to prove that individuality is socially conditioned. I argue we can and should gain from Hegel's notion of recognition rather 'speculative' insight that overcomes this way of thinking in terms of 'conditions', which Hegel called *Verstand*. In order to do that, we have to appreciate that in the *Phenomenology* the notion of recognition represents one – and crucial – moment within the development of Spirit. This integration of recognition as the conceptual moment into the process through which the Spirit comes to itself is contrasted with Hegel's previous conception of recognition from what is known as the *Janear* writings. Since in the *Janear* system of "ethical life", the notion of recognition is not yet subordinated to the notion of Spirit, in the second part, I criticise attempts to return to the young Hegel of *Janear*. Obviously in the name of avoiding Hegel's metaphysics of Spirit, such attempts hastily throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. I thus defend Hegel's metaphysics as a conceptual framework within which the notion of recognition finds its stronghold against any attempts that aim to pull it out and assimilate into their own framework of ideas. I argue that only within Hegel's metaphysics of Spirit can one understand why Spirit itself (with its three spheres of ethical life – the family, the civil society and the state – respectively) is the subject which not only seeks for recognition – from us – but also has legitimate right for this recognition.

Stanisław Krawczyk
Scholarly Communication Research Group
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Popular Authors in Search of Recognition ***On the Polish Field of Science Fiction in the 1980s and 1990s***

Science fiction is often associated with escapist entertainment. This is partly due to the social origins of the currently dominant variant of the genre. Between the 1920s and the 1940s, this variant was consolidated in the United States in pulp magazines, that is, in cheap periodicals ignored or shunned by high-status citizens.

However, many 20th-century writers and editors of the genre were scientifically educated and had high social aspirations. They frequently wished for science fiction to be seen widely as a legitimate, if not the most legitimate, branch of culture. Therefore, the contemporary history of the genre is also a history of a long search for recognition. Prestige, too, but first of all, recognition. As numerous authors apparently felt, not only was science fiction not given its due value by society (and particularly by the proponents of "high culture") but its very existence often went unrecognized.

In the paper I examine this process in the case of Poland in the 1980s and 1990s. First, I inspect the relevant data on Polish science fiction authors, basing on bios from the *Fantastyka* magazine, published monthly since 1982. This allows me to show that they frequently had higher education degrees and worked as specialists (academics, engineers, teachers, etc.), which suffices to qualify a high proportion of authors as members of the Polish intelligentsia. That qualification is then used in the second and third parts of the paper to explain certain tendencies in, respectively, science fiction itself and the writers' or editors' own commentaries on the genre.

The analysis of the prose itself is focused on the subgenre called social fiction, which depicted a conflict between individuals and authorities in dystopian worlds – a reference to the realities of life under the regime of the Polish People's Republic. Other relevant trends in science fiction are also briefly discussed. The analysis of commentaries is based on a study of editorials, reviews, and columns published in *Fantastyka*, with an emphasis on the concepts of "getto" and "mainstream" (both applied to denote the opposition between science fiction and legitimated literature) as well as on the concept of "fun" or "entertainment" (often considered merely a secondary function of science fiction, which may be surprising when popular culture is concerned).

What I intend to demonstrate is that a significant number of writers and editors were preoccupied with socially respectable functions of literature, and unwilling to accept entertainment as the main focus of science fiction. This search for recognition, and then for prestige, can be attributed largely to the interplay between the authors' social background (or habitus, in the terms of Pierre Bourdieu) and the conditions of the Polish literary field. We can thus see that the concepts of recognition and prestige are both useful in the explanation of at least some segments of the history of popular culture.

Piotr Kulas
Faculty of "Artes Liberales"
University of Warsaw

Recognition Gap and Polish Society
Presentation of the Preliminary Findings on the Distribution of Respect

The main aim of my speech is to present and interpret some findings from my research on the distribution of respect in Polish society. Based on the theory of recognition developed mainly by Axel Honneth, I also show my data and draw some conclusions. In the first part of my presentation, I discuss the theory of recognition and develop the term "recognition gap". Since this theory is a consequence of a historical process, I argue that it needs to be amended by the status and style of life (Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu, respectively). Supplementation affects the structure of the recognition gap. In the second part, I talk about the methodology of my research. In this section, I also enumerate questions of the questionnaire. The main results are also presented in this part. The data was collected in the survey on the representative sample of Polish society (1000 adult respondents). In the concluding remarks, I put my findings in the perspective of recognition and recognition gap.

Andrzej Leder
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology
Polish Academy of Sciences

Recognition and Desire: Two Lacanian Models of the Strive for Recognition – Two Types of Political Behavior

In my presentation, I will try to accomplish two aims. First, I will introduce the Lacanian form of the concept of recognition – the desire. I will link it to the Hegelian source and I will show main changes and adaptations to the psychoanalytical field performed by the French theorist. The main result of this operations was a basic idea – the idea of the Other. This pillar of the Lacanian theory is nevertheless complex and ambiguous. The relation of recognition by the Other can have at least two forms, and each of them determines a very different structure of the subject.

In the second part I will try to show how this two possible structures of the strive for recognition – desire – can help us to understand some important differences in actual political attitudes and social behavior in two parts of our continent – to the west of the Elbe and to the east of it.

Aleksander Manterys
Faculty of Applied Social Sciences and Resocialisation
University of Warsaw

Social Recognition and Microsociology

The aim of the article is to show social recognition as a relational property of human interactions, and more precisely: constituting and maintaining the views desired by actors of occurring events, including positional images of oneself in particular situational stages or installments.

The analysis takes place in a few steps. The first step is to outline an alternative perspective of generating social recognition, the starting point of which is Cooley's conception, understood as a theoretical alternative to the microsociological addressing of social recognition by Honneth, which, in a way, completes the Hegelian pedigree of his own interpretation of social recognition through the reconstruction of Mead's views. The second step is to point out heuristically fertile continuations and transformations of Cooley's ideas by referring to the findings of Goffman and Scheff (presenting oneself as a component of experience management), Garfinkel (maintaining background expectancies) and Collins (shaping and sustaining chains of interaction rituals). The third step is a kind of deconstruction, referring to the transactional understanding of social life, based on Dewey's transactionalism, Wiley's inner speech concept and Dépelteau's processual-transactional version of relational sociology.

Adam Mrozowski
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Wrocław

Jan Czarzasty
Collegium of Socio-Economics
Warsaw School of Economics

Class Boundaries in Poland: The Experiences and Identifications of Young People

The analysis of class boundaries and boundary-making practices is firmly rooted in the sociological thought and directly related to the question of recognition understood in terms of confirmation of some positive qualities of individuals and groups (Honneth 2012). Inequalities in recognition, or “recognition gaps” (Lamont 2018), affect in particular the members of disadvantaged sections of society struggling to maintain the sense of worth and self-esteem against their stigmatisation. Drawing from the tradition of studying the moral boundaries of class (Lamont 2000; Sayer 2005) and the “weak”, culturalist approaches to class analysis (Devine and Savage 2005; Gardawski 2009), this paper will report the results of the analysis of class identifications of young working Poles aged 18-30. We will be particularly interested in the effects of precarisation for boundary-making practices and class identifications. The empirical basis will be the NCN-DFG funded PREWORK project including the PAPI survey on a quota sample of young people (n = 1000) and a theoretical sample of biographical narrative interviews with young precarious workers in Poland (n = 63) in non-standard and low-paid employment.

The research points to clear processes of erosion of class identifications and “averaging” of the sense of belonging – young people either identified themselves with the broadly understood middle class or avoided any class identification. The minority of interviewees knew and identified themselves with the notion of “the precariat.” This does not mean, however, that interviewees denied the existence of social inequalities of various kinds, with particular emphasis on economic ones. The biographical research suggests that the boundary-drawing from those “above” and “below” enabled the informants to construct the middle as “normal” and a desired position in society with the reference to performance-oriented principles of meritocracy and entrepreneurship. Identifying oneself with the “middle” and limited identification with the precariat can be explained with generational factors (youth as a transition phase in an individual life), the devaluation of class discourse in Poland after the end of socialism (Ost 2015) and the spread of the myths of the market and entrepreneurship (Kolarska-Bobińska 1998). However, counter-tendencies to all of the aforementioned processes can be detected. Therefore, the presentation will conclude with the discussion of the (social) boundaries of the reconstructed tendency to identify oneself with the middle class in the context of objective processes of precarisation of work.

Selected literature

- Devine, F. and Savage, M. (2005). 'The Cultural Turn, Sociology and Class Analysis'. In: Devine F., Savage M., Scott J., et al. (eds), *Rethinking Class: Culture, Identities and Lifestyle*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–23.
- Gardawski, J. (2009). 'Teorie struktury społecznej a świat pracy [Theories of Social Structure and the World of Work]'. In: Gardawski J. (ed.), *Polacy pracujący a kryzys fordyzmu*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe 'Scholar', pp. 65–85.
- Honneth, A. (2012). *Walka o uznanie [The Struggle for Recognition]*. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos.
- Kolarska-Bobińska, L. (1998). 'Egalitaryzm i interesy grupowe w procesie zmian ustrojowych [Egalitarianism and Group Interests in the Process of System Change]'. Adamski W. (ed.), Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFIS PAN.

- Lamont, M. (2000). *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. New York & London: Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press.
- Lamont, M. (2018). 'Addressing Recognition Gaps: Destigmatization and the Reduction of Inequality'. *American Sociological Review*, 83(3): 419–444.
- Ost, D. (2015). 'Stuck in the Past and the Future: Class Analysis in Postcommunist Poland'. *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 29(3): 610–624.
- Sayer, A. (2005). *The Moral Significance of Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trappmann, V., Seehaus, A., Mrozowicki, A., et al. (2021). 'The Moral Boundary Drawing of Class: Social Inequality and Young Precarious Workers in Poland and Germany'. *Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038520985791>

Acknowledgements

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Andrzej Waśkiewicz
Faculty of Sociology
University of Warsaw

Gentleman's Leisure, or a Quest for Recognition

The article presents the ways in which the sons of the rich early 19th-century English bourgeoisie attempted to join the ranks of the landed aristocracy; the impediment that the lack of noble birth represented for them and to what degree their money was able to compensate for that, the money that they spent together with aristocrats, though not earned by them, and, to a certain extent, some personal qualities. This requires from them spending their leisure in the company of the children of the nobility, which is very expensive, and which, from the bourgeois perspective, is vain, spectacular consumption, considerably depleting the family wealth. This means, in fact, a rejection of the bourgeois ethos, focused on work, now viewed in a purely utilitarian way, as a road towards enrichment. Even so, leisure spent in aristocratic company is supported by the City bourgeoisie as an investment into social status, i.e. also in capital interpreted in Bourdieu's terms. Crowning these efforts is marriage, a special contract between two families. It is not a misalliance, as both estates are connected by the idea of the gentleman. In the early 19th century, it is a link between the old-type estate-based society and the new class society; it is this idea that made possible a fluid change in the social structure. Also, it probably prevented a revolution. This phenomenon will be presented on the basis of the great realistic Victorian novel: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes* by William Thackeray and the Palliser novels by Anthony Trollope, focusing in particular on the idea of the gentleman.

The phenomenon is a good illustration of recognition versus class prestige and the honour of the estate. Unlike both of them, recognition is an individual reward, as the advancement of a bourgeois to the gentleman category is individual. The inherited and acquired assets alike will be subject to judgement by society; importantly, the latter are not as precious as the former. An estate-based/class society is by no means a meritocracy; it does not appreciate the individual effort made to achieve a given position, but the position itself, no matter how achieved. Recognition entails a risk; leaving their estate, the children of the rich bourgeoisie must abandon one kind of collective honour, but they do not gain the aristocratic honour. Thus, one needs not only to gain this kind of recognition, but one also needs to institutionalise it; unless they join the ranks of the aristocracy, spectacular consumption will quickly make them

go down in the world. Incidentally, in that world they will meet those aristocratic sons who were unlucky not to be born as heirs to their families' estates. It differs from recognition in contemporary egalitarian society in that not all are entitled to it. Struggle for recognition is not triggered by a lack of any kind of recognition – in the dimensions of love, law and success (Axel Honneth) – but rather by a drive towards advancement, more even on the part of families still than on the part of individuals.

Marek Węcowski
Faculty of History
University of Warsaw

Ancient Greek Aristocracy as a Historical Problem

The case of ancient Greek aristocracy (or “aristocracy”) seems rather well suited to the conference on “Class(less) society and recognition gap”.

Ever since the fall of the theory of the Greek polis, or city-state, as a “clan state” in the seventies of the previous century, the very idea of Greek aristocracy had been under attack. It has been ultimately challenged at the beginning of the 20th century by the scholars who argue for the nonexistence of such a social group in the archaic and early classical period (ca. 800–ca. 400 BCE) and focus instead on individual strategies of social recognition (Fr. *reconnaissance sociale*) of wealthy families and powerful individuals. However, on the one hand, the very idea of distinguishing “the good ones” (Gr. *hoi agathoi*) and “the vile ones” (Gr. *hoi kakoī*) was amply present in archaic Greek literary texts. On the other hand, an élite culture, focused on cultural skills giving access to local élite social circles, seems to have been one of the key factors of the social life in the aforementioned historical periods.

In their fine introduction to the collective volume on *‘Aristocracy’ in Antiquity: Redefining Greek and Roman Elites*, Nick Fisher and Hans van Wees suggest that “‘aristocracy’ is only rarely a helpful concept for the analysis of political struggles and historical developments or of ideological divisions and contested discourses in literary and material cultures in the ancient world” (Fisher & van Wees 2015: 1). Fisher’s and van Wees’ suggestion was conceived in reaction to two fundamental errors of earlier scholarship, both resulting from excessive scholarly reliance on the claims of ancient aristocratic ideology. “In modern scholarship, these claims are often translated into a belief that a hereditary ‘aristocratic’ class is identifiable at most times and places in the ancient world . . . and that deep ideological divisions existed between ‘aristocratic values’ and the norms and ideals of lower or ‘middling’ classes”. Van Wees and Fisher persuasively argue that “the political and economic preconditions for the creation of hereditary aristocracies of the medieval and early modern European type (strong royal authority, stable transmission of wealth) did not exist in most parts of the ancient world, and we have much less evidence than we used to imagine for the importance of hereditary status and privilege in general and for the existence of closed hereditary elites in particular”.

The conclusions reached by H. van Wees and N. Fisher look entirely logical in the light of modern definitions of aristocracy that universally emphasise – with some minor variations – the hereditary nature and a high degree of exclusivity of such groups alongside their high material status (cf. Fisher & van Wees 2015: 1-2). The problem, however, lies less in our inability to find such “closed hereditary elites” in the archaic period than in the fact that these very definitions entirely miss the point when applied to the historical realities of the archaic Greek world.

Szymon Wróbel
Faculty of “Artes Liberales”
University of Warsaw

The Bourgeoisie as Humanity or Inter-Class

The text will be an attempt to rethink the present status of the bourgeoisie. The universal class described by Hegel in *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*) was supposed to mediate between the extreme terms of ethical totality: the selfish aspirations of individuals and the general form of group action of the state. The universal class should be associated with the emancipation of the bourgeoisie and the emergence of modern culture. The eventual death of this class would be the annihilation of the universal class at all. In the text I will refer to the theses formulated, *inter alia*, by Frank Ruda in *Hegel's Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. I will also discuss the diagnosis that the disappearance of the universal class may have unexpected consequences: if the lumpen-proletarians succumb to the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie have also been subjected to lumpenproletarianization. I would like to understand the social and political consequences of both possibilities: the absorption of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie and the absorption of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat. Finally, I try to rethink the concept of “interclass”.

CLASS(LESS) SOCIETY AND RECOGNITION GAP? INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Organizer

Faculty of "Artes Liberales" & Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

Aim

The conference will be a space for discussion among invited specialists from various humanities and social research fields. The theses discussed will concern the meanings and manifestations of recognition. We are interested in historical illustrations, philosophical and sociological approaches, and the possible contemporary application of this category in theoretical reflection and empirical studies. Furthermore, we would like to discuss recognition in its broad social context, which can be imagined in various ways – one of them being the concept of class.

Before their short talks during the proceedings, the invited scholars will prepare working papers to be distributed among all participants. The members of respective panels will first comment on these papers, and then they will be a topic of general discussion. The language of the proceedings and the resulting publication will be English.

Problem

Although the category of recognition has been covered comprehensively in philosophical reflection, it still provokes debates and arguments, as it concerns several significant matters of social life and public policy. Recognition is a category that appears regularly in the border space between philosophical and sociological considerations (e.g., in the works of Axel Honneth, Francis Fukuyama, or Charles Taylor). However, we are convinced that this concept has not been sufficiently operationalized in the social sciences. It is similar to the ones long used by sociologists, such as status, prestige, looking-glass self, or respect; at times, it is also used interchangeably with those concepts. And yet recognition has its tradition in the history of social thought and distinct meaning in everyday language. It has theoretical implications that are not, however, sufficiently utilized in empirical research. We believe that this concept's academic appeal lies in the fact that it underscores – more strongly than the ideas mentioned above – the significance of history and the processual and relational nature of social phenomena.

For these reasons, we would like to use the conference to reveal the specific sense of recognition, which is characteristic of history, contemporary times, and late modernity. Distinguishing recognition in particular from prestige and status, we will look for its philosophical and sociological conceptualizations, followed by historical and present illustrations of the phenomena that may fall under this category. We mostly take an interest in those theoretical and empirical approaches to the recognition that will allow for its operationalization as a research category. There are several points we would like to address:

1. Theoretical, historical, and philosophical conceptualizations of recognition.
2. Politics of recognition and the problem of identity and difference.

3. Recognition: a moral category, a cultural one, or a socioeconomic one?
4. Historically fluid meanings of recognition, both in the semantic sense and as a real social process.
5. Recognition as a fundamental problem of identity: between micro-and macro sociology.
6. The concept of recognition and other contemporary social sciences concepts: status, prestige, respect.
7. The issue of recognition and the problem of pluralism and democracy.
8. Recognition and the question of social justice and redistribution.
9. Examples (successful and unsuccessful) of implementing recognition in public policy.
10. Who is recognized today? Elites, middle class, and the working class: recognition as a fundamental problem of social relations.

Organization

We have invited scholars representing many academic disciplines, philosophers, historians, historians of ideas, and sociologists. We ask all active participants to submit abstracts for their paper by the end of December 2020 and draft the final texts by the end of February if possible. The drafts will be circulated among the speakers and panel chairs as a basis for discussion, and they can later be developed for publication. The papers will be sent as readings to all other participants, and the members of respective panels will be asked to provide brief commentaries to be given during the proceedings. We hope that the comments and the discussion will help the authors to prepare the final versions of their papers for publication.

As a starting point, we propose three discussion panels (we are aware that the papers submitted may affect the number and the subject matter of the panels):

1. Recognition as a theoretical category (philosophical panel).
2. Historical and contemporary illustrations of recognition (historical-sociological panel).
3. Recognition as a social problem (sociological-historical-economic panel).

Venue and date

Faculty of "Artes Liberales"
University of Warsaw
Dobra 72, 00-312 Warszawa

18-19 March 2021

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Keynot speaker, prof. Michèle Lamont – Professor of Sociology, Harvard University