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From Conflict to Mutual Recognition

ABSTRACT

This document exposes the conflict from the Post-Rational cognitive perspective, understanding the conflict as a relational phenomenon, which emerges when the need of recognition is exposed to its contrary: the non-recognition. "To know oneself" means in fact, to recognize oneself through the mediation of the other (Castiglioni 1998). An individual develops himself by recognizing the "otherness" that constitutes him. The self (idem/identity) that goes out toward the other and then returns as ipse/selfhood, having acquired self-awareness through the other (Ricoeur 1993). For this reason, recognition is a fundamental element in the building of human subjectivity (Honneth 1997).

Identity is a continuous process that lasts a lifetime. It contains a central nucleus that ensures continuity by which a person is able to recognize him/herself. In this way individuals learn to define who they are through interactions with others, especially those whom are more significant. Being recognized by others and by the environment offer the individual a sense of unity and coherence about himself.

Conflict arises when the other or the environment becomes a threat to the survival of the subjectivity; when the absence or lack of recognition leads to harm in a person (Tello 2011). Relational experiences are able to engender and

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ensure recognition, while holding onto an indispensable acceptance of individual differences. They thus allow each one to bring forth their own unique identity.

PERSONAL IDENTITY

The center of human identity is the dialectical relationship between "sameness" and "selfhood" and the narrative possibility that arises from them. In order to keep this process active, subjectivity must not be put on crisis from its fundamentals. Identity must "be" and "persist" despite the transformations that may happen (Tatossian 1994).

Every person builds a meaning about him/herself in a continuous process of self-individualization and self-recognition. Thus, the person can recognize each immediate experience in relationship with others; he appropriates it and integrates it in consistent explanations about himself. This provides a sense of continuity throughout time. The meaning we give to our life experience is shaped through an effort of appropriation (Ricoeur1983) of our own experience mediated by the social-cultural community of which we are part of.

In the other side, the structures – where the types of recognition are settled – are fundamentals to the existence and integration of society (Basaure 2011).

We must distinguish two aspects of Identity: one of them is the sameness, which means the perception of the own continuity regardless any events; and the second is the ipse/selfhood, the own immediate experience linked to the circumstances and the others individuals. It is from our earlier relational experiences that an emotional pattern is settled reflexively, which we call sameness and it endures throughout our personal development. It is used as a "coordinate" to check and organize our successive experiences.

Therefore sameness is a story of settlements and experience integration in a recurring emotional order. When it comes to sameness, the sense of belonging is a characteristic while in the other hand selfhood is the experience that happens and it depends on contingent situation related to the outside world and the others (Ruiz 2016).

Narrative identity is the intermediate space between the settlement (sameness) and the ¨acquired¨, "that happens as we go along" (selfhood). The language is an integrating element that organizes the relationship between sameness and selfhood (Sanchez 2015).

Personal identity is founded from the relationship between sameness and selfhood. That can be described as biographical and autobiographical narrative, in a continuous exchange with the events of life and the social context (Ballerini 2005).

CONFLICT AS THE CAUSE OF NON-RECOGNITION

According to Guidano, identity is a never ending development and dialectical process. In this process, what the individual seeks is to produce a continuity of the immediate experience that he has about himself and to accept the conscious image that perceives in order to be legitimized, recognized, and ultimately, loved by the others. Theoretically, an individual may develop optimally and avoid the previously described outcomes if they experience only "unconditional positive regard" and no conditions of worth develop. The needs for positive regard from others and positive self-regard would match organismic evaluation and there would be congruence between self and experience, with full psychological adjustment as a result (Rogers 1959). This ideal human condition is embodied in the "fully functioning person" who is open to experience able to live existentially, is trusting in his/

her own organism, expresses feelings freely, acts independently, is creative and lives a richer life; "the good life" (Rogers 1061).

There will never be a conflict when a person is able to recognize the immediate experience in the conscious image of the self. This means he is able to recognize his emotions, feelings as his own and auto referred them. He can live consciously as his way of being, therefore there will be no discrepancies between the immediate experience and the conscious image of the self.

In the opposite, the lack of recognition drives to an internalization of a negative image and self-contempt that it will be hard to be integrated. The discrepancy perceived by the individual disturbs the self in its structure and then he must elaborate this "perturbation" reorganizing his point of view at that moment. But if the criticism received is coming from a significant person, it will be something he cannot ignore. In that very moment, his perception of himself changes dramatically. In fact, there will be a conflict, when the emotions, feelings, cannot be recognized by the individual so will feel like they don´t belong to him (Ruiz 2003).

When significant others in the person's world (usually parents) provide positive regard that is conditional, rather than unconditional, the person introjects the desired values, making them his/her own, and acquires "conditions of worth" (Rogers 1959). The self-concept then becomes based on these standards of value. In a person's lifetime may occur, that an event cannot be assimilated in his vital history. For example, an experience of rejection, of no recognition from another significant person can led to a depressive reaction.

FIGHTING FOR RECOGNITION

From what we have said, we are able to understand that as individuals, the absence or lack of recognition, constitutes the primary damage to the subjectivity of the person. Honneth has

attempted to develop a universal theory of subjectivity and damage. This then becomes the motor for the social morality of human suffering and this can become the driving force behind social conflict (Tello 2011).

The novelty of his theory, based on Hegel's, is to overcome the traditional interpretation of the conflicts as a mere self-preservation (Maquiavelo y Hobbes) (Margalit, Sauerwald 1997).

Not to be considered, destabilize the self-confidence of the individual or groups. This is a demonstration of injustice that makes them to react. It looked like their ideas are threatened, as well their dignity and integrity (Francisco 2012). According to Honneth, the despised, humiliated, non-recognized man, make him to lose his integrity, rights and their personal and moral autonomy (Mendez 2008).

On the other hand as persons are accepted and prized, they tend to develop a more caring attitude toward themselves. As persons are empathetically heard, it becomes possible for them to listen more accurately to the flow of inner experiencings. But as a person understands and prizes self, the self becomes more congruent with the experiencings. The person thus becomes more real, more genuine. These tendencies, the reciprocal of the significant person´s attitudes, enable the person to be a more effective growth-enhancer for himself or herself (Rogers 2016).

Why does recognition matter so much to human beings? How can we explain their seemingly enduring readiness to engage in struggles for recognition?

Without a three-dimensional recognition – related to primary relationships (love and friendship), legal relations (rights), and communities of value (solidarity) – a personal identity cannot be developed, something which in its turn is a precondition for human self-realization. The kind of personal identity under discussion is a moral-practical identity that comprises a process of identity formation which has as its goal autonomy and individuality.

To refuse an individual recognition means to reject certain identity claims in the form of claims to recognition. Such a rejection either renders the development of a personal identity impossible or breaks down an already established identity (Heidegren 2002).

TOLERANCE

One of the key points of Honneth's proposal is that the failure of meeting the expectation of recognition is, very often, the motivating force behind actions of resistance or rebellion. We could ask ourselves: up to what point do we need to be tolerant when we are not recognized and our dignity, our very identity is threatened?

Groups that find themselves in this position cannot remain neutral before events that attack their identity and moral principles. Just the same, there is an active form of tolerance that does not mean being passive. It includes and accepts the other person or situation. Co-existing, in this case, means tolerating and understanding the others, even if we refuse to accept their behavior and refuse to act in the same manner.

This is different from passive tolerance that is submission. Positive tolerance does not agree with the facts, but at an emotional level accepts the other person, attempting to understand their point of view at a cognitive level. This is not a desperate choice but a conscious decision, with an awareness of the need to forgive and accept. This way of acting is significantly different from attitude toward this situation. In this case, tolerance would not be the lowest expectation, but the maximum of what can be achieved despite the differences (Calviño 2001).

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT THE RECOGNITION OF THE OTHER?

The formation of the identity of the subject as we have seen is linked to the experience of an intersubjective recognition. An individual that don´t recognize the other, cannot experience him/herself completely (Honnet 1997).

However there are obstacles that hinder our ability to recognize the other. Human brain is a predictable machine directed to reduce the environment uncertainty. The "theory of the mind" refers to the skill we have to comprehend and predict the people's behaviors, their knowledge, intentions, emotions, and beliefs. Even though this skill helps us to be empathic with other, it can be used to judge the other's actions as well. The ability to make certain value judgements about the other's actions depends on a specific area of the brain (ventromedial prefrontal cortex) according to results of recent studies, done by scientists of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). According to researchers, moral judgement of the daily life as the ones pronounced in the courts of justice, depend on our ability to infer intentions. Thanks to this ability we can forgive unintentional damages or unexpected, and on the contrary, to condemn failed attempts to hurt (Greene et al. 2004).

According to Carl Rogers, the major barrier to mutual interpersonal communication is the same natural tendency that all of human beings have, such as:
– to judge,
– to evaluate,
– to approve (or disapprove) the other's statement.

The main barrier to the interpersonal communication is our tendency to react before any statement with an evaluation of it from our point of view.

Is there any way to avoid this barrier?

According to Rogers there are two substantial elements that can help us to recognize and legitimize the other person: Profound listening and empathy, which means to perceive the uniqueness of the other and the effort of recreate him/her within myself (Rogers 1987). Profound listening avoids this "evaluative" tendency: If I can listen to what he can tell me or understand its personal meaning for him, then I will be releasing potent forces of change in him.

Empathy: It means to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other's person point of view, to sense how he feels, to achieve his frame of reference regarding the topic/thing he is talking about. Empathy allows us to be with the "other". Empathy can be just a word, just mean listening, or it can be an exceedingly intense attempt to capture or understand the inner world of the person you're dealing with all the nuances of feeling and meaning and so on which are real for him or her. It constitutes a way of communicating in which the "receiver" put his perception of reality aside, to highlight the experience and perceptions of the "sender" within himself (Capurso 2004).

Once we are able to see the other's point of view, our comments and ideas about the other person are revised and change drastically. We are able to recognize the other. "Differences are minimized and those that remain are rational and understandable" (Rogers 1987).

The recognition of the other, the differentness and dignity as a renounce of my own judgement about the other, is key to the constitution of my own subjectivity and the others'. This makes relationships possible between one self and the others, and it is the necessary foundation to an intersubjectivity detached from the domain (Ceragioli 2012).

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