The Ethics of Recognition in International Political Theory

Anna Geis

The Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory
Edited by Chris Brown and Robyn Eckersley

Print Publication Date: Mar 2018
Subject: Political Science, Political Theory, International Relations
Online Publication Date: Apr 2018 DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198746928.013.44

Abstract and Keywords

Studies on recognition in international politics deal with the (de-)legitimation of specific actors and the political dynamics of inclusion/exclusion in international society. Misrecognition, which actors experience as humiliation, disrespect, or false representations of their identity, is seen as a major cause of political resistance. This chapter first outlines the emerging body of literature on recognition in international relations. The following sections focus on three politicized issue areas in contemporary conflict settings: the struggles for (status) recognition by so-called “emerging powers”; the recognition processes that occur through negotiations with terrorist groups; and the recognition of individuals as victims in violent conflicts. The final section discusses the pitfalls of the normatively loaded concept of “recognition” in many of these studies. While (mis)recognition is certainly a key concept with which to understand the central dynamics of social and political conflicts, a generous politics of recognition cannot provide a panacea to all of these ills.

Keywords: recognition, misrecognition, identity, emerging powers, violent non-state actors, transitional justice

EXPERIENCING recognition in quite different contexts of their private and public life is essential for all human beings. “Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe other people. It is a vital human need” (Taylor 1994: 26). “Recognition” is an evaluative term that involves judgements about meaning and worth. It is also a relational concept because (mutual) recognition is regarded as a prerequisite for successful identity formation and beneficial social interactions. Judging by the sheer amount of literature, recognition is a prominent term in several disciplines such as social philosophy, psychology, sociology and international law. Political “struggles for recognition” (Honneth 1995) have also attracted increasing levels of attention from empirical political science and in peace and conflict studies. Misrecognition, which individuals or collective actors experience as humiliation, disrespect, or false representations of their identity, is seen as a major cause of political resistance, and as significant in the escalation of potentially violent conflicts.

“Recognition” is a fuzzy term that is used quite differently by authors and speakers. Far from being exhaustive, Ikäheimo and Laitinen (2011: 8–10) discern three usages, the boundaries of which are not always clear-cut: first, the term can be used as synonymous with “identification”; secondly, as roughly synonymously with “acknowledgment,” which implies having “evaluative or normative entities or facts as its objects, so that we can acknowledge something as valuable, as valid, as giving reasons, and so forth” (Ikäheimo and Laitinen 2011: 8, emphasis original). The third usage is most prominent in Hegel-inspired accounts of recognition and refers to interpersonal recognition, as exemplified by the works of Axel Honneth.

How useful is the application of recognition-based perspectives in international politics in the twenty-first century? The relevance of the topic in International (p. 613) Political Theory (IPT) and empirical International Relations (IR) research is likely to increase: debates in both sub-disciplines have shown that the social fabric of today’s globalizing world is marked by the pluralization of institutions and actors that “count” and by the contestation of norms on the global, regional, and local level. The liberal world order is seen as being in crisis (Dunne and Flockhart 2013). Both the rise of non-Western powers and transnational violent non-state actors indicate the fragility of Western hegemony. Ethical issues on how to deal with cultural diversity—the pluralization of norms and values—will thus not vanish from the agenda but prove to be persistent challenges (cf. Brown 2000). Who deserves recognition and respect for what, by whom and why? Whose identity claims and struggles for recognition are justified and on what grounds? Which actors “count”? The institutionalized international order will be characterized by a further politicization of such issues (Heins 2010: 154–8).

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, the emerging body of literature on recognition in IR is briefly outlined. This is followed by a discussion of three issue areas of recognition-related research, the relevance of which will probably increase in the future. Since individuals, groups, and states struggle for recognition in politics, these three basic types of actors will be considered separately in more detail. The section on recognition in real-world politics demonstrates that studies on “recognition” in international and transnational politics can hardly be accused of abstract normative theorizing about some utopian state of affairs, but that most of the existing work draws from or contributes to empirical research (O’Neill and Smith 2012; Hayden and Schick 2016). The final section discusses the pitfalls of the overly optimistic and normatively loaded concept of “recognition” in many of these studies. While (mis)recognition is certainly a key concept with which to understand the central dynamics of social and political conflicts, a generous politics of recognition cannot provide a panacea to all of these ills.

Taking “Recognition” Beyond the Domestic Sphere of Societies

The most intensive debates on “recognition” have taken place in Social Philosophy and Political Theory, starting in the late 1980s and 1990s. The increase in different forms of “identity politics” and “struggles for recognition” by minorities and social movements in multicultural liberal societies at that time stimulated theorizing about these diversified political phenomena (e.g. Fraser 1997; Fraser and Honneth 2003; Taylor 1994). Recognition of a specific identity, of rights, or a certain status has been regarded as one of the goals of (new) social movements organized around class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, or language. Social theorists have thus conceptualized recognition as a means of realizing broader normative goals such as emancipation, dignity, justice, and equality (Iser 2013).

(p. 614) Drawing partly on Hegelian theoretical ideas[1] and partly on empirical studies from evolutionary psychology, recognition theorists conceive of recognition by other individuals or by society as a vital human need (Ikäheimo 2009). It is only when an individual is appreciated for having certain qualities that (s)he will be able to develop self-esteem as well as an “intact” personal identity (Taylor 1994: 26–37). With regard to society, recognition operates as a mechanism that constitutes a normative status (of equals) and allots rights and duties within a society (Fraser 2000; Honneth 1995; 2012). Accordingly, acts of misrecognition constitute acts of injustice in that they violate personal integrity and impede people from becoming full members of a social collective. Experiences of misrecognition can provoke strong responses, including violent resistance, on the part of affected individuals or social groups.

Axel Honneth’s influential studies on the key role of “recognition” are often cited as a reference for recognition-related works in IR and IPT (Haacke 2005: 191–4). Honneth conceives of capitalist societies as institutionalized recognition orders, and differentiates three spheres of recognition: *love* focuses on persons as needy human beings, *respect* focuses on the legal recognition of persons as bearers of equal rights (and duties), and *social esteem* is derived from a person’s achievement and “value” within capitalist society. Honneth pleads for locating “the core of all experiences of injustice in the withdrawal of social recognition, in the phenomena of humiliation and disrespect” (Fraser and Honneth 2003: 134). These two basic modes of misrecognition are also taken up in IR/IPT works on recognition.

It has taken rather long for scholars of IR to explore in more detail the extent to which these concepts could be transferred to the international realm. Of course, recognition as a diplomatic act between states is a very prominent issue in international law and also of central concern for IR scholars, but the more diffuse social phenomena of (mis)recognition that could also include non-state actors relate to much more than such formal acts (Heins 2010: 166).[2]

Since recognition is closely linked to the formation of individual or group identities, it is especially appealing to social constructivists seeking to adapt recognition-related concepts for the analysis of international politics, as Erik Ringmar (1996; 2002) and Alexander Wendt (2003) demonstrated years ago. One of the main questions in recognition-related IR studies is whether and how the misrecognition of states or other collective actors promotes violent conflict and, vice versa, whether and how recognition fosters peaceful relations. Desire for recognition can take different shapes: Wendt (2003: 511–12) introduced the notion of "thin" and "thick" recognition, and it has been developed further by other authors (Allan and Keller 2012; Strömbom 2014; Gustafsson 2016).

The increasing number of studies such as these demonstrates not only that state governments escalate violent conflicts out of "brute" power politics or economic gains but that "softer" factors which structure social interactions in an international recognition order must be taken more seriously (see e.g. Lindemann and Ringmar 2012; Brincat 2014; Daase et al. 2015). According to Richard Ned Lebow (2008), the struggle for standing and prestige of (putatively) "inferior" powers or of "rising" powers in the (p. 615) regional or international system of states is a permanent feature of international politics and one of the causes of war. Thomas Lindemann (2010; 2014) investigates how the claim for "hubristic identities," the denial of equality, or the misrecognition of justified demands cause conflicts to escalate. Reinhard Wolf (2011; 2014) argues that attaining social respect is an important goal in international politics, and the non-recognition of social status can lead to serious conflict and even war. While introducing the normative concept of recognition, which is linked to "progressive" goals such as justice and emancipation in political theory, enables IR researchers to gain new insights into conflict dynamics, researchers need to be aware of the strategic use of recognition and the strategic value of reputation in international power struggles (cf. Lindemann 2012: 221).

Increasing Struggles for Recognition in Real-World Politics

Studies on recognition in international politics deal with the (de-)legitimation of specific actors and the political dynamics of inclusion/exclusion in international society (Bartelson 2013; Onuf 2013). Recognition in real-world politics is a gradual process, i.e. empirical research is required in order to grasp this fuzzy concept. Recognition and non-recognition occur in complex and entangled forms, and constitute two poles on a continuum of policies and outcomes, ranging from highly formalized to very informal modes of recognition. This notion of gradual recognition implies that recognition is not only granted or withheld between actors of equal status but also within asymmetric power relations (Daase et al. 2015).

This section briefly discusses three politicized issue areas that focus on different types of actors in contemporary conflict settings: the first issue area concerns the struggles for (status) recognition by so-called "emerging powers," the second focuses on negotiations

that have taken place with terrorist groups, and the third concentrates on the recognition of individuals as victims in violent conflicts.

Contestation of Liberal Hegemony: The Quest for Status Recognition

States are formal equals: the idea of "sovereign equals" has shaped international law since the end of the Second World War. However, the reality of international society shows that some states are more equal than others. The era of liberal hegemony following the end of the Cold War has been marked by normative changes that promoted human rights and democracy as indicators of legitimate statehood, and by political practices through which democratic states arrogated to themselves privileges in international politics (Geis 2013). Within their institutionalized communities such as NATO and the (p. 616) European Union or their informal "clubs" such as the G7/G8 (Gronau 2016), democratic states recognize each other as fellow liberals constituting a "community of values," and tend to withhold such a positive moral evaluation from "outsiders" (Williams 2001). Narratives traveling from academia to the practical realm such as "democratic peace" (Geis et al. 2013) or "normative power Europe" (Whitman 2011) provide academic legitimacy for reproducing benign identity conceptions of democracies as the moral superiors of international society. "Democracy" has become the standard of civilization of states in the twenty-first century (Hobson 2015: 198–200).

However, such self-congratulatory narratives of superior democracies and liberal norms and values are increasingly being challenged and contested by numerous "others." A general feature of social orders is that they are not static, uncontested sets of norms and rules. Each normative order faces challenges and challengers, and self-proclaimed or appointed guardians of an order engage in ordering practices through (non-)recognition. More recently, narratives of the "return" of "authoritarian great powers" such as Russia and China and the "rise" of regional "emerging powers" such as Brazil, South Africa, and India have added a new twist to liberal world ordering practices. Debates on global power transitions and the potential decline of "the West" raise the basic issue of who governs the world—and of who *should* govern it. The social hierarchy of a transforming international society results in new dynamics of quests for status recognition by specific powers. The experiences of centuries of brutal colonial subjugation (Fanon 2005), of contemporary unjust global governance arrangements, patronizing development aid, and the military dominance of liberal democracies led many actors from the global South to articulate the lack of respect they receive from actors in the global North, and the absence of opportunities for equal participation in global institutions (Dübgen 2012; Nel 2010). Feelings of disrespect or even humiliation are possible not only in interpersonal relations but also in relations between states represented by individuals. This is not to say that states have emotions, but that individuals (inter)acting in their name can feel disrespected and misrecognized and can express anger or frustration (Wolf 2011: 118–20; see Chapter 45). Emerging powers in the global South struggle for two types of recognition:

> firstly, recognition in the form of *respect* for developing countries in terms of full and equal membership and participation in multilateral institutions in general. [. . .] secondly, in the form of *esteem* for the specific and idiosyncratic developmental needs of developing countries [. . .]. These two forms of recognition are constitutive of the self-respect and the self-esteem that state agency in the society of states ultimately depends upon.
>
> (Nel 2010: 955, emphasis added)

While the emerging (democratic) powers Brazil, South Africa, and India are regarded with fewer reservations by the liberal democracies of the North and West, the scenarios for relations with China and Russia are far more ambiguous, and even include the potential for military conflict. Both great powers are considered to be especially concerned about their status and the social respect they feel entitled to (Forsberg et al. 2014). The concept of status recognition is linked to a subjective evaluation of the self about the (p. 617) respect one thinks one "deserves"; one expects this attitude of social respect then to be shown by the way others treat us (Wolf 2011: 112; see Chapter 27).

China's rapid economic growth, the size of its territory and population, its status as one of the P5 in the UN Security Council, and its possession of nuclear weapons render China a great power; but the ancient civilization has experienced a long history of violent subjugation, humiliation, and exclusion from clubs of "civilized" states (Ringmar 2015: 53–9). China's enduring ideological differences with Western powers, domestic narratives of past victimization, the status of Taiwan, and maritime territorial disputes with its neighbouring countries indicate insecurity about China's status ambitions (cf. Wolf 2014). There are rising anxieties among the Chinese elite and the population about a loss of status; these concerns were fuelled by an emphasis on humiliation in narratives of China's self-identity, promoted by a "patriotic education" campaign (Gustafsson 2016: 628–9).

Russia's status concerns are perceived as even more unsettling from a Western perspective. On the one hand, contemporary Russia is a "familiar" actor for "the West" and a part of Europe—on the other hand, it has remained an "other" to Europe that is met with suspicion and could turn into a threat (Neumann 1998; Forsberg et al. 2014: 266). Russia's military interventions in the former Soviet Union's territories and in Syria and the annexation of the Crimea indicate that Russia is also willing to use force in order to back up its status claims as a great power. "The idea of greatpowerness is understood as forming the core of Russia's state identity throughout centuries, including what we can observe today" (Forsberg 2014: 323).

The end of the Cold War clearly divided the protagonists into winners and losers: "the West" celebrated the triumph of democracy and liberalism and succeeded in enlarging the membership of NATO and the European Union and its liberal communities, whereas the Soviet Union, a former superpower, collapsed, and communism declined worldwide. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, famously described the demise of the Soviet Union as one of the major geopolitical disasters of the twentieth century. Although Russia has been included into governance arrangements that "count," the country's leaders perceive

Russia as denied the high social rank it deserves in international society. They claim that they are continuously humiliated by “the West,” threatened by NATO’s eastern enlargement, and alienated by its military actions (Forsberg 2014). The point here is not to assess the extent to which such perceptions are accurate or justified, but to include such subjective perceptions and demands for status recognition in analyses of conflict escalation.

The Recognition of Violent Non-state Actors: Negotiating with Terrorists

The pluralization of non-state actors in contemporary international society includes a differentiation of violent actors that claim to fight for the rights of marginalized groups or for a completely different world order (see Chapter 18). The proliferation of armed (p. 618) groups confronts ever more governments with the ethical question of whether negotiations with groups labelled as “terrorists” are justifiable. Negotiating implies gradual steps of recognizing and legitimizing the counterpart. Talking to terrorists is risky (Miller 2011; Toros 2012). In successful cases, violent non-state actors can be transformed into non-violent political parties, and the legitimate goals of such groups are incorporated into state policy; in unsuccessful cases, violent groups can radicalize again, and this can lead governments to be perceived as weak and susceptible to blackmailing. Negotiating with terrorist groups contravenes the ethical core beliefs of elites and those of populations.

Hence, many governments deny in public that they negotiate with groups they have labelled “terrorists” (Toros 2008). Empirical research on the end of terrorism, however, shows that nearly 20 per cent of terrorist groups have entered negotiations, usually secretly (Cronin 2009: 35–72). Successful talks with terrorist groups are always fragile, and depend on a number of conditions such as the mutual discursive reframing of the conflict parties, specific leadership structures within the groups, the careful separation of negotiable goals from non-negotiable issues, a mutual perception of a “stalemate” in the conflict, and accepted mediators (Zartman 2009; Goerzig 2010).

The complex role of recognition in dealing with terrorist groups (whether domestic “ethnopolitical,” revolutionary groups or transnational “religious” networks) merits far more attention by researchers, but this sensitive empirical field is also difficult to access. Terrorism is sometimes presented as a “weapon of the weak” in asymmetric conflicts, which refers to the role of misrecognition. The rise of transnational Islamist terrorist networks forces many actors to position themselves with regards to these issues. One important question is under what conditions feelings of disrespect and humiliation lead to a radicalization of a non-state group (Clément 2014) or, vice versa, whether gradual recognition can result in deradicalization (Biene and Daase 2015).

Recognition of political actors often occurs in gradual steps, and is not necessarily an intended result but an eventual outcome of negotiations. In order to grasp such different degrees of “recognition *as*,” Biene and Daase (2015: 223–5) suggest the identification of several “recognition events.” They assume that non-state actors can seek recognition

strategically so that the gradual granting of recognition could influence their strategic options: the first step is “thin” recognition as a party to the conflict. This is relevant, since states often try to deny the existence of a conflict or to delegitimize violent non-state actors. The next step is acceptance as a participant in *informal* talks, indicating their relevance in the present and the future for the successful management of the conflict. The third step is the invitation to participate in *formal* talks. This move signals that “the state government acknowledges not only the existence and status of the non-state actor, but also the possibility that it might have legitimate claims to bring to the table” (Biene and Daase 2015: 224). A final degree of recognition is realized if a non-state actor is recognized as a political authority, as a legitimate representative of a collective with the capacity to enforce binding decisions.

The history of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), of the Irish political party Sinn Féin, the recurring international demands to include the Taliban officially in (p. 619) peace talks in Afghanistan, and the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC–EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People’s Army) are just a few examples that show negotiations with actors that have been depicted as abhorrent enemies or as “evil” do take place. The distrust that they often continue to experience is but a weak indicator of the painful ethical choices political actors face in real-world politics. Many actors usually have strong reservations about granting ex-combatants “thick recognition,” which means that “each party needs to understand the Other in terms of essential elements composing its identity” (Allan and Keller 2012: 77). A majority of victims of violence by non-state actors often struggle for recognition as well.

The Recognition of Victims in Transitional Justice Processes

“Dealing with the past,” establishing a new (more democratic) post-violence regime, and promoting reconciliation among conflict parties require mechanisms of retributive and restorative justice (see Chapter 12) that involve several dimensions of recognition, in particular the recognition of victims, their suffering in the past, and their agency in the future. While the earlier debate on transitional justice focused on the tensions between peace-building and implementing justice, greater concern has been focused on the needs and rights of the victims since the mid-2000s (van Boven 2013). What some authors today describe as a “victims-turn” in transitional justice (García-Godos 2016: 350) is embedded in a broader normative development concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

Why do individuals (or groups) want to be recognized as “victims”? The very label “victim” is ambivalent, since it has the capacity to stigmatize and empower at the same time. However, there is a striking absence of “the victim” as a political actor in transitional justice literature (García-Godos 2016: 357–8): “victimhood” invokes notions of suffering but also of passivity, a lack of agency. The institutionalization of international criminal justice and the professionalization of transitional justice since the 1990s include an increasing international acknowledgment of the *status* of victims, awarding them more rights to directly participate in trials and to claim reparations. The UN General Assembly and the

UN Commission on Human Rights endorsed several important documents in 2005 on reparation and impunity principles that acknowledge special rights for victims in violent conflicts, such as the right to know, the right to justice, and the right to reparation as well as guarantees of non-recurrence (van Boven 2013: 21). This normative trend towards "reparative justice," however, is more impressive in the way it is spelled out in international documents than in the reality of violent (post-)conflict settings.

The recognition of individual rights and a certain status is an important dimension in acknowledging a victim's suffering but also her/his ability to regain agency, for example, as a participant in trials and as a rightful claimant to material compensation. Apart (p. 620) from this, victims of war crimes struggle for the restoration of their dignity as human beings, an aspect they were denied completely during the violent conflict (Haldemann 2008: 679). It is thus important to create opportunities for them to tell their individual stories and to make their experiences visible in society. Their participation as witnesses in criminal trials or in truth and reconciliation commission hearings has often been assessed as an inadequate form of acknowledgment, so that further innovations in transitional justice practices are advisable.[3] Symbolic forms of recognition of victims should also be offered by the perpetrators or those who are authorized to speak in their name (Haldemann 2009: 726–7). Public apologies by state officials who acknowledge the suffering of the victims, the responsibility for the crimes committed, and the political nature of these crimes are risky speech acts—they can have very positive effects in transitional justice, but public apologies can also be rejected by victims if such apologies are perceived as strategically motivated.

Among the types of recognition discussed here, the moral recognition of victims of international crimes might appear as the least controversial from a normative point of view. However, critical studies in transitional justice have pointed out that normative ambiguities also emerge in this field: the binary categories of "victims" and "perpetrators" have questionable essentializing labelling and ordering effects that can hamper reconciliation efforts (Renner 2013). In addition, one can often observe the discursive constitution of "good victims" who deserve recognition and reparation and "bad victims" who are considered undeserving and whose suffering is rendered invisible. This discrimination is usually a result of the interests of the ruling political elites: several transitional justice regimes (e.g. Algeria, Argentina, Chile, Colombia) demonstrate these exclusionary effects in that victims of non-state violent actors (e.g. those of Colombia's FARC–EP) are granted recognition, whereas victims of repressive state violence are disrespected or simply ignored (Humphrey 2013).

Conclusion: The Dark Sides of Recognition

Recognition studies offer useful theoretical and analytical frameworks for the investigation of the psychological needs of actors and their social embeddedness in (hierarchical) communities/societies. Empirical studies of humiliation and disrespect help to explain political resistance and the escalation of violent conflicts. Normative recognition theories

address social practices which are central to moral inquiry, and explicate the conditions that would be needed for more just institutions and emancipatory practices (Iser 2013). Transferring the social concept of recognition to international politics has inspired a growing number of studies in IPT/IR that are well connected with real-world politics—as this chapter has sought to show.

Viewing the social world through a "recognition lens" has many merits, and will certainly inspire further studies in IPT/IR, but employing the concept of recognition also (p. 621) entails some pitfalls that warrant further reflection: many studies on struggles for recognition have focused on identity issues. With regard to the domestic sphere of capitalist societies, Nancy Fraser (2000: 107) has rightly criticized such a narrow conceptualization as displacing the important issue of material redistribution and leading to a reification of group identities.

So far, there is also a tendency in IPT/IR to focus more closely on identity issues than on redistribution issues (but see Heins 2010 or Nel 2010). Those researchers who provide case studies on state identities in order to demonstrate the effects of misrecognition in international politics face a similar problem to that indicated by Fraser. If one studies "misrecognition"—when actors believe that their state is being recognized in a way that is not in line with how they see their state's particular identity (Gustafsson 2016: 617)—an assumption is made that a state has a form of identity that can be represented in an accurate and adequate manner. However, it is well known that collective identities are never homogeneous or uncontested (Duncombe 2016: 626). A similar problem occurs when studying radicalized non-state actors and their non-recognition. If Islamist terrorist groups engage in the discursive construction of a global war between "the West" and "the Muslim world," then another variant of essentializing and homogenizing collective identity constructions is in play (Clément 2014: 435). Researchers therefore need to be cautious with regard to the manner in which they relate themselves to their objects of study.

Which claims for recognition are normatively justified is a controversial political question, since not all such claims—e.g. group rights, cultural peculiarities, "inflated" identities, or status ambitions—"deserve" recognition. Empirically, the criteria for the (il)legitimacy of claims and struggles have differed across societies and have changed throughout history, also in terms of their normative content. In addition, actors can use claims for recognition strategically, employing the positive denotation of the term in order to cloak more mundane goals such as attaining hegemony. Again, violent non-state actors can also engage in such practices—for example, by advancing recognition claims on behalf of specific groups in order to gain control of these groups (Clément 2014: 431).

The term "recognition" is part of a semantic field that is shaped by other positive terms such as respect, love, care, (self-)esteem, status, prestige, or honour, and it suggests a certain reciprocity and a positive evaluation (Iser 2013; Onuf 2013). While the positive effects that recognition often has should certainly be acknowledged, "recognition" is an ambiguous concept in politics, and far more empirical research is needed on it in the field of international politics (Daase et al. 2015). Paradoxical as it may sound, recognition can al-

so lead to misrecognition, and sometimes actors might not even be aware that this is occurring. Post-structuralist and post-colonial theorizing has criticized modes of domination and the dynamics of processes of inclusion/exclusion generated by recognition politics. The recognition of a social group by the dominant, hegemonic culture of a society can also imply its "assimilation" and conformism with ruling ideologies, as authors such as Franz Fanon, Louis Althusser, and Jean-Paul Sartre have argued. The result can be misrecognition of the self or reification of a fixed and putative identity, instead of liberation or progress. Hence, recognition is also a technology of social (p. 622) differentiation that establishes layers of legitimacy and social hierarchies (Markell 2003; Iser 2013).

A final remark on the self-recognition of "the West" and global power asymmetries is due: Western self-representations have created benign narratives such as "democratic peace," "forces for good," or "normative power Europe." How resonant are such self-representations in the eyes of the "others"? In reviewing the recent literature for this contribution, it is striking how many state actors from the "global South" and violent non-state actors articulate being disrespected by "the West" or specific Western powers; some even speak of humiliation. This is, of course, not a new complaint—but its relevance will increase again. It is a crucial ethical question for all, not just in academia, to relate to such articulations. The liberal world order in transition will be shaped by ever-new struggles for recognition and a renewed politicization of cultural diversity. Most actors within "the West" might feel *misrecognized* by such malign representations and will also engage in their own quests for recognition. Paul Ricoeur reminded us that struggles for recognition can become an infinite, insatiable demand: "When, we may ask, does a subject deem him- or herself to be truly recognized?" (Ricoeur 2005: 217).

References

Allan, P., and A. Keller (2012). Is a Just Peace Possible without Thin and Thick Recognition? In T. Lindemann and E. Ringmar (eds), *The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers), 71–86.

Bartelson, J. (2013). Three Concepts of Recognition. *International Theory* 5(1): 107–29.

Biene, J., and C. Daase (2015). Gradual Recognition: Curbing Non-state Violence in Asymmetric Conflicts. In C. Daase, A. Geis, C. Fehl, and G. Kolliarakis (eds), *Recognition in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 220–36.

Boven, T. van (2013). Victim-Oriented Perspectives: Rights and Realities. In T. Bonacker and C. Safferling (eds), *Victims of International Crimes* (The Hague: Asser Press), 17–27.

Brincat, S. (2014). Recognition, Conflict and the Problem of Ethical Community. *Global Discourse* 4(4): 397–408.

Brown, C. (2000). Cultural Diversity and Political Theory. *Review of International Studies* 26(2): 199–213.

Clarke, J. (2016). Transitional Justice as Recognition: An Analysis of the Women's Court in Sarajevo. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 10(1): 67–87.

(p. 623) Clément, M. (2014). Al-Muhajiroun in the United Kingdom: The Role of International Non-recognition in Heightened Radicalization Dynamics. *Global Discourse* 4(4): 428–43.

Cronin, A. K. (2009). *How Terrorism Ends* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Daase, C., C. Fehl, A. Geis, and G. Kolliarakis (eds) (2015). *Recognition in International Relations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Dübgen, F. (2012). Africa Humiliated? Misrecognition in Development Aid. *Res Publica* 18(1): 65–77.

Duncombe, C. (2016). Representation, Recognition and Foreign Policy in the Iran–US Relationship. *European Journal of International Relations* 22(3): 622–45.

Dunne, T., and T. Flockhart (eds) (2013). *Liberal World Orders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Fabry, M. (2010). *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Fanon, F. (2005). *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove/Atlantic Press).

Forsberg, T. (2014). Status Conflicts between Russia and the West: Perceptions and Emotional Biases. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47(3–4): 323–31.

Forsberg, T., R. Heller, and R. Wolf (2014). Introduction: Status and Emotions in Russian Foreign Policy. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47(3–4): 261–8.

Fraser, N. (2000). Rethinking Recognition. *New Left Review* 3 (May/June): 107–20.

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

García-Godos, J. (2016). Victims in Focus. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 10(2): 350–8.

Geis, A. (2013). The "Concert of Democracies": Why Some States Are More Equal than Others. *International Politics* 50(2): 257–77.

Geis, A., H. Müller, and N. Schörnig (eds) (2013). *The Militant Face of Democracy. Liberal Forces for Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Goerzig, C. (2010). *Talking to Terrorists* (Abingdon: Routledge).

Gronau, J. (2016). Signaling Legitimacy: Self-legitimation by the G8 and the G20 in Times of Competitive Multilateralism. *World Political Science* 12(1): 107–45.

Gustafsson, K. (2016). Routinized Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations. *Review of International Studies* 42(4): 613–33.

Haacke, J. (2005). The Frankfurt School and International Relations: On the Centrality of Recognition. *Review of International Studies* 31(1): 181–4.

Haldemann, F. (2008). Another Kind of Justice: Transitional Justice as Recognition. *Cornell International Law Journal* 41(3): 675–737.

Hayden, P., and K. Schick (eds) (2016). *Recognition and Global Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Heins, V. (2010). Of Persons and Peoples: Internationalizing the Critical Theory of Recognition. *Contemporary Political Theory* 9(2): 149–70.

Hobson, C. (2015). *The Rise of Democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press).

Honneth, A. (1995). *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity).

Honneth, A. (2012). *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (Cambridge: Polity).

Humphrey, M. (2013). The Individualising and Universalising Discourse of Law. In T. Bonacker and C. Safferling (eds), *Victims of International Crimes* (The Hague: Asser Press), 67–89.

(p. 624) Ikäheimo, H. (2009). A Vital Human Need: Recognition as Inclusion in Personhood. *European Journal of Political Theory* 8(1): 31–45.

Ikäheimo, H., and A. Laitinen (2011). Recognition and Social Ontology. In H. Ikäheimo and A. Laitinen, *Recognition and Social Ontology* (Leiden, Boston: Brill), 1–21.

Iser, M. (2013). Recognition. In E. N. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [Online; accessed 21 Apr. 2017.] **http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/recognition/**

Lebow, R. N. (2008). *Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Lindemann, T. (2010). *Causes of War: The Struggle for Recognition* (London: ECPR Press).

Lindemann, T. (2014). Interest, Passion, (Non)recognition, and Wars: A Conceptual Essay. *Global Discourse* 4(4): 483–96.

Lindemann, T., and E. Ringmar (eds) (2012). *The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers).

Markell, P. (2003). *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

Miller, C. (2011). Is It Possible and Preferable to Negotiate with Terrorists? *Defence Studies* 11(1): 145–85.

Nel, P. (2010). Redistribution *and* Recognition: What Emerging Regional Powers Want. *Review of International Studies* 36(4): 951–74.

Neumann, I. (1998). Russia as Europe's Other. *Journal of Area Studies* 6(12): 26–73.

O'Neill, S., and N. H. Smith (eds) (2012). *Recognition Theory as Social Research: Investigating the Dynamics of Social Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Onuf, N. (2013). Recognition and the Constitution of Epochal Change. *International Relations* 27(2): 121–40.

Renner, J. (2013). *Discourse, Normative Change and the Quest for Reconciliation in Global Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).

Ricoeur, P. (2005). *The Course of Recognition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press).

Ringmar, E. (1996). *Identity, Interest, and Action: A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's intervention in the Thirty Year's War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Ringmar, E. (2002). The Recognition Game: Soviet Russia against the West. *Cooperation & Conflict* 37(2): 115–36.

Ringmar, E. (2015). China's Place in Four Recognition Regimes. In C. Daase, C. Fehl, A. Geis, and G. Kolliarakis (eds), *Recognition in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 49–67.

Strömbom, L. (2014). Thick Recognition: Advancing Theory on Identity Change in Intractable Conflicts. *European Journal of International Relations* 20(1): 168–91.

Taylor, C. (1994). The Politics of Recognition. In A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 25–74.

Toros, H. (2008). "We Don't Negotiate with Terrorists!" Legitimacy and Complexity in Terrorist Conflicts. *Security Dialogue* 39(4): 407–26.

Toros, H. (2012). *Terrorism, Talking and Transformation: A Critical Approach* (Abingdon: Routledge).

Wendt, A. (2003). Why a World State Is Inevitable. *European Journal of International Relations* 9(4): 491–542.

Whitman, R. (ed.) (2011). *Normative Power Europe: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Williams, M. C. (2001). The Discipline of the Democratic Peace. *European Journal of International Relations* 7(4): 525–53.

(p. 625) Wolf, R. (2011). Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition. *International Theory* 3(1): 105–42.

Wolf, R. (2014). Rising Powers, Status Ambitions, and the Need to Reassure. *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7(2): 185–219.

Zartman, W. (2009). *Negotiating with Terrorists: A Mediator's Guide* (Laxenburg: IIASA Policy Brief).

Notes:

(1.) Hegel's dialectic of master and slave developed in 1807 in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is one major source for the philosophical foundation of recognition theories (e.g. Markell 2003: 90–122).

(2.) This contribution does not deal with formal recognition between states. See e.g. Fabry (2010).

(3.) A case in point is the Women's Court in Sarajevo, held in 2015 (see Clarke 2016).

Anna Geis

Anna Geis is Professor of International Security and Conflict Studies in the Institute of International Politics at Helmut-Schmidt-Universität/University of the Federal Armed Forces, Hamburg.