Redistribution and Recognition Within the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Theory of Justice as it Pertains to the Palestinian Citizens of Israel

Ivan Panchenko

While there has been ample exploration of the relationship between Israel and its predominantly Arab neighbor states since Israel’s founding in 1948, there has been relatively little discussion of the daily lives of the Palestinian citizens of Israel and their relationship with the Israeli government. This paper considers that relationship in light of two competing theories of social justice based, respectively, on the writings of Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth. Both theorists approach social justice from different analytical perspectives and aim to address both the causes of injustice and possible solutions. Through the experience of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, it will be shown that the two theories can be reconciled, and a unified framework incorporating both will be proposed.

In 1948, the Israeli Provisional State Council, the predecessor of the Israeli Parliament known today as the Knesset, included the following premise in the Israeli Independence Charter: the state would “uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race, and sex.” However, the relationship between the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the Israeli government since 1948 has shown that the promise made in the Independence Charter is applied much more readily to Jewish citizens than to the Palestinian minority. For the Palestinian citizens of Israel, “the personal, familial,

---

communal, economic, and cultural rupture was indeed extreme." Many Palestinians effectively became refugees in their own country as the legal policies enacted by the Israeli government robbed many of their lands and homes.

What has become known as the Arab-Israeli conflict—a term used more generally to apply to the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors as well as Palestinians both inside and outside of Israel—has been analyzed countless times. However, I seek to analyze the conflict from two seemingly incompatible frameworks of a just society, that of Nancy Fraser's "perspectival dualism" and that of Axel Honneth's "normative monism." Beginning with a general discussion of their theories, I will then explore the experience of the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the policies and actions of the Israeli government and populace. Of specific importance will be the effect of the 1948 war and the subsequent policy decisions made by the Israeli government. I will then follow the presentation of the facts with an analysis from the perspective of both Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth. Finally, I will argue that despite their differences, the two frameworks can be integrated to properly address the distributive injustices that Fraser identifies and the human suffering that Honneth seeks to rectify. Thus, in the end, in consideration of what each theory offers, I will suggest a more unified variant of a Critical Theory of justice.

Nancy Fraser and "Perspectival Dualism"

In her essay "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation," Nancy Fraser promotes a framework of "perspectival dualism"—an integrative concept that examines both distribution and recognition—for evaluating issues of social justice. Fraser writes that, while most theorists reduce claims of justice to either distribution or

---

2 Kawla Abu-Bakr and Dan Rabinowitz, *Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 44.
recognition, this is a faulty separation of two interpenetrating concepts. It is often observable that groups seemingly at either end of the distribution-recognition spectrum can be found to be suffering from injustice in both regards. Thus, prevailing over injustice requires examination of both aspects: "no redistribution without recognition [...] no recognition without redistribution."3

Unlike Charles Taylor and other theorists who are focused on recognition as a necessary part of self-realization, Nancy Fraser approaches recognition from a perspective of justice rather than ethics: "it is unjust that some individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequences of institutionalized patterns of cultural value."4 Recognition is viewed in terms of a social status model, which, Fraser writes, has various advantages over the ethical self-realization model promoted by other critical theorists. First, the status model allows for justifications of claims for recognition that are not based on conceptions of "the good life" but rather on notions of justice that may be acceptable to various actors with different definitions of "the good." Secondly, the status model is concerned with recognition as a function of social relations rather than the psychology of individuals. This allows claims for recognition to be evaluated from the perspective of a group's ability to fully and equally participate in society. Fraser's model "accepts that misrecognition can have [...] ethical-psychological effects [...] but it maintains that the wrongness of misrecognition does not depend on the presence of such effects."5 Thirdly, the status model avoids presuming that everyone has an intrinsic right to appreciation of his or her values or experiences. Instead, there is a focus on the ability of everyone to pursue such esteem under equal conditions. Fraser suggests that remedies for misrecognition depend on the case at hand. If common humanity were denied, a universal remedy along the

4 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 29.
5 Ibid., 32.
lines of the politics of difference would be required. In the case of a denial of difference, the remedy should focus on the uniqueness of the individual or group, which is representative of a politics of difference. "In every case," writes Fraser, "the remedy should be tailored to the harm." 

Fraser's argument hinges on the concept of participatory parity, defined as the ability of individuals or groups (of adults) to interact socially as peers. This includes the objective condition—economic distribution that creates independence and voice—and the intersubjective condition—social institutions that ensure equality in gaining social esteem and that express respect for all participants. Fraser uses the idea of participatory parity as a framework for judging the validity of claims of injustice: valid claims will show that the established structures preclude a group or individual from equal participation. However, "there is no wholly transparent perspicuous sign that accompanies participatory parity, announcing its arrival for all to see." Thus, the ideal should be applied dialogically through a democratic process. This is especially important in the case of the Israeli state, which is nominally a parliamentary democracy.

**Axel Honneth, Identity, and Normative Monism**

In the essay "Redistribution as Recognition," Axel Honneth promotes the concept of normative monism, in which distributive issues are subsumed within claims for recognition. Honneth argues that the use of recognition as the basis for a normative analytical framework is based on insight gained into the sources of social suffering, which seem to result from misrecognition and the consequent injustices that arise as a result of misrecognition. Honneth's argument is based largely on the idea that recognition is necessary for the self-realization of individuals and groups, a direct contrast to the status model.

---

6 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 46.
7 Ibid., 43.
promoted by Nancy Fraser. In order to better understand Honneth's argument, it seems necessary to explore the roots of the relationship between recognition and identity.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Georg Hegel explores the idea of recognition, the process by which two people, in recognizing each other, attain objective self-consciousness. Alone, driven by the desire of self-preservation, man has a subjective knowledge of his own existence, but objectivity can only be found in recognition by another: "self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or recognized." In order to ascertain a level of self-consciousness beyond the material reality of the human body, another, the Other, is necessary. In a meeting between two beings desiring recognition, Hegel envisions an inevitable struggle, as both participants fight to have their interpretation of existence recognized while refusing to recognize the view of the Other. However, the desire for self-preservation stops one of the participants. Thus is formed the dichotomy of Master, the victor in the struggle, and Slave, the loser. The story does not end here, of course, but the important points have been established: objective self-consciousness requires, without exception, recognition by another self-consciousness, by another human being.

In his essay "Multiculturalism," Charles Taylor writes about the link between recognition and identity, with identity representing one's understanding of their own human worth, the fundamental framework of his or her existence. "Our identity," writes Taylor, "is partly shaped by recognition or its absence... and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves." Thus,

---

misrecognition or non-recognition can have grievous effects on the identity-formation process of a person or group. This idea seems especially important in a relationship of superiority-inferiority. For example, when a dominant group considers another group to be inferior, the cultural images produced by the dominant group will reflect this perception. The internalization of these images by the subordinate group may lead, in Taylor's conception, to a debilitating self-deprecation that prevents positive self-realization. Once again, the importance of the dialogical formation of identity—in relationships and dialogue with others rather than on one's own—is highlighted.

For his part, Honneth promotes a tripartite concept of justice, which involves love, law, and achievement. Love refers to a recognition of another's need for love and affection, and Honneth bases his discussion of love on insights gained from the nurturing and socialization of children by their parents and the relationship constituted by marriage. Law, quite clearly, refers to the recognition of subjects' legal equality. Lastly, the principle of achievement is based on measurement of subjects' accomplishments. These three spheres of recognition, according to Honneth, form self-consciousness about the legitimacy of one's needs, the right to equal legal autonomy, and the possession of valuable talents, respectively. In contrast to Nancy Fraser, Axel Honneth argues that questions of distribution can be evaluated via the latter principles of legal equality and social achievement or esteem. Distribution as recognition can take the form of "[calls] for the application of social rights that guarantee every member of society a minimum of essential goods regardless of achievement" or a redefinition of some tasks as a "different" type of achievement heretofore ignored by dominant value structures.10 Thus, the basis for social conflict—"what motivates individuals or social groups to call the prevailing social order into question and to engage in practical resistance [-] is the moral conviction that, with respect to their own situations or

10 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 152-53.
particularities, the recognition principles considered legitimate are incorrectly or inadequately applied.”

Honneth subscribes to a conception of recognition similar to that of Taylor; his model is based on the concept of recognition as necessary for self-development and realization, which is separated into two categories: the socialization of the individual and the just society. Honneth argues that “every human subject depends essentially on a context of forms of social interaction governed by normative principles of mutual recognition.”12 The strong dependence on recognition implies that misrecognition or non-recognition can have very damaging consequences on the identity-formation process. Thus, the just society is one that secures mutual recognition within the three spheres discussed previously for all subjects. Only in this manner can the identity-formation process proceed unhindered by a lack of recognition.

The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel

After the founding of the Israeli state in 1948 and the subsequent war between Israel and the Arab states, the Palestinians who remained in Israel formed a distinct minority within the Israeli polity. Despite granting citizenship—including the right to vote and be elected to the Knesset, the Israeli parliament—to the Palestinians who qualified under Israeli Citizenship Laws, the government “subjected [these citizens] to a host of dominating practices.”13 These dominating practices included confiscation of land and property for use by Jewish immigrants, the inequitable processes by which the Israeli state crafted policies regarding the Palestinian minority, deliberate repression of Palestinian political agency and ability to participate in the political arena, and an attempt to eradicate the Palestinian historical narrative while creating a biased Jewish-Israeli narrative. While these categories are not meant to define all forms of injustice faced by the

12 Ibid., 173.
13 Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz 2005, 43.
Palestinian citizens of Israel, they are meant to serve as specific examples of a broad spectrum of injustice and suffering.

One of the most complicated issues at hand is the Israeli government’s appropriation of land during and after the 1948 war that led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. During the later stages of the 1948 war, when it was becoming clear that the Israeli army would defeat its Arab challengers, the Israeli Defense Forces began to conquer land within the Palestinian Mandate, the boundaries of which were created by the United Nations after World War I. By war’s end, over 750,000 Palestinians had become refugees and those that remained numbered only 160,000, less than twenty percent of the territory’s original inhabitants.\(^1\) The urban middle class had been decimated, and many of the Palestinians who remained were often landless, uneducated peasants. Despite remaining within the territories of the Mandate, however, the displaced Palestinians were rarely allowed to return to the homes that they had left behind. The most prominent restriction created by the Israeli government was the Absentee Property Law of 1950. Having appropriated the land of refugees that had fled to the Arab states surrounding Israel, the government used the Absentee Property Law to confiscate the land of many Palestinians who had left their homes but were still living within the boundaries of Israel. By definition, an absentee could be any Palestinian who had left their home between November 29, 1947 and September 1, 1948, even if that person had subsequently returned. This “provided for the legal dispossession of those Palestinian citizens of Israel who had never left the newly created state,” despite the Israeli government’s grant of citizenship to those people.\(^2\) Regardless of their reasons for leaving, these Palestinians were classified “present absentees,” and their property was categorized as abandoned and controlled by the custodian of absentees’ property, an Israeli government official. In combination with the

\(^1\) Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz 2005, 35.

\(^2\) Masalha 2003, 156.
Absentee Property Law of 1950, the Law of Return, which serves as Israel's chief citizenship law, restricted Palestinian rights to citizenship while allowing any Jew, regardless of his or her birthplace to become and Israeli citizen. This law provides another example of an attempt to eradicate the link between the Palestinian minority and their former territorial home.

Another facet of Israeli government control over the Palestinian minority after the founding of the Israeli state was the inclusion of “special departments within the Ministries of Education, Welfare, Interior, and Religious Affairs, which purported to cater to the ‘particular needs’ of the Palestinian community.” These special departments were designed with semantic paternalism, casting the Palestinian minority as less developed than the Jewish minority. The various goals of these ministries generally included the modernization and progress of the Palestinians. This classified the Palestinians as a more primitive group of people in need of aid from the Jewish majority in order to become similarly “well developed.” It also further hampered Palestinian agency in that the services provided by the ruling Labor Party necessitated some collaboration on the part of would-be Palestinian leaders, creating “a deep dependency of whole Palestinian communities on the party.” Genuine empowerment and equality were systematically repressed through this process of dependency and cooptation. Political marginalization was aided by the sector of decision-makers responsible for policies that pertained to the Palestinian minority. Instead of relying on input from Palestinian representatives, the Israeli government policies were designed by supposed “experts” in the field of Arab affairs, experts who were most likely to have been trained by the military and secret service organizations. The views of these policy-makers, cultivated in their training, prompted a view of the Palestinians as a threat to the Israeli state and led to stagnation that further hindered genuine change: “instead of looking for positive solutions, this


17 Ibid., 66.
approach reifies old security concerns, perpetuating a hegemonic policy of majority control of the [minority]."

The generation of survivors of the 1948 war were hindered further by a lack of political agency. Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz write that while political awareness “was indeed diverse and rich,” political agency “was choked by external circumstances.” The general preoccupation of many Palestinians remaining in Israel was survival: finding food for families, acquiring a job, maintaining an income, etc. Combined with the military government’s harsh restrictions on the Palestinian minority—including the detention of Palestinians in specific, though arbitrarily defined, areas, grants of civil power for the military, and government control over permits necessary for travel, construction, and family unification—the goal of survival proved to deteriorate Palestinian political agency. Further, Palestinians are politically marginalized within the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. Having extended the right to be elected to all citizens, the Israeli governments, formed by ruling coalitions within the system of proportional representation by which members of the Knesset are elected, refused to include the Palestinian representative that were elected in any significant way. The sole example of inclusion—the Rabin government of 1992—that included Palestinian representatives in a ruling coalition refused to assign them to meaningful cabinet positions, choosing rather to concede larger shares of the state budget for the purposes of education, housing, and general infrastructure in Palestinian communities. The government, however, continuously ignored “the deeper needs of Palestinians counterparts to articulate alternative narratives, express pain, and seek genuine change in Israel’s power structure.”

One policy designed to further destroy the links between the Palestinian minority and what they considered to be their home in

---

19 Ibid., 52.
20 Ibid., 88.
the former Palestinian Mandate was based on what was essentially a semantic difference. Instead of referring to these citizens as Palestinian Arabs, the government introduced the nomenclature of "Israeli Arabs" or "Arabs of Israel." Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz argue that this "intentionally misrecognized the group's affinity with and linkage to Palestine as a territorial home." Further, the qualifier "Israeli" implies the primacy of the nation of Israel over the minority Arab population; the Arabs are defined by their Israeli citizenship rather than by their Palestinian identity. Thus, having been literally dispossessed by the Israeli government, the Palestinian Arabs found that their historical narrative and claims to the land were being erased from dialogue being held by a state that had been essentially forced upon them: "the determination with which the Israeli military moved during the hostilities of 1948 to chase the Palestinians off their land was reflected in the persistence with which Israeli historiography attempted to obliterate the presence of pre-1948 Palestinians from the physical landscape and from collective memory." Further, government restrictions on education and the political activism of teachers were "incorporated wholesale into the Israeli legal code... [causing] Palestinians to realize that the education system was used to eradicate their national, cultural, and historic identity in an attempt to depoliticize them." Despite its promises in the Independence Charter, it is clear that the goal of the Israeli government was not ensure equality of the Palestinian narrative and but to diminish or even destroy it.

For many Israelis, the "notion that the land they see as theirs is the national home and cultural cradle of others is anathema to them, one that breeds amnesia and denial." Consistent with their desire to eradicate the Palestinian historical narrative, the Israeli government also shaped its own narrative, creating an apolitical range of institutions that existed beyond the criticism of

21 Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz 2005, 43.
22 Ibid., 58.
23 Ibid., 55.
24 Ibid., 44.
the polity. The Labor party, the Knesset, state agencies and the judiciary formed the backbone of this system, and “were fondly viewed by many Israelis as irreproachable.”

The part that these institutions played in the Israeli narrative led to the depoliticization of the interests that they served. Despite defeating its Arab neighbors in four wars between 1948 and 1973, the Israeli government portrayed themselves as the weaker party, surrounded by enemies that were determined to destroy their state. Further, while stifling the Palestinian minority in Israel, the state was represented as a “progressive, peace-seeking entity stretching a reconciliatory hand to the Arabs only to have it inexplicably rejected.”

Analysis

For Fraser, the Absentee Property Law of 1950 is a case of maldistribution that is reinforced by a basis of non-recognition or status subordination. The law “[pertains] to both dimensions of justice, distribution and recognition, where it is liable to serve […] as a vehicle of […] subordination.” Thus, this law, which was created nominally to provide land for the government to distribute to large numbers of incoming Jewish immigrants, served to create a distributive pattern that prevents the Palestinian citizens of Israel from achieving participatory parity with their Jewish counterparts. The objective condition of participatory parity—an amount of economic, and in this case, resource distribution necessary for independence and voice in the public sphere—is unfulfilled. However, the dispossession of the Palestinians is also an example of non-recognition on the part of the Israeli government, found in the Law of Return, the Jewish citizenship law. By giving Jews, regardless of place of birth, the right to become citizens of Israel while, at the same time, preventing Palestinians who had fled into territory controlled by Israel’s opposition in the 1948 war, the Law of Return was “a

26 Ibid., 72.
27 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 220.
simple yet effective legal ploy [...] to annul the inherent right to citizenship normally granted to individuals born within a given territory." Thus, the intersubjective condition—institutionalized patterns of value that provide the opportunity for achieving equality of esteem—is violated. This status model, in which Jews, as an ethnic group, have a right to the "Land of Israel," while Palestinians, former residents and current citizens of the Israeli state, are denied this or similar rights, devalues the Palestinian minority and prevents their equal participation as peers. The Absentee Property Law and the Law of Return thus represent the institutionalization of both a distributive model and a status model wherein Palestinians, despite having been the majority in the territorial Mandate before 1948, were not given the right to reclaim their land by a series of regulations created by the Israeli government.

Recall that for Honneth, the struggle for redistribution can take place on two general levels: an application of social rights guaranteeing minimal distributive equality or by fighting for a redefinition of what one has accomplished as worthy of esteem and, therefore, of larger resource distribution. The former appeals to the sphere of legal equality, the latter to the sphere of social achievement or esteem. Honneth argues that "subjects or groups see themselves as disrespected in certain aspects of their capacities or characteristics because [...] the institutional practice of a legitimate principle of recognition unjustifiably fails to reflects these dispositions." On one hand, then, the situation is unjust because the Israeli government and the Jewish majority are unwilling to deliver the respect expected by Palestinian citizens with regard to their social right to an equal quantity of resources as promised within the Israeli Independence Charter. The hegemonic value structures in the Zionist ideology, which "[portray] Israel as a personification of the Jewish Diaspora" left little room for granting equal respect to the Palestinian minority.

29 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 157.
Is Honneth correct in stating that these forms of misrecognition have affected the identity-formation process of the Palestinian citizens of Israel? It appears so. Masalha writes that “the land for [the remaining Palestinians] was a means of livelihood, a symbol of identity, survival and security in the face of the 1948 exodus and dispersal of their compatriots [...making] land expropriation [...] the most significant aspect of the policy of deprivation pursued by Israel against this minority.” If the possession of land is part of the process of identity for the Palestinians as argued by Masalha, then the expropriation of land by the Israeli government may—and probably does—affect the identity-formation process through a devaluation of the Palestinian historical narrative and its claims to the territory known after 1948 as the state of Israel.

An exploration of the development of Israeli government policies and the repression of Palestinian political agency also touches upon a multifaceted interpenetration between distribution and recognition. The positions of decision-making, as noted, are distributed only to Jewish government officials, with Palestinians unable to affect any real change to their own condition. Again, this lack of equal or even proportional distribution fails the objective condition of participatory parity, assuming, of course, that positions of power are something that can be distributed by the government in the way of other resources. Moreover, the training of these policy-makers is such that they tend to misrecognize the Palestinian minority either as a demographic threat to the integrity of the Israeli state or as an innately primitive group of people, creating various levels of status subordination that further prevents participatory parity. It can be assumed, as was discussed in the section regarding the Palestinian narrative, that this and other assumptions generally go unchallenged by the majority of the Jewish citizens of Israel. As was seen in the discussion of Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu-Baker, problems of distribution plagued the agency of the

---

Palestinian citizens of Israel after the 1948 war. The desire for survival more than any other consumed many remaining Palestinians due to the inequitable distribution of resources, especially land. As survival became less of a pressing issue and Palestinians began to seek election in the Knesset, status subordination via a lack of recognition began to be another block to participatory parity. Allowed to be elected and to vehemently rage against the Israeli government during Knesset sessions, Palestinians were, unsurprisingly, not brought into positions of power by any ruling coalitions and their views seemed to generally be disregarded, even by the Rabin cabinet of 1992, which actually relied on an alliance with Palestinian parties to maintain a majority. Within the Knesset, members who represented Palestinian parties were clearly considered by their Israeli counterparts to be second-tier representatives, whose views were not viewed as worthy of consideration. Their membership in the Knesset seemed to act simply as a façade of democracy without granting them the necessary tools for true participatory parity.

With regard to the process of policy-making and the repression of Palestinian political agency, Axel Honneth’s spheres of legal equality and social esteem once again enter into the discussion. Within the discussion of both policy-making and political agency, “what is demanded by appeal to the equality principle if the elimination of obstacles or disadvantages relating to a social group’s cultural characteristics such that they put its members at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the majority.”31 The bodies given the power to make policies on behalf of the Palestinian population are composed of Jewish Israelis. Within the Knesset, Palestinian members are disrespected and generally shunned by ruling coalitions. In both cases, despite promises of legal equality in the Independence Charter, the Israeli government has instead delivered policies and programs that engender disrespect and misrecognition of the Palestinian minority. By casting the

31 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 163.
Palestinians as primitive or underdeveloped, by allowing the idea of the Palestinians as a demographic threat to permeate to the point that it is rarely challenged by Jewish Israelis, the Israeli government becomes guilty of creating the very obstacles that cast the whole of the Palestinian people at a disadvantage.

Finally, the disregard for and seeming attempt to eliminate the Palestinian historical narrative while at the same time attempting to create an unquestionable narrative of Israeli right and superiority fits into Fraser's model as a failure of the intersubjective condition of participatory parity. As Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker note, the linguistic usage of "Israeli Arabs" as the popular nomenclature for Palestinian citizens of Israel involves a drastic reconstruction of the historical narrative of the Palestinians, defining their existence by their inclusion in the state of Israel rather than by their historical claims to a land of Palestine. Fueled by what Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker describe as the denial of much of the Jewish majority and by the policies of the government in such fields as education, the non-recognition of the Palestinian narrative clearly creates a status hierarchy with the Jewish narrative taking primacy over any other. This is undoubtedly one of the causes of the dispossession of the Palestinian citizens, the unilateral way in which policies regarding the Palestinian minority are formed, and the repression of political agency. Further, in creating a depoliticized narrative of their own, the Jewish majority further restricts any discussion of the validity of other narratives and the formation of participatory parity for their Palestinian counterparts.

As has been shown in the work of Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, after 1948, both the Israeli government and society repressed the Palestinian historical narrative that laid claim to the territory comprising the newly founded state of Israel. The repression of a historical narrative, the repression of a collective Israeli conception of what Palestinians refer to as Al Nakbah—The Catastrophe—can be assessed via Honneth's principle of equality. Further, Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker suggest that one way in
which the government can change their policies toward the Palestinian minority is “[by affording] formal recognition of the Palestinian Nakbah, thus legitimizing the sense of grief that still engulfs those who lost relatives, livelihood, and property in 1948, and who have endured the deprivation and humiliation of displacement since.”32 This is an appeal to a collective right to be treated equally, and, in the case of the Palestinians, to have their narrative considered among others as part of the history of a nation that was ostensibly forced upon them. The level of humiliation and grief that the two authors refer to exists within the social suffering that Honneth’s ethical model attempts to analyze. It is this grief and humiliation—and the rupture of the Palestinian culture in 1948—that have altered the recognition order in what was once Palestine. Justice depends, for Honneth, on conditions of equality such that the characteristics and history of the Palestinians do not disadvantage them vis-à-vis the Jewish majority.

**Conclusion: Perspectival Dualism, Normative Monism, or an Integrated Framework?**

Through various distributive policies and modes of non-recognition or misrecognition, it seems clear that the treatment of the Palestinians by the Israeli government and the Jewish majority has been, contrary to their promises in the Independence Charter, unequal. The question remains, however, whether either theory explored earlier is better positioned to not only critically assess the injustices suffered by the Palestinians but also injustices on a broader scale.

Fraser bases her model on the ideal goal of participatory parity, which suffers from “an unavoidable circularity... claims for recognition can only be justified under conditions of participatory parity, [the conditions for which] include reciprocal

Fraser seems to dismiss this circularity in promoting the application of the standard of participatory parity discursively throughout public debate in order to reshape the guidelines by which such debates are held. The necessity of reciprocal recognition finds home, too, in Axel Honneth's ideal just society, which provides the safeguards for mutual recognition as a necessary part of intact identity-formation of the members of society. However, his tripartite conception of justice requires a transformative reconfiguration of many existing systems of value and the institution of true social equality. Is the debate over a Critical Theory of justice then doomed to remain stagnant between a position like that of Fraser—which is pragmatic at the risk of eschewing the ethical and psychological substance that Honneth argues for—and that of Axel Honneth—which may be less nominally pragmatic but is based on analyses of social suffering and the causes thereof?

Nancy Fraser rightly states that “it is doubtful that any society is simply a recognition order” and it is arguable that Honneth’s theory of recognition is not best suited for analyzing some distributive matters. For example, Fraser notes that Honneth’s theory shifts the focus from the societal arrangements that cause a situation in which one person may be suffering from total deprivation while another may be prospering marvelously “to the self, implanting an excessively personalized sense of injury.” In the case of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, for example, Axel Honneth’s theory provides important conclusions about the impact of non-recognition, but seems to be less capable than Fraser’s theory in dealing with the concept of distribution. Because distribution and recognition both play large roles in the situation of the Palestinian citizens of Israel with regard to the inequitable distribution of resources they suffer from, it is difficult to imagine that increased recognition of their national narrative, for example, will automatically afford them a more

33 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 44.
34 Ibid., 214.
35 Ibid., 204.
equitable distribution of resources. Rather, equitable distribution must be addressed as one part of the problem, in concert with a concept of recognition in order to rectify the injustice faced by the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Honneth seems to do a better job of situating a discussion of the legal principle of equality and its importance in matters of recognition: “the subjective rights we grant one another by virtue of the constitutional state reflect which claims we together hold to require state guarantees in order to protect the autonomy of every individual […] if subjective rights express the ways in which we regard one another as members of a democratic legal community entitled to autonomy, then their concession of denial must play a decisive role in subjective feelings about one’s status in society.”36 The interactive dimension—one might say, the participatory dimension—of the process by which rights are guaranteed by the state clearly plays in integral role in the formation of identity and in the notion of status, with which Fraser is concerned. The examination of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, the philosophy of Hegel and the work of theorists such as Charles Taylor, Franz Fanon, and Simone De Beauvoir, reinforces the suggestions that recognition is necessary to an intact identity-formation process. Thus, where Fraser’s theory seems to do a better job of addressing distributive matters, Honneth’s theory is more acute in dealing with the suffering caused by misrecognition and non-recognition. It is important to note that Honneth believes that “one can always appeal for a particular relative difference by applying a general principle of mutual recognition, which normatively compels an expansion of the existing relations of recognition.”37 Thus, his framework subsumes not only status inequality as described by Nancy Fraser, but also suffering that has not been politicized. Honneth’s attempt to find the roots of this suffering are more convincing

36 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 252.
37 Ibid., 152.
than Fraser’s. For this reason, his theory of recognition may be better suited to analyze human suffering.

Rather than being a point of stagnation, the question for theorists is whether two such opposing theories can be reconciled. My suggestion is as follows: to integrate the ethical basis of Axel Honneth’s framework into the “perspectival dualism” structure created by Nancy Fraser. This integration should be possible because of an important similarity between the discourses. Honneth’s concept of a just society and the ideal of participatory parity are similar in that they “agree that the goal of social justice must be understood as the creation of social relations in which subjects are included as full members in the sense that they can publicly uphold and practice their lifestyles without shame or humiliation.” Fraser admits the necessity of mutual recognition for participatory parity and Honneth sees mutual recognition as integral to the process of identity formation. Honneth proposes that the two ways by which progress occurs is “individualization and social inclusion: either new parts of the personality are opened up to mutual recognition, so that the extent of socially confirmed individuality rises; or more persons are included into existing recognition relations, so that the circle of subjects who recognize one another grows.” In both individualization and social inclusion, a concept of increased participatory parity can be inferred. Without defending the semantics of either author, it seems plausible that increased participatory parity as applied to debates about debates and the increased participatory parity found in Honneth’s two modes of progress are truly similar, if not identical. Participatory parity serves as a means and an end for Fraser, and it also seems to serve as a means for Honneth, with the end defined by intact identity-formation. Thus, it seems as if the two goals—participatory parity and intact identity-formation—are not irreconcilable; under conditions of true and

38 Fraser and Honneth 2003, 259.
39 Ibid., 186.
equal participatory parity, it seems reasonable to conclude that the identity-formation process would progress unhindered.

An integrated framework of a Critical Theory of justice is, therefore, plausible. It can be hypothesized that a just society is one that guarantees Fraser’s objective condition of material resources distribution, which enables voice and participatory parity, and promotes an intersubjective condition of intact identity-formation, of which participatory parity can be considered both an integral part and an eventual outcome. The final goal of this framework, pace Fraser, is participatory parity, which implies a fulfillment of both conditions. Honneth’s two modes of progress can be seen as increases in participatory parity, which, in turn, will lead to a broadening of horizons such that systems that institutionalize maldistribution and modes of misrecognition and non-recognition that engender human suffering will undergo more and more criticism, propelling society toward a greater degree of freedom and justice, toward greater levels of participation and even greater levels of critique. Instead of succumbing to what seemed to be a vicious circle of participatory parity described by Fraser, hope dawns in the form of Honneth’s two modes of progress within the recognition order. Individualization and social inclusion increase participatory parity, which increases mutual recognition of different individuals or parts of individuals, which increases participatory parity, ad infinitum. The ultimate result is a society in which there is an egalitarian—or proportional—distribution of resources, where mutual recognition within Honneth’s three spheres has both come about as a result of—and helped to institute a more just process of—participation and interaction.
Bibliography


