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Division of labour in Durkheim, Marx and Honneth

Contributions to a political economy of recognition

Divisão do trabalho em Durkheim, Marx e Honneth

Contribuições para uma economia política de reconhecimento

División del trabajo en Durkheim, Marx y Honneth

Aportes a una economía política de reconocimiento

 Luiz Gustavo da Cunha de Souza¹

Abstract: This paper presents a discussion on how the concept of the division of labour within society appears in the work of Émile Durkheim, of Karl Marx, and of Axel Honneth. Historically, that notion has been related to Durkheim's *De la division du travail social*, but it was also a subject to which Marx and, more recently, Honneth directed their attention. In highlighting how those three authors conceptualise the division of labour, this paper intends to show that all of them, with their respective particularities, conceive modern societies as a normative order based on the principle of mutual recognition, which for its part is expressed in the historical process of the division of labour.

Keywords: Division of labour; Émile Durkheim; Karl Marx; Axel Honneth; Recognition.

Resumo: Este artigo discute como a ideia de divisão do trabalho social aparece nas obras de Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx e Axel Honneth. Historicamente, este conceito é associado ao sociólogo francês, mas também Marx e Honneth se referem a este tema e às suas implicações para as sociedades modernas. Ao ressaltar o modo como cada um destes três autores trata da questão, o artigo procura demonstrar que, apesar de suas diferenças, tanto em Durkheim quanto em Marx e Honneth é possível encontrar traços de uma concepção das sociedades modernas como uma ordem normativa na qual o princípio de reconhecimento recíproco, expresso no processo histórico de divisão do trabalho social, desempenha um papel central.

Palavras-chave: Divisão do trabalho social; Émile Durkheim; Karl Marx; Axel Honneth; Reconhecimento.

Resumen: Este artículo discute cómo la idea de división del trabajo social aparece en las obras de Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx y Axel Honneth. Históricamente, este

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concepto está asociado al sociólogo francés, pero también Marx y Honneth se refieren a este tema y a sus implicaciones para las sociedades modernas. Al resaltar el modo en que cada uno de estos tres autores trata de la cuestión, el artículo intenta demostrar que, a pesar de sus diferencias, tanto en Durkheim como en Marx y Honneth, es posible encontrar rasgos de una concepción de las sociedades modernas como un orden normativo en el que el principio de reconocimiento recíproco, expresado en el proceso histórico de división del trabajo social, desempeña un papel central.

Palabras clave: División del trabajo social; Émile Durkheim; Karl Marx; Axel Honneth; Reconocimiento.

Introduction

Émile Durkheim's *The division of labour in society* (Durkheim, 2010) may be considered the first work of academic sociology. By the time it was first published, in 1892, Karl Marx had been already dead for almost ten years and Max Weber had already published his first works. Nonetheless, it was the Frenchman's doctoral thesis that was designed as the opening work of a newly established discipline provided with epistemological autonomy (Ortiz, 1989). So the issue, the historical changes in the process of division of labour, was addressed as a subject that could provide *sociological* insight into sociology's main subject, society. This is why Durkheim does not claim that he was the first to establish such subject matter as an academic issue: he rather acknowledges that Adam Smith first observed it; yet, Smith observed that fact from the viewpoint of the principle that gave occasion to it, namely the human natural propensity to "truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another" (Smith, 1999 [1776], p. 117). As a consequence of that feature of human nature, the division of labour provides "the great multiplication of the productions of all different arts" (Smith, 1999 [1776], p. 115), for its characteristic trait is that it generates an increase of the productive powers of labour, which in a well-governed society turns into universal opulence (Smith, 1999 [1776], p. 115).¹ Now, for Durkheim, the necessity of the division of labour is not a law limited to economics alone: It applies as well to living organisms, as an evolutive law towards specialisation of vital functions, and – this is most relevant here – to societies as well (Durkheim, 2010, p. 3). Yet, contrary to political economists like Smith, Durkheim asserts that creating civilisation is not enough to describe the division of labour as a historical necessity for mankind, since civilisation

¹ For an account on Smith's role as a leading figure to the practical-philosophical establishment of the market, see Herzog (2013; 2018).

does not possess a moral value in itself. Hence, the function of that process must be sought as a quest for its very reason to be, *as a moral fact* (Durkheim, 2010, p. 19).

In this article, I will discuss three different approaches to the moral fact of the division of labour, namely those of Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Axel Honneth. What interests me particularly is how each one of these – certainly diverse – perspectives on the division of labour and its effects result in a specific, albeit to some extent indirect account of relations of mutual recognition. Furthermore, I am also interested in discussing the possibility of understanding those perspectives on reciprocal relations as models of political economy centred around the concept of recognition. In order to do that, the article is divided in three sections, broadly dedicated to each one of those authors. So, in the first part (1) I show that Durkheim's lectures on the civic and contractual morals (Durkheim, 2016a) present a further, more complex elaboration of his views on organic solidarity compared to those in *The division of labour*; on section two (2) I take two different accounts of the division of labour presented in Marx's works, namely his ruthless critique of that process as exposed mainly in *Capital* (Marx, 1962 [1890]), and a more subtle presentation present mainly on his *Comments on James Mill* (Marx, 1968), in order to show that there is a difference in the way he understands mutual satisfaction as commodity exchange and mutual satisfaction as reciprocal recognition; finally, on section three (3) I show how Honneth's work has moved from an account of the plasticity of labour within a theory of the struggle for recognition to a more sociological account of it, thus providing room for that which, in a brief conclusion, I shall define as a political economy of recognition.

Durkheim: from organic solidarity to the individualistic state

Durkheim sees the division of labour as a way of investigating the moral consequences of the growing complexity within modern societies. The problem, however, is not to affirm from some externally constructed moral point of view, whether such division of labour should or should not happen, but rather which effects it has over human societies, and how it relates to necessities of the social organism. Here it is necessary to note that Durkheim conceived 'society' as a living phenomenon, a whole that is not formed by the mere sum of individuals; to him, society has to be understood as a system that represents a specific reality² with its own characteristics, and the result of

² Bauman (2005) points out that to Durkheim, contrary to other thinkers, society is a reality rather than an analogy to communal life of different levels.

the coming together of individual minds is a psychic individuality of a new species (Durkheim, 2007, p. 105). This implies a conception according to which societies are organisms with their own necessities. Thus, the problem regarding the division of labour in society is to determine which necessities are fulfilled by it. If societies are *sui generis* organisms, if they possess a specific social and a specific moral order, those specific orders have to be made possible by the effects of the division of labour, for the latter made possible the very existence of modern society. Accordingly, the division of labour creates societies that can only achieve stability and reproduce themselves through a set of values that are specific to them and must also be created through the division of labour. That is why it has to generate a specific bond between its members, a feeling that can only result from that very division of labour: the feeling of solidarity. Solidarity, as resulting from the division of labour, should not be taken as anything like empathy; it means rather the force that bonds highly specialised parts of modern societies as a unity. Therefore, its moral function is precisely to guarantee cohesion within society, hence the latter's very existence (Durkheim, 2010, p. 30).

But there is a second trace of such solidarity that is even more relevant. Solidarity not only reinforces social bonds between atomised individuals: The division of labour also presupposes that two or more human beings are mutually dependent (Durkheim, 2010, p. 27-28). Hence, its moral value lies also in that only through the kind of solidarity generated by labour's division mutual dependence can be successfully overcome – and being successful means that the resulting effect is cohesive for society. Once the very cause of the division of labour is understood as human incompleteness, the core of the social solidarity resulting from it is dual: on the one hand, one acknowledges her own dependence towards others, but on the other hand, one also must see as her task to work towards the satisfaction of the other's needs. Hence, exchange propitiated by the division of labour disguises a mediated satisfaction of individual's mutual dependence. One's productive activity, according to this, is developed as a form of reciprocity for the other's productive activity. Therefore, not only the implicit recognition of other's needs, but also of a mediated horizon of experiences is a result of the division of labour.

Exemplary of Durkheim's concerns about the implicit recognition of others as addressees of one's action is his treatment of the anomic forms of division of labour. According to him, among the greatest threats to the division of labour are its excessive development and the lack of coordination between specialised activities, both of which result in social disintegration (Durkheim, 2010, p. 367). Of course, he does not believe that harmony of interests will

necessarily result from the division of labour, although the occurrence of this process allows the emergence of a kind of solidarity that is based on the construction of a horizon of complementary activities. In this sense, the division of labour rather allows for a form of intersubjective recognition. Instead of finding themselves in a condition, in which due to the lesser extent of the division of labour they feel directly connected to the social whole – the condition in which their solidarity is rather similar to the blind mechanism that governs inorganic bodies, since they do not live as particular individuals, but as parts of a mechanism (Durkheim, 2010, p. 107) – individuals relate to each other in a deeper sense, as the division of labour evolves (Durkheim, 2010, p. 88). And this has deeper implications than the pure acknowledgement of their interdependence: Once the division of labour extends, that new, organic solidarity takes form, for in this social order of specialisation, functional differentiations are directly tied to the personal ability to perform such functions, resulting in an increase in individual autonomy (Durkheim, 2010, p. 109). So, in the course of the historical process of the division of labour, the individual personality has become a central element of social life, or in the Frenchman's vocabulary, it emerges a cult for the human dignity (Durkheim, 2010, p. 155).

However, it is not the process of division of labour alone that can be excessive, thus reversing its expected moral outcomes. There are system of ideas, such as economic Utilitarianism, that picture modern society, that is, market-based capitalism, as nothing more than a large mechanism of production and exchange (Durkheim, 2016b, p. 41). This is why creating and maintaining the unity resulting from the specialised forms of cooperation represents an additional task, and indeed one that requires a special organ. That task is to highlight the shared horizon of values, in which humans move, and that organ envisioned by Durkheim with its realisation is the state.

Moving forward from the evolutionary picture presented in *The division of labour in society*, Durkheim was confronted with the task of explaining how exactly the development of interdependence could also result in the establishment of individuality as the core value of modern societies. At the same time, he sees himself compelled to explain such development without opposing it to the emergence of the modern state, precisely because the latter also gained importance throughout the historical process. Consequently, he intends to show that the institution of individual rights is actually due to the state (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 80). Although such a statement must seem oddly trivial at first sight, Durkheim's usage of it hides the idea that the establishment of subjective rights can only occur because the very idea of individuality was

lent a sacred status thanks to the effects of the division of labour.³ Thus, the state does not attribute natural rights to its citizens because they are naturally entitled to them; it rather elaborates and establishes them *as an ideal*. To the purposes followed in this paper, this is especially important, in as far as it shows that Durkheim evolved from a functionalist explanation of the division of labour to a different one, namely, one that highlights its normative value as a foundation to modern societies.

In as far as civic morals are defined by Durkheim as the rules that coordinate the relations from individuals to state, and from state to individuals, that first organ has not only the ability, but also the task to act in the name of society (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 68). The state appears as an administrative organ, within which representations are elaborated and later flown into society. But that also means that the state must possess an openness to the heteronomy of social representations that correspond to the psychic life representations diffused within society; furthermore, it must have an intrinsic capacity to self-consciously steer society through such heteronomy (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 70). In a sense, the state is an organ more capable of deciding for society what is best for her; on the other hand, during the establishment of the historical process of division of labour, society has already established as an ideal, a sacred cult, that, which matters most for her: Individuality. So, the State is actually the organ, whose task is to provide a proper connection between individuals and the end, which allows them to be what they are, namely, a community of mutually dependent and mutually satisfying individual persons.

Since society generates the ideal of individuality (Durkheim, 2016b, p. 61), the fundamental task of its self-conscious steering organ is to liberate individual personalities (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 87), and this is why Durkheim talks about a state that is at once individualistic, without being an institution devoted to negative freedom, and wide, without being mystically associated with transcendental Reason (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 89). Rather, the very existence of the state and the norms inhabiting it are a result of an interplay of cultural, political and economic values that are legitimated from below.⁴

³ For the idea that the use of symbols and values, that is, evaluative symbolism, retains the ability to create sacred images of secular beliefs, see Hans-Peter Müller (1988, p. 144). His interpretation seems to be corroborated, when compared to a passage of *Individualism and the intellectuals*, where Durkheim affirms that the new religion of humanity addresses the faithful in a similar way to that of the religions it replaced (2016b, p. 47-48).

⁴ According to Müller (1988, p. 141), contrary to Marx' or Max Weber's theories of state legitimacy, the Durkheimian model of civic morals as a sacred form implies an interplay between the levels of culture, institutions, and individual: legitimacy of the Durkheimian state is not considered from the viewpoint of the system then, but from that of the actors (also Müller, 1988, p. 132).

But since political societies are divided in a governing organ and a mass of governed people, who legitimate the former, that means that the state is open to communication with the rest of society, so that it is able to engulf and organise the representations present on it (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 118). Therefore, because it is the political form that more closely conforms to the social ideal of individuality, democracy appears to Durkheim as the *social character* of modern societies (Durkheim, 2016a, p. 125-126). It is precisely because Durkheim sees democracy as such a character that relates to the ideal of individuality as socially mediated interdependence, that one could read his writings on civic morals as a more complex contribution to a political economy of reciprocal recognition: instead of merely asserting functional interdependence, in those lectures the Frenchman asserts a normative trait to the division of labour that is at the same time functional and political.

Marx: between class struggle and cooperation?

Contrary to Durkheim, there is no proper theory of the division of labour in Marx's work. His comments on the matter, although numerous, do not elevate it to level of a systematic subject. Yet, it is a central concept to his understanding of the capitalistic mode of production. Indeed, in *Capital*, Marx affirms that the condition for commodity production within capitalism is the division of labour. Nevertheless, he does not limit his account of the division of labour to its effects over the productive forces: Since commodity appears as the core of capitalism, Marx wants to understand the division of labour from the viewpoint of its relations to commodity production. So, contrary to Smith or Durkheim, he sees that specialisation of production turns into commodity production *only* if the product of one's labour meets the product of another individual, who is also *autonomous* and *independent* of the former,⁵ i.e., if those products of labour meet as exchangeable use values. Hence, the division of labour within the capitalist mode of production gives rise to a system of commodity producers (Marx, 1962 [1890], p. 57). In this scheme, the division of labour becomes the mechanism of commodity production once the products of labour leave the workplace and not at the moment subjects meet each other, or even when they become interdependent, as in Durkheim. That is, by the way, Marx's main challenge to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon in *The poverty of philosophy*, for, to Marx, the latter understand the division of labour as a

⁵ The emphasis is mine. The original sentence (Marx, 1962 [1890], p. 57) is roughly translated as: "Only the products of autonomous and mutually independent private workers confront each other as commodities" (*Nur Produkte selbständiger und von einander unabhängiger Privatarbeiter treten einander als Waren gegenüber*).

product of human agreement that is not determined by the subjects situation as commodities themselves (Marx, 1977, p. 68). And as it is made clear by this last point, the problem with the division of labour is that it does not primarily satisfies human necessities: If it is correct that Marx sees it happening outside the workplace – and among autonomous and mutually independent workers – as well as inside it, then he has to conceive the division of labour as a dual process, which at the same time raises economic efficiency and generates the commodification of human labour products.

From this point on, it was not hard for Marx to develop the idea that capitalistic society is such, that in it the relations of production imply that the producers relate to their own products as commodities, hence as objective values. As such, productive labour is hidden in value and its measure is determined through the time needed to produce something and not through its use value for the producer or for someone else related to the producer. However, this is not a natural condition for human production, as classical political economy would want; rather, the determination of labour as value is a circumstance of a social formation, where the process of production dominate humans and not the contrary (Marx, 1962 [1890], p. 95). That is why the secret of commodity production lies exactly in its commodity form, as Marx explains: The social character of production is obscured by the objective value impressed upon a commodity, so that humans lose sight of the relation between their own product and the social production of commodities. Those relations between products appears to them rather as external relations between commodities (Marx, 1962 [1890], p. 86). So, at least in those passages from *Capital* where Marx points out why commodity exchange assumes a reified character, it is possible to trace that circumstance back to a form of division of labour particular to the capitalist mode of production, namely one in which not only division within the workplace provides a growing productive capacity for the industry, but also a division outside the workplace allows work to appear as value, hence commodity, and finally commodities to appear as objective social forms independent of their producers.⁶

⁶ Even though this presentation of the problem may seem to stress a continuity between Marx's interpretation of the phenomenon of reification and the phenomenon of alienation first noted by him in his 1843 critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of right*, I cannot discuss this particular subject at length here. For an interpretation that stresses the permanent concern Marx held regarding the subjective dimension of human experience, see George Lohmann's, *Indifferenz und Gesellschaft* (1991). What interests me here is to present Marx's account of the division of labour in *Capital* as a constitutive instance of a society that blocks human reciprocal recognition. Another point I cannot discuss here, is Honneth's (2013 and also published in the present issue of *Civitas*) hypothesis that there are two forms of temporality in Marx's work that do not have anything to do with an epistemological break, but rather show that his historical writings and his analysis

Such criticism of the commodification of human's product within capitalism does not account for the whole of human production, though. As mentioned earlier, it is only the traditional political economy that accepts private property, hence commodity production, as a natural form. Marx, however, has since his youth attempted to show that precisely this assumption gives it its ideological character.⁷ Yet, in one of his lesser known writings, his comments on James Mill's system of political economy, Marx is prone to admit, on the one hand, that human beings need to exchange their products, whereas on the other hand, the exchange mediated through money is the really alienated exchange (Marx, 1968, p. 446). Under the reign of private property the circumstances of production make of every one a businessman (Marx, 1968, p. 451), but in as far as subjects commercialise their own labour, in as far, that is, as they become alienated from real satisfaction of needs through their submission to the imperative of gainful employment directed to obtain money, the division of labour is the peak of their impossibility to satisfy each other's needs, for human products assume the form of equivalents, exchange value (Marx, 1969, p. 455).

Although this may initially look similar to *Capital's* thesis, according to which subjects lose control of their production, here Marx adopts the viewpoint that it is the relation between subjects that is alienated, their mutual affirmation in their production as humans (Marx, 1968, p. 462). But there is more: that exchange of private properties is an alienated relation because exchange of human activity within production but also exchange of human products for other human products is the species activity, whose real essence is social activity and social fruition. That means, that the essence of human, its real (*wahre*) essence lies in the social community (Marx, 1968, p. 451). Accordingly, in the production within the community, subjects not only realise their individuality, but also are realised as their activity satisfies another human being's necessities. More important, in this double affirmation, subjects

of capitalism incorporate two opposite normative perspectives (2013, p. 358). Surprisingly, Honneth does not trace back the rather flat interpretation of normative struggle to Marx's (and Engels') view in *The communist manifesto*, where bourgeois society is characterised by a simplification of class conflict (Marx and Engels, 1977, p. 463); in *Capital*, additionally to the class divide that allows for the owner of the means of production to buy another individual's labour force (Marx, 1962[1890], p. 183), there seems to reign also a second level gap between humans and commodities, for here the humans are abstracted from their products and society is a society of commodity producers (Marx, 1962 [1890], p. 93; see also, Roberts, 2017, p. 87).

⁷ Again, due to space limitations, I cannot properly show Marx's criticism of liberal political economy in his most famous texts from the 1840's, as the *Political-economic Manuscripts* or the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Therefore, I suggest the reader follow Daniel Brudney's (1998) authoritative explanation of the subject.

appear as the mediator that link other persons to the community because they realise that in their human activity they externalise something that is vital to others, who also do the same. Therefore, human production would not only reciprocally satisfy individuals necessities: It would also provide humans with the possibility of taking part in that community, which represent the essence of their very species being (Marx, 1968, p. 463).

Surely, this Marxian theory of recognition does not possess the same place as the theory of reification, but for instance, in *The German ideology*, Marx and Engels affirm the necessity of establishing relations with other humans as an element of the social character of human consciousness (Marx und Engels, 1978 [1845-6], p. 31) and go as far as to talk about human control upon individuals multilateral interdependence (*allseitige Abhängigkeit*) as a distinctive character of a communist society (Marx und Engels, 1978 [1845-6], p. 37). Likewise, in a very late text, the *Critique of Gotha's program*, Marx famously asserts that, regardless of her labour contribution, each individual must have her necessities satisfied (Marx, 1987, p. 21). Such vestiges may let one defends the position that from his early writings, Marx attributes to the mechanism of supplying other people with goods or tools to satisfy their needs a moral character, namely that of reciprocally guarantee for other human's participation in the larger human community through their mutual exchange.

Honneth: a political economy of recognition

Honneth's approach to the subject of the division of labour can be separated in at least two different moments within his work. At each of these moments, the relation between work and recognition is exposed differently, thus giving rise to a change in the importance attributed to the division of labour, and consequently, to the form of sociological explanation within the architecture of his theory of recognition – as well as to the place of political economy.

In the first of those moments, Honneth struggles to ascertain how a critical social theory could gain access to a disclosing critique of social reality, once it acknowledges the failure of the Marxian paradigm of labour as the privileged means to human self-realization: If Jürgen Habermas' communication-based critique of the centrality of work is taken into account, then social interaction need not to be limited to appropriation of nature; it can also happen at a communicative level of moral understanding between subjects that is not necessarily mediated by their appropriation of nature as labour. Hence, the level of moral understanding among subjects is as important to self-realisation than that of instrumental action (Honneth, 1995, p. 41). However, such an

account requires a second step, in order to avoid deflating work to such an extent that it may be considered a mere handling of objects, and consequently that forms of expropriation of work and up appearing to be less relevant than communicative distortions (Honneth, 1995, 47; see also Deranty, 2015, p. 117). Thus, the struggle for the realisation of one's own expressive powers could be characterised as an attempt to gain control over one's own activities (Honneth, 1995, p. 48). In this sense, Honneth proposes to understand class struggle rather as a "moral conflict in which an oppressed class is fighting to achieve the conditions for its self-respect" (Honneth, 1995, p. 13). Accordingly, labour is but an expression of a higher level of socialisation, namely that one expressed in human beings struggle to meet the conditions under which they could achieve respect and recognition (Honneth, 1995, p. 15). Work, so it may be interpreted, is of course relevant, but not central to this understanding. Moreover, it is one among other forms of achieving recognition and respect. Central, therefore, is recognition, whose plasticity happens to include the individual ability to publicly express herself through social activities but also as a respectable person. Consequently, this moment of Honneth's work could be seen as one in which the plasticity of recognition encompasses the concept of labour – and all other concepts, for that matter.⁸

It was only after Honneth had formulated the first version of his theory of recognition that the concept of labour returned to a central place in his work. Whereas in *Struggle for recognition* he adopted an explanatory strategy based upon George Herbert Mead's interactionism, in *Freedom's Right* Honneth intends to follow Hegel's intention of presenting modern institutional complexes as an expansion of the *I* into the *We* (Honneth, 2011, p. 69-70). According to that, modern societies are built upon the institutionalisation of spheres of action that at least implicitly rely on reciprocal cooperation. This is the case of personal relations, political democracy and market relations.⁹ Therefore, the concept of justice in modern societies should be measured on the extent to which subjects' participation in institutions of mutual recognition is secured (Honneth, 2011, p. 115).

⁸ Jean-Philippe Deranty (2015, 2018) has – convincingly – argued that the connections between the Honnethian project of a theory of recognition and Marx's work are strong enough to justify a link between both, already when Honneth criticises the paradigm of work. Although I am overall convinced by Deranty, I suggest here that this has to be understood under the assumption that, at least at this point of Honneth's work, labour is a form of recognition, whose plasticity as communication, moral struggle *and* instrumental action are his focus.

⁹ Given such spheres of social action build the scope of Honneth's investigation, it is not an accident that Mead leaves room to Durkheim as the main sociological reference to Honneth (2011, p. 126).

Regarding work relations, Honneth had already made clear his scepticism towards theories that assert the loss of their importance within modern societies, since the development of personal identity is still at great length tied to one's occupational situation (Honneth, 2008, p. 47). The normative value of work, however, can only come about once it surpasses the threshold of a merely private occupation and assumes the categorical place of a social practice that structurally reflects the quest for dignity and recognition within society. Furthermore, the capitalist market also has to be conceived as more than a means to economic efficiency: It is seen as a moral arena, where individuals implicitly promise each other to fulfil their respective necessities (Honneth, 2008, p. 64), hence as a sphere of social integration. This is what Honneth endeavours in his reconstructive study of the moral order underlying modern societies, namely, to connect both sides of the equation that intends to show that labour is a source of recognition and at the same time markets are moral arenas.

To this intent it is necessary to admit on the first place that markets must not be conceived as unregulated, norm-free spheres of self-interest. Rather, tendencies to atomization and social atrophy are to be understood as false developments (Honneth, 2011, p. 346, 360; 2015, p. 30-33). Likewise, the growing independence of financial markets and the deregulation of work relations must be conceived as changes in the cultural patterns of accessing the legitimacy of markets (Honneth, 2011, p. 468; 2015, p. 47). In opposition to Marx's account of capitalist markets as arenas domination, Honneth assumes a perspective he finds in Hegel and Durkheim, according to which the establishment of any economic order demands a previous relation of acceptance of its norms and values. In order to integrate subjects in a free and harmonious order of production exchange, capitalist economic action must be embedded in such a previous relation (Honneth, 2011, p. 327-328). Now, contrary to both Hegel and Durkheim, Honneth does not want to rely on institutional structures that could realise the implicit norms and values of production exchange. Because of that, he assumes that it is only norms and values that must be accounted for in the analysis of the normative content of markets, for they provide an ethical framework for the subjects' orientations for action (Honneth, 2011, p. 333). This means, after all, that the pursuit of self-realisation depends on a previous set on non-written rules that assert that economic exchange is understood by its participants as the legitimate way of fulfilling their mutual dependence (Honneth, 2011, p. 348).

Therefore, contrary to those approaches which understand capitalism as a system for the maximization of individual self-interest, Honneth now assumes that success of the exchange process characteristic of modern capitalism

depends on how well it is able to cope with subjects demands that it fulfils a shared and cooperative way of life (Honneth, 2011, p.357). Accordingly, the division of labour represents here a mechanism that allows for such cooperative relations to be met at the sphere of market. Of course, its importance lies rather on the sphere of economic relations, but the division of labour is also an expression of implicit recognition, i. e., of the implicit social character of that sphere of action. Most importantly, in letting aside the plasticity of work as a form of self-realisation that can lead to recognition, Honneth assumes that instead of reaching for a normative dimension in work activity, that dimension should be sought in relations of social labour (Honneth, 2008, p. 54). In as far as that character is precisely what Honneth wants to highlight as the normative content of modern societies, it seems fair to admit that contrary to that first phase of his work where the expressive character of labour meant the connection to the normative content of recognition, now it is the cooperative character of the division of labour that plays that role. That implies, finally, not only a change in the place of labour and its division within the theoretical architecture of recognition; it rather implies that Honneth have moved to a more comprehensive account of modern societies, one that is based upon reciprocal recognition, instead of being ordered upon the chances to a successful development of one's own personality through social interaction. More than a theory of struggles for recognition, such a society is perhaps to be understood within the framework of a political economy of reciprocal recognition.

Conclusion

Regarding the idea of a political economy of recognition, on the one hand, Durkheim's vocabulary hardly serves the purposes of a theory of intersubjective recognition; Marx's work, on the other hand, has evidently favoured a critical stance towards labour division effects within the capitalist mode of production. Nevertheless, Durkheim's theory of the division of labour and his lectures on civic morals contain an account of a reflexive process of deliberation in which subjects' participation depend not only on their shared horizon of sentiments towards the society they are part of, but even more on their feelings about the legitimacy of the communicative institutions that constitute their society. These communicative instances, for their part, substitute the formal institution of contracts and are based on spiritual and psychic relations between subjects. Marx's model of cooperation, for its part, seems to corroborate exactly the idea that – if not reified or subjected to false developments – capitalist commodity exchange can be understood within the framework of such shared horizon of reciprocity. And Honneth's theory

systematizes those insights in a qualitatively different theory of the division of labour. It is precisely this qualified account of the division of labour that seems understandable as a complex and dynamic bundle of forms of interactions within capitalist markets, that include both ethically acceptable and regressive forms, that is better accounted for through a political economy of recognition.

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