

Work and the Politics of Misrecognition

Abstract

In this article we examine the idea of a politics of misrecognition of working activity. We begin by introducing a distinction between the kind of recognition and misrecognition that attaches to one's identity, and the kind of recognition and misrecognition that attaches to one's activity. We then consider the political significance of the latter kind of recognition and misrecognition in the context of work. Drawing first on empirical research undertaken by sociologists at the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt, we argue for a *differentiated* concept of recognition that shows the politics of misrecognition at work to be as much a matter of conflict *between* modes of recognition as it is a struggle for recognition as opposed to *non*-recognition. The differentiated concept of recognition which allows for this empirical insight owes much to Axel Honneth's theory. But as we argue in the section that follows, this theory is ambiguous about the normative content of the expectations of recognition that are bound up with the activity of working. This in turn makes it unclear how we should understand the normative basis of the politics of the misrecognition of what one *does* at work. In the final sections of the article, we suggest that the psychodynamic model of work elaborated by Christophe Dejours and others at the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers* in Paris can shed light on this matter; that is to say, it can help to clarify the normative significance and political stakes of the misrecognition of working activity.

Key words: Work, recognition, Honneth, Frankfurt School, psychodynamics, Dejours.

A distinction can be made between recognition of what one *is* and recognition of what one *does*. Insofar as each of us can say things like 'I am a being with particular physical and emotional needs', or 'I am a person with a mind of my own, capable of making my own decisions and taking responsibility for them', or 'I am a member of this particular religious group, with its distinctive beliefs, practices and traditions', we take ourselves *to be* a certain way and we typically expect others to recognize this fact appropriately. That I am a being with a mind of my own, capable of making my own decisions and taking responsibility for them, for example, is a fact about me which ought to bring with it a basic level of respect. If I were to be denied this respect, if I were to be treated as if I did not have a mind of my own or a degree of self-responsibility, I could be said to suffer misrecognition of what I am - namely

a person, a being capable of autonomy. Recognition of what one *does*, by contrast, concerns the achievements or contributions brought about through one's actions. If I have done something which I consider to be worthwhile, or which others have benefited from, I typically expect that achievement or contribution to be recognized as such by others. But unlike recognition of what one is, recognition of what one does is not dependent on some pre-given fact about me. It is not in virtue of being an entity of a particular kind – say, one with needs, with autonomy, or a distinctive set of beliefs – that the agent of a recognition-worthy act, an act that represents a genuine achievement or a substantive contribution to the social good, expects recognition. Rather it is as the source of the act itself. Even if there are facts about me which I might consider relevant for an assessment of my *personal* achievement in doing something, the recognition-worthiness of what I do is not limited to what it says about *me*: it extends beyond that to the quality of the action as measured against the standards of achievement and contribution that prevail in the community at large.

Expectations of recognition of what one is and of what one does are interwoven into the fabric of everyday life. Partners in love relationships, assuming they are not dysfunctional or falling apart, expect that they will look after each other's physical and emotional needs. They are also entitled to expect that their contributions to the relationship, including the effort they put into the household, will be noticed and valued. The citizens of liberal democracies, at least, expect to be able to make up their own minds about who should represent them, to arrive at and to express their own ideological and religious convictions, and to have the contributions they make to the state and to the voluntary associations they join properly acknowledged. Put negatively, partners in relationships who don't have their needs cared for or their contributions to a household acknowledged can be described as suffering from a failure of recognition, just as citizens who are denied a vote, or prevented from expressing

their convictions, can be said to suffer misrecognition as persons with basic political rights. And in both cases the misrecognition can precipitate a struggle, political as much as personal, aimed at getting proper recognition both of who or what one is – a being with needs, an autonomous person, and so forth – and of what one does.

There are many contexts in which expectations of recognition of what one is and what one does can be disappointed in ways that trigger struggles for recognition in the form of a politics of misrecognition, that is to say, in the form of collective action oriented at the abolition of the source of misrecognition. But it would be hard to find one in which expectations of recognition run deeper, in which failures of recognition are more palpable, and in which struggles for recognition are more fraught, than in the world of work. It seems that anyone who takes part in this world – that is, who participates in the sphere of the production and exchange of goods and services, be it in farms, factories, offices, hospital wards, caring institutions, classrooms, universities, etc – has a story to tell about not receiving proper respect or not having their contribution properly valued or acknowledged. For many people, such experiences of misrecognition are an entrenched feature of everyday working life. Some struggle with the experiences alone, but others are able to mobilize collective action around them as part of a trade union. Indeed, trade unions across the world now campaign explicitly around ‘respect at work’ and ‘rights at work’.¹ Such phrases serve at once to *motivate* and to *justify* political action: they provide a rallying cry which is effective in mobilizing workers to act together and they provide reasons that union representatives can draw on in the procedure of collective bargaining and negotiation. Unsafe or dangerous working conditions, lack of security, low pay, and exclusion from decision-making processes are *morally* unacceptable, according to this form of politics, because they fail to recognize or deny recognition of what the workers really are: beings vulnerable to physical and emotional

injury, beings with needs worthy of satisfaction, and persons with a capacity for autonomy deserving of respect.

What about struggles against the misrecognition of what one *does* at work, of one's *working*? These tend to be given less prominence by the union movement, and the relative lack of visibility of this kind of politics – the politics of misrecognition of what one does at work – reflects a certain lack of self-confidence at a philosophical level, we would suggest, about the very concept of recognition-worthy working activity.² The concept of recognition-worthy working activity seems to suggest that there are norms implicit in the act of working which working subjects expect to be fulfilled. Disappointed expectations of this sort could, under the right circumstances, trigger normatively legitimate struggles for recognition. But philosophers have found the content of such normative expectations difficult to pin down. Recoiling from this difficulty, they have settled for an understanding of misrecognition at work that focuses on the shared features of what working people *are*, especially their basic material needs (the satisfaction of which would seem to require a basic level of income) and their capacity for autonomy (including their capacity to choose a life that is good for them which does not involve working).³

In the remainder of this article, we shall examine this idea of a politics of misrecognition of *working* a bit more closely. As a first step, we need to move beyond personal testimony and familiar union campaigns to the sociological evidence supporting the hypothesis that experiences of misrecognition permeate the world of work. Of particular importance for our purposes is the research undertaken by sociologists at the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt, since while it can be inferred from much sociology of work and industrial psychology that expectations of recognition (and their disappointment) pervade working

experience, a sociological research program has evolved at Frankfurt which is explicitly organised around the concept of recognition. One key lesson of this research, as we shall see in a moment, is that we need a *differentiated* concept of recognition to understand the contemporary world of work and that the ‘politics of misrecognition’ at work is as much a matter of conflict *between* modes of recognition as it is a struggle for recognition as opposed to *non*-recognition. The differentiated concept of recognition which allows for this empirical insight owes much to Axel Honneth’s theory. But as we argue in the section that follows, this theory is ambiguous about the normative content of the expectations of recognition that are bound up with the activity of working. This in turn makes it unclear how we should understand the normative basis of the politics of the misrecognition of what one *does* at work. In the final sections of the article, we suggest that the psychodynamic model of work elaborated by Christophe Dejours and others at the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers* in Paris can shed light on this matter; that is to say, it can help to clarify the normative significance and political stakes of the misrecognition of working activity.

Conflicts of recognition at work: appreciation versus admiration

It is a broadly accepted social fact that the organization of work, at least in the advanced economies, has undergone profound transformation in recent decades.⁴ The change is in part about new styles of management, rearrangements of the centres of power (including a decline in the power of the trade unions), the introduction of new types of employment contract (increasingly short-term, casual and flexible), of team-work, outsourcing, and so on. But the change has also involved a transformation of the way in which *recognition* is given and received at work. Indeed, even the new managerial regimes that are now dominant in work organizations, and the new kinds of contract they favour, can be said to owe their distinctive

character to the types of recognition they facilitate or impede. And the distinctive kinds of conflict that arise in the new regimes of work can be attributed to the tensions and contradictions in these new forms of recognition.

Stephan Voswinkel makes a distinction between recognition as *appreciation* and recognition as *admiration* to shed light on this phenomenon.⁵ Recognition as appreciation has to do with the acknowledgment of service performed by the employee to the company or employing organization. It is an acknowledgment of the sacrifice made by the worker over the course of his or her working life with the company. It is a form of gratitude for all the time and effort put in, for the loyalty shown to the company by staying with it, for the steady and reliable contribution accumulated over time. Appreciation is made manifest materially in such things as provision of job security, transparent career pathways, and a degree of social welfare for workers. It is expressed symbolically in jubilee celebrations of long service and similar practices. Recognition as admiration, by contrast, is directed at exceptional individual performance. Performance is determined against criteria that can be precisely measured, and of course the most valued, readily quantified measure of success is profitability (for the company or its shareholders). Admiration need not be tied to successful financial results, but there must be some putatively objective standard against which exceptional performance can be measured, such as position in a league table. The result alone is what matters; the history is irrelevant as far as admiration-worthy work goes. Admiration is therefore uncoupled from sacrifice and the gratitude that sacrifice is owed. The admiration-worthy worker works ‘smart’ not ‘hard’. In contrast to the ‘appreciated’ worker, there is thus no need to compensate the ‘admired’ worker by way of job security, welfare provision and so forth.

Voswinkel and others argue persuasively that the transition from the so-called 'Fordist' regime of work to the new so-called 'Post-Fordist' world involves a shift in the dominant mode of recognition from appreciation to admiration.⁶ But the key point for our purposes is that Post-Fordism opens up new possibilities for the experience of misrecognition, while rendering more complex and problematic the politics of misrecognition. For in the new constellation, misrecognition of one's work, in the sense of a lack of appreciation of it, can be a matter not just of non-recognition, but of recognition in another form, namely admiration. Sacrifice and loyalty, which were once seen as recognition-worthy traits, can now be seen as signs of failure, as characteristics of the loser. How can collective action be mobilized around that? Workers' routinely given but unspectacular contributions to their organisations, which were always partly hidden even under Fordism, now hardly register on the political radar at all. As downsizing, outsourcing and closure of even highly profitable concerns becomes commonplace, workers have to make sense of their loss without knowing what they did wrong, without having failed at anything, but also increasingly without a clear or shared sense of injustice. On the other hand, admiration-worthy work, and the sense of disappointment that failures of such recognition can bring, are also hard to mobilize politically, given the highly individualistic nature of this norm.

Honneth's conceptualisation of recognition and work

It should be clear from the discussion so far that work is an important locus of experiences of misrecognition with political purport, even if such misrecognition may not be readily visible. Struggles for appreciation, in the sense introduced above, and conflicting demands of appreciation and admiration, permeate the politics of the welfare-state and the new

constellation that is replacing it. This observation is not without consequence for the recent philosophical debate around recognition.⁷ Perhaps most notably, it does not seem to fit well with proposals to distinguish a politics of recognition, directed at ‘status subordination’ and ‘cultural’ injustice, from a politics of redistribution, aimed at class-based ‘economic’ injustices.⁸ Appreciation and admiration, as modes of recognition that permeate the world of work, are as much about economics as culture, and it is far from clear what analytical advantage is to be gained from separating their economic and cultural components. This seems to us to count in favour of Honneth’s recognition ‘monism’ rather than Fraser’s ‘dual-perspectivism’.⁹ And as we have mentioned, the empirical insights about new forms of recognition and misrecognition at work established by Voswinkel and others are very much the fruit of Honneth’s differentiated concept of recognition, rather than a dual- or multi-perspectival conception of the kind proposed by Fraser.¹⁰

Honneth’s approach thus commends itself as a framework for understanding how work provides a politically significant context of misrecognition and struggles for due recognition. But Honneth’s theory provides resources for understanding the relation between recognition and work in both a weak and a strong sense. Taken in its weak sense, the misrecognition of work and the politics of correcting it are fundamentally matters of contesting prevailing interpretations of achievement. That is to say, such a form of politics challenges established meanings of what it is to make a contribution to society or to achieve something socially worthwhile. The criteria by which achievements are recognised can be (and in bourgeois patriarchal society are) distorted by cultural prejudices and the interests of powerful groups. To have one’s efforts (say, in caring for others) identified *as* work, as *worthy* of social recognition and reward, can then itself be the object of progressive political struggle. Such a politics of misrecognition involves struggle precisely because it is aimed at overturning

entrenched prejudices and stereotypes that serve the interest of those in power by helping to reproduce the established order of recognition. Much progressive feminist politics, Honneth observes, takes this form, and the validity and importance of struggle against the misrecognition of the social contribution made through so-called 'women's' work is one of the leitmotifs of his exchange with Fraser.

On this conception, established norms about the meaning of achievement or social contribution contain a 'semantic surplus' that struggles for recognition can draw upon to justify their cause.¹¹ The politics of misrecognition, if it is to have validity, must then be able to make explicit a normative commitment that the broader society already implicitly or half-knowingly relies on for its own sense of legitimacy. The focus, in other words, is on how the society at large understands itself, as expressed in the prevailing norms of social contribution and achievement. But a stronger thesis on the relation between misrecognition and work can also be found in Honneth's writings.¹² This is the idea that alongside reflective contestation of the social value attached to work, the act of working itself provides a context of normative expectations that can be satisfied or denied. According to this strong conception, the normative content of the disappointed expectation has to do with the quality of the work, with the experience of working, rather than the social estimation of the worth of the work. To put it another way, the 'semantic surplus' that reveals itself in well-grounded disappointment with working arises from an inchoate grasp of what it is to do good or meaningful work, which in turn can trigger resistance to that particular deformed or degraded working activity, and a 'politics of misrecognition' in that sense.

What we are calling here the strong conceptualisation of the relation between work and recognition is most evident in Honneth's earlier writings, whereas the weak conception comes to the fore in his more recent work. Indeed, Honneth now distances himself quite adamantly from that earlier conception.¹³ But it seems to us that the strong conception deserves further consideration, especially in light of our present concern - the politics of misrecognition of what one *does* at work. For further illumination on this phenomenon, we now turn to the psychodynamic model of work elaborated by Dejours.

The normative significance of working activity

Dejours and his team at the *Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers* in Paris have been studying the impact of work on the physical and psychical health of workers for the last three decades. Out of this clinical research and the substantial theoretical work that has accompanied it, a rich body of writing on the nature and place of work in modern society has grown.¹⁴ Dejours' "psychodynamic" model recommends itself in particular for the way in which it delineates different normative dimensions of work. Dejours has been able to demonstrate that work matters not just as a marker of status, , but also in respect to the dimensions involved in its very performance, inasmuch as it is an *activity*. Indeed, he has shown that working activity has normative significance not just in an external sense, for instance inasmuch as it can affect a subject's well-being (in terms of "working conditions"). It also has normative significance, and for Dejours primarily, in an internal sense, in relation to what can be called the "ergonomic" side of work.

The focus on the internal normative dimensions of working activity *qua* activity draws on a strand of ergonomic research closely associated with the psychology and anthropology of techniques that developed in France after the war. This research has highlighted the fact that there is hardly any kind of work that simply involves the direct application of externally produced directives. There is an infinite number of ways in which contingencies can derail even the most precise and “scientifically” established working procedures, or complicate tasks that appear on the surface to be very simple: contingencies relating to the material aspects underpinning the task, notably when machines or systems are involved; but also contingencies stemming from the social environment, colleagues, the hierarchy, clients, one’s own bodily limits, and so on. As a result, work is better approached as “working”, as it nearly always involves the bridging of a gap, on the part of the agent, between the prescribed tasks and the actual performance of the tasks.

It is at this point, according to Dejours, that work can have a formative or destructive character on subjective identity, and thus acquires a crucial, if highly specific, normative dimension. The necessity of the agent’s active involvement in the realisation of the task means that all work represents an irreducible challenge to psychic balance. Beyond the ideology of full control underpinning modern science and technology, the reality of work shows that working agents are constantly called upon to adapt their behaviour, circumvent procedures in place, take shortcuts, invent their own tricks, just so that productive results are achieved. The challenges linked to this gap between prescribed task and actual activity and to the difficulty of bridging that gap are many: personal inventions and interventions can fail; they can be in breach of regulations and involve legal or safety risks; they can also involve psychological or physical strains that are not bearable in the long run. All these challenges make of work an activity that can sustain and indeed enhance subjective identity, when there is a

good fit between subjective capacities and expectations and the objective difficulties of the task. In that case, the subject demonstrates and indeed develops his or her practical intelligence and manual skills, and thus increases his or her sense of self. Alternatively, , when the challenge is too great, an activity can destroy the subject's psychic balance. Therefore, before any larger social dimension is taken into consideration, work matters normatively in its primordial "praxeological" aspects, as a task that challenges the subject in his or her very identity because of the strong constraints, objective and human, defining and surrounding it.

Recognition of working activity

Crucially, Dejours argues that the impact of work's challenges on each subject is not just determined by the fit between the subjective and objective poles. According to him, recognition of the value of the worker's practical performance plays a key part in helping to sublimate the "suffering" involved in work, that is, to transform an experience which is negative and potentially destructive, into one which is positive and potentially formative.

This specific form of recognition, attached to the performance of the activity in its concrete specificity, is itself multidimensional. First, recognition of the activity occurs on a "vertical" axis, as the agent's performance is recognised or not by the hierarchy. The non-recognition by management of workers' personal investment, that is the involvement of their practical intelligence and good will in their tasks, can generate a profound sense of injustice. Indeed this dimension of recognition at work unveils a new aspect of the most traditional kind of

claims linked to work, that is, wage claims. Wages are not just basic material rewards, the absolute amount of which any individual seeks to increase from a simple utilitarian self-interest; they are also symbolic signs of recognition, in both the epistemic and “thankfulness” sense of the term.¹⁵ Conversely, symbolic signs that give evidence of the recognition of work by the hierarchy and clients are also strongly expected by workers.¹⁶

Even more significant than the “vertical” axis, is the “horizontal” axis of recognition of the working activity. This form of recognition is provided by the peers, those individuals who, because they are directly involved in tasks related to the activity, are able to fully understand the specific nature of the obstacles that have to be overcome as well as the skills and know-how that have to be mobilised. This horizontal recognition is best awarded by the work collective. According to Dejours, who bases his claim on the evidence provided by decades of clinical interventions, recognition by the work collective is crucial in determining the psychic value of the work experience for subjective identities. This form of recognition is so strong that it can counter-balance other negative aspects of work. For example, well-functioning work collectives, leaning on strong professional life-worlds, can offset negative statuses attached to particular professions.¹⁷ By contrast, deficient or non-existent work collectives leave subjects structurally vulnerable. There are well-documented cases of industrial conflicts that explicitly broke out,¹⁸ or alternatively well-documented cases of muted forms of “social suffering” that didn’t find political voice,¹⁹ all resulting directly from the demise of work collectives and of established working cultures. Dejours explains the rise of suicides at work in the last few years as the result of the increased isolation of high achieving workers, following the introduction of aggressive forms of management in companies exposed to international markets.²⁰ On this view, therefore, recognition that one is acting in compliance with the standards, norms and values of a profession and, as a result,

enjoys inclusion in a collective that shares such standards, norms and values continues to represent a powerful expectation of modern individuals.²¹ The question that arises, however, is whether such expectations can be expressed in acceptable normative terms, such that it could be made operative in a political sense, both in terms of concrete political demands and in regards to the specific requirements of political theory.

Politics of misrecognition of what one does at work

Two objections immediately present themselves to the very idea of a politics of misrecognition based on the kind of psychological considerations that inform Dejours' psychodynamic model of work. The first objection relates to the heterogeneity of subjective responses to the different types of working activity and work organisation. No general normative principle can be extracted, one might object, from a realm in which individual experiences and expectations are so diverse and idiosyncratic. Secondly, the exact object of claims that would be based on expectations of recognition of the kind discussed above is not clear. Whilst a claim for legal recognition (such as the right to vote) is a precise thing, what exactly would a struggle for the recognition of one's upholding of professional standards entail? What exactly would it mean to demand thankfulness from management? How does one engage in a political struggle in the defence of work collectives?

The first objection raises deep and complex philosophical issues about the relation between facts and values, the relevance of psychology for establishing the validity of normative principles, and for that matter the relevance of normatively valid principles from a moral point of view for politics, which we can't hope to address adequately here.²² All we can do

for the moment is to take some of the sting out of the objection by making one simple point. We acknowledge that in any particular case, the expression given to a person's experience of misrecognition at work may be unfounded, inappropriate, or in some way out of order. We also acknowledge that one and the same set of conditions may trigger disruptive struggles against misrecognition in some people but stoical acceptance in others. But does the undeniably contingent nature of an individual's disposition to experiences of recognition and misrecognition really prevent us from making any generalisations about how people are affected by work in morally significant ways? Beyond individual responses to particular forms of work, the psychology and sociology of work unveil aggregate phenomena, general forms of experience and reaction to changing work organisations. Despite the heterogeneity of individual responses, general thresholds of tolerance to work intensification, for example, or to the experience of solitude in facing increasing work pressures, do make it possible to speak in generalised terms about the effect on well-being of such practices.

Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the transition to so-called 'Post-Fordism' has been detrimental not just in terms of *individual* well-being, but the well-being of *democratic polities*. As we have already noted, a number of converging developments in work organisations in the last three decades have contributed to a destruction of old professional cultures, intensive individualisation, and a corresponding weakening of the union movement. In Dejours' view, this process of extreme individualisation of work experiences is directly responsible for the political apathy witnessed in industrialised nations – a phenomenon which is widely interpreted as a sign of the unhealthy state of these democracies.²³ Individualised work experience, by inhibiting or obscuring the cooperative dimension of work, undermines the civic basis of democracy.

The general point that can be made here is that the negative effect of the individualisation of work on the health of individuals and polities can be invoked to counter scepticism about the political significance of misrecognition in the activity of working. A parallel point about the positive effects of recognition in the act of working can be invoked in response to the second general objection we identified. That is, the object of expectations of recognition at work, and the struggles that can follow from their disappointment, can be clarified by viewing work under the aspect of cooperative, collective activity.

Dejours argues persuasively that the recognitive processes unfolding in the course of a working activity have an intrinsic political dimension, as they establish a prime example of valid cooperation. The working activity, *qua* activity, always occurs in a strong, highly structured intersubjective context; elements of the task are received from others, one's own contribution is directed at others, and so on. But the planned coordination of action suffers from the same intrusion of contingency as the individual activity. Cooperation, which is built upon dialogue amongst co-workers, and mobilises professional standards, norms and values, ensures that productive results are achieved, despite the contingencies hampering planned coordination. Such cooperation, for Dejours, which on the surface is geared solely to productive results and is guided only by instrumental considerations, is in fact also a directly political space: first, as an example of successful communication amongst strangers; and second, as the very space in which individuals learn to overcome their idiosyncratic views and preferences, and consider the views of others for the sake of a common purpose.²⁴

An analysis of this kind makes vivid the political dimension of working insofar as politics is grounded in social life, but it does not of itself establish how specific political claims can be justified. Such claims often have to do with expectations of recognition for achievement or contribution as discussed in our opening remarks. Industrial conflicts are typically driven by the outrage felt by workers at the lack of recognition of the value of their efforts, not just as a contribution to society in general, but as intelligent, involved performance. Indeed, depending on circumstances and different national contexts, this highly specific fuel of struggles for work recognition applies within a single firm, or across whole industry sectors, or indeed across society at large (for example, it has been a marked feature of recent demonstrations in France that large numbers of workers made their claims dressed in their professional clothes).

The expectation that one will receive recognition for one's practical performance, the desire to be included in a thriving working culture and in a well-functioning work collective, can thereby lead to the expression of clear and explicit political claims. When workers express their dissatisfaction with the ways in which they are forced to conduct their work activity, the ultimate object of their discontent may be a certain organisation of society, the way in which the division of labour is concretely set up. In many industrial conflicts, this ultimate political stake is in fact expressly and explicitly articulated: people know that all the managerial tools introduced to control and calculate their work performance are there for the sole purpose of short-term profit, that is, for the profit of shareholders, and that other considerations, of quality, safety, or indeed the pride they might take in doing good, meaningful work, have been made obsolete in the process. A sociology of industrial action attentive to the claims currently made by the people involved unveils the strong political content of their claims, and in particular the political import of their recriminations about the dismantlement of work

collectives. Misrecognition at work might well be one of the key experiences today to engage the political agency of otherwise disaffected citizens.²⁵

¹ Respect at work and rights at work are also key components of the ‘Decent Work’ agenda of the International Labour Organization. See <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>.

² See Emmanuel Renault, ‘The Political Invisibility of Work and its Philosophical Echoes’, in Nicholas H. Smith and Jean-Philippe Deranty eds., *New Philosophies of Labour: Work and the Social Bond* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

³ This position is set out most clearly in Axel Honneth, “Work and Recognition: A Redefinition,” in H.-C. Schmidt am Busch and C. Zürn eds, *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, pp. 223-240.

⁴ For a brief influential account of these changes see Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (New York: Yale University Press, 2006), and for more detail, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. G. Elliott (London: Verso, 2005). For criticism of Sennett’s interpretation, and a more sceptical view of the extent of the transformation of work, see Kevin Doogan, *New Capitalism?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

⁵ See Stephan Voswinkel, ‘Admiration Without Appreciation? The Paradoxes of Recognition of Doubly Subjectivised Work’, in Smith and Deranty eds, *New Philosophies of Labour*.

⁶ See U. Holtgrewe, S. Voswinkel and G. Wagner eds., *Anerkennung und Arbeit* (Konstanz: UVK-Verlag, 2000), and in English, Gabriele Wagner, “‘Exclusive Focus on Figures. Exclusive Focus on Returns’”. Marketisation as a Principle of Organisation and a Problem of Recognition’, in Smith and Deranty eds. *New Philosophies of Labour*.

⁷ See Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, trans. J. Golb, J. Ingram and C. Wilke (London: Verso, 2003).

⁸ See Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking Recognition', *New Left Review*, 2000, May/June, 107-120, and her contribution to *Redistribution or Recognition?*

⁹ As these positions are debated in *Redistribution or Recognition?*

¹⁰ See Axel Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*, tr. Joel Anderson (Cambridge, Polity, 1995), where Honneth distinguishes three fundamental forms of recognition: love, respect and esteem. Voswinkel's distinction between admiration and appreciation effectively introduces a further level of differentiation within the realm of esteem.

¹¹ On the notion of semantic surplus, see Honneth's contribution to *Redistribution or Recognition?* especially p. 150 and pp. 244-245.

¹² In particular Axel Honneth, 'Work and Instrumental Action: On the Normative Basis of Critical Theory', in Honneth, *The Fragmented World of the Social* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), pp. 15-49.

¹³ See Honneth, "Work and Recognition: A Redefinition," in H.-C. Schmidt am Busch and C. Zurn eds, *The Philosophy of Recognition*.

¹⁴ See the summation of Dejours' "psychodynamic" model in the recently published two volumes *Travail Vivant* (Paris: Payot, 2009). For a synthetic presentation of Dejours' model see J.-P. Deranty, "Work as Transcendental Experience", *Critical Horizons* 11(2), 2010, 181-220.

¹⁵ As analysed in particular by Paul Ricoeur, in *The Course of Recognition*, tr. D. Pellauer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 219-246.

¹⁶ See for example Gabriele Wagner, “Exclusive focus on figures. Exclusive focus on returns.” Marketization as a principle of organization and a problem of recognition’, in Smith and Deranty, *New Philosophies of Labour*.

¹⁷ See Mary Searle-Chatterjee’s classical study, ‘The Polluted Identity of Work. A Study of Benares Sweepers’, in S. Wallman (ed), *Social Anthropology of Work* (London: Academic Press, 1979), which documents the cultural identity developed by one of the lowest classes of untouchables around their work activity.

¹⁸ See Philippe Zarifian’s study of the conflicts around the restructuration of the telecommunication public company in France during the 1990s, in *Le Travail et la compétence* (Paris: PUF, 2009), 7-31.

¹⁹ Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character* (New York: Norton and Company, 1998), p. 64 and 75.

²⁰ C. Dejours, *Suicide et Travail. Que faire ?* (Paris : Payot, 2010), and *Observations cliniques en psychopathologie du travail* (Paris : Payot, 2010), pp. 131-161.

²¹ For reasons of space, we are not addressing here the third form of recognition, “diagonal” recognition between worker and client, which has become increasingly significant with the shift to service work in large spheres of the world of work.

²² For further discussion of the question of normative validity in the context of work see J.-P. Deranty, ‘Expression and Cooperation as Norms of Contemporary Work’, and N. H. Smith, ‘Three Normative Models of Work’, in Smith and Deranty, *New Philosophies of Labour*.

²³ This is the core thesis in his now famous account of the social and political situation in France in the last two decades, in *Souffrance en France. La Banalisation de l’injustice sociale* (Paris: Payot, 2009, 3rd edition).

²⁴ Honneth makes a similar point about the importance of cooperative participation in the social division of labour for democracy in A. Honneth, 'Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation: John Dewey and the Theory of Democracy', in *Disrespect. The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), pp. 218-239.

²⁵ Many thanks to Simon Thompson and Wendy Martineau for valuable feedback on an earlier draft of this paper.