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Recognition of nature

Recognition studies have become an established topic in critical social theory. Within this field, recognition constitutes two interrelated research topics: politics of recognition and philosophy of recognition. There are also two distinct senses of recognition: first, recognition as interpersonal mutual activity that is essential for self-relations; and second, recognition as adequate regard of the normatively relevant features of the other. Both insights embody the idea that recognition is essential for equality (as nondomination) in any society. In environmental political theory, recognition has emerged recently in two contexts: regarding the claims of citizens for environmental justice and denoting the recognition of nonhuman nature. The latter invokes new theoretical problems since the idea of recognizing nonhuman nature challenges the fundamental presumption of recognition as an issue of human-human relations.

This paper offers conceptual clarification to the notion of recognition of nonhuman nature and proceeds in three parts. The first section summarizes the concepts and strands of recognition studies briefly and provides a literature review on recognition of nonhuman nature. The second section considers gaps in the existing literature on nonhuman recognition and proposes criteria for an adequate definition of the term. The third section examines how the recognition of nonhuman nature in the sense of status equality (drawing on Nancy Fraser's works) could be conceptualized more precisely and what are its implications.

1a: What is recognition and why does it matter?

Recognition is a cornerstone of social life. It influences self-relations and intersubjective relations, and many contemporary struggles – like those regarding gender, race, autonomy, or identity – can be interpreted as struggles for recognition (Thompson 2006). Recognition is as a central concept for theorizing the conditions for the existence of societies, democracy, and for understanding some of the problematic manifestations that can perhaps be called 'pathologies of the society' (Honneth 1995?). Recognition studies have attracted much attention in social philosophy and political theory since Charles Taylor's work on multiculturalism and politics of recognition and Axel Honneth's work on recognition in interpersonal

relations in 1990s. Recognition has also entered the vocabulary of environmental political theory[1] and I am intrigued by this relatively recent development.

To put roughly, recognition studies use the term 'recognition' to denote the acknowledgment of and responsiveness to certain normatively relevant features of the recognized other (Laitinen 2010).[2] Beyond its general meaning, the definition of recognition scatters into multiple insights on what recognition is about. Hence, this study must begin with a short introduction to the major approaches to recognition. The whole gamut of the terminological debate cannot be encapsulated here; the introduction will focus on the aspects that are most relevant for environmental political theory.

Mutual recognition: personhood-focused views

Philosophically oriented recognition studies have focused on the social ontology of interpersonal, mutual recognition. Its standard case is this: A recognizes B as a person and vice versa, and both recognize each other as relevant judges of other's personhood. Mutual recognition evokes a particular affective engagement and responsiveness towards other's autonomous personhood, which has normative implications for approaching the person (Honneth 1995, p). This usually happens 'by itself' when we encounter other persons. Mutual recognition is an essential basis of social life. It is central for self-relations and self-realization (Honneth 1995): if other persons don't recognize me as a person or treat me accordingly, my self-respect and personal integrity are harmed and I cannot be a person in a full sense.

The most comprehensive philosophical approach to mutual recognition is the theory of Axel Honneth (1995) who draws on Hegelian philosophy and views recognition as an intersubjective condition for personal integrity. Honneth distinguishes between three forms of recognition: love, respect, and esteem[3]. Love relates to affections in the 'intimate sphere' of friendship ('recognizing one with whom I have a special bond'). Respect recognition denotes universal respect for human autonomy and equal dignity,[4] which are granted by institutionalized rights ('recognition as an equal human being'). Esteem recognition signifies the recognition of person's particular traits or achievements by a community who values those traits ('a recognized artist'). All three forms of recognition are essential for self-relations and

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[1] E.g., Schlosberg 2007; 2014; Whyte 2011; Figueroa 2011?; Dobson 2014; Hourdequin 2016; Martin et al. 2016; Kortetmäki 2016; Laitinen & Kortetmäki forthcoming.

[2] This meaning should not be confused with some everyday uses of 'recognition' that denote mere identification ("I recognized him as one of my colleagues") or cognitive acknowledgement ("I recognize that I made a mistake").

[3] He also talks about a form of preliminary or antecedent recognition, which exists already in the relationship between a young baby and her mother; this preliminary recognition is discussed later in this paper (**is it?**).

[4] Ikäheimo (2002, 454) points out that rights are not always grounded on the principle of universality and autonomy. Certain rights to bodily integrity are granted also to people who lack full autonomy (seriously retarded or demented people), and certain rights or entitlements may concern persons as singular (love recognition) or as having particular features like membership of a cultural group or indigeneity (Ikäheimo 2002, 452-456).

self-realization. Social struggles in the modern world are essentially struggles for recognition which arise from the experiences of misrecognition or nonrecognition: humiliation, disrespect, and ignorance that prevent the self-realization of individual humans.

Honneth's account has been very influential but it is also essentially bound to personhood and psychological insights. Initially, Honneth does not even mention the possibility of recognizing nonhuman nature (hereafter also nature). In his later book he argues that nature can be recognized but only indirectly: humans 'recognize nature' by recognizing the attitudes that their fellow humans have towards it (Honneth 2008, 60-63). Nonhuman nature serves merely as a vehicle for interpersonal recognition (Hailwood 2015).

Politics of recognition and recognition as adequate regard

Other approaches to recognition are oriented towards the politics of recognition (Thompson 2006), a viewpoint that emerged in Charles Taylor's influential work on recognition struggles and multiculturalism. Taylor (1994) argues that the absence of recognition influences and shapes identities: one can suffer distortion or harm if reactions to one's identity are confining or demeaning (misrecognizing). People who represent cultural minorities are susceptible to such misrecognition and social oppression. Long-term cultural demeaning may even promote an inferior self-image, due to which oppressed groups may become unable to identify their status as oppressed or claim due recognition. This may concern, for example, the long-term depreciation of women and of colonized people (Taylor 1994, 23).

In a multicultural world, the political (public) sphere of recognition is marked by a tension between two politics: politics of universalism and politics of difference. Universalism concerns the equal human dignity and rights (similar to Honneth's respect recognition), which call for non-discrimination. Politics of difference concerns recognition of the forms of distinctiveness that are essential for self-relations, which brings attention to the right of people to retain and protect their identities and cultures. The emphasis is not on what people have in common but how they are (and have a right to be) different. 'European or white domination' (Taylor 1994, 30-31) that for long time portrayed other cultures as inferior and less civilized, and whose traces can still be seen in how the white male story dominates the historical and cultural representations, exemplifies misrecognition in this sense. There is, however, a tension between the calls for universalism (difference-blindness) and politics of difference: the former may entrench the dominant cultural positions and hegemonies, and the latter may require 'difference-sightedness' or positive discrimination in the name of protecting certain groups or identities.

The same spirit of the equality of people with distinct (cultural, ethnic, and so on) features has been theorized quite differently by Nancy Fraser. Her status-based approach to recognition links recognition to a

90   trivalent notion of justice that has three distinct yet intertwined elements: redistribution, recognition, and representation (Fraser 2009). Status equality of people requires not just material and political equality but also recognition justice, which relates to social and cultural realms of equality in society. Various ethnic, cultural, or sexual minorities (and so on) may face misrecognition that deprives these people of their status as equally worthy participants in the social life: they are denigrated as 'second-class' or inferior citizens,

95   and looked down on either explicitly or implicitly. Such misrecognition may take at least three forms: cultural domination (being subjected to communication or interpretation that are alien or hostile to one's culture), nonrecognition (being rendered invisible), and disrespect (disparagement in public representations or in daily interactions) (Fraser 1998, 7). As a justice-oriented approach, status-based model pays particular attention to institutionalized value patterns that contribute to misrecognition, such

100   as the dominance of Eurocentric norms and 'white supremacy' (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 23). Mis- and nonrecognition constitute a status injury and unjust on their own, independently of distributive justice.

    Contrary to Honneth's approach that draws much on psychology of self-relations and on the subjective experiences of misrecognition, Fraser's status-based model focuses on the relative equality of people and treats the matter of recognition as one of justice rather than of self-realization. The presence of

105   misrecognition is not to be judged on the basis of subjective experiences of it. One reason for this is that long-term cultural oppression may create self-deprecation that effaces individuals' capacity to identify her oppressed status (Fraser YYYY, **pp;** cf. Taylor 1994, 23). On the other hand, the dominant groups may also 'experience misrecognition' (sometimes present in the laments of groups of white heterosexual men about the feminist movement's agenda) yet their claims for recognition are unlikely justified. Fraser's shift of

110   focus from subjective and self-relation-oriented viewpoint to status equality has been very influential for the discussion about recognition of nonhumans.

    Laitinen (2010) has categorized approaches to recognition into personhood-oriented 'mutuality insights' (dealing with direct interpersonal encounters) and 'adequate regard insights' (politics of recognition is one example of such). Laitinen argues that the adequate regard type of recognition allows

115   extending the notion of recognition beyond persons. In the broadest sense, adequate regard means an appropriate response to the recognized other's normatively (or evaluatively) significant features (Laitinen 2010, 323). These features deserve consideration whenever actions may affect the recognized party. Almost any entity may possess some relevant features and be recognized in the most general sense of adequate regard: institutions, artworks, areas of wilderness, and so on. What counts as adequate regard

120   depends on the features of entities in question. Laitinen's distinction is important for environmental

political theory since it is (to my knowledge) the first contribution in 'mainstream' recognition studies[5] that acknowledges the possibility of extending recognition discourse beyond persons.

1b: Recognition and the environmental issues

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Various social movements have addressed associated local and global environmental problems with the idea of environmental justice (fairness in the management of environmental issues and decision-making within human communities). Their concerns can often be captured with recognition terminology (e.g., Schlosberg 2003; Figueroa 2011; Kortetmäki 2016; Hourdequin 2017). Misrecognition of minority
130 groups or women hides the fact that their ways of life may make them particularly vulnerable to environmental harms and risks due to, for example, their geographical position or dietary traditions[6]. Environmental policies may also fail to recognize the significance of cultural practices or the value of places to certain cultures, due to which policy impacts on those groups are not considered properly (Kortetmäki 2016; Hourdequin 2016). Even 'formally equal' policy processes may involve misrecognition, manifested for
135 example in the invisibility of black women in public hearings (Schlosberg 2007, 61) and the dominance of the Eurocentric, economic-rational rhetoric as the only legitimate language in global climate negotiations (so that claims representing other worldviews are not taken equally seriously) (Kortetmäki 2016). Recognition is a useful term for clarifying the struggles for environmental justice and recognition theories fit these contexts directly because they concern environmental issues within human communities.

140 I am interested in a more radical idea has emerged alongside with the environmental justice and recognition discourse: the recognition of nonhuman nature. David Schlosberg (2007, 129-142) established this idea by arguing that recognition vocabulary is useful for making sense of the claims for ecological justice (justice *to* nature, in human-nonhuman relations). To answer what it is that should be recognized in nature, Schlosberg discusses the recognition of nature from two different viewpoints: 1) recognition as
145 respect for particular normatively relevant features in nature (adequate regard in a general sense), and 2) recognition as an issue of status equality (Fraser's approach to recognition). I will next describe these approaches in more detail.

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5 By 'mainstream' recognition studies I refer to the human-oriented tradition of recognition studies.
6 An example of this is how the US Environmental Protection Agency has defined limits for the industrial dioxin releases to streams to the level that still poses a major health risk to the Native Americans because of their traditional practices of subsistence fishing and high fish consumption levels (Schlosberg 2007, 60). (This example may be slightly problematic from the viewpoint of whether the practice of catching and killing fish itself manifests the misrecognition of nonhuman animals, however.)

Recognition of nature as respect for it has a basis in environmental ethics that has frequently claimed for extending respect and moral concern to nonhuman realm. Schlosberg (2007, 131-136) argues
150   that claims for the respect for nature are essentially claims for recognizing nature in the sense of recognizing certain features in it and respecting it therefore. Environmental ethics has focused on qualities that humans share with some nonhumans – like needs, sentience, or agency – that "should lead us to recognize our shared qualities and, so, include that similar, yet nonhuman, nature in the sphere of justice" (Schlosberg 2007, 133) (environmental ethicists usually talk about the sphere of moral concern rather than
155   justice though). This strategy is extensionist: it necessitates seeing "something of ourselves in nature in order to recognize it" (Schlosberg 2007, 136). Ecofeminist literature criticizes extensionist strategies for maintaining human supremacy: the modest improvement, argument that some nonhumans possess qualities similar to humans and therefore merit regard, is insufficient. Schlosberg agrees with this and proposes that instead of looking how nonhumans are similar to humans, focus should be on what humans
160   have in common with nonhumans[7].

Recognition as respect for nature would, in Schlosberg's view, have its basis on integrity: "the recognition of the potential in nature to develop, its autonomy, resilience, or a respect for autopoiesis – the quality of a self-directing, self-regulating, or self-correcting entity or system" (Schlosberg 2007, 136). Humans share this feature with various nonhuman entities. Recognizing nature on the basis of its integrity
165   would mean that human impact on the integrity of the nonhuman world must be given adequate regard. Recognition as regard for integrity would not be limited to individual organisms: arguably, certain kinds of ecological systems like ecosystems and species as evolutionary groups have integrity that can be harmed or violated (Westra 2016; Kortetmäki 2017). It remains unclear, however, whether recognizing integrity represents merely a general adequate regard model or justice-related respect recognition in a more
170   Honnethian sense, personhood-oriented emphases excluded: Schlosberg (2007, 133-138) discusses both options without distinguishing between them.

The other outlined approach[8] to recognition of nature draws on Fraser's status-based model of recognition. Since the model does not rely on psychological experiences, there are no obstacles for applying it to nonhuman realm in principle. The crux of the status model is overcoming oppression and
175   depreciation that prevents the status equality of different parties in society (Fraser and Honneth 2003). To justify the applicability of Fraser's model, Schlosberg (2007, 140-141) illustrates how three forms of status-related misrecognition are applicable to human-nature relations. Examples of the misrecognition of nature

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7   I am not convinced whether this formulation succeeds in escaping the ecofeminist criticism since the focus is still on similarities (see also Hailwood 2015 on a similar point).
8   The two approaches proposed by Schlosberg have overlapping points but they rely on different theoretical frameworks.

involve general cultural domination (manifested in e.g. the superiority of economic arguments over environmental concerns), nonrecognition (forgetting/neglecting ecological aspects in political planning), and disrespect. Misrecognition is maintained through socially constructed meanings of nature and in institutionalized regulation. Remedying the recognition of nature concerns both political and socio-cultural realms: in the latter, there is a need for reconstructing problematic notions that ignore or disparage nature into ones based on "more authentic recognition" (Schlosberg 2007, 141). Making modernity's social bond sustainable also requires recognizing of, and bonding with, the rest of the natural world (ibid., 142).

Hailwood (2015) relates the status-based model of recognition of nature to his own argument about estrangement from the nonhuman world.[9] The argument is that a certain level of 'basic estrangement' from nonhuman nature is positive and promotes respect for its otherness. Status-harming misrecognition represents domination over nature that regards nonhuman entities and processes only in terms of their usefulness or harmfulness for human purposes. To resist domination over nature is to "recognize that there is more to the nonhuman than its (potential) place in the human landscape" (Hailwood 2015, 143). This idea emphasizes the importance of recognizing nature in relation to its particularities and distinctiveness from human (Hailwood 2015, 144-146). Strategies that focus on similarities and continuity between human and nonhuman realms may encourage overcoming the positive estrangement from nonhuman nature and justify the transformation and 'benevolent policing' of nonhuman nature rather than letting it flourish its own way.

Recognition studies have drawn on actual social struggles to build theoretical approaches. In the nonhuman context, direct claims for recognizing nature are relatively scarce[10] but the case of the Māori people in New Zealand is an interesting exception. Māoris have struggled for the recognition of various ecological entities which they consider as their ancestors and as persons with whom they communicate. Struggles have resulted in the institutional granting of legal personhood to the Whanganui River, Te Urewera habitat (former national park) and Mt. Taranaki[11]. Personhood is granted with corresponding rights and duties (Hutchison 2014). Entities that are persons cannot be owned since they are recognized as their own autonomous 'masters'. Notably, the recognized entities are granted a legal status on their own. Recognition is not merely about recognizing the Māori worldview (recognizing the right of Māori people to maintain beliefs about nature as their ancestor). Rather, the recipient of recognition is nature itself, even if Māori people have 'spoken for it' when claiming for the recognition. It would be interesting to relate these cases to Honnethian terminology of mutual recognition.

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[9] (NTS: I need to check how explicitly Hailwood relates to status issues.)
[10] There may well be other claims regarding treatment of nature that could be captured in recognition language.
[11] The situation at the moment of writing (March 2018).

Section 2: Problems in the existing literature; criteria for an adequate definition

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Recognition should interest environmental political theorists for several reasons. First, it has potential to serve as a conceptual tool for analysing institutionalized reasons beyond environmental degradation and environmentally detrimental practices. Second, the notion is useful in addressing hidden and unquestioned assumptions that (re)produce inequalities, exclusions, and that impede hearing
215   nonhuman voices within the political sphere full of human noise (Dobson 2014, 143–149; 169). Unfortunately, existing contributions on recognition of nature are ambiguous in a way that make the notion itself open to a multitude of contestations and criticism. The notion has been applied in multiple senses without paying attention to their difference. To become a viable concept, recognition of nature requires conceptual clarification.

220   The first problem is that 'recognition' (of nature) has not been defined in detail and in relation to other recognition studies. Schlosberg builds the recognition of nature on very general ideas of recognition as respect and misrecognition as status injury, outlining alternatives for its application. The notion of recognition as respect for nature is too general and risks conflating two forms of respect, recognition and appraisal respect, whose distinction is central for moral philosophy (Darwall 1977) and even more so for
225   recognition studies (McBride 2013)[12]. Status-based model of recognition, on the other hand, is applied in a way that departs from Fraser's account in several respects (like the community of recognitive relations and recipients of recognition) but these differences are not articulated or justified.

A related problem is that the term has been used in several meanings without any specifications (except for the distinction between respect and status injury). Recognition of nature is sometimes equated
230   with 'respect for nature' (Schlosberg 2007, 131-132; Kortetmäki 2016a); elsewhere it refers to a more epistemic stance of recognizing nature as a support system for human flourishing (Schlosberg 2007, 132); and in other instances it is a political notion entailing considerations of justice (ibid., 133) or the redesigning of political community (ibid., 141). The term has been used to denote both the recognition of similarities (between humans and nonhumans) and of particularity in nonhuman (ibid., 134). It also refers to
235   appreciation-like recognition (Schlosberg 2007, 138). Schlosberg has also referred to authors who use recognition in senses that are irrelevant for recognition studies (see discussion on Jane Bennett below). From the viewpoint of conceptual clarity and viability, it would be crucial to identify and distinguish the

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[12] Whereas Schlosberg mostly speaks about the respect for nature (or its integrity and dignity) in a sense that denotes recognition respect, he concludes discussion about recognizing integrity by stating: "We find much to appreciate about the natural world". This hints in the direction of appraisal respect (appreciation of something by virtue of its particular characteristics). Appraisal respect is close to what Honneth means by esteem recognition in his tripartite distinction between forms of recognition.

different 'subspecies of recognition' that are relevant in the nonhuman context and provide a clearer definition of them. Without this work, there is a risk of serious confusion about the meaning of the term,
240   which leaves the term susceptible to criticism about ambiguity that may render the term useless.

In addition to conceptual clarification, some substantive questions require addressing too. One issue is whether strategies for recognizing nature are affirmative or transformative. Dobson (2014, 147) criticizes Schlosberg's approach as an 'affirmative strategy' that revalues nonhuman entities but does not challenge prevailing (human/nature) dichotomies that influence human thinking. Transformative strategy
245   requires something like Latour's merging of the 'questions of nature' and 'questions of politics' into the same epistemological realm (House of Nature in Latour's terms); this constructs a new political ecology and a collective of "a blend of entities, voices, and actors" (Dobson 2014, 150-155 / p154/footnote47?). Contrary to Dobson, Hailwood (2015, 145) reads Schlosberg more sympathetically and suggests that the status injury model represents a difference-based strategy for recognizing nonhuman nature. On the other
250   hand, the status injury model actually returns back to issues of integrity that represent affirmative strategy (cf. Hailwood 154, footnote 29). The transformative effect of status-based model remains unclear.

Another substantive point concerns specifically the status-based model that is the main object of study in this paper. The meaning of status equality and participatory parity need to clarification in the nonhuman context. Contributions that highlight the applicability of Fraser's typology to human-nature
255   relations (Schlosberg 2007, 140; Kortetmäki 2016a) explain only vaguely what *remedying recognition* would actually mean and require. It should mean something more transformative than the inclusion of nonhuman in political considerations since political is a separate element of justice in status-based model and distinct from (though interrelated with) recognition. Schlosberg provides fragments of answer here and there: he refers to the constitution of Ecuador that grants ecosystems a right to flourish and exist (Schlosberg 2014)
260   but does not discuss whether this is a necessary condition for remedy. He also refers to Jane Bennett's talk about the 'recognition of the agential powers of natural and artifactual things' (Bennett 2004, 349) but this confuses rather than clarifies terminology: Bennett talks also about the recognition of *human artefacts*, whose status equality Schlosberg unlikely defends. Bennett also uses 'recognition' in her article in multiple ways[13] that are not related to meanings used in recognition studies. Hence, Bennett's account does not
265   increase clarity regarding the recognition of nonhuman nature[14].

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[13]   Bennett talks about 'the gap between recognizing the suffering of others and engaging in ameliorative practice' and 'recognition of its [the deodand's] peculiar kind of culpability' (Bennett 2004, pp).

[14]   Dobson, too, discusses Bennett's work as representing a transformative strategy of recognizing nature. However, for the reasons given above (that Bennett is equally interested in the status of artefacts and anything material), I will not address her work in detail. It would deserve further attention from recognition studies though.

Considering the above-described ambiguities and shortcomings, I suggest that a satisfactory account of the recognition of nature should address the following issues:

1) The account should define recognition of nature and contrast the definition with mainstream recognition studies. This involves clarifying how recognition of nature relates to different accounts on recognition (at least the major approaches based on Honneth, Taylor, and Fraser).

2) The account should clarify its stance regarding the question about affirmative vs transformative strategies of recognition.

3) The account should explain the mechanisms of recognition: who mediates it and how?

4) The account should address the resolution of conflicting claims for recognition.

5) An account on recognition of nature as respect should contrast the concept with that of 'respect recognition' in mainstream recognition studies. The account should also clarify 'respect' in detail (recipients, justification, and mechanisms of respect, cf. Thompson 2006).

6) A status-based model of recognition of nature should address two major questions: What does the participatory parity mean in human-nonhuman relations? What are the conditions of it?

It is possible to discuss only one of two approaches within the limits of one paper, so I focus here on the status-based model of recognition because I believe it can provide fresh viewpoints for normative environmental theorising. Consequently, I aim to provide answers on all questions except the fifth.

3: Status and recognition of difference in human-nonhuman relations

Nancy Fraser's status-based model of recognition frames recognition as an issue of social status equality that comprises one element of justice. Participatory parity refers to "social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers" (Fraser 2003, 36). This directs the focus in politics of recognition and the task of identifying and overcoming the (institutionalized) patterns of oppression and devaluation that prevent the status equality of people. Obstacles for equality may lie in for example the stigmas created by institutional value patterns, hierarchical value sets that reconstruct the superiority of whiteness or masculinity, or by regulations that systematically deny cultural or religious minorities the opportunity for self-expression.

295   How do these ideas translate to nonhuman realm? Schlosberg (2007, 140-141) answers in two ways. First, recognition requires the inclusion of nature in decision-making and treating nature there as an end. This is partially an issue of political equality rather than of recognition[15], though recognition is essential for ensuring that nature is 'listened to' rather than just 'heard' (Dobson 2014). Second, the three basic types of misrecognition listed by Fraser (1998, 7) are applicable to human-nature relations: nature

300   may be culturally oppressed, nonrecognized or rendered invisible, or disrespected and disparaged in public representations (Schlosberg 2007, 140; Kortetmäki 2016a). Recognition requires overcoming those forms of misrecognition and redesigning practices and institutionalized value patterns. Schlosberg does not examine the status-based model of recognition in more detail: the definition of and conditions for status equality remain unclear. Fraser's definition of equality as the possibility of adult people to interact with each other

305   as peers in social life cannot apply directly to human-nonhuman relations. Status equality needs to be given another meaning that is not reducible to distribution and representation.

        I believe that reinterpretation of status equality benefits from a closer look on a topic addressed briefly by Schlosberg, Dobson and Hailwood: the problem of approaching the recognition of nature chiefly as an issue of recognizing similarities nonhumans have with humans. One step away from the problematic

310   extensionism is to shift the focus on what humans share with the nonhuman world (rather than the opposite). Recognizing the integrity of nature is perhaps a step in that direction but nevertheless represents a continuity-based approach (Hailwood 2014, 153-154 / footnote 29). A transformative strategy for recognizing nature should emphasize the recognition of difference or distinction, and this strategy deserves more attention. The strategy can draw on two sources: Fraser's idea of cultural status hierarchies

315   and Taylor's discussion on multiculturalism and politics of recognition.

        Fraser clarifies the crux of the problem: social status hierarchies create institutionalized value patterns that devalue or disparage certain groups whose members are denied recognition they would need to be equal peers in social life. Disadvantaged social statuses are associated with various forms of distinctiveness: gays are portrayed as pervert, female-headed households improper, or black people (or

320   other ethnic groups) as dangerous (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 30) – or non-Western cultures as somehow inferior and less civilized (Taylor 1994, 30/31). Status hierarchies and related distinctions constitute a barrier for the recognition of all members in the community. The problem may be either insufficient (ignoring) or the wrong kind of (exclusionary or disparaging) response to distinctiveness. Regarding gender, for example, the problem is not the ignorance of women's gendered identity but how it is put to the service

325   of oppression and exploitation (Wolf 1994, 50) and how the stereotypical representations of it leave no room for performing one's gender in a way one wishes. Status hierarchies are not necessarily malign but

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[15]   Although Fraser talks about participatory parity, recognition does not refer to political participation in her approach: political constitutes a distinct (though related) element of justice.

may also result from good intentions, like in the case of gender-targeted social welfare policies that actually stigmatize certain groups and create new forms of discrimination (Habermas 1994, 69-70).

Status hierarchies are characteristic of human-nonhuman relations. Ecofeminist literature has drawn analogy to (often institutionalized and entrenched) androcentric value patterns and the related oppression of both women and nature (e.g. Plumwood 2002). In a similar spirit, the first generation Frankfurt School critical theorists argued that the emergence of 'rational instrumentalisation' (the supremacy of technical rationality that does not question its ends) causes the oppression of humans (at least the proletariat) and nature (Horkheimer 1947). These critiques exemplify institutionalized value patterns that manifest the cultural domination of human(ized) rationality over nonhuman nature. Viewing the nonhuman world merely in human terms (what it is or could be for humans) manifests misrecognition (Hailwood 2015, p). Some entrenched representations stereotype nature as a resource that exists primarily for human appropriation: this is manifested in for example the commonplace paradigm of sustainable development where the ecological sustainability is defined only with reference to sustained satisfaction of human needs. The theoretical sphere is not free from the problem either, since the mainstream tradition of political theory and philosophy can be criticized of assuming a human/nonhuman dichotomy where 'human' sets the standard for anything due to the capacity for deliberative speech (Dobson 2014).

Taylor (1994, 31-32) views that the essence of politics of difference is acknowledging the equal value of what humans have made out of their (universal) potential for forming one's identity. Recognition may be granted to either individuals or cultural groups in their distinctiveness, but the identity does not need to be valued apart from its worth to the individuals or groups being recognized (Blum 1998). The culture needs not be declared as 'good' or 'valuable' (although Taylor has been criticized for suggesting something like this at certain points): point is in recognizing the value of a particular culture or its markers to individuals or groups. Groups can be recognized as groups regarding their historical experiences of oppression and resistance and alike (Blum 1998) and this is not fully reducible to the recognition of individual members of that group. Taylor's account differs in this regard from Fraser's view where recognition always comes back to the individual. In the nonhuman context, groups (understood as ecological collectives like ecosystems or species as evolutionary groups) are not fully subject to Fraser's criticism against recognizing social groups.[16]

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[16] Fraser (2003, 76-77) rejects the recognition of groups for twofold reasons: institutionally entrenched group statuses are hard to change (groups defend once-granted rights vigorously) and group recognition may lead to stereotypization of group identities, neglecting diversity and power imbalances within groups. I do not view the first problem topical regarding nonhuman groups whose activities in the political sphere inevitably differ from those of articulate human groups. The second problem bears some relevance. Some forms of environmentalism can be accused of stereotypizations about 'harmony in nature'. These portraits can be viewed as inadequate.

355   To adapt Taylor's core remark, the essence of the ecological politics of difference is the acknowledgment of the equal value of what different life forms have made out of their (universal) potential for integrity. Human rationality is one expression (among many others) of what has come out of that potential, and it is surely important to us human beings. Yet this rationality should also lead humans to recognize that there are other, perhaps very different, manifestations of that universal potential and that

360   those manifestations are equally important for their holders. Echolocation is an important feature for many bat species and their individuals and the ability to store kiloliters of water in their trunks is valuable for baobab trees that can live in harsh drought, though neither of those features matters for humans. In a more general level, features of species-typical behavior are important to various life forms, regardless of whether those features are shared with humans or not. What is similar, essentially, is the integrity and

365   agency that allows the unfolding of those features (Schlosberg 2007). The ideas of universality and difference are hereby linked without subjugating the latter to the former.

       Literature on the recognition of nature has mainly referred to misrecognition of nonhuman nature 'as whole'. This is appropriate since many forms of misrecognition (related to the supremacy of rational or to human/nature dichotomies) concern the nonhuman realm as a whole: 'non-humanity' in general is not

370   recognized appropriately but ignored or exploited due to its distinctive features (this is somewhat analogous to the misrecognition of female gender). At other times, misrecognition may relate to more particular distinctiveness. Consider the speech of 'nasty or disgusting' animals that are viewed as merely nasty annoyances or harmful beasts[17]. Their distinctiveness is not tolerated and they may be represented as carriers of distasteful properties like diseases, which justifies any treatment towards them. Attempts to

375   revalue these 'disgusting beasts' by pointing out their economic value represent an insufficient and affirmative strategy since they portray those beings only in terms of their usefulness for humans[18]. Rather, the recognition of distinctiveness and its manifestation in life forms must involve "recognition of their own way of being and willingness to coexist with it, rather than ignore it, denigrate it, view it as dispensable or as an obstacle to be overcome" (Hailwood 2015, 242-243). I would add in Taylorian spirit that it also

380   involves acknowledging the importance of various distinctive (and often not human-like) features or 'identity markers' (cf. Blum 1998) for those beings. This is also the point of recognizing distinctiveness, even when grounded on universal integrity: bats are bats not because of their integrity but because of their unique, distinctive and bat-like features (many of which they do *not* share with humans).

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[17]   Disparagement of such groups would deserve further examination that needs to be deferred for future.
[18]   See Hailwood's (2015, 235ff) discussion on Tony Juniper's book and vultures.

385   ## Status equality in a social-ecological community

Recognition of difference in nature is a condition for respectful coexistence[19]. This idea resembles Fraser's key point that one's distinctiveness should not constitute a barrier for one's participatory parity in society. A crucial difference to her model relates to the society, or community of coexistence. Fraser
390   restricts the community to include agents capable of rational speech: status equality is relevant with regard to adult persons. Status-based model of recognizing nature needs to redefine the community of recognitive relations and explain in which terms status equality can be achieved in human-nonhuman relations. I approach these issues by incorporating two concepts useful to the task: social-ecological systems and societal relations to nature.

395   The concept of social-ecological systems (SES) was established in environmental management studies as a response to criticism of earlier approaches that focused narrowly on either ecosystems or the social dimensions of environmental problems and had low success in promoting sustainability (Berkes, Folke & Colding 2000, 1). The concept emphasises "the integrated concept of humans in nature and […] that the delineation between social and ecological systems is artificial and arbitrary" (Folke et al. 2005,
400   443). It takes into account the reciprocal interaction between humans and the rest of the natural world. Social-ecological systems are epistemic models of knowledge about real-world phenomena (Becker 2012) yet do not suppose a direct ontological equivalent in the real world[20]. Interestingly, SES studies also acknowledge the pattern of domination in both human-nonhuman and Eurocentric relations: "Western European societies treated much of the world as a vast resource frontier" (Berkes, Folke & Colding 2000,
405   351). In the context of recognition of nature, social-ecological systems are good candidates for the community within which recognitive relations take place or fail.

Societal relations to nature, in turn, refer to the "historically and culturally specific patterns and practices by means of which societies attempt to materially regulate, and culturally symbolize, their various relationships to nature" (Becker 2012, 6). The notion captures both material and immaterial aspects of
410   societal relations: the regulation of material/energy flows and the cultural symbolizations that are embedded in societal structures and communication. These patterns may be analysed at different levels: individual, institutional and macro-level that goes beyond state control. Ecological crises signify the failure of certain patterns of such regulation (Becker and Jahn 2003). For my argument, the institutional level of

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[19]   Recognition of difference in this sense is not identical to Honneth's idea of recognition as esteem for particularities. Honneth's notion is based on communities of value who esteem certain achievements positively and the possibility to get recognition from such a community contributes to one's self-esteem.

[20]   Notably, the same concerns human-comprised political communities whose boundaries do not have direct ontological equivalents but are contingent and socially constructed.

immaterial mediation and regulation is particularly interesting since it fits addressing the institutionalized
value patterns, communication, and public representation related to status hierarchies.

Social-ecological systems comprise multitude distinct life forms, social and ecological, and their relations. It is a hybrid community characteristic of both what is referred to as human and nonhuman (Latour 2004). In this community, different entities manifest their own ways of life with their own distinct features. The recognition of these different ways of life and their (co)existence is the central claim of the politics of recognition of nonhumans. This politics is a defense of biological and cultural diversity and the right of different life forms to flourish in a way characteristic to them (cf. Gleeson and Low 2002; Schlosberg 2007, 136-137). It captures Hailwood's idea of 'peaceful coexistence' with otherness embodied in those life forms. When framed this way, the parity of participation refers to status equality in the social-ecological community. In Fraser's model, status equality manifests in the relations of interaction that do not presume the subjugation of certain people due to their identity. In the social-ecological model, articulate human speech is not the primary form of interaction in the community anymore. Rather, all forms of interaction that may occur between humans and nonhumans count. Status equality can tentatively be defined as the equal opportunity of different life forms to have interactive relations that do not subjugate, disparage, or exploit them (which happens when humans approach nonhuman realm merely as a resource to be utilised for human purposes). Different life forms should also be able to remain primarily in the forms of interaction that are characteristic of their kinds. For many nonhuman animals, this likely means that their life should not become heavily infused by direct human encounters (Collard 2011) or by other anthropogenic interference such as light pollution in the case of nocturnal animals. Systems that allow abundant light pollution misrecognize the importance of night darkness for nocturnal nonhuman life (a feature they do no share with humans).

There are two conditions for participatory parity in Fraser's model (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 36): 1) the objective condition (disparities in resource distribution may deprive some people the means and opportunities for interaction as peers) and 2) intersubjective condition (institutionalized norms may depreciate some categories of people and their qualities in ways that put them in devalued and subjugated position). These conditions correspond with the two dimensions of societal relations to nature: the regulation of material/energy flows may impede or violate the objective condition, and the embedded cultural symbolizations or communication may impede the intersubjective condition. The objective condition also signifies how recognition is inseparable from material questions even if it is an analytically distinct phenomenon.

In contrast to approaches that focus on recognizing similarities, the social-ecological systems framework and status-based model have true potential to be transformative: they reject the human point

of reference as the only standard, a revision that marks a departure from affirmative strategies (Dobson 2014, p). The SES framing challenges a commonplace boundary of community (as consisting of beings capable of rational speech) and points out that the social cannot be distinguished from nonhuman, even if semantic differentiation is possible and sometimes useful for analytical purposes (Beck 2012). Social-ecological systems are essentially hybrids: entanglements of human, nonhuman, and something between these two. Recognition at play is not merely about transformative recognition of difference, though. There are similarities at stake: entities to be recognized have features of integrity and agency, which makes it possible to speak of their relative status in social-ecological systems in terms given above.[21]

Implications and challenges of recognizing nature

Overcoming misrecognition requires a pragmatist approach: required forms or acts of recognition depend on the type of misrecognition that needs to be redressed. In some cases, remedy requires universalist recognition like universal citizenship (to remedy apartheid); in others, the remedy may be the public and symbolic recognition of particularity. Sometimes the excessive ascribed distinctiveness needs to be 'diluted', and in other cases the ignored distinctiveness needs to be acknowledged. (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 45-47.)[22] These general principles apply to remedying recognition of nature, too.

Meeting the objective and intersubjective requirements of recognition of nature arguably requires changes in both material-energetic regulations and in the symbolic/cultural representations in societal relations to nature. The existing modes of governance pose two kinds of threats to material/objective conditions of parity here. First, the increased appropriation of land for human use (or landscaping in Hailwood's terms) may reduce the *quantity* of certain kinds of nature, i.e. availability of particular habitat types, so that some life forms or ecosystems lose their opportunity to manifest their kind of life. Second, environmental degradation impairs the *quality* of habitats, which impedes the opportunities of (vulnerable) species and ecosystems to defend and continue their existence.

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[21] There might be things that do not share even integrity with humans (perhaps artworks?) yet may still be recognized in the general sense of recognition as regard toward their normatively relevant features (Laitinen 2010). However, I find it impossible to make any considerations about status equality in such cases: equality is a relative notion that requires the similarity in terms of which equality can be thought of. Hence, the idea of status equality necessitates some point of reference that is shared by those whose status is to be considered.

[22] Contrary to Honneth and Taylor, Fraser does not think that everyone's distinctiveness needs to be always recognized, since this would require the recognition of dominant statuses whose dominant position precludes participatory parity of others (she mentions men and heterosexuals as examples of this).

The intersubjective condition of recognizing nature has implications on multiple levels of societal relations. Reframing of the community of as a social-ecological community would transform political processes and education significantly. Taylor (1994) discusses how the education system portrays cultural achievements as a canon of European and North American white males. Not so differently, the substance of education systems is heavily anthropocentric: it often portrays the nonhuman world as a background resource that resides 'out there', distinctly from humans. The question about educational reform would deserve separate examination.[23]

Institutions are important mediators of recognition and societal relations to nature. Institutionalized recognition of nature might require confirming nonhuman realm a status that prevents reducing it into its use-value for humans. Fraser's model links universalist status recognition to rights: all humans are entitled to equal respect recognition, and human rights are one (though not the only) instrument for realizing that idea (Taylor 1994; Honneth 1995; Thompson 2006, 44; McBride 2013, 103ff). One strategy for institutionalizing the recognition of nature would involve granting nonhuman entities certain rights. Rights-like entitlements define a 'sphere of autonomy' by protecting autonomous agents against the violation of their autonomy. The granting of legal personhood[24] to certain nonhuman entities in New Zealand exemplifies a radical version of such strategy. Rights do not require the conception of personhood though: Ecuador constitutionalized the rights of nature without reference to personhood. The practical feasibility of rights-based solutions will be seen in future; the idea of rights of nature has been pointed to involve serious challenges and contestations especially when rights transcend beyond individual-like entities (e.g., Eckersley 1995). Given these challenges, it is useful to consider whether there are alternative ways for institutionalizing the recognition of nature.

Institutionally mediated recognition may also take a form of a public, symbolic affirmation of the value or standing of certain groups like cultural minorities (Laitinen 2010). A symbolic affirmation of nature's status as having normatively relevant integrity and the recognition of its 'distinct ways of being' (analogously to different cultures) without related rights would represent this strategy. It would involve the assertion of willingness to coexist with different forms of life, as well as acknowledging and honouring their agency and integrity. While this alternative could meet the intersubjective condition of status equality, it involves a doubt. Would public affirmation of nature's distinctiveness and integrity transform political and cultural sphere sufficiently, given how entrenched the patterns of subjugation of nature currently are?

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[23] A related point is the role of semi-educational documentary films about nature that may teach about the 'multiculturalism' within social-ecological communities and cultivate human understanding of, and respect for, the distinctive features present in nonhuman nature.

[24] There is potential space for critique that recognition of the personhood of natural entities is anthropomorphism that denies the distinctiveness of nature. The issue is much more complex in the Maori case, however, since in their worldview 'person' is not necessarily something that has initially originated in the human sphere but the opposite.

What about the conflicting claims of recognition within social-ecological communities? First issue is to resolve whether the conflict is real or ostensible. Fraser gives two criteria for justifying any claim for public recognition. Justification requires that the existing institutional patterns deny the claimant's participatory parity and that the practices whose recognition is demanded do not themselves violate overall participatory parity in some way (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 41). For example, discriminatory cultural groups cannot justifiably claim for the recognition of their practices, and conflicts between their claims for recognition and some other claims are ostensible. For example, a society that has institutionalized eco-friendly patterns of cultural value need not provide 'participatory parity' to eco-exploitative cultural minorities, because practices of the eco-exploitative group would violate the standard of participatory parity regarding future human generations (Lash & Featherstone 2002, 36-37).[25] Justification and potential conflict needs to be evaluated case-by-case. Some issues are global (conflicts related to climate adaptation, for example) and others local like the increasing human-cougar encounters in Vancouver Island (Collard 2011).[26] Resolution of conflicts also necessitates pragmatism and local deliberation rather than mere universal theorising. In such deliberations, of course, recognition of nonhuman nature as an expression of willingness to peacefully coexist with it (and accept some estrangement from it) is a precondition for fair resolution.

Discussion

To summarise the argument, recognition of nature concerns societal relations to nonhuman nature within social-ecological systems or communities and involves the attitude of respect for nonhuman ways to be and willingness to coexist with nonhuman otherness. Recognition allows nonhuman entities to conduct their own ways of life and their characteristic ways of interaction within the social-ecological community. Societal relations must not threaten nonhuman beings' continued existence (by endangering or destroying them) or integrity (by depriving them of agency). Recognition has both material and immaterial conditions that relate to the material/energetic and symbolic regulations and representations in the institutional level.

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[25] The argument could actually be stronger than made by the cited authors: namely, that not institutionalising eco-friendly patterns of value is a misrecognition of future humans (or present humans who suffer from the consequences of anthropogenic environmental degradation) (Laitinen & Kortetmäki forthcoming).

[26] This example also emphasizes the point that the approach *does not* mean promoting direct interactions between humans and nonhumans in any possible case. Direct encounters with humans and cougars are unlikely to be rewarding for either of the parties, and some form of (quite literal) estrangement (cf. Hailwood 2015) might be preferable in such environments to promote the peacefulness of coexistence.

The model proposed here bears much resemblance to Fraser's status-based model of recognition and applies several elements of it (different forms of misrecognition, strategies for remedying them, and the general connection between distinctiveness and universality). It also adopts the idea of status-based equality although modifies that notion significantly. There are also crucial differences: the community relevant to recognition is understood very differently, as is the notion of interaction. Moreover, the model proposed her involves a more far-reaching transformative effect since it concerns the recognition of distinctive qualities some of which cannot be shared by humans even in principle. Some elements, like the emphasis on the recognition of nonhuman groups and the spirit of 'coexistence in conditions of multiculturalism' draw more on Taylor's account. For these reasons, I am not certain whether the model counts as an application of Fraser's status-based model of recognition or represents a new theoretical-conceptual model of recognition of nature in societal relations to nature.

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