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**A Political Theory of Dissent:  
Dissent at the Core of Radical Democracy**

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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# ABSTRACT

The main idea that is advocated in this thesis is that a radical democratic theory needs a theory of dissent as one of its core concepts. The argument is made in favour of the view that a radical democratic theory requires a conception of justice as participatory parity and an account that makes change intelligible. The thesis defends the claim that Nancy Fraser's concept of justice as participatory parity combined with Ernesto Laclau's insights on populist democracy and hegemony best suits this requirement.

The thesis is done within the framework of radical democracy. It is argued that by radical democracy is meant a form of democracy that is more democratic than liberal democracy. The connection between radical and liberal democracy lies in the fact that radical democratic theories are usually based on a critique of liberal institutionalism.

Framed like this, there is an opposition between liberal and radical democracy. In the thesis it is claimed that a political theory of dissent should be positioned within the framework of radical democracy for a couple of overarching reasons. The first one is that the liberal democratic framework internalizes and domesticates dissent. This leads to the conclusion that the liberal democratic framework cannot treat dissent as a separate concept. Radical democracy, hence, is a view of democracy that is radical in relation to liberal democracy. It can be said to be radical towards democracy itself. To be radical towards democracy implies that radical democracy always stretches the boundaries of democracy.

A separate political theory of dissent is important for the sake of showing that dissent can and should be viewed as a positive and constructive feature in society. Dissent is positive and constructive for many reasons: it fosters democratic citizenship, it aims to remove injustices, and it may improve the institutional framework and strengthens participatory parity in society. Even though dissent, as a form of participation, is a positive feature in society it cannot be completely institutionalized. On the other hand, a democratic society is required to uphold dissent as a feature in a manner that is similar to a right.

It is argued that dissent should be viewed as a political conception that attempts to encompass actually occurring dissent. This is in contrast to dissent only as the idea of dissenting or fostering dissenting thoughts. It is proposed that dissent should be viewed as a conception that requires a divergent opinion to be articulated. The idea of articulated dissent ties the conception to social movements.

Dissent, as portrayed in this thesis, ties radical democratic theory to institutional reality. The main idea is that dissent stems from disagreement with society's institutional arrangements and hence, it will also target those institutions. Hence, it is proposed that a theory of radical democratic dissent

should be viewed as a theory that is positioned within the context of society's institutional framework.

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In Helsinki  
May 12.5.2016

Joonas Leppänen

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 GENERAL CLAIMS

The main idea that I advocate in this thesis is that a radical democratic theory needs a theory of dissent as one of its core concepts. I will also argue that a radical democratic theory requires a conception of justice and an account of the logic of change. I will defend the claim that Nancy Fraser's concept of justice as participatory parity combined with Ernesto Laclau's insights on populist democracy and hegemony best suits this requirement.

This thesis is done within the framework of radical democracy. I will argue that by radical democracy is meant a form of democracy that is more democratic than liberal democracy. The connection between radical and liberal democracy lies in the fact that radical democratic theories are usually based on a critique of liberal institutionalism.

A theory of radical democracy views democracy as being more than merely a liberal constitutional regime or system. Radical democracy is an idea of democracy where democracy is an equally strong normative ideal as the ideals of freedom, human rights and equality. The three latter ideals are encompassed by the liberal democratic framework. Hence, democracy in radical democracy is an intrinsic good whereas it has a more instrumental nature within the liberal framework.

Framed like this, there is an opposition between liberal and radical democracy. As I view it, a political theory of dissent should be positioned within the framework of radical democracy for a couple of overarching reasons. The first one is that the liberal democratic framework internalizes and domesticates dissent. This leads to the conclusion that the liberal democratic framework cannot treat dissent as a separate concept. Radical democracy, hence, is a view of democracy that is radical in relation to liberal democracy. It can be said to be radical towards democracy itself. To be radical towards democracy implies that radical democracy always stretches the boundaries of democracy.

Radical democracy stretches the boundaries of democracy in two ways. First, it widens our conception of democracy by constantly challenging its boundaries. This challenge arises from the view that democracy is an intrinsic good within radical democracy. Hence, democracy is developed because it is valuable in itself. This challenge makes alterations possible in our conception of democracy. Second, the challenge, and the possibility for different alterations, in turn requires a conception of radical democracy as a concept that is in constant movement. This means that our conception of democracy may lead to practical alterations of society at the same time as the institutionalized forms of democracy changes the requirements and hence also our conceptions of democracy.

A separate political theory of dissent is important for the sake of showing that dissent can and should be viewed as a positive and constructive feature in society. Dissent is positive and constructive for many reasons: it fosters democratic citizenship, it aims to remove injustices, and it may improve the institutional framework and strengthens participatory parity in society.

Even though dissent, as a form of participation, is a positive feature in society it cannot be completely institutionalized. On the other hand, a democratic society is required to uphold dissent as a feature in a manner that is similar to a right.

I will argue for the view that radical democracy also implies a specific logic of change in order to be able to properly encompass the idea that democracy is in constant movement. The requirement of a logic of change has its grounds in value pluralism and disagreement. As we have a plurality of values they necessarily come into conflict with each other. Hence, there is necessarily a disagreement of values. The logic of change conceptualizes how disagreement is met, overcome or managed. Leaning partly on Ernesto Laclau, there are two main ways of making change intelligible. According to Laclau, societal change can be made intelligible by employing a dialectical or an antagonistic logic of change. I will argue along with Laclau for the view that an antagonistic logic is the more justified alternative for a radical democratic theory.

According to Laclau, change in a society is tied to the hegemonic struggle of disagreeing parties. Democracy is viewed as being in constant movement. The logic that governs this change should avoid being one that sets strict boundaries and obstacles to democracy. On the contrary, the idea of democracy in constant motion requires a logic that allows for constant re-evaluation of the concept of democracy. A dialectical logic transcends opposition by deriving this possibility from the opposing concepts themselves. Viewing change as dialectical opposition implies a partial determinism. On these grounds I propose, along with Laclau, that we should understand the logic of change as an antagonistic logic instead of a dialectical logic.

Further, I propose that a radical democratic political theory of dissent requires an idea of justice in order to set just limits for democracy. Nancy Fraser's conception of justice as participatory parity seems to be the most viable such theory at hand for several reasons. If we want to take dissent seriously in a value pluralist society it is required to further participatory parity because it both defends and makes dissent possible. The promotion of participatory parity defends dissent because it is viewed as a possible way of participating. Insofar as dissent is viewed as a positive contribution to society, participatory parity enables the securing of everyone's equal right to dissent.

The right to dissent is crucial for a radical democratic theory of dissent because it secures individual participatory freedom under conditions of value pluralism. The right to dissent can be seen as a value itself because it is one of the foundational values of democratic and value pluralist politics. In other words, the combination of value pluralism and democracy is an oxymoron if one does not recognize the value of dissent.

The conception of dissent as I view it should be viewed as a political conception that attempts to encompass actually occurring dissent. This is in contrast to dissent only as the idea of dissenting or fostering dissenting thoughts. I propose that dissent should be viewed as a conception that requires a divergent opinion to be articulated. The idea of articulated dissent ties the conception to social movements. I propose that social movements are created around articulated dissent. This leads to the view that one of the constituting factors of social movements in democratic society is dissent.

The requirements of dissent also tie a radical democratic theory to institutional reality. The main idea is that dissent stems from disagreement with society's institutional arrangements and hence, it will also target those institutions. Hence, I propose that a theory of radical democratic dissent should be viewed as a theory that is positioned within the context of society's institutional framework.

## **1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is structured in five chapters: an introduction, three major chapters and a conclusion. The concepts and ideas mentioned in the introduction will be discussed and argued as the thesis unfolds.

This thesis is framed as a radical democratic theory. Hence, the first task will be to clarify my stance on what radical democracy means. My view on radical democracy is based on the idea that radical democracy should be seen as an umbrella concept for agonist and deliberative democracy. In other words, deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy should be seen as radical democratic alternatives. The radicalness of the concepts are in relation to liberal democracy and to democracy itself in the sense that radical democracy always entails a view of democracy that pushes at the very edges of democracy itself.

This argument is made against a view that seems to be quite common nowadays where radical democracy, deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy are viewed as different forms of democracy. It is also quite common to equate agonistic democracy with radical democracy. I view both the latter views as conceptually and historically untenable.

After my view on radical democracy has been clarified, I will continue in the second chapter to clarify what I mean by dissent. Within this chapter I will relate dissent, amongst others, to features such as representation, democratic demands and institutions. I will also clarify what is meant by the idea of viewing dissent as a positive feature in society. This chapter is concluded with a preliminary outline for the requirements of a political theory of dissent.

In chapter three, I will continue the investigation by determining what kind of conception of justice is most justified for a radical democratic theory which takes into account the centrality of dissent. I will argue that a view of justice that

is based on the norm of participatory parity is the one that has the strongest justification.

This chapter on justice is approached through the recognition/redistribution debate between Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser. The reason for this is that Fraser and Honneth can legitimately be viewed as two of the foremost philosophers, besides Habermas, on justice within radical democratic theory.

The debate between Fraser and Honneth is about the fundamental categories of justice. Honneth defends a position where recognition is seen as the fundamental category of justice from which all other forms of injustices can be derived. Fraser, on the other hand, defends a view that one has simultaneously to take into account three different categories of justice that cannot be derived from one another. Thus, in her view a conception of justice has to take into account socio-economic inequalities, issues of identity (recognition) and the problem of political representation.

I will argue that Nancy Fraser's approach that is based on the normative ideal of participatory parity is more justified for a radical democratic political theory of dissent. One reason, I will argue, is that participatory parity meets one of the requirements for a political theory of dissent. Fraser's framework also allows for justice to be defined from the point of view of dissent. This feature ties her idea of justice to social movements. Fraser's conception of justice also has strong ties to institutional reality, which I view as a clear merit.

The debate between Honneth and Fraser is also relevant as it captures a wider trend in political philosophy where matters of justice have been evolving from economic distribution into differing conceptions where identities and values have to be taken into account in one way or another. I will conclude this part by building further on Fraser's framework in order to make it more suitable for a political theory of dissent.

After the investigation on the conception of justice, I will continue, in chapter four, with an inquiry into what kind of conception of democracy is most justified for a radical democratic political theory of dissent. In this chapter I will argue that an agonistic conception of radical democracy is more justified than a deliberative democratic conception. The main reason is that deliberative democracy partially shares liberal democracies' feature of internalizing and domesticating dissent.

Within the scope of agonistic democracy the idea of hegemony is central. Hence, I will clarify in this part how dissent and hegemony is related. Later on I will argue for the view that Laclau's concept of hegemony can be combined with Fraser's framework in order to answer some deficiencies in it.

At the beginning of the thesis I have argued that one of the requirements for a political theory of dissent is what I call a logic of change. In the chapter on democracy I will clarify what is meant by a logic of change and also argue for the view that a radical democratic political theory of dissent should employ an antagonistic logic of change.

Finally, I will, at the end of the fourth chapter, present some ideas that make the combination of Fraser's theory of justice and Laclau's political theory possible.

In the fifth and final chapter, I present one possible way of achieving a radical democratic political theory of dissent. The theory that I am arguing for is based on the combination of Fraser's theory of justice as participatory parity and Laclau's political theory. Even though there may be other options in achieving a radical democratic political theory of dissent, I claim that this combination results in one of the better options.

## 2 A POLITICAL THEORY OF DISSENT: AN OUTLINE

### 2.1 THE CONCEPT OF DISSENT: GENERAL REMARKS

The aim of this chapter is to reach a preliminary outline of what is meant by the concept of dissent as viewed as a central feature of radical democracy. As this thesis is done within the framework of radical democracy I will first present and argue for my view on radical democracy. I will also present some arguments that liberal democracy contains dissent by internalizing it within the liberal democratic system, hereby domesticating it. This is also relevant as I will later argue that deliberative democracy partially shares this feature.

By dissent I will within the context of this thesis mean the following. To dissent with something is to disagree with a specific feature in society and to articulate this disagreement. It is the articulation of dissent that makes it into a political matter. Viewed like this, dissent is a political and articulated disagreement directed towards a specific feature in society. On a general level the meaning of the concept of dissent is relatively unproblematic, and does not commonly give rise to any major philosophical debates.<sup>1</sup>

A guiding idea of my viewpoint is that dissent and the dissenters have something valuable to provide to society. Thus, the concept of dissent has both a descriptive and a normative character.

The value of dissent is tied to the idea of viewing it as a positive contribution to society. In other words, one value of dissent lies in the idea that those who dissent in society do it based on demands to correct wrongs in society or to change the state of affairs that are conceived as oppressing.

The feature of dissent as removing injustices shares a close tie to the idea of justice conceived through the normative idea of participatory parity and hence, also democratic participation. If dissent is conceived as a feature that is aimed towards oppressive institutions, it should also be viewed as a way of democratically justified participation in society.

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<sup>1</sup> There are some works are closely related to dissent that warrant mentioning even though they mostly treat dissent in relation to some other feature of society. For example in *Democracy and Disagreement*, Gutman and Thompson treats disagreement in a way that can be interpreted similarly as my description of dissent. They however frame the question of disagreement within the context of deliberative democracy. Their goal is to overcome moral disagreement through deliberative democracy (Gutman & Thompson, 1996, p. 1). Another related book is Larsen's *The Right to Dissent*. Larsen frames his book in the context of Habermas' theory of communicative action and relates it to some classical philosophers and some modern ones like Rawls (Larsen, 2009). Even though there are many more similar works, most of them share the feature of treating dissent as secondary in relation to another social feature such as rights, moral obligation, civil disobedience etc. The bearing idea behind my thesis is to treat dissent as a central feature in radical democratic political theory.

I claim that dissent is a fundamental feature in democratic society. This is a very unproblematic claim because democracy by itself always implies differing views. As democracy is a way of either managing or living with this conflict of views, dissent becomes a necessity. One can conclude in line with Balibar that democratic citizenship as such is necessarily conflictual (Balibar, 2014, p. 284). The main question is not if dissent exists or not but how we should approach it in democratic society.

Dissent within the democratic framework challenges the idea of democracy as being merely a system of representation. Any system of representation necessarily implies exclusion (Benhabib, 2007, pp. 450-451). Exclusion, by definition, denies a part of the people voice in matters being decided within the body of representation. Hence, there remain voices that are not being represented and that are silenced. In other words, no democratic system can encompass all possible divergent views. Dissent allows for a channel of expression for the silenced voices. Dissent, thus, has an inclusionary aspect. This feature ties the concept of dissent strongly to the idea of participatory democracy.

Dissent should be seen as a positive feature in democratic society. It is targeted to correct wrongs in society and it furthers participatory democracy. On these grounds alone one can justify the view that we should allow and even foster dissent in democratic society. In other words, by guaranteeing a right to dissent it is possible to further democracy and democratic citizenship in society. In other words, dissent should not be viewed as a pathology in democracy which can be quenched in the name of stability but as a central feature of democratic society and political life.

Dissent is tied to the institutional arrangement of society. One possible target for dissent is oppressive institutions. Hence, besides furthering democracy and participation dissent has a feature of improving society's institutional framework. Dissent that is targeting institutions can from this point of view be interpreted as claims for institutional improvement. This interpretation of dissent views it as being targeted, amongst others, against exclusionary and oppressive institutional practices.

The idea that dissent is tied to the institutional framework and strives to remove oppressive practices ties the concept of dissent to what I call the logic of change. The logic of change is the underlying logic that makes change in society intelligible.

A general thought experiment that can show how dissent can facilitate change in society depending on how it is conceived is by examining a specific form of oppressive majority rule.

If the conditions of the majority are good, the majority in a representative democracy can be interpreted as having an interest to uphold its own position. Under such conditions majority rule may lead to the interest to uphold the status quo. Such an interest may lead to exclusionary practices as claims against the status quo are not properly heard and perhaps even excluded within the representative body. This kind of majority tyranny rejects new ideas and change

as they challenge the current status quo. If we view the representative system as the main facilitator of dissent in society, then change in society happens according to the will of the majority.

On the other hand dissent can be viewed as a feature that belongs to participatory democracy and it is viewed as a way of participating in society that has a strong democratic justification. If dissent is viewed like this, then change in society has a strong source in the minorities that are excluded or oppressed.

Of the two examples above I view the second one as the more democratic way of theorizing dissent in democratic theory. Hence, dissent and the dissenters should be viewed as making justified claims to be included or heard.

In the political theory developed in this thesis, dissent is viewed as a vehicle of societal change in democracy in line with for example Laclau or Mouffe. The dissenters are viewed as being able to bring forth new ideas, and thus furthering the development of democratic society.

One reason for depoliticization in modern capitalist society follows from the growing impact of the economic sphere which in turn leads to the wider usage of an economic or instrumental rationality. In other words, matters of politics become economic matters of how to tweak the bureaucratic machine that is the state (Young, 1990, p. 71) (Habermas, 1987, pp. 343-356).

The economization of society reduces social conflict to distributive matters and by extension value pluralism is reduced to mere interest group pluralism (Young, 1990). Claims of justice are translated to clever rhetorical slogans in the attempt to win and play the game. Hence, politics loses its dimension of justice or liberation. This reduces political matters to competing interests. The reduction distances the political decision makers from the citizens because those who should represent the people are concentrating on playing a game where the only victories are different economical configurations of the state machine.

The claims of the disaffected in society that all the political parties are the same and nothing will change by voting becomes true. It is true in the sense that when all political agents operate within the sphere of economics, in the language of economics and under the instrumental rationality of economics, then change is not possible as the commitment to the economic rationale is demanded from all who wants to take part. Also this makes a mockery of democracy as a value as there is no real discussion or deliberation. Even though it is unclear if the economization of any society has gone this far, the effects of such a development are clear to be seen.

I do not view the economization of society only as an effect of contemporary new liberalist policies but as a wider pathology of society that should be actively avoided in the name of value pluralism and democracy. A similar effect can be found, for example, in most forms of traditional Marxist theory where all matters political can be reduced to the relations of production, in other words economics. In this sense new liberalism and Marxism shares the effect of hiding politics behind economics (May, 2008, p. 45).

The opposite is also possible, as we can learn from the debate between Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). The reduction of politics

to a matter of ethics may lead to a situation where objective claims of justice cannot be made as everything is reduced to an interpersonal level or to intersubjectivity.

The possibility of dissent requires that a differing opinion can be voiced in a framework of the dissenters choosing. If the dissenter(s) are not allowed to define their claims on their own grounds and their claims are translated purely into the sphere of economics or ethics, their claims can become interpreted through hegemony. This entails that the claims can be hijacked in favor of claims that are different from the original intention. In other words, philosophically the concept of dissent requires the rejection of reductionism.

Under the regime of economic reductionism dissent introduces values into politics. In a regime of ethical reductionism dissent introduces a framework of objectivity. Dissent also challenges the idea of politics as a game and in such cases functions to remind the political elite of their position in society as subordinate to the people.

In other words, the acceptance and fostering of dissent energizes political conflicts by reintroducing values to an otherwise self-interested driven pluralism. One aim of dissent is to get rid of the kind of politics that requires that political claims create interest groups around them. Hence, dissent reintroduces values into politics and challenges the view that politics is merely about bargaining and making deals.

Most theories of modern capitalist society make presuppositions about human nature or the political agent. For example a liberal capitalist theory generally presupposes that humans are by nature, at least, somewhat egotistical creatures that tend to live to maximize their well-being. When this idea is tied to the idea of economic freedom, the political agent becomes a consumer instead of a citizen.

In liberalism, the bearing idea is one of autonomy, in other words, to have as much freedom as possible as long as it does not interfere with anyone else's similar freedom. More often than not, the main focus is on the idea that freedom is considered the absence of obstacles, in other words negative freedom. However, when this idea is connected to the idea of maximizing economic freedom the former idea of autonomy becomes obsolete. In other words, when freedom is considered as economic freedom, to retain the idea of autonomy economic freedom has to be limited as huge differences of wealth leads to different possibilities of everyone which ultimately leads to a situation where an increase in the freedom of some leads to the decrease of the freedom of others.

To dissent against this idea does not necessarily limit itself to dissent on the distribution of wealth. Dissent may be directed amongst others, towards the idea of the political agent as a consumer, the idea of freedom or the centrality of economic freedom. In other words, the idea is that the power to define the target and content of dissent should be characterized by the dissenters.

I do not claim that dissent by definition would reject only new liberalist policies, it only serves as an example. Dissent could equally well be directed

against a theoretical or real framework of state capitalism or some ideal of pure communist utopia.

Dissent potentially challenges any set of prescribed definition of human nature or political agency. It is not that such a definition would necessarily be intrinsically false but the possibility of redefinition should always be open. In other words, any theory that takes freedom seriously requires that substantial definitions of human nature and political agency are left open. Freedom is considered as the removal of institutional limitations in the way of participatory parity.

## **2.2 RADICAL DEMOCRACY**

This thesis is done within the framework of radical democracy, hence, it is necessary to spell out what is meant by the concept.

Within democratic theory there are differing conceptions of what we mean by radical democracy. Even though there are a lot of philosophers and political theorists who work on radical democracy, there are remarkably few thoughts on what is meant by radical democracy in itself.

Regardless of our conception of democracy the foundational difference of pluralism is central. In other words, a multitude of values implies a potential conflict that democracy in its different forms tries to manage or answer. Thus, all accounts of democracy strive to answer the question of how this difference should be regulated or how it should play out.

Liberal democracy regulates and domesticates the difference while the debate between deliberative democracy and agonist democracy treats this difference as foundational. Both deliberative democracy and agonist democracy share this to a certain point. Both share the idea that we need democracy because we have differences of opinions etc., the main opposition between them is whether or not it is possible to secure a ultimate common ground that everyone can consent to. The agonist would claim that it is impossible and the deliberative democrat would claim the contrary.

Adrian Little and Moya Lloyd have made some clarifying distinctions with regard to the concept of radical democracy (Little & Lloyd, 2009, p. 1). Their work consists mainly in identifying different strands of radical democratic theory. According to Little and Lloyd, the concept of radical democracy emerged as a response to a crisis within Western left-wing thought: the disaffection with socialist and orthodox Marxist thought to explain developments in the industrial world. These include the rise of new social movements that do not rely on class as a central feature for their critique or struggle. They also include the fall of the Soviet bloc and the demise of Communism.

On the question of radical democracy, Little and Lloyd provide some answers based on different approaches by theorists that either call themselves radical democrats or can on other grounds be counted as radical democrats (Little & Lloyd, 2009, pp. 2-3).

First, Lloyd and Little identify a characterization of radical democracy that they call post-Marxist or critical theory. This strand is identified as theories that at the same time are critical of the capitalist economy and historical Marxism. The major part of these are counted as belonging to critical theory. At this point they rely on a definition by Iris Young where she states that:

*The radical anti-capitalist pursuit of justice is better thought of as a project of democratizing both the state, corporate economy, and civil society than bringing all the production and distribution of goods under democratic state direction. (Young, 2000, p. 183)*

In this definition the opposition between radical democracy and its opposite, for example a representative or aggregationist conception, would lie with the question where and how democracy should take place. The radical democratic view would claim that people should have their say not only through the representative institutions of the state but also in areas where the state has little or no say at all. An aggregationist view would claim that a society is democratic as long as the people would have their say in choosing the representatives in the state.

According to Lloyd and Little, Iris Young counts works by Claus Offe, Jean Cohen, Andrew Arato, Jürgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser and herself as radical democrats. These thinkers are counted as the critical theorists. Lloyd and Little also identify another strand of post-structuralist post-Marxist thinkers. To this group they count Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

The reason for the distinction between critical theorists and post-structuralists is to highlight that they belong to different traditions of thought. The critical theorists have their roots in the Frankfurt school and the post-structuralists trace their roots to French post-structuralism. Both strands are critical towards liberal democracy while at the same time being committed to some of the elements of it, namely freedom, equality and liberal human rights. They share the idea that radical democracy favors participation and self-government over the institutionalization of difference in representative democracy.

Both groups also place importance on power relations that undermine individuals or groups possibilities to exercise the formal citizenship rights of liberalism (Little & Lloyd, 2009, pp. 2-3). In other words, they do not reject liberalism but aim to reconstruct it and strengthen its democratic dimension. The difference between these groups lies according to Lloyd and Little in the view on dissensus or consensus. They claim that the critical theory radical democrats emphasize the possibility of a rational deliberative consensus where the post-structuralists emphasize dissensus and disagreement.

On this point it becomes quite clear that this characterization of radical democracy is related to the contemporary debate between agonists and deliberative democrats. Quite often the agonist view is thought to represent radical democracy while the deliberate account does not.

One of the main reasons for idea that agonism is equated with radical democracy has to do with the influence Mouffe and Laclau have had on radical democratic thought in Europe. It is common to refer to their work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* when referring to radical democracy.

I think that it is a misconception to equate only the agonist stance with radical democracy. I hold that both the deliberative and the agonist standpoints are radical democratic conceptions. The categorization that Lloyd and Little make between critical theory radical democrats and post-structuralists supports this view. Especially from the point of view of Lloyd and Little it is possible to

view the debate between agonists and deliberative democrats as being part of the wider debate or theoretical project of radical democracy.

I hold that it is false and also quite dubious to attempt to define away the deliberative democrats from the radical democratic accounts especially as a major part of them can be counted as critical theorists. It is dubious simultaneously counting theorists as radical democrats as long as they are doing critical theory and then suddenly assume that they have left the project of radical democracy when counted as deliberative democrats.

This is especially true as they have not changed their theories in a way to merit the removal of the categorization of radical democracy. In other words, my stance is that for example Jürgen Habermas has as much claim to being categorized as being a radical democrat as for example Chantal Mouffe. The difference lies in the conception of what radical democracy entails where Habermas argues in favor of a deliberative consensus and Mouffe for an agonist dissensus. In short, both the agonistic and the deliberative conceptions are sub-concepts of radical democracy.

One can also identify two different strands of deliberative democracy. John Dryzek distinguishes liberal deliberative democracy from its critical theory counterpart (Dryzek, 2000, pp. 8-30). Hence, one can divide deliberative democracy in its liberal and radical versions. This does not change my categorization as my focus is specifically on radical democracy. Dryzek's distinction serves to show different ways of approaching deliberative democracy.

Another possible way to conceive radical democracy is as a political stance or as a leftist project (Little & Lloyd, 2009, p. 1). From this point of view radical democracy has taken the place that was earlier reserved for socialism. The idea is that the concept of radical democracy would encompass the heterogeneous movements of the left in a better way than socialism did. This characterization is in line with the difficulty of the political left of describing and providing a theory that could conceptualize contemporary struggles.

Within the Marxist framework all struggles could be subsumed under the category of class-struggle. Contemporary movements define themselves as struggling towards a myriad of different goals and on the basis of as many different reasons. Hence, the project of radical democracy can be viewed as spelling out and conceptualizing left-wing movements that supports the movements as well as vice versa. Thus, as we cannot view contemporary struggle through a theory that can reduce all struggles under one master concept (class-struggle) we need a theory that can conceptualize the myriad of struggles while not distorting the possibility of the movements to define themselves.

On the question of what it is that makes radical democracy radical, I would be inclined to give three answers. First, radical democracy is radical because it breaks the boundaries of the process of democracy as conceived within the liberal framework. With this I mean that the liberalist framework sets specific boundaries for the legitimate usage of democratic decision making. For example if democracy governs only in the public sphere. To widen democracy one has to

show and argue for the transferring of matters from the private to the public sphere. In other words, the boundaries for democracy within the liberalist framework are very strict. Radical democracy is radical because it allows for democracy to govern or happen potentially everywhere.

The other answer is that radical democracy is radical as it is an account in which one tries to encompass a multiplicity of different struggles within a conception of democracy while still being true to the multiple accounts on their own merits. In a sense this means that a radical democratic theory is radical because it is necessarily on the very edges of democracy. The edge of democracy entails the near impossible task of defining the potentially limitless. In other words, radical democracy has to give limits for democracy to be able to spell out an understandable conception of democracy at the same time as it has to give the ability to define democracy itself to the potentially unlimited different accounts of different movements. Hence, radical democracy entails taking democracy to its extreme by taking it to its limits.

Further, a feature of radical democracy is also that it views the normative ideal of democracy as equally important as freedom, human rights and equality. This means that apart from freedom, human rights and equality, radical democracy requires the idea of participation and a constant reminder that the ultimate power in a democracy belongs to the people. In this sense there is a claim in radical democracy of being more democratic than the liberal constitutional regime.

I will justify my conception of democracy by examining some of the radical democratic accounts and see how they fit in my perspective. This perspective entails, that radical democracy should be seen as a wider conception of democracy, whereas deliberative democracy and agonist democracy are sub-categories.

James Ingram has answered the question of what radical democracy is through his reading of Claude Lefort (Ingram, 2006, pp. 37-39) (Lefort, 1986). In his reading of Lefort, Ingram identifies two ways of politics that both are contrasted against totalitarianism.

One of them is liberalism and the other is radical democracy. According to Ingram, Lefort sees totalitarianism as a way of fusing power with society in the symbolic order. To do this it would be necessary to fight indeterminism with repression (Ingram, 2006, pp. 37-39). Ingram's account can be read as adding support to my account of radical democracy and to the conception that liberalism internalizes dissent.

To avoid this totalitarian temptation in a democratic society one has to leave power, legitimacy, identity and unity open to question or conflict (Ingram, 2006, pp. 37-39). The liberalist way would do this by institutionalizing politics-as-conflict within a legal and institutional order. Radical democracy on the other hand posits conflict and dissent as the main constitutive features of democracy and leaves the symbolic place of power empty by avoiding to institutionalize any specific arrangement of power.

Hence, Lefort's account of radical democracy as presented by Ingram adds to the idea that radical democracy and liberal democracy are two opposing ways of handling difference within democratic theory. This strengthens the conceptions and legitimizes the usage of radical democracy as being opposed to liberalism. Also, Lefort's idea that the symbolic place of power should be left open add to the view that radical democracy always is on the edge of democracy in the sense that Lefort's account presents the democratic struggle by not describing it or giving it any substance. In other words, the democratic struggle characterizes itself.

Even though it may be best to leave the "radical" in radical democracy undefined or open to different interpretations, it is clear that the scholarly debate has gone further as one of the main things is now the debate between agonism and deliberation or deliberative democrats and decisionists (agonists) as Bonnie Honig calls them (Honig, 2007, pp. 1-4). For Honig the main differences are the different answers the deliberative democrats and the decisionists can give to solve three democratic paradoxes.

The three paradoxes are the paradox of politics, of legitimation and of constitutional democracy (Honig, 2007, pp. 1-4, 8). Roughly the paradox of politics is a chicken or egg situation between universal foundations (deliberative democrats) and pure decision making (agonists) and how one can arrive to a general will from this. Honig relies on Seyla Benhabib for the characterization of the paradox of legitimation. Benhabib characterizes the paradox of legitimation by relying on Rousseau's distinction between the 'will of all' and the 'general will' (Benhabib, 1994, pp. 28-29). The paradox of legitimation has its roots in the opposition between what individuals believe to be in their best interest in concrete situations, and what would be in their collective interest if they would be enlightened enough. In other words, there is a paradox between the idea that the legitimacy of democratic rule by a sovereign people refers to the ability to make choices that is in the collective interest of all and the idea that democratic rule should allow for the people to make their own choices according to their own individual will.

Lastly the paradox of constitutional democracy is the paradox between constitutionalism and popular sovereignty. In other words, how can a constitution constrain the sovereignty of the people across the boundaries of time?

Honig's account of democracy also puts the agonists and the deliberative democrats within a single framework. She characterizes the debate between the agonists and the deliberative democrats as being a different attempt to solve the paradox of politics. Hence, this account adds to the idea that agonism and deliberative democracy is a subcategory of a wider theory of democracy.

It is possible to view Honig as a radical democrat because she closely ties her idea of democracy to Rousseau's idea of participation. The strong emphasis on participation highlights, and partially overcomes the problem that a democratic system runs into if legitimation is achieved only through representation. We can also see that the second and third paradox requires a concept of democracy that

always questions itself. In other words, Honig's conception of democracy can be said to view democracy itself as being always in motion.

Thus far it seems that my account of radical democracy can explain and categorize in a justified manner at least some conceptions of radical democracy and also the debate on agonism and deliberative democracy.

There are differing categorizations of radical democracy that imply the taking of a stance in the debate on how we should view the agonist/deliberation debate. I will present some of the competing ideas and I will show why my conception is better suited as a categorization of radical democracy, agonism and deliberative democracy.

In his book *Agonistic Democracy - Constituent Power in the Era of Globalization*, Mark Wenman views radical democracy as a distinct form of democracy apart from agonistic and deliberative democracy (Wenman, 2013, p. 3). With regard to the distinctions of different models of democracy, Wenman refers to David Held.

Held's claim is that different models of democracy are complex networks of concepts and generalizations which in turn reveal chief elements of different conceptions of democracy (Held, 2006, p. 6). Held does not identify radical democracy as a distinct form of democracy, the only inclination is that radical democracy is a form of democracy that strives to expand or intensify deliberation in deliberative democracy (Held, 2006, p. 253).

Because Held's book is fairly old, the original is written 1997, it is understandable that he does not identify radical democracy in relation with agonistic democracy. Hence, the view that radical democracy, deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy are own distinct models of democracy is not supported by Held and as such should be counted as Wenman's own distinction.

I have pointed out earlier that I disagree with the categorization of radical democracy as a different form of democracy that is distinct from agonistic democracy and deliberative democracy. As I have pointed out, there are theorists within both groups that have justified claims for being counted as radical democrats. Wenman's definition of radical democracy makes a categorization that cannot be accepted by the radical democratic theorists, and his categorization is counterintuitive as it defines their theories away from the scope of radical democracy.

Wenman defines theorists that are quite often associated with the agonist stance in a way that is untenable. For example, Wenman defines Chantal Mouffe as an agonist which of course is correct but then continues to define Ernesto Laclau only as a radical democrat (Wenman, 2013, p. 5). This is bewildering as Mouffe and Laclau have worked and published together *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, which is one of the quintessential works on radical and agonistic democracy.

The shared concept of hegemony that they utilize is based on premises that can be identified as agonist. Hence, we can see the problem that Wenman's definition runs into where he has to bracket theories as either radical or agonist.

In other words, he cannot coherently uphold the view that one can be both an agonist and a radical democrat.

Wenman's definition of Jaques Rancière as a radical democrat and not as an agonist philosopher is in my opinion somewhat mistaken. Rancière's conception of politics is tied strongly to the idea of dissensus (Rancière, 2004) (Rancière, 2001). The idea of the political in Rancière is based on the idea of equality where politics happens when claims of equality are made by those who are not counted. Thus, there cannot be a common principle of adjudication and politics itself is viewed as a clash between those that are counted and those who are not.

I have no quarrel with viewing Rancière as both being a radical democrat and an agonist. He would be viewed as a radical democrat because of his critique of institutionalized politics and because he defines politics as occurring on the very edge of democracy. He would be counted as an agonist as his conception of democracy is based on fundamental disagreement.

For Wenman radical democracy and agonistic democracy are differed by how they answer the question constituent power and on their perspective on augmentation and revolution (Wenman, 2013, pp. 5, 65-73).

The radical democrats have according to Wenman an exclusive emphasis on revolution (Wenman, 2013, p. 60). With regard to Laclau, who Wenman counts as a radical democrat, this conception does not hold as Laclau views democratic revolution as simplistic (Laclau, 2005b, p. 260).

Wenman counts Alain Badiou, Ernesto Laclau, Jaques Rancière and Slavoj Žižek as radical democrats (Wenman, 2013, p. 5). Wenman's focus on augmentation and revolution as a definition of radical democrats may hold to a certain point if we only focus on these philosophers. As I have pointed out it is justified to count Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1996), Iris Marion Young (Young, 2000), Nancy Fraser (Fraser, 2003a), Axel Honneth (Honneth, 1995) Jean Cohen, Andrew Arato, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 (1985)) as radical democrats.

The latter group is recognized by the academic public as radical democrats. Some of them also make explicit claims of being radical democrats. With this in mind it seems very odd to claim that we should suddenly focus on how these philosophers' answer the questions of augmentation and revolution in order to count them as radical democrats or as something else.

As a clarifying example we could take Habermas. He does not have an exclusive emphasis on revolution. However Habermas *Between Facts and Norms* can and should be counted as furthering of radical democracy (Habermas, 1996, pp. xlii, 471) (Grodnick, 2005).

At this point it seems quite clear that Wenman's categorization cannot answer the question of how it is possible to be both a radical democrat and an agonist or a radical deliberative democrat. His only option seems to undefine a group of radical democrats and redefine them as only being deliberative democrats or agonists. This move is counter-intuitive as this is a difficulty that arises from Wenman's categorization not from the theories he sets out to categorize. Before Wenman's definition there has not been any difficulty of

categorizing those who nowadays take part in the agonism/deliberation debate as being justly counted as radical democrats.

To make it a bit more confusing, at least Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth can be read as agonists and as deliberative democrats. For an account on Axel Honneth as an agonist philosopher see (Deranty, 2004). I will later in this dissertation propose that one should give Fraser's framework a agonist interpretation in order to make it more suited for a political theory of dissent. <sup>2</sup>

Wenman's categorization cannot explain how it is possible to at the same time view someone as being in all the three categories at the same time. Under my categorization one would view both Honneth and Fraser as radical democrats while leaving open the interpretation if they should be counted as agonists or deliberative democrats.

Wenman's idea that radical democracy should be seen as a distinct model of democracy apart from agonist and deliberative democracy is in my opinion mistaken. It is mistaken because his definition is based on the necessity of being radical, deliberative or agonist. This in turn leads to a classification where earlier radical democrats cannot any longer be counted as radical democrats. A conception of radical democracy should be able to encompass all the different radical democratic theories and on this basis define radical democracy, not the other way around.

Another quite common view is that radical democracy can be viewed as being the same thing as agonistic democracy.

For example Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen seems to think that radical democracy is formed as a critique of both liberalism and communitarianism, which revives the Marxist critique of modern democratic thought while at the same time criticizing Marxism itself (Tønder & Thomassen, 2005, p. 4).

The main idea is that radical democracy criticizes liberalism for viewing equality and liberty as rights that are not themselves questioned or politicized. Hence, they share the idea that radical democracy holds to the values of equality and liberty of liberalism but they disagree with liberalism's feature of taking these values "beyond dispute". Also radical democracy criticizes communitarianism because of its feature of holding communities as having solid boundaries which in turn lead to the idea that it is not true to the value of pluralism.

This far I agree with Tønder and Thomassen, but they take the idea of radical democracy even further and claim that radical democrats "...also object to the deliberative model's assumption that procedures can be rational and can produce rational decisions." (Tønder & Thomassen, 2005, p. 4).

Hence, they seem to equate radical democrats with the agonists. As a large part of the deliberative democrats count themselves or is counted by others as

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<sup>2</sup> Further it is possible to read the term radical democracy as coined by John Dewey in his essay "Democracy is Radical", an essay that predates all the contemporary conceptions of radical democracy (Dewey, 1987). For sake of clarity, we will hold to the contemporary debate and let scholars on Dewey investigate the merits of his thoughts.

radical democrats, this definition of radical democracy as being the same as agonistic democracy is clearly dubious.

Actually deliberative democracy seems to criticize liberalism in quite a similar manner as Tønder and Thomassen claims, even though the deliberative democrats hold to the idea of rational discussion. I reject the idea that radical democracy should be seen as being the same as agonistic democracy and hold to the idea that agonistic democracy and deliberative democracy are both parts of the radical democratic critique of liberalism.

My stance is that the discussion within the scope of radical democracy has evolved into the debate on agonism versus deliberation. Both groups are and should be counted as being radical democratic accounts. Radical democracy, I claim, is the historical backdrop of the deliberation/agonism debate.

Radical democracy is not a model that can be developed as such, but it should be seen as a critique of liberal democracy and as an attempt to constantly widen democracy by challenging democracy itself. At the moment the focus within the project of radical democracy is how to answer questions of fundamental disagreement versus agreement and foundational questions on democracy itself.

I do not claim that the radical democratic project is on hold but merely that the academic interest at the moment lies on the question of deliberation and agonism. In other words, the agonist/deliberation debate furthers the project of radical democracy.

Further I do not view radical democracy as a model itself but more as a conception that is in constant motion. The conception is given meaning to by positioning it as a critique of other forms of democracy as for example liberal democracy. Hence, radical democracy is the necessary other that is required to further the questions of increased participation, politicization etc. in the wider scholarly debate on democracy. Radical democracy is a conception that claims to be more democratic than liberal democracy. The question of classification is related to the question of what makes radical democracy radical.

Ernesto Laclau provides three ways of conceiving radicalism in radical democracy (Laclau, 2005b, p. 259). First, if we consider liberal democracy which according to Laclau entails conceiving politics as a regime. Laclau points out that it is possible to conceive of liberal institutions without citizen participation. In other words, there is no logical tie between liberalism and democracy.<sup>3</sup> Hence, according to Laclau liberalism and democracy are always in tension as the regime (liberalist) part of liberal democracy is partially opposed to the idea of citizen participation (democracy). Within this framework or line of thought, radicalism within liberal democracy would entail the internal democratization of liberal institutions.

The second idea is that the purely formal conception of universality is unable to constitute democratic subjectivity (Laclau, 2005b, pp. 259-260). Democracy as a system of institutional rules is only possible if the idea of democratic

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<sup>3</sup> This argument is also found in Mouffe (2000).

subjectivity is systemically ignored. It has to be ignored because democratic subjectivity requires partiality which is in opposition to universality. Radicalism within this line of thought presupposes the constitution of an underdog as a political actor while the moment of universality is still present. This entails an acceptance of the universal as theoretically justified while denying it in practice. This idea constitutes the mass of people as a new political actor. It is a populist conception as it leaves the pejorative function of the term intact.

The third way continues from the previous. The earlier versions take for granted that democratic demands of the underdog coalesce around a certain pole. This assumption is according to Laclau excessive. Democratic demands<sup>4</sup> have a variety of aims and nothing guarantees that they move in one specific direction (Laclau, 2005b, p. 260). It makes the democratic revolution simplistic especially if one conceives of making it as a unifying horizon dominated by the expansion of equalitarian logics to a wider sphere of social relations. To accept some popular demands is according to Laclau compatible with the exclusion of other demands from the equivalential chain. In this line of thought radicalization is linked to the idea of pluralism. The idea is that a populist democracy does not guarantee by itself the recognition of all democratic demands.

Hence, first of all, we end up with the idea that the first form of democratic radicalism is identified with universalism and the fact that of its removal of differences and exceptions. The second is concerned with creating the popular subject which is less than the whole but strives to be identified with the latter. The third one is based on the idea of radical pluralism and puts the principle of universalization into question. In Laclau's words "we are dealing with differentiality that which asserts itself as the only and irreducible principle." (Laclau, 2005b, p. 261)

According to Laclau, all of these ideas fail by themselves. The first one is compatible with undemocratic processes in civil society. The second identifies the community as a whole from some section of it. The third would lack any kind of common symbolic framework and would as such not be a society at all. Hence, all three conceptions are needed. This is however problematic as they seem incompatible with each other. This fact requires that they are conceived as a political articulation, not as a logical mediation. It is according to Laclau:

*The undecidable character of this interaction, the impossibility of conceptually mastering the contingent forms in which it crystallizes, is exactly what we call radical democracy. (Laclau, 2005b, p. 261)*

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<sup>4</sup> A democratic demand has three features according to Laclau (Laclau, 2005a, p. 125). First of all, a democratic demand is a demand that is made by an underdog in society. Second, a democratic demand is egalitarian. Third, it is a demand made against exclusion, deprivation and the construction of a person as a deficient being

it is the

*...the first strictly political form of social organization, because it is the first one in which the posing and the withdrawal of the social ground is entirely dependent on political interventions (Laclau, 2005b, p. 261).*

If we consider this characterization of radical democracy and how it fits the categorization that I have made, we'll see that Laclau is not too keen on positioning himself in the debate between the agonists and the deliberative democrats. It is however possible to position him according to his thought on hegemony and his social logic of antagonism.

However this is not necessary for my categorization as it is completely possible to further the project of radical democracy even though one does not want to take a stance in the debate on agonism vs. deliberative democracy. In other words, even though one could categorize Laclau as an agonist, it is not necessary because he is still part of the project of radical democracy as such. A similar idea also holds for Nancy Fraser. Even though it is possible to make the case for her being an agonist or a deliberative democrat, Fraser does not view the distinction as relevant because it does not concern real world problems.<sup>5</sup>

To sum up, I view radical democracy as a form of democracy that is more democratic than liberal democracy. This means that radical democracy posits the ideal of democracy as being equally important as freedom, human rights and equality in liberal democracy. Radical democracy is thus a critique of liberal democracy. Radical democracy is also always critical of itself and challenges itself as an attempt to constantly widen the scope of democracy. This means that the question of how democracy can be more democratic and where it should govern is always central.

The agonism-deliberation debate should be seen as being about the fundamental categories of radical democracy. Hence, both agonist and deliberative democratic accounts are viewed as radical democratic accounts. This is the most justified way of viewing this categorization.

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<sup>5</sup> A response by prof. Nancy Fraser to my paper *An Agonist Fraser – A Reinterpretation of Reflexive Justice and Radical Democracy* presented at a seminar that was chaired by prof. Fraser and organized by the University of Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (30.5.2013)

## 2.3 LIBERALISM AND THE DOMESTICATION OF DISSENT

### 2.3.1 REPRESENTATION

When considering democracy as a system of representation the focus is shifted from the actual demands of the people to questions regarding the institutional process of finding out the will of the majority. Viewed like this, a theory of democracy is not concerned primarily about how the people can speak for themselves. The main concern is shifted to the question of how we can conceive of a legitimate way that a part of the people can speak in the name of the people as a whole. Hence, by considering how the aggregation of peoples will is conceptualized, it is possible to shed some light on the relation between representation and dissent.

If we would agree that a parliament could completely represent the people's will, the idea of aggregation is fairly simple. The few representatives in parliament would be considered to legitimately represent the people on a scale that is based on the amount of parliamentarians in relation to citizens. A legitimate majority opinion would be established easily as the number of representatives would be small but they would still represent the people as a whole in a justified way.

In this kind of closed system the case could be made that everyone would be heard as every opinion would be represented. This kind of parliament clearly does not exist for real. There is no guarantee that the majority opinion that is voted through in parliament is represented amongst the citizens in equal proportion. This is especially the case in our modern democratic societies where everyone does not vote.

The system of representation in our contemporary democracies is designed in a way that allows the silent votes to be counted in favor of status quo. In other words, unvoiced votes are counted as votes given to the representative body in the same relation as the given votes.

The case could be made that in some kind of ideal democracy where the will of the citizen could only be expressed by the citizen himself/herself, unvoiced votes should be represented by empty chairs in parliament. In this case the will of the citizen as an individual would be viewed as inalienable and hence could never be counted in favor of any other idea than one that is voiced by the citizen himself/herself.

One could even claim that it would be more democratic to fill the "empty chairs" via lottery in comparison to current practice. The process of voting has other dimensions that the example above does not take into account such as establishing legitimacy. The main point is to highlight the conclusion that the practice of counting ungiven voices as something else than ungiven voices is problematic in contemporary democracies. This is especially problematic for a political theory of dissent as the conception seems, at least partially, to be opposed to the practice of representation and the principle that someone can justifiably speak on behalf of another.

The practice of counting empty votes in favor of the system is problematic also because this practice legitimizes and upholds hegemony. To uphold hegemony delegitimizes dissent as the silent votes, which are potentially dissenting, are in a sense hijacked in favor of hegemony.

Regardless of how one approaches the idea of dissent and democratic representation it seems that they follow different but closely related logics. The idea of dissent seems to, at least initially, make no assumptions on what the people actually wants. Dissent is always expressed by the dissenters themselves. The logic of representation does the opposite by assuming that one can make correct assumptions about the desires of the citizenry.<sup>6</sup>

The problem that arises from the opposed logics is tied to the way a political theory treats this opposition and consequently dissent. As described earlier, the place of dissent can be viewed as being internal to the systemic framework itself. This is the way the liberal democratic framework and partially the deliberative democratic framework approaches dissent. Dissent, thus, is seen as a problem that can be managed by the political system. The other option is to conceive of dissent and conflict as one of the constitutive features of politics. In other words, dissent is viewed as a feature that gives birth to politics and treated as something that should not be managed, neutralized or internalized by a system.

The basic idea that most democratic frameworks are founded in is the idea of a pluralism of values and the idea that in a democracy the people, whatever it may be, has the ultimately power in society. These values can come in conflict which leads to the fact that different theories of democracy gives us different ways to approach disagreement. Dissent is closely tied to the conflict of values. Hence, we can derive how the different theories of democracy treat dissent by viewing how they treat conflicts.

The two main approaches are thus, the approach that internalizes the conflict within the system and its opposite, the approach that views the conflict as the main constitutive factor of democracy.

The liberal democratic theories internalize conflict within the system (Ingram, 2006, pp. 37-39). This means that within liberalism the idea of politics as conflict is subsumed under a legal and institutional order. The other possible

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<sup>6</sup> It may be that dissent may be in line with the idea of true democracy in the sense that Simon Critchley describes it. True democracy is true in the sense that it is true in relation to democracy. Critchley's idea of true democracy is based on the Marxist notion of true democracy. The main idea is that governing should take place from where one stands and speaks. This is according to him an actual and actualizable feature of democracy (Critchley, 2005, pp. 227, 229). For a more thorough categorization of true democracy see Abensour, (1997, pp. 47-72). The concept of true democracy is strongly attached to Marx and carries with it quite heavy baggage. Thus when I say that the concept of dissent may be in line with the idea of true democracy I only mean the interpretation of Critchley where he states that governing should take place from where one stands and speaks.

approach would be the one that can be called the radical democratic approach where conflict is viewed as the main constitutive feature of democracy.

Hence, dissent can be viewed as being internal to the democratic institutional configuration or external. If dissent is viewed as internal, the solution is to manage dissent and see what kind of institutions can contain and channel this conflict as a justified decision making process. On the other hand if dissent is viewed as external, it is part of what constitutes democratic society and also the demos.

### **2.3.2 TOLERANCE AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

Within the liberal framework dissent is managed through rights and institutions that set the rules and boundaries for the management differing values and views. This however leads to problems when the conflicts challenge the systemic boundaries.

Within the liberal framework challenges to the systemic boundaries are managed through the introduction of new concepts. Two examples are the concepts of tolerance and of civil disobedience.

Both concepts share the function of exhaust-valves for conflicts that the liberal system cannot manage normally. For example in a liberal democracy different opinions are managed by dividing them in the public and private sphere. The opinions that need managing are within the public sphere. The private sphere is where people can do almost whatever they please as long as it does not affect any else. When matters affect others, they are managed by politics. Politics is in this sense the administration of public conflicts.

There are public conflicts that cannot be managed by the system. There are also values that put the entire system into question. These values are managed through the introduction of the liberal concept of tolerance.

The concept of tolerance has its roots as an instrument that promotes civic peace and an alternative to violent exclusions of religious dissidents. (Brown, 2008, pp. 1-2) The original meaning of tolerance can be described through the usage of tolerance in other areas than political theory (Brown, 2008, pp. 26-27). For example with regard to plants, drought tolerance explains how much drought a plant can resist until it withers and dies. Also one could approach tolerance through biology and how much foreign substance a cell can absorb before it collapses.

Hence, tolerance manages how far one should accept the excesses that are harmful to society or its basic values. In other words, the requirement of toleration stretches until the values tolerated goes from being manageable to

being dangerous for society.<sup>7</sup> This is a very shallow description of the concept of tolerance and its contemporary usage. However most of the conceptualization of tolerance shares a similar idea. It is possible that this excludes Anna Galeotti's attempt to translate toleration into recognition (Galeotti, 2006).

My claim is that tolerance within the liberal system is introduced in order to contain such differences that that cannot be managed by the liberal system. A more thorough account of how tolerance contains politics can be found in Schaap (2005). Schaap views tolerance as an adequate policy for the management of conflict that seeks to contain them by depoliticizing the conflict over ultimate ends (Schaap, 2005, pp. 27,28,35). According to Schaap, liberal tolerance overcomes conflict by referring to the common interest to security (Schaap, 2005, p. 38). With regard to dissent, this means that tolerance forecloses the possibility to dissent by referring to reason and security. Toleration is according to Schaap, blind towards its political nature and exclusions. Further Schaap points out that an ethic of toleration domesticates antagonistic relations by limiting politics by referring to the public good of security (Schaap, 2005, p. 41).

Schaap's account of the domestication of tolerance adds to my claim that such dissent that cannot be managed by the liberal system requires the introduction of another managing conception such as tolerance. Liberal tolerance manages justified dissent by referring to reason and security. This can be seen as a limiting the boundaries of democratically justified dissent.

Legitimate dissent, within liberalism, would in this sense be dissent that is either administered through the liberal framework or not harmful enough to challenge the entire system. Hence, in the same way as the requirement of tolerance extends as far as the tolerated does not threaten the system, dissent is justified as long as it does not challenge the system as such.

A similar case as for toleration can be made with regard to civil disobedience within the scope of liberal theory. Civil disobedience within the liberal framework mainly functions as a corrective mechanism for such injustices that are excessive and are not corrected through normal means. Normal means refer to such means that liberal democracy provides. The main idea is that severe injustices can arise through the fallibility of the system and its creators. These injustices can be so severe that it may be justified to break laws in order to challenge them. In Rawls theory one should only target excessive injustices and only when all other means are exhausted (Rawls, 1978 (1972)).

Even though Rawls definition of civil disobedience is very narrow and that the presentation given here is superficial<sup>8</sup>, we can see that civil disobedience as a concept is introduced in order to manage the challenges to the laws of liberal society that cannot be managed by the system. Hence, dissent towards unjust

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<sup>7</sup> In contemporary discussion toleration is usually presented as a positive value and quite often its feature of despising the tolerated is neglected.

<sup>8</sup> For a better description and analysis of Rawls' conception of civil disobedience see (Leppänen, 2008). For a wider definition of civil disobedience within liberal theory see for example (Bedau, 1991)

laws is managed through the introduction of civil disobedience in liberal theory. Thus, the liberal framework seems to require the internalization and domestication of conflict and all such conflicts that are not internalized are excluded as illegitimate. With regard to civil disobedience it is only potentially legitimate as one cannot be given a clear right to not obey laws. The legitimacy of civil disobedience is always evaluated afterwards.

However there are some ideas within the theories of civil disobedience that are similar to dissent. The similarities are found in Habermas theory of civil disobedience. For Habermas one feature of civil disobedience is that civil disobedience is required to remind us where the power in a democracy lies. For Habermas, civil disobedience is paradoxical in the sense that it requires the state to foster a healthy suspicion towards the state while the state is not able to give any institutional guarantees for disobedience (Habermas, 1985, pp. 103,105). Hence, civil disobedience in Habermas can be interpreted as a feature of society that fosters democratic citizenship in the same way as dissent.

For Habermas civil disobedience functions as a litmus test for democratic society (Habermas, 1985, p. 101). Even though one can claim that Rawls theory also functions as a litmus test, the opposite can also be claimed. The role of civil disobedience in Rawls is more about showing to what extent a constitutional democracy is liberal than about fostering democratic citizenship (Cohen & Arato, 1995, pp. 568-569) (Leppänen, 2008, p. 74). Hence, Habermas view of civil disobedience is not as narrow as Rawls'.

The reason for comparing Rawls and Habermas lies in the fact that Habermas refers to Rawls definition. However with regard to dissent and its place within different theories of democracy one can see some clear differences that are relevant with regard to dissent. Habermas posits a clearly stronger focus on the function of civil disobedience as fostering the opposition against the state by the state. Hence, Habermas positions civil disobedience in a way that allows it to foster democratic citizenship. The main difference of how the concept of civil disobedience is positioned arises from the different theoretical approaches. Rawls furthers the liberal democratic framework where Habermas belongs to the tradition of radical democracy. The radical democratic frameworks focus more on participatory democracy. Liberal frameworks focus on achieving a wide space of autonomy through rights and freedom.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> It is possible to give other more radical democratic interpretations of civil disobedience. One such example is Robin Celikates (Celikates, 2014, pp. 215, 220-221). For Celikates, one of the problems with the strictly liberal definition of civil disobedience is that practical forms of civil disobedience or resistance seem to avoid the Rawlsian definition. In his work, Celikates attempts to give civil disobedience a more radical reinterpretation. In my opinion it seems that Celikates needs to redefine civil disobedience in order to understand different forms of contemporary struggles. My aim is to show that civil disobedience within the liberal framework can be seen as an example of liberal domestication. Hence I agree with Celikates on the problems on civil disobedience within the liberal framework. However my aim is not to develop either civil disobedience or liberalism as such. My aim is to use the example civil disobedience as an example of liberalisms domestication of dissent. Hence, Celikates work may add to my account by

Within the scope of liberal theory there has also emerged some attempts to internalize the conflict between the underdog and the elite. Stuart White refers to Pettit (1997) and McCormick (2011) in order to describe some possibilities to institutionalize the contestatory functions in democracy that ensures electoral accountability in order to avoid majoritarian tyranny. The main idea is that, through an analysis of different forms of democracy, White raises the question if we should need to introduce new contestatory institutions in order to hinder the elites to use the electoral systems in their favor (White, 2014, pp. 24-26).

Again, there is a similar idea as earlier where a problem with regard to democracy is identified and the solution is to internalize and institutionalize the problem.

If we compare with other forms of democracy, especially the contemporary agonistic forms, these can approach the dynamics of elite and the people as the underdog when by positing conflict and power at the very center of their theories. One can assume that White is aware of this as he refers to some of such philosophers such as Mouffe and Young.

The mechanic of internalizing dissent in liberal theories leads to the eradication of dissent as a positive feature because dissent becomes by definition part of the existing system. Also all possibilities of transcending the boundaries of the liberal framework are either solved by introducing a new feature into the system to manage the transgression or if this is not possible through exclusion.

The exclusion of features that the liberal democratic system cannot internalize is justified from the point of view of the liberal democratic system. This delegitimizes dissent because dissent, as I view it, arises, at least partially, from being excluded. The impossibility of challenging liberalisms justified exclusions delegitimizes dissent. Hence, the liberal political theories seem to have a problem to take into account dissent as a positive feature. I assume that this has to do with the general focus on the distribution of rights and freedoms where the radical democratic frameworks focus on participatory democracy.

### **2.3.3 TACIT CONSENT**

The case can and has been made that the disaffection with politics and the widening distance between the people and politicians leads to a general disinterest to participate (White, 2014). According to White these phenomena put together can lead to a tyranny where powerful elites can control the majority in our parliaments.

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pointing out the problems within the liberal definition of civil disobedience. His solution to redefine civil disobedience does not change that liberalisms treatment of civil disobedience domesticates dissent.

Conceptually I will claim that one of the reasons for such tyrannical effect is that the “silent majority” sides through passivity or design with the ruling ideas. Such siding or consent is not active; it is consent by inactivity, in other words tacit consent.

Those who tacitly consent are occupying the conceptual space between active dissent and active consent. In other words, dissent and dissensus are seen as active concepts of disagreement; their counterparts, consent and consensus are counted as active concepts of agreement.

The case has been made, for example by Mouffe, that the drive for consensus is one of the roots for depoliticization. I do not view consent or consensus themselves as the roots of depoliticization or disaffection. On the contrary, as dissent is an immanent manifestation of disagreement, consent as its counterpart is an immanent and active manifestation of agreement with hegemony.

I claim that the problem of depoliticization arises from the grey area of tacit consent that occupies the conceptual space between dissent and consent. Hence, conceptually speaking, depoliticization cannot intrinsically be derived from either of the concepts of dissensus or consensus.

I claim that one of the reasons for criticizing consent and consensus as depoliticizing has its roots in the liberal practice of counting unexpressed votes in favor of hegemony. With regard to depoliticization, my claim is that to actively consent or actively dissent with hegemony should conceptually speaking, be viewed as being as politically invigorating as the other.

However when the tacit consenters are counted on the side of those who consent we are making a false interpretation of reality. In other words, one of the features of hegemony is that it produces a picture of reality that viewed as objective in the sense that it is the unquestioned idea that one generally can refer to when making social claims in society. For those who consent, this view of reality is justified if consent is based on sufficient knowledge.

However those in the grey area of tacit consent are not making any claims about agreement or disagreement with regard to the view of reality. Thus, objectivity is imposed on them because they have not taken any stance in the matter. This leads to a situation where the dominant opinion is forced upon them regardless of their real opinions if any. This produces a widespread hegemonic view of reality.

Viewed like this, tacit consent is not viewed as a phenomenon that can be observed. On the contrary, tacit consent is viewed as a specific way in which liberalism represents political inactivity. Thus my claim is that, tacit consent can be viewed as a liberal strategy of producing consent and domesticating dissent.

In a democracy the ideal that everyone should have the right to voice ones opinion and have the right to formulate a stance in political matters is central. When this ideal is connected to the above mentioned phenomena where the hegemonic view is forced upon the individual one can see how this imposition of a picture of reality is illegitimate from a democratic point of view.

If this is true, then the critique of consensus as depoliticizing should not be directed at consensus itself as the problem lies with the mechanism of illegitimately hijacking the consent of those whose only expression is inactivity. In a sense the critique should be directed towards the misunderstanding of the inalienable right of the political agent in a democracy to express ones will and if not expressed to only be interpreted as not being expressed.

Of course, if the hegemonic picture of reality would be objectively true and everyone that consents to it would do so on the basis of sufficient knowledge there would not be any problems. The problem is that unexpressed voices are counted in favor of consensus even if they by right do not belong to either those who dissent or those who consent. Unexpressed voices in a democracy should not be counted as anything else than voices that cannot be counted in favor of anything else than being unexpressed.

Thus, the reason that tacit consent manifests as a “silent agreement” has its roots in how liberal democracy represents inactivity in order to “hijack” consent. From a radical democratic point of view, this view entails a misunderstanding of one’s inalienable right to express ones will. Further this practice removes the possibility and power of the agent himself/herself to shift this will in favor or against anything else. If this is true, then, the disaffection with consensus-based politics lies partially in how liberal democracy domesticates dissent. The radical democratic critique starts from the critique of a conceptual misunderstanding of the agent of democracy and of the hegemonic struggle in liberal democracy.

This misunderstanding of the inalienable right to express ones opinion in a democracy is a central feature for practical effects of illusory democracy such as “majority tyranny”, “aristocracy of orators” and the hijacking of parliaments by powerful elites. Also the claim to speak in the name of the people is similarly based on the same mechanism of hijacking tacit consent. However, the claim that one speaks in the name of the people, is not a feature that only would exist in liberal democracy. It is a strategy that is employed by, amongst others, social movements and populist movements.

By giving dissent and consent a radical democratic interpretation, it is possible to view both consent and dissent as political concepts, which are politically invigorating. Dissent does this by challenging the state of affairs and consent by defending the status quo and thus invigorating our democracy through politicization. In other words, consent can also be interpreted as the position where one is struggling to uphold or maintain a hegemonic configuration in society. In a sense, dissent and consent describe the opposites of the hegemonic struggle where consent sides with hegemony and dissent the opinions that challenges the hegemonic view.

Tacit consent and the idea of the silent majority hides differing opinions in society as all the different opinions within the group of tacit consent is unknown. This fortifies existing hegemony. Tacit consent is the opposite of dissent in two ways. First, it is the opposite of dissent in the sense that tacit consent is partisan towards the hegemonic configuration. However this agreement is not an active agreement but an agreement through passivity and

inaction. Thus, tacit consent is the opposite of dissent also through its passivity which itself leads to taking the stance of the hegemonic view.

Because this tacit consent in principle could be awakened, there is the potential for a democratic upheaval or sudden change in dissent. In other words, if those who tacitly consent would become active and side with the dissenters the possibility of an upheaval arises. Hence, the idea of revolution is intrinsic to the concept of dissent.

Even though there is a potential for revolution or widespread chaos in dissent, it does not lead to a right to “quench” this resistance or for the requirement that the dissenters abstain in the name of stability.<sup>10</sup>

As a metaphor one could equate this with the public transportation system in a city. Let’s consider the situation where all citizens should use the system at the same time. This would probably lead to the collapse of the transportation system. However one could not claim on these grounds that any specific group of people should not have the right to use the system at a particular time. In the same way, one cannot claim that people should abstain from dissenting and possible chaos in the name of general stability.

On the contrary I claim that the potential for sudden change and upheaval leads to the duty for the state to listen and take into account the claims of the dissenters. In other words, because dissent can lead to chaos, and a democratic state does not have a right to quench dissent, the state is required to hear the dissenters on the grounds of justice, democracy and also in order to maintain a stable democratic society. Instability is hence interpreted as having its ground in the failure of the state not listening and attributing voice. In other words, dissent leads to a duty for the state to listen and take into account the dissenters claims. A similar idea can also be found in (Machiavelli, 1996, p. 16)

In general, dissent should allow any agenda as it does not violate a groups or an individual’s possibility to participate on par in society or diminish the possibility to dissent. This is similar to the ideal of liberal autonomy where one is free to do anything as long as one does not violate any others similar right. However if dissent is seen as articulated discontent and social movements are seen as the agents of dissent, it follows that only the movements that functions around a articulated agenda can be defined as social movements. In other words, a movement with a hidden agenda is not a social movement. It is a movement but cannot be counted as having ties to society as its demands and goals remain hidden.

The requirement that a social movement has to articulate its agenda to be counted as social movements is derived from its social character. It is a movement seeking to change, challenge or “discuss” issues that arises from society itself. Thus the social character of the movement implies that it has to have an articulated agenda as it is a group of interacting people working for a common cause, a cause which has its roots in democratic society. Thus, the

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<sup>10</sup> Rawls states this as an requirement for Civil Disobedience (Rawls, 1978 (1972))

group interacts with society as a whole. This interaction is impossible if the agenda is not articulated.

## **2.4 CENTRAL ASPECTS OF A POLITICAL THEORY OF DISSENT**

### **2.4.1 ARTICULATION**

One requirement of dissent is that it is articulated or voiced. I make this assumption on the basis of using dissent as a political concept and that dissent should be a concept that is positively tied to active societal change. To highlight the active features I will characterize unvoiced dissent as discontent. This characterization is analytical in the sense that it serves to highlight the active feature of dissent.

The passive form of dissent does not necessarily constitute discontent, the assumption is merely done in order to highlight that dissent as a positive concept with ties to social change necessarily has to be voiced. In other words, I do not make any claims of a definition of a possible passive counterpart of dissent. This categorization is instrumental for the definition of dissent.

The idea that dissent has to be articulated or voiced ties dissent to action. This tie is established by the fact that voiced dissent constitutes dissent as a medium of social change. The idea goes roughly as follows. In order to agree or disagree with social change the people in a democratic society has to be aware of this possibility. Hence, it has to be articulated.

The coupling of dissent and action ties the idea of dissent to the theory of social movements. Social movements are viewed as constituted by dissent and one of their functions is to gather dissenters. In a sense, social movements gather and channels dissent in society. A similar idea can be found in Laclau (2005, pp. 72-74).

The idea that dissent constitutes social movements is established through the feature of dissent as voiced. When dissenting people gather around specific demands and organize, they constitute a social movement.

What is important in this description of how a social movement is constituted is that they form around demands which in turn are done on the basis of dissent. The claim is that demands are made on the basis of dissent.

It seems that dissent is a fundamental feature in a democratic society. The whole idea of democracy is to answer the question of how we should approach the plurality of values and opinions in society.

A political theory of democracy is thus viewed as a political theory that attempts to answer the question of how we should cope with pluralism and differences of opinion politically. If this is true, then we can conclude that democracy is ontologically based on the idea of difference. One way of explaining how we can have a shared view of society even though the idea of democratic society is constituted around difference is through the idea of hegemonic power. This idea relies on the notion that a shared view of society is a partially imposed hegemonic view.

#### **2.4.2 HEGEMONY, DEMOCRATIC AND UNDEMOCRATIC DEMANDS**

I view hegemony in a similar way as Mouffe and Laclau. Hegemony is according to them when objectivity and power meets. Their definition of hegemony is detached from the Marxist conception. A common sense definition is that hegemony is the dominant political view.

The idea that commonality is created through hegemony is fairly common. However if we take the idea a bit further we can also establish that this commonality is based on difference. First, as the democracy is constituted around difference then it also follows that the mechanism of creating a commonality can be traced to this foundational difference. When hegemony is established hegemony itself creates dissent by imposing a unified view that cannot be shared by everyone. The hegemonic view cannot be shared by everyone because it universalizes a particular view. This necessarily creates those who are counted and taken into account and those who are left outside. Hence, hegemony itself functions as a cause of dissent.

This line of thought can also tie the idea of dissent to the idea of equality. The hegemonic view creates unity through the universalization of a particular. If the society that hegemony is imposed upon is constituted on foundational difference then those claims that are made against hegemony can be viewed as claims made on the basis of not agreeing with the hegemonic view. In a sense these claims are made as critical claims of not being taken into account in the hegemonic view. Hence, those being left “outside” are created as different and deviant in relation to the unified hegemonic view in power. This leads to the interpretation that the demands are made on the basis of being identified as different. The opposite of difference is similarity. With regard to institutions this translates to similar or equal institutional treatment. Hence, dissent that has its roots in the exclusion from the common world can be interpreted as demands that are made on the basis of equality. Thus, dissent is at least partially constituted by the value of equality.<sup>11</sup>

The justification for dissent has its grounds in the foundations of democratic society. If dissent arises from the fundamentals of democratic society, then it follows that the claims and demands made on that basis are also at least partially democratic. Because the democratic nature of dissent can be established through the link to the foundations of democratic society it is required by society as such to engage with dissent with proper seriousness. Hence, dissent cannot just be put aside as an annoying or harmful feature in society.

The above mentioned idea is similar to Ernesto Laclau’s idea that the making of demands requires identification with community which in turn establishes a

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<sup>11</sup> A similar idea can be found in Rancière’s theory of politics. The idea for Rancière is that political demands are constituted by equality is the same while the starting point is different.

link to existing society. I am only taking the same idea one step further to show that all claims made on this basis are democratically justified. Laclau defines democratic demands as being formulated to the system by an underdog and that there is an egalitarian dimension implicit in these demands and that their emergence presupposes an exclusion or deprivation of some kind (Laclau, 2005a, p. 125).

I do not claim that all demands or all dissent in society is democratic or justified. I propose that we can identify undemocratic demands in two different ways. Both ways presuppose the acceptance of the centrality of dissent within a radical democratic framework.

The first one is such dissent or demands that would narrow the boundaries of dissent itself. Thus, societal demands that would narrow the possibilities of dissent are undemocratic because, they would entail the potential exclusion of justified values and opinions.

Hegemonic plurality refers to the idea that the unifying factor of society, hegemony, is always viewed as a provisional but necessary feature. Hegemonic plurality can be viewed as an interpretation of hegemony as a regime. Demands that do not accept hegemonic plurality are undemocratic. Hegemonic imposition is undemocratic if one does not accept the idea that any hegemonic configuration can be legitimately altered. Hegemony as being provisional refers to the idea that the contents of the current hegemonic view could always have been different. Hence, hegemonic plurality is the view that there are always multiple conceivable hegemonic configurations at once in society. This is the second way of identifying undemocratic demands. Demands that do not accept hegemonic plurality are undemocratic as they attempt to impose a specific view that is seen as eternal.

For example fundamentalist or fascist claims cannot be seen to be grounded in any idea of hegemonic plurality. As I claimed earlier dissent arises from being excluded, oppressed, silenced or treated unequally by the institutions in society. This has its roots in the imposition of the hegemonic particular view. Fundamentalist, totalitarian or even neo-liberal demands can be seen as attempts to impose a particular hegemonic view. In other words, the grounds for these kinds of claims are not in the acceptance of democratic foundational difference but in a totalitarian hegemonic unity. Thus, such claims reject the idea of provisional hegemony. They also reject the idea that the unifying commonality of society is merely a provisional hegemonic construction. This leads to the necessity of upholding unity through an oppressing system of exclusion. In other words, these kinds of views cannot view accept a hegemonic pluralism that is necessary for democracy.

The idea of undemocratic and democratic claims can also be extended to social movements in a similar manner as democratic and undemocratic demands. To justify the evaluation of movements of this axis it should be possible to make it in practice.

If we take the text book case of movements oriented towards Nazism, the argument against the accepting of such movements would go as follows. If the

movement has articulated its agenda, it would become clear that the movement strives to impose a view of societal unity that categorically excludes a part from society such as immigrants, Jews ethnic minorities etc. It would also be clear that the movement aims to quench the possibility to dissent against its views in order to uphold unity.

However more often than not, such movements do not openly articulate their agenda. At this point however their claims are not by definition democratic as one of the requirements of such claims is that they are articulated. Hence, for claims to be democratic it is necessary that they are articulated. This also means that unspoken claims and goals can be viewed as undemocratic. To articulate ones demands does not necessarily make the demands themselves democratic. The articulation gives the demands the required democratic form that allows the public to evaluate their content.

Democratic social movements are constituted around democratic demands. It is unclear what a nazi-oriented movement would constitute. In a sense they are not by definition even social movements as they are not taking part in society by articulating their demands. Such movements cannot be seen as being constituted by democratic dissent.

As a nazi-oriented movement cannot trace its justification to the democratic foundations of society, it will be categorized as something else than a social movement and will fall within the scope of tolerance in society. In other words, the Nazi-oriented movement is tolerated as long as it is not perceived as a threat in society. Thus, as such a movement gains influence its agenda will be necessarily be made clear. When its agenda is clear, such a movement can be justly excluded and marginalized because it cannot trace its claims the democratic and participatory societal foundation that democratic social movements can.

The idea that social movements necessarily have articulated agendas ties them to conceptions of justice and democracy with institutional ties. Hence, viewed like this, the conceptions of democracy and justice only make sense when they can be applied in reality.

The idea can be illustrated through the idea that democracy necessarily requires undemocratic principles to uphold. I claim that this is false. The idea goes roughly as follows. Normally when we make the claim that democracy requires undemocratic principles to survive one often refers to means that ensure that democracy is not voted away or hinders the rise to power by undemocratic groups. The fallacy arises when we think of democracy on an ideal level and make claims that refer to reality. In other words, so long as we only speak on a level of democratic principle the idea that democracy requires undemocratic principles makes sense. When we think of democracy in practice we require a situated concept of democracy. This distorts the meaning of the divide between ideal and real.

What we need is a concept of democracy that has some substantive content when situating it in reality. This does not mean that the concept of democracy is not contested or up for redefinition. On the contrary the concept of democracy

necessarily has to be a concept that can be contested and redefined. However we still require some content for the conception when situating it in reality.

It seems that we require a concept that at the same time has substantive content but at the same time is open for redefinition. One way of illustrating the benefits of a situated conception is through an example. This will also highlight why I view the idea that democracy requires undemocratic practices as meaningless.

I will later argue that a conception of radical democracy requires a conception of justice that is based on participatory parity. This idea consists of the idea that that a just society is based on the norm that everyone should be able to participate on par in matters that concern themselves (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 35-36).

Some of the undemocratic practices that democracy supposedly requires are tied to the idea that we should not be able to vote away democracy and that democracy should be able to protect itself from the rise of undemocratic movements. The idea of participatory parity can answer both of these challenges by showing that the proposed actions are inherently undemocratic and, hence by referring to participatory parity, it is possible to exclude or discard such challenges. Hence, we will not need any undemocratic principles.

Let's first consider the idea of voting away democracy. Voting away democracy lessens the ability of people to participate on par in society. Thus, voting away democracy is inherently undemocratic because it refers to the real possibility to participate in society as peers. Hence, one cannot claim on this ground that democracy requires undemocratic principles to be sustained.

When we take the other example with the undemocratic movement we can make a similar evaluation. One cannot justify the rise to power by an undemocratic movement with an articulated agenda by referring to the real possibility of people to participate on par in society. The undemocratic movement would hinder the possibility of participation for all. Hence, such a movement can legitimately be excluded on the grounds that the practical realization of its agenda would be undemocratic because it weakens the ability to participate on par in society.

The idea of democracy as a practical concept ties it to institutional reality. In other words, we need to refer the concepts of justice and democracy to societal practices in order to make sense of both the concepts and the institutions. This also allows the concepts of democracy and justice to be constantly contested as their meaning is derived from real struggles between social groups and institutions. Because the concepts are directed at institutional reality they are by definition normative.

Now if we return to the idea of social movements we can see that the institutional ties leads to the requirement that movements have an articulated agenda. Democracy and justice are what movements struggle for. The movements justify their struggles by referring them to institutional reality. Under this interpretation, social movements are formed around ideas of dissension with the institutional arrangements of society. If we combine the

notion that everyone should have a voice in democratic society with the idea that a movement has an agenda that is directed towards the institutional arrangements in society, then it is required that the agenda is articulated. If the agenda is not articulated there is the danger that a movement lose the democratic justification on which they are initially constituted.

To have a voice and a possibility of being heard requires that the criticism is articulated. The requirement of operating with an articulated agenda also comes from the idea that in a democracy the only one who can legitimately define and speak for oneself is oneself. This also applies to movements. Thus, it is required that a movement has an articulated agenda as it is the only agent that can define what it is about.

The idea that everyone should have a voice and be able to define themselves is derived from the concept of democracy. If we would allow for someone else to define ourselves in a meaningful way, then we would not have to allocate voice to everyone. If someone else could speak for us and in our name then for example the agenda of movements could be given a justified description by someone else. Hence, democracy would not require people to have a voice but a group of good interpreters. In a sense it would entail the outsourcing of the spirit of democracy. From this it follows that in order to be heard a movement and also an individual has to have the power of self-characterization.

With regard to democracy the inclusion/exclusion of undemocratic movements goes as follows. Justice is defined as the thing that movements are struggling for in a particular historical time. In this struggle even undemocratic movements are taken into account. A social movement is defined as a movement that has an articulated agenda with regard to the institutional arrangements of society.

When movements are being heard, we can make the evaluation if the claims of the movement are democratic or undemocratic against the background of participatory parity. Thus, democracy requires us to choose the option that promotes participatory parity. This can be seen as one example of how the view of justice as participatory parity sets limits for democracy.

It is possible to have movements that have hidden agendas or articulates their claims falsely. Democracy requires us to "hear" their claims and make our evaluation on that basis even if there is a suspicion that they may be false. This is required because the right to characterize a movement's agenda should belong to the movement. The requirement for the characterization of the agenda by the movement is based on dissent. If the characterization of a movement would be given by someone else than from the movement itself, then one possible source for dissent would be the characterization. Hence, the power to characterize dissent and also movements that are based on dissent should belong to the movements themselves.

From the point of view of democracy this is not harmful as we still should operate on the axis of making our decisions on the basis what kind of institutional arrangements are required to promote participatory parity. For example, a fascist movement can hide its agenda and for example pose as a

movement furthering free speech. As this particular movement's impact on societal institutions is made as institutional claims based on the idea of free speech, the fascist agenda is not that harmful. However if the true agenda is articulated or identified, then the movement is excluded as undemocratic.

The evaluation of the democratic or undemocratic character of a movement is done in two stages. First, every movement is counted as they are perceived to arise from society. At this stage even movements that clearly are perceived as undemocratic are counted. In the second stage we can refer to the goals of the movements when they are articulated. At this stage we can make the evaluation of the undemocratic or democratic nature of a social movement.

### **2.4.3 INSTITUTIONS**

I will argue for the view that dissent and especially dissenting social movements should be seen as targeting institutional reality. I do not think that a radical democratic view should defend a view of institutional withdrawal. Institutional reality can be a cause for dissent. Hence, any reaction towards it should take this institutional framework into account. Further, it may be that withdrawal can be interpreted as a strategy of institutional engagement.

Dissent is directed against different forms of injustice that produces unwanted effects. As an example we can conceive of the dissenters as people that are suffering from material, cultural or identity-based injustices. These would be cases where dissent is directed towards injustices that arise from the institutional configuration of society. Dissent can also simply arise from disagreement with certain policies and hence the role of dissent would be to change them. In other words, any idea that seeks to change the current state of affairs in society can be when voiced counted as dissent. Dissenters belong by definition to the subaltern as they are in opposition to influence.

One of the aims of dissent as a positive feature is to remove institutional injustices in society. In such cases dissent is directed towards the oppressive feature in society. This can entail that the people that disagree with some feature of our society form a social movement around the cause. Iris Young defines one function of social movements as an attempt to encompass the unrealized possibilities of emancipation that is latent in institutions (Young, 1990, pp. 66-67). In other words, the social movements seek to remove institutional injustices and hence further the cause of freedom and equality. The centrality of conflict is present as the movements are in a conflictual relation to the institutions that are vehicles of oppression. The latent possibilities of emancipation are thus unmasked through the medium of social conflict.

Through the institutional linkage and the democratic nature of dissent, the concept of dissent is tied to reality. However dissent and the social movements based upon it should not be interpreted as interest driven activities. On the

contrary dissent and the social movements should be interpreted as movements that further value-based discussion. This is because of the central goal of democratizing undemocratic publics. According to Young, such movements attempt to break out beyond the limits of interest group pluralism with the goal of producing new and democratized participatory publics (Young, 1990, p. 67).

One of the problems in contemporary capitalist societies is what Habermas calls the colonization of our lifeworld (Habermas, 1987). The main idea is that if we allow instrumental reason to govern in areas that should be governed by communicative rationality we start making politics and political claims on the basis of interest. If interest is the basis of politics we reduce and set aside the plurality of values and replace them with the plurality of interests. In other words, we substitute value pluralism for interest pluralism. I claim that as dissent seems to democratize publics it can be viewed as an attempt to reintroduce values to already instrumentalized publics and politics.

In Habermasian terms, dissent could be interpreted as an attempt to turn around the invasion of our lifeworld (Habermas, 1987, pp. 305-396). Within the Habermasian framework dissent belongs to the sphere of communicative reason. According to Young's interpretation of social movements they capture the insurgent demands of new social movements that cannot be managed within the limits of interest group pluralism. This idea is similar to my interpretation of Habermas' life world thesis.

I would add to Young's idea that dissent is the feature that captures the insurgent demands; the movements are the agent that furthers them through the medium of social conflict. Interpreted like this, social conflict is based on dissent.

Oppression is, according to Young, embedded in unquestioned norms and symbols that can be found in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following them (Young, 1990, pp. 39-42). Hence, oppression is not something that has to be consciously imposed by someone.

One feature of dissent and consequently social movements is to remove oppressing and subordinating practices from institutions. This feature shows us two things about dissent and social movements. First, it clearly shows the emancipatory potential of dissent and the new social movements. Consequently, social conflict can also be viewed as having the potential for emancipation as it is one medium that dissent can be communicated through.

Society can be viewed as a division between a political community and the political order. The idea is that the political community is the legitimating factor for the political order that governs it. The idea of dissent belongs to the political community as dissent has its roots in a disagreement with the order (Laclau, 2005a). If this is true then dissent and the movements can also be viewed as a legitimating factor for the political order in a democratic society. The order is in a sense legitimated through how it treats dissent. A democracy should accept and guarantee dissent in society.

Dissent can thus be viewed as factor on which one can measure how democratic a society is. In other words, it functions as grounds for justification

as dissent functions as a litmus test for democracy where the deciding factor is how well society can accept dissent and potential subversive activity against the order.

One of dissent's features can be seen as the removal of institutional injustices. Oppression itself does not need a clear agent of oppression. Systemic injustices or the power of the oppressor is one of education and practices. Interpreted in Foucauldian terms the power of the oppressor is governmentality. If we combine this idea with the idea that dissent has its roots in the legitimating part of society, a new feature of dissent is revealed. Because dissent is grounded in the legitimating factor of society and oppression at least partially is a practice of governmentality, dissent can be interpreted as a feature that unmasks unwanted practices of governmentality.

## **2.5 A PRELIMINARY OUTLINE AND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A POLITICAL THEORY OF DISSSENT**

A political theory of dissent should take dissent seriously in the sense that dissent is not wholly internalized within any systemic framework. Such a theory should allow for the self-characterization of dissent. This means that the power of characterizing the substance of any particular dissent should remain with the dissenter. Hence a political theory of dissent should avoid using a framework that characterizes dissent in a way that goes against the principle of giving the power of characterization to the dissenters. Because the main flaw in liberal democratic theories institutionalize and contains dissent the requirement of the self-characterization of dissent requires a political theory of dissent to be framed within a radical democratic framework.

I treat dissent as a way of participating in society. Because dissent is viewed as participation it is tied to the concepts of democracy and justice. Hence, a political theory of dissent requires a justified combination of justice and democracy in order to promote participation, and also dissent, while still being able to give dissent limits that can be conceived as just and democratic.

Because the boundaries of dissent are limited and dissent should be able to challenge almost every feature of society, dissent requires a concept of democracy that is continuously in motion and challenges its own boundaries. This can also be taken as an additional argument for framing a political theory of dissent within the scope of radical democracy.

The possibility to dissent should be viewed as a right. This is required by value pluralism and the plurality of differing opinions that it is based on. In other words, because there are different values there will be disagreement. As long as there is disagreement in society there will also be dissent. Hence, as dissent is always present in a value pluralist democratic society and when it is viewed as a way of participation, it gets the same character of being a right as any other way of participation. Further, the articulation of dissent should be viewed as an expression of voice in democratic society. This adds to the right-like nature of dissent.

The right to dissent promotes individual participatory freedom. It does this by guaranteeing the possibility and right to dissent and the power to characterize it from where one stands. Because dissent may stretch the boundaries for participation and democracy, it will also widen the individuals means of participation. It is, however, impossible to institutionalize dissent fully as the potential for dissent is limited only by dissent and the norm of participatory parity. In other words, any rules for dissent may delimit dissent itself. Hence, institutionalization is impossible because it may exclude forms of dissent with strong democratic justification.

A political theory of dissent views dissent as a positive contribution to society. The positive contributions are at least that dissent fosters democratic citizenship, it removes injustices and diminishes depoliticization, it aims to

improve society's institutional framework and it strengthens participatory parity in society.

A political theory of dissent needs to use a justified logic of change in order to explain how society changes. This logic should not be a logic which sets unnecessary limits for dissent. In other words the logic of change in a political theory should be one that is compatible with dissent, its self-characterization and participatory parity.

Dissent is a legitimate form of activity in democratic society. Social movements come into being around democratic demands that are based on dissent. Hence, the democratic legitimacy of dissent and social movements is established through the link between dissent and democratic demands.

Social movements can be conceived as the agents or vehicles of dissent in society. They movements are constituted around a cause which can be interpreted as articulated dissent. A political theory of dissent should also be able to provide a possibility to make the distinction between democratic and undemocratic dissent and demands.

The right to dissent and the feature that social movements channel dissent in society may lead to widespread chaos. This feature only strengthens the requirement of the state to listen and take dissent into account properly. Hence, dissent requires the state take seriously into account the claims of the dissenters. Hence, a radical democratic theory of dissent puts the burden of stability on the state by ascribing it the duty to take democratic dissent into account.

The preliminary requirements for a radical democratic political theory of dissent are:

- (1) A framework that enables dissent, in other words does not institutionalize or contain dissent
- (2) A framework that allows for the self-characterization of dissent
- (3) A framework that is based on a logic of change that does not constrain dissent
- (4) A conception of democracy as being in constant motion;
- (5) A conception of justice that recognizes democracy as a primary good and enables us to distinguish between democratic and undemocratic demands.
- (6) A view that dissent is a positive feature in society

## 3 DISSENT AND JUSTICE

### 3.1 RADICAL DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE

The main aim of this part is to investigate what kind of conception of justice is most suited for a radical democratic political theory of dissent. I will argue for the view that one of the most justified views on radical democratic justice within radical democratic theory is one that is based on the norm of participatory parity.

I view the concepts of justice and democracy as equally important. In other words, justice and democracy are closely related and one cannot give precedence to either of the concepts.

Many radical democratic theories focus primarily on democracy and lack a concept of justice. For example Mouffe and Ranci ere create theories of democracy and contestatory politics but lack a concept of justice. One of the few radical democratic theorists with an articulated concept of justice is Nancy Fraser.

Radical democratic theories of deliberation focus on justice within the space of the deliberative moment. This means that the concept of justice employed does not surpass the boundaries for deliberation. I claim that a radical democratic theory requires a wide concept of justice that transcends the deliberative moment but does not limit dissent.

Central features of dissent are to foster participatory freedom and also to remove institutional injustices. An interpretation of justice that takes into account the centrality of dissent should be able to enable dissent. Further, it is important that the content of justice is such that the dissenters could define their dissension themselves, at least to a certain extent. I will argue that a view of justice that is based on the norm of participatory parity is the one that has the strongest justification.

The justification of this view is that it sets limits for democracy at the same time as the conception is very wide. The conception of justice as participatory parity is wider than a concept of deliberative justice as it transcends the deliberative moment.

With this I mean that is a wider principle than for example the all-affected principle. The all affected principle is an important part of participatory parity but the principle of participatory parity can cover a wider array of social injustices.

As Fraser points out, the all-affected principle has two main problems (Fraser, 2008b, p. 64). The first one is that, the all-affected principle is prone to what Fraser calls "...the *reductio ad absurdum* of the butterfly effect..." This means that the all-affected principle fails because potentially everyone is affected by every decision in a globalized world. The other problem is that the

all-affected treats relations in an objectivistic manner and hence, relegates the question of who justice should affect to social science.

As a part of Fraser's norm of participatory parity she treats the question of who the subject of justice should be, through the idea that all those who are subject to any given governance structure has a moral standing as subjects of justice towards it. She claims that her stance is better than the all-affected principle because, in her view:

*...what turns a collection of people into fellow subjects of justice is neither shared citizenship or nationality, nor common possession of abstract personhood, nor the sheer fact of causal interdependence, but rather their joint subjection to a structure of governance that sets the ground rules that govern their interaction. (Fraser, 2008b, p. 65)*

The discussion on justice will initially focus on the Recognition/Redistribution debate between Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth. Both Fraser and Honneth can arguably be counted as two of the most important philosophers on justice within the scope of radical democratic theory besides Habermas.

One central feature of the Recognition/Redistribution debate is that it focuses on the normative core of justice. Hence, the debate is partially about the concept of justice a radical democratic theory should employ.

One important aspect of the debate is to notice that Honneth does not claim that his theory of recognition is a complete theory of justice for a modern capitalist society. He restricts his theory to the recognition order. Nancy Fraser on the other hand strives to create a theory of justice that takes into account a modern capitalist society as a whole. With regard to Fraser's theory it is important to notice that it is precisely her wider scope that allows her to create one of the few radical democratic theories that connects the concepts of democracy and justice.

The debate between Honneth and Fraser highlights some philosophical challenges that Fraser's theory of radical democratic justice needs to overcome in order to answer in order to be philosophically justified. Later in this work I will argue that the incorporation of Laclau's theory of democracy with Fraser's theory of justice as participatory parity creates one possible radical democratic theory that is founded on dissent.

As I mentioned one of the main disputes in the Recognition/Redistribution debate is on the normative core of justice. Despite this, the debate can be read as a debate on how strong philosophical foundations a political concept of justice should have. It is quite obvious that Honneth can claim to have a stronger philosophical foundation for his theory.

Fraser's goal on the other hand is to achieve a usable theory of justice. In this sense the weaker philosophical foundations may be tied to the practical usability of a theory of justice.

The different take on foundations is also tied to the different projects of the respective philosophers. Honneth strives to find the roots for feelings of injustice and seeks to secure a stronger way to tie the Habermasian theory in reality while Fraser has a more practical approach and ties the concept of justice to existing institutional reality and the possibility for emancipation that lies within them.

It is true that there are some clear philosophical problems in Fraser's theory. As I mentioned one possible solution can be found in Laclau's theories of hegemony and populist democracy.

## 3.2 FRASER'S THEORY OF JUSTICE AS PARTICIPATORY PARITY

### 3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will present Nancy Fraser's conception of justice as participatory parity. One of the main sources that I rely on is her articles in the joint book *Redistribution or Recognition* (2003) with Axel Honneth. In the article *Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics* (2003a), which is also published elsewhere, Fraser defends a view where justice should be approached through two spheres of justice. Later in *Scales of Justice* (2008) Fraser introduces a third political sphere of justice. In other words, Fraser's theory of justice evolves from a dualist perspective into a perspective based on three spheres of justice. The way that I present Fraser's theory of justice follows this evolution which means that my presentation will cover both the dualist perspective and then the introduction of the third political sphere.

Fraser's general view is that justice should hold the position of the most important virtue in society. Justice is according to Fraser the first social virtue and it is required in order for other virtues to flourish (Fraser, 2012, p. 42).

Nancy Fraser divides her framework of justice in spheres which each corresponds to a different kind of remedy for a different structural injustice. These remedies are redistribution, which corresponds to the injustices of socio-economic inequality, recognition which corresponds with status inequalities of cultural identity, and representation which corresponds to political misrepresentation or misframing.

In this chapter the focus is more on the sphere of recognition than the other two spheres. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, the debate between Honneth and Fraser is mainly a debate if one should view recognition as a matter of self-realization or political justice. The second reason is that questions that relate to distributive justice are treated extensively by other philosophers. In this thesis, representation is treated partially later in the chapter on democracy. My view is that representation is better treated in terms related to democracy. Hence, my interpretation is that one can give more substance to Fraser's sphere of representation by treating it through concepts such as hegemony.

Fraser's framework is an attempt to mediate between the decline of the socialist imaginary and the shift to identity politics. It is be worth to note that Fraser's division of injustices should be taken as an analytic distinction, and that real world injustices usually overlap in the different spheres. She writes that "...virtually every struggle against injustice, when properly understood, implies demands for both redistribution and recognition." (Fraser, 1997, p. 12). To this quote one could also add the third sphere of representation.

Even though this distinction is an analytical distinction it is according to Fraser historically determined (Fraser, 2003a, p. 9). This means that the historical evolution of capitalism determines the concepts we use, thus also

determining the analytic divisions we make.<sup>12</sup> It may be that Fraser views this distinction according to the Marxist dialectic of base and superstructure. If the distinction is interpreted this way, Fraser would open for Laclau's critique of dialectical logic as being too deterministic. However it may be that this analytic distinction merely implies a quite standard view from critical theory where the historical evolution of society is connected to the conceptual frameworks we employ. Regardless of the interpretation given to Fraser's framework, my interpretation of hegemony can describe the evolutions of different conceptualizations through hegemonic struggle.

The different spheres of justice have two points of reference, a political and a philosophical (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 9-11). Philosophically they refer to the normative paradigms developed by a theorist and politically they refer to the claims that social movements make in the public sphere.

The normative core of Fraser multi-partite framework of justice is participatory parity. Within Fraser's framework, this means that injustices are unjust because they hinder the possibility and means for adult members of our society to interact with one another as peers.

The overall goal of Fraser's project is to analyze, and to identify an overarching emancipatory political project (Fraser, 1997, p. 3). Her understanding of justice is made for and derives from the development of the "new social" movements and from her diagnosis of our times.

Fraser strives to avoid framing her conception of justice either as class-struggle or identity politics (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 11-12). She claims that instead her conception of justice is a distinctive perspective of social justice that can be applied to the situation of any social movement. Her understanding of justice is understood through from the perspective of social movements. Fraser's concept of justice refers to folk paradigms of injustice.

Folk paradigms of justice mean that her understanding of justice is tied to what the social movements struggle for in any given historical time. Thus, justice is the essence of the struggles of the movements regardless of what kind of conceptual framework the movements frame the struggles within. The idea is thus to try to provide a conceptual framework that one can use to theorize any given social movement without imposing a specific theory on the movement. Thus, the idea is to allow the movements themselves to retain their freedom to define their struggle while still being able to tie them to the larger emancipatory project of promoting participatory parity.

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<sup>12</sup> This idea is very similar to the idea of hegemony. Another way of reading this would thus be that any current hegemonic configuration determines the conceptual framework we use. In order to avoid historical determinism, it is necessary to understand hegemony in a similar way as Mouffe and Laclau. (more on this in chapter 4.6.2)

### 3.2.2 REDISTRIBUTION, RECOGNITION AND REPRESENTATION

If we first consider the redistribution part and imagine a division that has its roots in the economic system of society. The injustice could then by definition be traced to the political economy of society. Any cultural injustices that derive from the current division would also have its core in the political economy, thus the division requires redistribution as opposed to recognition.

One example of such a division could be, for example, class differentiation in orthodox economist Marxism (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 16-17). Here the working class is the group of workers who sell their labor power under arrangements that authorize the capitalist class to appropriate surplus production for their own benefit. Thus, the core injustice here is exploitation of the working class. The working class may also suffer from cultural injustices, but they are not rooted in an autonomously unjust status order, but are derived from the economic structure. The remedy thus is redistribution. Class exploitation requires restructuring of the political economy to alter the benefits and burdens of class distribution to be overcome. In Marxism the task is to abolish the working class as such. What is important to notice here is that recognition of the distinctiveness of the working class is not needed when the point is to abolish class altogether.

At the other end of the imagined conceptual spectrum Fraser identifies a social division that has its roots in the status order of society. All structural injustices attached to it would be traceable to the institutional patterns of cultural value. The core of this kind of injustice would be misrecognition and the remedy recognition.

An example of this kind of injustice could be sexual differentiation (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 17-19). Here the social division between heterosexuals and homosexuals is not grounded in the political economy as homosexuals are distributed throughout the entire class structure and as such do not constitute an exploited class. The sexual division is rooted in the status order as institutional patterns of cultural value construct heterosexuality as normal and homosexuality as perverse and despised.

The effect is to construct homosexuals as a despised sexuality subject to status subordination. Of course homosexuals suffer also from economic disadvantages, but these are not rooted in the economic structure. Rather they derive, according to Fraser, from the status order "...as the institutionalization of heterosexist norms produces a category of despised persons who incur economic disadvantages as a consequence of their subordination status" (Fraser, 2003a, p. 18). Thus, the remedy of this kind of injustice is recognition, not redistribution. (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 17-19)

The division of redistribution and recognition can also be seen from the viewpoint of the "equality/difference" problem. This is a common thematic in feminist thought where the problem is what the goal of the feminist struggles should be. Those striving for equality are seen as trying to treat all in the same way and thus try to steer away from highlighting the specific nature of femininity. On the other hand there are those who strive to advance the feminist

cause by promoting specificity and thus end up in a position that is antithetical with regard to equality. Within Fraser's framework, the equality point of view would be attributed to the sphere of redistribution while specificity refers to recognition.

Even though Fraser claims that the fall of the Soviet Union and the decline of the socialist imaginary are at the core of her theory, I view the equality/specificity problem as central. This reading is based on the idea that Fraser's norm of participatory parity can subsume equality and freedom in one norm. In other words, Fraser's framework is based on a norm that can treat the different logics of equality and specificity simultaneously. This reading is also strengthened by the fact that Fraser's theory does not require the acceptance of her zeitdiagnose to be justified.

One important thing to notice is that Fraser's status model of recognition is about justice, not self-realization. The concept of recognition is commonly taken as a matter of self-realization as Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth do. For Taylor and Honneth recognition by another is a necessary condition for attaining full and undistorted personhood. Thus, denying someone recognition in this sense is according to Fraser to "deprive her or him of a basic prerequisite for human flourishing (Fraser, 2003a, p. 28)." In other words, Taylor and Honneth understand recognition in ethical terms as a matter a "good life". Fraser defends a view that sees recognition as a matter of justice. On the question of why misrecognition is unjust she answers:

*...that it is unjust that some individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of cultural value in whose construction they have not equally participated and which disparage their distinctive characteristics or the distinctive characteristics assigned to them. (Fraser, 2003a, p. 29)*

According to Fraser varieties of recognition politics that fail to respect human rights are intrinsically unacceptable even though they may promote social equality (Fraser, 1997, p. 12). Thus, for example neo-nazi group's claims for recognition would be precluded.

Fraser claims that the ways we are arguing about justice have changed with the decline of the Keynesian-Westphalian framework (Fraser, 2008, p. 12). Hence, many assumptions that were taken for granted within that framework are no longer self-evident. One such assumption is that regardless of the matter of justice it was a general assumption that the unit of justice was the modern territorial state.

The Keynesian-westphalian framework also gave, according to Fraser, a distinctive shape to arguments about justice (Fraser, 2008, p. 13). The arguments were mostly about what the citizens in a national state owed each other. Thus, it went without saying, who the subject of justice was. Nowadays the situation is different as social processes that impact our lives overflow

national boundaries, some examples one could mention are transnational corporations, international currency speculators, large institutional investors and governmental and nongovernmental public opinion.

With the political dimension of justice, Fraser tries to establish social criteria for belonging. That is, she tries to conceptualize who should be included or excluded from those who are entitled to just redistribution and reciprocal recognition. By establishing decision rules the political dimension also sets the procedures for staging and resolving contests in the other two spheres. Thus, the political dimensions tell us who can make legitimate claims and how these claims can be adjudicated (Fraser, 2008, p. 17). Because the political dimension is focused on procedure and belonging, the prime concern of this sphere is representation. Fraser identifies two different forms of political injustices against participatory parity on this political level. The injustices are misrepresentation and misframing.

Within the scope of misrepresentation we have the injustice that occurs when political boundaries or decision making rules deny some people parity of participation (Fraser, 2008, pp. 18-19). Fraser calls this ordinary political misrepresentation. The issue here is “intra-framework representation. Questions related to this are for example ones that debates merits of different electoral systems etc.

The other injustice, misframing, concerns the boundary-setting aspect of the political dimension. The injustice arises when the community’s boundaries are drawn in such a way as to wrongly exclude some people from the chance to participate at all in its contest over justice.

The aspect of framing is according to Fraser crucial to every question of social justice (Fraser, 2008, pp. 19-20). Frame-setting is according to Fraser one of the most consequential political decisions. Misframing is a serious injustice that can in one stroke deny some people the right to even have rights. People that are subject to misframing, thus articulated, cannot make first-order claims of justice and are thus reduced to non-persons with respect to justice.

As the political dimension of representation is used to signify the stage setting where struggles over redistribution and recognition plays out, the political in Fraser’s philosophy should be seen as an attempt to establish criteria of who should be included and who should be excluded from those who are entitled to just recognition or redistribution (Fraser, 2008, p. 17).

Hence, the political dimension should not be confused with a view of “the political” that highlights the contestatory and power-laden aspects in society. Fraser’s distinct usage of the concept of political should not be seen as a denial of the contestatory or conflictual aspects in society.

As I mentioned earlier, the normative core of Fraser’s framework is participatory parity. Thus, all claims for redistribution or recognition should seek their justification in whether the injustice in question functions as a barrier to participatory parity or not (Fraser, 2003a, p. 35). Fraser distinguishes two conditions for participatory parity that correspond to the two remedies of injustice. These are the objective and the intersubjective condition of

participatory parity. The objective condition corresponds to redistribution and the intersubjective to recognition. The objective condition states that distribution of material resources should ensure independence and “voice”. The intersubjective condition states that institutional patterns of cultural value express equal opportunity for achieving social esteem. Neither one of the conditions are sufficient alone, both are necessary.

Thus, the conditions for participatory parity is, according to Fraser that institutionalized patterns of cultural values should express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunities for achieving social esteem and the distribution of material resources should be such that it ensures participants independence and voice (Fraser, 2003a, p. 36).

The introduction of the political sphere in her framework also lets question who and how people should be taken into account when furthering participatory parity in society.

The core of Fraser’s multi-partite framework of justice is the radical democratic norm of participatory parity. Within Fraser’s framework, this means that injustices are unjust because they hinder the possibility and means for adult members of our society to interact with one another as peers (Fraser, 2003a, p. 36).

As I see it, the main merit with Fraser’s approach is that it ties strongly together the idea of democracy and justice. In a sense what she claims is that a matter is just as long as it is democratic in the sense of an idea of self-rule. More specifically Fraser’s idea of justice refers to the institutions, in other words, participatory parity is what we should want to achieve through our institutions. Fraser’s conception of justice sets the limits for a radical theory of democracy. What should be pointed out is that Fraser’s theory is grounded towards practical use. Her project can be read as a project of creating a usable concept of justice instead of focusing on giving strong philosophical grounds.

### **3.2.3 ABNORMAL JUSTICE**

Fraser frames her conception of justice according to the way she sees contemporary political life (Fraser, 1997, pp. 11-13). That is, in the socialist era before the fall of the Soviet Union, social movements and injustices were often framed as class-based struggles for socio economic equality.

After the fall of the Soviet Union and with it the decentering of class the new social movements started to mobilize around and contest cultural differences. With this development, questions of cultural identity started to dominate and thus redistributive claims started to recede. Thus, the struggle for recognition was quickly becoming the paradigmatic form of political conflict. Group identity replaced socio-economic class as the medium for political mobilization. Thus, cultural recognition became the chief goal of struggle. This all happens in a time when material inequalities are on the rise, especially globally between north and

south, but also within the nation states. The result is according to Fraser a “complex political field with little programmatic coherence”. It is against this backdrop that Fraser proposes to integrate recognition and redistribution in a single framework.

Another characteristic of our times is also according to Fraser that the self-evident frameworks behind our understandings of justice are declining (Fraser, 2008b, p. 49). That is, in “normal” times there is an unspoken widely shared consensus on how we should frame our claims of justice, who the subjects of justice are and how justice claims should be adjudicated. Fraser claims that we now live in “abnormal times” where cold-war paradigms of justice are no longer self-evident. Globalization and the decline of U.S hegemony is also making it harder for us to frame our justice claims in intelligible ways.

Fraser identifies three nodes of abnormality in abnormal times, the *what*, the *who* and the *how* of justice. The first node concerns the matter that justice should concern itself with (Fraser, 2008b, p. 53). For example, justice as a comparative relation must answer, what is it that it compares? In normal times it would be clear and self-evident what the object of justice would be. Everyone could for example take it for granted that justice should focus on divisible material goods. Another question that concerns abnormal times is *who* should be taken as a subject of justice; who’s interests should be taken into consideration (Fraser, 2008b, pp. 53-54)? It is no longer self-evident that the subject of justice should be the citizen within a nation-state. Finally the third node of abnormality concerns the *how* of justice. This is chiefly a procedural node. That is, the *how* of justice concerns itself with identifying or giving criteria for the procedure and the grammar of justice (Fraser, 2008b, pp. 55-56).

For example in a debate on global economy one could easily imagine as many, in some way justified, different appeals to different institutions as there are debaters. In this debate a proponent of some kind of conservative neo-liberalism could for example appeal to the WTO or the Davos-summit when an activist critical of current trends in globalization could justify his or her claims to the process of the World Social Forum. To adjudicate the claims we would have to solve to what kind of grammar of justice we would refer to in order to solve this issue. The problem is that in the before-mentioned debate the grammar of justice is what is at stake even if it is not articulated (Fraser, 2008b, p. 63).

These three nodes represent according to Fraser the destabilization of the previous hegemonic<sup>13</sup> grammar of justice. The destabilization of the *what* reflects our uncertainty of the substance of justice, for example socio-economic reform or cultural identification. The *who* destabilizes the previous grammars frame. That is previously claims of justice would have been made within a westphalian nation-state. The *how* reflects according to Fraser a hegemonic feature that was previously hidden and has become visible when the justice

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<sup>13</sup> This refers to Fraser’s interpretation of hegemony. She views hegemony similarly as Thomas Kuhn views paradigmatic change in science. In other words, Hegemony is viewed as the current paradigm.

discourse is not any more framed within the distributivist paradigm of the westphalian state. (Fraser, 2008b, p. 56)

Fraser grounds her framework of justice in the contemporary struggles of the social movements. In her words “dimensions of justice are historically disclosed through the medium of social struggle” (Fraser, 2008b, p. 56). Thus, justice is always defined historically by what is contested at that particular time. In this sense we always have to rely on a diagnostics of our times (*zeitdiagnose*) when we wish to speak on matters relating to justice. Her conception of justice relies on what she calls folk-paradigms of justice (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 11-12). Abnormal times, such as we live in, this consensus does not exist and almost every aspect of justice is “up for grabs”. Thus, we can no longer refer to self-evident conceptions of justice. As an example of self-evident frameworks she uses the cold-war paradigms of justice. (Fraser, 2008, pp. 71-73)

#### **3.2.4 REFLEXIVE JUSTICE**

Fraser presents the two concepts in relation to her idea of abnormal times. Abnormal times refer to the notion that our time is characterized by our inability to refer to self-evident frameworks of justice to adjudicate claims for justice. According to Fraser we have two possibilities. One is to try to establish such a framework and develop a “new normal”. This however would, according to Fraser, be a premature closing of the venues of contestation at a time that demands flexibility. On the other hand leaving every framework open would be to “revel in abnormality” and leave our claims of justice more or less unsolvable.

Fraser associates discourse ethics with the closing or establishing a new normal and agonism with keeping the framework open and revel in abnormality. Her solution would be to go both ways and establish provisional frameworks that always are subject to question. This would, according to her, cultivate responsiveness to emergent exclusions and invite us to reflexive self-problematization through concepts such as misframing. Fraser calls this approach *reflexive justice*. She claims that her framework of justice scrambles this opposition between a “normalizing” discourse ethics and agonism that irresponsibly revels in abnormality. Reflexive justice valorizes openings that breach the exclusions of normal justice and at the same time it valorizes the closure that enables political argument and collective decision making. From a point of view of reflexive justice the opposition between discourse ethics and agonism is, according to Fraser, a false antithesis. She refuses to absolutize either model to exclude the insights from the other and tries to incorporate both to establish a new genre of theorizing for abnormal times (Fraser, 2008b, pp. 72-73).

The idea of reflexive justice is, for Fraser, akin to the Kuhnian theory of scientific revolution where you have a normal (paradigm) and then the violent

upheaval (revolution) where after a new normal is established (new paradigm) (Fraser, 2008b, p. 49). The idea is also presented as the idea of hegemony theory where hegemony would be the same as normal discourse and counter hegemony abnormal. (Fraser, 2008b, pp. 74-75)

Fraser's idea was to prove that the contradiction between agonism and discourse ethics is a false antithesis. However because Fraser is using the Kuhnian framework to describe the opposition, her point of view does neither serve to overcome the opposition between agonism and discourse nor does it add any value for the analysis of modern capitalist society. Fraser's Kuhnian approach merely provides a superficial description of hegemony.

I claim that it is possible to give a different interpretation that can add to the means of social analysis. This reinterpretation is, in my opinion an agonist one. The main goal is to allow for an analysis where modern capitalist society can be simultaneously viewed from the point of view of abnormal and normal. This requires that the idea of paradigm change is discarded. Hence, the value added would be that one could be able to view matters of justice in society at the same time from the point of view of hegemony and counter hegemony. In other words, I propose that reflexive justice should not be interpreted as an attempt to overcome the contradiction between discourse and agonism but as an approach to justice that includes a strong element of social analysis. The reason that this dynamic should be interpreted as an agonist point of view has to do with the deliberative approach's necessity of relying on some form of background consensus. This approach would entail the possibility of viewing society through the "lenses" of abnormality, which in turn is incompatible with the idea of a common reference point. Thus, if interpreted as an ongoing dynamic, from an agonist perspective, it is possible to avoid the reliance on paradigm, ruling hegemony or closed frameworks in social analysis. This reinterpretation is required because Fraser's perspective does not by definition allow for the possibility to simultaneously view society from the point of view of closed and open frameworks..

For Fraser the closed framework is viewed as hegemony. This entails that a movement that strives for the opening of a hegemonic framework will be ascribed as one of counter-hegemony. If this is true, then, one could conclude that the idea of an open framework is not open, in a strict sense, because the open framework will actually be one derived from the closed framework in the same way as counter-hegemony is tied to hegemony. Hence, her idea is that agonism (open frameworks) and discourse (closed frameworks) are actually derived from one another. Agonism and discourse ethics are thus related to each other dialectically. This differs to my point of view of radical democracy because I view agonism and discourse as two distinct points of view of radical democracy. Fraser's point of view requires the deriving of agonism from deliberation whereas while I view them as sub-categories of radical democracy.

Regarded in this way the idea of reflexive justice does not transcend the opposition of agonism and discourse but constructs agonism as being derived from discourse. Hence, for Fraser, agonism and discourse does not refer to

different ways of conceptualizing democracy or radical democracy. In this thesis I have presented agonism and deliberative democracy (discourse) as two different approaches within radical democracy. The approaches differ on how they attempt to overcome difference, either by reason and deliberation or through hegemonic struggle. If one follows Fraser's line of thought this becomes difficult, if not impossible, to view reflexive justice as a mechanism of social analysis because open and closed frameworks ends up referring to each other. One cannot view society from the point of view of hegemony and counter-hegemony because they are conceptually derived from each other.

On these grounds I reject Fraser's interpretation and propose to reinterpret the framework as an agonist framework that has its grounds in the difficulty of capturing ontological assumptions. In other words, reflexive justice would not refer to paradigm change but with the difficulties of capturing social reality and framing political claims, demands and questions.

This entails that we accept the division between agonism and discourse as an opposition that cannot be conceptually overcome. Hence, they are viewed as two conceptually different and detached perspectives. Interpreted this way reflexive justice as a method, requires us to view society at the same time through the lenses of discourse and as an agonist view. When I claim that this view is an agonist perspective I merely assert that in politics one cannot understand reason as the ultimate adjudicator of conflicts.

Reflexive justice cannot be viewed as a discursive method as this would entail accepting the idea of a rational consensus and hence would render the agonist perspective less valued than the discursive one from the beginning. Of course, it is not necessarily required that one should view reflexive justice as one or another if viewed as a method because a method does not need to be viewed as either agonist or discursive. Despite this, I would argue for the view that one should view Fraser's framework as an agonist one in order to highlight the critique of a common conception of reason as ultimate adjudicator of conflicts. In a sense, this only serves as a clarification of what is meant when one claims that Fraser's framework is radical democratic.

In Fraser's defense, her idea of reflexive justice should be seen as an attempt to historically encompass the idea of abnormal/normal, not take part in the agonist debate. In a sense this can be seen as an attempt to reject the relevance of the whole debate.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This is roughly a statement of Fraser's take on my idea of reflexive justice presented as a response by her in a seminar at the Collegium for Advanced Studies at the University of Helsinki

### 3.2.5 FOLK-PARADIGMS AND THE SUBALTERN

Fraser's understanding of justice is understood through the lenses of social movements (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 11, 12). This is what she means when she claims that her understanding of justice refers to folk paradigms of injustice.

Justice in Fraser is understood to be historically determined by the struggles of social movements. The struggles of the social movements are where Fraser anchors her philosophy in really existing society. Hence, Fraser's claim that her theory is written "from the social movements to the social movements". In her words dimensions of justice are historically disclosed through the medium of social struggle. Thus, justice is always defined historically by what is contested at that particular time. In this sense we always have to rely on a diagnostics of our times (zeitdiagnose) when we wish to speak on matters relating to justice. Her conception of justice relies on what she calls folk-paradigms of justice (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 11-12). This entails that instead of giving a substance to justice other than what is required by participatory parity, justice is defined in struggle, hence all struggles are struggles for justice.

As I pointed out in the chapter on participatory parity that one of the merits of Fraser's idea is that it ties together justice and democracy as an unified democratic conception of justice. Where most theories focus solely on either justice or democracy, Fraser's idea of justice as participatory parity provides a conception of justice that can limit the conception of democracy. In other words, Fraser's theory provides the possibility of not having to accept all kinds of claims in the name of democracy. In other words, this provides the possibility of making the distinction between democratic and undemocratic claims. Fraser's idea of folk-paradigms does a similar thing in the opposite direction. This is a democratic conception of justice. To this we arrive from the idea that as the concept of justice is determined in a struggle and all struggles are in a sense struggles for justice. Hence, justice is something that social movements struggle for when they struggle to achieve participatory parity. Thus, justice is adjudicated in reference to participatory parity and it is defined through contemporary struggles for justice. Another way of describing this dynamic would be that initially all struggles for justice are accepted because they give meaning to the concept of justice in this specific era. After this meaning is established one can make the evaluation of the democratic legitimacy of movements and claims by referring to the norm of participatory parity.

In one of her earlier essays, "*Rethinking the Public Sphere*", Fraser introduces the concept of subaltern counterpublics. The background of the concept is a critique of the Habermasian liberal public sphere where the assumption is that one overarching public sphere would be desirable from the point of view of democracy and that multiple spheres would be a step away from democracy.

Fraser's argument against a single public sphere in egalitarian multicultural societies goes roughly as follows. A truly egalitarian society would be a classless society without gendered or racial division of labor. It would not have to be culturally homogenous. These societies permit free expression and association

and are thus likely to be inhabited by social groups with diverse values identities and cultural styles. Here Fraser asks if "...a single, comprehensive public sphere [would] be preferable to multiple publics?" (Fraser, 1997, p. 83).

Fraser claims that public spheres are not only a place the formation of discursive opinion but also a venue for the formation of social identities. Thus, participation is not only about being able to state propositional contents but also to "simultaneously constructing and expressing ones cultural identity in idiom and style". The spheres are also situated in culturally specific institutions and social geographies e.g. various journals, newspapers, internet, parks and cafeterias and so on. As these institutions are "culturally specific rhetorical lenses" that filter and alter utterances the can accommodate some expressive modes and not others. Thus, because no such lens can be neutral public life in egalitarian, multicultural societies cannot consist in a single comprehensive public sphere (Fraser, 1997, pp. 82-84).

Thus, according to Fraser, her framework acknowledges the historical and power-laden character of justice discourse but adds an interest in emancipation which is an, "insistence that the grammar of justice be reconstituted so as to enable the subaltern to speak *in authorative terms.*" (Fraser, 2008, p. 75).

Again, Fraser's point of departure is participatory parity whereas her analysis of the public sphere is done against the backdrop of how to narrow the gap between dominant and subordinate groups in social life. Fraser defends a view that a plurality of contesting publics does better at ensuring participatory parity than a single overarching one. The reason for this is that Fraser claims that in a single public sphere subordinated groups would not have any venues to undertake communicative processes that are not under the supervision of dominant groups. She also bases her argument in history which she claims shows that members of subordinated groups have repeatedly found it fruitful to constitute alternative publics, these alternative publics are what Fraser calls subaltern counterpublics. (Fraser, 1997, p. 80)

The subaltern counterpublics are discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups can invent and circulate counterdiscourses that in turn can form oppositional identities, interests and needs. One example of such a counterpublic is according to Fraser the feminist movement the United States where the variety of "own" bookstores, publishers academic programs etc. allowed the movement to invent new concepts for describing reality such as sexism, sexual harassment and marital, date and acquaintance rape. This again allowed the reinterpretation of women's identities in official public spheres. Fraser claims that widening and emphasizing the contestatory function of publics is a good thing in stratified societies. (Fraser, 1997, pp. 81-82)

The idea of contestatory public spheres adds to the idea that democratic citizenship is contestatory in nature.

## 3.3 HONNETH AND JUSTICE AS SELF-REALIZATION

### 3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of Fraser's theory is to create and defend the political conception of justice based on participatory parity. This led to her view that recognition should be viewed from the perspective of institutions and how they hinder or promote participatory parity in society. Axel Honneth's social theory of recognition is an attempt to reconstruct historical materialism in a way that fuses theory to practice in a way that retains its emancipatory intent (Deranty, 2009, p. 51). Thus, Honneth, as Fraser, are true to critical theory's bearing idea of transcending the immanent. Honneth social theory is based on the Hegelian notion of struggle for recognition. An idea he has been able to bring to completion through the social psychology of G.H.Mead.

For this part of the thesis I rely, in addition to Honneth's work, on Simon Thompson's *The Political Theory of Recognition* and Jean-Philippe Deranty's *Beyond Communication*. The main reason for this is that in Thompson one can find one of the better descriptions of Fraser's, Honneth's and Taylor's theories of recognition and their critique of each other. Deranty's work on Honneth is one of the most thorough works on the mature version of Honneth's theory of recognition and its foundations.

Honneth's theory of recognition has three stages that each relate to the development of the individual. The name "Struggle for Recognition" derives from the idea that a failure in the development of the individual constitutes a threat or injury. This injury leads to a struggle to overcome it which in turn brings about a development of the individual.

Honneth grounds his theory empirically through the social psychology of G.H.Mead (Deranty, 2009, p. 241). It is through the social psychology of Mead that Honneth finds the tools to fulfill Hegel's uncompleted stages of recognition. Honneth's and Hegel's theory shares the idea that there are three stages of development of the individual. They are mind, self and society. For Honneth these are love, rights and esteem.

Honneth finds in the theory of Mead the tools to reconstruct the intersubjectivist intentions of Hegel in a post-metaphysical framework (Deranty, 2009, pp. 241-242,245). The basis of Mead's theory lies in the dialectic of the I and the Me. This link between Honneth's normative social theory and social psychology is the most characteristic feature of his philosophy as a whole. This is also the feature that annoys his critics the most.

In the center of Honneth's theory one can find conflict. Both behavior and norms are changed through struggles. Social and historical struggles are seen as group interests and moral struggles that generate new needs and norms. (Deranty, 2009, p. 241).

Honneth's three spheres of recognition designate the three fundamental types of normative interaction which are necessary for modern subjects to develop their full anatomy (Deranty, 2009, p. 271). In this one can deduce the implication that subjects are dependent on their fellow beings for their self-realisation. The sphere of love is the one in which the subjects affective life is secured, in other words recognition through the intimate sphere. The sphere of rights is the one through which the subject is able to see himself as equal to all as full subject of rights, in other words the sphere of legal, universalistic recognition. The last sphere of esteem is the one through which the subject is able to see her contribution to societal life validated, recognition through individual performance. In the negative the three spheres forms the foundation for social critique. In Honneth's words:

*The reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view oneself from the normative perspectives of one's partners in interaction as their social addressee. (Honneth, 1995, p. 92)*

According to Deranty, Honneth's concept of self-realisation is wider than the common usage of it (Deranty, 2009, p. 275). The common usage is the fulfillment of capacities and desires of an already complete identity. Honneth's usage of the concept is about the formation of identity and the formation of the self. One is not a self at all if one is not a full self. Self-realization refers to the ontological possibility of subjective identity before an ethical notion of the good life. Even if rights are granted it is abstract to speak of freedom in a world that makes the full development of subjectivity structurally impossible. To have no self that exercises autonomy is to not be recognized.

In other words, demands for recognition are not only a psychological thing but they point to the conditions of a possibility of normative practical life in general (Deranty, 2009, p. 276).

### **3.3.2 LOVE, RIGHTS AND ESTEEM**

To experience love is to feel the "affectionate attention of concrete others". Love consists of a strong emotional attachment between a small number of people (Honneth, 1995, pp. 87,95-96). It marks our primary affectional relationship with each other. According to Thompson these descriptions highlights two important characteristics (Thompson, 2006, p. 25).

The first characteristic is love as affect, as emotion (Honneth, 1995, p. 107). According to Thompson, Honneth sees this as a positive affect, it becomes a matter of love, care or friendship, not hate, cruelty or enmity. The second

character is the limited scope of love. Honneth sees, according to Thompson, love as being necessarily limited which means that there is room only for a few important people that have a significant impact on ones sense of self. Love cannot according to Honneth be extended at will.

Love can thus only be shown to our “significant others”; children, lovers and friends (Thompson, 2006, p. 25). Even though, for example, romantic love is different from care for one’s children, they still have in common the characteristic of being positive emotional attachments to a necessarily limited group of people.

Love, according to Honneth, is the first mode of recognition. It is conceptually and genetically prior to respect and esteem (Honneth, 1995, p. 107). Conceptual priority refers to the idea that we cannot, according to Honneth conceive of the other modes of recognition if we do not first know love. Love is according to Honneth the basic prerequisite for other forms of recognition (Honneth, 1995, p. 107).

Love for Honneth is not only a relationship between subjects but also a practical relation-to-self (Honneth, 1995, pp. 107,129) (Honneth, 2003a, p. 139). This means that each form of recognition leads subjects to relate to themselves in a distinct way. Esteem leads to self-esteem, respect to self-respect. Being loved by ones primary care-giver leads to a body-related self-confidence. Honneth uses self-confidence to signify the idea that when we develop such self-confidence we believe that our needs and feelings have value and can also express them without shame or embarrassment. This positive self-relation is the prerequisite of all further positive relations to oneself (Honneth, 1995, pp. 107, 176).

According to Honneth other individuals are regarded as morally responsible. Honneth regards moral responsibility as the core of a person that is worthy respect (Honneth, 1995, pp. 114, 119).

This means that people deserve respect as people that can be held accountable for their actions (Honneth, 1995, p. 114). According to Honneth it is because of our capacity for rational autonomy that we can be attributed moral responsibility. Thus, when we say that we respect others we say that we regard each other as capable of acting autonomously on the basis of rational insight.

To fail to respect someone is to not accord them the same degree of moral responsibility as to others thus allowing us to restrict their personal autonomy (Honneth, 1995, p. 133).

According to Honneth this mode of recognition is necessarily mutual and reciprocal (Honneth, 1995, p. 108). Ones attitude of respect for another is thus tied to the others respect for oneself. On this point Honneth follows Hegel and Mead contending that we can only see ourselves as right-bearers (worthy of respect) once we understand our own obligations towards others. For us to get this understanding we have to adopt a generalized view of the other

In other words, one should adopt the viewpoint of no particular person in society. Legal systems in modern society help us to realize Honneth’s idea of reciprocal respect. According to Honneth it is “in obeying the law, legal subjects

recognize each other as persons capable of autonomously making reasonable decisions about moral norms (Honneth, 1995, p. 109). Thus, when they obey the same rules, they acknowledge my rights and their obligations towards me, they show me respect.

Respect is shown to others only by treating them as bearers of rights (Honneth, 1995, p. 116). If rights do not exist, no respect is possible. Thus, Honneth establishes a very close connection between rights and respect. This is not something that should be seen as static in society but this mode has a developmental potential. In other words, we can always strive for a more complete realization of our system of rights. Honneth contends that to get recognition as a citizen it is necessary to possess all of the three types of rights, civil, political and social (Honneth, 1995, p. 117).

Esteem is the third and final mode of recognition that Axel Honneth identifies. Honneth argues that individuals deserve esteem in virtue of their concrete characteristics or traits or abilities (Honneth, 1995, pp. 121, 125, 129). Thus, they are not esteemed only because they are associated with a particular culture or social identity, but because they possess specific features that distinguish them as unique individuals (Honneth, 1995, p. 122). Certain physical characteristics are not something worth of esteem because they have no ethical significance. According to Honneth individuals deserve esteem for attributes that contribute to the achievement of societal goals.

Esteem is thus a reward for persons that help their society to achieve particular goals. Thus, “the social standing of subjects is ... measured in terms of what they can accomplish for society within the context of their particular forms of self-realization” (Honneth, 1995, p. 127).

Hence, according to Honneth, each society has certain goals or values that help to define its identity. In his words a society has a set of ethical goals and values that comprises its cultural self-understanding (Honneth, 1995, p. 122). It is a sort of intersubjectively shared value-horizon (Honneth, 1995, p. 121).

Honneth does not, however, contend that a society would share a single set of values but we have after the “collapse” of traditional hierarchies of values seen the emergence of a condition of value pluralism (Honneth, 1995, p. 125).

In this value pluralism, many values compete against each other for social precedence (Honneth, 1995, p. 127). These are struggles for esteem. Thus, value systems are in a constant flux as some values wane and others wax. Thus, there is a permanent struggle to control the means of symbolic force and to shape the climate of public attention.

Thus, groups that share certain values strive to raise the profile of their own value-system and if they succeed they gain esteem (Honneth, 1995, p. 122). Thus, contemporary societies are not characterized by a consensus of values but rather by a temporarily stabilized agreement on societal goals. In modern society we have witnessed what Honneth calls the equalization of esteem (Honneth, 1995, p. 130). This means that we share the same chance of acquiring esteem in contrast to for example medieval society where one could have esteem because of being born into a particular status group.

### 3.3.3 THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION

The idea that recognition is something that we have to struggle for is an idea that has its roots in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the master/slave dialectic. For Honneth the idea is that societal conflicts can be explained and normatively assessed by using the idea of recognition.

In general Honneth assumes that social conflicts occur when people demand recognition that they feel that they are denied. At the same time as we can analyze and describe conflicts through the concept of recognition we can also according to Honneth do it the other way around, which is to analyze the concept of recognition through social conflicts.

By analyzing the directions of the conflicts we could see what the realization of undistorted relations of recognition would look like (Thompson, 2006, pp. 161, 162). Thus, according to Thompson, Honneth ties his theory of social development to a theory of moral progress. In other words, Honneth's theory explains why social conflicts occur at the same time as we can see how an ideal society would look like that would be achieved through these conflicts.

To get a clear picture of how this dynamic works it is necessary to explain how Honneth gets from the feeling of injustice to the struggle and from the struggle to recognition. For Honneth, we can find the root for our struggles in the negative emotional reactions of for example anger, rage, shame and indignation (Honneth, 1995, pp. 132-135). Honneth uses an empirically grounded phenomenology as the foundation of his theory. In other words, he thinks that he can find evidence for his theory from the above mentioned hurt feelings. Thus, having these feelings amounts, according to Honneth, to that the rules of recognition are violated. Honneth identifies three ways we can be denied recognition (Honneth, 1995, pp. 143,162-163). If we are being maltreated, we will feel humiliated and thus our self-confidence is damaged. If we are excluded from citizenship, thus denied our rights I will lose self-respect. If the way of life which we are associated with is being denigrated, self-esteem will be lost. In other words, Honneth tries to establish the connection between the hurt feelings as an evidence of injustice.

After Honneth has established the link between our feelings of hurt and injustice, the link between injustice and struggle should be established.

To get from the feeling of personal hurt to struggle we have to first see the hurt as an injustice and then come to the conclusion that it is not only about personal injustice but an injustice made to all people in a relevantly similar position. In other words, we have to bridge the gap between private experiences of injury and impersonal aspirations of social movements. In Honneth's theory this gap is bridged by an intersubjective framework of interpretation (Honneth, 1995, pp. 132, 163). This framework helps people to see that their feelings of hurt are tied to social processes that deny them recognition. Thus, it is the collective feelings of injustice that motivate our struggles against a certain kind of oppression. Thus, disrespect (lack of recognition), is the motivational force behind social resistance. Hence, the realization that a feeling of hurt is not only

a personal feeling, but a collective one, gives us reason to join with each other and struggle against this injustice.

After the link is made between injustice and struggle, it still remains to establish the link between struggle and recognition. The dynamics described above, show how Honneth's theory of recognition can explain social conflicts. If we turn this dynamic around, the social conflicts can also shed some light on recognition. According to Honneth the struggles move society in a direction towards a full realization of undistorted recognition. Thus, if we analyze the direction in which the relations of directions are moving, we can understand the idea of recognition that is emerging. Honneth claims that this direction is also a story about the moral progress of society.

One explanation of the development of relations of recognition can be found in Thompson, (2006, p. 164), Thompson interprets Honneth in a way that sheds light on the concept of recognition by describing the development of rights in Britain. Thompson, and also Honneth, follows the work of T.H. Marshall on this point. According to this account, rights developed in Britain in a series of historical stages in the order of civil, political and lastly social rights. This can be interpreted as a result of the unfolding of the developmental possibilities inherent in relations of recognition. Thus, as a principle of equality was introduced, it created a developmental pressure towards further expansion of these relations. For example once it is established that all men are equal, we have no grounds to consider women to be unequal. Thus, this dynamic is the ground for the successive expansion of rights. Thus, recognition is present in a way in every struggle for recognition as an embryo which then is realized through the struggle itself.

This framework also provides, according to Honneth, an interpretive framework for a process of moral formation (Honneth, 1995, pp. 115-118, 168-170). Thus, to study social struggles enables us to understand how a society makes moral progress. To do this a framework must be able to answer the question if a struggle is seen as reactionary or progressive. According to Honneth we can use as a normative standard a hypothetical anticipation of an approximate end state to determine if a struggle is taking us in the right direction or not. After we can identify this hypothetical end state we can also identify an idealized sequence of social struggles which would ensure a process of moral development in which the potential of mutual recognition is unfolded. After this we can determine if a particular struggle is part of this idealized sequence. According to Honneth if a society would experience this particular series of struggles of recognition a society would also have established moral progress.

For Honneth the link between social theory and practice is the feeling of injustice.

*the motives for social resistance and rebellion are formed in the context of moral experiences stemming from the violation of deeply rooted expectations of recognition. (Honneth, 1995, p. 163)*

Thus, Honneth relies on the idea that the fundamental motivations for social movements are moral, not utilitarian (Deranty, 2009, p. 312).

Honneth's theory does not only designate group/class specific symbolic expressions but also the symbolic, cognitive and normative resources that can be mobilized by dominated subjects to transform their individualized negative social experience into a collective representation (Deranty, 2009, p. 317). They form the basis of social action aiming at overcoming existing social injustice.

Honneth reinterprets class struggle as a struggle for symbolic power. With this interpretation the theory is sensitive to all forms of domination and oppression, it is not only restricted to proletarian movements (Deranty, 2009, p. 325).

For Honneth it is important that critical theory should not restrict social suffering to the kind of suffering that is visibly present in the public sphere (Deranty, 2009, p. 328).

### **3.4 FRASER'S CRITIQUE OF HONNETH**

#### **3.4.1 THE REDISTRIBUTION RECOGNITION DEBATE**

One of the main questions for my thesis is what kind of institutional arrangements are required to enhance dissent as a positive contribution to society. Hence, I hold to the idea that dissent and the concept of justice should retain a tie to institutional reality. My view is based partially on the idea that one should focus on what is changeable in society to be able to provide a concept of dissent that retains its connection with societal pathologies that emerge through institutions as oppression that can at least partially be approached objectively. Hence, I agree with Fraser that there seems to be a problem with Honneth's move to anchor justice primarily to the feeling of injustice.

The main problem is that this is a feature that removes the possibility to approach injustice and domination without actually asking the person or group if it is feeling dominated. For example, one could conceive that a person that lives on an economic minimum in society would be perfectly content with his/hers situation. Under a strict interpretation this would not entail an injustice if the person would not acknowledge that he/she is suffering from injustice. On the other hand one could also conceive of a wealthy person that claims that taxation of wealth is unjust and that he/she is suffering from injustice. This would entail that the feeling of injustice could be present even though one could objectively show that no injustice has taken place. Taken to its extreme the reliance on the feeling of injustice, leads to the possibility that the feeling of injustice could be cured by going to a psychologist and not by reconfiguring institutional reality.

Of course Honneth does not go this far nor does he claim that the feeling of injustice is the only thing we should focus on but despite this he leaves the possibility open for this interpretation.

Another problem with regard to Honneth's theory is that every injustice in society is framed as misrecognition. With regard to a political theory of dissent, this would mean that dissent would be derived from the obstacles in the way of self-determination, in other words, misrecognition. My idea is that the institutional reality is a central ground for the feelings of injustice which further can be articulated into dissent.

Hence, to remedy injustices one should reconfigure societal institutions. Also when interpreted this way dissent is viewed as positive because it has its roots both in changing institutional arrangements to better society at the same time as it strives to remedy the roots of the feeling of injustice which may or may not prove to be a hindrance to a person's ability to flourish as a person. Hence, I view the strong ties to institutional reality in Fraser's framework as a clear merit. This however requires at least partially the acceptance of the idea that injustices are rooted in institutional reality.

Both Honneth and Fraser share the same goal, which is the attempt to secure a normative foundation for critical theory. For them it is important that the

foundation should needs to be anchored in reality and through an analysis be able to transcend the immanent pathologies of society.

Fraser's theory can be read as an attempt to create a complete theory of democratic justice for contemporary capitalist society. She claims that her division of justice into redistribution, recognition and representation can encompass every aspect of justice in contemporary capitalist society. Her theory is founded on the idea that one has to view justice through all of these different spheres as none of the spheres by itself enables the possibility of overcoming injustices.

Fraser's theory can also be read as a theory that attempts to incorporate the democratic ideals of equality and difference in one single framework (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 7-9).

With regard to the sphere of recognition Fraser defends a status model of recognition which entails that recognition should be seen as a matter of justice, not self-realization. Honneth argues for the view that recognition should be viewed as the possibility to attain full personhood in society. It is thus a prerequisite for human flourishing. For Fraser recognition is a matter of justice, not ethics. In order to treat recognition as justice she treats it as an issue of social status.

Fraser's status model of recognition does neither treat misrecognition as a matter of psychological deformation nor a hinder for ethical self-realization. It is "to be constituted by *institutionalized patterns of cultural value* in ways that prevent one from participating as a peer in social life." (Fraser, 2003a, p. 29). This reframes the question of recognition so that it is not conveyed through belittling attitudes but rather through social institutions (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 28-29).

Fraser characterizes four advantages of her own status model of recognition over the model of self-realization furthered by Honneth (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 30-33).

The first advantage is, according to Fraser, that her model allows one to justify claims for recognition as morally binding under modern conditions of value pluralism. Fraser's claim is that her model of recognition avoids sectarianism as it does not appeal to a distinct conception of self-realization or account of good life that can be universally shared or established as authoritative. According to Fraser an attempt to justify claims for recognition that appeals to an account of self-realization or good life is necessarily sectarian. Thus, she claims that no such claims can be established as normatively binding if one does not share the theorist's conception of values.

Fraser claims that her model is deontological and nonsectarian and that it embraces the spirit of subjective freedom. With this she means that subjects themselves define what is important to them and how to further their respective cause within the limits that ensures similar freedom for all. According to Fraser her model is nonsectarian as it appeals to a conception of justice that can and should be accepted by people with differing conceptions of the good. The moral wrong in Fraser's scheme is that misrecognition denies the possibility of

participation on par with each other in society. Her norm of participatory parity is according to her nonsectarian and can “justify claims for recognition as normatively binding on all who agree to abide by fair terms of interaction under conditions of value pluralism.” (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 30-31).

The second advantage of the status model is that under the conception of status subordination the wrong is located in social relations, not interpersonal psychology. According to Fraser to locate misrecognition in internal distortions or interpersonal psychology is a short step from blaming the victim, or adding insult to injury (Fraser, 2003a, p. 31).

On the other hand when misrecognition is equated with, for example, prejudice in the minds of the oppressors, the overcoming of them requires the policing of people’s, minds which is an authoritative and illiberal approach. The status model avoids these both problems as it sees misrecognition as a matter of externally verifiable impediments by social institutions to some peoples standing as full members of society. Thus, to overcome this kind of status subordination change is required in social institutions and practices.

For Fraser this means that her conception of recognition acknowledges that misrecognition can have the types of ethical effects that Honneth and Taylor propose but maintains that the wrongness of misrecognition does not depend on such effects (Taylor, 1992). Thus, she claims that her model decouples the normativity of recognition claims from psychology and that this move strengthens the normative force of her models. She holds that when recognition claims are premised on a psychological theory of undistorted identity formation it remains vulnerable to the fact that if the psychological theory of identity formation turns out to be false, the whole theory of justice goes with it. What Fraser tries to do is to avoid being “hostage” to matters of psychological facts. Within her framework one can show that a society that impedes the parity of participation is morally indefensible “...*whether or not they distort the subjectivity of the oppressed.*” (Fraser, 2003a, p. 32).

The third advantage is according to Fraser that the status model avoids a view that everyone has an equal right to social esteem. According to Fraser Honneth’s conception of recognition views social esteem as one of the conditions for intersubjective conditions for undistorted identity-formation. According to Fraser viewing esteem as a right for all makes it meaningless as it becomes a *reduction ad absurdum* argument. Her own model avoid this according to her by entailing that everyone has an equal right to pursue social esteem under conditions of equal opportunity (Fraser, 2003a, p. 33).

The fourth advantage of her model is that by construing misrecognition as a violation of justice it integrates the claims for recognition with claims for redistribution of resources (Fraser, 2003a, p. 33). According to Fraser recognition is assigned to a universally binding domain of deontological morality as distributive justice. When both categories exist within the same normative conception, they become potentially subsumable under a common framework. The self-realization view, in contrast have not the possibility of conceptual integration and makes it incommensurable with distributive justice.

According to Fraser the result is that if one holds to the self-realization view and wants to endorse both recognition and redistribution, one risks philosophical schizophrenia.

Fraser's model also overcomes a traditional view of conceptual incompatibility between the Anglo-American liberal tradition and the phenomenological tradition (Fraser, 2003a, p. 33). This is so because the roots to the redistribution paradigm are associated with Kantian *Moralität* and Recognition has its roots in the phenomenological tradition associated with Hegel and *Sittlichkeit*. Normally these conceptions are held to be conceptually incompatible, but according to Fraser her status model overcomes this by treating both redistribution and recognition as a matter of justice. Thus, Fraser's framework can accommodate both conceptual views in a single framework without succumbing to philosophical schizophrenia.

Fraser sees that the reductionism of the conceptions of justice into one overarching conceptions is an impossibility. She holds that it is neither possible to subsume matters of recognition under a conception of redistributive justice nor is it possible to subsume a conception of redistributive justice under a conception of recognition. Even though many of the redistributive theorists, such as Amartya Sen (Sen, 2009), are sensitive to questions of status subordination, they are still according to Fraser bound by the measures of distribution of rights and resources and cannot adequately handle cases outside of maldistribution and legal discrimination. On the other hand Fraser also rejects that theories of recognition can adequately handle questions of recognition. Here she claims that for example Honneth assumes a reductive culturalist view of distribution.

According to Fraser, Honneth supposes that all economic inequalities are rooted in the cultural order that privileges some kinds of labor over others, thus to remedy these kinds of injustices it is enough to change the cultural order (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 34-35). Fraser uses an example of a skilled white male industrial worker who becomes unemployed due to a factory closing because of a speculative corporate merger. According to Fraser the injustice of maldistribution in this case has little to do with misrecognition. It is according to Fraser a consequence of imperatives to a specific economic order whose existence is based on the accumulation of capital. Consequently a theory of justice should in this case reach out beyond the sphere of recognition and ask whether the structural economic mechanism inherent to capitalism impedes parity of participation in social life.

According to Fraser Honneth's conception of recognition runs into difficulties when trying to distinguish whose claims for recognition are justifiable. As Honneth's model is based on the idea of self-realization it follows, according to Fraser that claims for recognition that enhance the claimants self-esteem are justified while those who diminish it are not (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 32-33). According to Fraser this means that racist identities would merit some recognition as they enable "poor" white Europeans and Euro-Americans to maintain their sense of self-worth by contrasting themselves with their

supposed inferiors. Thus, it is doubtful if enhanced self-esteem should function as a justificatory standard for recognition claims.

Honneth comments on a general level on Fraser's project. A reason, according to Honneth, to be doubtful of Fraser's project and to engage with it critically is that Fraser is fearful that the tradition of critical theory is shifting too far from its traditional key concept with the recognition-theoretical turn (Honneth, 2003a, p. 111). Even though Honneth agrees with Fraser that there is an urgency to solve problems regarding an ever-growing lower class as a result of unrestrained capitalism, he thinks that this is best done within a normative framework of recognition as it establishes a link between the widespread feelings of injustice and the objectives of the emancipatory movements (Honneth, 2003a, pp. 111, 123-124). Also he thinks in contrast with Fraser that the shift to identity politics is not a new phenomenon even though he also shares the view that many of the contemporary social movements frame their struggles as related to identity politics.

For Honneth the debate between him and Fraser is about the categorical tools critical theory should use in its attempt to "articulate and morally justify the normative claims of social movements" (Honneth, 2003a, p. 113). Honneth also points out that there is a problem with anchoring critical theory to the normative claims that have already been articulated in the public sphere and gained public notice as social movements as this position neglects the everyday struggles that have not been articulated in the public sphere. According to Honneth the orienting of critical theory towards the publicly displayed demands of the social movements has the unintended consequence of reproducing exclusions.

Also a problem arises as Fraser defines justice through the struggles of social movements; the concept of justice is derived from a small part of politically recognized claims (Honneth, 2003a, pp. 113, 123-125). Honneth even goes so far as to claim that Fraser lacks the tools for hypothesizing about the causes of injustice. (Honneth, 2003a, p. 128) According to Honneth, his own work is made as an answer to flaws in theory where Fraser's work can be seen as an answer to flaws in societal development (Honneth, 2003a, p. 126).

Honneth concludes by claiming that:

*...a satisfactory conception of the capitalist social order requires not only including the three spheres of social recognition, to whose normative principles subjects can connect their legitimate expectations of reciprocal recognition. Rather, we must also consider the cultural values involved in the institutional constitution of the economic sphere through interpretations of the achievement principle, which give it a particular shape in the form of a division of labor and a distribution of status. (Honneth, 2003a, pp. 155-156)*

Honneth continues by criticizing Fraser on the point of methodology on the point that Fraser does not adequately explain the reasons why the capitalist order should suddenly be investigated through the spheres of economy and culture.

He points out that for example in Habermas one can find a methodological dualism, but the two complementary perspectives of social integration and system integration are justified by referring to the object domain itself. They are understood according to Honneth "...as aspects of coordination of social action that are essential to or constitutive of the reproduction of late-capitalist societies." (Honneth, 2003a, p. 156).

The overall point however is that Honneth does not find anything analogous to this in Fraser's reflections, thus he claims that it is completely unclear why her methodological dualism should be justified. Honneth concludes by claiming that any sort of methodological perspectivism that is not anchored in a social-theoretical view of how social reproduction in capitalist societies is lacking. Honneth claims that his own view is a moral-theoretical monism that can be justified

*Since the central institutions of even capitalist societies require a rational legitimation through generalizable principles of reciprocal recognition, their reproduction remains dependent on a basis of moral consensus – which thus possesses real primacy vis-à-vis other integration mechanisms, since it is the basis of the normative expectations of members of society as well as their readiness for conflict. (Honneth, 2003a, p. 157)*

Thus, Honneth's attempts to show that the struggles and conflicts in capitalist societies refer to principles of mutual recognition that are considered legitimate by members of society itself. Thus, Honneth posits contra Fraser that a moral experience of disrespect is regarded as the motivational basis for all social conflicts. He sees that Fraser's opposition between economic and cultural conflicts at most can have secondary significance since it only specifies different ways in which disrespect is experienced.

The main difference according to Honneth is that Fraser first establishes autonomy and equality and then continues towards social participation whereas Honneth is oriented towards towards unobstructed identity formation (Honneth, 2003a, p. 176).

With regard to Fraser's criticism where she claims that Honneth treats self-esteem as a right which can valorize racist identities, Honneth answers by giving a thorough account of why one cannot make "demands" for social esteem (Honneth, 2003a, pp. 168-169). Esteem can, according to Honneth, "...only be the result of a process of judgment that escapes our control, just as sympathy or affection does. (Honneth, 2003a, p. 168)" In a sense, this entails that according

to Fraser's interpretation of esteem her criticism is valid whereas if esteem is framed as Honneth understands it will not valorize racist identities.

Either way, Fraser raises an important question as the dynamic where disaffected groups attempt to raise their own status by diminishing others is quite common, especially for racist or xenophobic movements. Hence, I am inclined to agree with Fraser and treat esteem through the status model and hence be able to point out the dynamic of making claims for esteem that diminish other's status as claims against participatory parity.

Fraser agrees with Honneth that both of their frameworks position critique in relations to contemporary social struggles. She also agrees that both frameworks are able to theorize culture in present day capitalism and that both frameworks promises to provide standards of justice that can adjudicate current claims for justice (Fraser, 2003b, p. 199). She concludes that for both of them, recognition is central to the effort to reconstruct critical theory.

The question for Fraser is which framework is more suitable for the task of renewing critical theory. For Fraser the suitability of the framework is decided on the grounds of how it meets three issues (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 199-200). The first issue concerns itself with the empirical reference point of critical theory. She claims that there can be no metaphysically decided agent of change or a prioristically identified addressee of critique at a time where the Marxian metanarratives have lost their credibility. Thus, the question arises how critical theory should position itself in relation to the current political situation especially as lots of the contemporary social movements seek recognition. The second issue is the place of culture in the new phase of capitalist society, for example, post-fordist, globalized or the phase of the information age. The third issue concerns itself with the normative standards that inform the critique.

Both Fraser's and Honneth's frameworks embrace the dialectic of immanence and transcendence that has traditionally been the guiding idea in critical theory. This is the reason why Fraser stresses the first issue of the empirical reference point of critical theory. This is done in contrast to theories of justice that adopt a god's eye view that is totally independent of actual society.

For Fraser, the empirical reference points are found in the actual struggles of the social movements while for Honneth it is anchored in a moral psychology of pre-political suffering (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 202,203,205). Fraser claims that her view based on the social movements are more plausible as they struggle for something that "really" merits injustice instead of an untested pre-political discontent or merely a "feeling of injustice".

For Fraser, the starting point is the decentered discourses of social criticism. It is a critique connected with social context by folk paradigms that constitute a hegemonic grammar of contestation and deliberation. Folk paradigms are not any specific grammar but "transpersonal discourses that are widely diffused throughout democratic societies" (Fraser, 2003b, p. 207). They do not only exist in the public sphere but also in workplaces, households and civil society associations. For Fraser these folk paradigms functions as the empirical reference point (Fraser, 2003b, p. 208).

The second issue for Fraser is the place of culture and widely one should understand its scope in capitalist society (Fraser, 2003b, p. 217). In other words, how far down should one understand that the cultural order extends and what is its relation to market mechanisms and distributive outcomes? Can misrecognition be seen as the root of all subordination in society? With regard to critical theory, Fraser asks if critical theory should unreservedly embrace the “cultural turn” and if one should replace an economistic paradigm with a culturalistic one (Fraser, 2003b, p. 218)?

Fraser agrees with Honneth that culture should not be seen as a mere reflection of political economy but it should be seen as a vehicle of political ordering at its own (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 217-218). Also both maintain that culture often serves as a medium of domination, in other words that society harbors injustices that does not have their roots in the political economy. Both also theorize culture in terms of recognition to highlight the social weight and moral significance of culture in contemporary capitalism. At this point however the agreement ends.

According to Fraser, Honneth subordinates social theory to his moral psychology. Hence, what Honneth does according to Fraser is to view all social processes in capitalist society as being directly regulated by cultural evaluation. Also all injustices can be remedied by a cultural change.

Fraser points out that one feature of contemporary capitalism, is that it creates a quasi-objective, anonymous and impersonal market that follows its own logic (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 217, 218). This logic creates class-relations that are not merely reflections of status hierarchies. They created through a complicated process that sometimes instrumentalizes, dissolves or circumvents status distinctions.

On this ground Fraser proposes that one cannot theorize capitalist society in a monistic way but that one has to take into account the distinctive dynamics of the capitalist economy and theorize its interaction with the status order (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 217-218). For example, today’s struggles against neo-liberal global capitalism cannot be rooted in ideologies about achievement but in system imperatives and governance structures of globalizing capitalism.

Deprivation does not occur as an under-valuing of labor contribution but because of economic system-mechanisms that excludes many completely from labor markets (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 217, 218). Naturally many of these imperatives have its grounds in Eurocentric racism but they cannot simply be changed by cultural measures. They require a wholesale restructuring of global system of finance, trade and production. These kinds of issues escapes according to Fraser recognition monism and require a two-dimensional framework to be properly analyzed.

Fraser also claims that the status order of society is too complex to divide it only into love, esteem and rights. Fraser holds that the recognition should be understood as status equality and not in terms of an intact identity (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 219-221). Also for Fraser the status order institutional expression is

the status order as a whole, in other words it is not divided a priori in three spheres with three corresponding psychological injuries.

The third issue was the normative component of critical theory, its understanding of justice and its moral criteria for adjudicating claims. Fraser proposes that critical theory cannot rely on a sectarian view of justice at the same time as it is determinate enough to clearly have a standpoint on what is right and what is wrong (Fraser, 2003b, pp. 223-233). Fraser claims that Honneth's approach cannot meet both requirements at the same time. To avoid sectarianism, Honneth must adopt an anything goes approach with regard to determinacy as any form of human flourishing would be counted as good. On the other hand if Honneth wants to have a determinate view on how to adjudicate claims he has to adopt a moral psychology that is restrictive, in other words sectarian. According to Fraser, her own approach manages both claims at the same time as it assumes both the reasonableness of ethical disagreement and the equal moral worth of human beings. It is compatible with all accounts of a good life that respects equal autonomy. Her norm of participatory parity articulates specific interpretation of what participatory parity requires. It rejects formal notions of equality as insufficient and maintains that to respect equal autonomous and moral worth of others one has to accord them the status of full partners in social interaction.

The dialectic of immanence and transcendence represents the legacy of critical theory's left Hegelian tradition. Historically the Frankfurt school tied this problematic to the seeking or identification of the revolutionary subject. According to Honneth this is one reason why the earlier theorists did not see the need to problematize the methodological structure as an individual problem (Honneth, 2003b, pp. 238, 239). Thus, as long as one could regard the proletariat as the pretheoretical class with an inherent interest of overthrowing capitalist relations one did not have the need to explain which experiences or practices could guarantee a transcendence of the social order.

According to Honneth the talk of transcendence and immanence designates a normative potential that reemerges in every new social reality because it is attached to forms of practice or experiences that are on one hand indispensable for societal reproduction and on the other hand points beyond all other forms of societal organization (Honneth, 2003b, p. 244). Thus, according to Honneth the connection between transcendence and immanence is stronger than Fraser sees. Transcendence should be a property of immanence itself so that the facticity of social relations always contains a dimension of transcending claims. Honneth states that even if such a connection seems a bit high-flown under present conditions, there are some approaches that follow this program such as Castoriadis, Marcuse, Habermas and Foucault. The approaches should be seen as attempts to fill the gap left by the disintegration of the production paradigm.

The difference with regard to the empirical reference point between Fraser and Honneth are guided by two completely different sets of ideas. Fraser starts with the folk-paradigms of justice and pursues the aim of anchoring theory in present-day society. Honneth's moral-psychological reflections seek according

to him quasi-transcendental justification of critique in the structure of social reality. His idea is the hypothesis that all social integration depends on reliable forms of mutual recognition whose insufficiencies are tied to feelings of misrecognition (Honneth, 2003b, p. 245). This is regarded as the engine of social change. Thus, the same instance that is in principle to guarantee the possibility of transcending the given order must also be able to explain historically how normative changes and improvements in form of social organization have come about.

To answer the question of sociologically explaining current developmental processes of capitalism is according to Honneth a too big question, especially as Fraser understands the disagreement between her and Honneth only in terms of the cultural turn. Honneth does not try to establish a categorical framework for adequately describing a modern capitalist society (Honneth, 2003b, p. 249). According to himself he only tried to reveal the moral constraints underlying social interaction on different levels in society. The guiding idea is that mutual recognition guides the inclusion in society. The mutual recognition or how we intersubjectively learn to affirm one another in particular respects amounts according to Honneth to social integration.

According to Honneth Fraser overdramatizes the moral psychology that Honneth uses. Honneth claims that moral-psychological considerations about the function of recognition plays a role in the conception of justice only insofar as they support the social-theoretical thesis that social integration works through forms of mutual recognition. (Honneth, 2003b, p. 258)

Honneth also criticizes Fraser for claiming that he incorporates a particularist idea at the same time as she introduces participatory parity, an idea that seems to be quite particular in itself (Honneth, 2003b, p. 259). Both Fraser and Honneth seem according to Honneth to agree that the most important good is the creation of social relations in which subjects are included as full members in the sense that they can publicly uphold and practice their lifestyles without shame or humiliation. In a sense Honneth's recognition is the same as participatory parity as the development and realization of individual autonomy is only possible when subjects have the social preconditions for realizing their life goals without unjustifiable disadvantages and with greatest possible freedom.

### **3.4.2 COMMENTS ON THE DEBATE**

The main theme of this thesis is to focus on radical democracy founded on dissent, I will assess the debate between Honneth and Fraser with this in mind. In other words, the question is which of the frameworks is most justified for a radical democratic theory founded on dissent. I will argue for the view that Fraser's framework based on participatory parity has the stronger justification.

First of all let's consider the roots of injustices in both Fraser's and Honneth's frameworks. Fraser grounds her framework in the idea of participatory parity and in the removal of institutional obstacles that lies in the way of its realization. She defines justice as the stuff that social movements struggle for in a specific historical time (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 11-12). These folk-paradigms of justice are not philosophical paradigms per se but paradigms that inform present day struggles in society which leads to a view centered on social movements.

For Honneth the idea of recognition and justice is tied to the pre-political feeling of hurt and injustice. This feeling is that is derived from obstacles in the way of self-determination. Honneth's theory is also tied to the social movements with the difference that in his theory the struggles of social movements are grounded in morality.

To make the case for one framework over the other with regard to a radical democratic theory based in dissent is tied to Honneth's and Fraser's respective views on theory and philosophy.

Fraser seems to be content with weaker philosophical grounding for her framework. One could claim that she ends up doing more political theory than political philosophy. With political theory in this case I mean that Fraser strives to formulate a better and more applicable theory of justice instead of focusing on stronger justification. In other words the justification of Fraser's theory refers to the practical usability instead of solid philosophical grounds.

Honneth seeks to secure stronger philosophical justification for his theory than Fraser. He strives to investigate and clarify the underlying philosophical grounds for our feeling of injustice and what social phenomena hinder us to flourish as persons.

One of the reasons why the arguments in the debate between Honneth and Fraser seem to go past each other is tied to the different justificatory principles and perspective on philosophical grounds.

With regard to justice and dissent the most important factor is how a theory can encompass the idea of self-characterization of dissent. This self-determinacy refers to the idea that the dissenters themselves can formulate dissent. In other words, the dissenters themselves should define the causes and the roots for their dissent.

The idea of justice as participatory parity allows for dissent to be defined by the dissenters as dissent and also political struggles are viewed as means of participation. In other words, participatory parity requires that dissent is accepted as a way of participating in society. The idea of participatory parity also strengthens the view that the only limit of dissent, apart from participatory parity, is dissent itself. In other words, all dissent is allowed as long as it does not hinder anyone else's possibility to dissent. The claim can be made that Honneth's theory of recognition provides for the stronger self-characterization of dissent because he derives justice from the feeling of injustice. However what I attempt to describe with the self-characterization of dissent is not if dissent can be traced to subjective feelings of hurt. My aim is analyze such dissent that

is articulated. The power of this articulation is what I attempt to capture with the idea of the self-characterization of dissent. This articulation can be based on subjective feelings of hurt but also on an understanding of, for example, objective conditions of domination. Because Fraser's participatory parity allows for the self-characterization either way, it is more suitable that Honneth's theory which emphasize subjective feelings of hurt.

Fraser's folk-paradigmatic idea of justice starts out from the notion that justice is the stuff that social movements struggle for. She states that we should exclude movements that are against human rights from this consideration (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 11-12). I would disagree with this despite being in favor of human rights as such.

As I proposed one should approach this question in two stages. First one should allow everyone to be considered in what the struggles are about. As all struggles rise from society, everyone is counted. In the second stage one should take into consideration the goals of the movement. It is at this second stage we can evaluate whether a movement is democratic or not.

Hence, Fraser's view is somewhat incoherent when she claims that movements that do not respect human rights should be excluded from a priori especially as she does not give any argument in favor of her view. Without such an argument this is an arbitrary division that has the same strength as claiming the opposite. Her argument seems to rest on the idea that human rights as such should not be contested at all.

My assumption is that Fraser merely attempts to introduce a principle which allows us to exclude movements that are against human rights from decision making in actual society. In order to achieve this it is unnecessary to refer to an uncontestable view of human rights. It is enough to show that some movements are working against participatory parity and are hence anti-democratic or oppressive. Thus, participatory parity itself is a sufficient principle to exclude anti-democratic movements.

The idea of justice as participatory parity seems to be a way of securing a view of justice that has enough substance to allow for normative evaluations while still leaving the content sufficiently open to allow for its definition by the dissenters.

In Honneth's framework every struggle for justice is tied to the moral psychological hurt of not being able to flourish as an individual. Honneth does not claim to make a theory that could explain contemporary capitalist society as such, only the recognition order.

It is noteworthy that Fraser's theory allows for the interpretation that recognition as a phenomenon works in the manner that Honneth claims. The difference lies in where the injustice of misrecognition is. Justice as participatory parity allows for a wider view of justice than the possibility for self-determination.

The framework of participatory parity allows the dissenters to frame dissent as a struggle for justice regardless of where its roots are. Hence, it may be that dissent could be tied to self-determination, but it is not a necessity. Hence,

justice as participatory parity allows for the interpretation that one cause for dissent may be tied to Honneth's theory of recognition but others are equally possible.

If we return to the question of giving philosophical grounds Fraser and Honneth seems to have a quite different view on them. As I have pointed out, Honneth justifies his theory by giving it strong philosophical grounds. I did claim that this is one of the reasons Fraser and Honneth seems to be misunderstanding each other constantly.

Honneth starts from the pre-political idea of the feeling of injustice and continues a solid and coherent argumentation which is based on the theory of Hegel. His goal is to give stronger ties to reality to the Habermasian framework. Honneth does not refer to political grounds in his theory. Fraser on the other hands starts out by claiming that the different spheres of justice have two points of reference, a political and a philosophical.

She continues by claiming that philosophically they refer to the normative paradigms developed by a theorist and politically they refer to the claims that social movements make in the public sphere. Hence, it is completely viable to claim that Fraser is more tied to the project of creating a working framework of justice whereas Honneth is interested in its philosophical grounds. It may be that a conception of justice in a modern capitalist society requires a kind of minimal justification in order to retain usability.

It is also viable to interpret the different views on philosophical foundations as having its ground in different justificatory principles. Honneth justifies his theory with strong and coherent philosophical argumentation. Fraser on the other hand uses the practical usability of her framework as a justificatory principle. To make the case for the view that stronger philosophical grounding could at some point become a negative feature for a theory would require a thorough investigation in itself.

Regardless of how the view one has on philosophical foundations, I claim that it is possible to make some practical improvements to Fraser's framework, by introducing some of Laclau's ideas. This can be done without sacrificing the practical usability of the framework.

The case could be made that within the sphere of recognition one should adopt Honneth's theory of recognition. Because of this it is necessary to answer the question of whether the status model of recognition or recognition as self-realization is more viable from a point of view of dissent. One problem is that Fraser states that it may be that her model of recognition is actually presupposing Honneth's idea but she is inclined to not letting the moral psychological feature govern her framework as it would be to introduce Honneth's intersubjective ethical model in a political framework of justice.

Fraser claims that one of the advantages of her model is that it allows us to justify claims for recognition as binding for all who agree to abide by fair terms of interaction under conditions of value pluralism. One of her claims is that this entails that Fraser's model would be non-sectarian. However Honneth argues rightly that Fraser's idea of participatory parity is a sectarian idea itself. It is true

that the norm of participatory parity is sectarian, but it only requires that one is a democrat.

As I already pointed out, I would favor the status model on the grounds that it does not need to locate injustices in psychology, even if it probably is true that the feelings related or derived from injustices hinders us to flourish as persons.

In my opinion it is a clear merit of the status model that it can show that injustices are unjust whether or not misrecognition has the effects that Honneth argues for. It also makes the ties stronger to institutional reality. The objective nature of Fraser's framework does not diminish the requirement of self-characterization, on the contrary, it strengthens it because the ability for self-characterization is not restricted to subjective feelings of hurt but allows for the consideration of objective causes for injustice.

One problem with Honneth's framework is one can make the case that Honneth's idea of recognition may lead to the right to have self-esteem. A right to self-esteem may again lead to a position where one has to accept the such self-esteem that relies on oppressing others.

Esteem is the third mode of recognition that Honneth identifies. Honneth argues that individuals deserve esteem in virtue of their concrete characteristics or traits or abilities (Honneth, 1995, pp. 121, 125, 129).

Thus, they are not esteemed only because they are associated with a particular culture or social identity but because they possess specific features that distinguish them as unique individuals. According to Honneth individuals deserve esteem for attributes that contribute to the achievement of societal goals (Honneth, 1995, p. 122).

Esteem is thus a reward for persons that help their society to achieve particular goals. Thus, "the social standing of subjects is ... measured in terms of what they can accomplish for society within the context of their particular forms of self-realization" (Honneth, 1995, p. 127).

Hence, according to Honneth, each society has certain goals or values that help to define its identity. According to him, society has a set of ethical goals and values that comprises its cultural self-understanding (Honneth, 1995, p. 122).

Honneth does not however contend that a society would share a single set of values but we have after the "collapse" of traditional hierarchies of values seen the emergence of a condition of value pluralism (Honneth, 1995, p. 125).

In this value pluralism many values compete against each other for social precedence. These are struggles for esteem. Thus, value systems are in a constant flux as some values wane and other waxes. There is a permanent struggle to control the means of symbolic force and to shape the climate of public attention (Honneth, 1995, p. 127).

Thus, groups that share certain values strive to raise the profile of their own value-system and if they succeed they gain esteem. Honneth's view on esteem has been criticized by Fraser as self-esteem may be interpreted as a right as it is seen as a necessity for undistorted identity formation (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 32-33). Social-esteem is an intersubjective condition for undistorted identity formation.

As morality is supposed to protect this, it follows that everyone is morally entitled to self-esteem. According to Fraser viewing esteem as a right for all makes it meaningless as it becomes a *reduction ad absurdum* argument (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 32-33).

Fraser relies on a distinction in moral philosophy where respect is owed universally on the grounds of a shared humanity, esteem however is given differentially on the grounds of specific accomplishments or contribution (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 32-33). Thus, giving respect equally to everyone is sensible, while according esteem equally to everyone becomes an oxymoron.

Her own model avoids this according to her by entailing that everyone has an equal right to pursue social esteem under conditions of equal opportunity (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 32-33). According to Fraser, Honneth's conception of recognition runs into difficulties when trying to distinguish whose claims for recognition are justifiable.

As Honneth's model is based on the idea of self-realization it follows, according to Fraser, that such claims for recognition that enhances the claimant's self-esteem are justified while those who diminish it are not (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 37-38).

Thus, it is, according to Fraser, doubtful if enhanced self-esteem should function as a justificatory standard for recognition claims (Fraser, 2003a, pp. 37-38). On the other hand, anti-racist claims could be seen as illegitimate as they could threaten the self-esteem of the racist. Here one of the problems is that prejudice can give the bearer psychological benefits.

Hence, it is possible to view Honneth's idea of esteem and self-esteem as something that one should have right-like claim to attain. Fraser's framework only states that everyone should have an equal right to pursue social esteem under conditions of equal opportunity.

The status model makes it easier to combine the idea of recognition to a political theory of dissent. A view of justice that leaves a major part of its definition to the dissenters can be combined with the idea of dissent as the limit of itself. This view also entails the viewpoint that there are multiple spheres of justice that all can be governed by an idea of justice that is specific to that sphere.

Honneth's idea treats the idea of flourishing as a person as a primary idea that should govern other spheres of justice. Fraser makes the claim that Honneth attempts to interpret all forms of justice through his idea of recognition. This is understandably not compatible with a perspective that allows for multiple frameworks of justice.

However it is also clear that the Fraserian framework lacks philosophical coherence and justifications at some points. The main points are Fraser's ideas on abnormality, agonism, discourse and hegemony. I have attempted to give reinterpretations of her framework where needed to make the framework as a whole more philosophically sound. Many of the insights that add philosophical justification to Fraser's framework can be derived from Ernesto Laclau's theories of hegemony and democracy.

### 3.4.3 HOW MANY SPHERES OF JUSTICE?

Fraser's framework as it is presented in (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) is clearly lacking with its perspectival dualism. Perspectival dualism refers to the division of justice into the spheres of recognition and redistribution. The main problem in my opinion is not that Fraser's dualism lacks justification as Honneth thinks, but mostly that the sphere of politics is left out. Fraser corrects this by later in (Fraser, 2008a) introducing the sphere of representation which can be seen as the political sphere that was left out initially.

There is however a point to Honneth's critique. If one is only interested in making a functioning theory of justice the question of justification can be avoided, but the framework would be left open for a philosophical critique at this point.

Honneth refers as an example to Habermas perspectival dualism as justified while Fraser leaves completely open the question of why society should suddenly be viewed through the dualist framework or later through the three spheres that she proposes. I agree with Honneth that there does not seem in Fraser's work any justification except that it leads to a clever and working theory of justice.

I claim that this problem can be overcome by giving Fraser's framework a reinterpretation that would be compatible with my dissent-perspectival idea at the same time as introducing the central idea of Michael Walzer in his book *Spheres of Justice*.

If we assume that the perspectives in Fraser's framework of justice would not refer to an all-encompassing view of all existing spheres of justice, then the problem of justification would look a bit different.

The problem of justification would be removed as one would not have to justify the specific two or later three spheres of justice but to justify the idea that there are many spheres of justice that while related with each other has own specific features that shows that justice works a bit differently in different spheres. Fraser seems to have a similar dynamic in mind as she points out that a social movement may open up new spheres of justice through contestation (Fraser, 2008, p. 59).

Hence, this would require that the Fraserian framework would be interpreted as a framework where there are potentially more spheres of justice than what she claims. Hence, according to this interpretation Fraser would only have given us interpretations of three spheres of justice that alone would not explain all features of contemporary capitalist society. Walzer's idea is roughly that there are different spheres of justice that all function a bit differently in the different spheres (Walzer, 1983, pp. 3-10). Also one should avoid to monopolize what is distributed in one sphere and also that this monopoly should not be used to dominate other spheres (Walzer, 1983, pp. 10-11,19).

However Walzer treats all justice through the idea of distributive justice even though he uses his theory to approach matters of justice such as affects, family, women and also recognition (Walzer, 1983, pp. 227-229, 239-242, 249-258).

Hence, to make use of Walzer's idea in this case implies that one would use only his idea of different spheres of justice and decouple it from being subsumed under the distributive paradigm. Hence, the idea framed this way could be read as a critique of for example the Marxian or new liberalist idea where the sphere of economy and hence the view of justice within it is falsely used to define all forms of justice. This would also entail a critique of any view that would see ethics or only the recognition order as the defining feature of all of justice.

In a sense the critique is quite similar as Fraser's idea that one should not view justice only as a question of redistributing wealth or identity political ordering, but at the same time through lenses that are true to the specific forms of justice at hand. Hence, if reinterpreted by adopting a decoupled version of Walzer's idea of justice it is possible to justify the multiple perspectives from the point of view that different areas of justice should be investigated through a conception of justice that is in line with that specific area of justice.

The connection with a political theory of dissent is made through the idea that the amount of spheres of justice should be left open. One of the features of dissent can be to show that our existing ideas of justice are not applicable in a specific case. Hence, this would warrant the introduction of a different sphere such a case.

On the level of theory this entails the introducing of a new sphere of justice to our framework of justice. Hence, the framework of justice can be justified by reinterpreting the Fraserian framework so that it leaves open the amount of spheres or perspective on justice and through the idea that such a reinterpretation is also justified by the idea that it allows for new spheres to be introduced through contestation and dissent.

One can find arguments in favor of from Fraser's own theory. The sphere of representation in Fraser's framework should encompass both representation in the sense of who gets to speak in matters at hand but also in the sense of how a question of justice is framed (Fraser, 2008, p. 17). The only argument that I can find in Fraser's theory is that the sphere of representation fits with recognition and redistribution in order to make three key concepts that start with re-. To have three concepts is more a question of style than any theoretical requirement. In other words, under my interpretation, Fraser already has at least four spheres of justice in her framework. Walzer's analyzes similar aspect that Fraser analyzes through the spheres of misrepresentation and misframing through the spheres membership and procedure.

### 3.5 JUSTICE AS PARTICIPATORY PARITY

The idea of participatory parity is central for Fraser's theory of justice. However there are not a lot of philosophical arguments for participatory parity as such. In other words, it remains a bit unclear why we should accept the idea as participatory parity as the normative core of a theory of justice. I also agree with Honneth that Fraser's claim that Honneth's theory is sectarian is a bit dubious as the idea of participatory parity as such is a quite sectarian ideal. The sectarian nature of participatory parity is not a problem as the only requirement is that one is a democrat.

Fraser's idea of participatory parity can be viewed as an attempt to capture liberty and equality under a single framework. This seems to entail that Fraser first seems to establish the space of autonomy through the concept of participatory parity and then builds her framework on that.

She does not provide too many arguments for accepting the idea or an explanation of how we can assume that everyone should accept participatory parity as the core of a theory. One possibility would, of course, be to assume, as Rawls does, that we could agree to participatory parity, at least in the case of ideal theory.

Hence, we would assume that participatory parity could be agreed upon rational grounds and under conditions that rule out partisan interests. Another possibility would be to approach the concept through empirical practice and assume that Fraser merely attempts to provide a working concept of justice that is possible to utilize for empirical purposes. I assume that this latter interpretation is the case.

However the philosophical grounds to accept this kind of interpretation are rather weak. Also the first possibility seems dubious from the point of view of dissent as I keep stressing that we should not force a specific interpretation on justice that forces dissent to be framed in a similar manner. For example, if we approach the idea of participatory parity as an idea of ideal theory we also at the same time can infer that matters of justice could be inferred in a similar manner and hence we would accept a substantive view of justice. Hence, if participatory parity should be accepted as the normative core of our framework we should be able to argue for it without referring to ideal theory.

The main argument for accepting participatory parity for me is through the requirements of dissent. As I pointed out the main idea is to view dissent as a positive feature in society and as a feature that is oriented towards betterment of society despite not being necessarily tied to discourse theory. A discourse theoretical view could accept participatory parity on the grounds of ideal discourse.

When participatory parity is viewed from the point of view of dissent, it is accepted because it allows for the possibility and creates a "right" for everyone to dissent. The key idea is that if we claim that everyone should be able to participate on par in society we also have to accept that one way of participation is through articulated non-agreement with society, in other words dissent. This

idea, however, does not necessarily establish the idea of autonomy as such but actually widens the possibility of participation as any form of dissent within the limits of democracy is accepted. Hence, participatory parity is viewed as central for any conception of radical democracy that is based on a political theory of dissent. The idea of justice as participatory parity also sets limits for the concept of democracy in a radical democratic theory. With this I mean that the limit between what is considered democratic or undemocratic can be assessed using the norm of participatory parity. Hence, in a democracy most claims can be accepted as being democratic as long as they promote participatory parity.

I view Fraser's idea of establishing the idea of liberty and equality as the clear merit of her framework as it also allows for tying together different traditions of political philosophy, especially its continental strands that focuses more on power and conflict and the liberal ones that focus on establishing as wide a field of liberty and equality as possible.

In my opinion the idea of participatory parity can also be viewed as an argument for the idea that very strong philosophical or ontological grounds for a theory of justice can be a negative feature. In other words, some part of the strength of Fraser's framework, namely those concerning the core of her framework, lies inadvertently in her philosophical argumentation for a weak basis.

This idea however rests on the idea that when giving stronger philosophical justifications one gives at the same times arguments from which it is possible to infer substantive conceptions of political action and that the power to define political action lies with the political actors themselves.

### 3.6 SUMMARY

At this stage I think we are ready to make some initial assumptions on what kind of framework of justice would be best suited for a radical democratic political theory of dissent.

From the debate between Honneth and Fraser, I have concluded that Fraser's framework of justice has stronger justification, mainly because it leaves a larger part of the substantial question to be defined by the dissenters themselves. While Honneth's theory may, initially, seem to, in a better way, allow for the self-characterization of dissent, I claim that Fraser's theory is stronger because it allows for the wider possibility of articulation of dissent. In other words, Fraser's theory is not restricted by subjective feelings of hurt or obstacles in the way of self-realization. The ideas of justice defined through social struggle combined with the norm of participatory parity allows for any form of dissent while still being able to provide the means of distinguishing between the democratic or undemocratic nature of such claims. This is done in two stages where the first stage allows for any claims to enter the picture in order to allow for maximum participation and also gives meaning to the concept of justice. In the second stage the articulated demands can be distinguished as either democratic or undemocratic by referring to the norm of participatory parity.

I also think that, overall, Honneth's theory as such has a stronger philosophical justification. This, however, is something of a problem with regard to dissent as it seems that a strong philosophical foundation may lead to giving substantive and somewhat binding views on justice that lessen the self-characterization of the dissenters.

Even though Fraser's framework functions as a basis, it needs some reinterpretations partially because of the requirements of dissent and partially because it lacks philosophical strength where needed. Hence, from this point on I will refer to the political theory of dissent instead of Fraser's framework to clarify when I am talking about my reinterpreted framework and when I am referring to Fraser's original framework.

Fraser's framework was divided into three spheres that refer to remedies for different injustices, redistribution, recognition and representation. A political theory of dissent requires that the number of spheres be left open to allow for the possibility of introducing new contestations of justice through the idea of dissent.

This also makes the framework stronger as it does not have to justify why justice should suddenly be viewed from the point of view of three perspectives as Honneth has rightly criticized Fraser for. I claim that political theory of dissent should avoid this. One way to illustrate how one could leave the number of spheres open is through Walzer's idea that there are different forms of justice that merit different forms of remedies. In other words, it is not necessary to specify the amount of spheres. On the contrary, the amount of spheres should be left open in order to allow for different perspectives of justice when needed.

This holds especially as “spheres” are merely analytic distinctions which opens the way for more thorough social analysis. With regard to Fraser’s theory I have argued that she already has introduced four spheres by giving the sphere of representation a double meaning.

The concept of justice is defined in Fraser’s framework through contemporary struggles of our time. However, Fraser rules out struggles that are against human rights. A political theory of dissent should view the ruling out as an arbitrary boundary and hence view justice as defined through every contemporary struggles.

The boundaries are set by the idea of democracy, which is incorporated through the norm of participatory parity. For example with regard to claims that against the idea of human rights one could assess their democratic nature as following. First of all, the claims are accepted as claims which are potentially democratic. It is the claims-making that gives them this nature. On this level they are included in assessments on, for example, justice is. However when the claims are articulated and thus made political one can assess if they promote or hinders participatory parity in society. As violations against human rights can be seen as violating the possibility to participate on par in society, such claims can be viewed as being undemocratic and on this basis legitimately be excluded.

The merit of Fraser’s framework is that it does not require a substantive view of justice. The substantive view of justice is rejected by the requirements of dissent to allow for the self-determination and self-characterization of the dissenters.

However, the contestation in the open aspects of Fraser’s framework seems to be solved at least partially through rational discussion, while the dissent-perspectival framework views the “filling” of concept through hegemonic contestation. This also introduces the question of political power. This idea is also more in line with the idea of a theory that is written from and for social movements.

## 4 RADICAL DEMOCRACY AND DISSENT

### 4.1 GENERAL CLAIMS

I have proposed that the best conception of justice for a radical democratic theory of dissent is based on the norm of participatory parity. A central argument is that the idea of justice as participatory parity allows for the self-characterization of dissent. In addition, participatory parity both sets limits for democracy and makes alterations possible in institutional frameworks.

The main objectives of this chapter are to clarify what kind of conception of radical democracy is best suited for such a theory and to combine Fraser's conception of justice with Laclau's political theory. This move will finalize the construction of a political theory of dissent.

I first clarify some central ideas and concepts that a radical democratic political theory of dissent should take into account and after that I show how a political theory of dissent can be modified to incorporate these concepts.

I start by presenting some thoughts on how we should conceptualize societal change and democratic struggle. One of the reasons for this is to further highlight the idea that conflicts can and should be seen as a positive feature in society. In other words, this is done in order to clarify why and how dissent should be represented in a democracy.

A radical democratic view implies a conception of democracy as being in constant motion. In order to explain this development conceptually and socially we need what I shall call a logic of change. The logic of change conceptualizes and makes democratic change in society intelligible. On the conceptual level, following the ideas of Ernesto Laclau, we have two main alternatives. These are dialectic and an antagonistic logic. I argue with Laclau that an antagonistic logic of change is more suited for a radical democratic political theory of dissent.

One of the main debates within radical democratic theory is the debate between the deliberative democrats and the agonists. I will argue in favour of the view that a political theory of dissent is more justified when viewed as an agonist theory. One of the reasons is that deliberative democracy partially shares liberal democracy's feature of internalizing conflicts and thus hides many important forms of dissent.

After the investigation into some of the key concepts for a radical democratic political theory of dissent, I present some of Ernesto Laclau's ideas that can add strength to Nancy Fraser's theory of participatory parity. These ideas are Laclau's and also Mouffe's<sup>15</sup> insights on hegemony and populist politics. I show how Fraser's theory can be strengthened by incorporating some of Laclau's

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<sup>15</sup> Even though I focus primarily on Laclau in this dissertation, the theory of hegemony is largely adopted jointly between Laclau and Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

ideas. Laclau's theory of politics can also further explain how political movements arise, which is a feature that Fraser's current theory cannot.

Fraser's theory of justice as participatory parity employs the concept of reflexive justice in order to explain the difference between open and closed frameworks. Further, she argues for the view that we need to have closed frameworks in order to make decisions and thus also change institutional configurations. In order to explain change from one social configuration into another, she employs the idea of open frameworks. I claim that a theory of hegemony is better suited to this. Chantal Mouffe's and Ernesto Laclau's theory of hegemony struggle can explain a similar dynamic as Fraser strives for with her notion of reflexive justice.

It is also possible to interpret Laclau's theory as one that is tied to the idea of participatory parity. I will argue for the view that Laclau's idea of democratic demands can be interpreted as enhancing participatory parity.

The question of viewing politics as institutional versus anti-institutional engagement is central in contemporary radical democratic theory. I have earlier argued that a radical democratic theory of dissent should be tied to institutional reality. I will elaborate on this conception a little further in order to achieve a more justified view of the concept of democracy and democratic politics.

After the key concepts have been straightened out, I will provide an argument about how these key concepts should be incorporated into a radical democratic political theory of dissent. The overall claim is that one possible radical democratic political theory of dissent can be achieved by integrating Nancy Fraser's theory of justice and Ernesto Laclau's theory of democracy.

## 4.2 DEMOCRACY AND THE LOGIC OF CHANGE

The logic of change explains how democracy changes both conceptually and socially. For a political theory of dissent the logic of change explains how social change, based on dissent, can be achieved. As dissent is directed disagreement towards some feature of society it implies conflict.

The logic of change can be approached through Laclau's ideas of different social logics. In this conception we can identify at least three ways of conceptualizing social logic. The first one is the liberalist conceptualization. The second with its root in Hegelian thought is to view change and struggle from the perspective of dialectical contradiction. The third one is to view opposition as antagonistic.

Within the liberalist framework all social matters are reduced to a system where rules and movement are internal to themselves (Laclau, 1990, pp. 11-12). All possibilities for social change are hence viewed as being systemic possibilities. In liberalism, conflicts are internalized and carried out within the scope of the framework.

Change that is not internal to the liberalist system is viewed as an anomaly and its legitimacy can be questioned. Hence, according to Laclau, antagonistic relations do not even exist in a liberalist system as all conflicts are internalized and hence play out neatly within the scope of the system itself. One can arrive at this idea through the realization that whatever an agent does within the liberalist system its identity as a maximizer of interest remains (Laclau, 1990, p. 12).

In Laclau's view the liberalist interpretation where political agents are reduced to maximizers of interest cannot explain antagonistic relations in a sufficient manner. The liberalist system eliminates antagonistic relations by confining them to the margins.

Because there are divergent interests in society they come into conflict. According to Laclau, the liberalist system manages this conflict by meeting interests in a sufficient way to ensure a stable society. Those interests that are completely against the liberalist idea are unaccepted and can be legitimately excluded. Change within the liberalist framework is contained in the liberal system.

In the liberalist framework, common ground can be reached by an appeal to the basic principles of reason as seen by liberals. A conflictual relation that cannot be reconciled through reason becomes a blind spot. In a sense, this eliminates politics as conflict and can be viewed as a false interpretation of pluralist politics. Real political antagonism is reduced to technical questions of how to recognize divergent interest (Mouffe, 2013, pp. 3-4).

A dialectical contradiction, again, implies a contradiction where the means to overcome the contradiction is found within the opposition itself. In other words, every current contradiction determines its subsequent forms. Hence, one can in principle track the evolution of certain social oppositions and determine their logical conclusion. With regard to social change, this means that social change

can be viewed as a logical evolution of current oppositions. The logic of dialectical change entails, according to Laclau, that change is logically determined through the transcending of the conflict in question. With regard to dissent, this entails that the possibility of change is intrinsic to dissent and its counterpart, for example institutional oppression.

The idea of dialectical contradiction as the engine of change is closely tied to the idea of historical determinism. The most common examples would be the evolution of spirit in Hegel or class opposition in Marx.

It is noteworthy that the logic of change within a dialectical framework is always determined from within the opposites themselves and oppositions are overcome in a way that follows a specific trajectory according to reason, spirit, and so on. The dialectical logic ascribes a privileged position to the agents that are opposing each other. Thus, other oppositions that may be relevant are ruled out. This reduces or rules out different real possibilities of dissent. In other words, dialectics conceptualizes oppositions in a way that does not take all possibilities of social conflicts into account.

According to Laclau, another possible way of conceiving change is to view concepts and social forces as being in antagonistic relations to each other. The main difference is that this way of conceiving the logic of change is not historically determined and conceptual change is not a logical consequence that follows intrinsically from within the concepts themselves. In this view the oppositional relations in society depend entirely on factual and contingent history (Laclau 1990: 8).

The difference can be clarified by presenting Laclau's example of the opposition between worker and capital and viewing the conflict from the point of view of dialectics and antagonism. First we shall take the opposition between worker and capital and view it through the lenses of dialectical contradiction. In this opposition, the worker is in contradiction to capital because of the class structure of society. We have arrived at this moment in history through the evolution of the modes of production in society and through the overcoming of the oppositions that any given societal stage creates. In an industrial capitalist society the opposition between capital and worker is logically determined by the current societal stage and the mode of production which creates the opposition. Hence, the opposition between worker and capital is a necessity. The opposition is transcended by the revolution that this opposition necessarily creates at which point another societal stage is entered. Thus, resistance is a logical conclusion of this opposition.

When the opposition between worker and capital is approached from an antagonistic point of view, antagonistic opposition exists only if the worker actually resists and in the form chosen by the worker (Laclau, 1990, p. 9). In other words, resistance in Laclau's sense is not a logical conclusion of the contradiction between worker and capital. Hence, an antagonistic perspective does not accept the idea that resistance is a logical conclusion of any opposition.

The reason why Laclau views the contradiction between worker and capital as an antagonistic relation is that the logic of dialectical contradiction

presupposes the idea of a determined historical movement. In such a saturated space there is no space for multiplicity. History could not have evolved in any other way and in a sense the future is already decided. All societal oppositions are viewed as necessities that arise from objective history.

Laclau tries to show that one cannot and should not view social oppositions as objective relations. They should be seen as “the limit of all objectivity” (Laclau, 2014, pp. 161-165). In other words, one cannot deduce anything objectively from any given social opposition nor can one deduce any future societal configuration from such an opposition. An opposition exists only where it is created and articulated and the alterations that a conflict may lead to should not be viewed as logical conclusions but as contingent features interpreted in terms of a hegemonic power struggle. Hence, society should not, according to Laclau, be viewed in terms of a purely objective order (Laclau, 2014, pp. 161-165). Thus, a society and social conflicts are only one possibility out of many. Everything could have played out in a different way.

With regard to the self-characterization of dissent, this means that one cannot merely restrict oneself to one specific hegemonic social order. Such claims that refer to another hegemonic project have to be counted in order to allow for the self-characterization of dissent.

With regard to the idea of history, the antagonistic perspective is opposed to the idea of historical determinism (Laclau, 1990, pp. 12-13). The antagonistic account treats history as a matter that is not necessarily coherent.

The idea of the dialectical logic of contradiction views change as springing from within the objective relations of oppositional concepts and forces. Dialectical contradictions arise from an objective order in society which in turn is tied to the idea of historical determinism. An account of dialectical logic has to accept some form of determinism as there is only a limited possibility to overcome conceptual oppositions from within concepts themselves.

This finitude leads to the necessity of viewing society as an objective order. The antagonistic perspective is not tied to any conceptual necessity nor is it tied to the idea of historical determinism. On the other hand, this leads to the idea that one cannot view society as being constructed around an objective order but as being tied to the idea of contingency.

I claim that a radical democratic political theory based on dissent should frame its internal logic of change as an antagonistic logic. This is a requirement of dissent. I argued earlier for the self-characterization of dissent. This means that the dissenters themselves should retain the possibility of characterizing their dissent. To allow for the self-characterization of dissent, dissent should be limited only by participatory parity. Historical determinism and the idea that conflicts can be deduced from an objective order cannot be justified because they derive the characterization of dissent and dissenters from a conceptualization of society which characterizes dissent and conflict in society. In other words, historical determinism cannot be combined with the self-characterization of dissent.

The problem with this idea when applied to political struggles is that it requires a view of political struggles that partially removes the question of power. The question of power is partially bypassed because contradictions are transcended through features intrinsic to the opposing concepts. A theory of hegemony is better suited for a political theory in order to explain political struggle in terms of power.

I do not claim that the idea of dialectics as such is faulty. With regard to theory and theoretical reflection it is a useful tool, but as an idea that real conflicts should be transcended in this way it seems implausible. One of the problems with dialectics implemented on politics is that it may draw oneself into the quagmire of historical determination.

For example, if we consider the Hegelian idea of history as the fulfilment of objective spirit or the Marxian idea of viewing history as determined by the modes of production, it is possible to view dialectics as not being completely historically determined if there are many possible ways to transcend contradictory relations.

However, history seems to be at least partially determined if there is not an unlimited number of possible ways to transcend these conceptual contradictions. Another problem with dialectics, more specifically the forms that assume some kind of historical determinism, is that they seem to give a specific role to a specific political agent.

For example, in Marxism it is the proletariat that is the privileged political agent. With regard to dissent, dialectics seems to at least in some forms force the idea of viewing political conflicts without taking into account relations of power other than opposites. Another problem is that there is the possibility of having to accept some form of historical determinism.

With regard to the theories of justice that I have presented earlier, it is a bit problematic that both Honneth and Fraser seem at least partially to adhere to approaches that follow dialectical logic. For Honneth this is clear as he derives his theory from Hegel, especially the master-slave dialectics. For Fraser it is evident through her critique of other ideas of justice, such as Honneth's and liberal theories, as being false antitheses.

I assume that Fraser's usage of the term antithesis relates to Hegel's *aufhebung*, which Fraser quite often describes using the formula *thesis – antithesis – synthesis*. So when Fraser claims that some feature is a false antithesis she claims that the opposite of the contradiction is false. One example is when she claims that the idea of discourse and agonism is a false antithesis. Hence, what she claims is that discourse and agonism should not be viewed in terms of conceptual contradiction, instead they should be viewed as concepts that add to each other. In my opinion this view is false.

However, it is possible to view the dialectics in Fraser's theories as an approach that uses dialectics as a theoretical tool and not claim that the dynamics of struggle in society should be viewed as dialectical struggles. On this point I also assume that it is possible to detach the idea of dialectical struggle from Fraser's framework, even if it was there from the beginning.

For Honneth, the detachment of dialectics seems to be somewhat more problematic as his whole theory of recognition presupposes the idea of dialectical struggles. However, Honneth does not, at least explicitly, adhere to any idea of historical determinism and he does not presuppose any specific political agent as being primary in any way.

However, his idea of recognition does entail that at least in the recognition order society strives towards full recognition. This does not presuppose any kind of determinism as such, but as Honneth has such close ties to the Hegelian approach, the case can be made that there is at least the possibility of determinism with regard to recognition.

One interpretation of dialectics in Honneth's theory would go as follows. Initially there is the idea of a relation of power that creates misrecognition. This leads to the struggle for recognition. From these premises recognition happens when the power that creates misrecognition and its counterpart, the struggle for recognition, is transcended. The possibility for recognition is thus intrinsic to the opposition between the power that creates misrecognition and the struggle that aims for recognition.

However, if one does not put as much weight on the Hegelian connection, then the same feature seems only to be a proof of a framework that is normatively strong. My critique is perhaps unfair, but it illustrates a problem that is present if one employs a too strict conception of dialectics in order to explain social change.

### **4.3 PROCEDURAL AND IDEAL DEMOCRACY**

The concept of democracy is commonly viewed as a dynamic concept where the real part and the ideal part of democracy interacts and sets boundaries for the final conception. The idea is that ideal democracy is the utopian view of democracy that is limited by the real or possible institutional arrangements of government. In a sense ideal democracy is the regulative ideal that ought to regulate the real configuration of democratic society.

From this division one can conclude that democracy is attractive and something to strive for but that it is at the same time by definition unrealizable because of the boundaries set by reality. While it may, initially, seem like a good idea to operate with a utopian concept for purposes of regulating real world institutional arrangements, there are some serious issues with this idea.

A main problem is that because there are different interpretations of the ideal, it is always unclear what kind of institutional configuration is acceptable as the best possible configuration. In other words, if we lack a common conception of what an ideal democracy would look like, it is hard to make any evaluations of what kind of arrangements are best. If we cannot do this we have to accept that every interpretation of the democratic ideal is at least partially valid. A regulative ideal where any interpretation of the ideal is valid can hardly be seen as a regulative ideal at all.

To make sense of this confusion it is quite common to introduce the idea of democracy as a constant process, and I agree. In other words, the institutional arrangements of democracy and the democratic ideal are both viewed from the perspective of constant betterment.

To reach a coherent view of the division between real and ideal democracy one needs to introduce the idea of democracy as a process. Thus, we have the ideal of democracy that is always unattainable but has the function of eternally guiding the institutional configuration on the path towards ideal democracy.

Because of the possibility of multiple interpretations, the ideal concept of democracy has to be very vague. Usually, it is sufficient to define ideal democracy as a societal configuration where societal power belongs to the people. This idea is compatible with a conception of pluralist liberal equality and also other conceptions of democracy.

In this dissertation, participatory parity functions as the content for what is meant by the idea that the power in democratic society belongs to the people. The reason why it is sufficient to define the ideal in such minimal terms is because any definition of ideal democracy that would be more specific runs into the same problem of multiple interpretations that the idea of process was implemented to overcome. In other words, because one cannot provide a clear substantive content to the original ideal concept one needs the idea of democracy as a process. The idea of democracy as a process cannot be given a clear definition of the ideal as the idea of the process was implemented in order to avoid this problem. No ideal form of democracy can give this answer as an

eternal truth. It is from this chain of thought that the division of real and ideal democracy arises.

For the process-based idea to be sensible, it is sufficient to accept that we do not know the best configuration but we have the inclination that we can always have a societal configuration that is a bit more democratic than the current one. In other words, we are always tweaking the societal configuration to make it a little more democratic. This is done through a process of trial and error.

If we have, within this line of thought, a different idea of a democratic configuration, we should supposedly argue for its implementation and show that the configuration of democracy that we argue for is more in line with the ideal of democracy. Hence, we should start to implement it because it is more reasonable and more democratic.

Different theories of democracy are argued for on the grounds that they are more democratic than our current or opposing configuration because they are more in line with the concept of ideal democracy. I point out again that the concept of ideal democracy retains its quite open or undefined nature.

One could claim that we need a democratic procedure to decide on which societal configuration is more democratic and because we cannot have a substantive view of democracy. The substantive view is impossible because we cannot have an eternal truth about democracy.

If it were possible to have a substantive concept of democracy as the ideal, it would make the real and ideal divide unnecessary. In other words, we would never have had the problem of how to decide between competing conceptions of democracy as the problem would be decided once and for all. Hence, we need a democratic procedure so that we can reach an outcome that we can call democratic when we have competing ideas of democracy. In other words, we cannot decide which configuration is more democratic by referring to a substantial concept as many competing conceptions would have a similar claim. Hence, we need to create a procedure that can be interpreted as democratic so that we can overcome the problem of deciding on a democratic configuration.

The outcome of the democratic procedure is thought of as being democratic. This idea leads to the further idea that the struggle for the concept of democracy is incorporated into the procedures. Hence, the concept of democracy is left open by definition. We would not need the concept of procedures in order to arrive at the best configuration if we had a clearly defined concept of democracy.

While I agree that the concept of democracy is open in the sense that it is always contested, I disagree with the introduction of the concept of procedure to aid us in overcoming the real and ideal democracy. I disagree on two accounts.

First, we have the idea that as long as the procedure of arriving at a specific institutional configuration is democratic, we can conclude that the procedural outcome or institutional arrangement is also democratic.

From this we can conclude that any current configuration is democratically acceptable to some extent as long as it has gone through the correct procedures. One can always argue that any current institutional arrangement is democratic

because it is part of the democratic process or trajectory towards the ideal of democracy.

The configuration itself always refers to an interpretation of the ideal concept of democracy. However, the interpretation of the ideal concept of democracy does not have its origin in the ideal concept but in the interpretation of the ideal. Hence, the interpretation uses itself as a guideline for itself. If we have another conception of democracy we need to show why it is more democratic than the current configuration. This is, however, always done while referring to a conception of ideal democracy. From this we arrive at the second reason for my disagreement.

As any current configuration has gone through the procedural process and by virtue of being “more” democratic than a former arrangement, any argument for a new configuration has to show that it is “more” democratic either by referring to the same concept of ideal democracy that the former arrangement did or by introducing a new ideal democracy and trying to show why it is better than the former. Both strategies are problematic.

First, if we refer to the same concept of ideal democracy we would not in fact need the idea of procedural democracy as we would in a sense operate with a substantive concept of democracy. This would be satisfactory if everyone could agree upon the use of that interpretation, but we should remember that the concept of an ideal democracy has to be open and vague by definition.

On the other hand, if we want to introduce a new concept of ideal democracy that the new institutional arrangement should refer to we have to introduce a new interpretation of what the ideal is either by referring to yet another newly introduced concept or by accepting that we cannot introduce new parts in this chain ad infinitum. Hence, we arrive to the idea that at some point one of the concepts of democracy is always conflicted in a way that cannot be reconciled through any process.

Thus, the opposition that the procedural idea tries to overcome by introducing the idea of democratic procedure is not overcome, as the opposition will always and necessarily exist on a different level. The idea of procedure is useful only to strengthen the current status quo as the most democratic as it is by definition the currently most democratic alternative.

Also, while operating with an idea of democratic process and democratic ideals, one always keeps referring to a higher order of democracy. In other words, democracy is democratic because it refers to the democratic ideal that is more democratic than any other because it in turn refers to yet another democratic ideal or thought.

The procedural idea requires the premise of constant betterment of democratic practices. This idea of constant betterment is precisely the idea that leads to the requirement that one has to show why a certain idea of democracy is better than the earlier and then in turn creates the infinite chain of referring to democratic ideals. On these grounds I would reject both the divide of real and ideal democracy and the idea of democratic procedure as a means to arriving at the most democratic institutional configuration. Instead, the struggle for the

meaning of the concept of democracy must be interpreted as a struggle for the hegemonic interpretation of the concept.

There are also other arguments against the procedural account of democracy. For example, in Wittgenstein's interpretation in Mouffe (1999) one can find the argument that the procedural is actually substantial. The reason for this is that, according to Mouffe's interpretation, Wittgenstein argues for an account where life-forms are prior to meanings (Mouffe, 1999, p. 749). In other words, identities are prior to speech. If this is true, then speech carries with itself substantial ethical commitments. In other words, speech is not free of substance, which leads to the idea that procedural democracy is substantial. If this is true, then there are ontological restrictions for procedural democracy.

The relevance of the critique of procedural democracy as something that can solve the opposition between different forms of democracy is that dissent as such can and often has its roots in differing conceptions of democracy. The emphasis on dissent allows us to translate this opposition into the terms of hegemonic struggle.

The procedural account seems to push away the opposition by always referring to something that is further away. Hence, differing conceptions of democracy are in a sense internalized in this chain in a very vague way that will never lead to a conclusion.

On the other hand, if we follow Mouffe's interpretation of Wittgenstein, we arrive at the conclusion that procedural democracy is actually substantive because life-forms or identities are prior to speech acts. Hence, we need to introduce the idea of hegemonic struggle to make sense of the unbridgeable opposition that different conceptions lead to. The different conceptions all share legitimacy especially in a political theory of dissent insofar as they do not destroy the possibility of dissent altogether. Hence, an account of dissent cannot work with a procedural account and can only work with a substantive concept under the premise that the substantive concepts are viewed as contingent or provisional.

The idea of participatory parity can be viewed as a normative ideal that lies between a purely ideal and a procedural idea of democracy. As an example one can view Rawls as a proponent of a substantial idea and Habermas as defending a purely procedural theory. While Rawls spells out the principles for justice in society in *A Theory of Justice*, Habermas focuses more on the procedure (Rawls, 1978 (1972), pp. 53-54) (Habermas, 1994, p. 6).

Participatory parity can be viewed as being between these two accounts as it focuses on the possibilities and rights of participation. The difficulty of making sense of a purely ideal or procedural conceptualization of democracy leads to the idea that we need another concept to set limits for democracy. I propose that Nancy Fraser's account of justice as participatory parity can set limits for democracy where needed.

Further participatory parity as a regulative ideal is compatible with an antagonistic logic of change. Participatory parity only sets such limits on democracy that ensures that democracy does not change into something else. In

other words, participatory parity can be viewed as a safeguard for democracy while making democratic alterations possible.

## 4.4 DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

As this thesis is done within the scope of radical democracy it is necessary to take a stance in the debate between deliberative and agonistic democracy. This means taking a stance on the foundations of radical democracy itself. To achieve this it is relevant to present the main arguments for and against the deliberative and the agonist conception. Deliberative democracy holds the position of being the more widespread conception of democratic theory. One could even make the case for viewing deliberative democracy as the leading theory of democracy at the moment. Hence, it is justified to start our investigation there.

While there is nothing wrong with deliberation as such, there are some arguments that force us to reconsider its leading position within radical democratic theories. For this dissertation, the different strands of democratic theory are considered against the background of which one of the theories is most capable of meeting the normative requirements of a political theory of dissent. In other words, the question is what kind of radical democratic theory is most suitable for a political theory of dissent. I have already ruled out liberalism as being suitable for a political theory of dissent because liberalism internalizes dissent within the system which domesticates dissent itself.

Along with Iris Young, I understand deliberative democracy to be a normative account of democratic legitimacy and of how citizens in a democracy should participate (Young, 2001, p. 672). The idea is that the best way to be politically active is through deliberation. The process of deliberation means that conflicts and disagreements in a pluralist society are overcome by different parties making proposals and arguing for and against them. The difference between deliberative democracy and other accounts is that deliberative democracy compels us to take into consideration others' accounts, not merely our own.

The general idea is that the aim of the deliberative democrat is to create more and better spaces for deliberation so that we can arrive at conclusions that can be accepted by all (Young, 2001, p. 672). The discussion is governed by the idea that participants argue for their own cause under the idea that the best argument wins. Thus, we should argue for our own position and at the same time take into consideration other accounts. This requires a common idea of adjudicating differences. Within the deliberative paradigm participants in deliberation are committed to changing their own positions on the tenets of reason.

Hence, reason is the common idea that is used to determine which account and which positions are the ones that should be furthered and which should be discarded. This leads to the importance within deliberative democratic theory to achieve a process of deliberation that can take into account as many different voices as possible while still being able to uphold some idea of common ground. The requirement of common ground arises from the requirement that we should attempt to overcome political opposition through argumentative procedures.

Young points out a couple of points in the deliberative account which are open for criticism. First, the deliberative account pictures an ideal situation where everyone should be included and everyone would be heard on equal grounds. However, in the real world of politics, Young points out, we have powerful elites that represent structurally dominant groups that have a significant influence on the political process. She agrees that deliberation can happen in the real world in boardrooms, parliaments, etc. However, elite groups can control the deliberative settings by controlling entrance to deliberative organs. In her words, "Deliberation is primarily an activity of political elites who treat one another with cordial respect and try to work out their differences" (Young, 2001, p. 677).

If the process of deliberation is controlled in this manner the justification for the deliberative conception diminishes. According to Young, we can justify resorting to protest and using non-deliberative means if the process of deliberation is exclusive (Young, 2001, pp. 677, 681, 683-686). Also, according to Young, formally inclusive processes of deliberation limit the access of structurally unequal groups. In other words, real world deliberation under structural inequality cannot be conceived of as democratic in the sense that deliberative theory proposes. Deliberative processes remain unjust as they reproduce and strengthen the structural injustices by only granting formal voice to the marginalized. The practical discourse appears "innocent" to the deliberative democrats while others see hegemonic powers and so on at play.

Another convincing critique against deliberation is levelled by Lynn Sanders. She argues that the fact that some people are better at arguing than others tips the process of deliberation in favour of people who are versed in argumentation. Sanders adds that there are also people that we listen to more and those that we decide not to listen to. Hence, deliberation presupposes mutual respect which we mistakenly decide exists when we start the practice of deliberation. Sanders also points out that there are material restrictions on deliberation that are unequally distributed. In other words, we require equality of resources, a guarantee of equal opportunity to articulate persuasively and also what she calls epistemological authority, that is, "the capacity to evoke acknowledgement of one's arguments" (Sanders, 1997, pp. 347-349).

For Sanders, the main problem is how more of the people that do not speak up and are alienated from politics could be heard and how those who "normally" dominate political discourse could be forced to listen and take into account those who do not take part.

There is a problem when democratic theorists make abstractions about the people who take part in deliberative practices. This has according to Sanders two effects (Sanders, 1997, p. 350). First, it has the positive effect of assisting the ending of discrimination based on ascriptive characteristics.

On the other hand, it also deprives democratic theorists of tools to notice "systematic patterns of exclusion" (Sanders, 1997, pp. 350-351). This idealized speech situation may lead to a situation where those who discriminate and those who are discriminated against become blind to discriminatory practices. In a

practical situation all rational arguments may still be disregarded completely, a matter which deliberative democratic theory has difficulty in answering.

Deliberation may prove to work against itself in trying to foster an autonomous spirit if the process is one that is discriminatory (Sanders, 1997, p. 360). A discriminatory process may lead to a situation where participation leads to a sense of alienation instead of community.

If deliberation cannot overcome structural inequalities and the problem of power, then injustices are reproduced through the process of deliberation itself.

Against both of these critiques Kadlec and Friedman attempt to defend the deliberative democratic project. They frame the answer as a challenge to the question of control, design and change (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, pp. 7, 9-11, 15-18).

The challenge to control is the challenge of who controls the deliberative process (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, p. 7). They argue that it is possible to overcome the critiques of both Young and Sanders by deploying non-partisan intermediary organizations to oversee the process.

There should also, according to them, be multi-partisan deliberative leadership coalitions (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, pp. 7-8). The main idea with non-partisan intermediary organizations is that they could cultivate properly democratic opportunities for deliberation. These multi-partisan leadership coalitions would be formed to ensure that all involved parties would have a stake in becoming involved in the process of deliberation as that would be one way to further any cause. The agendas would be partially balanced as there would be different parties involved in the process. This idea is in principle the same as Rousseau's idea of a non-partisan legislator.

I fail to see how a non-partisan intermediary group would differ from having bureaucrats or involving NGOs in the process of deliberation. If one or some groups were given the task of ensuring that the deliberative process would be as fair as possible, then I assume that the partisan forces would start to attempt to influence the non-partisan intermediary groups.

Hence, the problem would be reproduced merely in another venue. Also a multi-partisan coalition is no guarantee of a deliberative process as it makes sense for some parties that form a majority to form a coalition to dominate the decision process according to their respective interests where matters of politics are being haggled over rather than deliberated upon.

Kadlec and Friedman also identify the problem of design, which is the process of framing the questions at hand. They identify two different ways of framing: "framing for deliberation" and "framing to persuade" (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, pp. 9-11). Again, they partially argue for intermediary organizations, which I claim would become partisan when institutionalized. The problem of design is partially overcome by defining the two ways of framing and then implementing non-partisan guides to ensure that the process does not evolve into a framing to persuade.

Kadlec and Friedman also identify the problem of striving towards a consensus as it presupposes a background agreement with one another. They

propose using the concept of confluence which means “gathering or flowing together at a juncture” (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, p. 13).

In my opinion, this is the same strategy as Rawls implements with his introduction of the notion of overlapping consensus (Rawls, 2005 ). The overall problem with their solution is that the solution is always to develop deliberation by instituting some kind of non-partisan agent to eliminate political conflict.

Even though we could find actors that are completely non-partisan we have to remember that partisan forces are usually very experienced in politics while non-partisan guides would come from the outside and would be very susceptible to influence. In other words, the non-partisan actors would be either idealists that are unused to politicians or politicians themselves.

Also, this does not answer the question of what should be done when a participant in the deliberative process simply does not accept another person’s arguments, however reasonable they may be. From personal experience this is more often than not the case in party politics.

They also claim that the critique Sanders levelled based on the idea that deliberation requires mutual respect as a prerequisite for deliberation is false and that their process-based approach treats mutual respect as something that grows from the deliberative process (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, p. 14). This may be the case, but one can use the same argument in support of the agonist perspective. The main idea seems to be that mutual respect grows from social interaction. This seems acceptable but is not in any specific way attached to the deliberative paradigm unless one claims that this only holds for interaction based on the tenets of reason within the deliberative paradigm. As there are many other ways of fostering mutual respect, it seems highly unlikely that this is what Kadlec and Friedman would have in mind.

The last problem that Kadlec and Friedman identify is the problem of democratic change (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, pp. 15-18). The main idea is that a democratic theory should be a vehicle of social change and that the theory of deliberation should be more strongly anchored to change. They argue that the development of deliberative norms provides contexts and opportunities for people to take part in and foster communicative inquiry on common concerns.

They rely on Dewey’s account of social intelligence as one of the main characteristics that a well-designed process of deliberation stimulates (Kadlec & Friedman, 2007, pp. 15-18). However, they also point out that a process of deliberation should always be controlled outside the official channels to overcome the problems of reproducing the discriminatory practices that Young and Sanders warned about.

If deliberation is conceived as a practice governed by reason, then one opens for the critique that we would not need more democracy but a government of elites (Lafont, 2006, pp. 8-9) For example, if the idea why we adhere to the principle of deliberation is that it leads to the best results and that this process is governed by reason, then it is plausible to claim that we should focus on getting an elite government. This claim would itself also be made on the basis of reason.

As Lafont points out, the principle of deliberation is also used as a justificatory principle. Outcomes of political decision-making can be justified as if they would have been through the scrutiny of public argumentation (Lafont, 2006, pp. 10-13). This goes for all decisions regardless of whether they have factually been through any deliberative process. Lafont argues that democracy is at the best a sort of epistocracy. This holds especially if we consider the idea that the point of deliberation is to achieve answers that are in everyone's interests combined with the idea that everyone personally knows what is in their own interest. Hence, Lafont argues that the main defence of deliberation does not come from its adherence to reason, but from its strength to justify and legitimize outcomes.

Lafont also touches on the problem of why minorities should consent to a majority view (Lafont, 2006, p. 17). The minority does not consent because of substantive correctness but because the view after deliberation is more likely to reflect the force of the better argument at that specific time.

Hence, despite deliberative democracy's strength of legitimation and justification we still return to the question of reason. Lafont points out that the democratic commitment to public justification is not satisfied if a minority has not been given sensible reasons that they can accept. In other words, the process is justified only insofar as it is mutually justifiable. From this arises the further problem of how mutual justifiability can be adhered to under conditions of deliberative disagreement. What follows from this is that we should commit to a "permanent possibility of effective contestation of collective decisions" (Lafont, 2006, p. 22).

This means that the mutual justification is not undermined but the minority should accept that they have not been able to give reasons for their claims that most people in the community can accept (Lafont, 2006, pp. 20-23). However, if they succeed in giving reasons then the majority should by parity of argument have to accept the claims of the minority.

According to an epistemic view, deliberative democracy is justified and decisions made through the process of deliberation are legitimate because democratic deliberative values have more epistemic value than any other democratic alternative (Marti, 2006, pp. 31-33). In other words, decisions made through such a process are more likely to be right than other democratic processes, even though other processes may be more correct in certain particular cases. This view is attributed to philosophers such as David Estlund (Estlund, 1997) and Joshua Cohen (Cohen J. , 1986).

This ideal has to adopt a "standard of rightness" that is in a sense objective and not dependent on the deliberative process. In other words, through deliberation we will arrive at, or at least be closer to, objective truth. This idea is based on what Marti calls the ontological and the epistemological theses:

*One or several standards of rightness of political decisions exist as something at least partially independent both from the decision-making procedure and from the participants' beliefs, preferences and desires. And this standard is knowable. (Marti, 2006, p. 34)*

*Democratic deliberation is in general the most reliable democratic procedure in order to identify which are the right political decisions, and therefore it is the adequate method to make legitimate political decisions. (Marti, 2006, p. 35)*

From this Marti arrives at the conclusion that we have two ways of justifying deliberative democracy, the intrinsic justification and the instrumental justification (Marti, 2006, pp. 35-36). The intrinsic justification is when justification is based on the intrinsic feature of the process itself. Instrumental justification is when justification refers to the outcome of the process. The different justifications are not mutually exclusive.

David Estlund conceives of the ideal speech act as something broader than merely a regulative ideal that in an ideal situation should mirror society (Estlund, 2006, pp. 86-87, 90). He claims that his view is supported by Habermas. Estlund conceives of the ideal speech situation as a breakdown theory, based on Marcuse. This means that the role of deliberative democracy is to identify deviations from the deliberative ideal so that we can decide what to do with them later.

This idea is based on the reinterpretation of the Habermasian public sphere in the sense that there should be an informal public sphere that is unruly (Estlund, 2006, pp. 86-87, 90). This means that the informal sphere should not be governed by any principles of deliberation. In such a public sphere conflicts could play out and arguments based on emotions could be given in order to provide new insights for political deliberation. It seems that Estlund attempts to introduce an agonist public sphere in order to avoid some of the criticism against deliberative democracy. The introduction of the agonist public sphere can be viewed as agreeing with the agonist critique of deliberative democracy. I would claim that such an introduction would turn Estlund's conception into an agonist conception of democracy.

If deliberative democracy is about striving for truth, the question will always return to the question of whose truth we are striving for, as the conception of reason and the rules of the deliberative process define the outcome. Hence, if the speech act and the rules are not in reality defined together by everyone then the definer is the one holding the ultimate power in deliberative democracy.

One of the main ideas in deliberative democracy is that through deliberation we can arrive at a view of the common good. According to Jane Mansbridge, no decision about the common good can be legitimate if it does not take into account conflicting interests (Mansbridge, 2006, pp. 107-108, 117-119, 128-129). Consequently, according to her, deliberation should also be judged on the basis

of how well it can command genuine consensus and how well the process can clarify the conflicts at play.

She proposes a view of the deliberative process as a three-stage process to properly take into account conflicts in deliberation (Mansbridge, 2006, pp. 107-108). At the first stage, different interest groups or the “like-minded” deliberate amongst themselves to clarify their own agenda, also allowing for suppressed groups to mobilize. This idea is quite similar to Fraser’s subaltern counterpublics.

At the second stage we would have full-scale deliberation where both conflicting and common interests would attempt to clarify both conflict and commonality in order to achieve mutual understanding (Mansbridge, 2006, pp. 117-119). If this proves impossible there would be a third stage of negotiation to reach a decision in spite of disagreement. This three-stage model is partially proposed because, according to Mansbridge, deliberative processes that are aimed at understanding may suppress dissent.

She points out that conflict in opinion has always been central for thinkers like Habermas, Arendt and Wolin (Mansbridge, 2006, pp. 128-129). The main problem is when self-interest plays a bigger role in political decision-making. However, this kind of thinking, according to Mansbridge, undermines well-reasoned and fair decisions in conditions that reflect closely the equality and freedom of each individual.

In other words, such deliberation, which attempts to force conflict of interests within procedures, does not respect freedom and equality. One is forced to accept something that is not acceptable, at least partially. Mansbridge’s three-stage deliberative process may actually provide a solution to this. However, it is unclear if her theory strictly speaking should be conceived of as a deliberative democratic theory.

This is, as I see it, also one of the pitfalls of the classification of agonist as opposed to deliberative democracy. As long as we hold strictly to one view and attempt to define clearly different standpoints, we forget the bigger picture of how radical democracy could evolve into something better.

We tend to miss different points of view and that different paradigms do better in comparison to one another. Hence, the reaction should not try to define Mansbridge as either deliberative or agonist but to ask the question if her point of view differs on some relevant points from valuable aspects of agonistic democracy. On this point I would claim that even though I agree with her on the feasibility of her model and that it is probably also applicable in reality, the main difference with agonists is the constitution of identity. For many of agonists, identity is constituted through conflict. Pluralism is not merely a fact of pluralism (Rawls, 2005 ) but refers to the circumstances that constitute identity.

Thus, even though the question of whether Mansbridge is an agonist or a deliberative democrat is at least partially irrelevant, her model should be expanded to take into account the wider implication on identity if one wants to view her theory as one that could overcome the opposition between deliberation and agonism.

## 4.5 CHARACTERIZATION OF AGONISTIC DEMOCRACY

At the moment there are not many overall works on what agonistic democracy entails. One of the first comprehensive works is Mark Wenman's book *Agonistic Democracy: Constituent Power in the Era of Globalization*. Even though I disagree with Wenman on many points, I will follow his work in order to paint a clearer picture of what the unifying factors of agonistic democracy are and also to show the differences between his and my characterization of radical democracy and agonistic democracy.

To begin with, Wenman identifies deliberative democracy, agonistic democracy, cosmopolitan democracy and radical democracy as new models of democracy (Wenman, 2013, pp. 3, 18, 28). These are all different forms of democracy and mark different standpoints in contemporary debates. He identifies three central components that mark agonistic democrats; they share an emphasis on constitutive pluralism, a tragic vision of the world and a belief that certain forms of conflict can be a political good.

The parts that I mainly disagree with are the claims that radical democracy is a distinct form of democracy and that the "tragic vision" is a common feature.

I agree that most agonists share an idea of pluralism as constitutive pluralism, in other words they usually hold to an idea of value pluralism. This is an idea of pluralism as opposed to, for example, Rawls' idea of pluralism as a fact.<sup>16</sup>

The main idea of pluralism as a fact is that the world is factually such that there are different political values and hence we are required to take this into account when creating theories of society. In other words, theories based on the idea of pluralism as a fact are based on the idea of how we should manage the diversity of values. As Wenman also points out, agonists usually do not agree to this conception but "...reject the idea that pluralism can be mediated by a determinant set of rational principles" (Wenman, 2013, p. 29).

Agonists focus on how different identities are created and conditioned and on how plurality itself can be distorted and manipulated (Wenman, 2013, pp. 29-31). Hence, pluralism is not something that is characterized by managing a conflict of values but it shares the idea that identities, values and moralities are actually created and formed in and by the conflict. Agonists share the idea that there is no common measure or principle according to which one can adjudicate between competing values.

Wenman also distinguishes the tragic vision as one characteristic that all agonists share. According to Wenman, one characteristic of both ancient and post-modern times is the "...idea that conflict, suffering and strife are endemic in social and political life and not a temporary condition on a journey towards reconciliation or redemption" (Wenman, 2013, p. 35).

This should not, according to him, be understood as a mere conflict between good or evil but as "... an impossible contest between incommensurate

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Rawls (2005).

conceptions of the good, where neither has unqualified right on their side.” (Wenman, 2013, p. 35) .

Thus far I agree with Wenman. However, I disagree with the idea that tragedy or tragic vision should be a necessary feature of agonism.

Wenman ascribes the idea or the resurrection of the idea of tragedy to Nietzsche through Connolly (Wenman, 2013, pp. 36-37,39). He cites Derek Barker to show that tragedies are open to interpretation and that they do not decisively resolve the questions that they raise and as such are open to interpretation and discussion. Inherent in the idea of tragedy can also be found the idea that suffering and despair is involved. Even though we can find the ideas of tragedy, as Wenman does, in Connolly’s, Honig’s and Foucault’s writings it still remains unclear why tragic vision is counted as something that all agonists should share.

Where Wenman identifies conflict, suffering and strife as necessary prerequisites for agonism, I would agree wholly only with the idea of conflict. I do not think that the concept of tragedy is a necessary feature of agonism. Clearly, some agonist philosophers do share the idea of tragedy and utilize it in a fruitful manner, but postulating it as a necessary feature only confuses matters by bringing in the whole discussion of different interpretations of the tragedies of antiquity into the contemporary discussion of the foundations of democracy.

Wenman’s requirement of tragic vision seems to be connected to his distinction of agonistic democracy as being different from radical democracy.

The idea of tragedy in connection with agonism is derived from the Nietzschean idea of tragedy as opposed to optimism. Here the tragic view accepts conflict as inevitable and the optimist as dissolving conflicts.<sup>17</sup>

This idea as such is similar to the division between agonistic and deliberative democracy, where reason dissolves the conflicts in deliberative democracy and agonistic democracy embraces conflicts as inevitable.

As a feature that characterizes agonistic democracy, the idea of tragic vision merely serves to bracket all agonists as being related to Nietzsche and Greek antiquity. This characterization does not provide any new insight into the contemporary debate between agonists and deliberative democrats. In other words, relying on the idea of tragic vision merely narrows down the number of agonist philosophers. Not many agonists utilize or take part in the scholarly discussions on tragedy.

The idea of tragedy is inherently related to the idea of things going wrong. In a tragic story; the hero usually loses or at least does not achieve what he was set out to do. In relation to contemporary democratic politics this idea seems somewhat out of place. I claim that even though agonists highlight and embrace conflict and struggle, there are not many tragic elements in the sense of suffering or misery. On the contrary, agonistic democracy should be seen as a strand of democratic theory which sees conflict as something positive.

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<sup>17</sup> On this I am indebted to Sanna Tirkkonen. For an article where the topic is discussed, see Tirkkonen (2015)

By putting more weight on the idea of the tragic vision than the idea that irreducible conflict characterizes agonism, Wenman opens agonistic democracy up for the critique that it is inherently tied to the idea of misery and suffering. This only serves to heighten the misunderstanding between agonists and deliberative democrats.

The third feature Wenman identifies is the idea of conflict as a political good (Wenman, 2013, pp. 45-46). This idea is, according to him, the part that is often misunderstood with regard to agonism. He claims, rightly, that agonists are often criticized for not being able to give a conception of the political good and thus that agonists are also criticized for not being able to give a normative position. What is misunderstood, according to Wenman, is that agonism is itself a political value. In other words, it is conflict as a positive value that is emphasized.

#### **4.5.1 AGONIST ALTERNATIVES**

The agonistic critique of deliberative democracy is traditionally a critique of consensus and the insistence that the democratic contest or struggle should go all the way to include the principles and procedures that regulate political life (Schaap A., 2009, pp.1-3).

One of the most influential theories of agonism is Chantal Mouffe's idea of *agonistic pluralism*. Mouffe's thesis is that a consensus-based approach can lead to a moral distinction between those involved in the presumed consensus and those that are not (Mouffe, 1999, p. 754). In other words, this leads to a distinction between good and evil which in turn leads to a relation between friend and enemy which can only play out as a societal pathology of antagonism or the destruction of the enemy.

Mouffe assumes that the *we/they* relation is fundamental for us to understand the sphere of the political (Mouffe, 2005, p. 52). In Mouffe's scheme, conflicts should play out as agonism between adversaries, that is, within the democratic system so that they do not evolve into antagonistic relations between friends and enemies. An enemy is one whose demands are not recognized, an adversary is one who shares some common ground. The common ground in Mouffe's case refers to adherence to democracy.

According to Mouffe, collective identities always entail a *we/they* distinction. We should not try to overcome these distinctions through consensus, instead the divisions should be energized through confrontation (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 5-6).

The reason for this is that, according to Mouffe, consensus leads to no-difference policies which in turn lead to growing disaffection with politics and thus the decline of democracy (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 62-63).

When politics is played out in the register of morality antagonism cannot play out as agonism, that is, a legitimate conflict of plurality of interest that can never be completely reconciled (Mouffe, 2005, p. 76).

Consensus silences this plurality through a conceived unity of interest. Hence, what is at stake in Mouffe's theory is what to do in order to achieve a situation where conflicts play out as agonism and not as destructive antagonism. In other words, politics should be conducted within the sphere of democracy, that is, within the field where conflicts play out agonistically. In short, Mouffe's idea of agonism is that pluralism is defined as many competing values and empirical restrictions for unlimited deliberations lead to non-rational consensus plus hegemonic practices (Mouffe, 2013, pp. 3-4). What should be noticed is that Mouffe actually defines common and shared boundaries for democratic agonism.

Mouffe presupposes that liberty and equality are central values that we could all agree upon (Mouffe, 2013, p. 7). A similar idea where emancipatory politics requires liberty and equality can be found in Balibar (2002, p. 2). The idea of the centrality of equality and freedom can also be found in Laclau's idea of democratic demands and Fraser's idea of participatory parity. However, Mouffe does not provide us with an idea why, how and where we have agreed upon this principle. One way of doing this is by referring to a postulated or idealized discourse, but that would go against the principle of agonism.

However, this is only the case if one views agonism as a value that has priority over democracy. Wenman seems to see agonistic democracy in this way. However it is justified to set democratic boundaries for agonism, even if it would merely serve to make sense of the concept. Hence, if democracy and agonism are both viewed as values as such, then one can conclude that democracy has priority in Mouffe's theory. My characterization of agonism as a sub-category of radical democracy defines all the agonist alternatives as being secondary to democracy. Hence, under my categorization there is no problem with the idea that Mouffe gives priority to the idea of democracy.

Mouffe argues for an agonistic public sphere where passions can be played out politically (Mouffe, 2005b, p. 124). The idea is that passions are central for the democratic struggle. This would be a way to get away from the striving for consensus in the political centre. Her argument is that the movement towards the political centre gives grounds for the rise of fundamentalist movements.

The problem with deliberative democracy is that every political question acquires a moral nature and is hence subsumed under rational discourse (Mouffe, 2005b, p. 124).

Thus, we arrive at the problems with liberalism and deliberative democracy, namely that they cannot approach and think about conflicts in political terms (Mouffe, 2005b, p. 125). Conflicts are solved through other mediums such as economics or morality. A well-functioning democracy requires adversarial positions to function properly. The democratic struggle mobilizes the passions towards democratic design (Mouffe, 2005b, p. 127).

The problem with the public sphere in liberal and deliberative democracy is that when political conflicts are translated into moral terms, the conflicts lead to enemy relations (Mouffe, 2005b, pp. 126, 129-130). The idea is to have the political played out between adversaries. The main idea is that adversaries fight for hegemonization of their viewpoint. Enemies fight to destroy. The hegemonic struggle constitutes the democratic struggle. For Mouffe, hegemony is when objectivity and power meet (Mouffe, 1999, pp. 752-753).

Another agonist alternative is William Connolly's. His idea of agonistic democracy is based on the importance of genealogy as a key to undermining claims to normality and the fostering of agonistic respect as a feature to dampen agonistic contest (Wenman, 2013, p. 109). In Connolly (2002), agonistic democracy is a model where no positive vision can be enunciated and contestation takes priority over every other aspect of politics. Agonistic respect is a civic virtue that allows people to honour different final sources. "*Agonistic respect is a reciprocal virtue appropriate to a world in which partisans find themselves in intensive relations of political interdependence.*" (Connolly, 2002 (1991), pp. xxv-xxvi).

Connolly investigates the identity/difference dilemma and analyses how democratic identity can either become oppressive or configured to foster diversity. One task is thus to avoid the translation of difference into a threat in order that a certain collective identity is not "dogmatized". According to Connolly, democracy is the key practice that should be nourished. A democracy "infused with agonism" is a democracy where different and divergent orientations can flourish in public life (Connolly, 2002 (1991), pp. 200, 210-211).

Connolly also states that agonal democracy presupposes a reduction in economic inequalities that require a mobilization of public energies to promote it (Connolly, 2002 (1991), p. 212). Hence, for Connolly democracy requires some kind of material equality. This idea is very similar to Fraser's idea. Connolly's strategy of mobilizing public energies also seems to be similar to Fraser's subaltern counterpublics. The mobilizing is done against hegemony, which in Connolly's theory is described as a predominance of will in public life (Connolly, 2002 (1991), p. 212).

What should also be noticed is that Connolly's agonal democracy requires equality. The case that one of agonistic democracy's features is equality becomes somewhat stronger. Moreover, with the idea of politics as a "politics of becoming" Connolly also shows how pluralism is in a sense pluralized. The politics of becoming is a paradoxical politics where new things surge into being, such as new identities and new moral inspirations that upset older and stratified conceptions of these things (Connolly, *Pluralism*, 2005, p. 121).

Another agonistic theory that also focuses on equality is Jacques Rancière's theory. For Rancière the concept of equality is essential for his conception of democratic politics.

Rancière contrasts the idea of *police* with *politics* (Rancière, 1995, pp. 39-61). The *police* is for Rancière the governing functions that belong to the social

order. The sphere of politics is when claims of equality interrupt the police order and reintroduce the principle of equality as opposed to a naturally conceived social order. Even though Rancière holds that politics is in a sense pure and always directed towards the social order, he is not an anarchist (Klockars, 2010, pp. 285-290). For Rancière there are no natural grounds for a social order and he strives to conceive politics as the challenging of existing power structures.

The democratic element in Rancière is connected with his view of equality (Rancière, 1995, pp. 39-61). Equality, according to Rancière, is not a positive evaluation. Equality exists on a pre-evaluative level where no values as such exist. It is when an evaluation is made that we can start speaking of equality and inequality. Hence, everyone is potentially equal as no one has any natural or given right to evaluate him- or herself above another. Thus, on the level when we start to conceive of justice and stability, questions of equality come into play (Klockars, 2010, pp. 285-290).

For Rancière, democracy does not entail a specific social system but an activity that is closely related to politics in its “original” meaning (Rancière, 1995, pp. 39-61). Hence, democratic politics for Rancière can be conceived of as the returning of politics to its original level of equal diversity (Klockars, 2010, pp. 285-290). Hence, Rancière creates an opposition where on one side is democracy and politics, and on the other order and different social structures.

Democracy is thus not a government or model for a state but a reintroduction of the foundations of politics, in other words the dismantling of order (Klockars, 2010, pp. 285-290). Thus, we should not focus on politics as a question of how power is legitimately exercised. Instead we should focus on the disruption of current configurations of power and ruling ideas (Rancière, 1995, pp. 39-61). Hence, politics is grounded in difference not power. The reason for me to count Rancière as an agonist is tied to the idea that, for Rancière, disagreement is a fundamental factor of politics.

With regard to the debate on recognition, there are some works that approach the idea of recognition from an agonist point of view. These are amongst others James Tully<sup>18</sup> and Patchen Markell.<sup>19</sup> Also there is the possibility of reading Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser as agonists. James Tully’s approach, which is heavily influenced by Foucault, can also be read as an agonist account of recognition (Owen, 2012, p. 133).

Overall agonistic democracy in my opinion should be seen as theories of democracy that are constructed on the basis of disagreement and conflict. They are opposed to deliberative democratic theories with which they often are contrasted and together with deliberative democratic theories they are usually also opposed to liberal democratic theories. Hence, agonistic theories of democracy assume the priority of the value of radical democracy and approach it from the point of view of agonism.

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<sup>18</sup> see for example (Tully, 1995), (Tully, 2008) and (Tully, 2009)

<sup>19</sup> see for example (Markell, 2003)

One can conceive of agonistic theories that are not democratic at all. On this point Wenman's identification of agonistic democracy is misleading as it seems that he first establishes agonism and after that its relation to democracy. This has to do with the conception that all models of democracy are seen as distinct models and not as an evolution of a wider debate on democracy. In other words, the categorization of radical democracy as the umbrella concept establishes the priority of democracy in a way that does not lead to unnecessary criticism later on.

## 4.6 LACLAU'S RADICAL DEMOCRATIC POPULISM

### 4.6.1 DEMOCRATIC DEMANDS AND PARTICIPATORY PARITY

The main aim of this chapter is to present some of Laclau's political theories. Through this integration it is possible to achieve a more justified radical democratic framework that is based on the ideas of dissent and participatory parity.

One of the reasons for utilizing the insights of Laclau is that his idea of politics that arises from democratic demands can be interpreted as participatory parity. As I have mentioned earlier, democratic demands are demands that 1) are made by the underdog in society, 2) have an egalitarian dimension and 3) have their roots in exclusion, deprivation and society's creation of others as deficient beings (Laclau, 2005a, p. 125).

In Fraser's terms, Laclau's first feature would coincide with her idea of subaltern counterpublics and a strong connection to new social movements. The second feature coincides primarily with the sphere of distribution but also with the sphere of recognition. Lastly, Laclau's third feature can be seen as similar to Fraser's sphere of recognition and the sphere of representation.

Laclau's insights into populist democracy can add strength to Fraser's framework by giving a better interpretation of democratic politics. The key concept for this understanding is Laclau's concept of hegemony.

From the point of view of dissent, Laclau's theory can show how the idea of the people is created through dissent. Laclau's theory is also strongly tied to the idea of actually occurring dissent as he views the struggles of society as contingent antagonisms. This means that social conflicts should be interpreted as conflicts when they actually happen and are created, and not seen as logical necessities.

Laclau's theory is a radical democratic alternative that encompasses the antagonistic logic of change. In my interpretation, he is also an agonist philosopher. One of the strongest arguments for this is when he claims that reason cannot function as a common adjudicator for political conflicts as reason itself is dependent on hegemony (Laclau, 1990, p. 31).

Even though Laclau's reinterpretation of populism is innovative and also useful, I hold that the use of the concept of populism is bad. In other words, even though Laclau's theory is based on many ideas of populism he has a strong commitment to democracy. The common usage of populism views it more or less as a social pathology. With the common usage I refer to, for example, how populism is used to describe far-right anti-immigrant movements in Europe. I would be inclined to view populism as a social feature that is bad for democracy even though Laclau gives us the possibility of distinguishing between democratic and undemocratic populism. Hence, I agree with the substance that Laclau gives to the concept of populism. My disagreement is with the usage of the concept of populism for this description. In my view, giving a democratic

reinterpretation of the concept of populism is an attempt to hijack the concept by giving it a new interpretation.

#### **4.6.2 HEGEMONY**

As mentioned earlier, I follow Mouffe and Laclau's views on the concept of hegemony. Roughly stated the view is that hegemony is the place where power and objectivity meet. To arrive at this, they have partially rewritten Marx's concept of hegemony as found in Gramsci's work (Norval, 2005, p. 86). One of the main reasons for me to follow this interpretation of hegemony is that Laclau's work on hegemony shows convincingly that no analysis of politics can be done without understanding hegemony and the hegemonic struggle.

The underlying idea behind this concept of hegemony is that it highlights both politics and society as contingent features. In other words, the political and the social are created through power and decisions. Hegemony temporarily fixes the meanings of social relations (Critchley, 2006, p. 114).

Both Laclau's and Mouffe's concepts of hegemony are detached from the Marxian idea of historic necessity (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-28). It has to be detached in order to avoid the totalizing effects of "objective structures". Fixed objective structures are an impossibility as no hegemonic configuration can fully totalize itself into society.

Hence, from the point of view of Laclau's concept of hegemony, the Marxian concept of hegemony is impossible because it has strong ties to historical necessity and hence to objective structures.

Laclau operates with "open signifiers", meaning that a concept is left open to different interpretations and will be filled with different content depending from what point of view the concept is used (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-30). In other words, a left-wing and a right-wing politician would mean different things when referring to, for example, the concept of justice.

The hegemonic struggle is a struggle about whose definition fixes the meaning of concepts for a wider audience (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-30). The hegemonic struggle is thus translated into a struggle on hegemonizing the contents of concepts and fixing them according to a specific configuration.

According to Laclau, the field of the social could be likened to a "trench war" where different political projects attempt to hijack as many of these signifiers around themselves (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-30). Necessity and objectivity in this case would be grounded in "stable hegemony" and in between we would have times of "organic crisis" when hegemonic articulations weaken. A complete

hegemonic totality would, according to Laclau, be impossible because it is not empirically possible for a social force to impose its supremacy completely.<sup>20</sup>

The hegemonic structure as a whole is always in question (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-30). A social structure cannot, according to Laclau, be seen as the realization of a project or of rationality which has its foundations in a preceding configuration. A social structure has to be seen as an act of construction. According to Laclau, all the rules that govern coherence in society are grounded in hegemony and are thus dependent on who is in command. This does not mean that every new configuration would be founded completely apart from any current hegemonic configuration. It only means that the new configuration would not be determined by the preceding configuration. There would still be a partial relation as the preceding structure makes new structures possible.

Political agents in society share a similar relation to societal structures as they actualize some structural possibilities while rejecting others. In other words, the identities of political agents change when the structures of society change (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-30). Laclau uses as an example the trade union's relationship with society. When society changes we are not left with the same trade unions in a new configuration but with trade unions who have also changed their identity.

Any structural objectivity that is formed is based on a power relationship. This is also true for any decision made on this basis. We can arrive at this insight by examining how a decision is made in Laclau's theory.

First, an agent is autonomous but not completely detached from social structures. A social structure as such is ultimately undecidable as any other configuration could have been possible. Hence, according to Laclau, this means that a political subject is determined by the distance between an undecidable structure and any decision made on the basis of it (Laclau, 1990, pp. 27-30). When determining grounds for the decision the social structures are actually as primary as the decision itself because the structures are undecidable. If different possible decisions refer to different undecidable structures, then such a decision means repressing the possible alternative. Hence, any conception of structural objectivity is formed as a power relationship.

Laclau points out that a decision taken on the grounds of undecidable structures may seem unreasonable as it cannot refer to any solid grounds (Laclau, 1990, p. 31). This is, however, only the case if the undecidability is only attributed to the social structures. Undecidability, according to Laclau, can be viewed as a factor that is located within reason itself. Hence, reason and undecidable structures are not opposites but something that supplements and highlights reason's deficiencies.

This means that when two groups make decisions on the basis of undecidable structures the relation between them will be one of antagonism and power

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<sup>20</sup> One can see the similarity to Mouffe's idea, where democratic society is characterized as something that cannot be realized fully because democracy is constituted by the fact that no factor can control the totality (Mouffe, 1999, p. 752).

(Laclau, 1990, p. 31). Both decisions are made on the basis of reason but there cannot be any ultimate rational ground for deciding which of the decisions would be correct. This undecidability is transcended on the basis of power.

Hegemony as such can be associated with political domination (Howarth, 2008) (Connolly, 2002 (1991)). I pointed out earlier that any established hegemony is undemocratic as it always entails the imposition of a specific point of view as being universal. Hence, from this point of view the struggle for hegemony may be democratic but any set hegemonic configuration is at least potentially undemocratic. This holds even if hegemony is constructed in a manner where “empty signifiers” should be filled with democratic content. Hegemony’s undemocratic nature comes from the imposition of a set of ideas as universal.

#### **4.6.3 REMARKS ON HEGEMONY**

Laclau’s and Mouffe’s idea of hegemony is a reworked version of the Gramscian idea.

The Gramscian idea is roughly that hegemony is a political mechanism through which a group establishes its intellectual and moral leadership (Gramsci, 2000, pp. 249-250, 306). The hegemonic group uses a combination of coercion and consent to forge together a new hegemonic bloc that is based on the universalization of the group’s own interests (Khan, 2008, p. 196).

In the Marxian framework the proletariat has to establish its counter-hegemony by achieving the consent of subordinated groups (Gramsci, 2000, pp. 249-250, 306). For Gramsci, domination and hegemony are decoupled in the sense that domination is the power that is used through the state while hegemonic power is the wider societal power.

What Laclau and Mouffe did in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* was to detach the idea of hegemony from its class essentialism (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 (1985), pp. 137-138) (Khan, 2008, p. 196). In other words, there is no privileged class agent. Thus, any group in society can construct a “hegemonic bloc”, not only the proletariat.

According to Khan, in Laclau’s view the stability of society exists in a paradoxical tension with the social (Khan, 2008, p. 196 ), and the social is identified with the infinite play of differences. Society, on the other hand, exists to limit that play by containing it within the finitude of an order. Even though there is an attempt to institute this totality by society, it is impossible as society is always exceeded by the social.

The social is governed by the political logics of difference and equivalence, where difference refers to expansion and complexity and equivalence to simplification (Laclau, 2005a, p. 82) (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001 (1985), p. 130).<sup>21</sup>

Laclau's view is that hegemony is the political relation of power that is temporarily able to bring together the fragmented and particularistic moments of the social into the ordering of social relations (Khan, 2008, p. 196). Hence, no hegemonic agent can ever achieve full hegemony as Laclau rejects an idea of universal history moving in the direction of a specific *telos*.

According to Khan, Laclau's theory of hegemony is

*“dubious” insofar as it is a “notion of hegemony (understood as a conception of the social bond in which there will always be a leader) is a monistic form of power relation that precludes the very possibility of more egalitarian forms of power. (Khan, 2008, p. 201)*

I agree with Khan that it seems that Laclau views politics as the perpetual replacement of one hegemony with another (Khan, 2008, p. 201).

This may be problematic if hegemony itself is found to be undemocratic. In a sense, Laclau could probably agree that the idea of hegemony as such, that is, the filling of empty signifiers according to a specific configuration, could be undemocratic. However, it is problematic only if one holds to the idea that any configuration of hegemony is supposedly eternally final.

Laclau's theory rests on the idea that the democratic populism is based on democratic claims. From this it follows that any hegemony that is built on democratic claims should also be democratic. Hence, when a hegemonic position is “won”, it would be a democratic configuration.

However, this only means that the content would be democratic; hegemony as such would still have its undemocratic nature.

Hegemony and difference are compatible in Laclau's and Mouffe's work, according to Howarth, if one takes Marx's idea that “the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” seriously (Marx & Engels, 2005, p. 71) (Howarth, 2008, p. 187). Hence, in order to secure the compatibility of hegemony and difference it has to be understood that freedom and equality are not self-sufficient values but a balanced tension of mutually constitutive logics.

The logic of hegemony is interpreted as the political practice of linking different demands and identities into a common project that recognizes and respects difference (Howarth, 2008, p. 187). This presupposes the move from a closed system of social relations in which all identities and interests are fixed to an open-textured social ontology that is marked by radical contingency and a plurality of heterogeneous social spaces.

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<sup>21</sup> In Khan (2008), the logic of equivalence refers to complexity and difference to simplification. It is probable that this is the author's error rather than a different interpretation.

#### **4.6.4 DEMOCRATIC POPULISM**

A political theory of dissent needs a theory that can explain how dissent arises and how it is channeled in society. Ernesto Laclau's theory of populist democracy can explain this dynamic. This, however, requires an understanding of populism as something else than the traditional view which, for example, explains right-wing populist movements in Europe. Laclau's conception of populist politics creates a new and innovative way to understand populism. His view also opens up the possibility of making an evaluation between democratic and undemocratic populism.

According to Laclau, political identities are necessarily popular (Laclau, 2014, p. 176). Political identity and the *populus* are created through chains of equivalences, in other words through similarities of demands that are connected to each other. For example a *populus* can be created on the basis of a group of people whose demands are not met. The similarity or equivalence then would be the unanswered demand. Political identity is formed at the same time as the *populus* is formed. In other words, political identities are created on the basis of equivalence of demands. This is what Laclau refers to when he speaks about a populist logic. From this conception it follows that all political identities are popular because they are formed on the basis of a populist logic.

One should not confuse Laclau's interpretation of populism with the common definition that is used to describe, for example, the far right movements in Europe. Laclau's interpretation provides a novel way of analysing how popular identities are formed. Further, it is possible to evaluate democratic and undemocratic populism on the basis of this.

For Laclau, populism is necessarily tied to politics and also to all democracy. The idea of creating popular identities through chains of equivalences resonates well with a political theory of dissent. This holds especially in the case where the connecting of unanswered demands creates the *populus*. In this case the populist movement is created through dissent.

In order to make the distinction between democratic and undemocratic populism, one needs to take a look at the boundaries of populism.

Laclau is sympathetic to Mouffe's logic on agonism/antagonism (Laclau, 2014, p. 176). For Mouffe, this distinction establishes the boundaries between democratic and undemocratic politics. In Laclau's scheme, the democratic boundaries of politics arise from the idea that the *populus* is based on the idea of democratic demands. In other words, a *populus* that is created on the basis of democratic demands is also democratic. When a *populus* is created though the equivalence of unanswered demands one should notice that it is created around unanswered democratic demands.

For Laclau, it is important that the demands arise from society even though they can be created so that they are partially from the outside (Laclau, 2014, p. 176). Hence, the demands should be such that they have a link with society which gives them their nature of being democratic while also being open to the opportunity of introducing features that do not necessarily follow from current society.

Democratic demands are made with one foot in society (Laclau, 2014, p. 176). It follows that the antagonisms that Laclau speaks about are democratic. However, there is the possibility of making claims and building populist agendas around claims from the outside; these are considered undemocratic because they are claims that strive to eradicate democratic politics as such.

I interpret Laclau's conception of claims that are based on the "outside" as claims that are against democratic politics. The idea is that when one makes claims that accept democratic politics as such but are highly critical of society, one makes claims that are partially based on society. An easier way to conceptualize this is by thinking of outside claims as anti-democratic claims, in other words, claims that strive to eradicate democratic politics as such.

Hence, the political is the arena for democratic claims making. If we use the Mouffean distinction of agonism/antagonism, those claims that are partially interior to the system could be rewritten as agonistic claims while claims that are made completely on the basis of exteriority could be considered antagonistic. Mouffe also employs this kind of distinction as she speaks for a democratic agonistic politics that does not turn into undemocratic antagonism. Hence, Laclau and Mouffe share the idea that one should be able to make a distinction between anti-democratic claims and democratic claims.<sup>22</sup> It serves to remind ourselves that Laclau defines political logic as antagonistic as opposed to contradictory. Hence, when Laclau refers to antagonism he refers to the underlying political logic, whereas Mouffe refers to the boundaries of democratic politics.

Simon Critchely seems to have a view of the political project that sounds somewhat similar to Laclau's. He starts from the idea that we are stuck with both capitalism and with the state. However, it is possible to be distant from the state within the state (Critchley, 2005, p. 226). The idea is to work within the state against the state to open up places of opposition. Thus, an oppositional political project creates political subjectivity by gluing together cells of opposition. This idea seems very similar to Laclau's interpretation of populist reason, where political identities are formed around unmet demands.

The people in a democracy should have the power in a society. However, people have very different values and views on political reality. Thus, the concept of democracy should be eternally left open to contestation. If democracy is always open to contestation, we cannot have a consensus on the content of democracy. Hence, the question for us is how to deal with the varying concepts of democracy and still be able to have a concept that can be used for guiding institutional arrangements. This struggle should be interpreted as a hegemonic struggle where the current concept of democracy is the hegemonic one.

This does not mean that the current conception is the best one in any way, nor does it assume that the following view would be more democratic than the

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<sup>22</sup> Democratic demands are demands that 1) are made by the underdog in society, 2) have an egalitarian dimension and 3) have their roots in exclusion, deprivation and society's creation of others as deficient beings (Laclau, 2005a, p. 125).

last one. Hence, a view of democracy cannot be said to be more or less democratic by referring to a hegemonic conception of democracy because all such conceptions are interpretations on how we can realize the idea of power to the people.<sup>23</sup> This is because any common source is also created through hegemonic struggle. In order to transcend this contest we need a minimal substantial conception of what the power of the people entails. In this dissertation I have claimed that the norm of participatory parity can be interpreted as such a conception. This does not change the undemocratic nature of the imposition of hegemony.

If hegemony is undemocratic because it imposes its view of democracy on others we can also conclude that any institutional configuration is undemocratic as it is based on a view that does not take into account the whole populus. The only conception of democracy that would take into account the whole populus is one that would take into account every possible conception of democracy. Such a concept is clearly impossible and highlights the necessity to operate with an open concept of democracy.

Dissent in a radical democratic theory highlights this idea. It reminds us that all of our institutions are constantly contested and that a specific hegemonic view can never be counted as the whole truth. Similar ideas can be found in Laclau's and Mouffe's theories. For example, in Mouffe what constitutes democratic politics is the clash of irreconcilable hegemonic views (Mouffe, 2013, p. 17).

On the basis of Laclau's theory of populism it is possible to distinguish two kinds of undemocratic populism. The first one is when the populist claims and hence also the populist agenda are created on the basis of exteriority or from the outside of society. In other words, they are anti-democratic claims which aim to destroy the field of the political as such. Hence, democratic claims have to accept the democratic contestation to be counted as democratic claims. This means that democratic claims are such claims that take into account hegemonic plurality and hence can be internal and partially external claims. The main requirement is that they can accommodate the idea of such democratic claims that are based in another hegemonic construction which do not aim to undermine the field of the political.

The other form of undemocratic populism is when the populist cause imposes its own particular view as universal. Hence, the populist cause should take into account hegemonic plurality in order to retain its democratic nature. If movements attempt to impose its particular claims in a way that excludes other formations of identity, one can also speak of an undemocratic populism.

A similar idea to Laclau's can be found in Balibar's work where he claims that the demos in democracy is a schismatic notion that is divided against itself while reinterpreted in a rhetoric of the universal (Balibar, 2014, p. 195).

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<sup>23</sup> This is but one node that one should investigate to achieve a measurable conception of what a possible idea of good democracy vs. bad democracy could entail.

Balibar further suggests that it would be better if Laclau had concentrated on how the demands in Laclau's theory could be democratized in order to serve emancipation (Balibar, 2014, p. 195).

I do not see this as necessary since the demands in Laclau's theory are defined according to both democracy and emancipation. Laclau's definition of democratic demands can, as I have shown, be interpreted as participatory parity. Participatory parity is a normative ideal that is democratic and also serves emancipation as participatory parity requires institutions to secure parity for all. I would claim that Laclau's definition of democratic demands would be sufficient in order to answer Balibar's claim. I consider that my interpretation of Laclau's democratic claims as participatory parity make this matter even clearer.

#### **4.6.5 INCLUSION AND THE LIMITS OF DEMOCRATIC POPULISM**

In a globalized world the question of who should be taken into account and how they should do it is central and usually quite problematic with regard to democracy. The main problem is who should be able to take part and have a say in democratic decisions.

The easy answer is that everyone who is affected by the decision should be taken into account, but in a globalized world there are severe empirical restrictions as many decisions cut cross traditional boundaries. This leads to the idea that while democracy is necessarily dependent on the people, the notion of the people is also one of the most problematic ideas in democracy. Bonnie Honig seems to make a similar conclusion in her article "Between Decision and Deliberation: Political Paradox in Democratic Theory" (Honig, 2007).

The question at hand is how we should establish the demos in particular cases. The question is obviously tied to how we frame political goals and questions. The general question is who should have a say in particular decisions. There are a lot of different answers to the questions. Because political questions may transcend national borders a strict interpretation of the all-affected principle is problematic as those affected can be outside of a national border and hence, can be interpreted as legitimately excluded. Hence, the construction of the demos is related to how we conceive of the body of representation as a body that is responsible mainly to the people that elected it.

In other words, the all-affected principle is viable when talking about the democratic process as a whole. The idea of restriction or exclusion has closer ties with the idea of representation. The logic behind the idea of representation necessarily carries with it the idea of exclusion. In other words, when the decision of who should be represented is made someone necessarily has to be excluded. The logic of representation as an exclusionary logic becomes a wider problem of politics if one founds politics on the idea of discourse. According to Seyla Benhabib, the idea of discourse as an ethical principle requires that

everyone is able to take part in the discourse. At the same time we have the logic of representation that requires exclusionary principles (Benhabib, 2007, pp. 450-451).

In other words, the idea of representation necessarily requires borders, or at least some kind of limits. Otherwise we could not establish who is represented as otherwise “everyone” should be represented.

Hence, representation itself is intrinsically exclusionary (Benhabib, 2007, p. 448). On the other hand, the idea of democracy as a principle where inclusion is seen as one main factor only functions to highlight the contradictory nature of democracy itself. Benhabib’s solution is her idea of porous borders, which is the idea that while representational democracy requires set and perhaps strict borders they should be such that anyone can potentially cross them and take part as part of the represented body.

One interpretation of this is that the definition of who constitutes the demos in democracy is necessarily both defined and undefined at the same time. This contradiction arises from the inherently conflicting logic of democracy.

For Benhabib, demarcation does not amount to injustice, injustices arise from the allocation of membership and voice (Benhabib, 2007, p. 449). Hence, for Benhabib the people are constructed as those who are within the borders of the represented.

As we saw, the people for Benhabib are more or less established within the borders of a geographic location. Or at least this is true in the case of nations as the body being represented is also based on geographical location.

Naturally, it is possible to conceive of representative bodies that are not based on geography but there are few existing democratic bodies that are not connected at some point to the idea of geographic location. One alternative way of constructing the people is Laclau’s idea of populism, where the people are constructed around political demands.

However Laclau’s idea runs into some problems as his idea at an initial glance seems to be lacking any principle of inclusion or an idea of attempting to establish some limits to democracy. However, on closer inspection, we can find both in his theory.

In a way, Laclau’s idea is very similar to Mouffe’s idea where she establishes the limits for agonism as being democratic conflicts. The way Laclau arrive at this is a little different. For Laclau the idea is that we have articulated demands that the people are constructed around. The people are also constructed as those whose demands are not met. These people then enter the hegemonic struggle and attempt to “fill” or “hijack” the empty signifiers and arrange the configuration of them according to their own idea.

If we go back a bit, we can see that for Laclau the important demands are democratic demands. Hence, if we start from the idea of democratic demands, which are demands made on the basis of equality, freedom, etc., we can conclude that the people constructed around the demands not being met are a democratic people. This idea of the people is quite different as we see because the people that are constructed comes into being through conflict.

It is possible to interpret that the people created through the populist logic cease to exist when hegemony is established. This is only if we require the democratic populus to be specified for a longer amount of time. The people as such remain, the identities and the different struggling populus remain.

Hence, one can conclude that the idea that the people in a sense vanishes actually gives room to further democratic and also undemocratic demands in an ongoing process of political struggle.

## **4.7 FRASER AND LACLAU**

I have mentioned earlier, that one can conceive of Fraser's framework as an agonist conception or a deliberative conception of radical democracy. I claim that it is most justified to conceive of Fraser's conception as an agonist conception. This will allow us to better be able to combine Fraser's theory with Laclau's theory. In order to arrive at this, I will first present Fraser's conception of radical democracy, and then make the case for viewing her theory as an agonist conception.

The concept "radical" has a central role in Fraser's thought. She places what she calls the radical democratic norm of participatory parity at the core of her framework (Fraser, 2003a, p. 36). What she does not do, at least in a clear way, is to elaborate on the meaning of "radical" in the norm. This is in my opinion problematic because she ends up relying on a norm that is not sufficiently clearly defined.

In Fraser's early work she explicitly states that a conception of radical democracy must be able to provide answers to the question of what is required to ensure that everyone can participate as peers. She claims that a conception of radical democracy is distinguished from rival conceptions of democracy by the answers it gives to the questions if democracy requires social equality, recognition of difference and absence of systemic dominance or subordination. She states that to be a radical democrat is to appreciate and eliminate two obstacles of democratic participation. These are social inequalities and misrecognition of difference. (Fraser, 1997, pp. 173-175) Her interpretation is that radical democracy "...is the view that democracy today requires both economic redistribution and multicultural recognition" (Fraser, 1997, p. 174). To this one could add the sphere of representation that Fraser introduces in her later works.

As it turns out with regard to Fraser, she defines radical democracy in a way that perfectly fits her own conceptions of justice. In other words, she claims that her norm of participatory parity is a radical democratic norm and she then defines radical democracy as an idea which implies a view of justice that takes into account both the spheres of redistribution and recognition.

Hence, participatory parity is a radical democratic norm in Fraser's theory because it takes into account redistribution and recognition. To follow this definition would allow most contemporary theories of justice to be characterized as radical democratic because they take into account redistributive justice and also some form of identity-based justice claims.

It is however possible to read Fraser's theory in a way where she takes radical democracy as a given. In this sense when Fraser states that radical democracy should take into account recognition and redistribution, what she means is that radical democratic theories should focus on these matters. The conception of radical democracy itself is left open.

The first way of defining radical democracy is problematic with regard to dissent. She defines radical democracy in a way that fits her theory perfectly but

this definition may effectively exclude other conceptions of radical democracy. With regard to dissent, this is problematic with regard to the self-characterization of dissent and the idea of democracy as being in constant motion.

My definition of radical democracy as the umbrella concept for the debate between agonism and deliberative democracy is compatible with Fraser's theory. However this may require that Fraser's theory should also be positioned on the agonist deliberation axis. To define Fraser's theory according to my conception of radical democracy would provide Fraser's theory with an explanation for what it is that makes her norm of participatory parity radical. With regard to a political theory of dissent I will claim that it is most justified to conceive of Fraser's theory as an agonist theory.

Fraser attempts to define her theory somewhere between agonism and deliberative democracy through the concept of reflexive justice (Fraser, 2008b, pp. 72-73). With regard to agonism she claims that it "revels in openings" and opposes the kind of closure that Fraser strives to encompass with the idea of closed frameworks. The idea of closed frameworks in Fraser's theory refers to such frameworks which are widely accepted and referred to without question. I claimed earlier that this dynamic is best conceived of through the idea of hegemonic struggle.

Agonism does not necessarily have to "revel in openings" or oppose a closure of the kind that Fraser seems to have in mind. I do agree with Fraser that a conception of society should be sensitive to the dynamics she tries to encompass with the closing and opening of frameworks.

A practical example of Fraser's conception could be the following. First if we conceive of the agonist part, or the part that utilizes an open framework. A social movement that is not averse to conflict utilizes the openness of a framework to challenge existing conceptions and attempting to introduce new political conceptions and ideas. Fraser would conceive of this as agonism.

When similar claims are negotiated within an institutional body, say parliament, the rules and regulations that govern this process requires a framework of closure, in other words a set conception that promotes decision-making. This would be conceived as deliberation (discourse).

Fraser attempts to solve the opposition between agonism and discourse by overcoming the opposition between them. I disagree with the fact that Fraser is trying to frame this as a question of agonism contra deliberation (discourse) and that the solution would require an overcoming of this opposition. If one conceives of Fraser's theory as an agonist theory one can both retain the dynamic that Fraser attempts to encompass and further give an account of what is meant by radical democracy in her theory.

The agonism deliberation debate is a debate on the foundations of democracy. It is a debate on if democracy has a common ground on which to adjudicate conflicts or if disagreement is fundamental. In *Abnormal Justice* Fraser proposes that a central feature of our times is that almost all aspects of justice are up for grabs.

Abnormality in Fraser refers to the open framework. This is completely in line with an agonist conception. The difficulty in Fraser's definition is when she claims that that we can move from agonism to discourse in a manner that is similar to Kuhnian paradigm shifts. As I have pointed out the deliberation versus agonism debate requires the taking of one of the positions. One cannot be held to the deliberative account and the agonist account at the same time.

Abnormal justice is not compatible with the deliberative account because then every aspect of the frameworks would not be up for grabs. In other words, abnormal justice requires that one has to reject any notion of fixed and shared similarities if one holds to the idea that all aspects of justice is up for grabs.

The agonist conception obviously can meet the requirements of the open framework and I claim that it is also possible to have closed frameworks within the agonist conception. I have earlier proposed that this dynamic is better conceived of through Laclau's theory of hegemony. The closed frameworks would be the hegemonic idea to which one can refer to when making claims of justice.

Another agonist feature in Fraser's theory is her conception of the subaltern counterpublics. The subaltern counterpublics are smaller sheltered public spheres that exist in order to mobilize ideas so that they are stronger or more widely accepted when they enter the public sphere (Fraser, 1997a, pp. 81-82). In other words the subaltern counterpublics exist as arenas where ideas are mobilized against the hegemonic view.

The subaltern counterpublics are similar to Laclau's idea of democratic demands that arise from the excluded or deficient in society. The subaltern counterpublics are also similar to the idea that one can find in Mouffe's work; mainly that she thinks that political mobilization cannot exist without a production of conflictual representation of the world (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 24-25). Without the disagreement with the representation of the world, Fraser would not need the subaltern counterpublics at all.

I would claim that the idea that one has venues where oppositional identities are made and that these venues exist to mobilize against hegemonic views, require an understanding of a we/they opposition that is usually equated with an agonist conception.

Hence, Fraser identifies the requirement for the oppositional setting in politics. A similar oppositional setting is most often found within the agonist theories as they usually are based in the idea that societal conflicts have their roots in insurmountable disagreements and that political power allows conflicts to be "decided".

Thus, Fraser's conception can be interpreted as an agonist one. It would not be possible to go the other way and interpret her framework as deliberative as a framework that assumes a background consensus cannot incorporate the "open" framework where everything is up for question.

Fraser's own position in this debate is that she does not want to position herself in either group as she views the debate as not being directly about real problems. It is in a sense understandable if one is focused on how to change

institutional arrangements but as she also is an academic and is working on democratic theory one could counter with the argument that it is a real problem that one cannot ground ones theory solidly or coherently. Hence, as an activist her answer is completely feasible but as an academic it is lacking.

Fraser's dynamic of opening and closing is philosophically more sound when interpreted in accordance with Laclau's theory of hegemony. Further this allows us to frame Fraser's framework as an agonist theory of radical democracy. This also adds meaning to radical democracy and to Fraser's governing norm of participatory parity. This however requires the framing of Fraser's framework as an agonist framework of radical democracy.

The interpretation of Fraser's theory as an agonist theory is however a plausible interpretation because of the agonist elements that already exist in Fraser's theory. This interpretation also adds to the possibility to combine Fraser's framework with Laclau's political theory.

I mentioned that it is better to conceive of the dynamic that Fraser attempts to encompass with the concept of abnormal justice though Laclau's theory of hegemony.

One reason for the need for such a move is that one should be able to explain how political concepts, such as of justice, gets their meaning if one claims that they are "up for grabs" or open.

I propose that in this case one should utilize insights from Laclau in order to explain how the struggle to "fill" the concepts should unfold and also thus to add philosophical strength on the part of Fraser's framework. The theory of hegemonic struggle also adds the element of political power to Fraser's framework.

One could also describe the dynamic that Fraser attempts to encompass through Laclau's idea of hegemony. The claim is that the filling of the signifiers or hegemonic configuration is equated with the closed frameworks and Fraser's idea of open frameworks is equated with Laclau's idea that no configuration can ever be totalized. Hence, we could have the dynamic of opening and closing in one single framework that is an agonist one. This is according to me the most plausible explanation.

With regard to the question of political power, I do not claim that Fraser would not have taken into account power relations, especially as her earlier writings focus on power and takes into account Foucault's work. Also, her work on feminist theory is closely tied to the question of power. However, the only explicit reference to a dynamic of political power, in her framework of justice, is through the subaltern counterpublics.

Hence, Laclau's theory of hegemony and populist reason would add strength to Fraser's theory by introducing a way to theorize power and also the struggle for the conceptualization of political life.

With regard to dissent this allows for the self-characterization of dissent. This move is also compatible with regard to Fraser because she claims she makes theory from and for the social movements. Hence, to provide a more justified way of characterizing democratic politics that allows the movements

themselves to characterize their struggles should be a welcome reinterpretation to Fraser's theory.

## 4.8 DISSENT, RADICAL DEMOCRACY AND POPULISM

With regard to the concept of radical democracy I hold that both deliberative democracy and agonistic forms of democracy should be counted as being sub-categories of radical democracy.

Radical democracy as such is a form of critique of liberal democracy where the idea is loosely to widen the scope of democracy in different ways. With regard to dissent the main task is to consider what kind of democratic approach it fits better. It is quite clear that dissent as defined in this dissertation, does not fit into the liberal paradigm as liberalism strives to institutionalize the conflict and in this sense also institutionalizes dissent.

What this leads to is that liberalism cannot encompass dissent that comes from outside of the system and hence needs to rely on exhaustive valve mechanisms like theories of civil disobedience etc. Thus, the question arises which of the two radical democratic frameworks are more plausible for an approach based on dissent.

One of the main problems, in some cases merit, with regard to the deliberative approach is that it relies heavily on the idea of reason to overcome conflicts. If it ultimately can fall back on reason to resolve differences, we need to accept that there is an underlying mechanism on which basis one can adjudicate conflicts on.

Hence, we arrive at a similar problem that the liberal paradigm runs into where conflicts get internalized into the system. Those differences that cannot be adjudicated by reason's decree lose their legitimation as they become branded as unreasonable. Hence, differences that stem from the outside and that reject our conception of reason are excluded in a way that seems legitimate. Thus, one can interpret deliberation as domesticating dissent.

As pointed out by Laclau a conception of radical democracy should avoid any institutionalization of any singular configuration of democracy. In part, it is because of the impossibility of such an institutionalization and in part because such an institutionalization would in itself constitute a regime that is anti-democratic by nature.

With regard to the foundations of democracy one can read Laclau's approach as a critique of both liberal and deliberative democracy. Both frameworks rely on the idea of a common signifier to make sense of the framework. Also both frameworks attempt to secure a neutral procedure to govern society in a neutral and proper way.

As Mouffe pointed out through her interpretation of Wittgenstein, life-form precludes speech acts. Hence, identity is prior to speech which leads to the idea that there are ontological restrictions for adjudicating conflicts through procedures or deliberation. In other words, procedures contain ethical commitments and are as such themselves substantive conceptions.

Hence, as dissent requires a non-substantive view on society, because anything could potentially be a target for dissent, a dissent-perspectival view on

democracy should avoid foundations that restrict or carry substantive baggage with them.

Also if it is so that identity or way of life is prior to language, then one cannot choose only rational discussion as the proper medium of politics as for some this is not at all the most suitable form of participation.

Hence, the framework of democracy should be able to encompass the idea that not all clashes between different life worlds can be bridged or adjudicated through the medium of rational discussion.

Thus, if one sees participatory parity as one of the core features of democracy, then it seems that the framework cannot be one that relies primarily on rational discussion. At this point it seems that the agonist framework is the more suitable one for a dissent perspectival framework.

It should be pointed out that Wittgenstein's idea of the priority of life-world is not an uncontested view. However it seems a plausible idea if we compare it to real life political discussions where it is for example very hard to see any possibilities for equal deliberation between someone at the top of the socio-economic ladder and someone from the bottom.

Hence, there is also an agonistic relation between different positions in society. This may be a quite self-evident idea but it adds support to the Mouffeian interpretation of Wittgenstein. This interpretation does not prove deliberative democracy wrong as such but it sets ontological constraints for the deliberation process in the sense that one has to show how and why language can bridge the gap and adjudicate conflicts between life worlds.

Also it shows quite clearly that deliberative democracy is a substantive form of democracy. This is in the sense the more grave critique as one of the main pillars of deliberative democracy is to strive for a procedure in that everyone can take part in equally. The procedure itself should be as neutral as possible. The Mouffeian/Wittgensteinian critique also highlights that the conflicts are based in identity. Hence, with regard to dissent, and if we hold to the idea that dissenters themselves should hold the power to decide on the means of participation, it seems that one should reject the framework of deliberative democracy.

If a radical democratic political theory of dissent requires the rejection of the deliberative framework then we should investigate if the agonist frameworks can better answer the requirements of dissent.

First of all the idea of hegemony is a central concept in the agonist theories, especially Mouffes and Laclau's theories. With regard to dissent and the problems deliberative democracy runs into, the idea that one should be able to decide on the means of participation and that one cannot have any set form of adjudicatory principle (reason) that everyone should adhere to, the idea of hegemony provides some solutions.

Hegemony, as presented by Laclau, is the main factor that also determines the rules of coherency. Hence, hegemony in Laclau occupies the same significant place that reason occupies in deliberative democracy. The difference is that a hegemonic configuration is never "eternal". This also leads to the idea

that rules of coherence are changing and that from an “eternal” point of view they are undecidable.

This should not be seen as a rejection of reason as such but as a feature that shows where reason is lacking, or as Laclau puts it, it highlights a deficiency of reason itself. This idea also highlights the centrality of antagonism and power in politics over reason. Hence, the idea of the centrality of hegemony seems to be in line with the idea of the self-characterization of dissent.

The struggle for hegemony, which in Laclau translates to the struggle for the “filling” of the empty signifiers according to one's own view is also in line with the idea of dissent. This is so because struggle as Laclau describes it becomes a struggle where rhetoric is central as we cannot ground our political claims in any strong ontological foundation. This idea is compatible with Fraser's theory because, as I have shown, she avoids strong ontological foundations and stresses that her theory is derived from and for the social movements. Further for Fraser the concept of justice is “filled” through the struggle of the new social movements. Hence the dynamic of “filling” empty signifiers is arguably present in Fraser's theory.

The idea of hegemony, though, retains its feature of being at least partially undemocratic when set while the struggle for hegemony is democratic by nature.

It is partially undemocratic because if we follow Laclau's definition hegemonic totality is impossible as no social force can totalize it completely. It would be completely undemocratic if any hegemonic configuration would be totalized. However hegemony still “forces” a certain view with its set rules of coherence upon us whether we agree to it or not, hence there is an undemocratic character in hegemony itself.

Under this interpretation the struggle for hegemony retains the character of being more democratic than the current configuration as the struggle itself highlights or unmasks the “oppressive” power of hegemony. What this entails in a larger picture is that democratic society should allow and foster the struggle against hegemony in order to keep itself democratic.

In this sense the outcome or the victor of a hegemonic struggle creates an elite which loses a part of its legitimacy when winning. From this we can conclude that society should foster the struggle between political adversaries on the grounds of democracy itself. With regard to dissent, this legitimizes the subaltern as the subaltern will per definition have a stronger democratic legitimation than any existing power.

Laclau's and Mouffe's reinterpretation of hegemony which detaches the privileged role of the proletariat also allows for the idea that the democratic legitimation of dissent is available for any dissenting group. It also allows for the detachment of the potentially historical determinism of the dialectical logic. However if we follow the idea that any dissenting group has a stronger democratic legitimation than any existing configuration we still have to answer the question of how we can ensure the boundaries of democracy as there exists

claims that attempts to overthrow hegemony that in themselves are undemocratic.

On this point we can also rely on Laclau's framework as it treats all claims that come completely from the outside as anti-democratic claims that are aimed to destroy politics as such. This is precisely the dynamic that allows for the understanding of democratic claims in a way that does not domesticate dissent. In other words, the possibility of treating claims that are partially from the outside as democratic, and still retain the possibility to make a distinction between democratic and anti-democratic claims, allows for a radical democratic theory that does not domesticate dissent within itself.

Hence, accepted claims fall within the boundary of having at least some ties to the existing systemic logic. Having roots inside the current configuration does not determine claims but makes them dependent on current politics. This allows for new introductions because of the possibility of making claims that are partially from the outside.

Hence, the boundaries of democratic claims are set to ensure that democratic politics as such is not destroyed. This is an important factor with regard to dissent as we can on this point make a categorization of what entails democratic dissent with strong legitimacy versus hegemony and what kinds of claims can be excluded as undemocratic. Also the detachment of the privileged position of the proletariat makes it possible for anyone to dissent and have strong and legitimate claims. The strong privileged position of the proletariat in the earlier Marxist traditions makes the claims of the proletariat against capital privileged in relation to other democratic claims in society.

Laclau's reinterpretation of populism as not merely a pathology of democracy but as one of its core principles can be linked to the idea of dissent.

One of the main ideas is that the *populus* of populism is constituted through chains of equivalence between groups or actors whose demands are not met. In other words, the *populus* is constituted through those who dissent and whose dissent is not taken into account.

For this interpretation to be valid one has to answer the question of how we can identify the kind of populism that Laclau talks about and the negative kind of populism that for example Mouffe refers to in her analysis of the depoliticizing effects of consensus.

As we have seen, Laclau thinks that the claims are undemocratic if they are made completely from the "outside" which means that they strive to eradicate the field of the political. When this idea is viewed through the perspective of dissent, the eradication of the field of the political is similar to eradicating dissent. Hence, the boundaries of democracy are set as the boundary that keeps the field of the political intact.

In other words, the boundaries of democracy should guarantee dissent as long as dissent does not turn against itself in a way that eliminates its own possibility. In a sense, the boundaries of democracy could be seen to maximize dissent as long as it is not incompatible with the possibility of itself. Thus, the boundary of dissent is set by the actual possibility to dissent itself.

The function of dissent as a core principle also highlights the provisional nature of democratic configurations and the fact that no democratic configuration can ever encompass the whole full truth. Hence, democracy exists only as long as it does not exist completely. Hence, any claim of a full and true description of democracy is impossible.

## **4.9 DISSENT, INSTITUTIONS AND THE QUESTION OF ENGAGEMENT**

A very common question within democratic theory is if one should seek change by engaging with existing institutions or should one choose a strategy of withdrawal. Mouffe argues for a radical politics of engagement with institutions rather than one of withdrawal (Mouffe, 2013, p. 71).

I agree with Mouffe's idea, also Fraser and Young seems to be adherents to the idea of institutional engagement, Fraser's framework of justice is tied to the possibility of institutions to guarantee participatory parity and Young tries to unmask latent possibilities of emancipation in our existing institutions.

However from this we cannot yet conclude how this engagement should be played out. For example it is possible to engage with institutions, both deliberatively and agonistically. Mouffe clearly favors the agonistic approach with the claim of attempting to make the institutions a vehicle for democratic change (Mouffe, 2013, pp. 75-76). In order to facilitate this change we should be able to articulate a common world (Mouffe, 2013, p. 81). The common world in Mouffe's and also Laclau's theories are constituted through the hegemonic struggle.

For example Laclau argues for the idea that identities are created through the antagonistic relations, hence a common world can also be constructed only on a similar basis.

For Mouffe the common world is constructed in opposition to opposed to our adversaries. Also for example Fraser and also Benhabib seems to favor an approach where the idea of conflict and decision making can be separated so that we can have a conflictual discussion and reach a decisional closure (Benhabib, 2007, p. 452) (Fraser, 2008a, pp. 72-73). The idea that we can have agonistic politics and reasonable decision making is also that can also be found in for example Mouffe's idea of conflictual consensus (Mouffe, 2013, p. 15). For Laclau the inherently antagonistic nature does not disqualify reason, it only highlights the fact that reason cannot alone function as an adjudicating principle in politics.

Generally what these philosophers share is the idea that there is something valuable in conflicts, democratic discussion and also in reasonable decision making.

This is something that probably most of us can agree with. However a theory of radical democracy has to be able to accommodate all the above mentioned features in order to be justified. The question is tied to the question of justifiable grounds for democratic politics. For this thesis it is especially relevant because it is tied to the question how radical democracy should be conceived of if the idea of dissent is counted as a central feature.

With regard to the question of institutional engagement I would claim that institutional engagement is a necessity. The main question is not whether one should engage with institutions or not, but how one should do it.

As I claimed earlier, dissent arises from lack of voice or exclusion. Lack of voice and exclusion are effects of institutional arrangements in society. If this is true then dissent necessarily arises as an effect of institutional arrangements.

With regard to non-institutional engagement there are two main ways to conceive of it.

First if we consider dissent as having arisen from the institutional configuration of society one option is to leave the institutions and society behind. If one would be able to leave society completely behind this would entail some kind of complete exit strategy. In practice this would entail leaving everything behind. If one relates this strategy to the idea of dissent, it entails the complete dissolution of dissent as there would remain no one and nothing to dissent with. This would also entail leaving society completely. As a wider phenomenon this would be an impossibility because such a withdrawal would dissolve society completely.

The other possibility of withdrawal would be a withdrawal from the institutional configuration in order to undermine the legitimacy. This however cannot be viewed as a practice that would be non-institutional as the aim of withdrawal is to change the institutions as such. Hence, withdrawal in this sense should always be seen as an attempt to influence existing institutions. This is true especially if one conceives of politics based on dissent. Politics as withdrawal without the attempt to influence anything is not politics. It is something else, perhaps a party or a social gathering.

As we have institutions, we already also imply membership. Membership in democratic institutions also implies representation. And if we have membership and representation we also get their logical counterpart which is exclusion. Hence, if we have representation we have exclusion, as exclusion can potentially affect everyone, it leads to dissent.

Also as everyone cannot be represented, that same everyone can dissent. Be it for reasons of getting membership or any other feature. Even if we follow Benhabib's idea where representation has set boundaries while membership is potentially given to everyone, dissent arises on the principle that we cannot, at any given time, guarantee representation and voice to everyone.

Hence, on the question of who can dissent, or whose dissent should be taken into account, we would have to answer that potentially everyone on both questions. It is only potentially as there are limits to dissent as we have seen. Mainly this would include such dissent that destroys the future possibilities for dissent.

As Laclau pointed out, the idea of injustices arise from the idea of membership and voice. Hence, dissent arises from an already existing populous or those who are connected to it through ties or partial ties.

Hence, if we return to the question of engagement or withdrawal and we remember that the idea of dissent being directed towards institutions we can conclude that the people in a democracy is constructed from those whose demands are not met in relation to existing institutions.

If we use the principle in relation to a representative model we could conclude that we need an open system because dissent is by definition not tied to any substantive claims, hence all models that are based on dissent are provisional.

This highlights the nature and the feature of democracy of its own widening. In other words, dissent is tied to the idea of widening democracy to areas where it is nonexistent. The common world in a democracy is articulated through dissent and through the conflict that arises from it. Also dissent as a strand of agonist democracy which highlights the deficiency of reason makes reasonable decision making possible while it does not force any specific conception of rationality on everyone.

## 5 A POLITICAL THEORY OF DISSENT

### 5.1 GENERAL REMARKS

The main research question for this thesis was to investigate what a radical democratic theory that is based on dissent would look like. I set out to investigate dissent within the framework of radical democracy. I have defined dissent in general terms, where to dissent with something is to disagree with a specific feature in society and to articulate this disagreement. The claim is that a radical democratic theory should feature a political theory of dissent at its core.

The political theory of dissent developed is a theory of society that embraces dissent and values pluralism as core values. Such a theory should be able to enable as much dissent as possible while still not removing or diminishing the possibility of dissent for others. Hence, dissent is tied to parity of participation. I frame this theory of dissent within the framework of radical democracy. I believe that radical democratic accounts are the best democratic theories to embrace the centrality of dissent. A radical democratic theory enables dissent and does not neutralize it as liberal democratic theories may do.

I argued that radical democracy should be seen as an umbrella concept of agonist and deliberative democracy. The agonist and the deliberative account should be seen as radical democratic accounts. The discussion on agonism versus deliberation should thus be seen as a discussion on the foundations of radical democracy. I claimed that radical democracy is more democratic than the constitutional liberal regime because it puts equal weight on the normative ideal of democracy, freedom, human rights and equality.

With regard to a political theory of dissent I claimed that the radical democratic theory that has the strongest justification is the agonist version. The main problem with the deliberative account is that it shares some of liberalism's attempt to internalize or contain dissent within a systemic framework. Deliberative democracy does this by adhering to an account of commonly shared reason.

In the first part on justice I argued that a political theory of dissent should not have too many substantive claims on justice. A too specific or substantive conception of justice may contain dissent by not enabling it, amongst other things, towards itself. My claim is that participatory parity is a sufficient minimal conception of justice that enables dissent and still brackets dissent within democratic limits.

Hence, I argued for the view that Nancy Fraser's framework of justice as participatory parity proved to be the most justifiable for a political theory of dissent. The main reason is that the framework enables dissent and allows for the self-characterization of dissent. Another reason is that it is not burdened by as strong philosophical foundations as Axel Honneth's framework is. To investigate the relation between strong philosophical foundations and practical

application of theories of justice in political theory on a general level would be an interesting question to further delve into.

However, the lack of philosophical grounds in Fraser's framework can, in some cases, be seen as a weakness in her theory. I have argued that one can view Laclau's account of democratic demands as a version of Fraser's account of participatory parity. Partially based on this I have claimed that one can arrive at a more better radical democratic account that asserts dissent as one of its core features by combining Fraser's account of justice as participatory parity with Laclau's account of populist democracy and hegemony.

The normative core of dissent, within democracy, lies in its ties to participatory democracy. This means that dissent is viewed as a way of participating in democratic society. Hence, if we guarantee participatory parity in society we should also enable dissent as a way of participation. In other words, the norm that guarantees rights to participate also guarantees the right to dissent. Because dissent can be targeted towards almost any feature in society and we are required to guarantee parity of participation, we are required to allow for the self-characterization of dissent.

I claim that a political theory that takes dissent seriously has to utilize partially open concepts of democracy and justice in order to allow for definition through dissent. The contents of the concepts of justice and democracy are decided temporarily through hegemonic struggle. This does not entail the legitimation of undemocratic movements. I proposed that the evaluation of the democratic nature of movements should be made in two stages. First, every movement is accepted when a substance is given to the concept of justice and democracy. In this I follow Fraser when she states that the concept of justice is determined by the struggles of contemporary social movements. This interpretation means that the hegemonic struggle for justice determines the contents of justice.<sup>24</sup> In the second stage we can evaluate if the demands of the social movement are in line with participatory parity. Hence, an undemocratic movement is accepted in the definition of justice and democracy. Undemocratic movements are, however, legitimately excluded when they make articulated and concrete undemocratic demands.

The hegemonic configuration of power in society may impose identities upon us. For example, a citizen or a consumer can be viewed as examples of identities that are labelled upon a political actor. Both identities are carried through by the conception of democracy and justice. The political actor conceived as a consumer is carried through by a liberal conception that is strongly based on economics. This conception has been criticized as employing an instrumentalizing conception of justice.

The citizen is carried through the idea of the democratic national state as signifying the member of the political community that has a say and voice in political matters. Both identities are political identities that can be and often are criticized through dissent. Hence, a political theory of dissent requires an idea of

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<sup>24</sup> This interpretation relies on Laclau's definition of hegemony.

political agency that is in movement in the sense that it can be specified at any given moment while also having the potential of being something else.

An account of radical democracy is tied to the idea of democracy as being in constant motion and widening its scope in order to create democratic possibilities where they are not available. A political theory of dissent is most justified when framed as an agonist account because the agonist perspective retains the possibility for self-characterization of one's struggle, means and goals. The deliberative view constrains self-characterization through its reliance on reason and such rules for deliberation that domesticate dissent.

Following Laclau, reason should not be thought of as being outside of politics but as being governed by it. The agonism that I am advocating rejects any single governing principle as grounds for adjudicating conflicts. Also, the agonist account of identity formation through conflict allows for self-characterization. In other words, dissenters should be able to define themselves. The agonist perspective makes it possible to be identified politically through dissent.

A political theory of dissent is tied to the idea of liberty and equality through the idea of participatory parity. Participatory parity is not arrived at on the basis of some "ideal theory" but one can justify it on the basis of the requirements of dissent itself. In other words, dissent requires the widest possibility to dissent which does not contradict others' equal possibility. Hence, dissent is also a regulative principle because of the before-mentioned requirement. Even though the way through which we arrive at this distinction is similar to liberalism's distinction between unreasonable and reasonable, my account differs from it because dissent as such is not bound by reason. In other words, while the account of reasonable/unreasonable refers to a form of reason to make distinctions, the account of dissent refers to every aspect that one can question, even itself. One could argue that there is some aspect or hidden claim which refers to reason. This is, however, only partially true. My account, like Laclau's, treats reason as referring to hegemony. Further, the notion of hegemonic plurality requires the accepting of a plurality of hegemonic projects and hence also a plurality of accounts for reason. Thus, my claim is that the liberal distinction between reasonable/unreasonable refers to one specific account of reason. My account based on dissent does not do this as it can refer to a plurality of different accounts of reason.

Dissent can be justified through the idea of the hegemonic struggle. As mentioned at the beginning, hegemony itself is always potentially undemocratic as it imposes a particular view on society. Hegemony also dictates the requirements of reason. The hegemonic struggle itself is democratic as it is the place where views and identities are vetted against each other. Because the struggle is democratic and hegemony itself is potentially undemocratic, dissenters always have stronger democratic legitimacy. This idea also leads to the idea that a democratic state is required to listen to its dissenters as they have, by definition, stronger claims of legitimacy than the state itself. The potential for wider unrest that is intrinsic in dissent leads to the requirement that the state takes dissent seriously. The responsibility for unrest lies on the

state, not the dissenters. Dissent limits itself in the sense that any view that would destroy the possibility to dissent can be viewed as illegitimate.

A political theory of dissent is tied to the struggles of social movements. The introduction of Laclau's theory of populist democracy leads to the requirement of a plurality of populisms. I, however, proposed that the concept of populism should not be hijacked. Nor should it be associated with a simplified politics of blame, where, for example, complex political questions are reduced to the fault of, say, immigrants or other minorities. Hence, the logic that Laclau describes is viable and provides important insights into democracy, but it should not be called populism.

Laclau's theory raises the question that society itself may be an impossibility. The impossibility is arrived at from the idea that the people are created through dissent, in Laclau's theory, by the chains of equivalence of unanswered demands. The idea of society requires the idea of a people. Hence, a populist agenda creates society as it imposes its own view as the hegemonic view. However this destroys the idea of the people for those whose demands are not met. The establishment of a hegemonic view is continuously challenged in hegemonic struggle. This means that there are also more demands that are connected in different ways. From this one can conclude that democracy requires a pluralism of populisms or conceptions of "the people". The problem is that if society requires the idea of a people then the pluralism of "peoples" does not constitute society. Or more specifically the requirement of a pluralism of populisms requires the pluralism of societies which can be interpreted as no society at all.

If society is conceived through a specific view of the people, then the only way to constitute society is by fully totalizing a hegemonic view. This would entail a totalitarian society that imposes a specific view on everyone while rejecting others. As Laclau claimed, a full totalization of hegemony is impossible. Hence, a radical democratic theory of dissent has to accept to some extent the provisional nature of society itself.

I argued that a concept of democracy should be open within the limits of participatory parity in order to enable dissent. One possible radical democratic theory that has dissent at its core can be achieved by combining the theories of Nancy Fraser and Ernesto Laclau. This combination results in an agonist theory of radical democracy which is based on the norm of participatory parity. I view Laclau's account of democratic demands as his version of participatory parity.

## 5.2 THE FRAMEWORK OF THE POLITICAL THEORY OF DISSENT

Because of the possibility of interpreting Laclau's democratic demands as a version of participatory parity both Laclau's and Fraser's theories enable dissent by not giving too strong a substantive content to justice. In other words, it is possible to interpret both theories as allowing for the maximal amount of dissent but still not hindering the equal possibility of dissent for others. This means that the combined theory adheres to the principle of participatory parity in a way that guarantees maximal participatory freedom for all.

A radical democratic account of dissent guarantees the right to dissent because it is viewed as a form of participation. Because dissent is often targeted against current affairs in society that are deemed unjust or exclusionary, this right enables the underdogs in society to voice their grievances. Both Fraser's and Laclau's frameworks share the feature of being based on the idea of underdogs in society. Laclau states this explicitly as a feature of democratic demands. In Fraser's framework the strong position of the underdog is clear partially because of her critical approach in which she starts with injustices in society. Further, Fraser introduces the conception of subaltern counterpublics, which is a mechanism that allows divergent opinions to be mobilized against public opinion so that the people and their opinions can take part on equal grounds in the public sphere. This means that the possibility of mobilizing is recognized and partially guaranteed. It is only partially guaranteed as the mobilization of anti-democratic demands can be excluded according to the two-stage evaluation I have presented earlier. Hence, it is safe to claim that the combined theory fosters and guarantees dissent in society.

The two-stage evaluation is central for meeting the requirement for a political theory of dissent. Here one should employ a conception of justice that recognizes democracy as a primary good and enables us to distinguish between democratic and undemocratic demands.

The right to dissent and value pluralism leads to an account of radical democracy that promotes individual participatory freedom. Because of the possibility of contradictory values in a value pluralist society, the right to dissent becomes a necessity. This necessity arises from the hegemonic position of certain values and the necessity of divergent values in society. Hence, the right to dissent becomes a necessity. Because society should guarantee participatory parity for every individual and it is possible to conceive of individual dissent, this account of radical democracy guarantees individual participatory freedom for all.

Both value pluralism and an account of participatory freedom are central features in Laclau and Fraser. Hence, the radical democratic theory of dissent that is built on Laclau's and Fraser's theories meets the requirement of promoting individual participatory freedom for all.

In order to be able to make an interpretation based on dissent of Fraser's theory one has to make some modifications. The main modifications are that

Fraser's framework should be seen as an agonist account of democracy and that the division of justice into three spheres should be revised. I have argued for the view that Fraser's framework is philosophically stronger when conceived as an agonist conception of radical democracy. I have also shown that it is possible not to conceive of Fraser's framework through three spheres of justice. This is especially the case as Fraser divides the spheres of representation into two different spheres. Hence, it is justified to claim that Fraser divides her framework of justice into four spheres. If one introduces the insights of Michael Walzer's in *Spheres of Justice* one can further argue for the view that the number of spheres of justice should be left open as we cannot beforehand decide how justice should work in every instance.

I have argued for the view that the dissent that a radical democratic theory should take into account is actually occurring dissent and not merely dissenting thoughts. In other words, dissent that is not articulated into actual demands is politically irrelevant. It may be that dissent that is not actually articulated is impossible. The idea of dissent as actually occurring dissent establishes its ties to social movements. I have proposed that social movements should be conceived of as being constituted on the basis of demands. Leaning on Laclau, I propose that social movements should be viewed as entering the hegemonic struggle by unifying different demands on the basis of equivalence.

Laclau's theory of hegemony and populist democracy explains how social movements arise and how the hegemonic struggle should be conceived. Fraser's theory has a stronger tie to institutional reality. Hence, the combination of the two theories strengthens each other by allowing for a description of how movements are established (Laclau) and ties them strongly to institutional reality (Fraser).

I have proposed that a radical democratic theory based on dissent requires a logic of change to explain change in democratic society. This logic of change is most justifiably conceived of as an agonist logic in order not to domesticate dissent. A dialectical or historical determinist logic may internalize and domesticate dissent. The problem with dialectical logic is that the possibility of change is intrinsic to a dialectical opposition. Antagonistic logic views change as a contingent feature. Hence, Laclau's account of an antagonistic social logic can be integrated with a radical democratic theory based on dissent. Antagonistic logic also has the descriptive feature of being able to sufficiently describe change in democratic society.

It may be that Fraser is tied to a dialectic logic, although not necessarily so. If one conceives of Fraser's framework as an agonistic framework this detachment of dialectics becomes stronger. Fraser may presuppose an antagonistic logic as she does not presuppose any metaphysically decided agent of change and she employs a "hegemonic grammar of contestation". Hence, it is possible to interpret Fraser's framework on the basis of Laclau's antagonistic logic of change.

A radical democratic political theory based on dissent views dissent as a positive contribution to society. Some positive features of dissent are that it

fosters democratic citizenship, removes injustices, improves our institutional framework and strengthens participatory parity in society. The combined framework of Fraser and Laclau shows how dissent is positive by showing a strong tie to institutional reality and guaranteeing the right to dissent in society.

The close tie to social movements and demands based upon dissent combined with the idea of participatory parity explains how democratic citizenship is fostered in a radical democratic theory based on dissent. To voice demands and to be heard is a requirement of participatory parity. Hence, a theory of dissent fosters democratic citizenship by guaranteeing the introduction of ways of participation that are based on the needs and means of the dissenters themselves, in other words on the self-characterization of dissent.

The removal of injustices is explained through the emphasis on dissent and its ties to institutions. When institutions are oppressive they can be the basis of dissent, which in turn leads to demands and movements against them. This again leads to a requirement for the state to listen and meet the demands. If the demands are not met they may lead to mass movements that are aimed at overthrowing current hegemonic configurations. Hence, dissent should be viewed as a feature that improves the institutional framework. The possibility of cataclysmic change in society does not lead to the legitimation of lessening dissent in society. On the contrary, I have argued that this possibility leads to the requirement that the state listens to and takes dissenting voices seriously in society.

The improvement of institutional frameworks is tied to the idea of the removal of institutional oppression. When oppression or any other feature that dissent is targeted at is removed, the frameworks are at least potentially improved. This is viewed as a continual process since a completely unoppressive framework is probably impossible.

Another positive contribution is that dissent strengthens participatory parity. This is quite self-evident in a framework that sets the norm of parity of participatory parity as a guiding norm. I have proposed that Laclau's conception of democratic demands can be seen as a conception of participatory parity. Hence, it is justified to claim that Fraser's and Laclau's frameworks share the central idea of participatory parity. This in turn adds to the possibility of combining their theories.

Fraser's account of recognition can also be explained using Laclau's framework. Fraser states that it may be that her account of recognition presupposes a mechanism that Honneth describes. This also leaves us the possible interpretation that recognition should not be viewed in a similar way as Honneth does.

Honneth follows a Hegelian framework where social concepts follow from each other according to the dialectics of the struggle for recognition. As I have pointed out, social change that is based on antagonistic relations does not ground itself in the conceptual logic of contradiction and their transcendence.

Laclau conceives of identity as formed through antagonistic relations. Recognition in both Fraser's and Honneth's theories are conceived of as a

struggle. It is also possible to view both Fraser's and Honneth's theories as agonist accounts of radical democracy. Hence, it may be that the struggle for recognition could be conceived of as one that is based on antagonistic relations. This opens up the possibility of viewing recognition politically through Fraser's status model and combining it with Laclau's account of hegemonic struggle. Honneth's theory could probably be viewed as a struggle for recognition where the dialectical other is hegemony. Hence, it would seem as if one can retain the substance of Honneth's theory of recognition within the combined framework of Laclau and Fraser.

Even though one would retain Honneth's dialectical account within the framework it would not change the fact that society should be viewed through antagonistic logic. Antagonistic logic governs the hegemonic configuration of society. Honneth's dialectical account only explains how individuals and groups relate to hegemony. Hence, Honneth's dialectics can be viewed as being internal to the larger framework.

Fraser conceives of justice through her conception of our times as being abnormal. This means that almost every part of our conceptions of justice can be contested. Laclau's account of hegemonic struggles and the filling of open signifiers describe the same dynamic that Fraser attempts to encompass. Fraser's theory is, however, tied to the idea of viewing hegemonic struggle in terms of Kuhnian paradigm change. Laclau's and Mouffe's account of hegemonic struggle is better as it actually explains how hegemony is created on a conceptual and practical level.

Misrecognition is for Fraser when the cultural structures of value create an identity that is despised. Within Laclau's framework the same idea is interpreted as having its grounds in the hegemonic configuration. More specifically, the open signifiers that hegemony "fills" are filled in a way that makes certain identities despised. Hence, one effect of hegemony is that it constructs certain identities as despised.

### 5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this dissertation I have defended a radical democratic political theory of dissent that is arrived at by integrating the ideas of hegemonic and democratic populist struggles of Laclau with Fraser's radical democratic theory of justice as participatory parity. The framework of the combined theory can answer the requirements of a political theory of dissent.

The requirements were that a framework should enable dissent and not contain it in the manner of liberal democracy and some forms of deliberative democratic accounts. Another requirement that I argued for was that the framework should employ a conception of justice as participatory parity in order to set limits for democracy. Participatory parity is interpreted as a minimal definition of justice in order to allow the interpretation of democracy as being open and in constant motion. Because dissent is viewed as participation, it secures the participatory freedom for all. Dissent, thus, strengthens participatory parity and also improves the institutional framework in society. It is thus justified to view dissent as a positive contribution in society.

There are probably many possible radical democratic frameworks that can answer these requirements. However, there are very few radical democratic frameworks that integrate the conceptions of justice and democracy under a single framework. It is common to focus only on justice or democracy as single features. My view is that a conception of justice requires a justifiable conception of democracy and vice versa. To combine justice and democracy is a clear merit of Fraser's framework. This also improves Laclau's theory as Fraser's conception of justice sets necessary limits for democracy. With regard to the framework of justice, the combination of Laclau and Fraser is considered an improvement over the philosophers' own theory in isolation.

Hence, the investigation of the political theory of dissent proved to be fruitful in the sense that it led to a way of creating a better framework of radical democracy by integrating the insights of two thinkers that initially seemed to be quite different. The investigation also leads to the characterization of radical democracy as an umbrella concept which in my opinion is the most justified way of approaching the discussion on agonism and deliberative democracy.

Overall, I have defended the view that dissent, the plurality of values and the necessary conflict that arises from them are and should be taken as a basis in radical democracy. This means that a radical democratic theory should start out from the idea that the necessary divergent values, opinions and conceptions of society are the basis of democracy. In a sense this means that when we talk about democratic society we talk about the possibility of having different views about what society means and how it should function. If society is viewed as a single unified conception shared by agents in society, then a democratic society becomes an oxymoron. In other words, democratic society would not be a society at all. However, it is more justified to view society as being constituted by the hegemonic struggle of different conceptions of society. In this sense democratic society's foundations show their provisional character.

If the constitution of society is viewed on the basis of hegemonic struggle, then it is justified to claim that society is constituted on the basis of dissent. Hence, a political theory that attempts to understand such a society should also be based on the idea of the centrality of dissent.

My main aim in this thesis was to investigate what it would entail to base a radical democratic theory on dissent. I have given a suitable definition for dissent and argued for a specific conception of radical democratic justice. Further, I have shown that we need a logic of change in radical democratic theory. Lastly, I have argued for the centrality of the conception of hegemonic struggle and have suggested that it is possible to build a radical democratic theory of dissent by combining the theories of Nancy Fraser and Ernesto Laclau. Even though it is possible to conceive of other possible theories I consider that Fraser's and Laclau's combined theories provide the best current radical democratic alternative.

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