

# The Recognition Ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters and its Relevance for Missiology

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**The Recognition Ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters and its Relevance for Missiology**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L.).

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December 5, 2017.

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## **Introduction**

I will argue two propositions in this thesis: first, the Maryknoll Sisters and their school Maryknoll Convent 'recognized' their students and second, recognition should be included as a precondition to Roman Catholic missiology. My interest in the students 'reception' of the Maryknoll Sisters and their ministry at Maryknoll Convent School stemmed from four factors.

Scholarly attention to the Catholic missionary endeavor in China has been extensive though not comprehensive. Diverse and wide-ranging topics have progressively emerged. Jean-Paul Wiest illuminates the worldview that motivated the missionaries of Maryknoll, most especially their "theology and their understanding of mission."<sup>1</sup> David Mungello delineates the historical, social and cultural factors that may have influenced the outlook of the Catholic missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Sue Bradshaw argues that the Catholic nuns' contributed to the empowerment of Chinese women.<sup>3</sup> Henrietta Harrison's fascinating historical study concludes with her observation that one village's religious practices have paradoxically over time, taken on global rather than inculturated or 'Chinese' forms.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, Bernard Hung-kay Luk has identified

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest, *Maryknoll in China: a history, 1918-1955* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), xiv.

<sup>2</sup> David E. Mungello, *Catholic Invasion of China: Remaking Chinese Christianity* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Sue Bradshaw, "Catholic Sisters in China: An Effort to Raise the Status of Women," *Historical Reflections* 8, no. 3 (1981), 201-213.

<sup>4</sup> Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

a lacuna in scholarship and hopes that as the world's largest Chinese-speaking diocese, the Catholic Church in Hong Kong will receive more scholarly attention.<sup>5</sup>

Education is arguably the lifeblood of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong. Throughout its history, the education endeavor has always been a significant component of the diocese's ministry to the city. Moreover, this enterprise has enjoyed universal support from bishops and religious congregations. The first Chinese Cardinal of Hong Kong, John Baptist Wu even elevated education to one of the three major activities of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong. This unanimous agreement from all Catholics alike has meant that, despite the Catholic population making up only 8% of the total population, Catholic primary and secondary schools account for 17% of all schools in Hong Kong. Furthermore, 20% of the total student population was educated through the Catholic school system, which is a noteworthy achievement considering Catholics form a small minority.<sup>6</sup>

The Maryknoll Sisters' effervescence and vitality led me to Maryknoll Convent School in Hong Kong. The Maryknoll Sisters at Ossining had a zeal for life that drew me towards their ministry and this research. They were the first United States women congregation formed for foreign mission. In 1922, the Maryknoll Sisters set forth for their first mission. Initially destined for China, they instead settled and begun their first overseas ministry in Hong Kong. Once settled, they quickly spread out into various apostolates and one of them eventually morphed into Maryknoll Convent School. Maryknoll Convent is now famous for its education, its iconic

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard Hung-kay Luk, "History of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong," in *Historiography of the Chinese Catholic Church: nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, Jerome Heyndrickx (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, K.U. Leuven, 1994), 400.

<sup>6</sup> Magdalena Mo Ching Mok, "Challenges for Catholic Schooling in Hong Kong" in *International Handbook of Catholic Education Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century*, Gerald Grace et al. (Springer, 2010), 763.

building and its school culture.

Alumnae recorded and published their experiences in the commemorative book, *Forever be true, the love and heritage of Maryknoll*. This publication opened up a new vista, a new perspective, a new vantage point to assess the school ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters. Rather than previewing their ministry from the top down model, i.e. from the Maryknoll Sisters perspective, the reflections of past students' granted a window to analyze the students' 'reception' of the Sisters' ministry. In other words, it granted me an opportunity to assess the locals' experience of the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters.

The alumnae reflections can be analyzed through the prism of recognition. Axel Honneth argues that recognition in the forms of love, respect and esteem is a vital human need. The student experiences covered diverse grounds but were able to be assessed under Honneth's three spheres of recognition. In other words, the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters included recognizing the students through the recognition spheres of love, respect and esteem.

This historical case study also has relevance in the contemporary world of missiology. This look at the past was not simply nostalgia for the past nor was it to recall the glory days but was undertaken as an opportunity to discover 'best practices or models' that might offer guidance for our present times. The ministry of recognition of the Maryknoll Sisters is a crucial model for the present.

Recognition has critical implications for missiology. Recognition consists of recognitive actions (such as gestures such as a smile or a wave). Recognitive deeds influence human interactions e.g. a warm smile might elicit a more favorable exchange. Therefore if missiological exchanges include recognitive acts, then the outcome of that communication should be more favorable than ones without these signals.

Missiology shaped by recognition becomes even more valuable in a migrant, plural world. Migration is rapidly changing the sociological makeup of the world. Today, the world is a multicultural and pluralistic mosaic. Furthermore, this plurality begins with our next-door neighbor. One challenge is the issue of language. Previously, homogenous contexts are rapidly pluralizing, e.g. in Blacktown, a suburb of Sydney, 143 nationalities are represented.<sup>7</sup> In previously homogenous contexts such as Blacktown, communication through English might be sufficient. Now in current Blacktown, recognitive gestures will play an even more important role in interactions. Therefore, this meta-language of recognition will be increasingly crucial for our global context of plurality.

I believe this new reality of plurality requires a paradigm shift within missiology. Currently, the theology of mission is attentive to ‘contexts.’ These contextual categories are still relevant though the new sociological reality calls forth a new paradigm, in which the theology of mission must begin from the ‘individual’ and recognition. Nevertheless, recognition should only be a precondition to the “single but complex reality of mission.”<sup>8</sup>

Recognition as a precondition must be incorporated into Catholic Missiology’s theological horizons. Recognition should only be a precondition as Pope Francis has made it clear that “evangelization as the joyful, patient and progressive preaching of the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be your absolute priority.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "West Central District population characteristics," | Greater Sydney Commission, Oct 23, 2017, accessed Oct 23, 2017, <https://www.greater.sydney/digital-district-plan/812>.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II. *Redemptoris Missio* [On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate], Vatican Website, 7 December 1990, sec. 41, accessed October 29, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_07121990\\_redemptoris-missio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html).

<sup>9</sup> Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* [Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World], Vatican Website, 24 November 2013, sec. 110, accessed November 19, 2017,

Recognition as a precondition to mission has a further consequence, that all Catholics, act through the lens of recognition. Since, Vatican II, the Church by her very nature is missionary. In other words, everything that Catholics do is missionary. If that is truly the case, then adding recognition as a precondition to missiology, has the subsequent implication that every Christian must also practice recognition, whether they are working in the parish, studying in the seminary or just walking along the street.

My thesis consists of four chapters: first, to reconstruct the historical milieu, I outline the history of Hong Kong, the history of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, the history of the Maryknoll Sisters and finally the history of the Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong. Second, I outline the recognition theory of Axel Honneth and his three spheres of recognition. Third, I analyze the responses of past students and present recognition as a way to understand them. Fourth, I argue that recognition is important as a precondition for Catholic mission. The conclusion records my findings: the origins of this ministry of recognition from the Maryknoll Sisters' can be traced to their spirituality and to the life of Mother Mary Joseph; recognition might be one new lens to view the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters at Maryknoll Convent; recognition has primary importance as a precondition to missiology; themes for subsequent research and other possibilities for practical utilizations are explored.

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[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html).

## **Chapter 1: Historical Context**

### **Introduction**

The first chapter consists of three parts: first, a historical outline of Hong Kong; second, the Catholic Church in Hong Kong; and third, the Maryknoll Sisters. These parts provide a sketch designed to help us understand and appreciate the Maryknoll Sisters and the missiology that guided their school, Maryknoll Convent.

In this chapter I will highlight the following themes: first, since its colonial beginnings, Hong Kong has served as a safe haven for Chinese refugees escaping turmoil within China; second, the Catholic Church has been one of the larger providers of social/educational services to the city; and third, the Maryknoll Sisters, animated by their spirituality of recognition, participated in the social/educational endeavor of the Catholic Church.

The first section provides the history of: Hong Kong (1.1), of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong (1.2), and of Education in Hong Kong (1.3). The second section covers the Maryknoll Sisters: namely their history (1.4); spirituality of recognition (1.5); history of Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong (1.6); and a history of Maryknoll Convent (1.7).

### **1.1 History of Hong Kong till the 1960s**

Hong Kong's history is inextricably tied up with two powers, namely, its British colonial administrators and even more China and its vicissitudes. The current Chinese government views Hong Kong as always having 'been part of the territory of China since ancient times; it was occupied by Britain after the Opium War in 1840.'<sup>10</sup> British scholars generally follow Viscount Palmerston's description of Hong Kong as a 'barren rock' with no prior history.<sup>11</sup> Recent

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<sup>10</sup> Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext/preamble.html>

<sup>11</sup> Michael Ingham, *Hong Kong: a Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xvii.

archaeological work has disproved the latter view; history in Hong Kong dates from well before the British arrival. This brief survey will focus, however, on three major shaping events: first, the British arrival; second, the Japanese occupation during World War II; and third, the Chinese Communist victory in its civil war with the Nationalists.

The British arrival in Hong Kong began early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when trade dominated British and Chinese interactions. Opium was at the center of this trade. Its rampant spread within China led to untold suffering, coupled with the ballooning exchange imbalance. This pushed the Qing dynasty to suppress the opium trade. This suppression eventually led to the First Opium War (1839-42). This war, though, was not only solely commerce related, but also “stemmed from the deep-seated culture clash between the participants.”<sup>12</sup> The Chinese had a xenophobic view of all outside barbarians, and especially traders, who were considered the lowest occupation in a Confucian worldview. This directly opposed the British view of free trade; they felt endowed with a God-bestowed right to use forceful means to enforce their trade. Upon the conclusion of the war, the Chinese defeat led to Hong Kong being ceded to Britain as a crown colony, acquired “primarily for the promotion of trade, not for territorial conquest.”<sup>13</sup>

British colonial rule was interrupted in 1941, when the Japanese expelled the British from Hong Kong. While the Japanese “portrayed their invasion as liberation from colonialism,” in reality it was just another change in colonial administrators.<sup>14</sup> The Japanese ravaged the city, leaving it in a destitute state, and they also conducted forced depopulation leaving the remaining

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>13</sup> Jung-fang Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social unrest in the British colony, 1842-1913* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 288.

<sup>14</sup> John M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 121.

people totally demoralized.<sup>15</sup> At the conclusion of World War II, despite America's best anti-colonial efforts, Britain to restore its lost pride reclaimed Hong Kong over against the claims of China's Chiang Kai-shek. Afterwards, British colonial administrators utilized all their ingenuity, good will, and resourcefulness to restore Hong Kong on a path of recovery.

At the conclusion of World War II, China continued its major internal strife with its civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists. This civil war led to "Hong Kong serving as a haven for Chinese refugees."<sup>16</sup> One startling statistic was that in 1945 the population of Hong Kong was 0.5 million but after the Communist victory in 1949 the population rose four fold, swelling to over 2 million. Moreover, these Chinese refugees came "from almost everywhere in the interior and speaking almost every Chinese dialect,"<sup>17</sup> which only further exacerbated problems. Many of these refugees were most destitute, coming with very few belongings and also a feeling that Hong Kong was only ever going to be a temporary abode before their return to their ancestral home back on the Mainland.<sup>18</sup> This reality of unsettledness within Hong Kong created an attitude within the Chinese refugees to make the "most of what they have."<sup>19</sup> It created a Darwinian survival of the fittest mentality, focusing on flexibility, ingenuity and an entrepreneurial spirit with a cut-throat ethos, as traditional social support networks were not available.

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<sup>15</sup> Steve Yui-Sang. Tsang, *Modern History of Hong Kong* (I.B. Tauris, 2003), 127.

<sup>16</sup> Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Cindy Yik-Yi. Chu, *Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong, 1921-1969: in Love with the Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 68.

<sup>18</sup> Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 119.

<sup>19</sup> Tsang, *Modern History of Hong Kong*, 168.

Lastly, the decades of the 1950s and the 1960s were a period of great uncertainty. The victory of the Communists meant that many expected that Hong Kong would soon be on the Communists' radar. Nobody knew how long the colony would survive; let alone how many refugees would come! One visiting British labor adviser who noted that "a feeling of insecurity colors nearly everyone's life in Hong Kong... no knows how long Hong Kong will exist or how it will prosper."<sup>20</sup> This ambiguity pervaded Hong Kong life in the 1950/60s. Nevertheless, people were generally grateful as Hong Kong was better than the chaos occurring across the border.

### 1.2 History of Catholic Church in Hong Kong until the 1960s

There are three distinct historical periods within the Catholic Church of Hong Kong: first the Prefecture Apostolic Period (1841-1874); second, the Vicariate Apostolic Period (1874-1946); and lastly, the Diocese Establishment Period (1946-1969). Despite the distinctive periods, there was a common thread running throughout the three periods, namely the Catholic Church "played the role of a third force, providing service to people and preventing the escalation of social tensions."<sup>21</sup> These services included education, social welfare, and services to the poor.

The origins of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong begins with Father Theodore Joret, a Swiss diocesan priest who was sent as Propaganda Fide's representative to Hong Kong on March 3 1842. He was sent as a need arose to be chaplain to the Catholic soldiers of the British colonial force within Hong Kong. But, after laying the foundation of the first Church on Wellington Street, he died after having only been in Hong Kong for a few months.<sup>22</sup> Like many other missions, this mission started off on rocky and shaky ground, as the early inhabitants were only

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Gianni Criveller, *From Milan to Hong Kong: 150 years of mission: Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, 1858-2008* (Hong Kong: VOX AMICA Press, 2008), 24.

there “to make money and then return to Europe. When we speak about religion, they beg us to keep silent.”<sup>23</sup> Despite, this ambivalence towards religion, religious congregations such as the Sisters of St Paul De Chartres established “hospitals, a home for the blind, a home for the aged and other services.”<sup>24</sup> One of the more striking early events was the vocational decision of Emily Aloisia, the daughter of the Governor Bowring, to enter the Canossian Sisters in 1860.<sup>25</sup> Her entry as the “first Canossian to take her vows in the new Hong Kong Canossian mission”<sup>26</sup> was notable as she was a convert from a prominent family.

Second, the Vicariate Apostolic period saw the arrival of the Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong, joining many other religious congregations in Hong Kong.<sup>27</sup> In this period, another noticeable event was the establishment of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood in 1922.<sup>28</sup> One of their primary missions was to “devote themselves to the works of charity and education under the direction of the Bishop.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Criveller, *From Milan to Hong Kong*, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Magdalena Mo Ching Mok, "Challenges for Catholic Schooling in Hong Kong," in *International Handbook of Catholic Education*. ed. Gerald R. Grace and Joseph O'Keefe, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 752.

<sup>25</sup> Louis Keloon. Ha and Patrick Taveirne, *History of Catholic Religious Orders and Missionary Congregations in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Centre for Catholic Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2009), 337.

<sup>26</sup> The Canossians in Singapore, accessed December 07, 2017, <http://www.catholic-church.org/canossians-sg/the%20Canossians/holy%20women/HolyWomen2.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> Maryknoll Fathers, Salesian Fathers, Society of Jesus, Canadian Sisters of Our Lady of the Angels, Canossian Sisters

<sup>28</sup> *A Brief History of the Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood Religious Congregation of the Diocese of Hong Kong 1861-1952*, (Hong Kong: Antonius Riganti, V.G. Vicarius Generalis Diocescos Hong Kong, Victory Press Hong Kong 1952), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Cindy Yik-yi Chu, *The Chinese Sisters of the Precious Blood and the evolution of the Catholic Church* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 23.

Third, this period was of critical importance due to the major “exodus of refugees including Catholics, religious Sisters, and clergymen” from Mainland China.<sup>30</sup> This period was a period of managing to harmonize many different elements. Bishop Bianchi’s “openness, moderation and positive thinking” was one factor that contributed to the many diverse congregations being able to work together.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.3 Education in Hong Kong up until the 1960s

Schooling until the 1960s was predominately driven from religious sectors rather than colonial administrators. Prior to the arrival of the British, Hong Kong had “small Chinese Schools in existence,” run by locals to teach rudimentary education to the local children.<sup>32</sup> This policy of education through local initiatives continued upon the British arrival, as the administrator’s priority was to ensure the colony’s stability for trading purposes. Moreover, the British government did not have an empire wide educational policy for its colonies; hence the colonial administrators of Hong Kong ranked education last in their priority list.<sup>33</sup> Yet the colonial direction had some innovative and creative ideas, including enlisting support from other sources: for instance, from the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. The administrators provided much leeway in the provision of education, and the only essential demand was that the schools provide what people wanted, a good quality education.

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<sup>30</sup> Mok, “Catholic Schooling in Hong Kong,” 756.

<sup>31</sup> Criveller, *From Milan to Hong Kong*, 12.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong, Pre-1841 to 1941: Fact and Opinion: Materials for a History of Education in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong University Press, HKU, 1990), 15.

<sup>33</sup> Clive Whitehead, “The Advisory Committee On Education In The [British] Colonies 1924-1961,” *Paedagogica Historica* 27, no. 3 (1991): 391, doi:10.1080/0030923910270301.

Historically, the Catholic Church played a significant role as one of the leading providers of education in Hong Kong.<sup>34</sup> The first missionaries arrived in 1841 and the first Catholic school was opened in 1843.<sup>35</sup> Mgr. Raimondi, the first Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong was one of the foremost proponents of Catholic education in Hong Kong. He writes, “the education of our young people has been and will always be the cause dearest to my heart. For it I toiled for 25 years.”<sup>36</sup> In 1873, he visited Europe, and secured assurances from religious congregations to come and start schools in Hong Kong.<sup>37</sup>

This educational mission grew considerably as Catholic schools began to be recognized as good schools, so that Chinese parents started to seek out education for their children. This recognition and demand continued with colonial administrator’s assistance. One notable achievement was the role to provide education for women.<sup>38</sup> Previously, Chinese schools catered exclusively to the elite men of society. However, the Catholic women’s congregations opened up opportunities that were previously unavailable to women. Hence the mission slowly grew from teaching the faithful to a mission to help educate greater sets of people for the common good and to cultivate the social cultural landscape for a future Christianity.

Demand for Catholic education only increased after the Chinese civil war, as colonial administrators sought help to educate the large young population and to stem the threat of Communist infiltration. The *South China Morning Post* notes in 1957 that “our problem today is

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<sup>34</sup> Mok, “Catholic Schooling in Hong Kong,” 761-763.

<sup>35</sup> John Kang Tan. "Church, State and Education: Catholic Education in Hong Kong during the Political Transition." *Comparative Education* 33, no. 2 (1997): 211-32.

<sup>36</sup> Criveller, *From Milan to Hong Kong*, 58.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>38</sup> Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 3.

predominantly the 'Problem of Young People' ... and the Chinese are probably more education-conscious than any other race in the world."<sup>39</sup> Also as the Communists took over Mainland China, the British, determined to restrict the influence of Communist infiltration, enlisted the help of the churches to provide schooling to combat this influence.<sup>40</sup> These issues coupled with the influx of former China-based missionaries meant additional resources to create and staff more schools.<sup>41</sup> This led to a surge in Catholic schools and Catholic education. After the civil war, Catholic schools dominated the Hong Kong educational environment in terms of sheer numbers.

#### 1.4 History of the Maryknoll Sisters

There was a fervent Protestant missionary impulse in the United States at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> Protestant student groups, such as the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, were part of this development.<sup>43</sup> John Mott, one of the student founders, explained the group's rationale as wanting to give "to all people an adequate opportunity of knowing Jesus Christ as their savior and of becoming his real disciples."<sup>44</sup> While the Protestants were more

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<sup>39</sup> Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong, 1941-2001: Visions and Revisions* (Aberdeen: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 13-15.

<sup>40</sup> Beatrice Leung, "Political impact of Catholic education in decolonization : Hong Kong and Macau" (1998). CAPS Working Paper Series. Paper 32: 8.

<sup>41</sup> Mok, "Catholic Schooling in Hong Kong," 756.

<sup>42</sup> Barbara Hendricks, "The Spiritual Heritage of Mother Mary Joseph: Call to Mission" (unpublished essay, Maryknoll Archives), 1.

<sup>43</sup> Dana Lee. Robert, *American Women in Mission: a Social History of their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 1998), 256.

<sup>44</sup> Dana Robert, "The Origin of the Student Volunteer Watchword: "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation"" *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 10, no. 4 (1986): 146.

outward focused, Catholics in the United States were generally focused on another mission, namely the integration of immigrant Catholics on their shores. This soon changed.

Mary Joseph Rodgers (Mollie) in her college days at Smith College directly encountered this spirit for mission. One day, as she walked through her campus, she encountered a group of extremely exuberant classmates, their joy manifesting the confirmation that they had been sent by the Protestant Student Volunteer Movement to embark on a foreign mission. Their evident joy triggered within Mollie “something – I do not know how to describe it – happened within me.”<sup>45</sup> Subsequently, in front of the Blessed Sacrament, she pledged her life to the mission of the church, though “having no idea how she might follow through on this commitment.”<sup>46</sup>

Upon graduation, Mollie in need of materials for her mission study club, contacted Father James Anthony Walsh, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Boston. Together, with Father Thomas Price, the three dedicated their lives to the foundation of a Catholic Foreign Missions Society of the United States, which subsequently became the Maryknoll Mission Movement. This Maryknoll Mission movement began as a Catholic priestly movement for foreign mission, but quickly expanded to include a congregation of missionary Sisters and more recently a lay organization. Soon after, four more women came to join Mollie Rogers, namely Mary Louise Wholean, Sara Sullivan, Mary Dwyer and Nora Shea, who all committed and devoted themselves to this nascent missionary movement. Through Mollie’s leadership and the others’ commitment to mission, the women decided to establish a religious congregation. This idea of a religious missionary congregation was venturing into uncharted territory as in that period, there was a prevailing feeling that “American women were [not]

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<sup>45</sup> Mother Rogers, “The Student Volunteers” a talk to the League of the Sacred Heart in Seattle, November 1917, Mother Mary Joseph Rogers Papers, box 12, folder 1. Maryknoll Archives.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

courageous enough or strong enough to withstand the rigors of mission life.”<sup>47</sup> Therefore, also in that era, “not a single community of Catholic sisters in the United States would accept a woman with the promise to send her to the foreign missions.”<sup>48</sup> In this milieu, they encountered setbacks, resulting in two rejected petitions to the Vatican when they applied to be incorporated to be foreign missionaries. However, after the second setback, the joyful news arrived on February 14, 1920, that the Maryknoll Sisters could now be officially known as “the religious congregation of the Foreign Mission Sisters of St. Dominic.”<sup>49</sup>

### 1.5 Spirituality of Maryknoll Sisters: Recognition

Each congregation’s spirituality is unique and serves as a way to understand the congregation’s charism. Mother Mary Joseph’s words below epitomize the spirituality of the Maryknoll Sisters’, a spirituality of recognition. It is a spirituality that is formulated to meet others and built on the following characteristics: first, ‘*recognitive acts*’ as foundation, second, the “presence of God” within our souls; third, the balance between individuality and common good.<sup>50</sup>

*“This, Sisters is the foundation of the Maryknoll Spirit – to be so attractive in yourselves; to have such a magnetic power about you that you will attract souls to you and we know that nothing will do that so quickly as a smile and a bright, pleasant word and kindness.... That smile should*

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<sup>47</sup> Claudette LaVerdiere, *On the Threshold of the Future: The Life and Spirituality of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, Founder of the Maryknoll Sisters* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 18.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph R. Ryan, "American Contributions to the Catholic Missionary Effort in China in the Twentieth Century," *Catholic Historical Review* 31 (1946): 173, quoted in Sue Bradshaw, "Catholic Sisters in China: An Effort to Raise the Status of Women," *Historical Reflections* 8, no. 3 (1981): 204.

<sup>49</sup> Jean-Paul Wiest, *Maryknoll in China: A History, 1918-1955* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1988), 30.

<sup>50</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *Occasional Conferences*, (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 111.

*reflect the gladness of our hearts. It should be a mirror of the joy that is in us because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If Christ is really within us, we cannot help but be happy.*"<sup>51</sup>

Mother Mary Joseph wanted her sisters to have recognitive acts as their missionary foundation. As recorded above, a smile, a pleasant word and kindness are the foundation of the Maryknoll Spirit. Moreover, this wasn't just a rule but rather Mother Mary Joseph lived it herself as she had a "welcoming smile."<sup>52</sup> In many of her pictures, Mother Mary Joseph is pictured with a warm, welcoming, infectious smile.<sup>53</sup> The smile was her recognition of others. Mother Mary Joseph's smile helped attract others around her, which is recalled in one example: "even though Mary Joseph had no Chinese language, the Chinese women readily took to her smile as she accompanied the Sisters in their ministries."<sup>54</sup> In Father Francis X. Ford's words in 1951, "Mother Mary Joseph saw China from the inside of the kitchens, the interior of the family quarters, and smiled her way into the hearts of the womenfolk."<sup>55</sup> Finally, Mother Mary Joseph also encouraged her Maryknoll Sisters to adopt these recognitive acts: "mission, therefore, is to do the reaching out; to invite people to come to us, not to stand back waiting for people to search

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<sup>51</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 4.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 1699-1700.

<sup>52</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll Sisters*, 29.

<sup>53</sup> Penny Lernoux, Robert Ellsberg, and Arthur Jones, *Hearts on fire: the story of the Maryknoll Sisters* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012).

<sup>54</sup> Claudette Laverdiere, "Revisiting the Legacy of Mary Josephine Rogers," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 36, no. 4 (2012): 212.

<sup>55</sup> Francis X' .Ford, letter to James Anthony Walsh, February 20, 1924, in Barbara Hendricks, "The Legacy of Mary Josephine Rogers," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21, no. 2 (1997): 77. Hendricks quotes Jean-Paul Wiest, *Maryknoll in China*, 108, and Wiest quotes Sister Therese Grondin, M.M., *Sisters Carry the Gospel*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Maryknoll Publications, 1956), 18.

for us; to have the ready smile, the affable greeting, the radiating charm.”<sup>56</sup> She also wanted this recognitive attitude to be present in the hearts of her Maryknoll Sisters.

This recognitive attitude arises from cultivating an awareness of God’s presence, “in our souls.”<sup>57</sup> Mother Mary Joseph believed that “if Christ is really within us, we cannot help but be happy.”<sup>58</sup> Therefore, she notes, “Christ should and can be in the background of our minds, ever ready to take full possession of us when free moments come... the habit of brief prayer thought the day is, of course, the best means of keeping ourselves conscious of the presence of God.”<sup>59</sup> This did not mean that every Maryknoll sister had to be physically or mentally conscious of the presence of God at every moment. A full dedication would reduce the capacity to work. However, if we truly loved someone, the thought of that person would remain in “your subconscious, and that is the way it must be with God.”<sup>60</sup> This constant attentiveness to the presence of God was best exemplified when Mother Mary Joseph’s rickshaw got lost and she was alone on a bridge in China. While on the bridge, she suddenly “fell to dreaming of God and His way with people ... And I, if I had wished to try, could never have made them understand

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<sup>56</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 4.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 1699-1700.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 1699-1700.

<sup>59</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 2.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 778-779.

<sup>60</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 3.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 972-973.

how sweet were those moments of communion with my Lord – in the rosy freshness of the day - alone on a little bridge in China!”<sup>61</sup>

Lastly, this foundation of recognition does not mean that every Maryknoll Sister has to be the same but rather “that no two are alike.”<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, Mother Mary Joseph believed that there must be a right balance between “individuality and the common purpose/good.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, individuality was always within the context of the community’s purpose and needs. Mother Mary Joseph believed that individuality, namely “varying talents, different temperaments, and a wide range of physical powers” were a gift from God.<sup>64</sup> The mission of the Maryknoll Sisters was not to “stand aloof, to wait for people to come to them, to be sought out and to be sought after”, but rather it is to “seek and find the lost sheep and bring them home.”<sup>6566</sup> This difficult mission requires “all our individuality, all our generosity, all our graciousness and sweetness ... all of the things which the good God has given us.”<sup>67</sup> This is the reason why individuality is so important for Mother Mary Joseph, because “each one of us, in her own work,

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<sup>61</sup> Barbara Hendricks, "The Spiritual Heritage of Mother Mary Joseph: Union with God: Love and prayer" (unpublished essay, Maryknoll Archives), 13.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>63</sup> Barbara Hendricks, "The Spiritual Heritage of Mother Mary Joseph: Community, Individuality and Obedience" (unpublished essay, Maryknoll Archives), 1.

<sup>64</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 1.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 94.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 3.

with her own particular attractiveness is to be used by God as a particular tool to do a particular work and to save particular souls.”<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, the Sisters’ individuality must be “supernaturalized] so as to direct their individuality “to promote God’s honor and glory and to accomplish His will.”<sup>69</sup><sup>70</sup> The most effective way is to always think of the other, or the common good of the community. This direction to the other will mean that the individual will never be too caught up within herself, but rather always be directed towards generosity, and ultimately “all are to be used for [God’s] glory.”<sup>71</sup>

Mother Mary Joseph also recognized that an over emphasis on individuality can be detrimental to a community oriented religious community. She emphasized that this spirit of individuality “is extremely difficult and for a long time might have been misunderstood even by those nearest to us.”<sup>72</sup> Mother Mary Joseph recalled a famous case where one generous, loyal, devoted sister remarked that, “it was natural for me to be noisy. I wouldn’t know what to do with myself if I were not like this.”<sup>73</sup> Mother Mary Joseph laments that the Sister did not understand that individuality became the true gift only when it was balanced with an emphasis on God.

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<sup>68</sup> *Constitutions of the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic* (Maryknoll, NY: Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, 1965), 6.

<sup>69</sup> Mother Mary, *Occasional Conferences*, 2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Mother Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, Vol. 1.*, 94.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Moreover, this story captures the real difficulty of individuality and that it is “easy ... for even a Sister to get the wrong impression.”<sup>74</sup>

### 1.6 History of the Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong

The Maryknoll Sisters’ first intended overseas mission destination was Yangjian in China. But, upon arrival in Hong Kong in 1921, the first group of six Sisters soon realized that it would be important to establish a community house in Hong Kong and form a staging post before their entry into China. It would be a good place to learn Chinese, have a place to recuperate and a place to receive visitors who are either entering or departing from China. Hence, this first overseas Maryknoll Sisters’ community house was not pre-planned but a response to the needs and circumstances of the time. This type of flexibility and responsiveness can be one way to characterize their ministry in Hong Kong, in that most of their ministry “developed out of the needs which arose rather than by prearranged policies and ideals.”<sup>75</sup>

In Hong Kong, the Maryknoll Sisters quickly fanned out into different apostolates. The Sisters started a textile workshop to make embroidery, vestments and church linen to earn income for their house and for other endeavors. This workshop slowly expanded to also employ local girls, to train them and provide them with employment. Also, this workshop became the ministry for the first native Chinese Maryknoll Sister, Sister Maria Teresa (Teresa Yeung).<sup>76</sup> Subsequently, they branched out into Catholic hospitals and also educational work with the opening of two schools.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>76</sup> "Sister Teresa Yeung, MM," Archives, , accessed October 25, 2017, <http://maryknollmissionarchives.org/?deceased-sisters=sister-teresa-yeung-mm>.

The Sisters' social ministry expanded with the influx of refugees at the end of the 1940s. The refugees were in extreme poverty, and mainly "lived in shabby squatter huts made of tin plates and wooden boards, clustered together on hill slopes and abandoned lands."<sup>77</sup> The Maryknoll Sisters labored under tiring conditions, offering "accommodation, relief, and social service to the poor"<sup>78</sup> and loving care to the people to whom they ministered. One successful social enterprise was the "Sisters Scheme Cottages."<sup>79</sup> It began as a response to a fire in the squatter village of Tung Tau Tsuen, a village containing approximately 78,000 people. After the fire, Sister Mary Imelda convinced the government to approve her plan to provide better housing. This also entailed fundraising, which she and her sisters completed with vigor. Eventually, seventy-one stone cottages were constructed and this housing project, "the first of its kind in Hong Kong", convinced other religious bodies and companies to undertake similar initiatives.<sup>80</sup>

Apart from the housing project, Sister Imelda and the Maryknoll Sisters opened social welfare centers throughout Hong Kong. The centers provided for many different things, including, "relief, housing, medical care, nursery, social welfare, employment, education and catechetical work."<sup>81</sup> It provided space for recreational activities and became a gathering place for children and families. Sisters also provided other local needs, such as helping with administrative applications for government rations, licenses and other daily tasks. As the

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<sup>77</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong*, 68.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

Superior Sister Mary Imelda wrote, “the opportunities seem unlimited. . . . I hardly need to repeat that the need is tremendous.”<sup>82</sup>

### 1.7 The History of Maryknoll Convent School

Maryknoll Convent School began as a kindergarten in 1925, three years after the Sisters’ arrival in Hong Kong. The kindergarten’s opening was based upon two considerations: first, it offered Portuguese speakers an English-language education, and second, it provided much needed revenue, as Sister Mary Paul, the first superior in Hong Kong, noted: “people are willing to pay for the kindergarten.”<sup>83</sup> Maryknoll Convent opened as a kindergarten with twelve students crammed into the convent’s community room, though it quickly changed as families of government officials, army officials, business people and also poorer families heard about this new school and wanted their daughters educated there.

In 1937, the construction of the Maryknoll Convent was completed, and marked a new stage for the sisters’ history. The new building was hailed as an architectural landmark within Hong Kong, their style imitating “the Maryknoll Motherhouse in Ossining, New York.”<sup>84</sup> One traveler commented that this was “the most beautiful building in Hong Kong.”<sup>85</sup> This new building evoked mystique and romance, as people aspired to be students within this beautiful campus.<sup>86</sup> Practically speaking, the new building provided enough classrooms for the school to provide classes running from kindergarten to matriculation. Moreover, it even provided a science

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 42 .

<sup>85</sup> *The Field Afar Magazine*, March, 1950, 52.

<sup>86</sup>“瑪利諾修院學校.” YouTube. November 06, 2007. Accessed October 25, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH9VhM5GV6k>.

room, laboratory, an auditorium and a playground, a real pioneering endeavor in that period of Hong Kong history.

During the Japanese occupation, Maryknoll Convent was converted into a hospital, with much of its beautiful and modern school furniture shipped to Japan.<sup>87</sup> During these “black years” the American Sisters of the congregation were interned in a camp, while the Sisters of Chinese, Portuguese and Filipino heritage were confined in Maryknoll houses.<sup>88</sup> When the Japanese surrendered, the British administrators wanted to continue to run a makeshift hospital from the school grounds. But Sister Mary Paul’s persistence persuaded the British to relinquish control back to the Sisters as soon as possible.

This change also mobilized the Sisters into immediate action, opening the school for classes within a short amount of time. Once word spread that the school was reopening, students poured in. The students were in substandard conditions, having endured years of misery and lost opportunities. As the nearby boys’ school, La Salle College, was still closed, Maryknoll Convent opened its doors to students of both sexes. This period was also marked by ingenuity, as “file drawers were used as chairs, some pupils brought their own stools, collapsible tables (which often collapsed during class!) served as desks and classes were often held on the playground or lawn.”<sup>89</sup> In 1960, a further new building was erected to house the secondary school section, while the primary stayed at Waterloo Road. The Maryknoll Student Association was set up in 1967. In 1997, the primary school transitioned from a half-day to a whole day school.

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<sup>87</sup> Sister Jeanne Houlihan, interview by author, Ossining, October 15, 2016.

<sup>88</sup> Ha, *History of Catholic religious orders and missionary congregations in Hong Kong*, 274.

<sup>89</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll sisters in Hong Kong*, 62.

Throughout Maryknoll Convent's history, the Maryknoll Sisters undertook many varied and different responsibilities. The primary responsibilities were ensuring the smooth operation of the school, whether as administrators of the school or as teachers of the classroom. Generally, the Maryknoll Sisters taught within their own specialty, though they were often called to teach the subjects that were most needed. Despite their full-time jobs as administrators and teachers, the Sisters usually also undertook other responsibilities. This was most evident in the 1950/60s, when there were innumerable social needs. Many of the Sisters responded to these needs to the best of their abilities.

### Conclusion

In the 1940s and 1950s, Hong Kong was confronted with unprecedented human tragedy. The World War II occupation by Japan left the city devastated and the people traumatized. Moreover, just as Hong Kong was beginning its slow recovery, millions of Chinese refugees fleeing the Communist victory in Mainland China flooded into the city. This mass exodus, led to a doubling and then quadrupling of the city's population. These two events caused a humanitarian crisis on a catastrophic scale. Basic services such as water, health, and shelter were badly needed and conditions were critical.

During these two decades of significant need, the Roman Catholic Church offered their services. They provided humanitarian needs of food and clothing. This social relief soon extended into welfare relief. Later on, the Roman Catholic Church increased education opportunities for these new refugees.

The Maryknoll Sisters was part of this Roman Catholic Church's endeavor. They offered social services, welfare services and education for the residents of Hong Kong. The Sisters ministered in hospitals, set up housing settlements and also welfare centers. In terms of education, they reopened Maryknoll Convent School as quickly as possible. Apart from teaching

the Maryknoll Sisters were also engaged with social work. In this milieu, how did the students experience and receive the ministry of the Maryknoll Sister teachers? This is what I would like to explore in next few chapters.

The Maryknoll Sisters' ministry of recognition can be traced back to their spirituality and to their founder, Mother Mary Joseph. The spirituality of the Maryknoll Sisters, might be understood as a spirituality of recognition. As the founder, Mother Mary Joseph embodied this spirituality in her deeds and her words. Mother Mary Joseph emphasizes cognitive acts as the basis of the Maryknoll Sisters ministry. Therefore, I believe that the ministry of recognition of the Maryknoll Sisters did not arise from nothing but rather its origins and genesis was from their founder and their spirituality.

## **Chapter 2: Theory of Recognition: Axel Honneth**<sup>90</sup>

### Introduction

Recognition reentered philosophical consciousness during the social-political struggles of the 1960s. Diverse movements such as the Aboriginal indigenous, African-American, women, and anti-colonial nationalist movements all had the same undercurrent, a demand for public acknowledgement of their groups' particular feature/s.<sup>91</sup> This demand shifted the political battleground from "class, equality, economy and nation" to "identity, difference, culture and ethnicity."<sup>92</sup>

Axel Honneth believes that recognition is not just a political issue but rather is part of the "quasi-transcendental interests" of the human race" that are foundational for human interaction and identity.<sup>93</sup> Recognition is a "vital human need" and, most importantly for Honneth, humans need recognition throughout their whole lives.<sup>94</sup> Since recognition is a need for all, then it is morally wrong to interact with others as if it was not needed. In other words, recognition can be understood as a meta-language that is needed by all humans to communicate with each other.

Over the course of this chapter I describe: the constitutive elements of recognition (2.1),

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<sup>90</sup> Axel Honneth is born in 1949 and currently holds two professorships, one at the University of Frankfurt and the other at Columbia University. Moreover, he is Director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. Honneth's research interests focuses on the social-political realm of philosophy, especially on relations of power, recognition and respect and is known as the representative of the third generation "Frankfurt School." His central argument is that mutual recognition is the building block to all social relations.

<sup>91</sup> Charles Taylor and Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994).

<sup>92</sup> Simon Thompson, *The political theory of recognition a critical introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2006), 3.

<sup>93</sup> Nancy Fraser et al., *Redistribution or recognition?: a political-philosophical exchange* (London: Verso, 2003), 174.

<sup>94</sup> Taylor and Gutmann, *Multiculturalism*, 26.

theory of recognition (2.2), and his three spheres of recognition: love (2.3.1), rights (2.3.2) and esteem (2.3.3). Lastly, I outline two criticisms of Honneth: Nancy Fraser (2.4.1) and Judith Butler (2.4.2) and also defend Honneth against Nancy Fraser (2.4.1.1) and Judith Butler (2.4.2.1).<sup>95</sup>

## 2.1 What is or constitutes recognition?

The English word ‘recognition’ and the German word ‘Anerkennung’ can communicate different meanings. Paul Ricoeur discovered more than twenty meanings for the term, “to recognize.”<sup>96</sup> What does Honneth mean by recognition? Luckily, two scholars, Ikäheimo and Laitinen have analyzed the usage of the term recognition by Axel Honneth.<sup>97</sup> I use their findings to clarify the usage of recognition by Axel Honneth.

Ikaheimo and Laitinen classifies recognition into “three different, although intricately interconnected, phenomena ... *identification*, *acknowledgement* and *recognition* respectively.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Nancy Fraser is a professor of Philosophy and Politics at the New School for Social Research. She has also been a visiting professor at different universities in Europe, including Germany, France, Spain, and the Netherlands. Fraser was also a former co-editor of *Constellations*, an international journal of critical and democratic theory. Fraser has an extensive list of publications and her research issues cover a wide range of topics but she is primarily known for her conceptions of justice.

Judith Butler is Professor of Comparative Literature and Critical Theory at the University of California, Berkeley and has a chair at the European Graduate School. Butler’s research influence on gender theory has had a far and wide ranging influence on many different fields including political philosophy and ethics.

<sup>96</sup> Mattias Iser, "Recognition," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, August 23, 2013, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/recognition/>.

<sup>97</sup> Heikki Ikheimo and Arto Laitinen, “Analyzing Recognition: Identification, Acknowledgement, and Recognitive Attitudes towards Persons,” in *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*, ed. Bert van den Brink and David Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 33.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

Identification relates to the sense that anything can be recognized (identified), i.e. one can recognize (identify) a tree. Acknowledgement conveys the understanding that normative entities can be recognized (acknowledged), i.e. one can recognize (acknowledge) that the law “you shall not kill another person” as good. Recognition is the idea that humans can be recognized (bestowed recognition), i.e. one can recognize another person. It is in this last category that recognition as used by Honneth should be understood.

Recognition is primarily understood as “an interpersonal relation consisting of taking someone as a person.”<sup>99</sup> This means that having a recognitive attitude towards a person means relating to that human as a person. Relating in this sense means responding to the person and also acknowledging various dimensions of the person. This responding includes cognitive, volitional and emotional actions. Therefore, in recognizing another, there is a basic mode of relating that shapes our specific response. Nevertheless, apart from the cognitive, volitional and emotional attitudes and behaviors, recognizing someone is also a moral affair, namely in a practical sense of bestowing on someone a positive status. One example might be Person A greeting Person B, this would be recognizing the other’s presence. Lastly, recognition occurs only when it is mutual, as there is no one-sided recognition. It always takes two people and their corresponding attitudes to each other constitute recognition. This means that person A’s recognizing attitudes towards person B is only recognition when B also has recognizing attitudes towards A.

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<sup>99</sup> Heikki J. Koskinen, "Mediated Recognition and the Categorical Stance," *Journal of Social Ontology* 3, no. 1 (2017): 68, doi:10.1515/jso-2015-0019.

## 2.2 Recognition Theory: Honneth

Honneth formulates his recognition theory from the Hegelian insight that individuals have a need for an “intersubjective recognition of their identity.”<sup>100</sup> In other words, “a subject can arrive at a consciousness of its own self only if it enters into a relationship of recognition with another subject.”<sup>101</sup> This Hegelian account differs from Descartes’ conception of identity being formed subjectively, and, more importantly, rejects the Hobbes and Machiavelli idea of humans being driven by the innate desire of self-preservation. The key is that “we become who we are only through our interactions with others.”<sup>102</sup>

Hegel notes that humans need three analytically distinct, though conceptually overlapping, types of recognition (love, respect, esteem):

in the affective relationship of recognition found in the family, human individuals are recognized as concrete creatures of need; in the cognitive-formal relationship of recognition found in the law, they are recognized as abstract legal persons; and finally, in the emotionally enlightened relationship of recognition found in the State, they are recognized as concrete universals, that is, as subjects who are socialized in their particularity.<sup>103</sup>

The dimension of respect means treating another person as being capable of rational determination and the bearers of rights. The dimension of esteem relates to the qualitative aspect of the person, in treating others who have particular qualities that merit esteem or affirmation by others. The final dimension of love / friendship relates to the unique individual as the person who

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<sup>100</sup> Axel Honneth and Joel Anderson, *The struggle for recognition: the moral grammar of social conflicts* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>101</sup> Axel Honneth, *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 3-4.

<sup>102</sup> Christopher F. Zurn, *Axel Honneth a critical theory of the social* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), 24.

<sup>103</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 25.

is capable of being loved. If these three forms of need are met, then the individual will develop with self-realization, and if all individuals' recognition needs are met, then there is a just society.

However, violations can impede the self-realization of individuals. Honneth believes that violations such as disrespect ('Missachtung') can hinder and even destroy individuals' path to self-realization.<sup>104</sup> There are three forms of disrespect that correlate to the three spheres of recognition. They are abuse or rape (love), denial of rights or exclusion (respect) and insult or denigration (esteem).<sup>105</sup> The following examples might help. If an individual is abused or raped, then they feel humiliated and this impacts their self-confidence. If an individual is denied the legal rights that they are entitled, then their self-respect will diminish. If my way of life that I subscribe in is denigrated, then my self-esteem will be negatively affected. Hence, disrespect are also moral issues as they impede the growth of individuals. In fact, Honneth believes disrespect lie at the source of all of society's injustices.<sup>106</sup>

### 2.3 Three Spheres of Recognition

The three distinct, though interconnecting, spheres of recognition are love (2.3.1), rights (2.3.2) and esteem (2.3.3). When sufficient levels of recognition are received, an individual develops a "practical relation-to-self" namely, self-confidence (2.3.1.1), self-respect (2.3.2.1),

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<sup>104</sup> I reproduce the translator's notes for the translation of disrespect. "Honneth's general term for the failure to give someone due recognition is 'Missachtung', which is translated here as 'disrespect.' It should be noted that this concept refers not merely to a failure to show proper deference but rather to a broad class of cases, including humiliation, degradation, insult, disenfranchisement, and even physical abuse." *The struggle for recognition*, iix.

<sup>105</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 129 - 134.

<sup>106</sup> Fraser, *Redistribution or recognition?*, 133.

self-esteem (2.3.3.1).<sup>107</sup> Lastly, the disrespect that correlates to the three spheres are: acts that violate bodily integrity (2.3.1.2), denial of rights (2.3.2.2) and insult or denigration (2.3.3.2).

### 2.3.1 First Sphere: Love

Honneth believes that love forms the basis for self-identity and is also essential for the individual's self-confidence. Honneth formulates this idea from Hegel's insight "that love is a form of mutual recognition between intimates whereby one comes to know oneself and to be oneself only in and through a specific form of emotional support from another."<sup>108</sup> In other words, if a person never received love, then that person would have no self-confidence or even an understanding of a self. The key insight is that recognition received from these loving relationships constitutes an essential foundation for self-realization.

While Hegel understood this love to refer to adult erotic love, Honneth understood love in a broad way to include not only "primary relationships ... model of friendships, parent-child relationships ... erotic relationships between lovers" but also an "affectionate attention of concrete others" that entails a "strong emotional attachment."<sup>109</sup> Hence, love has two important characteristics: first, it consists of "positive feelings," and second, it is limited to small numbers of concrete others.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, while Honneth refers to this recognition type as love, another broader descriptive term might be friendship.

One paradigm of love/friendship is the mother-baby relationship. Honneth utilizes Winnicott's psychoanalytic research on the mother-infant relationship to empirically confirm

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<sup>107</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 132.

<sup>108</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 28.

<sup>109</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 95, 87, 95.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 107

Hegel's understanding of love as "being oneself in another."<sup>111</sup> Winnicott's 'object relations theory' begins with the idea that there was an original unity between the baby and mother. This unity exists at the beginning of birth when the mother and baby do not yet understand themselves as different from each other. The two cannot differentiate needs, desires, disappointments and joys of the other. Gradually, differentiation begins as each slowly recognizes a separate existence and eventually mutual recognition occurs. Individuation occurs in a healthy way when it is a process that is accompanied by mutual emotional support with each supporting the needs of the other. This process can be fraught with danger; especially if "care and love" is not given, then the "children's personalities cannot develop at all."<sup>112</sup>

This account of love/friendship is significant, as Honneth believes that it is the first mode of recognition and "conceptually and genetically prior" to respect and esteem.<sup>113</sup> Love/friendship is a "basic requisite" for other modes.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, this love/friendship leads to a "practical relation-to-self."<sup>115</sup> In this case, an individual that has received loving concern develops "basic self-confidence."<sup>116</sup>

### 2.3.1.1 Self-Confidence

Love is not just about a relationship but is connected to an individual's capacity to develop self-confidence. Self-confidence in this regard differs from the common notion of a self-

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>112</sup> Fraser, *Redistribution or recognition?*, 138.

<sup>113</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 107.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 129.

assured disposition, but stems from the idea “that one can autonomously coordinate one’s own body,” or exercise self-control over one’s physical body.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, it extends beyond to include “a very basic sense of the stability and continuity of one’s self as a differentiated individual with particular needs and emotions.”<sup>118</sup> It relates to an ability to trust oneself, to be calm and comfortable in the midst of different situations. It also includes a belief that the individual’s needs and feelings are valued; they can also be expressed and fundamentally value themselves and their life project. This is associated with a positive understanding of the self. Lastly, self-confidence is a foundation block on which to build the other two practical relations-to-self: self-respect and self-esteem. Therefore, self-confidence is a cornerstone to the two other relations-to-self.

#### 2.3.1.2 Abuse or Rape

Self-confidence can be undermined by “physical abuse” or by violent bodily transgressions.<sup>119</sup> Honneth’s basic idea is that extreme violations of physical integrity ... are able to disrupt that basic, foundational self-confidence,<sup>120</sup> the “trust in oneself and the world and this affects all practical dealings with other subjects, even at a physical level.”<sup>121</sup> What is most destructive about these physical abuses such as torture and rape “is not the purely physical pain

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>118</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 31.

<sup>119</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 132.

<sup>120</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 32-33.

<sup>121</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 132-133.

but rather the combination of this pain with the feeling of being defenselessly at the mercy of another subject, to the point of feeling that one has been deprived of reality.”<sup>122</sup>

### 2.3.2 Second Sphere: Rights

The second sphere of recognition of respect is gained through legal rights. Legal rights make two claims: first, these rights confer respect on individuals. Treating them as rational morally responsible individuals, legal rights are a way to instantiate the respect that individuals owe to each other. In other words, legal rights are the best way to ensure that respect is afforded to all, based on the universal fact that humans are morally responsible beings.

Rights confer respect upon individuals, as they follow Kant’s line that rights treat individuals as morally responsible individuals. For Kant, “moral responsibility is the respectable core of the person.”<sup>123</sup> Respect is conferred when individuals are understood to be free, rational beings that can take moral responsibility for their actions. Therefore, legal rights grant a form of respect to individuals, treating individuals as autonomous, rational people.

Legal rights convey the idea that everybody deserves respect. Legal rights enshrine the idea that respect for others is due based upon their intrinsic worth as a person and not based upon some achievement or accident of birth. Legal rights convey the idea that “the reason why I should be respected is a reason for everyone else to be respected as well.”<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, “in obeying the law, legal subjects recognize each other as persons capable of autonomously making reasonable decisions about moral norms.”<sup>125</sup> In other words, I respect others when I follow the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 114, 119.

<sup>124</sup> Thompson, *recognition a critical introduction*, 48.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 49.

same laws. Paradigmatically, if we do not “recognize other members of the community as the bearers of rights,” how can we be sure that “our claims will be met?”<sup>126</sup>

### 2.3.2.1 Self-respect

The practical relation to self that develops is self-respect. The key claim of Honneth is “a person can fully develop healthy self-respect only when he or she is granted the appropriate social recognition expressed through the full legal rights granted to other members of his or her community.”<sup>127</sup> This is important, as legal protections promote the idea that individuals are treated in the same way, gaining a sense of respect or a feeling that the individual has the same inherent dignity as a free and equal individual in the community. In other words, all members are equal in the eyes of law of their dignity and moral worth.

Also, self-respect only occurs when individuals understand that they have normative obligations to the other members in their community. This attitude of respect occurs through adopting the perspective of the “generalized other,” e.g. when the individual adopts the perspective of no particular viewpoint.<sup>128</sup> This is the perspective found in modern democratic legal rights, and this is where Honneth argues that, “obeying the law, legal subjects recognize each other as persons capable of autonomously making reasonable decisions about moral norms.”<sup>129</sup> So an individual who follows the law is also respecting the other members of the community.

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<sup>126</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 108.

<sup>127</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 36.

<sup>128</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 108.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

Most importantly, self-respect is the recognition that individuals can make legal claims based upon their right as conferred by law. It means that when they have been faulted, the individual can insist on a right to demand restitution for wrong treatment. This declaration forms another dimension of self-respect, namely as a free and equal member of the community. This means that individuals gain self-respect only when they can initiate the mechanisms to be “able to raise claims whose social redemption is considered justified.”<sup>130</sup>

#### 2.3.2.2 Denial of Rights

The denial of rights is considered a form of disrespect, as “this would imply that he or she is not being accorded the same degree of moral responsibility as other members of society.”<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, it is not just a restriction in personal autonomy when one experiences the “feeling of not enjoying the status of a full-fledged partner to interaction, equally endowed with moral rights.”<sup>132</sup> This disrespect extends to an injustice, as it denigrates the individual’s ability to act and be answerable for those actions. Furthermore, this denial also hampers the ability to understand an inherent dignity or moral worth.

#### 2.3.3 Third Sphere: Esteem

Esteem as recognition differs from the other two spheres, as it is afforded precisely because of individual qualities or traits that are best able to contribute to the society’s collective goals. Esteem involves a “form of social valuing that is differential across persons” and based upon “concrete characteristics” or “traits and abilities”.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, esteem is not granted

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>132</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 133.

<sup>133</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 40, 121, 125, 129.

because of a social identity but rather because people have something that can assist “societal goals.”<sup>134</sup>

Honneth believes that every society has a set of “ethical goals and values” that defines its “cultural self-understanding.”<sup>135</sup> This cultural self-understanding might be “characterized by a distinctive set of values which are linked together to form a more or less coherent scheme.”<sup>136</sup> This aspect of society is the “intersubjectively shared value-horizon or value system.”<sup>137</sup> Therefore, individuals who possess qualities that can further society’s collective aims can gain esteem. One example might help elucidate this aspect of esteem. An individual in a poor country might be the world’s most distinguished beer can collector; nevertheless, that trait might not receive positive esteem from the community as it does not further society’s goals.

Esteem is also very much context-dependent. What might be esteemed in one country, might not be esteemed in another. Esteem, therefore, is very much linked “to a society’s complex set of meanings, values, goals and their interrelations: “its esteem order.””<sup>138</sup> Also this esteem order is “open and porous.”<sup>139</sup> In our contemporary culture, there has been a rise in a plurality of values or a plurality of the esteem order. “Traditional hierarchies of value” are slowly or quickly changing.<sup>140</sup> Values are in flux.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid..

<sup>136</sup> Thompson, *Recognition a critical introduction*, 75.

<sup>137</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 121, 124.

<sup>138</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 42.

<sup>139</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 122.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 125.

Finally, “in modern societies ... social relations of symmetrical esteem between individualized (and autonomous) subjects represent a prerequisite for solidarity.”<sup>141</sup> Therefore, it is this esteem that builds relations of solidarity “amongst people who participate in a community of value and further its shared goals.”<sup>142</sup>

### 2.3.3.1 Self-esteem

The practical relation to self is self-esteem. Self-esteem is gained when individual’s traits, talents, gifts, accomplishments are affirmed or socially recognized by others, to the level they reserve. Self-esteem is developed when individual’s achievements are positively evaluated to be of “worth to society.”<sup>143</sup>

Self-esteem can also be gained through social or group identities. This is particularly important, as a group’s worth is also intimately tied to their contribution to society’s goals. Therefore, members of a group can be esteemed or disregarded, purely due to their membership of a group. Disregard for the group’s way of life will result in a loss of self-esteem for all members in that group. One pertinent example might be the Aboriginal Australians. Time and again, one can hear that a group has been belittled due to their different lifestyle. This process of devaluing the traits and abilities results in the loss of self-esteem for all members of the group.

One difficulty arises in that some individuals might lack the requisite qualities to contribute to society’s goals. In this scenario how do they earn esteem? This would be problematic for Honneth, as it would mean that some individuals might be denied recognition and thereby unable to gain self-esteem, which ultimately affects their self-formation as an

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>142</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 42.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 128.

individual. Honneth believes that there has been a “pluralization of values” in that there are “differing forms of personal self-realization.”<sup>144</sup><sup>145</sup> This means that there is a greater chance now for people to attain esteem from their peers, as there are more life choices, more paths to realization. One example might be the expansion of economic careers that lead to more opportunities for self-esteem. Nevertheless, this does not mean everybody deserves an equal amount of self-esteem, some traits will be more esteemed than others: for instance, a heroic firefighter who rescued people will be more esteemed than bystanders. Lastly, Honneth does not believe all individuals have “an automatic right to be granted esteem, [but] he does believe that they should have an equal chance to earn esteem.”<sup>146</sup> In summary, what Honneth is arguing for is that “every subject is free from being collectively denigrated, so that one is given the chance to experience oneself to be recognized, in light of one’s own accomplishments and abilities as valuable for society.”<sup>147</sup>

#### 2.3.3.2 Denigration or Insult

The form of disrespect that correlates to self-esteem is “the denigration of individual or collective ways of life.”<sup>148</sup> Self-esteem partly arises from bestowment from society. Therefore, societies downgrade or mark certain ways of life as inferior, then this denies individuals who follow those ways of life, opportunities to receive society’s approval or self-esteem. It makes it difficult for those individuals to gain positive recognition for their traits, abilities or ways of life.

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<sup>144</sup> Thompson, *Recognition a critical introduction*, 76.

<sup>145</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 125.

<sup>146</sup> Thompson, *Recognition a critical introduction*, 76-77.

<sup>147</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, 130.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

More importantly, it conveys to those individuals that their mode of life has little “positive significance within their community.”<sup>149</sup>

One pertinent example might be the women’s struggle over the “definition of productive labor.”<sup>150</sup> Honneth highlights that “achievement ... is defined against a value standard whose normative reference point is the economic activity of the independent, middle class, male bourgeois.”<sup>151</sup> In this scenario “work ... hence amounts to the result of a group-specific determination of value – to which whole sectors of other activities, themselves equally necessary for reproduction (e.g. household work), fall victim.”<sup>152</sup> Therefore, the women’s labor struggles can be understood as a struggle to reclassify the values of the society, to change the hierarchies of value, or the esteem order of society to include and esteem the important work that these individual women provide.

## 2.4 Critics

### 2.4.1 Critics: Nancy Fraser

The debate between Fraser and Honneth covers a lot of ground, and it would be impossible in such a brief essay to analyze all of her criticisms. Instead, I will focus on what I believe to be her main criticism. She disagrees with Honneth’s claim that changing recognition patterns will lead to a fairer distribution of economic resources amongst all people. Honneth believes that capitalism’s unfair distribution of resources is due to the “consequence of a mode of cultural valuation that is bound up, from the very outset, with asymmetrical forms of

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>150</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 64.

<sup>151</sup> Fraser, *Redistribution or recognition?*, 141.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 141.

recognition.”<sup>153</sup> In other words, capitalist systems are influenced by cultural patterns that are based upon patterns of recognition: for instance, Honneth would argue the current gender wage disparity stems from recognition. Hence, the only way to ensure fairer distribution of economic resources is through changing current recognition patterns.

Fraser introduces two objections: injustices require both recognition and redistribution, and some aspects of the market operate under universal principles rather than cultural patterns. In other words, Fraser believes that changing recognition patterns alone won't lead to a just society. This idea opposes the central tenet of Honneth, namely that *changing recognition patterns will lead to a fairer distribution of resources*.

First, she believes that, for practical purposes, all injustices require both recognition and redistribution.<sup>154</sup> She believes Honneth overlooks this fact and this is his fundamental mistake of Honneth. She believes that “culture and economy are closely entwined,” and therefore any change to make a more just society includes both the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution.<sup>155</sup> The example that Fraser gives is “race,” where the injustice is “rooted simultaneously in the economic structure and the status order of capitalist society.”<sup>156157</sup> The economic structure generates racially specific forms of wages, while the status order privileges

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>154</sup> Fraser, *Redistribution or recognition?*, 25.

<sup>155</sup> Thompson, *recognition a critical introduction*, 105.

<sup>156</sup> Fraser, *Redistribution or recognition?*, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Eurocentric patterns of whiteness. Therefore, the rectifying the injustice of racism requires “an integrated approach” that encompasses both redistribution and recognition.<sup>158</sup>

Second, Fraser believes that markets within economic systems operate under universal principles. She argues that capitalistic markets follow mechanisms that are independent of cultural values. She notes that in capitalistic societies there are two arenas: “marketized arenas, in which strategic action predominates, and non-marketized arenas, where value-oriented interaction predominates.”<sup>159</sup> She notes that “in this marketized zone, interaction is not directly regulated by patterns of cultural value.”<sup>160</sup> Within marketized arenas, individuals want to maximize self-interest. This self-interest applies to all and is therefore independent of culture. This problematizes Honneth’s claim that cultural patterns underpin the capitalistic system.

#### 2.4.1.1 Defending Honneth against Fraser

I will defend Honneth by arguing against Fraser’s claim that there are market sectors (self-interest) that operate outside of cultural values, and that, therefore, recognition is not sufficient to redistribute economic resources. Fraser notes that self-interest in profit making is universally applicable. Honneth does not explicitly refer to Fraser’s self-interest claim, but I suspect Honneth would argue that self-interest for profit is itself cultural. This self-interest for profit is actually created “in eliminable normative preconditions of capitalism - laws, norms and dispositions.”<sup>161</sup> In other words, self-interest for profit can be explained as a cultural creation, created through a particular set of many casual (and some cultural) factors. Finally, in Honneth’s

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>161</sup> Zurn, *Honneth*, 152.

own words, “it is not advisable to theoretically isolate purely economic or systemic factors from cultural elements with regard to the capitalist economic order.”<sup>162</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Critics: Judith Butler

Butler identifies an issue with Honneth, namely that he does not pay close enough attention to the dangers of socio-institutional patterns of power. As he doesn't incorporate power into his theory, she argues that Honneth's theory is a reductionist account of recognition. One example, she gives is that Honneth's account fails to articulate the complex ways that power works in identity formation: e.g. transgender identities. She notes that the world consists of a collective social order that has a preexisting recognition order, or “a world where the meanings and limits of subjects are ahead of me”<sup>163</sup>. This means that identities are never formed in total freedom. This is problematic, as these norms of recognition also exclude other potential human identities. In other words, it calls people to certain predetermined identities whilst deeming other identities unrecognizable. In this sense, recognition can become subjection or domination. Nevertheless, Butler does not totally reject Honneth's theory but wants to highlight its limitations.

##### 2.4.2.1 Defending Honneth against Butler

I will defend Honneth against Butler's criticism. I will do that by, first, arguing that Honneth's account of recognition can be understood as an elucidation of power, and second, that the search for individual self-realization without any reference to the larger community can be problematic.

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<sup>162</sup> Fraser, *Redistribution or recognition?*, 156.

<sup>163</sup> Judith Butler, *Undoing gender* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 28.

First, I defend Honneth, by showing that he does elucidate power in his account of recognition and that he also tries to address and overcome power. Honneth understands the effects of power in recognition, as he writes that recognition can contain forces of power, especially when “praising certain characteristics or abilities seems to have become a political instrument whose unspoken function consists in inserting individuals or social group... Consequently, rather than empowering or liberating individuals, practices of recognition “subject them to domination.”<sup>164</sup> More importantly, Honneth’s recognition does not just highlight power, but the theory’s purpose is to overcome the negative effects of power. Honneth’s recognition theory tries to elucidate injustices of humiliation or disrespect that deprive individuals of the necessary conditions for the formation of their autonomy.<sup>165</sup> This elucidation will hopefully initiate the struggle to overcome it.

Second, I agree with Honneth that Butler’s focus on individual self-realization can become problematic. Honneth offers three criticisms. First, Honneth argues that social forces to legitimize the current social economic order have hijacked this drive for self-discovery. Second, he notes that this quest for authenticity actually limits freedom, practical relation-to-self. Third, this focus is psychologically destructive to the individual, as “compelled from all sides to remain open to the psychological impulses of authentic identity-seeking, subjects are faced with the alternative of feigning authenticity or fleeing into depression; they are forced to choose between

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<sup>164</sup> Axel Honneth, “Recognition as Ideology,” in *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory*, ed. Bert van den Brink and David Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 323.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

staging originality for strategic reasons and pathologically shutting down.”<sup>166</sup> Moreover, are all individual paths of realization equally worthy of recognition?

### Conclusion

Axel Honneth’s project of recognition can be situated within a “tradition that emphasizes not the struggle for self-preservation but rather the struggle for the establishment of relations of mutual recognition, as a precondition for self-realization.”<sup>167</sup> Honneth emphasizes the importance of social relations to an individual’s self-development and maintenance of the person’s identity. Honneth’s idea is that fully autonomous and individuated person depends on an intersubjective relationship centered on love, esteem and respect. The relationship begins with mutual recognition. Then it includes “(a) close relations of love and friendship to include (b) legally institutionalized relations of universal respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons, and (c) networks of solidarity and shared values within which the particular worth of individual members of a community can be acknowledged.”

I propose that the past students’ experience of Maryknoll Convent School and the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters ministry might be understood under the framework of recognition. In other words, Maryknoll Sisters set up and ran Maryknoll Convent School under the framework of recognition and that their ministry within the school might be also understood as recognition. This ministry of recognition was a foundation and core dimension of their work in the schools. I propose recognition as one way of understanding their ministry.

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<sup>166</sup> Honneth, *The I in we*, 166.

<sup>167</sup> Honneth, *The struggle for recognition*, iix.

### **Chapter 3: Students' Experiences of the Maryknoll Sisters' Ministry at Maryknoll Convent School: Recognition**

#### Introduction

Maryknoll Convent School in Hong Kong (MCS) and the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry at that school has primarily been known for women's education. A former principal of MCS, Sister Jeanne Houlihan, noted that "when we first came to Hong Kong, girls were at a disadvantage because the boys had a better education," and that the aim of MCS was to provide better education for women.<sup>168</sup> The school has been very successful. From its earliest years it was considered a "smart school that builds love of God and love of neighbor," as well as containing "the most beautiful building in Hong Kong."<sup>169</sup> Over the years, MCS has educated "ten thousand girls ... through the gates of Maryknoll [Convent School]."<sup>170</sup> One can and should ask: *what was the students' reception of the Maryknoll Sisters within MCS?*

One way to understand the 1950/60s students' reception of the Maryknoll Sisters and the MCS is through Axel Honneth's recognition framework of love, respect and esteem. *Forever Be True: The Love and Heritage of Maryknoll*, a commemorative book on the Maryknoll Sisters and MCS published in 2009 by MCS alumnae. It records hundreds of student experiences spanning six decades. MCS graduates share their diverse, varied and moving experiences of the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry. The 1950s/60s graduates' reflections, though varied, can be collectively

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<sup>168</sup> "Teaching was always passion for Maryknoll nun," South China Morning Post, October 06, 2013, accessed November 19, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1325781/teaching-was-always-passion-maryknoll-nun>.

<sup>169</sup> *The Field Afar Magazine*, March, 1950.

<sup>170</sup> Amy M. W. Ho, *Forever be true: the love & heritage of Maryknoll* (Hong Kong: Maryknoll Convent School Foundation, 2009), 223.

understood within Honneth's framework of recognition. Over the years, the past pupils reciprocated the Sisters' initial recognition through visits to MCS, visits to the Maryknoll Motherhouse in Ossining, New York State, and by publishing books and videos about the Maryknoll Sisters and MCS.

This chapter is divided into the following parts: methodology (3.1), the Maryknoll Sisters/ MCS recognition in terms of respect (3.2.1), esteem (3.2.2), love (3.2.3) and an outline of the alumnae's recognition of the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry (3.3).

### 3.1 Methodology

The source for the pupils' experiences was the aforementioned jubilee book: *Forever be True: The Love and Heritage of Maryknoll*. The book came into being following the publication of a brochure commemorating the "71<sup>st</sup> anniversary" of the iconic school building and its designation "as a Historic Monument by the Government of Hong Kong."<sup>171</sup> The jubilee book was conceived as "a more committed project" hoping to capture the "inspired vision and love that led to it [school building]," the "essence of the Maryknoll [Convent School] experience" and lastly, "the people that came to use and inhabit this building over the years."<sup>172</sup> "Hundreds of MCS girls spanning some sixty years" were invited to share their personal memories of their time at the school.<sup>173</sup>

My methodological analysis of the 1950/60s graduate reflections is based upon three considerations. First, the 1950/60s graduates were chosen to analyze a manageable data set of approximately fifty responses. Second, the 1950s/60s group of graduates' responses had the

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<sup>171</sup> Ho, *Forever be true*, 7.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 239.

highest frequency of references to the Maryknoll Sisters. Third, the 1950s/60s period was at the peak number of Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong.<sup>174</sup>

This methodological approach is limited by the fact that personal memories recorded in a commemorative book are less objective than other historical sources. All of the recorded experiences are favorable and need to be supplemented with in-depth interviews. Unfortunately, time, money, geographical distance and the reality that many of the Sisters are deceased or frail make this endeavor difficult. Nevertheless, the student experiences provide some evidence. It is possible that further studies can be initiated to clarify or reinforce these initial findings.

Nevertheless, this approach is suitable for the current endeavor as my aim is to generate a thesis and not necessarily to prove one. In other words, my aim is to explore a possible new method to look at the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters. Further research will be needed to prove this thesis.

### 3.2 Recognition in Three Spheres: Respect, Love, Esteem

#### 3.2.1 Respect

Honneth's recognition of respect occurs when students are treated equally through the policies of the institution. MCS students experienced respect through four different policies. The first was that entry to the school was not restricted by ethnicity and nationality (3.2.1.1). The second was that economically disadvantaged students were helped with support structures (3.2.1.2). The third was that the school was open to students of different religious traditions (3.2.1.3). The fourth was that students' voices were respected through student councils to represent their claims (3.2.1.4).

##### 3.2.1.1 Nationalities

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<sup>174</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll sisters in Hong Kong*, 163.

From its earliest days Maryknoll Convent School accepted students of different nationalities. It began as a kindergarten catering to twelve Portuguese families, but this quickly expanded to include students from other nationalities. Only a few years after its foundation, one Sister counted “twelve nationalities among our members in the kindergarten: Chinese, Japanese, English, Portuguese, Irish, French, German, Scotch, Russian, American, Peruvian and Hindu Indian.”<sup>175</sup> This was captured in a 1925 photo, “the multicultural student body of the Maryknoll Sisters” convent school in Kowloon. Children of Chinese, English, American, Portuguese, Indian and other nationalities could be identified in the photo.”<sup>176</sup> The 1930s practice of accepting different nationalities differed from some non-Catholic schools at that time. The students of European and Eurasian descent generally attended one of two schools, the Diocesan Boys’ School or the Diocesan Girls’ School, while students of Chinese descent attended one of two government schools, Queens College or Kings College.<sup>177</sup>

### 3.2.1.2 Support structures to help economically disadvantaged students

Maryknoll Convent provided assistance for its economically disadvantaged students through two policies: first, everyone had to wear a standardized uniform, and, second, the convent provided free second hand uniforms for students. First, Maryknoll Convent adopted the British custom of school uniforms. The British idea was based upon a sense of neatness and the desire to convey a sense of equal dignity amongst its students. Maryknoll Convent had standard uniforms and “in some small way, this would help young minds recognize the equality and

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>176</sup> "The multicultural student body of the Maryknoll Sisters' convent school in Kowloon," 香港記憶 | Hong Kong Memory, accessed October 29, 2017, [http://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/education/All\\_Items/Images/201303/t20130311\\_57266.html?f=search&t=search\\_datas.jsp&path=channelid](http://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/education/All_Items/Images/201303/t20130311_57266.html?f=search&t=search_datas.jsp&path=channelid).

<sup>177</sup> Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 107.

dignity of each person.”<sup>178</sup> Second, Maryknoll Convent had a room where students could find second hand uniforms. After World War II, Hong Kong’s economy was in tatters. The city was suffering financial ruin. This hardship extended to the people and to the Maryknoll Convent. Alumna Dr. Linda Tsui wrote, “I remember there was a room at school for storing handed down old uniforms. They were made available for girls who did not have the means.”<sup>179</sup> MCS created a room for those students so as to minimize a sense of income disparity. As Hong Kong in the 1940/50/60s was very poor, it suggests that Dr. Linda Tsui’s opinion that “many girls did take advantage of it [the second hand uniform room] – all public and natural. Not an eyebrow was raised among schoolmates.”<sup>180</sup> This may well be true or perspectival.

### 3.2.1.3 Open to non-Catholic students

MCS provided respect for people of other religions. Though initially catering for Catholics the school soon enrolled non-Catholics. Part of this reason stemmed from the reality that the Catholic population of HK has always been a small minority. Alumna Mabel Chau was relieved when she was accepted, “being Buddhists, my mom and I were relieved.”<sup>181</sup> It was not just Buddhists, but, as the former principal Sister Jeanne Houlihan noted, students’ religious affiliation have included “Catholics, Protestants, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Chinese popular religions.”<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 208.

#### 3.2.1.4 Students were represented via student councils

Since 1948, MCS respected student voices and allowed them to form a representative body, the Student Council.<sup>183</sup> This new Student Council with Sister Ann Mary as adviser was instrumental in identifying new initiatives and handled “minor disciplinary problems.”<sup>184</sup>

#### 3.2.2 Esteem

Honneth’s recognition of esteem occurs through appreciating and valuing the individual’s valuable qualities and gifts. MCS and the Maryknoll Sisters esteemed the students in the following areas: Catholic faith (3.2.2.1), academics, athletics and music (3.2.2.2), ingenuity and creativity (3.2.2.3), social justice (3.2.2.4), and dreams for the future (3.2.2.5).

##### 3.2.2.1 Catholic Faith

MCS esteemed the students’ Catholic faith through conducting beautiful and elegant Catholic liturgies. MCS respected different religious affiliations but valued the Catholic faith. Four students describe experiences of Catholic religious activity as one of the highlights of their MCS experience. Three students Miriam Lau, Pam Vincent (Esmail) and Pearl Chan Tam mentioned that “the May Crowning of our Lady” was a “beautiful, simple ceremony” that “has stayed with me all these years.” Moreover, two students reflected on the student chosen to crown Mary: Miriam Lau “hoped that [she] would one day be chosen,” while Pam Vincent (Esmail) “would love to know at the age of 60 the criteria for being chosen.” A third student, Nancy Yiu notes how she received esteem when she was selected to lead the rosary during the month of May. She writes, “I still fondly remember the Statue of the Blessed Mother of Jesus standing in the Courtyard. ... I remember how I stood patiently [there,] waiting proudly, anxiously, and earnestly for my turn to lead the Hail Mary. For the first time I had the deep feeling of the power

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>184</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll sisters in Hong Kong*, 87.

and unity in praying. To be included on such special occasion among those leading prayers touched me profoundly.”<sup>185</sup> Therefore, MCS esteemed the students’ Catholic faith with the Marian events being significant and highly valued events.

### 3.2.2.2 Athletics, music and academics

MSC provided different avenues of esteem including academics, athletics, and music. MCS expanded opportunities for esteem beyond the 1950s/60s housewife model to include academic achievements, music and other extracurricular activities. First, students were esteemed in academic realms with the commemorative book highlighting the distinctive benchmark of two girls entering the University of Hong Kong in 1936.<sup>186</sup> Academic esteem was not restricted to the humanities, but included scientific endeavors as seen through the construction of a “new science laboratory” and the establishment of other clubs such as a “glee club, science club and book club.”<sup>187</sup>

Second, esteem expanded beyond academia and included many other extracurricular activities including athletics, drama and girl guides. Moreover, this was unusual in those days as Mabel Chau writes, “there were so many extracurricular activities for us to participate in through drama, debate, basketball, netball, swimming, girl guides ... These activities were quite unusual for local schools in those days.”<sup>188</sup> Third, music was also esteemed at MCS. Eleanor Wong notes how she was esteemed through the privilege of performing for the Maryknoll Sisters: “in my

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<sup>185</sup> Ho, *Forever be true*, 113.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

Maryknoll days, I was often invited to give concerts at the Convent – sharing music with the Sisters and others. I gave it my best.”<sup>189</sup>

### 3.2.2.3 Ingenuity and creativity

Maryknoll Sisters also esteemed students who exhibited ingenuity and creativity. Three experiences of students in which they displayed ingenuity and creativity were recorded. I will discuss each of the three vignettes, so as to describe a characteristic that the Sisters displayed, namely that they esteemed girls through allowing them to pursue opportunities within the school.

The first experience comes from Lanny Oei who was esteemed for conceiving the idea to organize and perform a Beatles style concert at MCS. Her full experience can be found in the footnotes.<sup>190</sup> She notes that she had an idea either to “raise money or to raise excitement at the school.” Sister Houlihan approved the plan. Moreover, during the concert with the pandemonium of nine hundred screaming students in the hall, Sister Houlihan and the rest of the Sisters were still supportive. This points to the esteem that the Sisters had towards the girls who displayed ingenuity, that the Sisters esteemed girls in different ways, allowing them to propose, initiate and take charge of special events.

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 170. “I think we needed to raise some money or some excitement at school or both; so I convinced Sr Joel Marie (Sr Jeanne Houlihan) that the great innovative and creative Form 5A would put on the performance of a lifetime which would have the school hall just ‘rocking’ while raising money for a good cause. Sister gave her blessing and so it was. Four Form 5A girls dressed up in men’s black suits and wearing Beatles wigs came prancing out swinging their guitars to the tune of ‘It’s a Hard Day’s Night.’ I thought I was in DEEP trouble with the nuns for not being able to control the 900 screaming Maryknoll girls in the hall and bringing out their animal instincts. I panicked until I noticed right at the back of the hall like neat black and white penguins in a row were all the Sisters sitting in observance their arms originally crossed but now I noticed they were actually nodding their heads to the music, quite taken by the happy tune! ... What a relief.”

The second was the esteem that Janet Wai Kam Chang received from her netball proposal. The experience is reproduced in full in the footnote.<sup>191</sup> The reflection supports the idea that the Maryknoll Sisters esteemed creative students. Once again, the students were empowered enough to ask. The Sisters esteemed the students through their listening and by subsequently entrusting the girls with executing the project, which included writing to an international netball association, persuading the sports store to order balls, and then ensuring that the netball courts were properly marked. This example shows an important value from the Maryknoll Sisters; they esteemed the girls who displayed ingenuity and creativity, even if sometimes “a few daring souls sneaked into the school in the middle of the night and painted in straight lines with the assistance of torch lights!”<sup>192</sup>

The third experience from Shelley Lee shows the esteem she received for suggesting the establishment of a democratically elected student council.<sup>193</sup> Shelley opposed her selection as the head of the student council as she believed grass roots democratic elections would be more

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 97. “Thus, netball was chosen as the school sport instead of the more common basketball. However, we didn't even know what a netball looked like nor the rules. With Sister Victoria Marie's “No mountains high enough” song in the air, we wrote to the netball association in England for rules books and cajoled the only sports shop in Tsim Sha Tsui to order genuine netballs for us. They were paid for with our own lunch money too. There only three or four schools which had netball teams. We rotated playing in each other's court. When it was our turn to host, we were at a loss – our asphalt court was full of holes with no distinguishable lines. Once again, Maryknoll ingenuity came into play: a few daring souls sneaked into the school in the middle of the night and painted in straight lines with the assistance of torch lights. Sisters, forgive us. The angels you saw dancing on the court that night were actually your mischievous students!”

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 97

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 183. “Personally, I had my first experience with popular democracy at school. I was appointed head girl in Form 6 but I went to Sister Rose Duchesne, then principal, with the claim that the student leadership should be elected by the girls at large. We drafted a Constitution, ran an election, formed an EXCO, and founded our first Student Government... We were a creative bunch. We were always extending the possibilities.”

representative and also bestow a greater mandate upon the student council. She took the idea to Sister who agreed with her. The students “drafted a Constitution, ran an election, formed an EXCO, and founded our first Student Government.” They initiated and were allowed to run the project from beginning to end. Once again, it highlights how the Sisters did not see this activity as a distraction but rather encouraged it.

#### 3.2.2.4 Esteem for girls who tackle social justice

MCS also esteemed girls who tackled social justice issues. From early on the girls were encouraged to form a social conscience. Mother Mary Joseph notes in her letter to the school that “the school children are being trained to take an active interest in the poor and needy; the older ones [to] visit the hospitals and teach religion, and throughout the school the money made on the sale of candy at recess goes to the poor fund.”<sup>194</sup> This value for social justice manifested in different ways, including visiting the sick, teaching religion and the most explicit, the understanding that sales from candy went into the poor fund. All the students knew that any money raised was to help needy people. It wasn't a profit making enterprise but an early form of social enterprise. Senior girl students were asked to give lessons to others as a sign of helping poorer students from less socially economic background.<sup>195</sup> Finally, Margaret Wong notes that “as Maryknollers [Maryknoll Convent School students], it is our duty to question inequalities, to instill mutual respect in our relationships and to champion the equal rights of all human beings, regardless of gender, age or creed.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 1.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 180.

<sup>195</sup> Patricia P. K. Chiu, *A history of the Grant Schools Council: Mission, Vision, and Transformation* (Hong Kong: Grant Schools Council, 2013), 21.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

### 3.2.2.5 Encouraged dreams (esteemed dreaming)

MCS encouraged students to think and dream big and beyond the traditional roles of housewives. These dreams were not restricted to traditional Confucian roles but rather greatly expanded to undertake opportunities that, in many ways, could be considered other worldly. Dorothy Mei-Chu Chan reflects that “These sisters and the teachers inspired us to chase the dreams – going to the moon, running at the Olympic Games, saving the wild elephants in Africa, tending to the poor and the sick and building dams on the Yellow River. Based on the beliefs and values of Christianity, we learned love for God, commitment, and dedication to serve. In short, we learned how to be noble.”<sup>197</sup> This quote highlights how some Sisters inspired the girls to chase their dreams and to pursue lofty endeavors within the remit of religion and commitment to the common good.

### 3.2.3 Love (Friendship)

Honneth’s recognition of love can be described in two ways. The first occurs between parents, and child, while the second transpires between friends. The students experienced love and care four different ways: the Maryknoll Sisters’ love and care for their students (3.2.3.1), Sisters foregoing their learning Chinese (3.2.3.2), the beauty of the school campus (3.2.3.3), and accompaniment following graduation. (3.2.3.4).

#### 3.2.3.1 Love and care for their students

The Maryknoll Sisters offered love and care to individual students and their families. Hong Kong from the 1940s through the 1960s was very poor with many people living in destitution as the country slowly recovered from the effects of war. There were four experiences of care from the book that ranged from individual students at school to students and their

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<sup>197</sup> Ho, *Forever be true*, 145.

families at home. In other words, Maryknoll Sisters provided individual students with extra time, maternal love, home visits and visits to provide food.

The Maryknoll Sisters provided love and care through individual attention to students. As one Sister recorded “a teacher’s day is necessarily occupied with school and attention to individual students.”<sup>198</sup> Eleanor Wong recalls this individual attention when she writes that the Sisters “showed me how to be a better person by sharing one’s time and talent.”<sup>199</sup> Etta Seen Ling Chan writes that this attention was evident by the Sisters accompanying her through her “tribulations, during different stages of my life.”<sup>200</sup>

This individual care became maternal love for one student who lost her mother. A now Jesuit priest, Father Marciano Baptista, SJ, writes that “Sr Matthew Marie was like a mother to me (perhaps because I lost my mother when I was six) and she was even closer to Nancy.”<sup>201</sup> Sister Matthew Marie’s actions were perceived by Marciano to be love, care and actually representative of a mother. Moreover, he wonders if Sister Matthew Marie looked after him because she knew about his loss. Nevertheless, Sister Marie’s actions showed her loving disposition and Marciano received her actions as motherly love. This is one experience but is significant as it suggests that attention sometimes was extended into even greater care and love.

The Maryknoll Sisters cared for students through home visits. During the day, the Sisters were already very busy, yet they were called to extend their care towards the students through the important ministry of home visits. As one Sister recorded, “some of the sisters try to do all

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<sup>198</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll sisters in Hong Kong*, 87.

<sup>199</sup> Ho, *Forever be true*, 155.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. Father Marciano Baptista, SJ studied there when MCS became co-educational for a brief amount of time after World War II.

they can with the result that they are overworked.”<sup>202</sup> Despite this, their religious superior urged the Sisters “to do more for the people in home visiting.”<sup>203</sup> This demand shows the love and care that the Maryknoll Sisters had for their students, not just within the school community but also beyond the school context.

The Maryknoll Sisters loving care included providing food during their home visits. One reason for home visits was to ensure the children and the family had the bare essentials, including food and milk powder. Thus, the Sisters provided not only for the individual’s mind (education) but also the body and the soul. This care wasn’t restricted to the individual but extended to the family. Winifred Lin was moved as she recorded, “my earliest memories of Maryknoll Sisters were of their loving care for the underprivileged classmates. The Sisters would personally deliver rice and milk powder on home visits, offering far more than just tuition. Their loving care, generosity and kindness were beautiful beyond words, just like the school campus, the hub of the Maryknoll heritage.”<sup>204</sup> Therefore, the Maryknoll Sisters provided love and care to students and their families both at school and in their homes.

### 3.2.3.2 Maryknoll Sisters foregoing the opportunity to learn Chinese

In the 1950/60s, Chinese parents and students understood that proficiency in English was paramount for their futures. Hong Kong was still a British colonial colony with English being the lingua franca. Chinese parents and students were aware that “academic qualifications in English offered better and wider opportunities of securing a well-paid ‘white-collar’ job in commerce,

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<sup>202</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll sisters in Hong Kong*, 87.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> *Forever be true*, 94.

the professions or with a Government department.”<sup>205</sup> Moreover, as United States cemented itself as a global superpower, American English was sought after.

The Maryknoll Sisters working at MCS were missioned not to study Cantonese, so that they could further develop their students’ English proficiency. Maryknoll Convent was an English medium school whereby all classes (except language classes i.e. Chinese, French) were conducted in English. Unlike the Sisters missioned to parish and evangelical work, who learned Cantonese, the Sisters missioned to MCS were ordered by their superiors not to learn Cantonese, so that by communicating exclusively in English they could better help their students learn English. Sister Betty Ann notes “simply because we have all these Sisters and the Sisters that work in the school were not allowed at that time to learn Chinese. The Sisters that work in the parish and who did the evangelical work all went to language school, so that was by way of making sure that in school that the language that will be used will be English.”<sup>206</sup>

This order would have been difficult for those Maryknoll Sisters who taught at the convent school, as they were members of a missionary order, wanting to learn other cultures and languages. The Maryknoll Sisters charism was one of encountering other cultures. Generally, they would learn the local language to better understand the local culture. However, in this scenario, the Sisters working MCS had to forfeit this aspect of their Maryknoll charism. Sister Rose Debrecht was one such Sister, and upon her arrival in 1946 “was disappointed to know that she was going to teach in English to M.C.S. students.”<sup>207</sup> On one level, it meant it was easier to begin their ministry, as Chinese is not an easy language to learn. However, this policy also had

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<sup>205</sup> Lachlan Crawford, "The development of secondary education in Hong Kong, 1945-71," *History of Education* 24, no. 1 (1995): 111, doi:10.1080/0046760950240108.

<sup>206</sup> Chow, “The role of English,” 48.

<sup>207</sup> Chu, *Maryknoll sisters in Hong Kong*, 161.

negative repercussions in that it made it more difficult to engage within the larger Chinese community. It would have also made the home visits much more difficult and less productive. Therefore, this sacrifice might have caused pain to some of the Sisters, as it restricted their social interactions and made them permanently unable to engage within the wider Chinese community. This sacrifice was an act of love for their students, especially coming to the fore in the 1950/60s, when the majority of students were native Chinese speakers.<sup>208</sup>

### 3.2.3.3 The Beauty of the School Campus

The beauty of the MCS building inspired feelings of wonder, love and special care for the individual student. The first thing that the students noticed was the beauty of the school building. In post-war Hong Kong, where refugees were teeming the streets and the city in ruins, it would have been a special moment to be able to go into the school. The beauty of the school campus produced within the students, feelings of being special. This sense would have brought them feelings of being worthy, of having dignity, and of being loved. Miriam Lau wrote how she continues to have dreams of the school and their building, even “years after I have left Maryknoll, I continue to have dreams of the lovely school building and events taking place inside it. My dreams took me back to many locations, particularly in the Primary Section.”<sup>209</sup>

### 3.2.3.4 After graduation: Alumnae relations center

This love and care continued after graduation, through the alumnae relations office, maintained by a former graduate of the school, Sister Teresa Leung. She runs the alumnae relations center from the convent. Sister Teresa contacts over 3000 students and “her focus is on them and their families. I am interested in the wellbeing of the alums – how they are doing, how

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<sup>208</sup> Chow, “The role of English,” 48.

<sup>209</sup> *Forever be true*, 112.

happy and peaceful they are, how their health is and how their relationship with God is.”<sup>210</sup>

These are all signs of love, care and friendship.

### 3.3 Students’ recognition of Maryknoll Sisters Ministry at MCS

After graduation, the students reciprocated their recognition of the Maryknoll Sisters in three ways: graduates presenting their spouses to the Sisters on their wedding day, visits to the Ossining Convent, and books and video productions of the school and the Sisters.

In the 1950s there was a tradition by which graduates would present their spouses to the Sisters and to the school on their wedding day. This was done “immediately after the wedding ceremony to visit their teachers and other Maryknoll students.”<sup>211</sup> This was to show to the School, teachers and Sisters the important places they held in their lives. It symbolically brought the school and the Maryknoll Sisters “into the family.” Indeed, the Maryknoll Sisters were treated as highly significant others. In all cultures, marriage is an important occasion that is generally celebrated with close family and friends. Presenting their spouse on the wedding day itself showed great respect towards the Sisters.

Maryknoll Sisters’ center at Ossining is constantly marked by streams of past student visitors. Sister Teresa noted over 400 visitors each year and that they travel from far and wide. One past pupil was so determined to see her former teacher that she travelled to Ossining, regardless of the fact that her transit through New York totaled less than one day.<sup>212</sup> Moreover, the journey to Ossining is difficult and this inconvenience further suggests the high regard and gratitude the alumnae have for the Maryknoll Sisters and their school.

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<sup>210</sup> Sister Teresa Leung’s 2016 Alumnae Liaisons Annual Report.

<sup>211</sup> *Forever be true*, 174.

<sup>212</sup> Author’s conversation with Sister Teresa Leung, in May 2017.

Recently, alumnae have produced books and even a DVD documentary, acknowledging the Sisters' presence and their work at Maryknoll Convent School. These books include: Cheung's *Maryknoll Convent School: 75th Anniversary, 1999-2000*, Chu's *The Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong, 1921- 1969: in Love with the Chinese*, Chu's *The Diaries of the Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong, 1921-1966*, Ho's *Forever be True: The Love and Heritage of Maryknoll*, and Lee's *Maryknoll Convent School 1925-2000, Hong Kong: Maryknoll Convent School*. Also a DVD was produced called *Trailblazers in Habit*.

### Conclusion

The students' reception of the Maryknoll Sisters ministry at MCS can be understood as one of recognition. They recorded experiences where the Maryknoll Sisters recognized them through the spheres of love, esteem, and respect. Following graduation, the alumnae continued to recognize the Maryknoll Sisters in three different ways: by visiting the Maryknoll Sisters either at the school, or by visiting them at their convent in Upstate New York. But most importantly the students recognized the Maryknoll Sisters through the jubilee book. As the editor writes, "the girls of MCS [Maryknoll Convent School] wish to express their deepest gratitude to the Maryknoll Sisters for their invaluable contribution to education... In turn they have helped MCS girls develop to their full potential and become the unique [persons] that they are today."<sup>213</sup>

This historical case study suggests a new way of seeing the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters at Maryknoll Sisters Convent, Hong Kong. It proposes that recognition was how the students experienced their time at their school and the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters. This is meaningful, as it highlights the need of mutual recognition by teachers and schools, on the necessity of mutual recognition of other religious congregations. In other words, this historical

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<sup>213</sup> Ho, *Forever be true*, 219.

case study is not just important for historical purposes or for an academic purpose but rather this model or framework is important for our contemporary world today.

In my next chapter, I argue that the ministry of the Maryknoll Sisters in Hong Kong is significant for contemporary missiology. Recognition is not a historical need but as Honneth notes a transcendental need for all humans. Therefore, it is vital that recognition is part of current day missiology.

## **Chapter 4: Recognition as a Precondition to Roman Catholic Missiology**

### **Introduction**

Alex Honneth's recognition theory can be understood as having two distinct conceptual dimensions: the first is the psychological recognition in the spheres of love, respect and esteem, while the second is the recognitive acts and gestures: e.g., a smile that underpins the previous psychological recognition of love, respect and esteem.<sup>214</sup> In other words, recognitive actions such as a smile are the first step to recognizing the individual and only then can one give the psychological recognition of love, respect and esteem. A mother smiles at her child to recognize her, but this smile also conveys the psychological recognition of love.

Recognition is how the former pupils of Maryknoll Convent in Hong Kong received the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry. The Maryknoll Sisters recognized the students through recognitive gestures and also through the recognition spheres of love, esteem and respect. Recognitive actions included greeting the students, enquiring about their life etc.

Recognitive acts are important for missiology as it influences missiological interactions: e.g. a pastor's warm welcome precipitated conversation regarding religion. Human interactions are imbued by recognitive and non-recognitive acts. Acts such as a wave, a greeting, a smile and a hug are permeated with recognitive meanings. These acts or attitudes such as a smile or a wave can influence communication either in a positive or in a negative way. Another way to understand recognition is to view it as a meta-language of communication that can affect human interactions.

Recognitive acts become even more important in this world of migration and diversity. Migration has increased language plurality in many places. Previously homogenous contexts are

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<sup>214</sup> I shall use recognition to describe the psychological recognition of love, esteem and respect, while recognitive acts will denote the actions, gestures that are needed to recognize the individual.

now plural: e.g. in 2013, 430,000 African nationals traveled to Guangzhou, a city in China. Historically, communication in Guangzhou would have been in Cantonese but now, with this global trend of migration, one might encounter many different language speakers at once. In this scenario, communication will be highly influenced by recognitive acts such as smiles, waves and affectivity.

Contemporary missiology needs to incorporate recognitive acts as a precondition to other contemporary Catholic missiology. This means that recognition is the precondition, but never the final step, to *Redemptoris Missio*'s "single but complex reality of mission."<sup>215</sup> Mission, then begins with recognition but also includes the other six or so elements that theorists have developed. As a precondition, recognition underpins all the other elements to mission and constitutes an essential component of mission.

In this chapter, I describe the Catholic understanding of participation in God's Mission (4.1), outline a contemporary issue of missiology, migration (4.2), articulate the theological significance of recognition (4.3), argue that recognitive acts can address migration issues (4.4), and argue that recognition must be included as a precondition to Catholic Missiology (4.5).

#### 4.1 Roman Catholic Mission from Church documents

##### 4.1.1 Documents prior to Vatican II

Five mission encyclicals were published between the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Vatican II.<sup>216</sup> The first was Pope Benedict XV's 1919 apostolic letter, *Maximum Illud* which highlighted the need for more local native clergy in the missions, as they were "the greatest hope of the new churches."<sup>1</sup> Seven years later, Pius XI in 1927's *Rerum Ecclesiam* echoed the

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<sup>215</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, sec. 41.

<sup>216</sup> See James Kroeger, "Papal Mission Wisdom: Five Mission Encyclicals 1919-1959," in Stephen B. Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2013) 93-100.

importance of missionary work in non-Christian countries.<sup>217</sup> In 1951, Pope Pius XII's *Evangelii Praecones* urged the need for missionaries to undertake more specialized training.<sup>218</sup> Pius XII released *Fidei Donum* in 1957 and warned about the “dangerous narrowness of excessive love of country” in the forms of nationalism.<sup>219</sup> Pope John XXIII in 1959's *Princeps Pastorum* reaffirmed the trajectories of previous documents and stressed the importance of a local hierarchy and clergy.<sup>220</sup> These documents emphasized a shift to “appreciating the values of local cultures and the call for the establishment of an indigenous clergy.”<sup>221</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Vatican II and its aftermath

There have been four major mission and evangelization documents since Vatican II: *Ad Gentes* (AG), *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) and *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG).<sup>222</sup> *Ad Gentes* characterized the whole Church “as missionary by her very nature”; she has

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<sup>217</sup> Pius XI, *Rerum Ecclesiae* [On Catholic Missions], Vatican Website, February 28, 1926, accessed November 19, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_28021926\\_rerum-ecclesiae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_28021926_rerum-ecclesiae.html).

<sup>218</sup> Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones* [On Promotion of Catholic Missions], Vatican Website, June 2, 1951, accessed November 19, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_02061951\\_evangelii-praecones.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_02061951_evangelii-praecones.html).

<sup>219</sup> Pius XII, *Fidei Donum* [On the Present Condition of Catholic Missions, especially in Africa], Vatican Website, April 21, 1957, sec. 16, accessed November 19, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_21041957\\_fidei-donum.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_21041957_fidei-donum.html).

<sup>220</sup> John XXIII, *Princeps Pastorum* [On the Missions, Native Clergy and Lay Participation], Vatican Website, November 28, 1959, accessed November 19, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_28111959\\_princeps.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_28111959_princeps.html).

<sup>221</sup> Stephen Bevans, “Mission as the Nature of the Church: Developments in Catholic Ecclesiology.” *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 21.3 (December, 2014): 185, accessed Nov 19, [http://aejt.com.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/694298/AEJT\\_Mission\\_as\\_the\\_Nature\\_of\\_the\\_Church\\_Developments\\_in\\_Catholic\\_Ecclesiology\\_Bevans.pdf](http://aejt.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/694298/AEJT_Mission_as_the_Nature_of_the_Church_Developments_in_Catholic_Ecclesiology_Bevans.pdf)

<sup>222</sup> Vatican Council, and George H. Tavard. *Ad Gentes: On the Mission Activity of the Church*,

arisen from the mission of the Trinity: “the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws as her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.”<sup>223</sup> Mission is not some activity of the Church but rather constitutive of its being. Mission is not an elite activity but rather constitutive of being Christian. Every Christian participates in the being of God and is called to be God’s saving presence on earth. This theological shift means that mission begins at home, with neighbors in the community, etc. Nevertheless, AG also retained a special objective for the term missions, “usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ.”<sup>224</sup>

EN proposed important movements, and following AG did not restrict mission to a geographical area. It expanded the undertakings of mission to include partnership of all churches, and the need for development, peace, freedom and liberation as elements of the Biblical message

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*Promulgated by Pope Paul VI, November 18, 1965.* Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1966.

Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Vatican Website, 8 December, 1975, accessed October 29, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html).

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<sup>223</sup> *Ad Gentes*, sec. 2.

<sup>224</sup> *Ad Gentes*, sec. 6.

and part of mission. It recognized that elements of salvation could be found in non-Christian religions.<sup>225</sup>

Pope John Paul's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) was promulgated to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of AG and the fifteenth anniversary of EN. It is the most comprehensive and systematic reflection on Catholic mission. Pope John Paul II affirms AG's proper understanding of mission, "directed to peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ," "who are far from Christ," in whom the Church "has not yet taken root" and whose "culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel."<sup>226</sup> He also acknowledges the diversity of mission arising from the "variety of circumstances in which that mission is carried out."<sup>227</sup> He includes a new addition, interreligious dialogue, but this dialogue is not a strategy for eventual conversion. It arises out of respect for the other religions and is done with a sincere desire to get to know and learn from other religions. Finally, dialogue is a task for every Christian in his or her own way.

Pope Francis published his first Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) on November 24, 2013. The document reemphasizes that the Church's "missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*."<sup>228</sup> This outreach springs from the joy of the gospel and should lead the faithful "to bring Christ's love to others."<sup>229</sup> Moreover, only people who feel

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<sup>225</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, sec. 53.

<sup>226</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, sec. 34.

<sup>227</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, sec. 33.

<sup>228</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 15.

<sup>229</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 25.

happiness in seeking the good of others and desiring their happiness are truly missionaries.<sup>230</sup>

Finally, this mission involves many elements, but the key “dialogue and friendship ... are part of the life of Jesus’ disciples.”<sup>231</sup> In Pope Francis’ words, the Church’s mission is the “deepest identity.”<sup>232</sup>

#### 4.2 Contemporary missiological context: Migration

Over the last thirty years, migration has become an issue of increasingly importance for the Roman Catholic Church. Migration’s growing importance has been reflected in papal statements. Pope John Paul II writes that “migration is a problem” that needs prompt action.<sup>233</sup> Pope Benedict XVI elevates migration to be “a social phenomenon of epoch-making proportions.”<sup>234</sup> Pope Francis has been the most explicit, underscoring the importance of migration and its implications for the mission of the Church. He writes that “throughout the first years of my pontificate, I have repeatedly expressed my particular concern for the lamentable situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty. This situation is undoubtedly a “sign of the times” which I have tried to interpret, with

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<sup>230</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 272.

<sup>231</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 248.

<sup>232</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 14.

<sup>233</sup> John Paul II, “Address to the Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants,” Vatican Website, 9 October 1998, sec. 1, accessed November 19, 2017, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/october/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19981009\\_migranti.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19981009_migranti.html)

<sup>234</sup> Benedict XVI, *Caritas In Veritate* [Encyclical on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth], Vatican Website, 29 June 2009, sec. 62, accessed November 19, 2017, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html).

the help of the Holy Spirit, ever since my visit to Lampedusa on 8 July 2013.”<sup>235</sup> Contemporary Missiologists have also highlighted migration as an important issue. One of the leading Roman Catholic Missiologists, Stephen Bevans writes that “migration today forms a major context for the church’s mission of evangelization and solidarity with the poorest of the earth’s poor.”<sup>236</sup>

In the world today, approximately one in seven people or one billion people of the world’s population fit the migrant category. The world has seen unprecedented levels of migration in the last few decades. “In mid-2010, 859 million people from 327 people groups were living in diaspora, a total of 12.5% of the global population.”<sup>237</sup> These statistics do not include the world’s “fifty million refugees or internally displaced people.”<sup>238</sup> This sociological reality means that “migration is a mega-trend of our times.”<sup>239</sup>

The global economy’s “emerging structural features” will further fuel the rates of migration.<sup>240</sup> The increase boils down to two simple economic supply and demand factors. On the supply side, the labor force numbers in developed countries will remain steady while in less

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<sup>235</sup> Francis, “Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees,” Vatican Website, 15 August 2017, accessed November 19, 2017, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170815\\_world-migrants-day-2018.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html).

<sup>236</sup> “Themes and Questions in Missiology Today,” Document Details , 11, accessed November 19, 2017, [http://www.cppsmissionaries.org/docs/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_details&gid=101&Itemid=4](http://www.cppsmissionaries.org/docs/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=101&Itemid=4).

<sup>237</sup> *Christianity in its global context, 1970-2020: Society, religion, and mission* (South Hamilton, MA: Center for the Study of Global Christianity.), 82.

<sup>238</sup> “Themes and Questions in Missiology Today,” 12.

<sup>239</sup> Silvano Maria Tomasi, “Migration as Challenge to the Catholic Church,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 14, no. 1 (2017): 29, doi:10.5840/jcathsoc20171414.

<sup>240</sup> “World Migration Report 2010,” *IOM World Migration Report*, 2010, 4, doi:10.18356/be2a2be6-en.

developed countries, it “is expected to increase from 2.4 billion in 2005 to 3 billion in 2020 and 3.6 billion in 2040,”<sup>241</sup> Moreover, labor demands in less developed countries will remain static while developed countries will demand more labor.<sup>242</sup> This confluence of factors will see ever increasing numbers of people wanting to migrant to other countries.

Migrant movements have brought immense language plurality into many contexts. Previously homogenous places now see an explosion in diversity. Congolese women are on the street markets of Guangzhou in China, purchasing their wares to take home to their country. They do not speak Chinese but the method of interaction is through the calculator. Australian university volunteers are now teaching in remote villages of Northern Thailand. Jesuit Volunteer Corp volunteers from the United States now work in previously inaccessible mountain regions of Kohima, India. Finally, in the outskirts of Battambang, Cambodia, constant streams of visitors from Spain, Australia and China descend to work in the Jesuit secondary school. Also this plurality is different from previous waves of migration, as there has been a significant increase in temporary migrants.<sup>243</sup> This means that past history might not be the best guide to understand the nature of this migration.

#### 4.3 Theological significance of recognition

Theologically, recognition is the act that acknowledges and respects the human dignity of the individual. This act of recognition, of treating others as individuals, removes their invisibility whilst also acknowledging their humanity. I think Cathy Ross’ words describe in a succinct and

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Graeme Hugo, “Migrants in society: diversity and cohesion,” Global Commission on International Migration website, September 2005, 3, accessed November 19, 2017, [https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy\\_and\\_research/gcim/tp/TP6.pdf](https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/tp/TP6.pdf)

apt way the theological significance of recognition, “when we see the other person, we see the image of God, as well as our common humanity, which establishes a fundamental dignity, respect and common bond.”<sup>244</sup> A poignant example might help convey the theological significance of recognition and it occurs in the film ‘The Mission.’<sup>245</sup> Rodrigo Mendoza (Robert De Niro) is a slave trader who in a pique of rage commits the ghastly crime of killing his own brother. His redemption arrives when the Guarani people recognize him. This act of mutual recognition bestows Rodrigo redemption and restores him back to life, as an individual. Failure to recognize others might eventually result in barbarism. Once again, I think of the film ‘The Mission,’ the Spanish Governor Don Cabeza justifies slave trading because he does not recognize the Guarani calling them “creatures [who] are lethal and lecherous.”<sup>246</sup> In other words, the non-recognition of the Guarani led to them being categorized as sub-human and justified their enslavement.

Throughout the New Testament, there are examples of interactions, discussions, encounters between Jesus of Nazareth and many interlocutors. These interlocutors come from a variety of backgrounds and situations, whether they were: disciples, Pharisees, Sadducees, a Roman Centurion, lawyers, ordinary men and women, children, Samaritans, people from his own family.<sup>247</sup> These interactions formed the basis of the ministry of Jesus, namely preaching the

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<sup>244</sup> Cathy Ross, “Hospitality: The Church as a Mother with an Open Heart,” in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 75.

<sup>245</sup> I thank my supervisor Professor Margaret Guider, O.S.F for this helpful way to view Axel Honneth’s recognition. Roland Joffé, Director, *The Mission*, 1986.

<sup>246</sup> Roland Joffé, Director, *The Mission*, 1986.

<sup>247</sup> Encounters of Jesus: Matt 8:5-13 Centurion; Matt 22:23-46 Sadducees; Luke 11:37-54 Lawyers and Pharisees; Mark 10:13-14 Children; John 4:1-42 Samaritan woman; Mark 8:1-5 Disciples.

‘Good News’ of God. Through these interactions, Jesus offers his ministry and does his Father’s work. What type of approach did Jesus adopt in his encounters with others? In more precise language, did Jesus practice a form of recognition in his encounters?

Jesus seeing, greeting and calling Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) can be understood through the recognitive framework. In the story, Zacchaeus desired to meet Jesus but due to his height and the multitude, was blocked and unable to see Jesus. Nevertheless, he wasn't to be deterred, as he climbed to the top of the tree so that he could peer over the crowd. As Jesus approached, he was surrounded but despite the presence of many others, Jesus looked up, spotted Zacchaeus and called him down. Once he was on the ground, Jesus spoke to him. These actions of Jesus, namely looking and speaking constituted recognitive acts and recognition. It became mutual when Jesus’ words prompted Zacchaeus to come down from the tree. Jesus’ act of recognitive precipitated an invitation from Zacchaeus. Moreover, this act of recognition, that has cosmic significance. This rather mundane simple act of recognition might “sometimes, by the very act of welcome, a vision for a whole society is offered, a small evidence that transformed relations are possible.”<sup>248</sup> For Zacchaeus, this vision of a new society of him giving his money back to others became the start of a new vision of society for him.

The theological significance of the recognition is that we see with the eyes of God, the other as the other person and the other as Jesus Christ himself. This recognition is important as it is a vision of a new society and it begins “with seeing the other person; the act of recognition – a powerful act indeed. Looking the other in the eye – the establishment of the ‘I-Thou’ relationship

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<sup>248</sup> Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 64, quoted in Cathy Ross, “Hospitality: The Church as a Mother with an Open Heart,” in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 75.

... acknowledges people's humanity, accords them dignity and denies their invisibility."<sup>249</sup>

#### 4.4 The importance of recognitive acts under conditions of plurality

Recognitive acts are a 'meta-language' that influences human exchanges.

Communication, whether verbal or bodily, is always conducted under an elaborate set of cultural expressions. A welcoming hug will have a different effect in China than in the United States.

These socially visible gestures or expressions comprise the public act of recognition. Any encounter between interlocutors is partially influenced by the presence or absence of these recognitive acts. In Honneth's words, "a welcoming gesture among adults expresses the fact that one can subsequently reckon upon benevolent actions," while "the absence of gestures of recognition" suggests, in the space of the encounter, that the other "must be prepared for hostile actions."<sup>250</sup>

Recognition implies a basic 'positive' attitude towards the person, and this positive attitude will shape the other's future cognitive, emotional and volitional responses. In other words, the theory of recognition argues that social interactions are also based upon feelings and motivations other than just cognition, and that these are important for any exchanges.

In this world of migration where plurality becomes the norm, recognitive acts will be even more important. Migration is rapidly changing the sociological makeup of the world and makes plurality a norm in the majority of the world's contexts. Previously, in homogenous contexts, communication through a language might be sufficient. Now in this new urban plural setting, language diversity might be the norm rather than the exception. In this milieu,

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<sup>249</sup> Ross, *Mission on the Road to Emmaus*, 74.

<sup>250</sup> Axel Honneth, "I—Axel Honneth: Invisibility: On the Epistemology of 'Recognition'," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume 75*, no. 1 (2001): 120, doi:10.1111/1467-8349.00081.

communication will be even more based upon recognition, upon gestures, actions rather than language. One hypothetical example might be a Mercy Sister ministering in a Sydney suburb called Blacktown. Fifty years ago, English would have equipped her for most situations in that milieu, i.e. she could clarify in English why an interlocutor refused to speak to her. The contemporary situation is vastly different, Blacktown, a suburb of Sydney is represented by 143 nationalities.<sup>251</sup> In this context, the Mercy might minister to Filipino/ Indonesian/ Samoan/ Tongan/ Vietnamese/ Chinese/ Irish Australian Catholics who may or may not speak English. In this milieu, it would be inconceivable for the Mercy Sister to learn so many different languages and cultures. This is where recognitive acts or affectivity becomes more important, as they are one of the few avenues to establish communication or even to clarify any misunderstanding. This makes the need for recognitive acts, the meta-language of gestures, smiles, hugs, handshakes or not touching so much more important.

#### 4.5 Recognition as an integral precondition to Catholic Missiology

I believe recognitive acts are integral as a necessary precondition to the complex reality of mission.”<sup>252</sup> Recognitive acts influence interactions and communications. This is even more important in an age of language diversity. Moreover, I find support for recognitive acts to be incorporated into missiology within Pope Francis’ writings. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis notes the importance of recognitive acts: “communication takes place in so many different ways that it would be impossible to describe or catalogue them all, and God’s people, with all their

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<sup>251</sup> "West Central District population characteristics," | Greater Sydney Commission, Oct 23, 2017, accessed Oct 23, 2017, <https://www.greater.sydney/digital-district-plan/812>.

<sup>252</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, sec. 44.

many gestures and signs, are its collective subject.”<sup>253</sup> In other words, Pope Francis also believes in the need for language that is beyond the cognitive, and requires recognitive acts.

Nevertheless, recognitive acts are only a necessary precondition. They cannot be the end goal, since mission must entail proclamation. Pope Francis writes, “there can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord”, and without “the primacy of the proclamation of Jesus Christ in all evangelizing work.”<sup>254</sup> While some might argue about the primacy of Jesus and Christ for salvation, it is clear that Francis considers it the basis for Catholic evangelization.

Recognition is a universal need though the meaning of recognitive acts change depending on various factors such as culture, time and space. Recognitive acts are important for communication, though the specific meaning of the recognitive act is contingent on other variables e.g. a hug might be an appropriate greeting between two close friends in the USA but it might not be an appropriate greeting between two strangers. Therefore, the same action might have different recognitive meanings in different contexts. Nevertheless, recognitive acts are universally important for all humanity.

I would like to offer a historical vignette taken from *The Field Afar* magazine, in an article called “Little Bent Back,”<sup>255</sup> of recognition as foundation to mission. The story recalls an exchange between a Chinese girl, Little Bent Back and a Maryknoll Sister in 1930s Hong Kong at their Maryknoll Sisters Industrial Center.

“At seventeen Little Bent Back was still a maid... And she no longer had home, father, or “face” in Big Tiger Village. One night ... there was an attack on the village ... Little Bent

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<sup>253</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 129.

<sup>254</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, sec. 110.

<sup>255</sup> “Little bent Back,” *The Field Afar Magazine*, February, 1935, 51.

Back scrambled into a sampan ... to Hong Kong... She slid into place in the work room among fifty companions... Catching Sister in the midst of one of her kindly smiles she said gruffly, "This stuff here ... glowing Cross, "means something?"

"Would you like to know what it means?"

"Yes"

And the telling took time. For days and weeks the story unfolded bit by bit. ... Then one May morning, she surrendered the name of Little Bent Back, and received in sweet exchange the name and role and destiny of "Malia," that soft sound with which her people Hail Mary."

I offer this story as it epitomizes, recognition as a precondition to mission. The story captures what may have influenced this initial human exchange, namely the Maryknoll Sister's recognitive act of a kindly smile. Moreover, this smile was only the precondition to the exchange, as subsequent encounters show, the Maryknoll Sister continued her mission by explaining the Christian faith to Little Bent Back. In other words, the Maryknoll Sister did not just recognize Little Bent Back but coupled with the smile was also conversation and discussion about Jesus Christ. This is a paradigmatic example of recognition as a precondition to mission.

### Conclusion

Recognitive acts should be included as a precondition contemporary missiology. Mission can begin or end with a recognitive or non-recognitive act, before even a word is spoken. Recognitive actions are even more necessary in a world that is migrating at unprecedented rates. In this scenario, mission might begin and end with these recognitive acts. Recognition must be an integral precondition of Catholic missiology but cannot be the end goal. Pope Francis' EG and Pope John Paul II's RM have explicitly stated that "proclamation is the permanent priority of mission."<sup>256</sup> Nevertheless, recognition is a necessary precondition, as recognition enables communication and therefore, better mission. Recognition is also very practical. But recognition is only the precondition to mission, mission also entails six other elements: "witness and

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<sup>256</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, sec. 44.

proclamation; liturgy, prayer and contemplation; justice, peace and the integrity of creation; dialogue with women and men of other faiths and ideologies; inculturation and reconciliation."<sup>257</sup>

Finally, Pope Francis can be considered one model of recognition. One unforgettable example of recognition occurred at St Peters Square when Pope Francis' embraced Vinicio Riva the severely disfigured man.<sup>258</sup> Pope Francis spotted Vinicio in a wheelchair, walked over and without speaking embraced him. These recognitive acts framed the whole interaction. During this brief one-minute encounter, Vinicio "felt a great warmth" and "ten years younger [and] as if a load had been lifted."<sup>259</sup> Moreover, his outlook on life changed, now embolden to face the world and even commit to a CNN interview.<sup>260</sup> During this interview, once again Vinicio conveyed the feelings of a new man, "I feel stronger and happier. I feel I can move ahead because the Lord is protecting me."<sup>261</sup> Finally, this encounter demonstrates that Pope Francis' recognition of others and he executes it in a transformative way.

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<sup>257</sup> Bevans, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 64.

<sup>258</sup> Faith Karimi, "Pope Francis' embrace of a severely disfigured man touches world," CNN, November 07, 2013, accessed November 01, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/07/world/europe/pope-francis-embrace/index.html>.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ben Wedeman, "Meet the disfigured man whose embrace with Pope Francis warmed hearts," CNN, November 27, 2013, , accessed December 08, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/26/world/europe/pope-francis-disfigured-man/index.html>.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

## **Conclusion**

Honneth's recognition might be a new framework to elucidate the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry at Maryknoll Convent School, Hong Kong. Traditionally, their ministry was understood as the education of women. Mother Mary Joseph in her writings represents this conventional view: "the wealthy Chinese girls can be a powerful force for good or evil, we have a school [Maryknoll Convent School] which prepares them for the Oxford examinations and at the same time inculcates Christian ethics."<sup>262</sup> While this historical view is still valid, a new opportunity to nuance this interpretation, presented itself with the publishing of the past students' experiences. The students' experiences were numerous and though varied, were linked with a just visible denominator. Maryknoll Sisters 'recognizing' the students' was this thread. Therefore, recognition might be a new method to frame the past students' *reception* of the Maryknoll Sisters' school ministry, and lastly a new approach to view the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry.

This historical case study of the Maryknoll Sisters' ministry has major missiological ramifications. It highlights the importance of recognition within mission. One critical important dimension is cognitive acts. Cognitive acts such as a wave or smiles influence human interactions, and can either enable or hinder communication. The past students' feedback of the Maryknoll Sisters' recognizing them, only further reinforces the necessity of recognition within missiology.

Cognitive acts are even more important in a globalized, multicultural and pluralistic society that increasingly begins at our doorstep. Individuals need to be able to co-operate, engage and disagree with people holding different cultural / ethnic backgrounds, religious worldviews

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<sup>262</sup> Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, *In Discourses of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, M.M., 1912–1955. Vol. 2.* (Maryknoll, NY: Maryknoll Sisters, 1982), 452.

and political allegiances. Moreover, this plurality means that recognitive acts and the affectivity associated with recognition will be more important than ever.

Recognition is critical though only as a precondition to mission. Recognition cannot be an end goal of mission though this does not lessen its value. Moreover, as a precondition it means that every Catholic must practice it, in every circumstance. Nevertheless, it can't be the end goal as Pope John Paul II has made clear, "all forms of missionary activity are directed to this proclamation" of Jesus Christ."<sup>263</sup>

Recognition as a precondition to mission also has a revolutionary significance that every Catholic should operate through the lens of recognition. The Church itself is missionary as noted by *Ad Gentes*. This means that every Catholic is on mission and all their acts are missiological. In this circumstance, all Catholics should also be recognitive. In other words, a Catholic chatting to their co-workers should also base their interactions on recognition, or while talking to a neighbor or a parishioner or even whilst travelling abroad.

Recognition theory provides innumerable possibilities for further research and also countless practical applications. I outline a few suggestions and possibilities for future research.

One theme might be to conduct further research to either prove or disprove my thesis of the students being recognized by the Maryknoll Sisters at their Maryknoll Convent School. Additional data might be collected through detailed interviews with students, lay teachers and Maryknoll Sisters alike. Unfortunately, conducting interviews with teachers and Maryknoll Sisters alike might prove increasingly difficult as many of the Maryknoll Sisters are now in retirement at their center in Ossining.

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<sup>263</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, sec. 44.

Another line of enquiry would entail a developing a comprehensive missiology of recognition. One possible avenue might be to complete the preliminary investigation by fully articulating the implications of recognition as a precondition to mission. A second possibility might be to develop recognition as a completing element to the complex reality of missiology.

Many different case studies can be conducted using recognition as the overarching analytical framework. An interesting study might entail research into the extent of recognition within our Jesuit schools. Does recognition play a factor within Jesuit education and if it does how and in what ways? I am thinking specifying of high schools though it can be applied universally.

Professor Guider suggested a research topic that casts the theory of recognition onto films and to assess its impact on missiology. She suggested reviewing movies such as ‘The Mission,’ ‘Of Gods and Men’ and also ‘Silence.’ I believe this would be a worthwhile project.

Professor Guider also proposed that a research topic might entail assessing Roman Catholic religious formation programs and whether they operate under the principles of recognition. Reviews of institutional policies might be undertaken to assess whether they treat each formation member with respect, in other words equally.

One very interesting proposal that Professor Guider suggested would research the conditions and times when the other religious traditions recognized the Catholic religion or the Church. This would mean understanding such recognition it from the perspectives of others. This might help both ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Might factors such as non-recognition or misrecognition be part of the impediments or roadblocks to improving our relations with other traditions and faiths?

Professor O'Collins suggested a research project that analyzes recognition within the Catholic tradition, or in other words to explicate the historical Christian understanding of recognition.

My favorite proposal concerns China, particularly her Sino-Vatican relations. The theory of recognition can be used to better understand China's attitudes towards the Sino-Vatican diplomatic relationship. Moreover, a missiology formed from the theory of recognition might help break the current diplomatic impasse.

The Vatican and China are presently talking past each other. The Vatican believes the sticking point is rational, namely control over the appointment of bishops. While China believes it is emotional, that the Vatican has not acknowledged the pain, the feelings of disrespect from their Western missionaries who served under foreign protection. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is still dealing with the 'century of humiliation,' beginning with the Opium War right through to Japanese aggression in World War II. These feelings of disrespect play a large part in the CCP's international politics.

The lens of a struggle for recognition would better illuminate China's negotiating stance. To the best of my knowledge, no contemporary research has approached the Sino-Vatican relationship, using the struggle for recognition as the principal theoretical framework. The application is apt as it has the capacity to illuminate the cultural, social, historical factors and the underlining assumptions that motivate and drive China. The identification of historical, cultural sources of disrespect might eventually progress to rapprochement.

A missiology based upon recognition may be constructed that support efforts to overcome this impasse. This missiology might consist of four components: first, mutual recognition will take a long time, second, an acknowledgement of mutual faults, third, respectful

accompaniment and fourth, promote missionaries that did hidden, heroic work (e.g. Maryknoll Sisters ministry in Hong Kong). Lastly, this missiology of recognition might be applicable to others who have felt disrespected e.g. sexual abuse victims.

Honneth and his theory of recognition offer many inspiring possibilities and this list contains only a few of my personal thoughts and suggestions.

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