

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR MQRES SCHOLARSHIP

**Project Title:** Everyday multiculturalism and the theory of recognition  
**CORE:** Centre for Research on Social Inclusion (CRSI)  
**Supervisors:** Dr. Jean-Philippe Deranty (Philosophy) and possibly Dr. Amanda Wise (CRSI) and/or other as appropriate.

In recent decades, most Western societies have seen the emergence of growing angst and overt tensions around the presence of cultural and religious minorities. This is of course also true of Australia. In response to some of the limitations of traditional social-scientific or discursive approaches to these issues, a number of scholars have begun to employ qualitative and ethnographic methodologies to study this phenomenon. This approach can provide rich insights into the full range of social experience of minorities, including, for example, the complex intersections between everyday practice, institutions and representations. Detailed ethnographic research into the experience of migrants and minority communities has thus become an essential complement to more traditional sociological approaches.

An important recent development in this area has been the appropriation by Noble and others of the grammar of recognition to characterise the difficulties of migrant integration, and the social, cultural and political demands migrants address more or less explicitly to the host society (Noble, 2005). The core reference here is the work of Axel Honneth who has made the concept of recognition a central concept in contemporary social theory. According to Honneth's model, recognition is an irreducible condition of adequate socialisation (Honneth, 1995, 1996, 2007). Conversely, therefore, the absence of recognition, or an inadequate form of recognition, can become determining factors in problems of integration. The Macquarie Centre for Research on Social Inclusion has been doing groundbreaking work on recognition theory through its 'Social Hope and Critical Theory' research cluster, (Deranty, 2005; Deranty and Renault, 2007; Smith, 2005), while the Centre's 'Migration and Multiculturalism' cluster has been undertaking empirical research into various domains of migration and multicultural studies (Wise, 2005; Wise & Velayutham, forthcoming).

The proposed project aims to further and strengthen the dialogue between these two areas of contemporary research in the social sciences. The main hypothesis is that, whilst ethnographic studies of migration have put recognition theory to excellent use in order to diagnose the malaise and discrimination felt by some migrant communities in contemporary Australia, it has not exhausted all the analytical and critical potentials of recognition theory. The project therefore aims to expand the use of recognition theory to other dimensions of the migrants' experience, beyond the characterisation of experiences of incivility as forms of misrecognition. Indeed, the theory of recognition provides a comprehensive model, which explains not just the structure of feelings of injustice, but accounts also for many other dimensions of the overall experience of migrants. To list some of the most important dimensions, recognition theory also accounts for: the cultural and social conditions that make it possible for individual feelings to be perceived as representative of a group experience; the specific logic of social movements, their relation to initial feelings of injustice and disenfranchisement, and their practical and normative dynamics; and the relationship between experiences of recognition and political representation within democratic processes. On all these fronts, recognition theory can provide a useful analytical tool to characterise the complex situation of migrant communities who face difficulties in the integration to mainstream Australia.

There are numerous domains in which the theory of recognition might be applied to better understand the experience of minority communities in Australia. These might include, for example, the experience of Muslim populations in Australian cities, or the contemporary working and life conditions among migrant workers.

We seek expressions of interests from students wishing to explore the applicability of recognition theory in relation to migrant communities in Australia through a case study to be developed in discussion with the supervisory team and the student.

The student will be supervised by an interdisciplinary team of academics within the Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, led by Dr Jean-Philippe Deranty (Philosophy). Suitable co-supervision for the empirical aspects of the project will be identified once the case study has been settled upon.

Ideally, the candidate will have a background in sociology, anthropology, philosophy or a cognate discipline, and have a good grasp of theory, with a capacity for and interest in undertaking theoretically informed qualitative/ethnographic research.

For further information and discussion regarding the projects, candidates are encouraged to contact Dr Jean-Philippe Deranty, telephone: +61-2-98506773 or email: [Jean-Philippe.Deranty@scmp.mq.edu.au](mailto:Jean-Philippe.Deranty@scmp.mq.edu.au) .

Application forms, and conditions for MQRES awards, are available from the Higher Degree Research Office, telephone +61-2- 9850 7987, e-mail: [hdschol@vc.mq.edu.au](mailto:hdschol@vc.mq.edu.au), or downloaded from our website: [www.research.mq.edu.au/students/scholarships/pages/SCMP\\_CRISIRecognition](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/students/scholarships/pages/SCMP_CRISIRecognition)

**Applications should be forwarded to:**

The Scholarship Officer  
The Research Hub  
Level 3, C5C East  
Macquarie University NSW 2109  
AUSTRALIA

## **REFERENCES**

Deranty, J.-P. and Renault, E. (2007) "Politicising Honneth's Ethics of Recognition", *Thesis Eleven*, vol. 88.

Deranty, J.-P. (2005) "Injustice, violence and social struggle. The critical potential of Honneth's theory of recognition", in *Contemporary Perspectives in Social and Critical Philosophy*, (eds) John Rundell, Danielle Petherbridge et al, (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

Honneth, A. (1995) *The Fragmented World of the Social*, State University of New York Press.

Honneth, A. (1996) *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. J. Anderson, Polity Press.

Honneth, A. (2007) *Disrespect. The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*, Polity.

Noble, G. (2005) "The Discomfort of Strangers: Racism, Incivility and Ontological Security in a Relaxed and Comfortable Nation", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 26, pp. 107-1290.

Smith, Nicholas (2005) "Hope and Critical Theory", *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2005, 45-61.

Wise, A & Velayutham, S. (eds) (forthcoming) *Everyday Multiculturalism*. London: Palgrave.

Wise, A. (2005) "Hope and Belonging in a Multicultural Suburb". *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. Issue 1/2 2005.