

ARTICLE

Climate Justice, Recognition, Pluralism*

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The sixth IPCC report states that a proper conception of climate justice that can address the complexity of the phenomenon of anthropogenic climate change as a whole requires considering not only one but rather three dimensions of justice today: redistributive, procedural, and recognition dimensions. In this article, my focus is on exploring the latter dimension, drawing special attention to climate policies addressing cultural-identity issues. In the first section, I illustrate how climate policies can be connected to discriminatory practices against minority cultures and their identities. To do so, I take the struggles of Black movements against environmental racism and the struggles of Indigenous peoples against a colonialist cultural heritage as case studies. In the second section, I look into the most advanced normative model to address the dimension of recognition, its advantages, and how it addresses the so-called 'institutionalization of cultural patterns' in climate policies: the Nancy Fraser model. Finally, in the third section, I investigate an aspect that remains open. It concerns the matter of how to use institutional authority to 'deinstitutionalize' non-ecological cultural patterns, while respecting pluralism and avoiding falling into the risks of institutional paternalism.

Keywords: Climate policies; climate justice; recognition; pluralism; institutional paternalism.

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It is widely acknowledged that the idea of 'climate justice' has gained more prominence both on the political agenda and in the public sphere at domestic and international levels. The debate on climate justice has generally flourished since the 1990s, with the expansion of international scientific efforts to tackle carbon emissions (IPCC, 1992) and received further impetus from the 'Paris Agreement' (UNFCCC, 2016), and the '2030 Agenda for Development' (UNITED NATIONS, 2015). It has been particularly in recent years that this idea started to play a more significant role than ever before in the contemporary political debate and citizens' daily praxis (CRIPPS, 2022; FRASER, 2022; GOSSERIES, 2023; MCKINNON, 2022; MOELLENDORF, 2022; SHUE, 2022)¹.

In particular, in the sixth and latest report of the 'Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change' (LEE et al., 2023), more specifically in the contribution of its Working Group II, which addresses impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability, attention is drawn to the fact that there is more than one dimension of climate justice in the political and academic paradigm (IPCC, 2022). The study highlights the existence of 'different approaches' and 'diverse contexts' in which climate justice has been used, emphasizing 'three' analytically different, yet not necessarily disconnected dimensions: the (re)distributive economic dimension, the procedural political dimension, and, finally, the cultural-identity recognition dimension.

The term climate justice, while used in different ways in different contexts by different communities, generally includes three principles: *distributive justice* which refers to the allocation of burdens and benefits among individuals, nations and generations; *procedural justice* which refers to who decides and participates in decision-making; and *recognition* which entails basic respect and robust engagement with and fair consideration of diverse cultures and perspectives (IPCC, 2022, p. 07).

Due to these three dimensions, the study argues that an appropriate normative design to capture the complexity of the phenomenon must be able to operate within a more complete and, therefore, 'multidimensional' climate justice paradigm (IPCC, 2022). More specifically, this normative model, with several dimensions, needs to be able to conceive climate justice, not only in terms of a fair redistribution of economic

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resources among the most and least advantaged groups in terms of income and wealth. But, also, in terms of a fair configuration of the model of political representation, making it more inclusive for those who have been less influential in public decision-making. This model, furthermore, must be equally fair regarding the recognition of agents who currently are or will be most harmed in terms of cultural and identity losses in the near future. Considering these different dimensions, the sixth IPCC report (2022) proposes the foundations of a normative approach that provides not one, but ‘three different guiding principles’ for institutions. Each of them addresses one of the dimensions of climate justice.

AR6 highlights *three principles of climate justice*: distributive justice, procedural justice and recognition. Distributive justice refers to the allocation of burdens and benefits among individuals, nations, and generations. Procedural justice refers to who decides and participates in decision making. Recognition entails basic respect and robust engagement with and fair consideration of diverse cultures and perspectives. (IPCC, 2022, p. 124).

In other words, the report proposes the following. First, a ‘redistributive principle’ that can fairly guide the allocation of economic resources to fund climate policies and transition funds for new non-polluting and renewable energy models. Second, a ‘procedural principle’ that guides the creation of more inclusive political representation processes, so that underprivileged groups in terms of power have the opportunity to participate on an equal footing in deliberating on the sustainable development agenda and climate policy-making. Finally, third, a ‘principle of recognition’ that not only acknowledges equal respect for all people, regardless of their cultural-identity differences in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, etc, but also prevents institutional power from being blind to the impacts on different cultures, identities, and forms of life due to anthropogenic climate change.

In this article, I explore one of the crucial dimensions of climate justice: ‘the recognition dimension’. Although the literature places much greater emphasis on the redistributive dimension, the first section aims to provide an overview of the origins and developments of the recognition dimension in climate justice. I specifically look into how this dimension has been recently incorporated by some of climate movements in liberal societies. Moreover, I demonstrate how these movements highlight that climate policies ‘themselves’, which are formulated and implemented by

institutions to fight environmental issues, can harm people not only in material terms but also in cultural-identity terms. To this end, I draw from two important movements that shed light on this point. The first one is the Black movement and its fight against environmental racism. The second is the struggle of Indigenous peoples against a colonialist cultural heritage.

In the second section, in line with the literature, I present the most sophisticated model for addressing the recognition dimension of climate justice in liberal societies. This paradigm is formulated by the US philosopher Nancy Fraser². In particular, I highlight three main advantages. The first advantage is that her paradigm is able to explore the dimension of recognition, avoiding being reductionist, in particular, without falling into the so-called ‘risk of culturalism’. The second advantage is that the model permits to analytically separate different dimensions of climate justice, but bring them together under a shared normative horizon, for example, a conception of a Green, Just Society. Finally, by moving away from the traditional psychologically-centered approaches to recognition, such as the approach taken by the philosopher Axel Honneth (1996), the third advantage is that the paradigm sheds light on the ‘institutionalization of cultural patterns’ and on when we have solid reasons to say these patterns are just or unjust from a normative perspective. In doing so, her original model can avoid the so-called ‘risk of psychologization’ when dealing with cultural-identity in terms of recognition.

Despite important advances in the recognition dimension of climate justice introduced by Nancy Fraser’s paradigm, in the third section, I argue that there is an aspect that remains little explored in the literature. In particular, I refer to the limits and possibilities of using institutional authority to ‘deinstitutionalize’ non-ecological cultural patterns in liberal societies. I specifically explain how the design and implementation of climate policies aiming for cultural transformations in liberal societies can conflict with the pluralism of values and, consequently, risk institutional paternalism.

²In this article, I focus on exploring the dimension of cultural-identity recognition in climate justice. This is not to underestimate the importance of separately investigating other dimensions, and especially the interconnection between the recognition dimension and the redistributive-economic and procedural-political dimensions. As Nancy Fraser (2003, 1997) has argued, I believe these three dimensions are often intertwined, and therefore a comprehensive conception of justice should consider all three dimensions together rather than focusing exclusively on one of them (see FRASER and HONNETH, 2003).

Demanding redistribution and recognition: the origins and developments of the recognition dimension of climate justice

To understand how this approach has developed over time, the literature often makes reference to three important waves of ‘grassroots mobilizations’ as case studies to understand why it is important to include a dimension focused on cultural and identity issues. More specifically, the literature believes that: 01. the ‘Black movement’ fighting environmental racism, 02. the ‘anti-toxics movement’, and 03. ‘Indigenous peoples’ struggles’ are paradigmatic because they can capture this abovementioned dimension and, more importantly, demonstrate how climate policies themselves can be pervaded by the ‘misrecognition’ of some groups due to their cultural-identity differences in terms of race, gender, or ethnicity (FIGUEROA, 2006, 2003; SCHLOSBERG, 2007, 2003; WHYTE, 2011). Due to space limitations, my focus in the following paragraphs will be on the first and third abovementioned movements.

First case study: the Black Movement and the fight against environmental racism

As originally narrated by sociologist Robert Bullard ([1990] 2019), one of the authors who closely observed the global energy crisis in the 1980s, and the rise of the Black environmental movement in the United States, the agenda of the pro-environmental protests, at the time, was mostly concentrated in protecting the green interests of the most privileged groups in US society. For example, by focusing on demands for leisure and recreation, wildlife preservation, industry regulation, and eco-friendly modes of consumption (BULLARD, 2019; LAZARUS, 2000; UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1987). However, as described by Bullard (2019), this scenario starts to change when the environmental justice agenda, which was previously seen by minorities as an ‘elitist’ green expression of mainstream America, starts to be reinterpreted as a demand that also affected them. To overcome the elitist perception of climate justice — the so-called ‘environmental elitism’ phenomenon narrated by Bullard (2019) —, the public discourse of minorities shifts their focus to new issues. In particular, their justification now incorporates strong criticism of the non-egalitarian and especially discriminatory ways of designing and implementing the environmental climate policies that were in force at the time.

Indeed, compelling studies, including ‘Toxic Waste and Race in the United States’ (UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1987) and ‘Dumping in Dixie’ (BULLARD, 2019), illustrate how mostly white, upper-class communities relied on climate policies that afforded them sanitation systems, drinking water, parks, and green areas for recreation. On the other hand, in mostly non-white communities, especially where most residents are Black or Hispanic, not only was there a lack of public investments in climate policies, but worse: the institutional authority allowed the creation of incinerators and disposal of toxic waste from industrial areas. By looking at the unequal way in which institutions distributed the climate policies, the Black environmental movement emphasized that the reason for the ‘maldistribution’ of climate policies cannot be fully understood if we only look into the socioeconomic differences between the people involved. While social class differences are an important factor that should not be disregarded, the Black environmental movement strongly called the attention to the fact that economic inequalities are not enough to understand the complexity of the phenomenon as a whole.

Behind inequalities in the distribution of economic resources towards the finance of climate policies, there is another and more serious form of inequality, according to them. An inequality grounded on cultural and identity differences between people — in particular, marked by the category of ‘race’. Reverend Benjamin Chavis, one of the leading voices of Black environmental activism in the US, attributes the maldistribution of climate policies directly to an existing institutionalized discriminatory culture, in which people of color are routinely symbolized and treated by institutions as individuals who can be ‘sacrificed’ and, consequently, subjected to environmental risks (UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1987). Similarly, as more recently stated by the philosopher Charles Mills (2001), these discriminatory cultural patterns, which are deeply institutionalized in American society, treat people of color as ‘Black Trash’, whose existence endangers US society and, therefore, must be institutionally ‘cleaned’.

By highlighting the discriminatory character of the climate policies of the time — a phenomenon Robert Figueroa (2006, 2003) interestingly called ‘discriminatory environmentalism’ —, the abovementioned minorities were key to demonstrating how the very formulation and implementation of climate policies not only sometimes

cannot promote equality between people, but, on the contrary, they might foster discrimination between them. This phenomenon is now widely acknowledged as 'environmental racism' (UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 1987). Or, in Bullard's words (2019):

Environmental racism refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color. Environmental racism combines with public policies and industrial practices to provide benefits for whites while shifting industry costs to people of color. It is reinforced by governmental, legal, economic, political, and military institutions (2019, p. 98).

In fact, if we look at the contemporary Brazilian scenario, this phenomenon is certainly not far from what is denounced by many Quilombola communities today (RANGEL, 2016) and also in 'favelas' (slums) across the country's large urban areas (ALVES and PAULA, 2021).

Second case study: indigenous struggles against a colonial cultural heritage

Another case study explored in the literature on the recognition dimension of climate justice refers to Indigenous peoples' revindication against an institutionalized colonial cultural heritage that not only does not respect them as free and equal citizens, but also affects the equal distribution of resources between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. While, in the previous case, the phenomenon of environmental racism was mainly connected to environmental pollution at the local level — and, therefore, was more closely connected to a broader conception of 'environmental justice' —, Indigenous peoples' struggles brought the discussion much closer to the contemporary approach to climate justice. It is no coincidence that Indigenous voices are increasingly being recognized as fundamental in international climate negotiations, as their purposes in fighting anthropogenic climate change are strongly

aligned with global interests in limiting global warming to 1.5/2°C by 2050, as set out in the Paris Agreement (LEE et al., 2023; IPCC, 2022)³.

In line with the II Working Group, the revindications put forward by many Indigenous peoples encompass not only one but, again, ‘multiple’ dimensions of climate justice in their public discourses (IPCC, 2022). In the redistributive field, to use the Brazilian case as a paradigm, many Indigenous peoples have been pushing against unequal ways institutions are distributing economic resources between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples — again, a phenomenon the literature calls ‘maldistribution’ of economic resources (FRASER, 2003). Because of this unequal distribution of economic resources, the possibility of effectively protecting Indigenous territories is strongly affected. As a consequence of this economic inequality, resources are not provided to design and implement climate policies for the containment of illegal mining operations, extensive livestock production, and rampant logging practices in their native territories, etc (KOPENAWA and ALBERT, 2013; MENDES, 1992). We can mention another example of the redistributive struggle waged by Indigenous peoples in the contemporary scenario. It refers to the maldistribution of economic resources to fund basic health care for their communities. I am referring to the recent and dramatic case that called the attention of the domestic and international public sphere: the restricted access to vaccines and adequate health care during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular endured by the Yanomami people (KRENAK, 2020; MENESES, 2023).

Moving from the redistributive to the recognition dimension, many Indigenous peoples have continuously drawn attention to the phenomenon of ‘non-recognition’ existing in current liberal societies — that is, the institutionalization of discriminatory cultural patterns grounded on ethnic differences between people (FRASER, 2003). More specifically, to focus again on the Brazilian case, they strongly call attention to the

³A brief but important note is useful here. Not all Indigenous peoples wage their struggles employing a language of justice. This is because, according to Glen Coulthard (2014), some peoples believe that minorities (Black or Indigenous) can only lose by adopting a language that has been historically imposed by their oppressors. This is because, by using the language of justice, minorities, who have been historically harmed by a colonialist institutional structure, would be subjecting themselves to the very institutional structure the main values and ideas of which, like freedom and justice, are part of the framework of domination that colonized them. Coulthard (2014) believes that the very conceptions of freedom and justice are ‘white ideas’. There is obviously a broad discussion about how emancipatory it is to use the oppressor's ‘weapons’ to achieve emancipation. My goal here, however, is to focus on the demands of Indigenous peoples who adopt the language of social justice and climate justice.

colonialist cultural pattern that has been historically institutionalized over the past centuries and notably used to justify the coercive power exercised by institutions to ‘civilize’ them (COULTHARD, 2014; FRASER, 2018; KOPENAWA and ALBERT, 2013; KRENAK, 2020, 2019). In other words, through the coercive state apparatus, institutions have been used to force Indigenous peoples to change their cosmological cultures, identities, and forms of life into those regarded as ‘emancipated’ and ‘civilized’. Now, conversely, they are appealing to the public reason of non-Indigenous peoples to deeply rethink their presumed ‘emancipated’ and ‘civilized’ cultural patterns that, as the scientific reports show, have led to anthropogenic climate change because of their merely instrumental relationship with nature and their consumerist ways of living.

Now that we have seen the origins of the recognition dimension of climate justice, we can move on to what comes next. In the second section, more specifically, my focus is on exploring what the contemporary literature considers to be the most robust model to establish the normative foundations of a multidimensional conception of climate justice, with special attention to the recognition dimension (FIGUEROA, 2011, 2006, 2003; SCHLOSBERG, 2007, 2003; WHYTE, 2011).

The normative foundations of a multidimensional conception of climate justice grounded on Nancy Fraser’s Paradigm

While the philosopher Nancy Fraser directly addressed climate issues in her latest book, ‘Cannibal Capitalism’ (2022), it is from the social justice model she developed from the 1990s to the mid-2000s. Referred to by some authors as the ‘early Fraser’ (BRESSIANI and SILVA, 2021) — that the II Working Group (IPCC, 2022) and part of the contemporary literature drew inspiration to establish the basis of the recognition dimension of climate justice⁴. While Fraser approaches anthropogenic climate change in her latest works from a ‘functionalist perspective’ — that is, one that is focused on exposing the malfunctioning of the capitalist social order and its contradictions, especially highlighting the so-called ‘ecological contradiction’ (FRASER, 2022) —, the second section of this article is mainly focused on connecting the works

⁴The purpose of my article is not to conduct an exhaustive analysis of the different phases of Nancy Fraser’s work. For a detailed analysis of her thought and its different phases, see Bressiani and Silva (2021) and Piroli (2021a).

of the so-called ‘early Fraser’ with a multidimensional conception of recognition climate justice. This is because, agreeing with the literature, I believe that her multidimensional model can advance the cultural-identity dimension in a more appropriate way for the use of the institutional apparatus than other models, such as Honneth’s (1996).

To show her theoretical advantages, the second section explores three points I consider to be fundamental to robustly ground the recognition dimension of climate justice and, at the same time, guide institutions around conflicting cultural issues. In this respect, at first, I explore the potential of Fraser’s model to not reduce recognition to a strict culturalist perspective. Secondly, I demonstrate how, from her paradigm, it is possible to analytically distinguish different dimensions of climate justice, while also being able to integrate them under the same normative horizon. Finally, I will demonstrate how Fraser’s model can address issues of recognition without falling into the risk of psychologism. This way, I introduce the important normative turn of her paradigm toward the discussion around the institutionalization of cultural patterns that can, on the one hand, provide a positive contribution to the multidimensional dimensions of climate justice while, on the other hand, not falling into the ‘non-recognition’ problem.

Recognition without culturalism: the critique of reductionism applied to climate justice

In her inaugural writings on social justice as a critical theorist, Nancy Fraser (2003, 1997) critically looks into reality and describes a social dynamic marked by the ‘fragmentation of the idea of social justice’ by a wide range of actors that are part of both the public sphere and the official political arena in liberal societies, including social movements. In her ‘Zeitdiagnose’, she sees this phenomenon happening at a time when the different dimensions of social justice—again: economic, cultural, and political—come to be seen as completely separate spheres, treated as if they were ‘incommensurable’ with each other.

Fraser (2003, 1997) argues that this phenomenon is part of a certain ‘reductionist’ trend affecting peoples’ political imagination and the very meaning of social justice both present in the public sphere and in the political arena. On the one hand, ‘redistributive reductionism’ occurs when a conception of social justice is

uniquely focused on a just distribution of economic resources (in particular, income and wealth). Interpreting all other issues that are not properly economic, as is the case of racial and ethnic discrimination previously mentioned, as if they were mere 'by-products' of economic inequalities between people (FRASER, 2003, 1997). In simple terms, racial and ethnic discrimination is a mere consequence of an institutionalized division of classes in liberal societies. This position is largely defended by the traditional Marxist interpretation of class society that argues that all those 'non-economic' phenomena (again, those regarding 'non-recognition'), as is the case of racial and ethnic discrimination, are mere by-products of a capitalist system divided by social classes. For these mere 'economicist' currents, to use Fraser's (2003, 1997) vocabulary, the solution to the problem of racial and ethnic discrimination against minorities lies in the equal redistribution of economic resources by the background institutions. For this position, once a class division is deinstitutionalized and replaced by a society of equals in material terms, as a consequence, cultural-identity inequalities would spontaneously dissolve over time.

On the other hand, the problem of reductionism can also be applied in the case of recognition. Based on the same logic, but with inverse content, reductionism happens when 'culturalist' approaches to justice aim to explain and derive non-cultural phenomena, as is the case of redistributive inequality, as mere by-products of the ruling discriminatory cultural patterns institutionalized in liberal societies, like racist and colonialist patterns. Once the dynamics of circulation of these discriminatory patterns are understood, culturalist approaches believe they are able to explain all other forms of 'non-cultural' inequality (like the economic one). Using the same logic of the previous case, in order to remedy economic inequalities, this position believes that institutional power must be used to interfere in the existence of discriminatory cultural patterns to replace them with just ones. Once they are dissolved, again, in the same spirit, it is believed that all other forms of inequality between people, like economic inequalities, would be spontaneously resolved over time.

Moving further, we can also identify economicist and culturalist positions in competing paradigms of climate justice in the current scenario. Similar to the previously mentioned case, these positions normally are attached to a unilateral

perspective of what climate justice means and, therefore, incur what Fraser (2022) calls ‘reductive ecologism’⁵.

When it comes to the ‘reductionist conceptions of climate justice from an economicist perspective’, in the vein of Nancy Fraser’s position, it is believed that anthropogenic climate change could be exclusively resolved by using institutional power to change the economic structure of today’s liberal societies. To mention again the orthodox Marxist tradition, such a task would require ambitious and radical changes in the capitalist economic structure of society, free from economic growth (like in many degrowth positions). In simple words, once the economic system is radically changed for a non-capitalistic one, all other ‘non-economic’ problems, which are also connected to climate change, such as racial and ethnic discrimination, would be spontaneously remedied over time.

Following the same reasoning, yet conversely, a ‘reductionist conception of climate justice from a culturalist perspective’ argues that the core of the anthropogenic climate change issue lies in the use of the institutional authority — in particular, its coercive power against people’s rights and liberties — to change agents’ non-ecological values, behaviors, and forms of life that are predominant in today’s liberal societies. In simple words, it is about using institutional power to undo the predominance of consumerist ways of living and the merely instrumental ways in which people establish their relationships with nature. For the culturalist approach to climate justice, it is only through a strong public appeal and especially through institutional intervention in the values and non-ecological forms of life that prevail in liberal societies that the goals of the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2016) can be achieved in the coming years.

Unlike the above-mentioned economicist and culturalist positions in climate justice, on the one hand, Nancy Fraser (2022) argues that the capitalist mode of production has an internal ecological contradiction that destroys its own background conditions for acquiring stability over time, as is the case of the disavowed extraction

⁵In my view, there are two possible interpretations of Nancy Fraser’s ‘reductive ecologism’ thesis. The first concerns the topic of ‘isolationism’ in the climate justice literature. Like Caney (2020), the author criticizes the way most experts have been addressing the climate change issue in isolation from other social problems. In this sense, they both advocate for an ‘integrationist’ conception (CANEY, 2020). There are, however, those who advocate for isolationism as a methodological strategy in climate justice; on this topic, see Williges et al. (2022). The second interpretation refers to the problem of economicism and culturalism as explored in this article (section II.I).

of natural resources. On the other hand, the way liberal societies interpret their relationship with nature and people's consumeristic cultural patterns are also highly problematic. In this sense, Fraser (2022) could easily agree that the predominant cultural pattern established by capitalism is deeply harmful. Indeed, capitalist social orders make agents see what is 'not human' — that is, nature — from a merely instrumental and exploitative perspective. As a result, nature is primarily interpreted as a mere supplier of commodities for value creation, without considering our responsibilities in return.

Therefore, by encompassing an economic and cultural perspective in climate justice, fair adjustments in the structure of economic production alone are not enough to solve the problem of climate change in liberal societies today. While these changes are critical and necessary, they are insufficient. Along with this structural economic transition, it is also fundamental to change institutionalized cultural patterns that ground our relationship with nature, our daily behaviors, and forms of life in a purely instrumental, exploitative, and disavowed way.

A Green just society: connecting different dimensions of climate justice through a shared normative horizon

Amid the aforementioned scenario, where culturalist and economicist currents battle over social justice (and climate justice), Nancy Fraser's paradigm provides a propositional intervention to reconcile them. While her model demonstrates how redistribution and recognition do indeed correspond to analytically different dimensions, this does not mean they do not have points of contact. The originality of her model lies in her ability to connect them through the so-called 'principle of parity of participation' (FRASER, 2010, 2003, 1997).

To this end, her model establishes the normative bases for a just institutional structuring model that can guarantee a set of basic conditions so that all people can participate effectively as 'peers' in social life — at least in the public sphere and in the political arena in liberal societies. Three structural conditions are required to achieve this shared normative horizon:

- 'Redistributive Conditions' (or Objective Conditions): the institutional establishment of economic arrangements that provide material equality of resources to all;

- 'Conditions Of Recognition' (or Intersubjective Conditions): the institutionalization of cultural patterns that are not discriminatory in terms of values, enabling a relationship between people as equals;

- 'Conditions Of Representation' (or Political Conditions): the institutional establishment of representation arrangements that allow people to participate in and discuss fundamental issues of justice as equals.

But how does this apply to the purposes of climate justice?

In the literature of climate policies or so-called 'ecopolitics', to use Nancy Fraser's vocabulary (2022), there are three main pillars for institutional intervention to address anthropogenic climate change. First, there are climate policies institutionally designed and implemented that aim to 'mitigate' greenhouse gas emissions. Second, there are climate policies institutionally designed and implemented with the goal of 'adaptation', preparing societies to face mainly the negative impacts of the increasing global temperatures in the coming years. Finally, there are climate policies institutionally designed and implemented aiming at compensating 'loss & damage', mainly based on funds allocated to those agents who are already tackling the unavoidable consequences of climate change in the current scenario.

While the three pillars above are technically different, they are all aligned with the same normative horizon: a 'Green, Just Transition'. According to the most prominent international negotiations, this normative horizon targets not only ways to efficiently promote a Green Transition but, above all, an institutional transition that is also just. Therefore, a Green Transition is not only a technical project shifting from a fossil fuel-based to a clean energy-based production model, but also a commitment to values and ideas of a 'Green, Just Society'.

While there is room for the normative imaginary of a Green Just Society, several conceptions come into play and compete for the institutionalization of their meaning. Nancy Fraser's model is certainly one among several other conceptions. Her latest book addresses some relevant considerations about this shared horizon. I highlight two normative considerations about her recent reflections on the institutional structuring of a Green Just Society.

First, she believes that a Green, Just Society must radically disrupt the current structure of economic production. In this sense, it must be 'anti-capitalist' (FRASER, 2022).

Second, a Green, Just Society must be part of a 'trans-environmental project' (FRASER, 2022). In simple words, the shared horizon should not be restricted to the issue of anthropogenic climate change as an isolated scientific fact that requires merely technical solutions, but it should be able to connect these issues with other equally important matters, including racial oppression, imperial domination, dispossession, and Indigenous genocide, for example.

Once her current considerations are combined with her multidimensional model of justice, a Green, Just Society is one with fundamental institutions that can guarantee fundamental conditions of parity for all people, but without taking irresponsible actions toward nature. This means, therefore, that it must use its institutional power to guarantee: 01. redistributive conditions of parity, without externalizing the costs of the exploitation of natural resources; 02. conditions of recognition, so that the institutionalized cultural pattern does not symbolize nature as a mere instrument for value creation; and, finally, 03. conditions of political representation that are more inclusive and that allow, for example, the inclusion of the demands of Indigenous peoples in the public sphere and in the official political arena.

Recognition without Psychologism: the normative turn toward the institutionalization of cultural patterns

There is one last point to discuss before closing this second section. It concerns the advantage of Fraser's model to address recognition issues in climate justice without resorting to the strong appeal of the psychological elements of the cultural-identity background of the agents involved, which she calls the 'risk of psychologism' (FRASER, 2003, 1997). This movement is necessary precisely to move the dimension of recognition away from the traditional Hegelian interpretation of this terminology. In doing so, she disconnects the dimension of recognition from an investigation that is directly linked to the formation (or deformation) of the 'self' of the agents involved in institutional processes. Her model, therefore, is focused on the conversation around the 'cultural patterns of value institutionalized' in liberal societies and, especially, when they can be deemed fair or unfair according to a normative conception of justice (FRASER, 2003, 1997).

Let's look into this in more detail. As mentioned in the first section, along with the demands for recognition put forward by 'new' social movements in recent decades,

a wave of theories and conceptions of recognition have been formulated, aiming to capture these demonstrations in theoretical terms (BENHABIB, 2002, 1992; FORST, 2008, 2002; HONNETH, 1996; TAYLOR, 1994). As Charles Taylor (1994) describes it, minorities started to push forward an agenda regarding the need for institutional intervention in the quality of relationships between people. In addition to ensuring the quality of legal relations so that people could have free and equal relationships—which Taylor (1994) presents as the field of ‘legal equality’—, they also demand the use of institutional power to ensure quality in other areas where our self is also deeply formed (or deformed), with emphasis on the family environment and intimate relationships. This implies bringing the coercive power of the state into that realm where liberal tradition had purposely become ‘blind’ and left aside in modernity: the so-called ‘private sphere’ (FORST, 2008, 2002; TAYLOR, 1994)⁶.

By opening up this road, recognition theories inspired by the teleological tradition of the young Hegel, especially that of Axel Honneth (2003, 1996), start to investigate how, in liberal societies: 01. institutionalized recognition patterns tend to shape the intersubjective relationships between individuals, especially regarding expectations of love, respect, and esteem; 02. how the fulfilment or disrespect of these patterns tends to affect the way people learn to refer to themselves, influencing the formation of their self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem; 03. finally, how these patterns should not be interpreted as static, but rather as dynamic. This is because they tend to change when collective experiences of suffering and disrespect can be translated into a language of social justice, entering the official political arena.

While teleological theories of recognition are very sophisticated in philosophical terms, they may encounter compatibility problems with theories of justice due to their strong appeal to psychological elements⁷. Moreover, they tend to

⁶Advocacy for institutional interventions in the ‘quality of relationships’ is greatly driven by feminist criticisms of patriarchal cultural patterns, which show how the institutionalization of these models in modern societies has affected and continues to profoundly affect the malformation of subjectivity, not only of women but also of men (GILLIGAN, 1982; PATEMAN, 1988). Similarly, Black movements also explore how the institutionalization of a racist cultural pattern can survive even when legal equality is respected within the framework of civil rights. Authors like Bell Hooks (2014) show how the institutionalization of a racist culture can deeply affect the quality of intimate relationships and even social esteem relationships between white and non-white people in liberal societies.

⁷For a counterargument in favor of psychological elements in recognition approaches, see Zurn (2003). For a conciliatory argument, see Thompson (2006).

shift the primacy of the object of justice, from an 'external investigation' on how the institutions of the basic structure should be guided to ensure the quality of parity relations (at least in the public sphere and in the official political arena, as Fraser believes), to an 'internal analysis' of the experiences of the individuals involved (as Honneth argues).

By delving into the dynamics of the formation and deformation of people's identities, teleological recognition theories come much closer to the purposes of ethical theories about a good life and a good relationship with oneself than to theories of justice. To avoid this strong appeal to psychological elements, Fraser (2003, 1997) takes a normative turn in recognition for the purposes of formulating a deontological theory of justice. That is, her paradigm shifts the focus from the recognition of an internal analysis of the psychology of the agents to an external analysis of the configuration and institutional practices that prevent people from acting as peers. By doing so, the dimension of recognition shifts to an analysis of cultural patterns of value and how they can enter the institutional apparatus, creating arbitrary distinctions between people based on cultural-identity differences.

To illustrate how this approach would work in climate justice, let us take the struggles waged by Indigenous peoples as a case study once again. Based on Fraser's normative turn, in positive terms, it is worth investigating whether the cultural patterns of value, which permeate climate policy-making and implementation, express equal respect for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, ensuring intersubjective conditions so that both can engage in relationships on an equal footing, regardless of their ethnic differences. In negative terms, it is worth investigating whether these patterns create arbitrary distinctions of value between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, for example, based on the patterns of a colonialist heritage.

In cases where cultural patterns are disrespectful and discriminatory, it is then appropriate to direct institutional power itself to "[...] deinstitutionalize patterns of cultural value that impede parity of participation and to replace them with patterns

that foster it" (FRASER, 2003, p. 30)⁸. However, this task is not simple from an empirical or normative point of view. The next section will explore why.

Deinstitutionalization of non-ecological cultural patterns: pluralism of values and the risk of institutional paternalism

By opening the doors for institutional power interference in the existence of cultural patterns in liberal societies, in this third section, I close the article with some reflections on the contemporary challenge posed to framing and implementing climate policies that can influence people to effectively reduce their 'luxurious' or 'non-subsistence' greenhouse gas emissions, to use Henry Shue's (2014) famous vocabulary. Nevertheless, my interest here is in climate policy-making and implementation that is not committed to a 'paternalistic use' of institutional power, on the one hand, and is respectful of the 'pluralism of values', on the other⁹.

As the sixth IPCC report (LEE et al., 2023) categorically points out, the task of limiting global warming to 1.5/2°C compared to the pre-industrial period is an 'ambitious' goal that requires 'serious' and 'rapid' structural changes not only in socioeconomic terms, but also in cultural terms in contemporary societies. This requires, therefore, the use of the institutional authority to deinstitutionalize a ruling non-ecological cultural pattern which is 'capitalist' in spirit, according to Nancy Fraser (2022). A pattern that has largely influenced in past centuries and continues to influence nowadays an entire cycle of 'production', 'consumption', 'transport', and 'waste management', which is grounded in a non-responsible and disavowed cultural pattern in which the relationship with 'nature' is merely exploitative. Faced with the need for an economic and cultural transition toward a Green, Just Society, a multidimensional conception of climate justice includes two challenges. First, the

⁸In the Brazilian scenario, the newly established 'Committee for the Promotion of Public Policies for the Social Protection of Indigenous Peoples' is pointing in the direction of deinstitutionalizing discriminatory cultural patterns toward Indigenous peoples. In its second article, in particular, it establishes that one of its purposes is to formulate action plans to end 'prejudice' and 'discrimination' grounded on ethnic-cultural differences (BRAZIL, 2023).

⁹Fraser (2003, 1997) emphatically states that her approach has aimed to respect 'value pluralism' and, because of this, her model has aimed to stand against 'illiberal' and 'authoritarian' forms of using institutional power to interfere in people's autonomy. And to choose their own conceptions of good life that they believe are appropriate to guide their ways of life; meanwhile, with Caranti and Ali (2021), I believe that her approach paid little attention to an important point: the risk of institutional paternalism. The third and final section of this article will be dedicated to exploring the deinstitutionalization of non-ecological cultural patterns and the risk of institutional paternalism.

challenge of reshaping the economic background institutions in a non-capitalistic way. Second, the challenge of reframing the cultural patterns away from a capitalistic view of nature. Regarding the latter, it must be reframed in a way that respects the pluralism of values and also avoids the risk of institutional paternalism¹⁰.

To understand what the risk of paternalism means in climate policies designed and implemented by institutions in liberal societies, I believe Jonathan Quong's (2011) definition is very useful for our purposes here. Based on his definition, I argue that the risk of institutional paternalism in climate policies should be understood based on two fundamental characteristics:

- The first characteristic draws attention to the fact that paternalistic climate policies usually imply a presumed 'negative judgment' about the agents' inability to assess, evaluate, and review their non-ecological cultural patterns over a lifetime.

- As a consequence, the second characteristic of paternalistic climate policies is the use of coercive power to force agents to review and pursue a presumed 'true interest' in living in a Green, Just Society over time. Even if these agents are strongly opposed to a green cultural transition, they publicly justify their forceful actions for the sake of a 'good life', as if they were in a better position to understand it than citizens.

With this definition of institutional paternalism in mind, it is possible to list 'three positions' in climate policy-making and implementation in liberal societies today:

- The Behaviorist Position
- The Classical Liberal Position
- The Perfectionist Position

Let us briefly explore each of them.

The first one is what I classify as a 'behaviorist position'. That is a stance that argues that institutional interference in the existence and maintenance of non-ecological cultural patterns over time does 'not' touch on serious conflicts of values. As it does not happen, it does not need to be concerned about the so-called risk of

¹⁰Notably, I establish here a connection between the pillars of mitigation and the dimension of recognition. However, the discussion around the cultural dimension has been introduced in the pillars of 'adaptation' and 'loss and damage' in climate policies. For this purpose, see Andre (2020), Page and Heyward (2016), and Heyward (2010). More precisely, the cultural dimension is particularly present in the discussion about how institutions should 'remedy' and, then, 'restore' the cultural-identity losses of people who are on the front lines of anthropogenic climate change, including those who live in small island states like Tuvalu and Kiribati.

institutional paternalism. In this respect, simple and everyday non-ecological practices, including, for example, food and water waste. The unbridled consumption of disposable items, and travelling by private car when efficient public transport is available will all change through purely 'positive techniques of persuasion to encourage sustainable behavior', such as by using 'green nudging' practices (ALLCOTT and KESSLER, 2015; ALLCOTT and ROGERS, 2014; SUNSTEIN, 2016; UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, 2020). Therefore, the use of institutional authority to arbitrate non-ecological patterns will in no way affect comprehensive values that shape people's ways of life, their identities, and their relationship with nature. From the behaviorist perspective, such as in the green nudging case, the reason for this set of non-ecological behaviors is the mere lack of external incentives and rewards for people to reconsider their habits and, consequently, have more environmentally responsible actions (DESOMBRE, 2018; TAVONI et al., 2021). However, contrary to this stance, I believe that a transition from non-ecological to sustainable cultural patterns would lead to a profound conflict of values that should be seriously considered. With Rawls (2005), I believe that the choice of individual actions is usually influenced, and shaped by comprehensive value systems. People believe to be true or more appropriate to guide their everyday choices. As institutional interference opens the way for conflicts of values, then the potential for paternalism is indeed possible, contrary to what the behaviorist position argues.

Let us move to the next position, which is typical of the 'classical liberal position'. According to this understanding, by opening the door for institutional interference in the content of a 'good (green) life' and a 'good (green) relationship' with the self and with nature, climate policies aiming to change non-ecological cultural patterns would inevitably lead to conflicts of values. Indeed, this position is quite emphatic in arguing that institutional power should absolutely refrain from interfering in the existence and maintenance of cultural patterns — in particular, to use the famous expression coined by Isaiah Berlin (2002), they should especially refrain from creating obstacles to the many paths along which a person can decide to walk. This does not mean that the classical liberal stance does not consider that a cultural transition to green values is important in liberal societies. On the contrary, this current strongly advocates for the free and autonomous 'self-regulation' of citizens themselves over a lifetime. Because of their self-interest in preserving a

sustainable natural environment, people themselves must find ways to reconsider and reshape their non-ecological behaviors aiming at the goals of a carbon-free society. The classical liberal view obviously bears in mind that people can choose not to adopt more eco-friendly behaviors and ways of life in the end. But this is the price to pay for having a society that is strongly committed to the most comprehensive set of individual rights and freedoms, where issues of values and conceptions of a good life are left for them to decide throughout their lives.

Finally, the third position is what I refer to as the ‘perfectionist position’. Unlike classical liberalism, it categorically argues that climate policies should be formulated and implemented to ‘improve’ people. In the case of interference in non-ecological cultural patterns, these policies should be considered just from a normative point of view when the use of institutional power is justified as a way to promote:

- A better green relationship between people and nature;
- The improvement of their lifestyles and conceptions of a good life toward ecological ones.

Contrary to the behaviorist stance, therefore, the perfectionist stance does not deny that such interference normally affects the pluralism of values in liberal societies. As its purpose is to use institutions to promote a qualitative improvement of people themselves, it becomes inevitable to interfere in their existence and maintenance of non-ecological cultural patterns in liberal societies over time. Even though climate policies do spark deep conflicts of values, this does not imply that this institutional interference should necessarily be considered arbitrary in terms of what we should morally improve regarding our duties to nature (WIENHUES, 2020) or regarding an imaginary a better community in ethical terms (LANE, 2011).

I agree with classical liberalism and the perfectionist positions that conflicts of values will be inevitable when the doors are opened for institutional interference in the deinstitutionalization of non-ecological cultural patterns. However, in contrast to perfectionism, I believe that the green cultural transition does not need to be decoupled from important pillars of liberal societies, including individual autonomy and pluralism (see PIROLI, 2021b). In this sense, the perfectionist current seems to very quickly abandon crucial pillars of liberal societies. Moreover, this stance lacks criteria to distinguish democratic ecological patterns from those that can be considered unreasonable, as is the case of ‘far-right ecologisms’ (MOORE and ROBERTS, 2022) and

others that justify authoritarian institutional measures to avoid a presumed ‘political catastrophe’ in the years to come (MITTIGA, 2022).

In this sense, I agree with the strong appeal classical liberalism has regarding the commitment to pluralism and especially its concern with protecting institutions from paternalism. However, in contrast to the classical liberal approach, I believe that climate policies can be formulated and implemented in a neutral way to avoid this risk; but this is a subject to be addressed in future work.

Final considerations

My purpose in this article was to explore the recognition dimension of climate justice and especially to introduce an innovative proposal regarding. An extension of the literature to guide institutional power in terms of designing and implementing climate policies to deinstitutionalize non-ecological cultural patterns without falling into the risk of institutional paternalism, on the one hand, while respecting the pluralism of values, on the other.

To summarize my argument, in the first section, I have shown how climate policies themselves can include discriminatory practices toward certain minority groups. To show this, the demands of the Black movement in the US against environmental racism (section I.I) and the struggles of Indigenous peoples in the Brazilian context against a colonialist heritage (section I.I) were used as case studies. Based on this, it became clear how discriminatory cultural patterns can potentially permeate climate policy-making and implementation even in the context of liberal societies.

In the second section, I have explored how useful philosopher Nancy Fraser’s multidimensional normative model is to capture the recognition dimension in climate justice. First, I have shown how her model can capture a multidimensional conception of climate justice without being reductionist — both, in the economicist and culturalistic sense (section II.I). Second, I have explored how Fraser’s paradigm can connect all three dimensions of climate justice under a shared normative horizon: the one of a Green Just Society (section II.II). Third, but no less important, I have analyzed how her model can move the issues of recognition away from a traditional theoretical approach of recognition—those typically connected to the formation and deformation of the ‘self’ of agents, like Honneth’s approach (2003,

1996). By avoiding the so-called 'risk of psychologism', the philosopher Nancy Fraser provides an original approach to recognition focused on the 'institutionalization of cultural patterns' that permits us to evaluate when we have solid reasons to say those patterns are just or unjust in liberal societies (section II.III).

Based on the spirit of Nancy Fraser's normative turn, in the third section, I close the article with a reflection on the contemporary challenge of designing and implementing climate policies that can help to deinstitutionalize non-ecological cultural patterns and, then, influence people to effectively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. More specifically, I have focused on the matter of how to make and implement these climate policies, while respecting the pluralism of values, on the one hand, and avoiding falling into the risks of a paternalistic use of institutions, on the other.

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