THE NATIONAL AND PLURINATIONAL COMMUNITY: NECESSARY

AND IMPOSSIBLE

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Contradictions in Community: Ecuador's Plurinational Case

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Literature Review

Previous scholars have widely theorized upon the idea of community and its connection the nation-state. Benedict Anderson, whose approach to the problematic of the nation became a classic, defines it as an "imagined political community." Étienne Balibar challenged the primordial nation and spoke of internal exclusions inherently caused by nation-states. This raises the question of whether internal exclusions can be overcome in a nation marked by multinationality. Recently, the idea of a plurinational nation-state has been introduced, catalyzing a change to the approach of previous theories of community. The problems of a nation-state increase exponentially when multiple community forms are politically combined within state borders. Raúl Zibechi contextualized this problem when he wrote about Ecuador, which has created a plurinational constitution. Independent communities are now becoming homogenized as one overarching community. Literature regarding the organization of the world into nationstates, the idea of plurinationalism and the contradictions to traditional renderings of community raise the question of how diverse groups with seemingly nothing in common become a community.

Thesis Statement

Given the idea that the congruence with a cultural community is what gives legitimacy to the political unit, what kind of legitimacy can come from a community that defines itself as plural? Can pluralism be the basis and the glue for a wider community explicitly imagined to support/legitimize the existence of a state? Can the idea of plurinationalism help solve the inherent contradictions created by communities?

Theoretical Framework

This research thesis will be grounded in theoretical inquires on communities and nationstates from a variety of fields including anthropology, sociology and philosophy.

Project Description

Traditional renditions of the idea of community have faced many new critiques in the face of our increasingly globalized world that has come to be organized into national communities, or nation-states. Following a transdisciplinary and critical approach I intend to address the problem by asking: 'How does a diverse group of people, in a world in which uniformity offers legitimacy to the nation-state, become a community? How can diversity can be overcome or even become itself the common ground that holds together a community?' These theoretical questions will lead me to inquire the idea of plurinationalism, which attempts to tie together various national identities into one community of citizens of the same nation-state. This research will seek to form a connection between the idea of plurinationalism and the concept of the national community.

INTRODUCTION

Community is an idea that has taken many forms and subsequently offers no decisive definition. Because of the ambiguity regarding the concept of community, I will seek to understand community as it relates to the nation-state, specifically in order to understand the emerging phenomenon that is plurinationalism. Ernest Gellner's definition of the nation-state has come to be accepted by scholars as the correct delineation of nation-states. Nation-states are based upon the principle of nationalism, which holds that the political unit and cultural unit should be congruent in order to produce political legitimacy. Nationalism is therefore the principle that lends political legitimacy to a nation, and nationalism is likewise the foundation from which the nation is produced. Given the idea that the congruence with a cultural community is what gives legitimacy to the political unit, what kind of legitimacy can come from a community that defines itself as plural? Can pluralism be the basis and the glue for a wider community explicitly imagined to support/legitimize the existence of a state?

To begin to analyze, explain, and further understand these questions, it is necessary to begin with the cultural aspect of the idea of nation-states, which can be conceived of as the *community*. I employ Roberto Esposito's theory, which states that community is both necessary and impossible, to form my own understanding of the national community. Within the nationstate, community is that which offers legitimacy to the nation, and that which exists as an unfulfilled project. As such, the national community is both necessary and impossible. Throughout the national communities' inception, reproduction, and subsequent exclusionary tendencies, these two fundamentals are shows. In keeping with Gellner's principle of

nationalism, which holds that the congruence between the political unit and the cultural community is what offers legitimacy to the nation-state, we can come to the conclusion that the cultural community is fundamentally necessary for the fulfillment of the principle of nationalism because it justifies the political unit through this perceived "unity." Likewise, the national community exists as a constant project, which points to the impossibility of the true existence of a national community. The duality of the concept of a national community allows for an understanding of plurinationalism Previously, the concept of plurinationalism formed a theoretical problem for the principle of nationalism because it creates a disjuncture between cultural and political boundaries; however, when we understand the political unit constantly creates and projects uniformity with the cultural unit, plurinationalism simply offers an example of how true uniformity within the nation-state never reaches actualization. To explain the paradox of the national community as necessary and impossible, we must first begin by understanding how the national community is formed.

CHAPTER I

COMMUNITY AS IT EXISTS

Creation of Community

To understand community one must first seek to understand the conditions in which man exists, namely, the conditions in which man is born into to a necessary communal existence. Existence without human interaction is wholly impossible, as biology has shown. Human beings initially need others for their coming into existence, and likewise for primary care, which in turn transitions into life in a communal existence. In this way, Esposito posits that community is *necessary* for mankind; it is the "transcendental condition of our existence," (14). At the same time, Esposito regards community as *impossible* because the originary condition of mankind as existing in community precedes "every possible realization," (15). He writes that the only true community would be a community in which all personal human interest is overcome, which is unrealizable. "It must, says the simple law that demands it, remain a simple idea in reason, or an unrealizable goal, a pure destination," Esposito writes (20). In this way, community is a condition of human existence that can never be fully achieved. The paradox that Esposito enunciated has formed the foundation of my own understanding of the idea of the national community. Just as community is necessary and impossible for all mankind, within the nationstate, community is that which offers legitimacy to the nation (necessary) and exists as an unfulfilled project (impossible). In order to further explain this paradox, it is necessary to understand how an idea of the national community is created within a nation-state, and how its creation is perceived as fundamentally necessary for the legitimation of the nation-state.

In keeping with Gellner's conception of nationalism as the congruence between the political unit and cultural community which lends legitimacy to the nation, we may necessarily come to the conclusion that this cultural unit is a foundational, albeit ambiguous, aspect of any nation-state. As such, I seek to understand *community* as a concept which implies a national community which is inherently cultural; it is likewise used to justify political territories and has formed the basis for scholar's understanding of the nation-state. It is precisely the previously mentioned ambiguity surrounding the idea of community that this research seeks to clarify.

By associating the idea of community with the "cultural unit" that, through its congruence with the political unit, offers legitimacy to the nation, it is first useful to understand how (and in what ways) national communities are formed. In his *Imagined Communities,* cultural anthropologist Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political community" that is imagined as both limited and sovereign (Anderson 6). The use of imagination is a vital element in the creation of community, as individuals never truly know all other individuals within their community, but must conceive of others and their communal existence through imagination. Anderson very briefly responds to Gellner's idea of nations as *invented* by retorting that nations should be understood as *imagined* rather than *fictitious.* Gellner posits that there is a myth, which he refers to as "the nationalist myth," surrounding traditional conceptions of nations. He says that nations, specifically nation-states, are viewed as latent entities waiting an "awakening," (Gellner 45). Gellner surmises that nations as "in the nature of things" is a false notion, because in reality nations, or the nationalism that justifies nations, becomes necessary in an industrialized age. Though Gellner's depiction of the nation brings to light the fictitious idea of "sleeping beauty nations," he does not reduce nations and nationalism to simple inventions or *fabrication* as Anderson declares that he does. Rather, Gellner says that nationalism is "the

crystallization of new units, suitable for the conditions now prevailing, though admittedly using their raw material the cultural, historical and other inheritances from the pre-nationalist world," (Gellner 48). This *crystallization* denotes a pre-existence of certain aspects, whether cultural or historical, that are then formed to suit the age of industrialization from which Gellner writes. Rather than complete fabrication, nationalism seems to be a *creation* that is then used as a justification of political legitimacy. Nationalism is largely a political theory that bases political territory on the perceived cultural community in order to lend legitimacy to itself. Anderson's work in *Imagined Communities* has portrayed the national community as that which is created through imagination, and has since been used by scholars across many disciplines. The imagining of this cultural community, as Anderson states, is both limited and sovereign, which allows for the territorial delineation of the nation to coincide with the community.

The principle of nationalism has therefore been thought of by the two scholars in relationship to its "origin." Anderson comes to the conclusion that nationalism, as a system of meaning, has come to replace the previously dominant practice of religion. Both nationalism and religion are systems that organize meaning for the community. Anderson writes that the onset of nationalist thought began to take root when previously shared understandings about the nature of mankind, a nature formed namely through religious understanding of 'divine truth' that created a common worldview, began to subside. With the decline of this common basis of community came an opening for a new way of thinking about the concept of community. He theorizes that this opening for a "search for fraternity" was then increased by print capitalism, and eventually led to the induction of the concept of nationalism. In saying so, Anderson never surmises that nationalism as a dominant practice is necessary, unlike Gellner, who concludes that with the closure of the agrarian age and the onset of industrialization, nationalism was the subsequent

outcome. "High culture," or Gellner's conception of those literate cultures that consciously seek to reproduce themselves, existed as dominant during the agrarian age but did not define the political limit. This changes with the dawn of industrialization; high culture during industrialization "badly needs political support and underpinning," (Gellner 48-49). Thus, Gellner uncovers the myth of nationalism and the weakness that lies in viewing the nation as a natural destiny, but he risks falling into a similar paradigm when he goes on to treat the "age of nationalism" as a necessary consequence of modernity.

The community exists through the imagination, but likewise is presented as preceding its "fusion" with the recognized nation. Both Anderson and Gellner recognize the fallacy in viewing nations as natural, but still imply the existence of a preexisting concept which is transformed in the name of nationalism. To Gellner, the inherited cultural or historical factors are changed to suit the use of the nation. To Anderson, the preexisting religious community organization is dismissed and thus occurs the onset of the practice of nationalism.

What both scholars suggest is that a system of meaning, which for Anderson is religion and for Gellner is agrarianism, is replaced by a more novel system of meaning that is the age of nationalism. While both scholars create innovative theories on the idea of the national community, they both seek to explain the ways the nation-state exists by looking to the past and showing a linear transformations of cultural systems into what we now know as the nation-state. The crucial point here is that systems of meaning form commonality amongst groups of people; the novelty is that these cultural systems are portrayed as congruent with the political boundaries of the state. The scholars provide justification for the present reality of nation-states by providing a historical framework which precedes the age of nationalism.

While both scholars employ a narrative that formed a time suitable for the age of nationalism, Appadurai exposes the linear fallacy that is perpetuated when we view a community as falling within a relatively stable territory throughout history, and thus necessitating the existence of a defined geography. For Anderson and Gellner, the abatement of previous systems of meaning within stable spacial arenas is replaced with the age of nationalism, and the inception of nation-states is then portrayed as a natural transformation of history. Instead, Appadurai articulates that it is "histories that produce geographies, not vice versus," (66). A crucial point to note regarding the idea of histories producing geographies is that historical agents are those who interpret history, and therefore produce history *as an interpretation of events*. The element of imagination, which is discussed in the work of Anderson, is similarly regarded in Appadurai's writing when he speaks of the "work of the imagination" which is necessary to produce geographies. Instead of imagining the present community through entities such as newspapers (as Anderson posits), an imagining of past communities is possible through history. Historical interpretations allows national communities to imagine a history that presents itself as the necessary transformation of the national community to its ultimate destination: the nation-state. The past communities are then presented by historical agents as stable entities which shifted, transformed, and culminated in the present geographical layout. Thus, any geography, including the nation-state, is formed through the historical factors which create it, and subsequently the historical actors within the nation-state that produced the geography are affected by the geography itself. "Histories that produce geographies" shows the fallacy that occurs when viewing geography as a stable entity throughout history.

Just as Appadurai posits that historical interpretations of the past produce special territories, Etienne Balibar directly presents the "retrospective illusion" that allows national

identity to be perceived as preceding the nation. He writes that the current nation-state in which one exists consistently projects into the past a history that consists of a series of events which ultimately must manifest into the current national identity. The events selected create an image of the nation-state as intended to exist long before its existence reached "actuation." However, the "liner destiny" created by the nation itself pulls distinct events and happenings, quite often uncorrelated circumstances, in order to procure an image of the nation as an inherent destiny (Balibar 86-88). As such, the cultural community is often the retrospective illusion used in the attribution of the nation-state as the fulfillment of a the necessary culmination of the community into the nation-state.

In his "A Metonymic Community?" Thomas Claviez likewise remarks on the transformation of the past to serve the purpose of a nation's present.

> "For a community to "occur," that is, for it to have left its state of contingent possibility and achieved actuality- it has to narrate its own, contingent roots and original *potentia* as a teleological narrative designed to overcome contingency by means of (which means to reformulate it as) necessity, which turns the passive *Schicksal* (fate) into active *Geschick* (destiny)," (45).

This "occurrence" of community is most realized when it becomes congruent with the nationstate, or when it reaches political actuality. Claviez rightfully uses quotation marks around *occur* to show the linear projection of the community as an entity that precedes its actuation with the nation-station. As such, the contingent nation-state grounds itself through the use of the community as destiny, when even the community upon which it legitimizes its being is equally contingent.

All of the aforementioned scholars point to the irremissible idea, though they do not

explicitly state, that the national community is only "realized," or rather, is *perceived* to come

into existence, by its relationship to the political unit or to the state. The existence of the national

community is only perceived after its culmination with the state, and is likewise projected as

having been present long before this "culmination." However, the community still only exists as

it is imagined. That is to say, the national community is never truly actuated, but claims to reach

realization (but we understand that realization exists in imagination) when it becomes congruent

with the state. The two ideas, cultural community and political sphere, are therefore quite

inseparable factors in the nation-state because the nation-state legitimizes its existence by

projecting cultural uniformity that not only shares congruence with its territorial borders, but also

naturally pre-existed the political territory in which it now exists. This is precisely why

plurinationalism poses such a distinct challenge to traditional renditions of the nation. However,

the present nation in which one exists constructs the concept of the a cultural community in order

to justify/legitimize itself. If the summation of a nation-state is built, constructed, and continually

projected as being based upon a national community, then this community is a necessary tool in

the justification of the nation-state. The question "did community exist before the nation-state?"

can never be answered precisely because the community being discussed is a political

community, a product of the nation-state, yet the community is projected/imagined/presented to

be based upon something other than a political connection. In other words, the community can

never be separated from the political unit because it is a political conception, an imagined one,

though it is made to seem as if it were something beyond, or more deeply rooted than a simple

political idea. he national community is a necessary creation on behalf of the state because it

forms a perceived sense of unity, which in turn gives political power legitimacy, but it is a

concept that has been re-fabricated to suit the needs of the nation-state. Thus, the community is a constant project of the nation, though it is presented as an already fulfilled project because of its "culmination" in the nation-state. The national community is therefore an inherently unfulfilled project, though it believes itself to be fulfilled. In this way, the community seeks fulfillment that masquerades as continuity.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY AS IT PERSISTS

Continuity of Community

Community is presented as an entity that preceded the nation-state and culminated with its congruence to the state, which allows the community to be presented as an already fulfilled project. Legitimacy is granted to the nation-state by the perpetuation of this image, and the unrealizable reality of community is masked, allowing an unfulfilled project to be masked as the continuity of the present community. As Esposito stated, the community is a *destination,* though it exists as if it were a *continuation.*

This disguised unfulfillment is precisely what Balibar theorized when he spoke of the illusion of national identity. As I previously mentioned, the presentation of the nation as the culmination of a series of events that was an inherent destiny allowed distinct events to fall under the guise of a prior common cultural community within a fairly stable territorial region. In turn, this narrative of the nation allows it to be presented as an entity that is as equally destined to continue forever as it was destined to exist in the first place. Thus, as community did not naturally happen to become a nation-state, the national community does not naturally reproduce itself, but instead requires a deliberate method of "producing the people," (93). The community exists as an unfulfilled project, though it believes itself to be fulfilled. The striving of the community to perpetuate itself is then actually a striving of the community to reach its fulfillment. This is not to say that the nation itself does not exist, but instead the unifying cultural community that it bases itself upon is always in a state of perfectibility. In other words, the community is never actuated or realized, but exists as a "community in striving."

The question then becomes one of the reproduction of the national community, though this reproduction is a disguised strive for fulfillment. National communities do not inherently pass down from generation to generation, which presents a challenge for the community to continue in existence. National community must be seen as natural for the uncritical acceptance of such a community to prevail, so the people must be continually reproduced in a manner that does not question the reasoning behind their allegiance to a nation.

In the context of Balibar's argument, this 'producing of the people' is a key component of the way nations exist and are perceived to continually exist. Unity gives power legitimacy, so a production of unity would necessarily lead to a production of political legitimacy. People are produced through daily practices, but it is important to note that unity takes place at the individual level as well as the mass level. It is not just the inclusion of individuals into the established community, but instead the individuals produce the community. Essentially, the people produce themselves as a people (Balibar 93-94). Up until this point I have purposely focused on the role that the state has played in the creation of an imagined national community, but who is it that forms the nationstate? The people of the nation. Thus, it is the same people who misunderstand their national community to be a the base and glue for the political unit. In this way, the imagined community is not simply constructed by a conscious few, but is produced and in a state of constant perfectibility by the masses.

Balibar then goes on to suggest that the production of the people as a people takes place through "the naturalization of belonging and the sublimation of the ideal nation," (96). In other words, the naturalization of belonging, or creation of what Balibar calls a "fictive ethnicity," is used to create the projection of both the past and the future as a natural community. In other words, the construction of the people as a national community is *necessary* for the justification of the

state's power. Balibar uses the word "fictive" to describe the way the community is instituted. The use of the word is used to convey a fabrication rather than a falsification. Fiction is typically regarded as something that is not real, whereas Balibar uses the term to describe something that is produced *as if* it were real (96). This means that the national community is fictively created by the nation-state so that fictive ethnicity is regarded as natural, as something that must necessarily exist. Language and race, to Balibar, are the ways in which fictive ethnicity is produced because they are made to seem as inherent qualities of our existence. Thus, fictive ethnicity becomes necessary for the creation of community as natural, while in this case "natural" would be the antithesis of "fictive."

As the creation of a fictive ethnicity seeks to continually "reproduce" the national community, the "sublimation of the ideal nation" likewise seeks to perfect the national community. The process of sublimation is powerful precisely because it is an imperceptible process which typically results in exclusions. The two processes are indispensable for the creation of an ideal nation, and can be equated with the constant project of producing the national community.

Eric Hobsbawm's idea of invented traditions, which are those practices which seek to create norms of behavior through repetition and "normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past," shows a pattern of projection into the future based upon a perceived communal past. This becomes quite the paradox when we recall the fictitious construction of national histories, as Balibar posited with his idea of a retrospective illusion. Hobsbawm writes that modern traditions often transform and institutionalize older, customary practices, and thus fabricate a continuity with the past (7). Thus, invented traditions are in a constant state of reinvention through imposed repetition. Traditions are not a standstill invention, but require deliberate and repetitive ritualization. The power that invented traditions contain is best

understood when we recall that the traditions themselves, especially those regarding the nation and nationalism, are not perceived to be a form of social engineering, as they ought to be understood. Hobsbawm writes that it is through invented traditions that social cohesion, the legitimation of authority, and socialization occur. All three of these forms of invented tradition are crucial aspects of the constant project of creating a national community.

Now, in order to understand how invented traditions hold an emotional sentiment over individuals who form a part of the invented tradition itself, it is useful to understand Balibar's idea of normalization. While the nation-state itself can be viewed as an invented tradition, it is the "structures of hegemony," as Balibar writes, that create each individual's uncritical acceptance of what is "normal." Through institutions, such as the family and education, an idea of what is normal in social interactions with others is displayed and consequently becomes so heavily manifested in the individual that any idea of normal goes unquestioned. It is through the process of normalization that members of society learn how to interact in community if they are to be respected and heard (Ambiguous Universality 62-63). The idea of normalization then is a process that allows the unfulfilled national community to strive for fulfillment through the institutionalized display of normal societal behaviors. These behaviors, in turn, procure a process of sublimation of the nation. Likewise, normalization contributes to the creation of the invented tradition that is the nation-state, as it is a method of "inventing" the nation.

One way the constant project of creating the national community is accurately shown is through Billig's concept of "banal nationalism," in which a dialectical relationship is formed through forgetting and remembering, allowing the nation to be created. Billig writes that we continuously forget both our own nationalism and the reproduction of our nation (184-186). A collective amnesia is formed as nations forget the daily repetition of "banal nationalism," and

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subsequently mistake only overheated nationalist moments as nationalism. Nationalism is then

seen as a negative concept that threatens the nation-state, when it is in reality the factor that

allows for the reproduction of the nation-state itself. Thus, it is the banal nationalism that is

reiterated daily that allows the continuity of the nation. Likewise, the forgetting of negative

historical events and perpetuation of the positive historical factors that "led" to the nation allows

the national community to be viewed as natural. Billig offers a germane example of banal

nationalism when he writes about waved and unwaved flags. In certain instances, which are what

Billig calls "waved flags," the national flag is a symbol that incurs certain actions, such as a

salute, moment of silence, or a hand placed over the heart. However, the "unwaved flag," which

are flags found in photographs or flags that fly on a daily basis and go unperceived, demands no

pageantry. These daily encounters with unwaved flags offer the quintessential depiction of banal

nationalism, and they contribute to a process Billig refers to as "enhabitaion," (189). The daily

reproduction of nationalism is an unconscious process that contributes to Hobsbawm's concept

of invented traditions. By equating nationalism as a negative, overheated idea, the nationalism

that the nation-state is wholly based upon becomes forgotten, allowing the national community

to continually strive to reach the unrecognizable community form, all the while never conceiving

of itself as an entity that needs to be continually produced. This incognizant process then

becomes a primary reason that nationalism hold the power to legitimize a nation-state precisely

because of its unperceptable nature.

The reproduction of a community, as I have shown, is produced by the people of a nation,

and requires daily reiteration in order to succeed. But, the process of reproduction is an

unconscious process that takes place through each individual, as well as through the institutions

set in place by the state. As I understand community to be an unrealizable destination, the

constant reproduction of a community is in reality an endeavor to achieve the unachievable

community form, which is likewise thought to have been accomplished in the past. It is in the

process of continuation (strife for fulfillment) that the problem of exclusion occurs, which is the

next problem this research seeks to understand.

Community through Exclusion

Another method in which the national community seeks fulfillment is through the

exclusion of others that is both internal and external. Because the national community is based on

a perceived cultural unit, it exists as opposed to anything that does not fit this community. In this

way, just as we can only perceive of our own existence because of our relationship to other

human beings, the community can only conceive of itself in relationship to other communities.

The tendency to conceive of an entity through its relationship to other entities can lead to a

production of difference that allows the community to perceive of itself as necessary. In other

words, anything exists only as far as it is defined by those things it exists against. Through all of

the aforementioned scholars and theories, I have shown the necessary unity of community in

order to legitimize the nation-state, but the projection of unity results from a process of exclusion

that is necessary to produce perceived unity. By including members into a national community,

and then projecting this inclusion as a natural connection that has latently awaited an awakening

through the acquisition of a congruent territorial/political unit, there must necessarily be a

process of exclusion of individuals who are not part of this "natural community." In the words of

Balibar, "The conditions that define belonging also *ipso facto* identify non-belonging…" (73).

Going back to the principle of nationalism, which is the correspondence of the cultural

community and the political community, the nation-state then becomes a system that often seeks

to find fulfillment through exclusion of those individuals or groups who lack the necessary

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cultural community. This cultural community, as we have seen, is produced as if it were a longstanding, natural phenomenon making inclusion appear to be deeply rooted, and exclusion simply a necessary process in the communities' fulfillment.

Both Castels and Torpey express similar ideas when it comes to the idea of membership, or that which allows an individual to access the national community. Once a state becomes a nation-state, the political unit then holds "the monopoly of legitimate means of movement," according to Torpey. The implications of the scholar's corollary to Weber's conception of the monopoly on the legitimate means of violence become apparent when the idea of membership is recalled. When the politically sovereign state contains the monopoly of movement into and within its territory, the problem is then created of deciding who is a member and who is a nonmember. As the principle of nationalism holds, the cultural community should be congruent with the political unit, so those individuals within the territory are presumed to be members of the common cultural group or community. Thus, according to this principle, those who are "others," or those non-members of the cultural community, are blocked from movement into the sovereign state. Castels writes that the state is the only power that holds the authority to grant individuals this membership, which is called citizenship. However, there are different levels of membership granted to individuals within the nation-state, which is seen through Castel's distinction between active and passive citizens. Going back to Torpey, who believes the two aspects of a state's control of borders are territorial access and establishment, we can see that it is the state who is afforded to opportunity to distinguish between members and non-members and subsequently can implement various levels of this membership. Castels poses a quintessential question that is applicable to my own research when he asks, "National identity is often asserted

through a process of exclusion - feelings of belonging depend on being able to say who does not belong.

But if the other is part of society (as a worker, parent, or tax-payer, for example), how can national distinctiveness be maintained?" (302). This question, regarding the other that is within society, can be likewise asked of plurinationalism.

In "A Metonymic Community," Claviez articulates community as that which seeks to protect against contingency, and in the process of immunization against contingency, the community often is led to exclusion (53-54). However, Claviez points out the erroneous tendency to reduce exclusion to something that solely takes place outside of the whole community, for the "walling in" of our community then augments the number of potential contingencies within the nation. Thus, there are forms of exclusion that take place through closing of the nation-state to all outsiders, but there still exists the exclusions that occur within its own borders. The idea of an augmented number of internal contingencies can best be understood through Balibar's concept of "internal exclusions."

The national community often excludes "others" by perceiving of itself as opposed to outsiders, and in the form of the nation-state, this exclusion takes place through the implementation of external borders that protect the territorial sovereignty of the national community. However, Balibar writes of the "gray area" that is necessarily conceived due to the idea of the "levels of membership" we have previously discussed. When we understand the idea of foreignness as something that is against our own national community, we depict this idea of foreignness as being tied to certain attributes, often anthropological attributes such as gender, race, and language; a "fictive ethnicity" is often used to justify the difference between member and non-member. Thus, when there are individuals living within the nation-state, who cannot be

contrived of as non-citizens but who do not meet the fictive standards for full membership, a process of internal exclusion occurs. Internal exclusions show how the process of projecting foreignness into the internal space of a community becomes an attempt to transform of the national community towards fulfillment. In other words, the process of internal exclusion is a result of the unfulfilled project that is the community, and in seeking to perfect its own ideal community, those individuals caught in between member and non-member become excluded in their own space.

The following passage from Balibar's "Citizenship and Exclusion" thoroughly captures the idea of a community in striving:

Thus, the constituent relationship between community and exclusion can begin to function *in the opposite direction*; instead of a pre-existing definition of community, predisposed to make the simple differentiation between citizen and non-citizen, reality is created out of an *unresolved conflict*, one which never stops evolving, which for the most part takes place "behind the scenes" of citizenship (or on *another stage* of the political), and whose stakes are discriminatory violence, inequalities in statuses and rights, whose anthropological "material" is sexual, racial, religious, cultural… Through this conflict, the institutional community is mirrored by an "imagined community," just as the external border comes to be mirrored by an internal border, but it is also *politically transformed*, whether it be in the direction of restriction or expansion. (74)

This passage falls under the first of Balibar's theses regarding inclusion and exclusion, which posits that there is a co-occurrence of violence, or dual violence, on the sides of both inclusion and exclusion. Because the process of inclusion can contain its own elements of violence, it becomes transformed and transforms its political reality. In other words, the process of excluding

others is not the only method in which the community seeks refinement, for the process of inclusion (often one of assimilation) can be its own violent refinement. The constant evolvement of an unresolved conflict, leading to political reality, can be equated with the idea of the unrealizable reality that is community, or community that exists only as a destination (Esposito). It is through the constant strife to become "the more perfect" community that the national community continually exists, and through which the political realities (often violent realities) are continually created. In the words of Castels, "the development of national consciousness is a difficult and as yet *incomplete process*," (emphasis added 306). The irony of the idea of national consciousness, however, is that it is always presented as being complete, which allows the community to then perceive who is a member and who is not a member. Yet, how can a national community, that is not conclusively defined, project individuals as "other" if it is in the process of defining its own national consciousness? In order to answer this question, we may turn once again to Appadurai, whose work in "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" can help us remedy the paradox.

Appadurai's concept of "constructed primordialism" can help us understand how an incomplete national consciousness is contrived of as a complete community and is simultaneously used as the justification of internal and external exclusions. Undoubtedly, an entity that is primordial cannot be an entity that is constructed, for they are contradictory terms. However, communities or ethnicities are constructed *as if* they were primordial groupings. This idea is not novel when we consider the generous scholarship previously mentioned throughout this research points to the idea of a community that is presented as preceding its ultimate culmination with the nation-state. When an entity, such as the national community, is constructed to be seen as primordial, it uses attributes such as language or ethnicity to conceive of the

community as long standing in history. It ties its primordialism to an attribute that is constructed to be viewed an inherent; in doing so, history becomes a key factor to its success. An incomplete national consciousness then moves towards complete consciousness by attaching nationality to a certain attribute, paradoxically presenting the national community to be primordial while constructing the idea of primordialism on a daily basis. Therefore, an incomplete national consciousness which seeks to exclude "the other" is less of a paradox than it is a necessary consequence of the project of refining the national community.

Now, this attempt of purification of the national community, or fulfillment of the community project, can be either a conscious or unconscious process. When it is conscious, the project usually seeks to fulfill a political motive, and when it is unconscious the project typically is a result of the presentation of the community as natural and necessary. Nonetheless, Balibar concludes that "*it is the community itself* that excludes, not only in the form of bureaucratic rules and procedures, but also in the form of the consensus of its members, which is itself more or less politically 'motivated,'" (76). It is through the imagination of the community members of their own communal existence that an idea of non-membership or outsider status is produced.

In his "Community and Ethos," Young extends Freud's conception of community, which becomes sublimated at the cost of the individual, to argue that likewise nationalism is that which destroys communities. Young writes that just as actual communities become communities at the expense of the individual's autonomy, when the idea of the community becomes congruent to the nation-state, the negative consequences of nationalism become the synonymous with the community. In other words, a community obliterates difference among individuals who situate themselves within the community, and when the definition of community becomes a national community, there is the same tendency for the homogenization of the "communities" within the

overarching national community. This theory shows how a community that is *national,* or synonymous with political borders, during its sublimation can seek to homogenize its internal communities, eradicating difference based upon a perceived unified cultural community.   **A Plural Community?**

Upon defining community as that which is necessary for the nation state through its justification of political legitimacy yet simultaneously a constant project for the nation-state, it is necessary to return to the original problem of this research. Given the idea that the congruence with a cultural community is what gives legitimacy to the political unit, what kind of legitimacy can come from a community that defines itself as plural? Can pluralism be the basis and the glue for a wider community explicitly imagined to support/legitimize the existence of a state? Rafael Correra, President of Ecuador, defined plurinationalism as that which allows several nationalities to coexist within the larger state. Until this point, we have assumed nationality to be synonymous with the entire nation-state, or that which is a product of the principle of nationalism. A national would then be one who is a member of the congruent political and cultural community. Yet, if the state defines itself as having multiple nationalities within its borders, it essentially negates the idea of similitude between the cultural community and the political territory, which until this point has been a necessary congruence. With the advent of the idea of plurinationalism, it is therefore necessary to understand what a "principle of plurinationalism" entails, and if a plurinational state can exist within the framework of nation-states in which the world currently exists.

The idea of a national community has made way for internal exclusions, which result from the condition of "otherness" being projected within the borders of the nation-state. Otherness then results from factors of cultural difference, namely difference of race, ethnicity or

language. These factors of difference can be remedied by implying a system of assimilation upon the national community in order to attempt to negate the cultural difference, but can these factors of difference be preserved and consequently allow for a community defined by heterogeneity? Going back to my conception of the national community as that which lends legitimacy to the nation-state and yet exists as an unfulfilled project, I would like to begin with the latter concept.

The national community perceives of itself as an actuated entity, or as being fulfilled with its "ultimate destiny," the nation-state, when its reality is that of an unfulfilled project due to both its imperfect nature and necessary constant reproduction (when reproduction is the metonymic name for the creation of the community on a daily basis). As the national community perpetually exists in a state of sublimation, it is subject to constant transformation in its attempt to continue in existence. In order to preserve the whole, the nation-state must adopt and transform its principles if it is to continually persist as the nation-state. In the case of plurinational societies, the sublimation of the nation comes with the transformation of one nation, congruent with the state, into multiple nations underneath the state's overarching roof. In the case of a self-defined plurinational state, the homogenizing tendency of the national community is then transformed into a community defined as heterogeneous. By transforming its constitution from one that is national (singular) to one that is plurinational, the national community seeks to remedy the internal exclusions that develop when a national defines itself as being a singular, unified culture. Theoretically, a state defined by multiple nationalities would indeed overcome the internal exclusions that occur with the onset of a unified cultural identity and the assimilation of "otherness" that a common cultural identity is precipitated upon; however, unification is necessary to lend political power its legitimacy, so how will unification occur in a state that is marked by its diversity of culture?

The plurinational state, instead of imagining itself as unified by a common cultural community, instead explicitly imagines itself as unified by a common political community. In other words, instead of attempting to conceal the political connection that makes nation-states possible by projecting a national community as the base for the nation, the plurinational state does the opposite. It explicitly imagines its equality and liberty as residing in the sole factor of common citizenship; eliminating the need to base national community on a cultural factor. It casts aside the fallacy that view a singular cultural identity as the creator of national identity, and says instead that national identity can be multifaceted. National identity need not be singular, but instead can exist as plural. The crucial point here is that the political identity must remain unified. In order to perpetuate the existence of the state, the imagining of the community as one political community, rather than as one national community, allows the state to refrain from the assimilation of cultures, and instead perpetuate its existence as one defined by its resistance to homogenization. Instead of being a political theory that bases politics on culture, plurinationalism bases politics on being *a culture of political subjects.*

The idea of a community of citizens is not synonymous with Renan's idea of community as being due to its willed persistence, for as Gellner remarks, there are many entities that will their own existence but have not been able to achieve nationhood. Rather, a community of citizens takes a previously established territory, perceived to be based upon a singular cultural community, and transforms the idea of unity through culture into a unity through citizenship.

Because plurinationalism occurs in an world already defined by nation-states, it does not have to transform cultures into defined political territories, instead it transforms the idea of a unified cultural community into a culture unified by its common political connection: citizenship. It is important to distinguish that plurinationalism does not offer each 'nation' its own territory,

or its own sovereignty as an independent nation. Plurinationalism still conceives of each nation

as being a subset of the overarching political state, subject to its full political sovereignty.

Plurinationalism, however, aims to allow each sub-nation to be an equal part of the political

process, which would offer multiple nationalities the equality and liberty of which they were

deprived when the nation was a singular and therefore imagined as a homogenous entity.

Plurinationalism then creates a heterogeneous equality among its internal communities which

identify as national. A "heterogeneous equality' does not mean that the equality itself is

distributed in different or unequal measures, but rather that the equality is offered to a

heterogenous group of individuals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, community has been a phrase that has been utilized to define an amalgam of groups. My focus on the national community has shown its duality as both the creator of political legitimacy and its unending need to be produced *as* a national community. Through the production of the people as a community, exclusions and a projection of "otherness" within the borders of a national community necessarily occur. The creation of internal exclusions can lead to assimilation or homogenization of the internally excluded other or perpetuate their existence as one of exclusion. Gellner's principle of nationalism poses a distinct problem for the concept of plurinationalism, as the plurinational state is a disjuncture between cultural and political boundaries, which would seemingly violate the principle of cultural and political congruence. However, we understand that the political unit constantly creates a projection of congruence between cultural and political boundaries, and therefore, the congruence is impossible or unreachable, existing only as a destination. Plurinationalism precisely shows the impossible reality of the principle of nationalism. There is never true uniformity between boundaries, only a projection on behalf of the political. Therefore, the understanding of the principle of nationalism as an impossible goal permits plurinationalism to exist. Plurinationalism is viable precisely because the principle of nationalism is itself a myth. The concept of plurinationalism thus seeks to create equality and liberty for all communities within a nation, basing the state on a plurality of nations. The recognition of multiple nations underneath one sovereign state then becomes a community united merely through their imagining of a shared citizenship, rather than a shared uniform culture.

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