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Danielle Young

Title: De-territorializing Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities:
From Political Communities of Place to Political Communities of
Recognition

The word length of this dissertation is 13,161.....

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Signed.....Danielle Young..... (Candidate)

Date.....08/09/12.....

STATEMENT 1

This work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

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Signed.....Danielle Young..... (Candidate)

Date.....08/09/12.....

Abstract:

In this dissertation, the need to re-conceptualize political community is explored as a result of the problem of environmental degradation. The concept of inevitability and how it informs barriers to such a re-conceptualization is pursued throughout, by examining its influence on understandings of political community. The potential to re-formulate political communities is considered in light of arguments for communications that facilitate a sense of community, cosmopolitan harm conventions, different types of learning, and most significantly, a concept of recognition that might provide a basis for reconsidering what political communities look like and how they might be organized.

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Introduction: Re-conceptualizing political community and the problem of inevitability.

Nothing political is inevitable. Politics is about choices and decisions, whether that is 'who gets what, when and how' (Lasswell, 1936) or some other formulation. There is never only one answer or one choice, though a judgment can be made about what is good or bad, best or worst, desirable or undesirable, and acceptable or unacceptable. Politics involves a multiplicity of actors, perspectives and interests. That being the case, it is difficult to predict likelihoods and impossible to determine certainties. However, once an event has happened, the choices and decisions that led to that outcome can be obscured, seeming natural or inevitable. Because something did happen, it can seem as though it was always going to happen. This has the effect of shaping perspectives and behaviors that can make one way of thinking, doing, or organizing things seem like the only option or the best option. This sense of inevitability, then, pervades politics and creates a barrier to conceptualizing alternatives.

It is difficult to think in counter-factuals, and counter-factuals may only represent a small number of choices conceivable because they still correspond to the actual outcomes. The opposite of something still reflects the thing, taking into account what it is in order to become what it is not. This can create a challenge to finding different ways to address difficulties and problems. If something or some way of doing things has been the answer to a particular set of questions and problems but a new set of questions and problems arises, the old answers may be

insufficient, irrelevant, or asymmetrical. Attempting to incorporate new problems into old solutions may prevent new solutions, and if the problem is large enough, threaten the old solutions as well. Thinking differently in order to find new solutions to new problems does not, however, necessarily mean doing the opposite of or jettisoning old solutions, particularly if old problems that seem to have found a solution would still need to be dealt with in some way if those old solutions were rejected or discarded. A new problem does not obviate old problems.

Territorially located political communities are the answer to older questions about how we live, interact and organize ourselves optimally. They have come to seem natural, inevitable and desirable, particularly given the absence of alternative conceptualizations. What political communities are, are not, and some of what they could be will be explored below to see how they have been the answer to old questions, how this was not a given, and therefore, how they can change or adapt to become the answer to new questions. Benedict Anderson's work *Imagined Communities* will be an important part of this because it shows the role political communities fill, illustrates some common assumptions about political communities and provides the tools to help challenge those assumptions. Anderson's work alone, however, is inadequate to effectively challenge some of the inevitabilities associated with political communities that prevent refitting them to old and new purposes. For this, the work of Onora O'Neill and others will be drawn off of to expose the contingency of the seemingly inevitable and to help articulate new potentials for political communities. The work of Andrew Linklater and Jens Bartelson in particular will be used to expose the need for exploring such potential and how it

might be done. Rather than relying on a formulation of political community that is inadequate to address such new problems, a new approach to political community may allow us to maintain a response to old problems, and provide one for new problems. Ultimately, this dissertation serves as a proposal for answering new questions about new problems, particularly that of environmental degradation, with a new understanding of political communities driven by a concept of recognition, to be set forth below.

To begin, a brief overview of Anderson's understanding of the imagined nature of political communities and how they spread will be provided. Before examining in depth how these ideas might contribute to a new approach to political community, an assessment of the assumptions about political communities and the role they play will be undertaken. Why these assumptions are problematic and unnecessary will be demonstrated in order to introduce different possibilities. The possibility of political communities based on a concept of recognition, but that may still account for the old form and functions of political communities will be presented.

Chapter 1: Inevitability, Interpretation and the Form of Political Communities' Impact

I. Imagining Communities Large and Small: Truth-Languages, Relativization and Enduring Needs.

In his work *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson presents an argument for the advent and propagation of modern nationalism. A nation, according to Anderson, is “[a]n imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (Anderson, 2006: 6).” For the purposes of this dissertation, the focus here is on the idea of the political community, which Anderson takes as being “[a] deep, horizontal comradeship (2006:7),” and different means for the development and organization of political communities. The imaginary quality of these communities rests on the idea that even though members may never know or have the opportunity to meet others in their community, they still have a sense of communion, or relationship of recognition, with them.

Anderson’s explanation for how people come to imagine themselves as members of a modern, horizontal political community with others they may never see or know is based on what he refers to as print-capitalism. In many ways, language is the key to the creation and expansion of community in his work, and Anderson ascribes much of the development of modern political communities to the advent of things like books and newspapers. Knowing a common language allows people to share in ideas and experiences through different printed mediums. He traces the expansion of dynasties and empires through newspapers in particular,

but other printed materials such as textbooks used in schools and popular literature as well. Newspapers are given particular emphasis in part because of their frequent reinforcement of the idea that they address issues and events of interest and concern to a broad audience. In far-flung empires this is especially important in fostering a sense of community despite a lack of physical proximity. A newspaper can facilitate the perception that people are linked across distance and foster awareness of the non-local.

There is more to say about Anderson's arguments regarding language, media and how they foster community which will be addressed in more depth below, but the limitations, boundaries and functions of community are just as prominent in Anderson's work, as well as others who grapple with the concept of political community. In order to more fully understand the potentialities of political communities, it is important to address historical forms of political community, changes and shifts over time, and assumptions about modern political communities.

Anderson argues that political communities fill a need to help people make sense of the lives they lead and the world that they live in (2006: 10). He traces a shift from religiously based political communities with aspirations towards universality such as the Islamic Ummah, the 'Middle Kingdom' which we now think of as Chinese, and the especially that of Latin Christendom, towards smaller, territorialized political communities in the form of nations. The nationalized character of modern political communities was largely absent in these far-reaching communities held together by both religion and language. People may have been a

part of local communities with various dialects or even different languages, but, to focus on the example of Medieval Christendom, their overarching sense of political connection was derived from being Christian and having the “truth-language” of Latin to bind them, and it is that sense of political connection that is emphasized here. These communities, though much larger in scope than modern political communities, were still imagined through the medium of language, although Anderson argues the understanding of these languages is foreign to us today.

[T]he ideograms of Chinese, Latin, or Arabic were emanations of reality, not randomly fabricated representations of it...There is no idea here of a world so separated from language that all languages are equidistant (and thus interchangeable) signs for it. In effect, ontological reality is apprehensible only through a single, privileged system of re-presentation: the truth-language of Church Latin, Qur’anic Arabic, or Examination Chinese.
(Anderson, 2006: 14)

Further, these truth-languages embedded a concept of conversion, whereby one was a member of the overarching community regardless of the localized aspects of their identity-the significance of the Englishman who becomes Pope is that he is bound into the community by Latin and its prestige, not by place of birth or his local vernacular (Anderson, 2006: 15).

A sense of communion with others is not only about having a shared language, even a truth-language. While these languages were primary drivers to Anderson, he explains that the understanding of community was also different. Rather than the “horizontal, deep comradeship” mentioned above, these communities with pretensions to universality based on the access that truth-languages provided also contained understandings of community that were

“[c]entripetal and hierarchical, rather than boundary-oriented and horizontal (Anderson, 2006: 15).” People could be located anywhere; it was religion, language, and the understanding entrenched in peoples’ consciousness, in the Christian example again, that “[t]he bilingual intelligentsia, by mediating between vernacular and Latin, mediated between earth and heaven (Anderson 2006: 15-16),” that bound them together in a relationship of recognition, or community.

The power of truth-languages waned as interactions increased between universalizing or powerful communities. Rather than representing *the* truth, languages like Latin, Qu’aranic Arabic, and Examination Chinese began to be perceived as representing *a* truth. This relativization was slowly accompanied by territorialization, where the local can begin to compete with, and eventually supplant, the universal (Anderson, 2006: 16-18). When vernacular languages and religious variety gain comparable footing with formerly monopolized truths, the local, the particular and the contingent also gain significance.

Obviously, the transition from truth-language, religiously based political communities to modern, territorially located political communities was neither as smooth or apparent as portrayed above, which Anderson also acknowledges (2006: 11). That the story of the move to modern political communities was not so simple, and, paradoxically, not always so complicated will be addressed further below. What it does do, however, is first introduce the idea that there have been and there are other ways of conceptualizing and organizing political communities. It will be clarified below how the transition between the type of political community

examined above to modern political communities was not inevitable, but what it does here begins to lay the groundwork for reconsidering any sense of inevitability associated with the make-up of political communities. A far-reaching political community based on religion, “[t]he non-arbitrariness of the sign (Anderson, 2006: 14),” and a hierarchical understanding is vastly different from a physically bounded and limited political community, yet both have been possible and practiced. They are very different, but what they have in common is the desire to answer driving questions about why and how things are, and to shape and understand them in some way. “The century of the Enlightenment...brought with it its own modern darkness...the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. Disintegration of paradise: nothing makes fatality more arbitrary. Absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary (Anderson, 2006: 11).” Modern political communities helped take on the role of answering whom and why we are, based on localities and particularities rather than universals.

II. The Gage and Emblem of Freedom? The Pervasive Sense of Sovereignty’s Virtues.

There were other reasons, of course, and apparent advantages to territorialized political communities, smaller in scope. A common narrative about the advent of the modern, sovereign state holds that they were a means to alleviate religious conflict that wracked Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. With the waning of the prestige of the truth-language of Latin and a politically

unifying conception of Christianity, religious and political differences proliferated and while a hierarchical understanding of community was still pervasive, it arguably led to contestations among elites for positioning within that hierarchy, which was pursued through conflict. The impact of these conflicts was deleterious, and in order to curtail these consequential attempts at jockeying for position, status, and power the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“Whose realm, his religion” meaning the religion of the ruler become the religion of those in the territory ruled) was enshrined in the Peace of Augsburg and other treaties (Brown, 2002: 19-37). The breakdown of the widespread, religious political community seemed to necessitate a replacement in order to mitigate conflict, and through much political maneuvering, negotiation, and battle the sovereign state became that replacement. How accurate this narrative is and an alternative explanation will be explored below, but first some of the impacts of this narrative need to be considered.

There are a couple of potential problems and questions that arise here. The first is whether or not political communities are coterminous with sovereign states, the inherent euro-centrism if such a conclusion is reached and the impacts of that, and whether or not such conclusions would be desirable. In international relations theory, political communities are not automatically coterminous with sovereign states, but they are closely aligned concepts and where they are not coterminous with an extant sovereign state, they often aspire to become one. Anderson’s political community is the nation, and from his definition of the nation as limited and sovereign, the alignment between nations and states is clear. This is because for Anderson “[t]he gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state (2006: 7),”

this freedom being religious and territorial freedom that sovereign states supposedly enshrined at the end of the wars of religion. Where his nations are not states, they fight to be.

Jens Bartleson articulates that what conceptions of political community have in common in political theory is that protection of understandings and pursuit of the good and particularities is provided for and can be defended against outside interference and imposition (Bartleson, 2009: 7). Bartleson argues that the multiplicity of variations on community make the term ambiguous and clear definitions limit inquiry into community and its potential. While his point is well taken, and a strict, independent definition of political community outside of those put forth by authors such as Anderson is avoided to maintain such an open inquiry into conceptual possibilities, what Bartleson reveals supports the idea of an assumption of the desirability of sovereignty in political theory regarding particular, localized political communities. Regardless of variations, modern political communities assume boundaries and their necessity because these lines of demarcation allow outside intrusion to be rejected with a claim to legitimacy. That claim rests on the practice and history of sovereignty as the means to guarantee freedom within boundaries and borders. Current conceptualizations of political community, then, may not explicitly identify with states, but the desire to have the presumed protection of sovereignty that states at least theoretically enjoy is implicit. Sometimes, the linkages between political community and states are much more evident. In *Transformation of Political Community*, Andrew Linklater, even while arguing for the need to move beyond states derived from the supposed

Westphalian order, is primarily concerned with confronting political communities in the form of states (1998: 1-3). Furthermore, apart from the discussion of the possibilities and desirability of a dialogic community, Linklater is careful to preserve much of the rationale and force of sovereignty in dealings between different peoples and communities.

The principle that no one has the right to purchase autonomy by reducing the autonomy of others can be embedded in the project...which addresses the concerns of individuals and minorities and not merely, interest of the nation-states. Societies which take this conviction seriously are bound to be troubled by the ways in which they export harm to outsiders or secure their own identity by demeaning or misrepresenting other cultures. (Linklater, 1998: 219)

Autonomy within boundaries and freedom from outside interference are key advantages of sovereign political states in theory, and while Linklater is dedicated to more inclusive, just forms of community, the appeal of a concept of sovereignty still exists in terms of securing freedoms to be different, and to limit exposure from external injury. Even where a desire for political community different from the limitations of sovereign states exists, there still tends to be a level of correspondence between political community and sovereign states in modern approaches.

If prevailing conceptions of political community are so closely aligned with the idea of sovereign states, to the point where even calls for reform or transformation would incorporate primary components of the sovereign state, one begins to question where these ideas come from and what they might mean for those outside of the ideas' origins. As discussed above, the sovereign state became

an answer to the conflicts in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth century following the gradual disintegration at a more broadly conceived political community based on religion and language. The origins of this form of political community are particular to Europe, and that origin has had a decided influence as the form has been exported or adopted elsewhere.

III. Is it Differences that Makes us Strangers? Power Vacuums, Periodization, and the Perfect Problem for a Suspect Solution.

Reference was made above to a Westphalian order, shorthand for the supposed advent of the modern states system. Although authors such as Daniel Philpott (2001), Benno Teschke (2009), and Bartelson (1995) have done much to illuminate the problematic narrative of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia and modern sovereign states and expose a much more complicated picture, the division between the medieval and the modern is still bound up with the arrival and predominance of sovereign states. This division between the medieval past and modern present has had severe political consequences and poses a challenge to attempts to reconfigure political communities. As noted above, modern sovereign states were *an* answer to the problems supposedly resulting from widespread conflicts driven by religious and political differences that became more prominent as the attempted monopoly on truth became relativized and the foundations of a more broadly based political community were compromised. One of the issues here is that politicized historical narration has propagated the idea that modern sovereign states were *the* answer, rather than a choice amongst others. This both confers legitimacy and sustains it for

sovereign states, and creates a barrier to conceptualizing alternatives, even where they might be necessary. The way that this barrier was established and has been maintained is twofold: by exploiting and entrenching suspicion of difference and by imbuing modern sovereign states with inevitability through politicized historiography.

In *The Problem of Difference*, Naeem Inyatullah and David Blaney argue that “[r]eason dictates sovereignty as a spatial solution to the problem of moral and religious uncertainty; power is spatialized in the state, thereby transforming a dangerous diversity of individual opinions and wills into a sovereign opinion and will (2004:36).” Although sovereign states have been viewed as the means to address the religious and political differences that led to conflict, they can be viewed rather as deferring, denying, and suppressing difference. Differences themselves are not negative or positive, it is only through interpretation and interpretation of the impact of those differences that they become negatives or positives. Sovereign states were touted as the solution to a constructed problem, where differences were perceived and acted upon as negatives. This solution aligned with actors interested in consolidating their political power by transforming control of a territory into political and religious supremacy. Arguably, the desire for the solution may have preceded the problem of difference. The advantages of sovereignty for *de jure* equals are clear-cut: internal autonomy, theoretically with the threat of outside interference and external reprisal removed. In fact, an examination of the historical foundations of the modern sovereign state suggests that a problem was created to fit a solution. This interpretation is argued below.

Sovereign states were touted as the means to escape a medieval past characterized by an oppressive, feudal hierarchy where peoples political and religious differences drove them to conflict. As noted above, there is a gap where Anderson's explanation of the end of a universalized political community based on the Latin truth-language and religion and where modern sovereign states begin. As Anderson's political community waned and the contingencies of location, vernacular languages and religious differences took on significance, jockeying for position and power became more intense between political actors, and difference was a premise for conflict, which was itself a means to establish territorial controls. What was at work was a power vacuum created by the *end* of a hierarchical, centripetal, universalized conception of community, rather than manifestations of that conception.

However, political moves made by sixteenth and seventeenth century jurists helped to create an understanding of the past wherein feudalism was an oppressive organizing system for society based on fiefs and vassalage in which land was held by nobility in exchange for military service and those that lived and worked on that land were bound to it through complex systems of stake-holding and homage (Reynolds, 1996: 6). Medieval historians reject this characterization of the medieval period as an attempt to "[o]rganize the past and provide arguments for the present so that ideas about it gradually spread to the public (Reynolds, 1996: 7)." Feudalism was not medieval society's structure and in surviving medieval documents references to fiefs and vassalage are limited to academic laws of fiefs (Reynolds, 1996: 4). What, then, was the reason and origin for this pervasive narrative about

Europe's past? In *Periodization and Sovereignty*, Kathleen Davis argues that the creation of a feudal European past was meant to substitute as a foundation or location for sovereignty (2008: 6). The need for this substitution arose as a result of the "sovereign paradox" where the sovereign is "[h]e who decides the exception (Schmitt, 1988: 5)," both inside and outside the law. In a legal foundation, there can be no location of sovereignty because the potential for a 'state of exception' where a state's own legal order and norms might threaten the existence of the state, and where the sovereign must be empowered to decide on the suspension of the legal order to protect the state in the event that he recognizes such an exception (Davis, 2008: 14). The tenuous solution to this problem created through the politicized historical interpretations of jurists such as Hotman and De Moulin was to make the rejection of feudal relations the basis and justification of sovereignty (Davis, 2008: 25).

As an "-ism," feudalism of course suggests a fully reified object, a status that accords with the belief that it is (or *ought* to be) a phenomenon of the past. We should not be surprised, however, to find that "feudalism" emerged with the decapitating stroke: first nominalized as *feodalite* on the eve of the French Revolution, it was brought to adjudicate between nobility, parliament, and crown, particularly in matters of property, and ultimately to embody the superstitious and fettered past being dragged to the guillotine. In this sense, "feudalism" is one of our most graphic examples of Walter Benjamin's insight that "modernity" simultaneously produced and destroyed the images of tradition to which it opposed itself. (Davis, 2008: 7)

The location, definition and possession of sovereignty was a source of conflict and struggle, and a feudalism that never was helped to both create and demolish the history necessary to justify the sovereign state. History is not simply a matter of recording a series of facts and events; it is a political, interpretive act. The choices

that are made about what to include and exclude, how things are framed, who is the audience and what are the subjects will have an impact on both audience and subject. Authors of history are influenced by their own histories, and the choices that they make in terms of subjects and language also affect history's interpretation (White, 1989: 128-129). When these decisions are denied or disguised by claiming to present only the facts of how things were or are, contingent interpretations can be taken as innocent explanation. (White, 1982: 123). The history as political act outlined above has not been innocent.

The ramifications of this historical construction have been extensive. Above it was mentioned that politicized history created a barrier to conceptualizing alternative political forms. This is because this image of the feudal past was brought into life to be destroyed. To demonstrate that the new was positive, it was seemingly necessary that the "old" be negative, but while the division between the medieval and the modern was constructed in service of political actors who wanted the advantages of sovereignty, that division's effects were not limited to that effect. The "medieval" is not simply in the past. Sovereignty, the social contract and subjection were theorized based off of the lord and vassal of feudal relations, which allowed theorists such as Jean Bodin to argue for absolutism by keeping the social contract, but jettisoning what was "feudal" because it was associated with slavery, subjugation and property.

At the very moment the colonial slave trade began to soar, in other words, feudal law and slavery were grouped together and identified as characteristic of Europe's past and a non-European present. To this history we owe the later, persistent association of the Middle Ages

with subjugation, as well as the role of the Middle Ages as the enabling figure of exclusion in much philosophical and political thought. (Davis, 2008:24)

To be “medieval” is to be oppressive, irrational, brutal and regressive, and it is not a label limited to the past but applied to some in the present. People are cast out of history by this ‘denial of coevalness’ (Fabian, 1983). Pre-modernity is where oppression and slavery belong, and where these practices exist contemporaneously people are “[b]anned from the story and relegated to the past (Buck-Morss 2002: 850).” When something is labeled as medieval, it enables it to be ignored and excluded from the world. “With the conversion of space into time, the constructed temporal backwardness of the savage is equated with the imagined temporal origins of the European self...the spatially distant other is thereby converted into a temporally prior self (Inanyatullah and Blaney, 2004:56).” The division between medieval and modern still acts as an exclusionary force. People are denied access to modernity and its advantages, which prevents them from engaging with the modern, powerful and makes them more susceptible to subjugation and exploitation because they do not count in the present narrative. The medieval “[i]s a mobile category, applicable at any time to any society that has not “yet” achieved modernity or, worse, has become retrograde (Davis, 2008: 5).” Labeling someone or some group as medieval is an exclusionary move and it can be oppressive for “[C]an the designation of something or some group as non or premodern ever be anything but a gesture of the powerful (Chakrabarty, 2002: xi-xx)?”

It is also a move that can invalidate difference, which, along with excluding people, curtails explorations of alternatives modes of doing, being, or organizing.

This makes it difficult to re-conceptualize political forms or political communities because:

[B]y providing a singular point of departure, a global “medieval” past anchors this homogenization of cultural forms. More specifically, this singularized point of departure validates the global application of narrowly conceived definitions of political forms-such as modern democracy, feudal (or “rogue”) states, and “secular” government-the limits of which have been formulated through the periodization of the medieval and the modern. (Davis, 2008: 5)

This is a problem that it is necessary to expose, acknowledge and confront in order to begin seriously investigating new potential formulations of political community, particular if those political communities might be in more just relation to each other.

Chapter Two: Transnational Problems and the Need for Change

I. Environmental Degradation and the Prospect of Politics' Erosion

The question then becomes why this blockade against difference and different political forms matters even beyond questions of just treatment, consideration, and inclusion of others in the present. While it may not be palatable, an argument could be made that even if the politicized historiography of the modern sovereign states invalidates difference and limits the possibilities for re-conceptualizing political forms and communities, the order it has helped establish has more benefits than harms. Some would argue that even if an order is unjust, order must be maintained for justice to ever be possible (Bull, 1977: 83). Questions of justice are significant in terms of the rationale for re-conceptualizing political communities and will be dealt with further below, but the problem created by the barrier to considering or pursuing alternatives is in large part one of the adequacy and efficacy of the *status quo* political form and community to address challenges that people and their communities face. Modern sovereign states once supposedly mitigated the problem of conflict over differences, and even though this narrative was interrogated above, they have sustained a claim to having the logically necessary attributes to respond to the problems of difference in an anarchical international system. This may or may not be true, but what matters is whether or not they are also capable of meeting challenges of global concern.

Disease, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are issues with broad ranging impacts that may affect people regardless of their

territorial location, and, more importantly, regardless of what role they have had in bringing these problems about. Their consequences have been uneven or unrealized, but particularly in the case of weapons of mass destruction, their potential to impact people regardless of the states that they belong to and the clear limitations of states to address such transnational problems have elicited calls and efforts to re-consider what political community should look like:

[w]hat is needed in order to save the world from self-destruction is not the limitation of the exercise of national sovereignty through international obligations and institutions, but the transference of the sovereignties of individual states to a world authority, which would be as sovereign over the individual nations as the individual nations are sovereign within their respective territories" ; that because "reforms within the international society have failed and were bound to fail," there must be a "radical transformation of the existing international society of sovereign nations into a supra- national community of individuals (Morgenthau in Speer, 1968: 212)

Precisely because sovereignty secures internal, territorial autonomy it poses a challenge to the cooperation necessary to confront transnational issues effectively. Unless all states agree to cooperate to resolve a problem, even if it means compromising their sovereignty, the potential for either conflict or problems going unaddressed and unresolved is high. That a transference of sovereignty such as Morgenthau discussed above would be extremely onerous and likely to cause or be brought about only by severe conflict has been frequently acknowledged, and that is a dilemma explored below. First, however, a transnational problem that may have the force to realize a reconsideration of the structures and logic of modern political communities needs to be introduced.

The transnational problem of environmental degradation is strengthening the urgency of calls to reconsider how we approach political community and it is an issue that has the potential to drive change. Environmental degradation is, indeed, the transnational problem *par excellence*. It embodies the longstanding concerns of international relations theorists preoccupied with questions of harm, justice, duty, time, space, development, and globalization, among others. Bound up in the problem of environmental degradations are issues of security, ethics, morality, and survival.

While some such as Ronald Inglehart (1986) have argued that growing concern with the environment is the result of a shift in values regarding materialism that has developed since 1945, or that, as argued by people such as Stephen Cotgrove and Andrew Duff (1980), that it is the result of a newer, large class of people that are removed from the values and experience of industrial production (1980: 340-341), the consensus amongst the world's climate change scientists, captured by the reports and efforts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and governments is that climate change and environmental degradation is a genuine, multi-faceted, globalized problem (Garner, 2011: 26-27). Air and water pollution, ozone depletion, diminished biodiversity, resource scarcity, catastrophic weather, rising sea levels are just some of the problems associated with environmental degradation, the impacts of which are felt in different ways in different places, but have interconnected causes, where local manifestations cannot be disentangled from global factors (Garner, 2011: 3). Environmental degradation poses risks and challenges to health and sustainability, and authors such as Simon Dalby (2010), Jon Barnett (2001), and others have assessed and approached the

problem as a security challenge, with the potential for conflicts over resources. Despite growing consensus that environmental degradation is increasingly a problem, political action and will have not been found to effectively or sustainably address or attempt to alleviate it. Solutions have been focused on developing international agreements and reforming institution within the current political framework. Treaties and agreements are unimplemented, and continuous meetings and summits have been inconclusive, with minimal results (Annan, 2002; Chasek, 2000).

This lack of political will and effective action can be interpreted partially as the result of a form of political community organized on the principle of territorially bounded sovereignty. Because the emphasis and onus of political solutions to problems falls on a form of political community that is characterized by a focus on internal autonomy, separateness, and particularized interests, the practices and tools of cooperation and broad-scale thinking that a transnational problem such as environmental degradation requires are weak or lacking. If reform that would allow dedicated cooperation and attention to environmental degradation is possible, it would also need to be significant and far-reaching.

The reason that this matters is that if the environmental consequences of the problems mentioned above are not addressed and become increasingly severe, they will erode the grounds for politics. Without the conditions necessary to life or survival, politics cannot be conducted, and even if the prospect is not complete devastation and extinction of life, the worse the conditions, the worse the prospects

for politics not driven by fear and desperation. Whatever the interests of different political communities may be, they are undermined by the prospect of severe environmental degradation; anything dependent on the conditions necessary for survival becomes secondary in the event that those conditions are destroyed or deteriorate substantially.

There is dissension amongst scientists and observers about when catastrophic environmental degradation might occur (Garner 2011: 10-123), but even the prospect may be enough to galvanize change before widespread catastrophe. A pessimistic view might hold that people can only be brought together in cooperation as the result of catastrophe, but below it will be argued that the political capabilities and resources exist to effect changes required to adequately confront the challenge of environmental degradation before disaster, and without widespread conflict. Questioning the moral relevance of physical boundaries and the role of harm are the first part of unlocking that potential.

II. A Small World, After All: Distance, Interaction and Harm

Within normative international relations theory, the idea that because people have the ability to impact each other even across great distances they cannot be limited by the physical boundaries of their communities in recognizing their relationships with others has a long, if uneven pedigree. Charles Beitz was among

the first and most prominent to bring forward the notion that “[i]f evidence of global economic and political interdependence shows the existence of a global scheme of social cooperation, we should not view national boundaries as having fundamental moral significance. Since boundaries are not coextensive with the scope of social cooperation, they do not mark the limits of social obligations (1979: 151),” although he was not alone. Increasing globalization and, more importantly, increasing awareness of globalization made the questions of the obligations that exist in interactions across distance persistent at least within normative theory.

For theorists such as Onora O’Neill, physical borders need never have been invested with weighty moral significance not only because our ability to impact each other across distances, though that is important, but also because of we are not so limited in our ability to conceive of ourselves in relationships with others. People have multiple overlapping identities and communities that they can belong to (O’Neill 2000a: 121). People are capable of being more than one thing; they can be parents, children, siblings, friends, colleagues, and citizens amongst other roles simultaneously, suggesting that they are not so limited in their ability to conceive of themselves in relation to others that their identities must or can be contained within rigid boundaries. This capacity is related to Anderson’s argument above about people’s ability to imagine themselves as a part of communities with people they have never and will never meet; O’Neill introduces the idea that communities can also overlap, which will be taken further below.

That people are capable of thinking of themselves as more than one thing and acting in more than one role is one component of formulating what relations are and could be between people across distances, but the more pressing need to consider these relations is driven by the impact that people can have on each other, regardless of location. Moral standing, or “[o]ur commitment to *who counts* (Erskine, 2008: 15),” is a frequent consideration. What moral standing we grant to others is increasingly more than a matter of convenience, an afterthought, or the preserve of those primarily concerned with issues of justice, though that is never far from questions of moral standing.

A practical approach to moral standing has strong implications for action for anyone who does not live the hermit life. We live with and by the complex interlock of agents which global trade, communications and densely connected institutions have produced...We do not and cannot coherently deny the agency of those whose nuclear weapons or debt repudiation or habits of pollution and environmental degradation we fear...We do not and cannot consistently deny the agency of those whose peaceful coexistence, economic sobriety and environmental responsibility we hope to rely upon...[w]e begin to premise our actions, plans and policies on there being agents and subjects. When we do this...we are committed to ascribing to them the same moral standing that we ascribe to nearby and familiar others in whom we assume like capacities. (O’Neill, 2000d: 196-197)

Interconnectedness brings us into relationships of reliance whether we desire them too or not. The frequency, depth, and significance of interactions with others brings us to rely on certain conditions and behavior as far as possible, and we predicate our actions accordingly. The idea of granting moral standing to others is closely linked to recognition which will be discussed in greater depth, and it is also tied to the problem of harm, which will help to illustrate further aspects of the potential for change in political community needed to confront transnational challenges.

Andrew Linklater is perhaps the most prominent theorist in International Relations on the subject of harm. Harm is a “[p]art of the universal grammar of social life (Linklater, 2011: 6),” that all societies and communities must find a way to grapple with as it is an issue that constantly arises in relations between people. Because of increasing interactions, harm between and across community boundaries must be addressed (Linklater, 2011: 221-222). The core premise of harm for Linklater is that, in a variety of ways, we can and do damage or harm each other. Although the concept of harm covers an extensive range, from non-violent to violent forms and Linklater admits that understandings of harm can vary between different people (2011: 41-42), there is a need to develop conventions about harm to mitigate its consequences and impact. Consequences of issues that affect people across distance such as exploitative economic arrangements or environmental damage require greater means and resources to control or reduce them, or the “[m]oral and political resources with which to adapt to the increasing challenge of how to control global processes in ways that respect economic, cultural and political rights of every member of the human race (Linklater, 2007b: 123).”

Harm conventions for Linklater are both international and cosmopolitan, with international harm conventions developing around ideas such as sovereignty and non-intervention in order to support international order; as such international harm conventions are often silent on forms of harm that might lead to individual or group suffering, because they prioritize international order and tend to focus on the unit level of states in the international system. Cosmopolitan harm conventions, alternatively, would emphasize world order rather than simply international order,

meaning that the treatment of individuals and groups, and the harm inflicted upon them from sources such as states, structures, processes, and other groups and people, would be a matter of concern and attention (Linklater, 2011: 36-37).

International harm conventions, as noted above, already exist with some force as a means to order relations between actors, primarily states. This includes rules governing things like the use of force and warfare, and conventions on the treatment of prisoners. However, international harm conventions do not go far enough, and may create a barrier to establishing more robust harm conventions in relation to transnational issues, because international harms conventions limit focus and resources to an international order composed of units that are not equipped to address such issues, as argued above, and may exacerbate them.

Cosmopolitan conventions are essential because of the negative consequences of unusually high levels of human interconnectedness, specifically the ability to project military power into the heartland of distant societies and the increased possibility of transnational harm in recent decades. Environmental degradation is a striking contemporary example of transnational harm that travels freely across borders, giving rise to a new moral and political vocabulary, and to limited global harm conventions, that are concerned not with 'national interests' or international order but with the well-being of the species and the fate of future generations. (Linklater, 2011: 37)

International harm conventions are insufficient to meet the problems of transnational harm. Cosmopolitan conventions against harm are a part of the means necessary to confront transnational problems such as environmental degradation, and part of their development may be found in extending some of Anderson's arguments outlined above.

As noted, Anderson considers newspapers and other forms of print and media to be a significant part of imaging ourselves in relation with others. We can be connected without face-to-face interactions by using language and media to learn about, understand and empathize with others across distance. Globalized communication technologies make it increasingly difficult to avoid awareness of the impact of transnational harm, and might encourage accountability for that harm:

Images of distant suffering bring the plight of distant strangers closer to the lives of the affluent; stark evidence of global inequalities makes it hard to deny that many can relieve distress with little cost to themselves; visual representations of suffering dramatize the ways in which the most powerful societies can harm the vulnerable, whether as a result of their stranglehold on global institutions that are biased towards their economic and political interests, or because of military operations in foreign places, and so forth (Linklater, 2011: 226).

For anyone swayed by images or media that call attention to the impact of harm as the result of structures and interactions, the need for cosmopolitan harm conventions may seem both obvious and easily in reach through a promotion of further awareness, calls for action, and efforts to establish such conventions. However, widespread implementation of cosmopolitan harm conventions faces several significant difficulties, may not be possible as a result of the current form and conceptualization of political communities in close correspondence with sovereign states, and is a slow moving process. The most prominent of the difficulties associated with enacting effective cosmopolitan harm conventions have to do with the tension associated with cosmopolitan thought and its apparent inability to drive extensive change. These difficulties will now be assessed in order

to help establish a potential foundation for resolving them, and helping to push forward cosmopolitan harm conventions and the re-conceptualization of political community required to do so.

III. Communitarianism, Cosmopolitanism and Learning What Moves

In his work *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches* Chris Brown argues that international relations theory can be broadly divided between communitarian and cosmopolitan thought. Where “[T]he root notion of communitarian thought is that value stems from the community, that the individual finds meaning in life by virtue of his or her membership of a political community (1992: 55), “ whereas “[W]hat is crucial to a cosmopolitan attitude is the refusal to regard existing political structures as the source of ultimate value (1992: 24).” The cosmopolitan attitude relates directly to questioning the moral relevance of boundaries discussed above, as well as the issue of moral standing granted to others. There is no socially prior self for communitarians (Brown 1992: 59), and what a more cosmopolitan thinker might consider to be contingencies of identities, political structures and communities, are integral for communitarians because without those layers of contingency, “[t]here is no ‘self’ left (Erskine, 2002: 459).”

The starkness of the division between cosmopolitan and communitarian positions vary. While a broadly cosmopolitan thinker might hold that there are “[n]o

compelling reasons for preferring the interests of co-nationals to the interests of foreigners (Linklater, 2007: 116), they might still recognize utility of bounded communities, and indeed some people who adopt a communitarian position may do so because they believe that by using communities to secure their own needs, people might then be more willing to look to the care of others, and that there are practical limitations to caring for others across great distances. Attempts have also been made to combine the supposed value of bounded communities with cosmopolitan concerns, such as with Toni Erskine's idea of 'Embedded Cosmopolitanism,' which accepts "[t]he strength and tenacity of particular ties, as well as the existence of separate communities, nations, and states, and to construct an ethical framework that recognizes value as constituted by, but not bounded within these associations (2008: 40)." This approach avoids treating particularity as unimportant contingency, and supposes that because, drawing off of O'Neill's ideas referred to above, identities and belonging to communities can overlap, it is possible to develop more inclusive relationships with others by finding commonalities with others beyond physical borders. Erskine argues that this overlap concerns our ability to grant equal moral standing across boundaries where "[O]ne's sphere of equal moral standing, understood as informed by shared membership within multifarious and overlapping morally constitutive communities, has the *potential* to be inclusive in scope (2008: 175), although some identities may be too different or incompatible to form inclusive bonds and overlap (Erskine 2008: 177-178). For someone such as Bartelson, this formulation of embedded cosmopolitanism would be problematic in terms of genuinely establishing inclusive forms of community

because it still relies on the premise that communities, no matter how much they are able to overlap, must be bounded (2009: 19). This is a problem of seeming inevitability discussed above, where our conception of what community means is fundamentally premised on some idea that seems natural and inevitable, but that with a different cosmology or understanding of the world may not be.

Re-thinking this premise about community is important to unlocking the potential of political community so that it might be better able to address transnational issues. Some communitarian thinkers hold that without bounded communities in which people identify more strongly with members of their community than those outside of their community they “[w]ould have no reason to be moral (MacIntyre, 1995: 217).” However, even if the contingencies of our identity are important in giving us a sense of self and helping us enter into relationships with each other based on commonalities, moving away from the supposedly more realistic approach of communitarianism and focusing on that which makes us the same rather than what makes us different is an important step to establishing different ideas of community.

But if our moral values do not derive from the particular communities we happen to inhabit, but rather from our ability to share meaningful experiences in common with other people, then such values would stand an equal chance of evolving irrespective of the existence of boundaries between the people doing the sharing...the seeds of human community are sown the moment human beings enter into intercourse with each other, not the moment they decide to settle down together within the same territory...boundaries are therefore arbitrary restrictions on such intercourse, and on those very practices of sharing that are constitutive of the possibility of human community. (Bartelson, 2009: 178).

Questioning the inevitability of what political communities must look like, and that they must be comprised of boundaries and borders invested with moral relevance is necessary to unlock the possibility of doing things differently, and in a way that might allow better means to combat a problem such as environmental degradation.

According to what has become a widespread assumption within the social sciences, the identity of a given political community requires it to be different from other communities of the same kind. Sameness presupposed otherness, and identity presupposes difference. Consequently, particular communities derive their identity from a game of recognition that takes place between them during their formative phases, in which case their 'identities and their corresponding interests are learned and then reinforced in response to how actors are treated by significant Others.' But as long as we regard this logic of identity as a predominant source of human belonging and identification, the formation of a community of all mankind will look highly unlikely simply because there are no human Others left that would provide that sense of sameness (Bartelson, 2009: 43).

This is not to suggest that communities do not or should not matter, or that identity does not or should not matter, but that how identity is used in constructing communities needs to be seriously interrogated. Our sameness does not have to derive from our differences with others, it could derive from our sameness in spite of a multiplicity of differences—we may not all be similar, but because we are human we are the same. As argued above, the negativity of difference is the result of interpretation and a calculated political interest in division to allow multiple actors access to power. Difference as a problem is not inevitable.

At this point, however, it is important to acknowledge that the argument above does not have enough force to be compelling to communitarians, or most beyond dedicated cosmopolitans. This lack of persuasive power has been identified by theorists such as Andrew Dobson, who argues that cosmopolitan positions that

call for extending recognition or moral standing equally to all person by virtue of their sameness and regardless of their differences lack motivational capacity (2006: 165). The argument does not move most people to act or change their behavior and perceptions. Under present conditions, it may be impossible to extend recognition to all persons in a way that makes political community based on equal moral standing and consideration, or fundamental human sameness, possible. There may, however, be a way to move forward in such a way that the prospect for such a re-conceptualization does become possible. Part of this involves the coincidence of learning of different types, which will be examined immediately below, and part concerns an exploration of recognition and the articulation of a different type of recognition that might facilitate change and grow that change through practice, which is the subject of the final chapter.

In Linklater's work there are two significant forms of learning that he has drawn from Jurgen Habermas and others, which are strategic and moral-social learning. Strategic learning is that learning in which "[s]ocieties have mastered more destructive technologies for the purposes of outmaneuvering, controlling and defeating adversaries (Linklater, 2011: 252)." On face, this type of learning is a negative form that, if unchecked, can lead to conflict and destruction. Moral-social learning involves thinking from the standpoint of others, which is a process that has the potential to "[i]mprove the human prospect of reaching agreements about how to co-exist with minimum harm (2011:251)." These two forms of learning are presented as being in a sort of competition with each other, and historically the

division between the two has also been a division between a more cosmopolitan orientation and that of a more pessimistic outlook:

It is essential to stress that forms of social learning that have led to larger territorial monopolies of power that can cause immense harm over greater distances express species-powers that are distinctive as the ability to widen the scope of emotional identification to include all humans...the fact that revolutions in inventing new ways of causing harm have often had the upper hand should not obscure the part that moral learning plays in maintaining the hope that modern societies and their descendants are not condemned to forevermore to live with the patterns of the past. (Linklater 2011: 253).

The division between the two types of learning here is clear, and that hope has rested in moral learning to outpace strategic learning drives the hope that thinkers such as Kant have had that the damages caused by strategic learning are not inevitable or destined to determine the future. This division makes a great deal of sense, particularly as it relates to the past, but another reading of the potential relationship between strategic and moral learning is possible. Rather than the two forms of learning remaining in competition with each other, where moral learning hopes to outstrip strategic learning at some point to improve prospects for the future, a problem such as environmental degradation may be able to fuse the forms together, or at least have them work in tandem with each other, instead of in conflict. Strategic learning is about mastering the ability to defeat adversaries to advance interests, so theoretically that learning could be channeled to defeat an adversary that poses a clear threat to interests, even if the adversary is not another, specific group of people. As environmental degradation advances, through moral learning, or seeing from the standpoint of others, the interconnectedness of the problem may become clearer, and people may learn that no one group of people or

actors has caused the entire problem, and that the solution involves massive, wide-ranging cooperation on a variety of fronts, in different forms. The threat to the conditions of life that allow actors to pursue interests might create a non-adversarial or less adversarial relationship between the two types of learning, if strategic learning can be harnessed to destroy the problem, and it is focused on conditions and structures, rather than people. Such a coincidence of the two types of learning might sound optimistic at first glance, however, part of strategic learning in light of a problem of environmental degradation is likely to be that groups are inflicting the problem on themselves and others, and to secure interests and survival strategic learners may turn that knowledge that we interact and effect each other into a means of controlling others. If moral learners can take practical steps to try and direct strategic learning towards cooperation to address the problem that threatens its interests, rather than moral learning that allows us to see from the standpoint of others to be co-opted to subjugate people as a means of alleviating the problem of environmental degradation, there is some hope for a positive relationship between the two types of learning. Strategic learning may have done much to cause the harm of environmental degradation, but it will not stop as a result of that harm; rather, it is likely turn itself to defeating the threat of its creation. How this happens is an open question, but an active attempt for moral learning not to outstrip strategic learning in relation to environmental degradation, but to fuse with it is preferable. At a certain point, how a problem came about matters less than how it will be dealt with, and guiding the destructive tendencies of our strategic learning

capabilities with our moral learning capabilities advances and protects interests on both sides of the learning divide.

Chapter 3: What Might We Learn

I. Recognition, From People to Means

Recognition plays a role in the moral-social learning addressed above, and may be a part of the practical steps to fuse the two forms of learning. How and why this might be the case involves a more in depth discussion of recognition, as well as a somewhat novel approach to the concept. Below it will be argued that recognition exists at three stages, with the first stage of recognition as identification being a constant of all types of recognition, the second stage of recognition as acknowledgement representing a continuum, and the third stage of recognition as appreciation. What this entails will be detailed below, as well as its limitations and how those limitations might be circumvented in the service of the wider argument here about the potential for a re-conceptualization of political community to address a transnational problem like environmental degradation.

Theorists such as Axel Honneth who have concerned themselves with the concept of recognition have emphasized recognition as a form of acknowledgement (Honneth, 1995: viii). Acknowledgement is an integral part of recognition, but it will be argued that there is more to the concept than acknowledgement, and that the degree of acknowledgement differs substantially in different cases. As stated above, the concept of recognition employed here comes in three stages because recognition conveys a variety of related meanings depending on context and usage or performance. Recognition begins with simple identification or consciousness of

someone or some thing, which is the first stage. In this first stage of identification, recognition simply demonstrates consciousness or awareness of an idea, person, structure, situation or problem. This seems very basic, but it is a necessary part of reaching the second stage of recognition, acknowledgement. Acknowledgement is a far more political form of recognition, and it introduces judgment into the concept because it concerns evaluating both the existence and validity (or lack thereof) of the object of recognition. Unlike in the first stage, this type of recognition moves beyond simply being aware of the existence or non-existence of something, because one can be aware of something but still refuse to acknowledge it. Recognition as identification is a nearly inescapable aspect of recognition because it does not require sustained effort to merely be conscious of something, but recognition as acknowledgment requires far more. To recognize in the sense of acknowledgement requires that a decision be made to reject or accept whatever the object of recognition. In these stages of recognition, while it would not be possible to acknowledge something without first identifying it, it is possible to identify something but refuse to acknowledge it. For example, a person might be aware or conscious of the presence of another person that they dislike, but whether or not to acknowledge that person involves another layer of judgment.

Recognition as acknowledgment is a form that relates directly to questions of justice and injustice, and depending on how it is employed or withheld can have severe consequences. Identification and acknowledgment are not two distinctions without difference in the concept of recognition. Acknowledgment is where questions of moral standing, agency and justice begin to enter into any discussion of

recognition and what it might mean for broader concerns. An illustrative account of the first two types of recognition and how they relate to the questions mentioned above is provided by Onora O'Neill in her account of duties to distant strangers. She argues that if someone is treated as an agent or having agency, they are entitled to some degree of moral standing. (2000d :191-192). This entails identification as recognition, because when assumptions are made about a person's behaviors, ideas and preferences those assumptions also indicate a larger assumption that a person has agency (O'Neill 2000d: 193). These assumptions, however, are not always enough to elicit recognition as acknowledgement, and when that form of recognition is withheld from agents, the consequences can be severe.

Notoriously some Nazis *claimed* that some of their victims lacked moral standing, that they were *Untermenschen*. Yet the Nazis' actions reveal that they in fact assumed that those whom they persecuted were intelligent, foresighted, literate agents capable of complex mental and physical suffering. None of the organization of the deportations or of the camps makes sense except against these background assumptions. All the subterfuge, the bureaucratic formalities of deportation, the rhetoric of belittlement, the techniques of control make sense *only* on the assumption that the victims were indeed seen as intelligent agents and vulnerable subjects. (O'Neill, 2000d :193-194).

The significance of the distinction between identification and acknowledgment are demonstrated by this example. The Nazi's showed that they recognized, in the sense of identification, that their victims had agency- that they were capable of feeling, planning, thinking, or acting- but they withheld acknowledgment of that agency. Withholding recognition as acknowledgment is a form of injustice, and it is a powerful and consequential move that provides a basis for perpetrating further injustices, as the above example demonstrates. Even though their victims were

identified as agents and people, they were not acknowledged as such, and that lack of acknowledgment allowed further abuses against their victims. In order to avoid such abuse, strong justifications must be offered for withholding recognition as acknowledgment from persons or things, because by refusing to acknowledge them, there is also an implicit refusal to acknowledge that harm may be done to that thing or person. “ [U]nless distinctive and weighty reasons to the contrary can be given in a particular case, agents will be committed to acknowledging the moral standing of those whom their action acknowledges as agents and subjects (2000d: 194).”

This example exposes a clear difference between recognition as acknowledgement and recognition as mere identification, and what the consequences of that may be. However, most cases are subtler than the injustices perpetrated by the Nazi's. This subtlety is where the continuum of recognition as acknowledgment is introduced. A complete refusal to acknowledge something has obvious consequences, as illustrated above, but there are different levels of acknowledgement available besides outright denial and full embrace. Identification or consciousness of persons may not be possible to escape, but there are different degrees of acknowledgement. Tied to the discussion above about differences between communitarian and cosmopolitan thinkers, it is not only cosmopolitans who would acknowledge others both inside and outside of their own communities. Even if their recognition stopped well short of appreciation, a strict communitarian thinker would still acknowledge that outsiders exist and have some right to. Even though acknowledgement requires acceptance, acceptance does not mean celebration, and provided that someone did not demand the eradication of others

for no reason than that they belong to a different community, that acceptance exists. As noted above, there is also a range of positions taken in communitarian thought, and many would grant acknowledgment far beyond the minimal threshold of not wishing to destroy others for the mere sake of it. For example, even though a communitarian such as Alasdair MacIntyre strongly prioritizes members of his own community over others because of the belief “[t]hat a satisfactory life lies in being in a right relationship with a community (Brown, 1992: 58),” he does not deny their right to exist, and would presumably only wish that they did not in the event that they posed a threat to his own community (1995: 222). MacIntyre is a much more hard-line communitarian than others, and others may not even acknowledge members of their own communities to be distinctly more valuable than those outside of it, but rather that there are limitations to how we can treat people outside of our immediate communities. There are shades of acknowledgment here, from unequal, indifferent, positive, and with cosmopolitan thinking, the desire for equal acknowledgment for all.

As note of Erskine’s theory of embedded cosmopolitan above alluded to, there are differences in the spectrum of recognition for cosmopolitans as well. A committed ethical cosmopolitanist might object that because Erskine’s theory claims that granting equal moral standing to people requires connection beyond just shared humanity, its moral purview is too limited. An ethical cosmopolitanist and someone who advocates embedded cosmopolitanism might both question the moral relevance inherent in physical boundaries and refuse “[t]o regard existing political structures as the source of ultimate value (Brown, 1992: 24).” However, a

cosmopolitan such as O'Neill would be more suspicious of any position that invests much importance in particularities, particularly at the expense of granting equal moral standing to all. As evident from the above, she views withholding acknowledgment from people a form of injustice, and believes that establishing an inclusive worldwide community of humanity is a requirement of justice (2000d: 196-197). Extending recognition and granting moral standing to everyone is part of the practical aspect of securing justice, and can provide a basis for actions to establish justice.

A potentially inescapable impasse develops in relation to recognition in light of disparities between communitarian and cosmopolitan thinkers on the subject of justice, which is closely tied to the issue of recognition, and what level of acknowledgment people are to be granted. As a further example of Dobson's critique above that cosmopolitanism does not create impetus for action, here we see that while some committed ethical cosmopolitans call for equal recognition or all people regardless of community, there is no way to enforce that equal recognition as it relates to persons. While discussion between and amongst the variety of position holders on this issue will continue, the prospect of a consensus that leads to uniform, equal acknowledgment of persons seems unlikely. However, this does not bring the discussion of recognition, or its potential, to a close.

As mentioned above, there is a third stage of recognition, in the sense of appreciation or acclaim, which is more robust, enhanced form of recognition where an actor has now identified and strongly acknowledged something, and has also

come to value the object of that recognition. Concern and significance are greatly increased for things that we value, and these increases might be able to provide grounds for change. The act of recognition at this third stage promotes action beyond recognition. Actors may be driven to preserve, defend or fight for what they value. While it is possible for an individual actor to recognize others in the sense of appreciation or valuing them, as mentioned above, it is not the position here that such an extension of recognition is possible towards people to meaningfully effect widespread change alone. Instead, it is argued that recognition as appreciation can be extended to resources and conditions, particularly as they relate to the environment.

As discussed extensively above, our interactions have increased substantially to the point that we have the ability to impact each other significantly and without regard to physical distance. Theorists such as O'Neill have argued that extending recognition or equal moral standing is a part of a practical matter as it relates to establishing justice in these interactions and alleviating their consequences. However, not enough people are willing to extend recognition of everyone's inherent value as a member of humanity to allow that to become a basis for action or change. In order to unlock the potential of recognition as appreciation for change, we must leave aside the question of extending recognition to people at present, and instead focus on extending recognition to the conditions and resources that enable us to live and interact. Appreciation of the means and conditions that enable life and interaction may lead us to reform our behavior in relation to the environment and our political and social interactions that impact on it. This recognition as

appreciation of means and condition, that also requires recognition as acknowledgment of the problem of harm detailed above. Because of our ability to harm each other and our environment across distances, if we are concerned about the harm that may be done to us, we must also be concerned about the harm that we do to others. Appreciating the means and conditions that enable life, and acknowledging harm that damages those means and conditions and makes us vulnerable may provide us with the motivation to work to establish just relations required to alleviate environmental harm, and change our behavior that inflicts that harm.

Part of how that recognition as appreciation for the means and conditions that might allow us to alleviate environmental degradation might come about can be found in the above discussion about the fusion or co-relationship between moral and strategic learning. If we learn the consequences of environmental degradation and the danger that strategic learning alone might represent in response to such a problem, we might also learn to appreciate the environment, or the means and conditions of life to the extent that we are able to act and think differently. By recognizing in the sense of appreciation means and conditions, rather than people, we may be able to focus attempts a re-conceptualizing political community so that the form is better able to address environmental degradation not on issues of identity and relationships between people within and across those communities, but on what is required to secure the means and conditions of life.

There is potential for a loose political community based not identity, but on the recognition as appreciation of the means and conditions that are affected by environmental degradation. An overarching political community that addresses itself specifically to issues relating to environmental degradation, or who gets, what, when and how in terms of protecting the environment and its resources, while still allowing more particularized communities to be embedded within this larger, looser political community. If we are capable of imagining ourselves as part of communities with people based on shared identities, we may also be able to imagine ourselves as part of a world community based on a shared appreciation or value for the means and conditions that allow us to live and interact. The resources Anderson uses to explain the spread of political communities, such as media are still available to a community not based on place or territory, but on this third stage of recognition. People can communicate their shared interest in and appreciation of the environment, as well as their fear for it, to forge ties necessary for such an association. Such a community would not need to be defined by its boundaries, but by what its members appreciate in common, even if they differ in terms of identities and other interests. As with Anderson's truth-language and religiously based universalized communities, people still have the particularities of their identity, such as location, vernacular languages, religions, and other pursuits, but their overarching relationship and loose sense of communion with each other is forged by their shared recognition of their environment and the problems that it faces, and that they in turn will face if they do not have some association for action.

II. Practice Makes Practice Grow

This argument may seem somewhat improbably or unrealistic on the face of it. Part of the is arguably due to the issue of inevitability that surrounds our current conception of political community, however, it is transnational problems that continually bring us back to the questions of political community and how they might and must change to address a problem of the scale of environmental degradation, because that have been demonstrably unable to do so, and are theoretically incapable and unequipped to do so. Like others, Bartelson's investigations into community and how world communities might be brought into being has been driven by issues of transnational harm, especially environmental degradation.

[T]oday this leaves us with the task of reformulating our conceptions of community in light of our cosmological beliefs about the human habitat, rather than conversely. This is the philosophical import of problems of climate change in current cosmological beliefs about the role of mankind in the shaping of our habitat. If mankind is no longer separate from nature, we might as well reunite in the face of the Flood that threatens to diminish the habitability of our planet. But that very Flood is also what now promises to wash the maps of empire away for good (Bartelson, 2009: 181-182)"

For many, reconsidering the shape of our communities is no longer optional in light of the problem that we face. While this may entail, as Bartelson suggest, a complete reconsideration of our cosmology, the argument here has been that if we are able to learn to extend enhanced recognition to the environment to the point that we would take action on a broad scale to preserve and defend the means and conditions that allow us to live and interact, that action might lead us to re-conceptualized political communities, where we can be in loose, universal association with each other, but

still retain our particularized, local identities. As O'Neill suggested above, we are already capable of holding multiple, overlapping identities in a variety of communities, this would take the additional step of being in an overlapping set of communities that is not predicated on the idea that communities must have boundaries, be exclusive, or that it is forged in opposition to an Other.

There is a final point of potential in a community imagined on the basis of recognition of means and conditions- the potential that it could also serve as the basis of communities that are also unbounded in character that eventually do extend recognition to people as a matter of justice, rather than just means and conditions. If there were such a political community based on loose association and recognition of means and conditions, it may further grow to influence how we approach other communities embedded within this larger, looser community. By engaging in different practices and ways of thinking, we may begin to grow those practices to the extent that they eventually become what seems inevitable or normal. Part of what Anderson's work demonstrated was that there have been other ways of organizing or conceptualizing of political communities, meaning that other ways were still possible. It also illustrated how practices changed over time to reify and naturalize the form of political community that we think of now that is local, particular, territorially based, and limited. This was not, as shown above, inevitable. It involved choices, acceptance, and the imagining over time that is what political communities acted and functioned like. Media and communications could be put to use in a similar manner to normalize a new approach to political community (or new approaches, because it does not necessarily have to take only one form) that

views boundaries as instrumental rather than morally relevant, or celebrates both difference and sameness as the basis for different types and approaches to political community.

The more that we practice a loose sense of association or political community, the more that it may grow and the further it may go to alleviating the problem of environmental degradation. Such a loose political community that brings us into more just relations in regards to the environment by default may also influence other relations and associations. The goal of recognition as appreciation is not justice directly, but if an actor appreciates the means and conditions of life and interaction, they must also acknowledge that other actors can harm or impact those means and conditions. Unless all potential threatening actors can be controlled and subjugated, which it is argued here they effectively cannot, acknowledgement of the capabilities of others in tandem with appreciation of the means and conditions that facilitate life requires practices that foster co-existence and minimal harm. Such practices would have the byproduct of producing more just relations.

Stanley Hoffman articulated the effect that practices can have over time in fostering and growing practices:

[I] end up somewhat inevitably with the philosophically untidy and politically elastic notion, that the scope of our obligation to individuals in other societies varies in time and space. There was none of it perhaps sixty or fifty years ago (or rather, very few people acknowledged one). There is some now, more widely recognized. If all goes well, and statesmen, writers, and so on, press on, it may grow in the future (Hoffman, 1981: 157).

As something is practiced, it grows over time. Where once there was no recognized obligation to outsiders or other, eventually there developed the idea that there were such obligations, an idea that has only grown stronger and more widespread over time. As we practice recognition as appreciation for means and conditions or the environment, we grow that practice, and it may begin eventually to extend to other areas or people.

Conclusion

Environmental degradation is growing global concern that has provided a sense of urgency to discussion related to the development of ideas such as cosmopolitan harm conventions and re-conceptualization of community. The current form of political community as it is closely aligned with sovereign states is inadequate to effectively addressing and alleviating the problem posed by transnational harms, particularly that of environmental degradation. The modern form of political community, and the understanding of communities more generally, have been imbued with a sense of inevitability that naturalizes contingencies and creates a barrier to considering alternative forms, practices, and ideas. By interrogating and exposing this false inevitability and the impact that it has, the path towards re-conceptualizing political community begins to clear. This does not mean that the current form of political community and the ideas the it encapsulate need to be completely dismantled, but that they must be opened up for reconsideration and change as necessary.

By using Benedict Anderson's work, that alternative possibilities for political communities have existed and therefore can exist was demonstrated. Anderson's *Imagined Communities* also served as an integral part of the premise that political communities can shift from being political communities of place to political communities of recognition. While Anderson does take a territorialized view of modern political communities, his arguments about imagining communities across

distances and regardless of face-to-face interactions serve to illustrate how other conceptualizations of political community might grow and spread.

Theorists such as Onora O'Neill and Jens Bartelson show that much of the flexibility needed to change entrenched understandings of what political communities are and how the function already exists or has existed, it just requires great motivational capacity, that can be found in the threat of environmental degradation, the potential of cosmopolitan harm conventions, the possibility of a combination of moral and strategic learning, and an enhanced form of recognition as appreciation that can be extended to things rather than people.

Perhaps it will require catastrophe to move people to the action required to effectively address a problem on the scale of environmental degradation, but that is not inevitable. By confronting and exposing barriers to alternatives, and then by being willing to flexibly re-consider how and why things and people are organized the potential opens up for cooperation without devastation. The warning is already enough for some, and the more that potential solutions are explored, articulated and practiced the stronger they may grow.

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