

# DIALECTICS OF PLURINATIONALITY AS CRITICISM OF THE LIBERAL STATE-NATION

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## Dialéctica de la plurinacionalidad como crítica del Estado-nación liberal

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### Abstract

This article presents dialectics as a way of investigating plurinationality and its counterpart, the ancient Ecuadorian monoethnic nation-state. It puts forth the following questions: 1) what is the ontological foundation of plurinationality? and 2) why does plurinationality as a socio-political approach deny the homogeneity of the liberal nation-state and its correlated external-internal colonialism? It is argued that the ontological foundation of plurinationality is found in community society (or social being) and that, in its socio-political praxis, it denies the fetishization of the liberal nation-state, determined as an instrument of the external-internal colonialism of society. The research conceives and applies the dialectical analysis of concrete reality and the law of universal contradiction, as inherent in the social being and the thought that reflects said reality. The study concludes that: 1) dialectics comprises the category of totality and is useful for the analysis and explanation of society as a whole, from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts, in mutual universal interrelation; 2) community society is an ontological objectification of plurinationality and manifests itself in the ethnic-cultural diversity of Ecuador, with different historical temporalities, and in opposition to the colonial and republican economic-social formation; and 3) the fetishization of the liberal nation-state as an instrument of external and internal colonialism of Ecuadorian society is still in force and continues to fulfill that same function through the processing of the colonality of power, the ontological invisibility of the other (alter) and racist colonial differentiation.

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### Keywords

Dialectics, community, state, nation, colonialism.

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### Resumen

El artículo estudia la dialéctica como camino de indagación de la plurinacionalidad y su contraparte el vetusto Estado-nación monoétnico ecuatoriano. Indaga: 1) ¿cuál es el fundamento ontológico de la plurinacionalidad? y 2) ¿por qué la plurinacionalidad como planteamiento socio-político niega la homogeneidad del Estado-nación liberal y su correlato el colonialismo externo-interno? Se plantea que el fundamento ontológico de la plurinacionalidad se halla en la sociedad comunitaria (o ser social) y que en su praxis socio-política niega la fetichización del Estado-nación liberal, determinado como instrumento del colonialismo externo-interno de la sociedad. La investigación concibe y aplica el análisis dialéctico de la realidad concreta y la ley de contradicción universal, como inherentes del ser social y del pensamiento que refleja dicha realidad. El estudio concluye que: 1) la dialéctica comprende la categoría de totalidad y es útil para el análisis y explicación de la sociedad en su conjunto, de las partes al todo y del todo a las partes, en mutua interrelación universal; 2) la sociedad comunitaria es una objetivación ontológica de la plurinacionalidad y se manifiesta en la diversidad étnica-cultural del Ecuador, con temporalidades históricas distintas, y en contraposición a la formación económico-social colonial y republicana; y 3) la fetichización del Estado-nación liberal como instrumento del colonialismo externo e interno de la sociedad ecuatoriana aún está vigente y continua cumpliendo esa misma función a través del procesamiento de la colonialidad del poder, la invisibilización ontológica del otro (alter) y la diferenciación colonial racista.

### Palabras clave

Dialéctica, comunidad, Estado, nación, colonialismo.

## Introduction

One of the contemporary problems of scientific disciplines, both positivist and neo-positivist, has to do with the recurrent conception and apprehension of reality in segments and compartments. In this view, the free thinker conceives of reality from his subjectivity and subjectivism, before objects that are interpreted outside of himself, as independent and without any relationality from one another. The same happens with methods. According to the free thinker, the methods of apprehending reality have been segmented into multiple orders called epistemological and methodological pluralism, thus foregoing an understanding of reality as a concrete totality.

The approaches of science from the epistemological or gnoseological perspective are multiple: concordist, disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and in the best of cases, transdisciplinary; according to Falatoonzadeh (2012) they are still divided and disunited as a science and, in the worst cases, disconnected from reality. An example of this is the study of economics, on the one hand, and politics in universities, on the other; many subjectivist scholars separate economic reality from real political life; they even conceive in their thoughts of the public sphere and the private sphere as disconnected in order to account for the world, divorcing politi-

cal society and civil society as if they were two separate realities. In addition to that inherent segmentation, there exists in the curricular programs of the (Ecuadorian) university an academic and functional dualism, as a reality assumption, from which university studies are promoted, as if the natural-social world were structured in this way-content.

In this context, according to the postmodern approaches of Mouffe (1999) and Lyotard (1987), the comprehensions of reality have become particularized or relativized. In this sense, according to Díaz (2015), the historical subject has also been made invisible or hidden under the meta-physical abstraction of the being that forgets the colonial scope of the other as distinct and under increasingly reconstituted colonial conditions.

From the ontological horizon, the nihility or nullity (as negation) of the social being means the objectification, reification or the alienation as loss of identity and negation of the social human essence (or negation of man by man himself). Lessa (2015) denotes that under alienation, the alter, as an individual and a substantial part of the human race, is thought of as an object; in capitalist society as a commodity, detached, distorted and denigrated of its human relations, of its social being. In the perspective of Alcântara (2014), in this set of reified or alienated relations there is no room for the condition of human autonomy and freedom, if what is meant by freedom is the choice of concrete possible alternatives, in the context of the historical-spatial community to which each man and woman belongs. Only there can human life be realized in its specific conditions.

In its concrete form, the social being has correspondence with the social community in conjunction with others, in order to survive and become in the historical space-time, without ceasing to be what it was in its essence and what it is in the present. The community as a social being, in its formation, form and historical content (historicity), is opposed to any essentialism, monism, monadism or historical particularism, because the social community is a community society that, according to Bautista (2014), gives foundation to the singular and universal relations of the present society. And everything that undervalues it, such as the nation-state or global capitalism through the uncontrollability of capital and the plundering of work, is a contradiction that can and must be overcome by the qualitative dialectic of the negation of the negation of the nation-state (substitution of the old for the new) and a different community-based civilizational matrix that, in the language of indigenous and Afro-Latin American societies, corresponds to the plurinationality of societies as a practice of political freedom of processes of self-determination and community self-government, as a product of millennial praxis.

In this general context, the article approaches the study of dialectics as a way of investigating the plurinationality that confronts the ancient modern and Ecuadorian monoethnic nation-state, because the way to approach the reality of the thing itself is through dialectics, as a path of ontological investigation of reality and as a reflection of that reality and not as a field of epistemological or subjective thought that interprets reality. Dialectics is conceived as a movement of concrete reality, in which the world is explained by what is itself (its own nature) and not by something external to it (the metaphysical field). According to Bruno (2011) and Kosik (1976), dialectical thought conceives of reality as a structured totality that develops and creates, that is, as a concrete totality.

In the Marxist conception, dialectics is critical and revolutionary, since it conceptualizes and understands all reality as historical and transitory, and according to Kohan (2014), it does not “fear the antagonism of contradiction” (p. 3); it is understood that there is no dialectic without the contradiction of its own being in its movement, its processual nature and originality. In this sense, plurinationality as an ontological manifestation of the social being of indigenous societies does not escape the historical law of contingency, transience, contradiction and the irreversibility of social processes. In this view, plurinationality as an expression of social being becomes the negation of the homogeneity of the liberal nation-state and of opposition to any process of external-internal colonialism of society.

From what has been stated above, the article aims to delve in two research questions: 1) What is the ontological foundation of plurinationality for the Ecuadorian case? And, 2) why does plurinationality as a socio-political approach deny the homogeneity of the liberal nation-state and its correlate of external-internal colonialism? As a fundamental message, it is established that the ontological foundation of plurinationality is found in the community or community society (as a social being) and that in its socio-political praxis it denies the fetishization of the liberal nation-state as the instrument of external-internal colonialism in civil society.

The article is segmented into three analytical guidelines: 1) the first line of study refers to the understanding of dialectics as an ontological heuristic path; 2) the second guide refers to the understanding of communal society (social being) as an ontological manifestation of plurinationality and its manifestation in the ethnic-cultural diversity of Ecuador, in the context of a variegated social formation, opposed to an economic-social republican formation; and 3) the third line of study has to do with the fetishization of the liberal nation-state as the primary instrument of the external-internal colonialism of society.

## Dialectics as an ontological path of study

Although dialectics is present in all civilizations of the world, it was the Greeks who developed it in their philosophical thought and as a mode of explanation of reality. Konder (2008) argues that in ancient Greece, dialectics was the art of dialogue. It was also considered as the peculiarity that provided them with the necessary tools to understand the essence of what they did and the professional activities to which they were dedicated. One of the radical Greek thinkers was Heraclitus of Ephesus, who maintained that everything exists in permanent change and that conflict is the father and king of all things. Heraclitus denied the existence of any stability in being, which disturbed many Greek thinkers, giving way to the thought of another thinker, Parmenides. This author, unlike Heraclitus, taught that the deep essence of being was immutable. And movement, on the other hand, was a superficial phenomenon. The metaphysical thought of Parmenides imposed itself over the thought of Heraclitus. In later societies the metaphysical position prevailed due to class society and its ruling classes. In this way, Heraclitian dialectics was obscured until the appearance of the German philosopher Hegel, who returned to it without extrapolating it from the metaphysics of being. The German philosopher concluded that the principle of contradiction could not be suppressed from the consciousness of the subject and objective reality. Dialectics remained upside down. It was Karl Marx who straightened it out with what is known as historical materialism.

Due to the misrepresentations and misappropriations of the thought of Marx and Engels, dialectics in particular, we can ask ourselves what Marxist dialectics is not. Several answers are possible: it is not a manual of concepts or a catechism of faith (mythification), nor a dogmatic doctrine that must be followed at face value, nor an immutable, archaic and petrified science. It is the opposite. Bruno (2011) states that it is a science of the radical critique of society, of historical and cultural processes, global, micro and macro, and of radical self-criticism of subjects committed to historical praxis and the transformation of class society.

Another problem that should be clarified has to do with the terminological definitions carried out by some intellectuals, especially Ecuadorians, when defining social objects and relations as independent of each other, without any connection. For example, the public and private spheres, theory or practice, or the principle of identity of formal logic that defines a value judgment as  $A = A$  (the table is identical to the table), as if reality were like this. On the contrary, Marxist dialectics crosses all the fields of reality, does not neglect some parts for others or the parts



over the whole, because reality is a concrete totality in the sense conferred by Kosik (1976). That is why we must be attentive to the totality of the interrelations and ontological interactions that appear as phenomena and processes and hide the substantiality of being.

In the Marxist vision, dialectics is a fluid and dynamic vision of society and history (read as historicity) of economic and social events. The following quote from Engels and Marx (2006) from the work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of classical German philosophy (and other writings on Feuerbach)* offers a global overview of this perspective:

Men make their history, whatever the course of it, as each one pursues his own ends with will and conscience of what they do; and the result of these numerous wills, projected in different directions, and their multiple influence on the outside world, is precisely history. It matters, then, what the many individuals want. The will is moved by passion or reflection. But the springs that, in turn, move directly to them are very diverse. Sometimes, they are external objects; other times, ideal reasons: ambition, “passion for truth and justice,” personal hatred, and also individual manias of all kinds. But, on the one hand, we already saw that the many individual wills that act in history almost always produce very different results from those intended—sometimes, even contrary—and, therefore, their motives have a purely secondary importance in terms of total result. On the other hand, it is necessary to ask what propulsive forces act, in turn, behind these motives, what historical causes are those that in the heads of men are transformed into these motives (pp. 43-44).

Marx and Engels, unlike Hegel (idealist) put the accent of dialectics on materialist and revolutionary foundations. In this sense, the history of peoples and civilizations advances through contradictory processes that follow one another in non-linear and curvilinear processes of continuity and discontinuity. For this reason, the deployment of reality carries with it the negation of the negation as an overcoming of the previous moment in another, superior moment, one that contains the elements of the previous one. An example of this is written by Erice (2013) referring to the ideas of Herber Marcuse:

In socio-historical terms it means that, in general, crises and collapses are not accidents or external disturbances, but rather manifest the true nature of the thing and, therefore, provide the basis for understanding the essence of the existing social system. It also means that the intrinsic potentialities of man and things can only develop in society through the death of the social order in which they previously originated. Hegel says

that when something becomes its opposite, when it contradicts itself, it expresses its essence.

When, as Marx says, the common idea and practice of justice and equality leads to injustice and inequality, when the free exchange of equivalents produces, on the one hand, exploitation, and on the other, the accumulation of wealth, these contradictions also belong to the essence of existing social relations. Contradiction is the engine of progress (pp. 8-9).

Another dimension of Marxist dialectics has to do with the category<sup>1</sup> of totality, understood as the unity of the whole with the whole and of the whole with the parts, unlike the separatism or the relativity of everything in the whole that is typical of postmodern thought. Lukács (1970), who developed the idea of totality in *History and Class Consciousness*, affirms that even in concrete studies we must not lose sight of the “relationship with society as a whole. Because only in this relation does the conscience that men can have of his existence in each moment appear in its essential determinations” (Lukács, 1970, p. 80). In this way, the category of totality is indispensable to think and explain the plurinationality of society in all its determinations and socio-historical and cultural interactions.



## Community society as an ontological manifestation of plurinationality in the context of a variegated social-spatial formation

One of the options for explaining the Ecuadorian national question is that of the variegated social-spatial formation with differentiated historical times, different socio-cultural and territorial entanglements, in the contradictory unity of the territory delimited by the State.

In order to explain the category of social and spatial formation, linked at the same time, as it must be understood, to that of economic formation, the Marxist version will be used.

A first explanatory finding is found in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, either in the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1989) or in *German Ideology* (1974), when they refer to economic-social formation. In relation to the *Contribution to the critique of political economy*, Marx starts from the following assumption: the material conditions of life are the indispensable component from which life and the history of men arises. They think that neither juridical relations, nor the form of the State, nor the general evolution of the human spirit can be understood by themselves, since those relations and form of the State



have their origins in the material conditions of existence or life. In this sense, the form of civil society—in the name that Hegel gives it—must be sought in political economy. In *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels (1974) express the same idea, referring to the conditions of life linked to real individuals and their actions. The following statement correctly expresses the previous idea: “The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. The first verifiable factual state is, therefore, the corporeal organization of these individuals and, as a consequence, their behavior towards the rest of nature” (Marx and Engels, 1974, p. 19). The term *naturally* expresses being-alive-existent and human, that is, corresponding to the human species, therefore, individual (the quality of being individual), social and also related to a nature that is both inorganic and organic; in this scaffolding of being, there are different levels of being (inorganic, organic and social) related to each other.

In this way, human history and the existence of living individuals represents the existence and coexistence of human beings among themselves. Marx and Engels (1974) refer to the fact that humans, by differentiating themselves from animals, begin to produce their livelihoods by that very fact: “By producing their livelihood, man indirectly produces his own material life” (p. 19). What is behind the production of livelihoods is work, in a broad sense, as a “basic and fundamental condition of human life” and, at the same time, the fact that “work has created man himself” (p. 371).

Marx and Engels (1974) go on to state that the way in which human beings manufacture their livelihood depends, above all, on the very nature of the means of life with which they find themselves at every step. But this form of production is not only a reproduction of the physical existence of individuals, it is above all a determined form of human activity, a definite modality of expressing one’s life and a delimited way of life of individuals. And individuals are what they are, because of how they express their very life. From this moment, Marx and Engels (1974) trace the general concept of production, whose content is related to what they produce and how they produce men. Marx and Engels conclude that: “What individuals are depends, therefore, on the material conditions of their production” (Marx and Engels, 1974, p. 20). This production logic is what is called productive moment.

There is another element that the authors incorporate in their explanation. They refer to the fact that the vital social production is determined by the degree of development of the material productive forces linked to relations of production that, as a whole, configure the economic



base of society, and it is on this structure that the legal and political superstructure of society stands. Defined modalities of social conscience correspond to this dimension of society. The productive forces and the relations of production are always in conflict or continuous contradiction.

In the field of social formation, in Marx (1989) a new social formation is nonexistent if all the productive forces within it have not yet developed. As such, no new and superior production relations appear if the material conditions for its existence have not matured within the ancient society. Marx exposes in broad strokes the preexistence of several modes of production, e.g. Asian, old, feudal and modern bourgeois, which are comparable to the economic social formation of human society and this closes the prehistory of society. This classification corresponds to the European and other realities studied by Marx, but it does not serve to explain all the historical world realities. Therefore, it is not plausible to accept them as Marx enunciates them for the peoples of America, which entail other different and varied processes in historical spaces-times.

Starting from the socio-economic formation category conceived by Marx, Tapia (2002) in accordance with the ideas of René Zavaleta (2015), formulates a *sui generis* explanation to account for the coexistence of several modes of production at the moment of productive level in the Bolivian multi-society. Other thinkers, says Tapia, have conceived of the category as a structural and superstructural unit which gives unity to that variety “of modes of production at the level of the economic moment” (Tapia, 2002, p. 308). And the sphere of the superstructure would contain components of earlier traditions that are re-functionalized by capitalist society and that would end up being part of “a new political-social quality” (p. 308).

One of the difficulties encountered in the category of socio-economic formation is that of not allowing the understanding of other modes of production or their articulation in heterogeneous societies, such as those determined by indigenous Latin American societies within each country. For this reason, the bet that Tapia (2002) makes with the category of variegated social formation is pertinent to unravel and explain the structure and superstructure of Ecuadorian society as a whole.

Tapia (2002) mentions that a variegated social formation is characterized by the coexistence of diverse temporalities or historical times, an issue that is defined at the level of the productive moment. The notion of historical time is not comparable to the mode of production, due to the existence of other modes of production, particularly in agricultural societies such as the Bolivian, Ecuadorian and others from the contem-



porary world. In such a way that in a variegated social formation, in addition to the coexistence of social and legal relations of production, there are also heterogeneities of historical times that are specificities of profound diversity or differences in political structures and culture. At the same time we must add the diversity of political modalities and social matrices of generation.

Thus, in the Ecuadorian sociopolitical reality—and the Latin American by extension—, exists on the one hand, the political sphere of the national State with formal legal characteristics, and on the other hand, a series of local structures of authority, which are diverse and do not represent the national authority, nor are they designated by the national government; it is more about endogenous local modalities and millenarian and ancestral types that organize the social life of local societies.

In short, the variegated social formation, according to Tapia (2002):

is characterized, then, by containing diverse historical times, of which a more particularized expression is the coexistence of several modes of production; the existence of various political forms of a diverse or heterogeneous matrix, expressed in the existence of a set of local structures of authority that are diverse among themselves, and a more or less modern and national State, but which does not maintain relations of organicity with the previous ones and consequently, it is a more or less apparent State (p. 310).

The appearance of the State is reflected in a set of cultural communities and heterogeneous and inconclusive productions that have not found a foothold in civil society as a whole. The State is apparent because, in those heterogeneous societies, the capitalist system has not yet been developed in its formal composition, nor has the historical process between producer and means of production been definitively divided. In other words, if one follows the Marxist conception (Marx, 1980), the process of *original accumulation* has not yet been developed prior to *capitalist accumulation*. However, it can be shown that the original accumulation or what Harvey (2004) calls *accumulation by dispossession*, today is extended by the State to other processes of social life, such as the commodification and privatization of lands, territories, agribusiness, among other processes that are catastrophic for countries in capitalist dispossession.

In the explanation given by Tapia (2002), the variegated social formation is the composition of extensive margins of segmentation with processes of conjunction of various modes of production and of con-

junction of structures and superstructures related to their own world-views. In other words, it is about:

A process of incomplete organic totalization, of the dominant mode of production at the level above all of the productive moment, and of an apparent unification of everything that has not been transformed into its social substance but is contained under the domination of a state or superstructural regime that demarcates the horizons of the current system of that diversity which legitimacy claims and legitimates as a national government (Tapia, 2002, p. 310).

In the context of the variegated social-spatial formation, the Military Geographic Institute (2017) attests that the Ecuadorian State, through the 2008 Constitution, has finally recognized fourteen nationalities of millenarian and ancestral origin, with peoples that recognize ancestral languages and inhabit territories in community and/or communal enclaves. In this same sense, the State Policy Letter, CPE (Corporación de Estudios y Publicaciones, 2015) conceives that the nationalities are constituted by indigenous people, and by peoples, such as the Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and white-mestizo. However, we must ask ourselves what is beyond this recognition, that is, what is the substance of this social diversity or is it at the very base of indigenous nationalities and peoples, in their social being and the motive of their historical struggle?



## Community society on the basis of indigenous nationality

An approximate answer to the previous question is to show that the community or community society, with its respective socio-cultural, economic and political structures, is at the base of the configuration of each nationality. In other words, the foundation of nationality is substantiated in the community society of millenarian and ancestral origin, in the daily practice of relations and networks of kinship and consanguinity that extend beyond the third or even fourth generation. The objective formulation that will be introduced here is that of the Andean ayllu, as the fundamental nucleus of community society, extensive not only to the Ecuadorian case but also to the pan-Andean context. What is or what characterizes a community society?

In the understanding of Kusch (1976), community society implies a way of life, a way of living, a way of “being” (p. 153), a way of existing of the typically pan-Andean life world that is based on the ayllu. The ayllu is a fundamental and life experience of the indigenous community societies

of Ecuador, and according to Moya (1995) also of the Andean cultures in general; the community society is the basis on which the original social and organizational community structure is built.

According to Bautista (2012) the ayllu is a community society of relatives, with strong ties of kinship and affinity. The ayllu in conjunction with other forms, gives way to a wider community society. This generates a mode of relationship and ad intra and ad extra reciprocity. Bautista maintains that: “The *Ayllu* indicates not a mere community, but the always extensive congregation of *potential relatives*; so that the community, in principle, is determined as an open community” (Bautista, 2014, p. 142). Calapucha (2012), referring to the Amazonian ayllu of Arajuno-Ecuador, asserts that the ayllu is the extended family or muntun (from the Spanish *montón* or heap) and is reference and self-reference for each person. Among the Amazonian kichwas, the community is also the ayllu that is constituted in the ayllukuna (families), in such a way that the ayllu is the foundation of the indigenous society and no social action develops without the participation of the ayllukuna.

Likewise, for Espinoza Soriano (1990) the original community society is a supra-family, extensive structure, in which its members united in simple nuclear families and nuclear-compound families, since pre-classical times, were and continue to be linked today by real or blood kinship. The union of domestic units (nuclear-simple families and nuclear-compound families) in the configuration of broader community societies was fundamental for collective work. The ayllu as an original community society, together with others, always forms a much larger community society or *jatun ayllu* (big family), in order to organize and resist the ravages of political society and the domination of global capitalism.

In the pre-Hispanic past, the set of original communities composed of farmers shared different ecological levels. According to Mariátegui (2007), this type of community extended beyond the conquest, with the denomination of “agrarian communism of the allyu” (p. 50). In interpreting Peruvian reality, Mariátegui argued that the agrarian communism of the ayllu was the central nucleus of the indigenous community and of the “community under colonialism” (p. 50) that even extended to the republic. However, the colonial legal provisions were what transformed the indigenous community society into “a wheel of administrative and fiscal machinery” (p. 50). The colonial agrarian regime established the replacement of a large part of the indigenous agrarian communities in exchange for privately owned latifundia, cultivated by the Indians subject to a feudal organization. Mariátegui mentions that the ayllu or community continues

to preserve its natural idiosyncrasy, as a subsisting, almost family institution that remains beyond the conquest with its constituent principles.

Castro Pozo, in the framework of “Our indigenous community” (in Marzal, 1998, p. 468), shows that the community is based on common property and consanguineous ties. And the land also belongs to a community that benefits from production.

It has been mentioned above that the indigenous peoples of Ecuador and Latin America base their way of being and living in community society. In the Andes, these communities are *ad intra* and *ad extra*, although more endogamous. *Ad intra* communities, according to Albó and Ramón (1995), form their new homes, share a “territory,” “with their own system of government” (p. 92), a natural environment, a language, a culture, an identity and the same historical root, giving origin to the indigenous nationalities (Ecuador) or nations (Bolivia).

In social praxis, each of the communities is self-contained, related to others with which it competes for resources, and relationships that contain real or potential conflicts. The community society as a social organization chooses the cultural particularities that it adopts as its own identity, be they practices, symbolic representations, parties, dances, jobs and linguistic turns of the language, etc. In the perspective of Groppo and Cenerini (2012), community society is the geopolitical space in which identity is constructed and manifested, linked in fact to the land, territory and territoriality. The territory is considered as an inherent part of this society and its construction, hence it is not only an administrative space, but also a space of “cultural, linguistic or marginal nature” (p. 12) and power relations.

In the Ecuadorian Amazon, in the criterion of the coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin-COICA and assumed by Calapucha (2012), the territory is understood as a natural and social relational totality, where everything is imbued with life. Calapucha (2012) states that:

The mountains, valleys, rivers and lagoons identified with the existence of indigenous peoples and have provided them with their means of livelihood; the inherited wealth of their ancestors and the legacy they are bound to pass on to their descendants; a space in which each small part, each manifestation of life, each expression of nature is sacred in the memory and in the collective experience of that people and that is shared in intimate interrelation with all other living beings, respecting their natural evolution as the only guarantee of mutual development (p. 36).



It should be clarified that what Calapucha (2012) argues cannot be generalized to other places and regions of the Amazon, because the patterns, rationalities and perceptions in Amazonian societies are not natural but cultural and ideological constructions (belief systems). These forms of social being correspond to the superstructure of indigenous societies.

In short, community society is the ontological basis of indigenous nationality identified in the facts, in community territories and with community territorial governments. They exercise authority in specific territories, have political-legal representation, constitute the space for participation and decide on their social, political, economic and cultural aspects. According to the Government Council of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador-CONAIE (2007), community territorial governments have participation mechanisms through community assemblies, extended councils, congresses, among other modalities for collective decision-making, which allows for decision processes, planning and organization of multiple forms of productivity, trade, education, health, etc. From now on, the acronym CONAIE will be used to refer to the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador.

In the Andean context, according to the CONAIE (2012) and Rivadeneira (2014), the territorial governments consider and are governed by several reality principles, as part of their integral philosophy: relationality, complementarity, duality, reciprocity, and community.

Just as the ayllu is to the community society, so the community society is to the indigenous nationality, shaping plurinationality. However, it should be clarified that the terms nationality and indigenous nation are not comparable with that of the modern nation of Bottasso (2010), since the conception of the modern nation evolves within the liberal framework of a nation, even articulated to the modern State.

The following section analyses the historical-spatial problematic of plurinationality.

## Plurinationality as a historical problem

According to Ramón (1992), until 1975, indigenous claims had not appeared in the political debate in Ecuador, but in 1977, with the invitation made by the Ecuadorian Institute of Anthropology of Otavalo (Ecuador) to **Yuri Zubritski**, a door to the debate on the plurinational State was opened.

In the testimony of Almeida (2016), the State should consider indigenous people not as peasants or as poor, but as peoples who have

maintained their languages, cultures, territories and historical memory, because indigenous societies were entitled to their own political freedom, to self-govern and not to allow others to assume the role that corresponded to themselves.

Almeida (2016) mentions that Zubritski, referring to the terms of nationality and plurinationality, started from the right of peoples to their identity, belonging and autonomous organizational capacity. Zubritski argued that the concept of peasant employed in the struggle for land did not offer a consciousness of belonging; nor was the concept of Indian suitable for the peoples of America; in a struggle that should be understood for universal reasons of nationality, it was not enough for indigenous people to think of themselves as exploited. For the Russian ethnographer, language, culture, specific history and collective memory could only be constituted in a common collectivity through long historical processes. As such, the categories of community, people, nationality and nation were relevant and articulated the history and politics of indigenous peoples. Zubritski asserted that it is not a question of betting on the secession of the State or of establishing a second State, as Ecuadorian politicians would later interpret.

In this regard, Ortiz Crespo (1992) alludes to a particular circumstance of President Rodrigo Borja (1988-1992 period) who, when defining the meaning of State, nation, agreement or treaty, territory, people and sovereignty, and addressing the leadership of the Confederation of Indigenous nationalities of Ecuador and other representatives of the indigenous movement in 1990, emphasized that the sovereignty of the State cannot be put into discussion by any person or any internal organization; he reaffirmed the right that the State has over the subsoil and over the airspace that belongs to the State and against which no one can argue, reminding them that “you are not a State within another State... because you are subject, like all other Ecuadorians, without any privilege, to the same laws, to the same Constitution and to the same State authorities” (p. 111). Another Ecuadorian politician, Jaime Nebot, of the Social Christian Party, had maintained a similar opinion.

According to Almeida (2016), the best way to collect, agglutinate, bet and assume the political dimension of these notions was through the concept of plurinational State. In historical events, the concept of plurinational State ceased to be a theoretical approach and became a political proposal in the lustrum of the 80s (twentieth century), during the Meeting of Indigenous Peoples held in the city of Puyo. Alfredo Viteri, the Kichwa leader of Sarayacu, played an important role in this event. It is worth



remembering that in the previous decade the Shuar, with the influence of some Salesian priests linked to the Apostolic Vicariate of Méndez, had already raised criticisms against the Ecuadorian State, had considered it alien to indigenous peoples; the Shuar argued that the State had not recognized their historical rights nor respected their identities and differences, nor had it attempted to at least remedy the evils that the transnationals had caused to the environment in the places where they lived.

Between 1983 and 1988, the CONAIE (1986), as the legitimate representative of the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, concomitantly with the discussion of the plurinationality of the country, accentuated the political recognition of multiculturalism and multilingualism in Ecuador. Its fundamental proposal was the recognition of the plurinationality of Ecuador and the institutionalization of the plurinational State. Some events contributed to the establishment of the proposal, such as the *Sarayacu Agreement* (1989) and, according to Almeida *et al.* (1993) and Moreno and Figueroa (1992), the indigenous uprising of the *Inti Raymi* (festival of the Sun) of 1990.

Other intellectuals of the Ecuadorian social sciences, such as Ayala (1992), Ortiz Crespo (1992), Acosta and Martínez (2009), Ávila Santa-maría (2011), to name but a few, in due time participated in the debate for the enlightenment of plurinationality. These intellectuals understood that the demand of indigenous societies for their recognition as nationalities was one of the biggest questions regarding the structure of the Ecuadorian society and State. For example, Ayala (1992) affirmed that “we have begun to talk about the recognition of the indigenous nationalities of the country; and their subsequent self-determination. The need for Ecuador to recognize itself as a plurinational, multi-ethnic, multicultural country has been strongly raised” (p. 31). Likewise, Ortiz Crespo (1992) recognized the cultural heterogeneity of the country as a concept from an old phenomenon: “The phenomenon existed since ancient times, but only the development of the Ecuadorian social sciences allowed its discovery and conceptualization in the last decades” (p. 98).

In sum, the aforementioned authors argued that the Ecuadorian reality in principle was heterogeneous and complex, composed of plural and diverse societies.

In this context of complexity of complexes is where the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality that reinvent the Ecuadorian State appear. Therefore, these terms will be analyzed. What is the content of plurinationality and what is the relationship with the intercultural principle?



In the terminology of the CONAIE (2001), plurinationality “is the political principle that guarantees the full exercise of the rights of all nationalities in the country” (p. 37) and the plurinational “is the political organization of the Peoples and Nationalities of the country. The Plurinational State arises when several peoples and nationalities come together under the same government and Constitution” (CONAIE, 2001: p. 35). In this way, the political project of the organization incorporates plurinationality as a political principle and the plurinational State as political and legal organization of the nationalities and peoples of Ecuador. On the other hand, the Development Council of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador-CODENPE (2011a), created from the legal and political framework of the Political Constitution of the State of 1998, argues that plurinationality is based on real diversity and irrefutable objectivity of the nationalities and peoples of Ecuador, who built differentiated historical, economic, political and cultural entities; the CODENPE (2011a) asserts that the CONAIE:

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Recognizes the right of nationalities to their territory, internal administrative political autonomy, that is, to determine their own process of economic, social, cultural, scientific and technological development to ensure the development of their cultural and political identity and therefore the integral development of the Plurinational State (p. 25).

To what extent is plurinationality related to interculturality?

As conceived by the CONAIE (2012), interculturality is understood as the political and ideological principle of recognition and praxis of individuals, communities, peoples and nations with the intention of building and living in fair, symmetrical, equitable and harmonious relationships with other original societies (Afro-Ecuadorians, Montubios and Mestizos) within the framework of the plurinational State and the intercultural society. For the CODENPE (2011b), interculturality is not only a dialogue of cultures, but also praxis, in the horizon of relationship between cultures in conflict that come together in an organization of power that was modeled as a product of the colony and modernity.

For Walsh (2012), interculturality refers to the principle of respect for the diversity of the nationalities and peoples of Ecuador and the democratic construction of the country that goes through a third critical path, “which considers the structural-colonial-racial problem” (p. 91). In this same perspective, Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel (2007) understand that it is about decolonizing power relations, being and knowing, in the direction of what is currently called *the decolonial turn*. At present, inter-

culturality is an ideal and not real issue; in other words, it is a story that forgets the differentiation of concrete classes of society and does not pose the concrete problem of the class struggle that is the real issue.

The political debate on the plurinational and intercultural State in the approach of several authors, such as, Alta, Iturralde and López-Bassols (1998), Almeida, Arrobo and Ojeda (2005) and González, Cal y Mayor and Ortiz-T. (2010), also articulates other ontological discussions related to self-determination, indigenous autonomies and, according to Ospina (2010), the indigenous territorial self-governments, without excluding Afro-Ecuadorians and Montubios *de jure* as they are recognized by the Political Constitution of the State of the year 2008, the Organic Code of Territorial Organization, Autonomies and Decentralization-COOTAD and the Law of Lands and Territories of Ecuador.

Currently, the debate and discussion about self-determination, autonomy and indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio self-governments is inescapable and unpostponable, given that there lies the ontological reason for plurinationality and its political liberation. The existence and coexistence of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio and Mestizo community societies (popular or of the people), as the ontic basis of society, cannot be achieved without the link with space, territory and their own territorialities.

What do the demands for self-determination, autonomy and self-government mean? Two theoretical perspectives are discussed below.

Regarding the concept of self-determination, the one who best proposed to raise the national liberation of the peoples was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov-Lenin (1973). In "The right of nations to self-determination" (p. 46), this author pointed out that although nations are the fruit of bourgeois revolutions, nevertheless, the masses and peasants play a role of active struggle for national self-determination. Referring to the national question, Lenin recognizes the existence of oppressing nations and oppressed nations; and those who can best contribute to the liberation from oppression are the revolutionary subjects. The oppressed must fight for their authentic national liberation.

A different institution that has made relevant statements about the self-determination of peoples, especially indigenous peoples, is the United Nations; many states abide by its principles and resolutions. In the context of indigenous peoples, the principle of self-determination of peoples is stipulated clearly in several articles of the declaration. For example, article 3 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that: "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By

virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (United Nations, 2008, p. 5). Additionally, in article 4 the rule states that: “Indigenous peoples, in exercise of their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters related to their internal and local affairs, as well as to have the means to finance their autonomous functions” (United Nations, 2008, p. 5). Consequently, self-determination becomes the exercise of free determination that nationalities and indigenous peoples have, wherever they may be. The declaration favors the right to *autonomy* and *self-government* as collective political freedom of the peoples; the concrete problem lies rather in the *State reason* and its sovereign ontological ascription of governing or of claiming for itself the absolute state sovereignty in favor of capitalist development, because, as mentioned by Córdova Alarcón (2013), capitalism requires the modern State and its ascribed functionality to concentrate the power of decision on the territory and the governability included in itself.



## The liberal nation-state as an instrument of external and internal colonialism

From the nineteenth century to the present century, research on colonialism linked to the modern state and the interest in explaining and reflecting on external and internal colonialism have increased. It is worth mentioning some authors that allow us to remember this interest: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Materials for the History of Latin America* (1972); Frantz Fanon, *Black skin, white masks* (2009); Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (2006); Santiago Castro-Gómez, *The hybris of zero point: science, race and illustration in New Granada (1750-1816)* (2005), Eduardo Lander, *The coloniality of knowledge: Eurocentrism and social sciences. Latin American Perspectives* (2005); Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel, *The decolonial turn: reflections for an epistemic diversity beyond global capitalism* (2007); Pablo González Casanova, *From the sociology of power to the sociology of exploitation: thinking about Latin America in the 21st century* (2009); Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Violence (re) concealed in Bolivia* (2010); Paulo Henrique Martins, *The Decoloniality of Latin America and the heterotopy of a community of solidary destiny* (2012). The list does not exhaust other thinkers within and outside Latin America that deal with the problem.

It should be noted that they are researchers from the humanities and social sciences who are originating other ways of explaining the conception of the world and have been critically placed on the tangent of global capitalism.

In the understanding of Dussel (2007) and Wallerstein (2011), colonialism is a long-standing historical and spatial process and, since the 16th century, linked to dominant capitalism. The reality of colonialism, as an analytical category linked to capitalism, also entails a structural problem that is not simply racial or cultural. In this same horizon, for González Casanova (2015), colonialism is dialectically related to the independence of countries (for example, in Latin American), by the monopoly that a dominant country exercises over another country; in this pragmatic sense, colonialism is accentuated as the monopoly intensifies and vice versa; in such a way, a vicious circle with no exit is generated.

While it is true that colonialism initially was external, nevertheless, the processes of coloniality have been internal, promoted by political societies. In Latin America, it is a colonialism that develops within the nation-state linked to the expanding mercantilist, industrial and monopoly-oriented capitalist system. The system was increased with the enormous natural resources or raw materials coming from the colonized countries and the use of cheap labor. In other words, according to González Casanova (2009), metropolitan development has only been possible due to the underdevelopment of peripheral countries.

González Casanova (2015) understands internal colonialism as a set of social relations of domination and exploitation between different cultural groups, each of them with their specific class structures. Domination and exploitation do not occur in pure form, but are traversed by different modes of production, e.g. the hacienda, slavery, salaried work, sharecropping, peonage, the huasipungo, among other modalities.

The internal colonialism of the nation-state as a typical phenomenon of the development of capitalism means not the struggle between ethnic groups or cultural groups, but rather, the dispute of minorities, peoples, indigenous nationalities and nations against the ruling classes, external colonialism and world imperialism. Both foreign and intranational colonialism become phenomena closely linked to the development of dependent and imperial capitalism. As suggested by Robinson (2013), dependent capitalism brings as a consequence not only national, but also transnational class struggle.

In the Ecuadorian case, the debate and praxis before external and internal colonialism come from the historical horizon undertaken by the

indigenous movement and other social movements. Specifically, the concepts of plurinationality and interculturality are on the table for discussion. The three political projects of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, CONAIE, of the years 1994, 2001 and 2012, place the emphasis on colonialism and decoloniality. According to the CONAIE, decoloniality can only be achieved through “the construction of a New State Model and a Plurinational Nation” (1994, p. 1). The same theoretical proposal is outlined in the 2001 political project; the Ecuadorian indigenous movement continues to establish the goal of decoloniality of the country’s social and political system. On the occasion of the National Constituent Assembly held in Montecristi-Manabí in 2007, it proposed the declaration of a plurinational, unitary, sovereign, inclusive, equitable and secular State. One of the proactive axes of the CONAIE (2007) prays precisely for “The construction of a plurinational State, which will forever discard the colonial and monocultural shadows that have accompanied it for almost 200 years” (p. 5). The political proposal was not exempt from conflict between the indigenous organizations themselves.

The proposal of plurinationality and interculturality in the national conjuncture of the National Constituent Assembly developed in Montecristi-Manabí, from 2007-2008, as Simbaña (2008) indicates, was disrupted by the dispute among the three great indigenous organizations of the country, the National Federation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organizations, FENOCIN, the Council of Indigenous Peoples and Evangelical Organizations of Ecuador, FEINE and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, CONAIE. In spite of the oppositions between the organizations, FENOCIN and CONAIE coincide in the abolition of the colonial shadows of the structural monoculturality and power of the colonial State.

Altmann (2013) considers that the indigenous movement understands, describes and criticizes internal and external colonialism as “racism, exclusion and exploitation that go hand in hand with the invisibility of indigenous people, especially in their capacity as nationalities or collective actors who share a culture and a social stance” (p. 133). The criticism of internal colonialism involves interrogating the national question and the State as a whole structural class.

## Conclusions

Interest in the study of dialectics as a heuristic modality applied to the sociological and historical question of the indigenous societies of Ecuador,

if one considers the long and present process of collective search to find solutions to the regime of secular domination and oppression exercised with the Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio peoples, originates in the doctoral research project *Plurinationality and State in Ecuador during the government of the Citizen Revolution, 2006-2016 period*. It is a contribution to the collective interest of the indigenous peoples of Ecuador.

The study of dialectics allows us to analyze the problems of plurinationality and the prior-ideation of the plurinational State, in the face of the contradictory reason of the liberal nation-state as a part and instrument of external and internal colonialism. In this horizon, the article set out to investigate two fundamental questions related to the ontology of plurinationality, namely: What is the ontological basis of plurinationality for the Ecuadorian case? And, why does plurinationality as a socio-political relationship deny the homogeneity of the liberal nation-state and its correlate of external-internal colonialism?

In this research, several findings were presented and are detailed below:

1) From the understanding of dialectics as an ontological heuristic path. Dialectics as dialogue and relationship is present in all civilizations and human cultures of the world. However, the Greeks, through their organic philosophers, systematized it as a way of explaining reality. To name just two Greek thinkers, Heraclitus of Ephesus (circa 540-480 BC) and Parmenides (circa 540-470 BC) are two dialectical philosophers, with different conceptions of being, opposed even on the issue of the substance of nature and historical processes. Heraclitus of Ephesus affirmed that everything exists in permanent change and becoming, and that conflict is the father and king of all things. Therefore, there was no stability in being. Parmenides, contemporary of Heraclitus, on the contrary maintained that the deep essence of being was immutable and that movement or change was a surface phenomenon. This directive of metaphysical thought ended up prevailing over the Heraclitian dialectic.

In the aftermath of the next centuries, the metaphysical conception prevailed due to its correspondence with class societies, with the interests of the ruling classes, with the concern to bind both values and concepts, and existing institutions, in order to prevent that men avoid the temptation to seek to change the social regime of their time. Metaphysics became hegemonic and speculative.

In a different century, Hegel (1770-1831) takes up dialectics without extracting it from the metaphysics of being. Hegel thought that the principle of contradiction could not be supplanted by the consciousness

of the subject and of objective reality; even so, dialectics continued to be upside down. It was Karl Marx who straightened it up, putting it on its feet with historical materialism.

Dialectics is a fluid, dynamic and contingent conception of society and historical economic and social facts. It is important to emphasize that, in the history of society, actors are individuals endowed with consciousness that execute actions moved by passion or reflection and in the pursuit of certain desired ends (purposes). However, this explanation is not sufficient to understand the course of human history—as opposed to nature—because history is governed by even more general laws of an internal nature that are also mainstreamed by fortuitous chance and necessity. In another logical conceptual order, necessity, purpose and chance (as circumstances) seem to be the motives of human historicity. However, the question of Marx (Engels and Marx, 2006) remains valid: “What propulsive forces act, in turn, behind these motives, what historical causes are those that in the heads of men serve as motives” (p. 44).

An answer to the previous question is offered by Engels and Marx (2006) in their work *Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of classical German philosophy (and other writings on Feuerbach)*, a source referred to previously which states:

(...) if one wants to investigate the motive forces that—consciously or unconsciously, and often unconsciously—are behind these motives for which men act in history and that constitute the true supreme springs of history, we should not to focus on the motives of isolated men, no matter how relevant they may be, as much as on those that move large masses, entire blocks of people, and, among peoples, entire classes; and not momentarily, in rapid explosions, as fleeting fires, but in continued actions that result in great historical changes. To investigate the determining causes of their leaders—the so-called great men—as conscious motives, in a clear or confused way, directly or under an ideological and even deified wrapping; here is the only way that can lead us to discover the laws by which history is governed as a whole, as well as different periods and countries. Everything that moves men must necessarily pass through their heads; but the form it takes within them depends very much on their circumstances (p. 45).

Engels and Marx (2006) put the emphasis of dialectics on materialist and revolutionary foundations. The history of societies advances through a web of contradictory processes that would become revolutionary processes. For this, then, it is necessary to consider the law of contradiction as the engine of human-social progress.





Another important element of dialectics is the understanding and application of the category of totality for the explanation of society as a whole. The category of totality includes levels of analytical relation of society that can go from micro levels to macro levels and vice versa, with detours of the thing itself. In this sense, dialectics is a method of decomposition of the unitary whole, without whose action no knowledge can be generated, since dialectics does not consider the products and relations as something fixed. From a scientific perspective, following the approaches of Kosik (1976), it is thought that dialectics leads to the destruction of pseudo-creation (phenomenal appearance) through: a) the revolutionary criticism of the praxis of humanity that agrees with the evolution of the human being, whose key circumstances are social revolutions; b) the dialectical thought that dilutes the fetishized world of appearance to arrive at the thing itself and reality; and c) the realization of truth and the construction of human reality in an ontogenetic process.

In short, dialectics as a way of study allows us to understand reality in its entirety; it is a science of the radical critique of society, of historical processes and serves as a self-criticism for the agents committed to the transformation of capitalist society. It does not matter what place or society is analyzed.

In the context of this article, dialectics becomes essential for the analysis of plurinational societies and for delving into the complexity of the social being of socio-cultural and identity diversities, as is the case of the Ecuadorian national question.

2) In the study of the Ecuadorian national question we have opted for the categorical formulation of variegated social-spatial formation that includes historical times differentiated from each other, with diverse socio-cultural and territorial intertwined in an apparent State.

The variegated social-spatial formation is characterized by the co-existence of diverse historical temporalities—which is not the same as modes of production—, in the diversity of spaces-territories occupied and inhabited by millenary and ancestral societies. The historical times are defined at the level of the productive moment that is not the same for all the indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio nationalities. Historical temporalities are also a substantial part of the territorial spatiality of peoples. The categories of temporality and specific spatiality are two elements that are present in the cosmovisions of indigenous societies and other peoples, where life itself is constructed in its totality. Life itself or full life in the Ecuadorian Kichwa language means *sumak kawsay*.



Sumak kawsay or fullness of life in indigenous societies is manifested in the molecular practice of community societies. Three concrete cases illustrate this way of community life.

A first exemplary case corresponds to the indigenous societies of the inter-Andean alley, life itself is woven and woven around what this article refers to as community societies that have the ayllu at their core. The ayllu is a community society of relatives with strong ties of kinship and consanguinity that extends beyond the third or fourth generation. The Andean territory is a good laboratory to study kinship, consanguinity and affinity relations in the context of the ayllu (simple nuclear families and composite nuclear families).

A second case related to the Shuar-Achuar nationality, of the Ecuadorian-Peruvian Amazonian region, corresponds to the local or domestic community, studied by Mader (1999); among the Shuar-Achuar, each person is part of a local or domestic community, whose membership is determined by offspring and marriage alliances; the domestic community is structured as an extended family comprising one to five monogamous and polygynous family units.

A third specific case corresponds to the Montubio people, people from the Ecuadorian coast, often denigrated as “cholos,” who have been studied by Álvarez (2016). The authentic Montubio people, in order to identify themselves as a collective self, have been structured in a communal and community system; in their narratives and myths they see themselves as people different from whites and with rights to their ancestral collective territories occupied uninterruptedly for centuries. The Montubio people claim their territories as part of their collective property where they develop community life.

The aforementioned examples, which do not exhaust the reality of deep Ecuador, show that the indigenous nationalities and other peoples (Afro-Ecuadorian, Montubio, even mestizo) are built from the notion of community society, understood as a real community of relatives linked by consanguinity and affinity relationships.

Just as the ayllu is to the community society, so the community society is to the indigenous nationality. This means that the set of indigenous communities make up a nationality. Nationality is understood as the quality of nation, whose material and immaterial substance represents the whole of one or several peoples linked by an equal historical origin, share the same cultural characteristics, territory, original language and a real sociopolitical organization. In the conception of the CONAIE (2012), the nations and native peoples are governed by their own laws,



customs and beliefs, native languages and forms of social, economic and political organization in their authentic territories of ancient and ancestral roots. The existence and definition of nationality predates the creation of the Ecuadorian State. The Ecuadorian indigenous nationality does not coincide with the Ecuadorian nationality of white-mestizo order. The indigenous nationality has to do with the legal-political relationship of the individuals with the plurinational State and their respective original nations.

The historical recognition of the plurinationality and the plurinational State allows the credible critique of the liberal nation-state and its connection with external and internal colonialism.

3) The structure of the current State shows the faithful fetishization of the liberal nation-state as the primary instrument of the external-internal colonialism of society and the reification of it for the achievement of particular interests and the conservation of private order.

What is meant by fetishization in this particular case? Fetishization is the action and effect of fetishizing, that is, turning something into a fetish (idol). In the religious field, in its first, lower phase, of religious development, the fetish as an idol was the object of adoration of the faithful. This is still so. Fetishes also exist in capitalism: merchandise, money and capital. As material objects, they have become fetishes or objects of worship. Fetishes are considered as natural or are naturalized in everyday life and are seemingly normal. For capitalist intellectuals, merchandise, money and capital are not understood as expressions of capitalist relations of production but as something natural. In capitalism, the relationship between peoples becomes a cosmic or objectual relationship that merges into merchandise and mercantile relations. Nor does the State escape the principle of fetishization and commercial commodification. Everything becomes merchandise.

If the modern State, from its origins, is the appropriate instrument of the modern world-system, it is also the ideal device for the expansion of external colonialism, reproduced internally in the colonized and currently neo-colonized countries. In the modern world-system, colonialism, coloniality and the nation-state were fetishized as objects of deification and replication unparalleled in the history of humanity.

From a historical perspective, colonialism is part of a historical process through which overseas territories were unevenly integrated into the world economy of European countries. Strictly speaking, colonialism was the formal control of a given territory by a more powerful or imperial country. Colonialism led to the colonization of the territories, as a process

of occupation of the conquered territories. Colonization admitted the violent irruption of the European countries in the invaded continents. As a result of colonization, a colonial stage characterized by political and legal domination over subjugated peoples was established, economic and political relations of dependence were established for the ends (or interests) and needs of the imperial economy, and new institutions regulating social composition were formalized, differentiated by racial and cultural inequality. The situation went much further, inaugurating a process of coloniality that lasts until today.

This process of coloniality is what González Casanova's (2015) research identifies as the internal colonialism that has been promoted by political societies. The author studies the Mexican case, which is very valuable for other countries of the continent of Abya Yala (land in full maturity). González Casanova (2015) understands internal colonialism as a totality of social relations of domination and exploitation between various cultural and class groups. It should be emphasized that the domination and exploitation of subaltern classes is not pure, but is mediated by different modes of production, with varied forms of forced labor including the *mita*, *encomienda*, reductions, *yanaconas* (hereditary servitude), *hacienda*, slavery, wage labor, sharecropping, peonage, *wasipungo* (feudal mode and exploitation of precarious work) and other forms not mentioned here. It is also important to note that nowadays there are other forms of slavery in the Abya Yala continent that require new research from the social sciences.

Finally, the liberal nation-state fulfilled and continues to play a relevant role in the reproduction of colonialism, neocolonialism and coloniality. According to Dávalos (2013), the modern nation-state "processed the coloniality of power, the ontological disappearance of the Other and the colonial difference of racism" from the beginning (2013, s/p). In this perspective, the other as another (otherness) must disappear or be included in the world-system as servile labor and its natural assets as raw materials or commodities.

## Notes

- 1 Marx states that: "Categories are forms of being, determinations of existence." (quoted in Lukács, 2007, p. 65). In this article, the term category will be understood and used in this sense.

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