

Oct. 5, 2009

Bring in tabooed “Kurd” Robins p. 74

8 STATE, NATION, CULTURE

Read: Louisa Schein, 1997. The consumption of color and the politics of white skin in post-Mao China. In *The Gender Sexuality Reader*. Roger Lancaster and Micaela Di Leonardo, eds. New York: Routledge: 473-86

Kevin Robins, 1996. Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe. In Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage: 61-82

David Maybury-Lewis, 2002. The state. In Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon: 105-130 (25)

Review of concepts:

Identity:

The identity of any individual consists of what I’m calling identity components

Some of them are related to each other Russian-egg fashion: a series of wooden eggs, the largest containing a smaller egg, that one in turn containing a smaller egg, and so on

For example: membership in nuclear family, extended family, region, country—each identity component is larger

Other identity components will cross-cut these scaled components (e.g., gender, religion)

Religion can be scaled: the Catholic parish up to the international Catholic Church

At any one time some of these identity components will have more demands made on them than the others

Will be more salient

The individual will be required to think/feel/behave in certain ways in many areas of their life

Today ethnicity, nationality are often highly significant identity components

Ethnicity

Ethnic and national identity are concerned with groups

That relate to other groups: we're always talking about a *relation*

A crucial feature of ethnicity

Is a consciousness or awareness of difference

Progress was made in understanding ethnicity when anthropologists started moving from studying "contents" of ethnic groups

To looking at ethnic their boundaries and relations

Eller notes that the contents of a group may change, and the membership of the group may change, while the boundary—its name, relative status, remains¹

Ethnicity is about culture: the crucial domain of difference is cultural

They themselves may not see it this way (they might feel that the crucial domain is common ancestry, for example), but social scientists do

Eller argues that if a group is not conscious of its culture, or organized in terms of its characteristics, then there is no ethnicity

No matter how distinct

Indigenous peoples are not ethnic groups until they have developed this consciousness

A certain objectification of culture and cultural difference, certain distance—from culture, a certain reflexive relation with one's own culture

People who live culture unproblematically tend not to be ethnic

The Kurds in Turkey, who were forbidden their language, even their name (they were called "Mountain Turks") do not live their culture unproblematically; are definitely an ethnic group

Kinds of cultural characteristics:

Real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past, cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements

¹ Some material in this lecture from Jack David Eller, *Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict: An Anthropological Perspective on International Ethnic Conflict*. Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2002, Chapter 1, Ethnicity, Culture, and "The Past."

Founding father sociologist Max Weber's characterization:

Subjective belief in their common descent

An ideology of continuity with that past... "traditional" culture

Eller: Continuity and discreteness are ideologies of ethnic groups, not necessarily actual qualities

The cultural symbols may be quite new (Norway—in this case the symbols were originally not even Norwegian—Eriksen's example of the painted ceramics and folk costumes)

It's not important that claims be true, what's important is that the beliefs are strong and convincing

Ethnic claims ultimately based on "the right to one's own culture" (implicit in all nationalism)

Ethnicity is a process, not a thing

Eller: Ethnic groups have to move, they are movements, by definition they have to be doing something about their culture or social situation

Have to have an agenda (members don't live their culture unproblematically)

Ethnic groups change over time, are *never* static, despite appearances

Eller: Ethnicities are labels to a certain extent, made unmade, remade:

"French-Canadian" was quietly replaced with "Quebecois," and membership has changed

Ethnic groups change as a result of outside forces

In present-day Europe, many examples of states influencing ethnicity

In China, different governmental policies toward the Hui over the 20th century

Sun Yat-Sen, the Nationalists, Peoples' Republic, Taiwan

In USA, Native Americans were first radically changed by the colonists, then by the push to the west, now by the bureaucratic state (Bureau of Indian Affairs, etc.)

Yinger's scheme: 3 variables (in Eller)

Self-perception (or avowal)

Others' perception (or ascription by other)

Participation by members

Kinds of ethnic groups

One scheme: ethnonationalists, indigenous peoples, communal contenders, ethnoclasses

Another (Eriksen): urban ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, proto-nations (ethnonationalists) and ethnic groups in plural societies

Why is ethnicity such a popular mode of social organizing?

Symbolic and instrumental purposes are combined in this mode

Eller: to clothe practical interests and competitions in the garb of antiquity, authenticity, and kinship

Nationalism

Nation: a fully mobilized or institutionalized ethnic group

Nationalism is primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent

Maybury-Lewis: nations are not natural units to which human beings automatically belong, but units created by feelings of nationalism (p. 108)

Need to see the nation as a creation of nationalism (Smith, cited in Eller)

The belief that nations are real, important, and necessary can lead a people, leaders of a people, to interpret and construct their identity and their experience as a national one.

Nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around

Nation-building not same as state-building, but an important part of it is nation-building, creating a sense of nationhood among all the people within the state's territory.

Eller: nationalism is a different phenomenon, different level of reality than ethnic group or state

Nationhood is an achieved status

And it's subjective: is a state of mind, whereas ethnic groups are composed of flesh-and-blood people, states are political units controlling territory, composed of institutions, etc.

Nationalism emerges only at a point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation

At a particular stage of technological and economic development

For example, standard languages, cannot emerge before printing, mass literacy and hence, mass schooling

Political scientist Walker Connor's typology

Nations proper

Pre-national or potential

Offshoot (Afrikaners, Quebecois)

There are examples of rulers of already-existing states forging the population into a nation (Napoleonic France)

Eller provides another typology

Multihomeland states

Unihomeland (others' rights disputed, Sri Lanka, Fiji)

Nonhomeland multinational states contain 2 or more nations, none of whose members can claim homeland (Trinidad)

Immigrant states (U.S., exception being Native Americans)

Mestizo states, unique to Latin America

Nationhood can be larger than a state

Islamic or Arab nationhood:

Bosnia was attacked on that same basis

Origins of nationalism: stages of nationalism in 19th century Europe:

First stage: purely cultural, literary and folkloric

Then a body of pioneers and militants of 'the national idea' developed and political campaigning for this idea would begin

Then nationalist programs come to acquire mass support

Nationalism, ethnic recovery movements, for example, are one result

What happened in 19th century Europe doesn't always happen

Sometimes preexisting cultures are turned into nations

Sometimes invents them

Often obliterates pre-existing cultures

How nationalism develops

Hobsbawm: nations are dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above by elites, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people

Part of the project of "nation-building" is to foster these appropriate inner states (thoughts, feelings) that result in appropriate actions (acts of patriotism, etc.)

Mobilization and institutionalization of an ethnic group and its culture effects a qualitative change, new kind of culture and cultural politics, new perspective on culture..."culture cult"

An ethnic group may or may not be nationalistic...significantly different, relation to its own culture and of its political aims.

Fully developed nationalism requires high culture: literate, aesthetic, politically astute leaders

If a nationalist movement only has intelligentsia, academics, political leadership (often urban, Western educated)

Task is to vernacularize the high culture, take it to the common people

This “high” culture

May be simplified from “great traditions” (India, Pakistan)

If more than one high culture is involved (Sri Lanka) there will be struggle

No high culture? Then one must be borrowed or invented

What we don’t know about ethnicity

The criteria that will be used for classifying a given ethnic group

For example, being Jewish: identify themselves as such even though they share neither religion, language, culture, tradition, historical background, blood-group patterns nor an attitude to the Jewish state

We don’t know before the fact which groups will become a national state—although the constraints have changed over time

Earlier in Europe, in the 19th century, a campaign for self-determination wasn’t sufficient

The group had to be seen as a viable state (culturally, economically, size) if it was to gain sympathy and support

Maybury-Lewis quotes John Stuart Mill on how beneficial (in his opinion) it was for a Breton to be “brought into the current of the ideas and feelings of a highly civilized and cultivated people—to be a member of the French nationality...” (p. 108)

Even in the Wilsonian era: Luxemburg and Liechtenstein were seen as an embarrassment, nor the Free City of Danzig (what is now Poland)

Size: only since 1945 have we made way for entities like Dominica or Maldives or Andorra (tiny nation-states)

We don’t know where or when ethnic resurgence will happen

Nagel shows that the dire predictions of Indians becoming extinct was very mistaken—this is true throughout the W. Hemisphere

What we don't know about nationalism

Nationalism as an ideology does not specify which groups are nations, what level of collectivity...pan-state category like Arabs, Basques, or a dispersed minority like African Americans?

Not all nationalist movements represent real, concrete, already-existing nations....modest...“Yugoslavism,” Czechoslovakian, Hungarian

Eller: there is no cultural or political “litmus test” that can establish or deny a group's claims to nationhood.

We don't know before the fact how nationalism will tie in with state formation

It can occur before creation of a national state (Ireland)

Sometimes afterwards

And sometimes never (many Third World examples)

We certainly don't know what the congruence will be between state and nation

We can define states pretty well

Maybury-Lewis's description of the origins of the concept of state

Hobbes: *Leviathan* (1651)

And we have the 20th-century meaning of “nation”: a people who are or should be self-determining and sovereign, have their own state

But we don't know what constitutes “a people”

The American colonists spoke the same language, came from the same stock and culture as the British

Yet they were declaring themselves a nation, indivisible, independent

19th-century notions of nationalism hadn't developed in 1776

Nation-building had barely started

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