

Oct. 14, 2009

Study Questions on Eller 143-193 (Kurds); Malkki

1. According to Eller, 3 conditions must be met before a group can be considered a nation. What are they? (p. 144)
2. Eller cites another scholar, Izady, who states that “Kurdish society remains heterogeneous in almost all those aspects that normally form the basis of an ethnic identity...” (in Eller, p. 144). What are these? How do the Kurds compare to the Hui?
3. Eller says that some of the most traditional characteristics of Kurdish society are the biggest impediments to being able to build themselves as a nation. What are these?
4. List the ways Kurdish nationalism differs from the vast majority of nationalist movements.
5. Describe two examples of the Kurds manipulating the governments of countries that contain Kurdish populations. Describe two examples where the Kurds were used as pawns by these states.
6. On p. 163 Eller says that “in a certain sense” the tribal organization of today is a product of “the state systems that overarched Kurdish society.” How so?
7. Iraq, unlike Iran, has very little nationalist ideology. What are some of the consequences for the Kurds living in these two countries?
8. “Of all the interests at work in Kurdistan, however, the most enduring and pernicious is geopolitics.” (p. 164). Give two examples.
9. What does Malkki mean by “National Geographic”?
10. How “rooted” in land/territory/soil is our concept of culture? Give 3 examples of extremely “rooted” culture. 3 examples of what we might call “unrooted” culture.
11. Describe the differences between the camp Hutu refugees and those of the town. What do the 2 groups—and the differences between them—tell us about culture? About nation? About ethnicity?
12. Malkki makes a couple of points that are potentially upsetting to activists. Why, do you think, would they be upset?

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21A.226 Ethnic and National Identity
Fall 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.