

Strengths and weaknesses in terms of democratization sociology essay



In terms of potential harm and violence that ethnic nationalism and primordialism might bring, I have many things to say. First of all, let me clarify the perspective of ethnic nationalism and primordialism a bit more; these perspectives establish the identity (both ethnic and national) as fixed and non-changeable characteristics that are determined at birth and that does not change according to one's own beliefs or actions. As a result of these pre-determined ethnic and national identities, distinct identities are formed as counter groups such as "others" and "us", whereas "others" are the evil and "us" is the good. Such a labeling does not leave any room for others since they are belong to different ethnicities. The roots of these fixed identities lie beneath primordialism because primordialism sees these identities as ancient and unchangeable.

As a result of this formation of identities and labeling, which are nor changeable neither adaptable and which created "others" and "us", fear arises. According to this view, "others" are different and bad and we (as "us") have to protect ourselves from the possible violence that might come from the surroundings. This creates a vicious circle where every group fears "the others" and because "the other" is always "us" for another group, thus, every group is in fact afraid of every other group. Since the solution comes from the elimination of this fear by eliminating "the others", things can go very violent. Many examples from the history can be given for the violence that ethnic nationalism and primordialism had so far caused; Rwanda Genocide of 1994, Nigerian Civil War of 1967 and genocide of Bosnian Muslims are just three examples. For example in Rwanda, the incompetence and failure of two groups to live together caused around 800,

000 Africans to die. From this point of view, they are Hutus and Tutsis who were fighting and killing each other but on the other hand they share the same identity by being Africans. My motive for mentioning this is to exemplify the abstractness of the concept of being Hutu or Tutsi (or having an ethnic identity); the real murderer and butcher behind this violence was their approach to ethnic identities.

The book (Heywood, 162) mentions the formation of these identities from the perspective of social constructivists. According to social constructivists critique on 'fixed' ethnic and national identities of primordialism, sense of national belonging is constructed through political and social processes, thus, social constructivists suggest that nations in fact do not create nationalism, they say that nations themselves are actually fashioned by nationalism.

Primordialist view generally leans over culture and linguistics and not on biological factors such as race because primordialists do not want to be seen as justifiers of violence arising from racial/ethnic differences. Considering that these supposedly logical theories and ideas had caused Holocaust, it is understandable that primordialists want to stay away from the biological elements. Another problem with primordialism is the paradox in defining ethnicity. If we accept the ethnicity to be really primordial then we also accept that we cannot change it but this is not correct. Through generations the ethnic identities may change. For example once-African people in America, now call themselves American or Afro-American. They accept both of these ethnic identities. It was possible for them to adapt to the culture and identity of America, thus their ethnic identity has changed. Also in certain <https://assignbuster.com/strengths-and-weaknesses-in-terms-of-democratization-sociology-essay/>

parts of the world where the local cultures were changed by colonization and blended with the culture of colonizers to some extent and led to the creation of new ethnic identities.

Primordialism cannot explain the specific transformations and the reasons of how some changes occur. Primordialism also fails to identify or explain the issue of multi-ethnic identities, such as in United States, Afro-Americans etc. There are people who say that they are multiracial and that they carry multiple ethnic identities. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible to determine whether or not the ethnic identities are primordial. According to socio-biologists, the sense of primordialism is derived from the common genes. If they were to be correct, then we can say that this primordial sense coming from the transfer of genes is the real reason underlying the ethnic identities. In this sense, we would have to assume that ethnic identities depend on senses and feelings (emotion) and that they are not really primordial.

To a certain degree, one can have a patriotic view and at the same time a critical view of nationalism. One can suggest and support the protection/preservation of diversity in terms of culture, language and ethnicity because in a world in which even these diversities are globalized different perspectives and looks on the world would slowly fade away and a useless solidarity that would hinder or slow the pace of development would come into question. One can say that, these different things, diversities, should be practiced privately and not in public sphere. Well if we think the international arena as the public sphere then the area within the countries is a private sphere for the beliefs, culture and language etc. of the countries. I too believe that this area should be preserved no matter what. Difference
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and diversity is good in my opinion. I believe we can appreciate our own countries' and cultures' values in a defensive patriotic sense and at the same time be aware of the negative impacts of overly-patriotic behavior. In a sense, if I am overly patriotic, a fanatic, I may even want the world to belong to Turkey and to be Turkish. But then, if that ever happened, the world would be globalized and the diversities of the world would have vanished just as some people, for example some liberals would have wanted.

4. In a 1-3 page essay, please describe the liberal ideal of nationalism, and explain its strengths and weaknesses in terms of democratization (tolerance, open public sphere, diversity) and its power to command loyalty. Do you think Turkish nationalism tends more to “civic nationalism” or to “ethnic nationalism”? What are the reasons for your opinion?

Liberal ideal of nationalism is built around the view of nationalism as a liberating force. According to liberal ideal of nationalism, the important factor in formation of nations is shared political alliances. The perspective of this view suggests that nations are civic entities and nation-states are formed around political alliances. Contrary to the 'fixed' identity of nations, which idea suggested by ethnic nationalists, liberal nationalists see the citizenship as open and volunteristic. Also, liberal nationalism is associated with civic nationalism. Liberal nationalists believe that having a world that consists of individual nation-states is really important as well as they pay very much importance on the existence of sovereign statehood. From the liberal ideal of nationalism, nationalism and internationalism are complementary ideologies as mentioned by Heywood. According to liberal view, in a world consisting of

independent nation-states there would be concordance and peace. The reason behind this belief of liberal nationalists lies beneath the belief that the respect paid by nation-states to the rights and freedom of others would be more, at such a degree that prevents wars.

In terms of democratization, liberal view of nationalism suggests that the nationalism is consistent with tolerance, diversity and freedom. Liberal view argue that nationalism can be intolerant in nature only if the nation is described on the basis of ethnic and racial terms (in other words, by the values that are propounded by ethnic nationalists). On the other hand, counter arguments criticize every kind of nationalism for being intolerant in nature because nationalism fundamentally creates “ others” and “ us”. Critiques suggest that tolerance is not achievable in nationalism because there is a threat when there are “ others”. In terms of diversity, liberals pay respect for ethnic differences and suggest that nationalism is consistent with diversity (at a certain degree). Liberals see that there is harmony between civic unity and diversity in the nation. However, they also suggest that the harmony is achievable if diversity is excluded from the public sphere. In other words, they believe that diversity should be confined to the private sphere, meaning that cultural, moral and lifestyle differences should be within the private sphere. The public sphere is seen as a realm for integration. The unity in the public sphere is formed by shared political and civic allegiances. On the other hand, today, many nations are established around shared cultural, ethnic, regional values, common location and language. These values, which reflect the ethnic nationalism, are usually associated with deep sense of belonging to one’s nation and culture. It is

questionable if political and civic allegiances create a strong belonging to one's own nation. As is mentioned in the text, ethnicity, language and other cultural values are seen as values bounding people to their nation as well as each other. Therefore, political and civic allegiances might not establish the same connection in the society as much as shared history and ethnicity can establish.

In terms of Turkish nationalism, I feel free to identify it as ethnic nationalism because it shares the same characteristics with ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism is described basically by being deep-rooted in ethnic unity and deep sense of cultural and national belonging. When we think of Turkey, simply the people calling themselves as Turks, they identify themselves as people living in Turkey (certain location/territory), speaking Turkish (common language), and sharing same history (common descent). Given these characteristics of Turkish nationalism and because it has a 'fixed' identity, Turkish nationalism tends towards ethnic nationalism. To exemplify how ethnic nationalism is supported in Turkey, I wrote "the Turkish Oath" (AndÄ±mÄ±z in Turkish) as an example.