

12606471

There is certainly plenty of evidence of reading and hard work here, and you convey the arguments of the protagonists with reasonable accuracy. You separate the essay into pro and anti multiculturalists, which is important. However, there are a number of major problems here. First, you do not properly define multiculturalism. (NB. p 2 - DO NOT use dictionary definitions for terms. this tells us little). You first need to distinguish between multiculturalism as demographic fact and as public policy. Once it is clear you are speaking of public policy, be sure to mention that this policy envisions assigning rights to groups in the cultural, political and economic sphere, often on a proportional basis - not just individuals. Mention federalism, consociationalism and assimilation to contextualise things.

Second, the text reads as a series of book reviews. This is not how to write an essay. Instead, you need to blend different authors and let concepts rather than authors structure your piece. So start with multiculturalism and focus on central concepts or issues - perhaps national identity, or affirmative action, or faith schools, language funding or housing policy. You could mention that there is a difference between cosmopolitan and communitarian multiculturalism. Modood is an example of the former, and these advocate a kind of integration in which ethnic identities are supported, and integration takes place in the political sphere. Those like Goodhart advocate a deeper cultural integration, even going as far as assimilation. These kind of subtleties need to be brought out much more in the essay. Please also watch usage and spelling (multiculturalism is incorrectly spelled in the title which indicates sloppiness since a spell check would pick this out).

For more on essay style, see: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/polsoc/students/essays/essay-guideline>

Structure

Introduction good					x	No or weak introduction
Develops logically				x		Rambles
Conclusion sums up & answers				x		Drifts off
Legible/fluent				x		Unclear

Substance

Analytical				x		Descriptive
Accurate				x		Questionable
Transparent					x	Opaque
Independent				x		Uncritical
Relevant			x			Answers different question

12705035

An extremely exhaustive and well-structured essay that nicely lays out the competing schools of thought and some of the ways in which recent authors have sought to bridge the theoretical chasm. Based on wide reading and sound comprehension, it makes a persuasive case. A few small things to watch:

- What of the historical approach?: it is not clear that ethnosymbolism and symbolic politics can be reduced to social psychology. Rather the reproduction of memory and development of specific myth-symbol complexes is necessarily a collective activity;
- You could note dominant v subaltern dynamics as ethnic violence perpetrated by dominant groups is different from that performed by minorities or secessionists;
- A distinction between ethnic awareness or even conflict (which could be nonviolent and endemic) and violent conflict needs to be drawn. Conflict is a normal part of human activity, as in a marriage. But violent conflict requires special explanation.
- Some mention of mobilisation, as noted by Harff, is important. The idea that stronger in-group networks and greater density of modern communications enables violent secession.
- The debate between whether violent secession requires popular support or can exist merely on the strength of a handful of small renegade movements of armed men who have esprit de corps but may exist in an atmosphere of weak popular nationalism (Fearon & Laitin 2003)
- please use page numbers and double space

But still, a very good essay, at a high level, which is well-organised and shows the synthesis of disparate perspectives.

Structure

Introduction good	X					No or weak introduction
Develops logically	X					Rambles
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Legible/fluent	X					Unclear

Substance

Analytical	X					Descriptive
Accurate	X					Questionable
Transparent	X					Opaque
Independent	X					Uncritical
Relevant	X					Answers different question

72

12630142

This essay presents a range of definitions of ethnic group, nation and state, culled from several readings. The range of readings could be broadened beyond the few cited from the Smith & Hutchinson readers. More seriously, there is no real introduction or an attempt at structuring the essay around competing perspectives. Instead, each reading is dealt with in serial fashion, with a sample of typically several pages from each. What is needed is a more compelling theoretical overview which sets up a dialogue between competing theories and then resolves in favour of one or other on the basis of evidence.

In addition, while you set out the definitions from several authors, there is no amalgamation of these into concepts of your own. The authors differ - but who do you feel is right? Some indication of the links between ethnic group and nation is warranted: perhaps that ethnic groups have a sense of homeland, culture and memory which is activated into nationalism in the modern age. Or that states seek to inculcate patriotism and cultural homogeneity which can then shade into nationalism or even ethnicity. You could mention that nations are modern whereas ethnic groups may be premodern; mention that different theorists see things differently, with modernists defining nations a modern and state-driven while ethnosymbolists see them as originating from premodern ethnic groups. This would be a nice theoretical debate which could be set out at the outset.

Minor point:

' According to Professor Eric Kaufmann, the nation is the overlap of ethnic groups and state.' Not entirely. The argument is that nations partake of elements of ethnic group and state, coupled with modern integration.

So while some effort has been put in, a lot more needs to happen to attain a higher mark.

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Relevant			x			Answers different question

50

12700368

This essay contains evidence of a nice range of reading, comprehension and some intelligent writing. There is a good grasp of aspects of Smith and other writers, and an attempt to apply this to

cases. But the essay lacks structure: it does not have a section for arguments in favour of the idea that religion complements nationalism, and a counter-section for arguments against this hypothesis, followed by conclusion. This leads to a meandering discussion that seems to lack overall direction. This in turn lessens the clash of ideas in the essay, and is compounded by limited referencing in the second part.

A number of omissions and errors are evident. First, you need to distinguish several aspects of religion: religious texts (and the Old Testament template which Hastings writes about, as does Smith, with his discussion of divine election); religion as boundary marker (as in Northern Ireland or early Israel, where religious adherence was low but religion was an ethnic boundary symbol. This is why the statement 'in northern Ireland where the nationalist churches are in rivalry with each other' is so wide of the mark. The churches in fact work together across the ethnic divide but religion serves as a symbol of ethnicity). Finally, the role of religious clerics in nationalism.

The essay contains too many assertions that lack evidence, such as 'there is no nationalism without a religious foundation at some point in history'. Surely the anti-clerical nationalisms of Europe (France, Italy, etc) were defined against religion. Even Zionism arguably fits this bill. In Islam, the discussion obscures rather than enlightens. More reading is needed to prise apart the anti-nationalist rhetoric of Islamism from the instances of where Islam serves nationalist ends (ie Iran post-79, Pakistan post-47), Arab nationalism (often led by Christian Arabs since not all Arabs are Muslim) and so on. The Sri Lankan case is tossed in without regard for how it fits into the overall argument. Religion sometimes reinforces nationalism, sometimes not. When does it do so and why? This remains largely unanswered. So while this essay contains some good insights, it lacks structured argument, contains some omissions, and could be better backed up by sources.

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53

12704161

A very comprehensive and well-written account of this phenomenon which makes a clear case for the desecularisation argument. One distinction which could have been brought out a little more is

that between public secularism (separation of religious institutions from the state) and the decline of private piety. How are they related? Also perhaps the clash of approaches between supply-siders and secularizationists. Incidentally, some of the predictions of supply-siders have not been borne out in the sense that more diverse religious markets are not generally more vibrant (compare mono-religious Saudi Arabia and Greece, where religion is doing well, with relatively open and diverse Britain.) The Inglehart-Norris thesis offers a version of secularization that argues that economic security and equality lower religiosity at a global scale, thus the theory applies outside the West. Of course, this account has also been criticised. Overall, though, an excellent essay.

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72

12700940

This essay possesses both strengths and weaknesses. The strength is in the range of reading and the attempt to weld together such a rich array of sources. You clearly have grasped the concepts in the reading, as with insights drawn from the reading such as: 'shrines were transformed into national sites, religious martyrs into national heroes, and sacred chronology into national epic' or 'religions, which brandishes the power of sanctification and ritualization'. However, this strong material is not welded into a powerful and coherent argument, but remains inchoate and wandering. Why? Largely because the essay lacks a proper introduction and coherent structure. It does not have a section for arguments in favour of the idea that religion complements nationalism, and a counter-section for arguments against this hypothesis, followed by conclusion. Or - alternatively, separate sections for the different ways in which religion affects nationalism. This leads to a meandering discussion that seems to lack overall direction.

The text fails to note the importance of the argument that nationalism can emerge as an anti-religious movement, as in France or Italy or - to a great extent - Israel. It does not prise apart the complex ways in which religion interacts with nationalism: as opponent, as text, as symbol, and as the source of mobilising and leadership capacity for nationalism.

O'Brien and Hastings treat the role of religious texts (and the Old Testament template which Hastings writes about, as does Smith, with his discussion of divine election); religion as boundary

marker is important in more 'secular' places where the conflict may appear religious but has nothing to do with theology (as in Northern Ireland or early India) but religion was used (or excavated, to use the archaeological metaphor) as an ethnic boundary symbol. Finally, the role of religious clerics and places of worship as spaces of social mobilisation for nationalism. Religion sometimes reinforces nationalism, sometimes not. When does it do so and why? This remains largely unanswered. So while this essay contains good discussion, a subtle grasp of some sources and wide reading, it lacks structured argument and contains omissions.

Small points:

- Religion could be defined
- Ashkenazi are not an ethnic group and Jews in Israel are not of multiple ethnic origins though multicultural
- Use ethnic group not ethnicity to describe the noun
- You fail to note that the decline of arabism is linked to the rise of Islamism

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58

12725993

This is a comprehensive essay based on wide reading. The level of writing is high - even prosaic. You clearly grasp the important theoretical differences between primordialists, modernists and ethnosymbolists. You note that these have different implications for the origin of ethnic groups. On the other hand, I felt the essay lacked structure and sometimes strayed from its terms of reference. It could have started with an introduction setting out the structure to be followed. It might have a separate section for each major theory of ethnic origins, then come to a conclusion as to which is most useful. This essay does keep a conversation going among the theories and emerges with a favourite (or blend thereof) which is good, but does it in a somewhat meandering way rather than setting up clear sections so we can more closely see where the arguments clash. Just as important is an insufficient distinction drawn between ethnic groups (please use ethnic group not ethnicity to

describe the noun) and nations. We need to know a bit more about the modernists and their view of community in the premodern period (generally identity is seen as local for the masses and imperial-religious for elites). The ethnosymbolist conception necessarily needs to discuss Smith's typology (lateral and vertical types of ethnies) in greater detail, and perhaps something on the way Armstrong and Hastings link religion to premodern ethnic community. Also the role of medieval kingdoms in giving birth to ethnic foundation myths. So a good effort which shows strong comprehension of the key terms and theories, but more might have been done to structure the essay and focus it more squarely on the question of ethnic origins (rather than national origins).

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Relevant			x			Answers different question