
Concluding Remarks

This study has demonstrated how the colonial institutions of law and the military play both a repressive and a productive role in the constitution of postcolonial national identity and national culture. This is accomplished through the institutionalization of a juridical-disciplinary dyad, which constitutes the colonial and postcolonial modes of governance.

Transjordan, a territory carved from the Ottoman Empire, was rearranged territorially and demographically by British colonialism and the Hashemite Amir ‘Abdullah and ushered into a new age, the age of the nation-state. To render the new order permanent, a number of strategies were created that led to the imposition of a new identity, called *national*, on a population that adhered to a different set of identities. The new identity began as a juridical invention. Through a number of juridical and military strategies, this identity was generalized, normalizing and unifying a disparate population. Even what came to constitute Jordanian national culture, a set of practices identified as “traditional” and “national,” was produced through these institutions, which in the process repressed and destroyed existing cultural practices while generating new processes that produced new cultural practices and identities. The new identity and the new national culture were then deployed not as the new products, which they in fact were, but as eternal essences that had always existed. Jordanian popular nationalism, like its postcolonial counterparts in the rest of Asia and Africa, was to internalize the new identity and its culture without any acknowledgment of their recent juridical and military

genealogy. In fact, Jordanian nationalism today is predicated on the denial of this genealogy, and it posits instead a “national” history throughout which Jordanian identity is said to have always existed.

The production of national identity and national culture was also shown to be a gendered project. Women and men occupy different discursive positions within it. Masculinity and femininity are nationalized and given “national” valuations as reflective of “past traditions.” These “traditions,” which were produced as such by the juridical-disciplinary state, determine the status of men and women within the nation-state and guide the behavior of citizen-nationals today.

Conventional studies of national identity have not paid much attention to law and the military as “nationalizing” institutions. The extent to which some studies posited the military as an organ of nationalization at all, they failed to explicate how the military played that role internally within its ranks and externally vis-à-vis society. In this study, I have introduced a mode of inquiry that helped unravel the complicated roles that the law and the military have played in constructing national identity and national culture in a colonized and a postcolonial context, namely Jordan. Whereas the results of this inquiry may be specific to Jordan, the questions it asks are not. In using this mode of inquiry, students of nationalism will be able not only to answer questions that traditional methods have not, but also to formulate new questions that conventional approaches could not pose.

This study has described the different strategies used by the nation-state of Jordan to create an identity that is crucial to the reproduction of the nation-state itself. The result is a Jordanian national identity and national culture that think of themselves in essentialist terms. Like other postcolonial national identities, Jordanian national identity and Jordanian national culture are products and effects of colonial institutions. Perhaps anticolonial nationalism’s main manifestation of its agency was its opposition to colonial rule and colonial racial hierarchies that denied the colonized their agency. However, the ontological status of anticolonial nationalism changes with the historical moment. By appropriating colonial discourse, anticolonial nationalism was able to subvert it and resist it, leading to the end of colonial rule. Its subsequent refusal, however, to question colonial modes of governance and the very precepts of colonial epistemology, except for its place in them, meant its abdication of agency to colonial law and discipline. Instead of understanding their anticolonial nationalism as a *strategic* essentialism to fight colonial power, anticolonial nationalists mistook their nationalism for an absolute essence.¹

After the end of formal colonialism, national identities and cultures in the postcolonies are not only modes of resistance to colonial power, they are also the proof of colonialism's perpetual victory over the colonized. The irony of this is in having us believe that this colonial subjection and subjectivation *is* anticolonial agency.