

Commonality between nationalism and colonialism essay examples

[Government](#), [Colonialism](#)



Nationalism is a socio-political philosophy whereby the nation's or state's welfare as an entity is regarded paramount. It is essentially a collective consciousness or mind state in which people have the belief that their primary loyalty and duty is to the state. In most cases, nationalism glorifies different virtues of the nation as well as implying superiority of the nation. In nationalism, the love for the nation is likely to be overemphasized. Though a recent move that probably started during the French Revolution, nationalism has been instrumental in the formation of the bonds that keep modern states intact. Nowadays, the ideology of nationalism operates along legal structures and adds up to the formal institutions in the society, thus, providing order and cohesiveness required for a modern state to exist. On the other hand, colonialism is an ideological, economic and political subjugation of nations that are poorly developed either economically or socially, by the rulers of the exploiter nations. As such, there exists a similarity between nationalism and colonialism. This similarity is, therefore, thoroughly investigated in this paper. Additionally, an account for the commonality is also given.

Starting with nationalism, the creation and spread of the ideology throughout the land is very essential in explaining the similarity. Firstly, the origins of nationalism were found in the activities of bilingual intelligentsias. Having access to the modern culture of the west in a broader sense particularly with nationalism, nation-state and nation-ness which were produced in other places during the nineteenth century. In Africa for instance, nationalism figures such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Nkrumah of Ghana spoke their colonial masters' language, having lived in North America and Europe. The indigenous intelligentsia forged a consciousness of nationalist drawn from

experiences and knowledge gained. They were denied positions of authority by the colonial masters and ended up becoming spokesmen for nationalism, which was anti-colonial. From this example, it would not be in any contradiction to conclude that both nationalism and colonialism were made, shaped and propagated by the intellectual and political history of the Europeans. In this case, nationalism is reduced into a derivative discourse that is essentially dependent upon the language and models that were obtained from colonial masters. Partha Chatterjee, while challenging the conception of nationalism as a derivative discourse seeks to know if the nationalists in other parts of the world have to select their imaginary community from some modular forms given by the Americans and Europeans, what is then left for them to imagine. From this illustration, it is noticeable that both nationalism and colonialism propagated by the Europeans are both oppressive and cause misery to the subjects directly and indirectly. As Chatterjee continues to denote, when either nationalism or colonialism is in use even the imaginations of the subjects remain colonized forever.

So far it can be observed that nationalism is more or less the same as colonialism, the only difference is the fact that it is modern, and the colonial masters are not present on the grounds like the colonialism of the past. However, the systems, ideologies, imaginations and forms of government applied in the countries that have upheld nationalism resemble the ones used in the colonial times. This is not nationalism as it is meant to be, but colonialism disguised in the name of nationalism. In fact, some of the people in the countries once colonized, deny the fact that they have anti-colonial

nationalism, since it focuses on a given identity and not derivation, rather on the disparities between African/Asian and western identities. Therefore, to understand nationalism, there is a need to look at the ways in which colonial difference was challenged and maintained instead of only focusing on the concepts borrowed from colonial powers.

Drawing a difference between nationalism mirrored as a cultural concept and the same as a political drive, is critical to achieving the desired understanding. While nationalism in the view of the political movement pursues to challenge the state of colonialism, nationalism in cultural concept enables the subjects who are colonized to create a personal space that is autonomous. In the second process, nationalism functions in a manner that fashions a modern development that is not Western. In this case, nationalism declared sovereignty over some issues such as popular culture, schooling, art, novels, religion and language . On the other hand, nationalism in the reflection of a political drive fights relentlessly to remove the marks of the differences of colonialism. Colonial state powers were premised on the idea of preservation of the separation of the group that was ruling. By affirming superiority, colonial masters could legitimize their deeds. This was followed by a couple of forms that race marked a palpable selection in many of the nations. It was also used to draw the difference of the people who could take part in forming a government and those who could join the civil society. In the same way, language was at times used as a tool to help make decisions on who were allowed the freedom to speak. Nationalism also sought to under look colonial difference by illustrating the inherent impracticality of reconciling modern regimes of authority that were constructed by

colonialists and the conditions of the colonial rule. The regimes of modern power were grounded on the justification that power would be made more humane, more effective and productive by making the social regulations a self-disciplinary aspect of normalized persons. Accepting the notion, nationalists argued that the colonial rule was not in the operation of imposing new state institutions upon the indigenous society; rather it was violating and restricting the actual principles of the modern form of government.

The relationship between colonial difference and nationalism is very resourceful even to date. It helps in the understanding and recognition of the key similarities between post-colonial nationalist states and the colonial ones, in relation to the techniques of rule, as well as the centrality of gender and rule. Gender is central in both nationalism and colonialism ideologies in the sense that women were often used as the vehicles to maintain spiritual and cultural purity. The centrality of the rule is evident in both ideologies in the sense that the systems of rule used in both were similar. In fact, nationalism had borrowed a good number of its techniques from colonial rule.

The commonality between nationalism and colonialism can be accounted for by a number of reasons. First, the two ideologies were propagated by the Europeans. This implies that the systems of rule applied in colonialism were most likely transferred to nationalism. On the same note, the Africans Asians who struggled to fight for independence during the colonial rule, who later came to be leaders of their respective countries after independence was granted to them had no choice other than to adopt the system of rule they

had observed from their colonial masters since they had not held such posts before. As a result, most of the concepts, ideas, forms and systems used were largely borrowed from colonialism. Another reason there was so much commonality between colonialism and nationalism is the fact that the West had so much influence over their former colonies. For instance, all the British colonies joined the commonwealth, where ideas, views and opinions could be shared across these countries. Although the West had physically gone out of the colonies granting them independence, they had so much influence in terms of indirect control over the colonies. First, some of the colonies continued to use the laws and the constitution drafted by the colonial masters. Secondly, the form of governance the colonial masters used were ingrained in the minds of the nationalists who led their countries to independence explaining the similarity in the two ideologies. Lastly on the reasons for the commonality in the two ideologies, people had been used to the colonial rule and were, therefore, reluctant to the change that occurred. For a considerable long time, these people had been subjected to colonial rule and, therefore, even after the colonialists went back to their motherland, the people in the former colonies were unable to rule themselves and come up with their own government. Since only a few people were literate, the minority intellectuals were not enough to run the nationalism government. Lacking no experience with a similar task also made the countries rely a lot on the West for the know how to run their governments. Even to date some countries rely on the West for grants and loans. What do they get in return? The West manipulates their governments and resources in what may be referred to as neocolonialism.

In conclusion, nationalism and colonialism have a lot in common, basically due to the fact that they originate from one person, the European. Well while, this is a rampant phenomenon in most of the Asian and African countries, not all concepts of colonialism are despicable in nationalism. Some concepts like enforcing the law and having a central government and a good constitution are very helpful. However, this does not eliminate the possibility of some oppressive concepts that are undesirable and should be avoided in the present nationalism. To that effect, governments should ensure that what they borrow from colonialism does not cause harm and misery to their communities.

Bibliography

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