

Nation, Nationalism, Exile and Transitional Networks

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Although some commentators might not qualify South Africa as having been an empire, its position in Southern African had direct economic, cultural, political and military consequences on other countries in the region which could be described as forms of informal imperialism. Namibia was actually formally incorporated as the fifth province of South Africa for a period with representatives of Namibia's white community sitting in the South African Senate. The South African Empire reinforced its domination by aggressively insisting on its own hegemony and deliberately excluding the natives of the colony from benefitting from its resources or being recognised citizens, but, rather, in Mamdani's framework, constructed them as subjects. This paper will explore how the South African empire ironically mobilised a new 'Namibian' identity by advancing the concepts of a nation (real or/and imaginary) and nationalism. In addition, the paper will also explore the ways in which an 'authentic' nationalist project is being constructed in the post-independent Namibia.