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When natives became Africans: A historical sociolinguistic study of semantic change in colonial discourse[1]

Abstract

The word native is a key term in nineteenth-century British colonial administrative vocabulary. The question is how it comes to be central to the classification of indigenous subjects in Britain's southern African possessions in the early twentieth century, and how the word is appropriated by colonial citizens to designate the race of indigenous subjects. To answer the question, I construct a semasiological history of native as a word that has to do with the identification of a person with a place by birth, by residence or by citizenship. I track the manner in which speakers invest old words with new meanings in specific settings and differentiate among them in different domains. In the case of native, a signal keyword is recruited to do particular work in several contemporaneous discourses which take different ideological directions as the nature of the involvement of their speakers changes. The result is a particularly complicated word history, and one which offers a clue to the ways in which colonial rhetoric is domesticated in specific settings at the very same time as the colonising power eschews it in the process of divesting itself of its colonies.

1. Introduction

The lexicon used over time and across space to designate the difference between citizens and subjects in colonial Zimbabwe is demonstrably complex (Fitzmaurice, 2015). Indeed, the investigation of the raced discourse that marks the biography of Zimbabwe as a British colony, as a rebel republic and then as a postcolonial African state suggests that it has its roots in the language of British imperialism. Specifically, the public discourse in the late nineteenth century about and of Britain's colonies exemplifies the extent to which the term native is used to refer to African indigenous colonial subjects.

The question is how this word acquires the status of official terminology for the classification of indigenous subjects in Britain's southern African possessions in the early twentieth century, and how the word is appropriated by colonial citizens to designate the race of indigenous subjects. To approach this question, I construct a semasiological history of native as a word that has to do with the identification of a person with a place by birth, by residence or by citizenship. In so doing, I track the manner in which speakers invest old words with new meanings in specific settings and differentiate among them in different domains. In the case of native, a signal keyword is recruited to do particular work in several contemporaneous discourses which take different ideological directions as the nature of the involvement of their speakers changes. The result is a particularly complicated word history, and one which offers a clue to the ways in which colonial rhetoric is domesticated in specific

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settings at the very same time as the colonising power eschews it in the process of divesting itself of its colonies.

My argument rests upon the assumption of a rich historical sociolinguistic framework for the study of semantic-pragmatic change in public (and private) discourse between 1890 and 1960. Accordingly, in **section 2**, I set out a framework for the application of a model of linguistic change which attends to the cultural and discursive conditions that may be criterial in semantic change (Fitzmaurice, 2015).   In **section 3**, as the first step in a historical sociolinguistic history of native, I inspect the received history as presented in the OED's entries dating from 1900 till the latest revision in 2003 for the word. The aim of this examination is to begin construing the social structure of the word's polysemy, as documented and illustrated in the dictionary entries and quotations. The attestation dates are useful indicators of the periodisation of the senses attributed to the use of the word and aid the selection of the materials for intensive study. **Section 4** provides the specific historical context of British colonial expansion in Africa, which sees the establishment of British imperial discourse. In **section 5**, I deploy a data-combing procedure to identify key discourse contexts within a range of material for closer inspection of the rhetoric that accompanies and frames the use of native. A series of searches for full-text occurrences of the keyword in databases (including British Newspapers Online, The National Archives Cabinet Papers and JSTOR) generated a large corpus which forms the rich intertextual research context for this study, and which yields a number of illustrative excerpts. The sources of the public discourse examined thus include British newspapers, reports and addresses about the African colonies presented to meetings of the Royal African Society and published in the Society's official journal, African Affairs. I also examine official despatches and parliamentary debates focussing on the administration of the colonies. The sources of private discourse examined include private letters and memoirs.

In sections **6** and **7**, I map the discourse onto the external history of the actors, agents and institutions involved in producing the universe of discourse as the basis for locating key events that trigger or usher in changes in discourse, including changes in the meanings of key expressions. The result is a rich account of meaning change that is rooted in the historical and discursive conditions of British colonial administration in Africa.

2.   Contingent polysemy and discursive thresholds in accounting for semantic change

The development of a rich historical sociolinguistic framework for the study of semantic-pragmatic change responds to the challenge of connecting the stages and types of change that affect a lexical item to the different, specific material circumstances that appear to be critical to change.

The linguistic framework I adopt for the investigation of semantic-pragmatic change is Elizabeth Traugott's IITSC (Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change) (Traugott and Dasher, 2002). Underlying this model is the presupposition that linguistic expressions have multiple meanings (i.e. they are polysemous). The model locates the seeds of semantic change in a speaker's innovating pragmatic behaviour in the course of conversational

interaction in situational contexts of utterance. The notion of context deployed here is central to the analytical framework of historical pragmatics (Fitzmaurice & Taavitsainen, 2007; Jucker & Taavitsainen, 2013). Thus the temporal, ideological and experiential stances of the interactants both shapes and influences the nature of the situation in which talk occurs. For example, a speaker might use an expression in such a way that it generates a novel implicature specific to that context of utterance which is inferred by the hearer, what Traugott and Dasher (2002: 17) term an 'utterance-token meaning'. Alternatively, the speaker might exploit an existing (shared) conversational implicature in an ad hoc way in a new situational environment. Such innovative uses, if transferred into new situational contexts of conversation and, more importantly, taken up by other participants (hearers and speakers), have the potential to catch on in a discourse community with an 'utterance-type meaning' (Traugott and Dasher, 2002: 16). If the new use persists in the community, speakers can invest it with social value and give it sufficient currency for it to spread to other situational contexts and to other speakers. In the process, the new use acquires pragmatic strength and becomes more prominent than the other uses or meanings of the expression (see Fitzmaurice 2016a).

Polysemy itself is agnostic, of course. It is speakers and hearers who invest particular expressions with social, personal and other (speaker) meanings as they select them for use in specific contexts. So the question is how we evaluate the pragmatic strength and social prominence of innovative meanings in use. In other words, do speakers evaluate or hold particular attitudes towards the new polysemies that arise out of speaker innovations in social terms? One way to understand the nature of the relationship among the new and existing uses/meanings of an expression at any particular time within a universe of discourse is to structure the polysemy in terms of the factors that might promote the prominence of a use at the expense of others. I call this notion of dependent or contextual polysemy contingent polysemy. Contingent polysemy captures the fact that at any particular time, some meanings associated with a word will be more prominent than others for particular conversational interactants at a particular moment depending upon the temporal, ideological and experiential stance of those interactants.

This notion thus rests on the assumption that polysemies of expressions operate within a broader discourse. This means that questions of collocation, lexical variation and rhetorical variation all contribute to the discursive context. This complex context then allows us to identify the polysemies and explore the nature of their contingency. So I argue that key terms have complex polysemies that are contingent both upon the interactants and the discursive contexts in which they are used. Depending upon the specific historical setting and the ideological domain in which the interactants perform, a group of expressions may index the identity of its users.

For example, Robinson (2012) found that in the particular Sheffield community she investigated in 2005, people of 60 years of age reported that they associated the word skinny primarily with being 'mean' ('stingy, ungenerous'). Predominantly identified as members of the local working-class community, they held to the local meaning of the term. In contrast, people (mainly women) of 30 years of age or younger primarily associated skinny with

'skimmed milk' as in skinny latte, the coffee drink made with skimmed milk. The key contextual factor here was that the women worked in the vicinity of the university, many of them in university and city cafes and coffee shops. Although these women were familiar with the traditional, local signification ('mean'), the use of skinny that they encountered more than any other was in reference to the lack of fat in the milk used to make posh coffee. Consequently, the structure of the polysemy of skinny contrasts for young Sheffield women and their mothers. Robinson constructs this semantic variation within a particular speech community as sociolinguistic variation. I am interested in the relationship of the prominent meanings selected by particular speakers to the external circumstances that might activate or promote those meanings.[2]

Polysemy is intrinsic to semantic change but there may be specific circumstances that appear to promote or trigger shifts in this (social) structural relationship among the meanings of words. Although we might point to the specific external circumstances in which change might be triggered in the meaning of a particular expression, the greater challenge is to extrapolate from the specifics of an individual case to identify a mechanism (or a principle) to account more generally for the discernible start of change.[3] So it would be useful to be able to label the external conditions that shape change. I follow Pilosoff (2012) in adopting Whitlock's (2000) notion of the discursive threshold to refer to the moment at which an (external) process or event effects change in a group's discourse. Because words are part of discourse, they may be susceptible to shift in specific contexts. A discursive threshold, then, is a historical moment that accommodates semantic-pragmatic change and, consequently, discursive change. In my framework, new discourses are grounded in and build upon linguistic elements that have been covertly or privately disseminated. These include new conversational implicatures (utterance-type meanings) created and shared between interlocutors in the domain of private conversations. The discourse of private conversations does not arbitrarily become public; something must happen in the world to change the status of the discourse from private to public and at the same time, potentially, the meanings of the vocabulary that is the content of the discourse. Specifically, a particular event may have the effect of making a hitherto private discourse public, and in the process, result in the conventionalisation of conversational implicatures. Once the threshold of that event has passed, the private discursive elements appear and emerge in the public domain to receive widespread and popular recognition. The threshold marks the waning of one discourse and the growing acceptance and use of another as the group adds a new style/register to its discursive repertoire. The use of the new register is subject to the same factors as any other in the community, namely, interlocutor and communicative context. Once the register is established it becomes a discourse. Importantly, a community may have more than one discourse.

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[2] Elsewhere, I have argued that the complex vocabulary of politeness in 18th century England is marked by multiple interpretations depending upon the context of use, the interactants and purpose of communication (Fitzmaurice, 2016b).

[3] In sociolinguistic terms, locating or identifying the discernible start of a change is the actuation problem.

In his study of the language and behaviour of white farmers in postcolonial Zimbabwe, Pilosoff (2012) identifies the fast track land reform programme (FTLRP) begun in 2000 as an event that triggered the reemergence of a discourse that had, to all intents and purposes, disappeared from the public domain after independence in 1980. The discursive threshold of the FTLRP marked the reappearance in the public sphere of discursive practices which had flourished during the war of the 1970s and which had subsequently been restricted to the discourse shared among a small group of white farmers in specific private settings. I have invoked the discursive threshold in exploring the changes in the meanings of the term African in the discourse of whites and blacks in Zimbabwe in the course of the twentieth century (Fitzmaurice, 2015). In some circumstances, the conventionalised implicatures of particular expressions can attain the status of coded meaning, that is, a semantic convention of the language at a specific time (Traugott & Dasher, 2002: 16), leaving the older meanings as mere traces. If the original coded meaning of an expression reduces to a trace in certain contexts or if it disappears, then the now usual pragmatic meaning may become the predominant meaning. I want to test this notion further on a different historical discourse— that of imperial Britain at the end of the nineteenth century.

More broadly, then, we interrogate the nature of the context in which meaning change arises; is it identifiable in the discourses of a particular period or in a particular speech community? Are there related or connected expressions that mark the discourse in which particular semasiological changes occur? To conduct the analysis of semantic-pragmatic change in discourses that can be understood as contexts that generate these novel implicatures, we must ground the model in specific ideological historical domains that produce the relevant social discourse. In the case for examination, we see a signal keyword being recruited to do particular work in several contemporaneous discourses which take different ideological directions as the involvement of their speakers changes. I focus on a particular, particularly complicated word history; I will adopt this model to examine the semasiological history of native from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s.

3. A semasiological history of native from 1850 to 1960.

The natural starting point for this investigation is the OED entry for native (n). The nature of a dictionary entry, a two-dimensional record, does not make it terribly useful in reflecting particular realities of language use. For example, by presenting a list of senses, the dictionary format invites the inference that they occur successively over time.[4] There is nevertheless a great deal of information in the OED entry for the noun native, for instance, evidence and illustration of numerous usages of the item; discontinuous uses, and localised uses over both time and space. However, without examining the quotations that illustrate the definitions and making particular inferences about their own cotext, the reader must decode the dictionary's

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[4] I adopt the term sense to label the different categories of meaning (i.e. Senses 1 through 5) attributed to the word native in the OED online. This decision is intended to help clarify the discussion of the pragmatic, contextual and discursive meanings that are at issue in relation to the designated dictionary meanings documented in the OED.

terminology to construct the relationship among the senses, in order to apprehend the complex history of the word. Sense I concerns senses related to birth (mainly historical terminology), including reference to a person born under a specified plant or sign, or with a particular mark.

Our focus here is on Sense II, namely, 'senses relating to birthplace or country of origin', which consist of the particular characterisation of a person's relationship to a place with which they can be identified from birth [3a], or to residency or citizenship [3b]. Sense 3a refers to '[a] person born in a specified place, region, or country, whether subsequently resident there or not'. The entry includes the additional usage information ('Usu. with of'), illustrated with a quotation containing the phrase from Robert Louis Stevenson: 'Ah Wing, cook, native of Sana, China...John Hardy, native of London, England'. Together with sense 3b ('A person resident in a particular place or locale; a citizen'), sense 3a indicates the extent to which the attributes of native are relative rather than absolute. The assertion of birth or belonging juxtaposes those viewed as native to a place with those doing the viewing, looking at the person in relation to the place. Indeed, the 3rd edition of the OED online (2003) includes the comment on 3a, 'Freq[uently] with mildly depreciative connotations'. Interestingly, the quotation (attested in 1800) in (1), used to illustrate the use of native to refer to a denizen of a place, appears to derive its negative force from the combination of evaluative adjectives (superior, odious) and the definite article (the) to underpin the stance of the observer:

1.   'The girl...was...really much superior to the rest of the odious natives in their neighbourhood' (E. Hervey, Mourtray Family, 1.173).

The dictionary entry includes notes on historical uses which are juxtaposed with comments on meanings that are attributed to the usage associated with varieties or particular places, as in the case of 3c (see 2), which is attributed specifically to Australia and New Zealand. This sense seems to have acquired sufficient currency in the Australian and New Zealand context to have been coded, albeit briefly.

2.   3c. Austral. and N.Z. A white person born in Australia or New Zealand, as distinguished from first-generation immigrants and Aborigines. Now disused.

There are comments that allude to the historical appropriateness or relevance of the use illustrated, for example, with the rather unspecific deictic: 'now' in the phrase '[now] disused'. The problem, of course is that we have no way of locating the time that the deictic 'now' refers to beyond paying attention to the date attributed to the entry. A closer look at the quotations in (3) indicates that sense 3c is highly local and limited, in both geographical and temporal terms.

3a. 1900. Canterbury Old & New 6. The Committee of the Christchurch branch of the N.Z. Natives' Association wishes to record [etc.].
  b. 1917. Huon Times (Franklin) 16 Feb. 6/1. She was born at Pitt Town, near Windsor, New South Wales, in 1821…and was possibly the oldest living native of the Commonwealth.
  c. 1966. G. W. Turner Eng. Lang. in Austral. & N.Z. iii. 62 The word natives was required by Europeans born in Australia, who formed an Australian Natives' Association in 1871.

As illustrated in the quotations in (3), native is appropriated for use in the first half of the twentieth century to distinguish whites born in New Zealand and Australia from (new) (presumably white) immigrants. The relevance of the distinction is potent for constructing the identity of New Zealanders as people who eschew the label 'settler' to assert their right to be identified as New Zealand natives. This sense seems to have been conventionalized as an utterance-type meaning, even coded, in this particular context, as evidenced by its adoption as official terminology in the quotations in (3a) and (3c). As the term distinguishes New Zealand or Australian-born whites from the territories' indigenous people, we are invited to infer that for the people for whom this use would be prominent, native and aborigine are differentiated. In this case, the choice of native signals the attempt to assert ownership and imply the possession of an otherwise empty region.

The 1989 entry for native was updated in 2003 for the third edition of the OED (http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/125303). The new entry has a separate, additional sense (5) for reference to a member of an indigenous ethnic group of a specific region encountered by Europeans. The content of this new sense (5) hints at the complexity of the polysemy of native in the history of English and illustrates the susceptibility of the expression to pragmatic strengthening and variation of connotation, across both time and space. The general definition given for Sense 5 ('a member of an indigenous ethnic group') does not include concrete detail of context, time, or place. Instead, it is annotated with a comment that appears to present the definition as a usage in the mouth of a particular kind of speaker, one who would assert that a native is of 'inferior status': 'Freq[uently] with a suggestion of inferior status, culture, etc., and hence (esp[ecially] in modern usage) considered offensive'. The detail appears in the entries for the subsenses of 5, which illuminate the history of native in terms of Britain's history as an imperial power and her colonial possessions. Subsense 5a specifies '[a] member of the indigenous ethnic group of a country or region, as distinguished from foreigners, esp. European colonists'. The quotations used to illustrate 5a amplify this comment as they are from sources about Britain's colonies in North America (1777), Australia (1804), Africa (1896, 1950) and Ireland (1931).[5] Importantly, each of the quotations contrasts the perspective or stance of the European colonist with that of the indigenous people he or she encounters in the New World (1777), in Sydney, Australia (1804), in Matabeleland, Africa (1896), in Ireland (1931) and in Rhodesia, Africa (1950). These uses identify the term as part of the imperial vocabulary used to talk about the people found across the imperial world from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Underpinning this sense is the distinction of the imperial power from the mass of subjects in the different parts of the empire. To the extent that these subjects are not British, they are natives of Britain's possessions.

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[5] 1777. W. ROBERTSON Hist. Amer. (1778) I. II. 98. Columbus…continued to interrogate all the natives.
1804. Sydney Gaz. 27 May 4. The numerous natives in those parts are on the most friendly terms with the Europeans.
1896. F. C. SELOUS Sunshine & Storm Rhodesia i. 5. No one could have recognised...in the quiet, submissive native…the arrogant savage of old times.
1931. E. O'NEILL Mourning becomes Electra III. ii. 238. The natives dancing naked and innocent without knowledge of sin.
1950. M. CHAPPELL Rhodesian Adventure xiii. 143. There was nothing here when the pioneers came. Save bushveld and natives and wild animals.

The term native has a different reference in New Zealand discourse, namely, to label the bureaucracy responsible for managing the aboriginal subjects in the British protectorate. Specifically, institutions set up by the state for the Maori exclusively, such as primary schools, were labelled 'native schools' until their abolition in 1969 (Donald Fraser, p.c.). In this case, native and aborigine are consonant terms, both realisations of the concept INDIGENOUS. The two distinct uses of native in the course of the twentieth century clearly instantiate how contingent polysemy occurs in a particular speech community. For second generation New Zealand whites, the use of native to refer to themselves represents a claim to be true, authentic New Zealanders, not settlers. For New Zealand government officials, in contrast, native was a descriptive term used to designate the policies that have to do with administering the lives of Maoris. This sense is consistent with the OED's sense 5a. Of course, what the dictionary cannot make clear is the pattern or the structure of native's polysemy. We have to read through the senses and examine the attested uses illustrated in the quotations to work out the relationship among co-existing senses, and to discover whether they co-exist within the same speech community.

In sense 5b, the OED identifies a geographically specific use of the term within the same period to refer to 'a member of the indigenous Indian or Inuit peoples of North America' (s.v. 5b). The dictionary entry specifies that this subsense 5b is not 'now' [i.e. as of the date of the entry, 2003] in generally accepted use, presumably, in contrast to its use in the quotations collected from 1763, 1856 and 1910.[6] The OED online entry indicates that native was appropriated as a modifier for the peoples of Canada in particular from the 1970s (as in the quotations attested in 1976, 1992 in the updated 2003 entry), but the term Indian has since been rehabilitated in the American southwest.[7]

Perhaps logically, following the increasing specificity of the category of indigenous person identified by the term through time, subsense 5c is marked as particular to South[ern] Afr[ica]. The definition—'a member of any of the black peoples of South Africa, as distinguished from a person who is white or of mixed descent'—is accompanied by the comment, 'now chiefly hist[orical] or ironic, and avoided as offensive. Occas[ionally] as the native: black people collectively'. The OED entry for 5c emphasizes the localised use, both geographically and historically speaking, to refer to black African people. This local

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[6] 1763. J. WOOLMAN Jrnl. 13 June (1971) viii. 128. My meditations were on the alterations of the circumstances of the natives…since the coming in of the English. 1856. R. M. BALLANTYNE Snowflakes & Sunbeams vii. 72 This is the trading-store. It is always recognisable, if natives are in the neighbourhood, by the bevy of red men that cluster round it, awaiting the coming of the store-keeper. 1910. Encycl. Brit. I. 476/2. The natives have adopted many customs of white civilization. 1976. Tundra Times Oct. 20. Since you are a Native and mayor of the North Slope Borough many people are going to think your interests are going to be primarily for the Native people. 1992. R. M. Bone Geogr. of Canad. North iii. ix. 217. The James Bay hydro project…set a precedent for other Natives who now face the question of resource development on Indian or Inuit lands.

[7] The phrase 'first nation' has also gained currency, particularly in Canada. The following current example includes the use of native as well as first nation: 'Gabor Maté, a retired doctor, said: "There's an official narrative of this country as democratic and one of the best places in the world to live. That would be severely challenged if we actually talked about the conditions of natives in their communities". The crisis in Attawapiskat came to light amidst an ongoing campaign to abolish the Indian Act, a statute that marked 140 years of existence last week and which puts the government in control of most aspects of First Nations life.' ('"We're crying out for help": spate of suicides signals despair of Canada's First Nations', Observer 17 April, 2016).

(southern African) sense draws upon and refers to the formal designation of race (black, mixed race) and generates the connotations of racism that accompany the specialisation of reference. For the reader who lacks knowledge of the clarifying context necessary to apprehend the particular historical moment of the specific southern African use of native, distinguishing between 'ironic' and 'historical' uses of the term is very difficult. In other words, the specific orientation to a historical period can be made only by linking the annotating comment (e.g. 'now', 'chiefly historical or ironic', 'avoided as offensive') to the quotations and making the inference that the use is ironic.

4a. 1826. W. Shaw Diary 31 Dec., Baptized five Adult Natives, on their profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
  b. 1948. A. Paton Cry, Beloved Country ii. viii. 171. Most of the assaults reported were by natives against Europeans.
  c. 1951. A. Gordon-Brown Year Bk. & Guide S. Afr. 299. The local authority in whose area a Native is employed should…provide for the accommodation of such Native and his family.
  d. 1990. R. Malan My Traitor's Heart 30. Natives cooked my meals, polished my shoes, made my bed, mowed the lawn, trimmed the hedge, and dug holes at my father's direction.

The quotations in (4) above, attested in 1826, 1948, and 1951 illustrate the categorical sense of native to distinguish the black African referent from a white European. There is an important difference in tone and purpose then between the quotation (4b) from Paton's (1948) Cry, the Beloved Country and Rian Malan's self-consciously ironic use in his (1990) memoir about growing up among racist Afrikaner nationalists (4d). Malan's use is historical, but as it also ventriloquises the anachronistic attitude of his racist Afrikaner parents, it is intended to be read as ironic. It is also anachronistic because by 1960, native has largely been replaced in the discourses of southern Africa by African, which in turn is replaced by the 1990s by black, as explored in sections 6 and 7 below.

Between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries native was recruited by English visitors and colonisers to label the indigenous people they encountered abroad in various foreign places from America and India to South Africa. A careful review of senses 5a and 5c for native indicates that by the end of the nineteenth century, the term's reference had specialised to apply primarily to black Africans, but it is not clear precisely when it was established with specific reference to black Africans. A potent clue lies in sense 5d: 'In Britain and the United States during the period of colonialism and slavery: a black person of African origin or descent. Obs.' This 'obsolete' sense is localised and historicised to vocabulary used in Britain and the USA, associated with colonialism and slavery respectively. The British usage of this particular sense, is aptly illustrated from Dickens' novel, Dombey and Son (1846-8), in which the choleric Major Bagstock terrorises 'the Native', his 'dark servant':

5. The Native, who had no particular name, but answered to any vituperative epithet, presented himself instantly at the door and ventured to come no nearer.
    'You villain!' said the choleric Major, 'where's the breakfast?'
    The dark servant disappeared in search of it, and was quickly heard reascending the stairs in such a tremulous state, that the plates and dishes on the tray he carried, trembling sympathetically as he came, rattled again, all the way up. Dombey & Son, 1848: chapter 20).

In Dombey's mercantile capitalist world, Britain's reach and sway across the empire bring an extraordinary range of assets, including exotic servants, from Africa and the Caribbean. The American use of the sense is equally localised, to refer to slaves, typically of African descent. The OED quotes 'E. Kirke's' (James R. Gilmore) My Southern Friends (1863), in which the connection is explicitly made:

> 6. Joe was a dark-colored mulatto man, about fifty years of age. He was dressed in a suit of "butternut homespun," and held in his hand the ordinary slouched hat worn by the "natives." His hair—the short, crispy wool of the African—was sprinkled with gray, and he had the thick lips and broad, heavy features of his race. (My Southern Friends, 1863, p. 106)

These uses appear to be established in Britain and America in the middle of the nineteenth century to refer to people of African descent, whom Britons or Americans encountered within the domestic sphere at home, not abroad. Accordingly, they might be considered essential ingredients of an imperial discourse that originates in the metropolis to talk about and classify the subject peoples under imperial control, whether abroad in Africa or at home. As such, these highly restricted historical uses appear to contribute to the input force for focussing the association of native with 'African'.

If nineteenth-century colonialism and slavery are critical institutions in the establishment of the meaning of native to refer to black people of African origin or descent, we need to examine the context which generates the co-existence of the senses enumerated under 5. Specifically, the potency of these institutions in this period suggests that there was a discursive threshold that must have been felt through the western world to usher in the generation of meanings that associate native specifically with the (black) African in English on both sides of the Atlantic. In the next section, I argue that the expansion of Britain's colonial empire into Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is a critical context for inaugurating and establishing a distinctive imperial discourse within metropolitan British English of which the specialisation and focussing of native is a central part.[8]

4. The 19th century British Empire and the Scramble for Africa

Three factors—historical, anthropological and political—converge to create the critical context for the emergence of what we might term '(British) imperial discourse'. Firstly, Britain's reach extended across the globe throughout the nineteenth century, bringing new legal, military and economic opportunities as well as generating new responsibilities for an expanded Britain. At the same time, Darwin's scientific theories on the differentiation of

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[8] To check the OED history against an integrated database of public discourse, I conducted a set of searches of The Times Digital Archive for native as a keyword between January 1880 and December 1926 in news articles, letters to the editor and editorials. This exercise yielded 2646 documents containing native and Africa, 101 documents containing native and New Zealand, and 54 documents containing native and Canada. None of the instances in the 'Canada' set included the use of native (5b); the majority were attested uses of native (3a, 3b). In the 'New Zealand' set, a number of instances of native were used to refer to Maori (native 5a) and a number were used in senses (3a and 3b); there were only 2 instances of use in sense (3c). The vast majority of instances of native in the 2646 documents for 'Africa' reflected the uses under sense (5a); and in the documents on central and southern Africa, the majority were used with sense (5c).

species shaped mid-nineteenth century notions of difference and differentiation among peoples, resulting in the construction of race, a concept that was instrumental in shaping British attitudes to the administration of affairs in her dependencies. These two developments were given sharp focus in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, in the so-called Scramble to carve up Africa among the major European powers (Harlow and Carter, 2003). These converged in the emergence of a British consciousness of the nature and status of this empire, which was expressed in a developing discourse about the nature of the relationship of Britain to far flung places, markets and territories and the people whom the British and their agents found there.

The seeds of Britain's empire had been sown in the New World in the seventeenth century. After the eighteenth-century American wars of independence and the loss of the American colonies, Britain's imperial attention shifted to India and the Caribbean and then to Africa.[9] In the early nineteenth century, Britain's colonial empire acquired possessions in the West Indies, trading posts in West and East Africa, the white settlement Cape colony, Malaysia and Singapore, and the white settlement colonies of Australia and New Zealand. British expansion did not proceed entirely smoothly; there were crises in different dependencies in the middle of the century which required expensive British military resources to resolve. In the winter of 1849-50, the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, was forced to justify Britain's continued responsibility for the Empire on the following grounds:

> 'contribution towards the civilizing of distant portions of the world, imperial strength, responsibility for the welfare of native races like those of New Zealand and Natal, the security offered by colonial ports to British shipping … and, finally, the inability of the colonies to defend themselves' (Koebner & Schmidt, 1964:70-1).

In India, the 1857-8 uprising, called the Sepoy mutiny, against British policy highlighted the consequences of attempts to impose British legal, cultural and religious institutions on Indian society (Mamdani, 2012: 8). In places which had significant numbers of white settlers, there were conflicts with the indigenous people over the possession of land; for instance the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s were fought over land (Sinclair, 2000). These conflicts and concerns did not slow the impetus of colonial expansion. Charles Dilke's book, Greater Britain, related his 1866-7 global trip around the English-speaking world. Dilke 'made his readers conscious of the fact that Great Britain had extended round the world into a Greater Britain which was held together by the bonds of race, language and law' (Koebner & Schmidt, 1964: 88). He concludes his memoir by observing that 'the difficulties which impede the progress to universal dominion of the English people lie in the conflict with the cheaper races', thus distinguishing between the English ('the dear races') and those they vanquished around the world ('the cheap races') (Dilke, 1868, vol 2, p. 405).

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[9] See Porter (1996) for discussion of the complex relations between Britain and colonies and dependencies until the mid-nineteenth century. Note that British administration of a colony varied depending upon whether it was a (white) settlement colony, in which case progress towards self-government was made, or not, in which case policy regarding the administration of the indigenous people was categorised as 'native policy' (Porter, 1996:19).

Dilke's ideas reflected the nineteenth-century construction of race as a means of classifying difference, and ultimately, as a means of marking different levels of social, cultural and economic development. Darwinism—theorising evolutionary change though natural selection—seemed to answer the question that Dilke had raised about unequal development across the world. In consequence, 'racialist ideas that humans were different, which had existed before Darwin, were confirmed and in turn, intellectual justifications slid towards racism' (Johnson, 2003: 109).[10] A considerable body of work developed around these ideas.[11] For diverse interpreters of Darwin, 'Africa was the great laboratory, a testing ground for religious and scientific beliefs, a site in which the energies and faculties of civilised society could forcibly shape, refine, and redefine the fecund mass that to them, Africa seemed to be' (Harlow & Carter, 2003: 88).

The emergence of 'race' in these terms provided an important additional legitimisation to the 'civilising' mission of Europe in Africa which was championed by imperialists and missionaries. Indeed, the work in Africa of missionaries and explorers like David Livingstone in the 1850s created enormous public interest in the 'dark continent'.[12] Livingstone's work drew wide support from men like Harry Johnston, a prominent explorer and colonial administrator, who wrote that missions 'strengthen our hold over the country, spread the use of the English language, they induct the natives into the best kind of civilisation and in fact each mission is an essay in colonisation' (Oliver, 1957: 182). Missionary activity thus went hand in hand first with exploration and then colonisation throughout Africa.

Between 1840 and 1880, British expansion continued apace in commercial, economic and political terms, into 'the Gold Coast, Lagos, Sierra Leone, Natal, Basutoland, Griqualand West and the Transvaal' (Wesseling; trans. Pomerans, 1996: 31). The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a scramble by the major European powers to split Africa up between them. Britain and half a dozen European countries, including France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Portugal, looked to Africa for potential new markets and for sources of new income in the form of raw materials like rubber, iron and steel, cotton, gold and diamonds. In 1885, the German chancellor, Bismarck, sponsored a conference in Berlin to mark the continent's partition. It culminated in the ratification of a General Act of the

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[10] Johnson (2003: 107) distinguishes 'racialism' from 'racism'. He notes, 'race is used to denote any group of people, united by common descent and identified by skin colour and physiognomy. Common bonds are also usually expressed in terms of shared language, history, culture or outlook. In the 19thc, race became a universal tool of categorisation, but also the key to understanding customs and behaviour. Racialism was thus a term used to describe differences between races. Racism is a belief that some races are inherently superior, and that others are inferior, and those races therefore require different treatment.'

[11] For example, Herbert Spencer's evolutionary philosophy, Benjamin Kidd's sociology, and Dudley Kidd's political science explored the political and social implications of construing Darwin's scientific theories as social theories (see Harlow & Carter, 2003).

[12] Livingstone's Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (1857) was a bestseller; 'a compelling drama of self-improvement, expanding knowledge, and non-sectarian Christian fortitude', it advocated the importance of commerce, Christianity and civilization to the successful European 'mission' in Africa (A. D. Roberts, 2004).

Conference 'to adjudicate such disputes of trade, territory, spheres of influence, and the use of "spirituous liquors' (Harlow and Carter, 2003:14). Although the Act represents an attempt to prevent European conflict over political and economic interests in the region, the major powers continued to compete and press their ambitions repeatedly in the last decades of the 'imperial century' in Egypt, the Congo and in the Transvaal (see Wesseling, trans. Pomerantz, 1996). After 1884, Britain acquired 'responsibility for the Niger Coast, Somali, portions of Malaya and New Guinea, for Bechuanaland, Zululand, for regions in East Africa and beyond the Limpopo River, for Upper Burma and Zanzibar' (Koebner and Schmidt, 1964: 196). British (like German, French and Portuguese) expansion into regions of the world that were not settled by Europeans was motivated by commerce and speculative capitalism.

The 'Scramble' represents a discursive threshold which cemented an imperial vocabulary to classify Britain's possessions according to the type of administration judged to be appropriate. After 1880, there were very few territories that were annexed outright that would warrant the label 'colony' and thus guarantee the metropolitan country's assuming responsibility for all aspects of their administration. One was British Bechuanaland (Porter, 1996: 113). The rest tended to be 'protectorates', whose principal administrative responsibilities fell on the shoulders of an authority on site who could call upon the metropolitan country for help and protection if it was needed. In practice, this arrangement between the metropolitan country and the protectorate was marked by a treaty which enabled Britain to identify somebody in place as authority and thus minimise its own responsibility. Ideally, Britain sought to delegate responsibility for administering and policing a particular territory wherever possible (Porter, 1996: 105). For instance, the British government delegated authority for the annexed territories of West Griqualand and Basutoland to the government of the Cape. However, Porter (1996: 104) notes that Britain's 'favourite instrument of vicarious colonial administration in the 1880s was the chartered company', a commercial body wholly outside the domain of government. The British government issued royal charters to commercial companies such as Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company which authorised them to exploit commercially and police the territories over which they sought control. Accordingly, in the Transvaal, Rhodes's chartered company served in place of British colonial administration, ostensibly exempting the British taxpayer of the cost of colonial administration. Rhodes also used his charter company as a basis for proposing to run the region north of the Limpopo River in exchange for the mining profits anticipated from the goldfields of Mashonaland and Matabeleland. Rhodes was also ambitious to found a new British settlement colony, Rhodesia, and in 1899, the company got its royal charter (Porter, 1996: 99).

Thus in the course of the nineteenth century, a British metropolitan vocabulary developed for managing, discursively, the bureaucratic machinery and political typology of imperial responsibility in Africa and elsewhere in the Empire.[13] The terminology of foreign and

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[13] See Banton (2015, 2nd ed.) for details of the development of colonial government structures and systems for managing relations with London from 1801.

imperial administration—colonies, protectorates, spheres of influence, charters—marks British policy discourse. In the last two decades of the century, a British colonial discourse emerges and becomes established for dealing with particular challenges and difficulties for the colonists and colonial administrators involved in governing the African territories. Central to this language is the problem of how to manage the difference and differentiation of colonial citizens and subjects in terms of rights, law and administration. It is in this discourse that the term native becomes a key word. In the next section, I examine the meanings that are associated with the term native as it is used to define the key problem in governing southern Africa at the turn of the century.

5. Southern Africa and 'The Native Question'

In general, British imperial administrators labelled the decisions and processes designed to manage the indigenous people of dependencies and colonies 'native policies', judging that their needs were considered to be distinct from those of white settlers in the colonies (Porter, 1996: 19). In other words, this sense of native pertains to the indigenous people of places abroad (cf. OED s.v. native 5a). Britain's approach to the administration of white settlement colonies such as New Zealand and Canada was to support the settlers to achieve self-government (Porter, 1996: 15-16). However, in colonial territories not marked out for large-scale European settlement, notably in Africa, British administrators and their agents tended to be much exercised by what, in the colonies and in Colonial Office parlance, was labelled 'the Native Question'. In this section, we examine the way in which native [5a] is superseded in southern African discourse by native [5c], and the manner in which this explicitly racist usage comes to underpin British Imperial discourse about the territories.

'The Native Question' became a polite euphemism in the last decades of the nineteenth century to label the problem of how to organise the colonial state in order to enable a tiny foreign minority to rule over an indigenous majority. As Mamdani (1996: 3) notes, 'it was a dilemma that confronted every colonial power and a riddle that preoccupied the best of its minds'. Porter explains Britain's 'native problem' in South Africa, noting that the crisis of conflict between whites and blacks could never be resolved in a region where the frontiers of Britain's control were not clearly defined, where there were competing interests in the form of the Afrikaner republics, and where whites were vastly outnumbered by blacks: '[t]he problem would not solve itself. Natives did not "die out" in Africa as they did, conveniently, in North America and Australasia' (Porter, 1996: 56). Cecil Rhodes put the matter starkly in 1887, in a debate on the parliamentary registration Bill (also alluded to in the official papers as 'the Native Question'). This speech focussed on the registration of black voters, and Rhodes explicitly connects entitlement to political rights with race, which he constructs in terms of racial superiority:

7.   I will lay down my own policy on this Native question. Either you have to receive them on
      an equal footing as citizens, or to call them a subject race. Well, I have made up my mind
      that there must be class legislation, that there must be Pass Laws and Peace Preservation
      Acts, and that we have got to treat natives, where they are in a state of barbarism, in a

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different way to ourselves. We are to be lords over them. These are my politics on <u>native affairs</u> and these are the Politics of South Africa. Treat the <u>natives</u> as a <u>subject people</u> as long as they continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure; (Vindex, 1900: 169). [My emphasis—SF]

Rhodes uses the term native in this 1887 speech in two of the OED's senses. When referring to the problem of 'this Native question' (line 1), he uses sense 5a '[a] member of the indigenous ethnic group…as distinguished from foreigners'. However, his reference to natives in the context of local conditions and matters ('Pass Laws and Peace Preservation Acts') (line 4) indicates use of the more specialised, local sense 5c, the indigenous black people of South Africa. This specialisation is marked by the lexical context in which native occurs; the people referred to belong to a distinct 'subject race', 'in a state of barbarism and communal tenure'. These are the grounds for distinguishing between citizens, who have the franchise, and 'a subject people', whom the citizens 'lord over' and deprive of the franchise by legislative means. Rhodes's language is emblematic of British imperial racism. 'The Native Question' acquired gathered weight and urgency for Cecil Rhodes, as it posed a formidable challenge to the British South Africa Company's designs on the permanent occupation of the territory across the Zambezi River possessed by those who were destined to be subject races. However, his agent, Dr. Jameson, used the incursion of the Ndebele into Mashonaland in 1893 as an opportunity for the company, using Maxim guns, to destroy the Ndebele, resulting in the settlement of Matabeleland by white settlers for the pursuit of gold. In 1894, now as Premier and Secretary for Native Affairs for the Cape Colony, Rhodes reflected on 'the Native Question' for South Africa as well as the new territories in explicitly racist terms:

8. The proposition that I would wish to put to the House is this, that I do not feel the fact of our wanting to live with the <u>natives</u> in this country is a reason for serious anxiety. In fact, I think the natives should be a source of great assistance to most of us. At any rate, if the <u>whites</u> maintain their position as <u>the supreme race</u>, the day may come when we shall all be thankful that we have <u>the native</u> with us in their proper position. We shall be thankful that we have escaped those difficulties which are going on amongst the old nations of the world.
    Now, it happens that in the rearrangement of the Cabinet I was given the charge of the <u>natives</u>, and, naturally, what faced me was the enormous extent of the <u>native problem</u>. In addition to the natives in the colony, I am responsible, on <u>this side of the Zambezi, for half a million of natives, and on the other side of the Zambezi I am responsible for another half-million</u>. By the instrumentality of responsible government, and also by that of another position which I occupy,[14] I feel that I am responsible for about two millions of human beings. The question which has submitted itself to my mind with regard to the <u>natives</u> is this---What is their present state? I find that they are increasing enormously. I find that there are certain locations for them where, without any right or title to the land, they are herded together. [My emphasis—SF]

Rhodes's position on 'the Native question' is given concrete content in the Glen Grey Act, which represented, in the words of "Vindex", the editor of Rhodes's speeches, 'a practical

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[14] At the same time as Rhodes was engaged in the parliamentary politics of the Cape Colony, assuming the role of Premier and the position of Secretary of Native Affairs in 1894 (Vindex, 1900: 369), he was the chairman of the British South Africa Company, the chartered company funded by speculative capital which sought to open up goldfields north of the Limpopo in the last decade of the century.

attempt to deal with the native question in legislating for the more uncivilised and ignorant natives crowded together in a part of the Cape Colony' (1900: 369). The Act, made law in 1895, 'allowed Africans to acquire land under individual tenure on strictly controlled terms, provided for local councils, and imposed a labour tax intended to propel Africans into working for white employers' (Marks & Trapido, 2004). This meant that the vast majority of Africans were restricted to communal lands, later called reserves, as they were unable to meet the criteria to qualify for individual tenure. The labour tax effectively forced African men to labour for whites. Rhodes's optimistic view of the co-existence of white and black in Africa was predicated on the whites maintaining their status as 'the supreme race' while the 'natives' kept 'their proper place'. Importantly, Rhodes's speech highlights the specialisation of the sense (and therefore use) of native from the notion of the indigenous person of a territory as viewed by the foreigner (sense 5a) to the clear, specific reference to the black African on both sides of the Zambezi, as viewed by a colonist governing that territory (sense 5c). At the same time, as we shall see, there is evidence that the phrase 'native question' becomes a fixed phrase, almost mnemonic, to refer to the potential for conflict arising from the situation in which a small number of colonists assume a right to control the lives and livelihoods of vast numbers of indigenous people in their own space.

The phrase 'the Native question' was not restricted to the discourse of politicians. In 1892, the South African writer, Olive Schreiner, wrote to her brother commenting on her own perspective on 'the native question', one which challenged the standard view of the Imperial project, as expressed by Rhodes.

> 9. I've been having a great look into affairs up in Kimberly. Dr Hillier is Dr Jameson's dearest friend & was his partner. He got a long letter from Jameson while I was there & read me parts of it. I've a great liking for Jameson. After Rhodes, he's the man I like best in South Africa. I suppose you heard before you left that the man Hart who flogged the black man to death the other day was ~~fal~~ entertained at a great dinner by the ladies & gentlemen of Cathcart the other day, in honour his return to them in joy & peace. "Ye shall see greater things than this that ye may marvel." (Lines 50-58) ………….
> I was going to go forth on the native question, & the long wave of re-actionary conduct of which the late mutilations, this flogging to death case at East London are only the little first forerunners - but you would only laugh at me, so I reserve my mental breath. (Lines 89-94.)
> Olive Schreiner to William Philip ('Will') Schreiner, 9 October 1892, UCT Manuscripts & Archives, Olive Schreiner Letters Project transcription. [my emphasis—SF]

Schreiner's reference to 'the native question' concentrates attention on the implications of colonial government for the actual lives of black people in the colony. Far from treating it as an academic matter, she offers a horrific illustration of 'the native question', relating an instance of how Rhodes's 'supreme race' 'lords' over 'the native'. Schreiner comments on the killing by flogging of a 'black man' by a settler, Hart, and his subsequent celebration by his fellows, implying that he had been put in danger. Schreiner appears to treat the phrase as a euphemism, preferring to use descriptive language instead of nomenclature to highlight the savagery of the 'long wave of the re-actionary conduct' represented by the flogging case.

The label native was increasingly used to distinguish between black and white, between subjects and citizens in Africa. The distinction, evidently unremarkable by the last decade of

the nineteenth century in southern Africa, was also adopted by campaigning organizations and used in publications that were critical of colonists' policies in Africa. For example, in 1900, on behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society, Alfred E. Pease (President) and H. R. Fox Bourne (Secretary) published the 'Outlines of a Suggested Charter for Natives Under British Rule in South Africa', in which they understood native 'to comprise all who are not of white race, and to include British Indians, Malays, and all other "coloured persons") within Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa' (p. 7). In this document and in others, native was juxtaposed with European and its use reflects common practice both in the African colonies and possessions and in the Colonial Office. The writers of the pamphlet do not define precisely what they mean by 'Native Question', but they do construe the phrase as 'justice for the native races' (p. 3). Among the 'explanatory observations' that accompany the draft charter, is the following headed, 'Areas reserved for Natives':

> 10. From most of the parts of South Africa formerly owned reserved by them, but deemed suitable for <u>European</u> use, those <u>natives</u> not willing to remain as drudges have been expelled. But they retain occupation, more or less guaranteed to them, of very extensive areas in Cape Colony and Natal, of the whole of Basutoland and nearly the whole of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, and of about a third of the Transvaal. The territories assigned by its charter to the British South Africa Company, indeed, appear to be the only extensive areas under British dominion in which there is uncertainty as to the right of <u>the native occupants</u> to live permanently on land set apart for their use. Recent events in other localities, however, as well as in Rhodesia, have aroused in these <u>native occupants</u> reasonable alarm as to the security of their tenure even of districts hitherto recognised as belonging to them. (p. 12, The Native Question in South Africa: Outlines of a Suggested Charter for Natives Under British Rule in South Africa: submitted to Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society. 1900). [My emphasis—SF]

The Aborigines Protection Society (APS) was founded in 1835-7 by anti-slavery campaigners to champion the rights of indigenous peoples in territories acquired by Britain, from Fiji and New Zealand to South Africa. The term native is a key part of the vocabulary of the APS writers; they adopt it in sense 5a, to refer to the indigenous people of the particular overseas colonial territory they are concerned with, regardless of period or location (Heartfield, 2011: 71ff). As missionaries and humanitarians based in the metropolis, the APS campaigners have at the centre of their discourse the distinction between the British Crown and its agents and administrators (Europeans) and the natives of the Crown's possessions in the Empire. The polysemy of native is evidently contingent upon the historical moment, temporal stance and imperial viewpoint of the speaker/writer. For the APS campaigners, writing about the indigenous people of Britain's colonial possessions generally, native naturally refers to the indigenous peoples of those possessions, in contrast to the European settlers or administrators in those places. Therefore, in their 1864 pamphlet on the Maori people's rights to land in New Zealand, they refer to the Maori as natives.[15] By the end of the century, as they turned

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[15] In the 1864 pamphlet entitled: A Protest Against the Confiscation of Native Lands in New Zealand. The Report of a Debate in the Legislative Council of the Colony, together with the Memorial of the Aborigines Protection Society and other Documents, the memorialists refer thus to the Maori people: 'The natives,

their attention to Africa—the Cape colony and other British African possessions—their use of the term native is focussed to distinguish the indigenous (African) people from the white European settlers.

Regardless of their political stance or vantage point, commentators in southern Africa and Britain alike used the phrase 'native question' to refer to the same phenomenon, namely the potential for conflict between black and white, or in modern parlance, 'race relations' (Ashforth, 2014: 1-2). The Scramble for Africa in the last two decades of the nineteenth century thus marks the threshold of the emergence of a common language to talk about the civilisation, administration and, ultimately, pacification of the natives, no longer broadly the 'indigenous (peoples of Africa, India and America), but now, increasingly specifically, '(black) Africans' of Britain's African possessions. We thus see a shift in the reference and connotations of native from the indigenous peoples of a foreign possession to the black African (as opposed to white, Anglo-Saxon) peoples of a possession on the African continent.

6.   Localising nomenclature: the social structure of polysemy in the colonial period

From 1910 onward, we see the bedding down in southern African institutions and official discourse of the nomenclature inherited from the imperial project that focused on Africa in the Scramble of the 1880s. In this section, I examine the manner in which the establishment of self-government in southern Africa provides the circumstances for the domestication or adaptation to local conditions of the practices, institutions and nomenclature that had marked British colonial administration. I argue here that increasingly distinct discourses develop. Emblematic of the difference between British official discourse and southern African administrative language is the focussing of the sense of native to 5c ('a member of any of the black peoples of South Africa, as distinguished from a person who is white or of mixed descent'). Accompanying this focussing is the emergence of distinctive connotations associated with the choice of native to refer to black Africans.[16]

In 1910, the various protectorates, possessions and colonies in the territory that stretched from the Cape to the Transvaal were united under the Union of South Africa. Further north, the Southern Rhodesian white legislature declined to join the Union, but opted for self-government as a British colony in 1923. Although the establishment of 'self-government' in southern Africa between 1910 and 1923 resulted in independence or separation from Britain,

moreover, are entirely unrepresented in the New-Zealand Legislature; and although the treaty of Waitangi nominally invested them with all the rights of British Subjects they have been practically treated as a separate and an alien race'.

[16] Mamdani (1996: 111), discussing the definition of native in colonial Nigeria, observes that the statutory definition in section 3 of the Interpretations Act included: '"a native of Nigeria" and a "native foreigner". Further, a "native foreigner" was defined as "any person (not being a native of Nigeria) whose parents are members of a tribe or tribes indigenous to some part of Africa and the descendants of such persons, and shall include any person one of whose parents was a member of such tribe". The point was no doubt to cast the net wide enough to catch within its fold every person with any trace of African ancestry. The objective was to arrive at a racial definition, not a cultural one'. This particularly astute observation applies to the case of southern Africa too by 1910.

communication on matters of mutual interest continued between administrators and the British. A major forum which facilitated contact was the Royal African Society, whose journal published reports about current affairs in Africa following their presentation to meetings of the Society in London. These reports covered a range of topics pertinent to Africa, including politics, geography, philology, agriculture and culture, and many were contributed by colonists and settlers as well as by travellers and colonial administrators. They provide interesting illustrations of the nomenclature used to communicate the state of the administration of African affairs to interested British audiences.

The following extract (11) is from a report compiled by H. E. Rawson of the findings of a Commission set the task of assessing the state of 'Native affairs' in South Africa on the eve of Union in 1910. The report illustrates the institutional appropriation of native as a label for the relevant office and officers responsible for governing all aspects of African lives: 'the Secretary for Native Affairs' (p. 147). Native is used specifically to refer to black African people in sense 5c, in contrast with reference to whites ('European'). The report also uses the term in a generic fashion—the Native—to refer to the African man, as in 'the increasing wants of the Native and of his family' (p. 148). The extract (11) is taken from the Commissioners' conclusion:

11. Finally the Commission have to record that from every quarter have been received most satisfactory reports of the general state and conduct of the <u>Native</u> people. That they are remarkably law- abiding is illustrated by the small number of police required for the administration of justice; in the Transkeian Territories, besides their own Headmen, there is on an average but one policeman to every four thousand of population. There has been little crime of a serious nature, and the percentage of convictions for drunkenness is extremely low. To their credit also be it said that they invariably respect the persons of European women and children left unprotected in their midst. Generally, the <u>Native</u> people are rising in the scale of civilisation; they are advancing intellectually; and by their loyalty, their obedience to the law, their large share in the industrial life of the country, and their direct and indirect contributions to the public revenue, they are responding worthily to the generous policy of this Colony in the <u>Administration of Native Affairs</u>. (H. E. Rawson, 1911: 149)

The administrative use of native, as illustrated in this extract, indicates that it is a standard part of the terminology for describing black South Africans, terminology for use in public by politicians and civil servants that is shared with organisations such as the Royal African Society and the Aborigines Protection Society.[17] The system of administration that Rhodes had inaugurated in the Cape Colony for 'Native Affairs' is alluded to in the reference made to the role of 'Headmen' in providing protection and policing in the Transkei territories. This system was refined in the new Union as institutional segregation (Mamdani, 1996: 77).

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[17] The terms Native and European were generally and widely used to distinguish blacks and whites in southern Africa at this time (Fitzmaurice, 2015). For example, the South African writer and journalist, Solomon T. Plaatje, who was the first secretary general of the South African National Native Congress (later the African National Congress) in 1912, published a book titled Native Life in South Africa, Before and Since the European War and the Boer Rebellion in 1916 (Willan, 2004). The terminology was not restricted to specific discourse communities at the turn of the twentieth century.

By 1926, when the Governor, Sir John Chancellor, and Prime Minister, Sir Charles Coghlan, of the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia addressed the Royal African Society, the terminology for describing the infrastructure of institutional segregation was well established. In extract (12), the juxtaposition of native races with white races and European races makes clear the focused reference of native to 'black African' in Southern Rhodesia:

12. I am certain that absolute segregation of the <u>native races</u>, that is, their removal entirely from all relationships and all contact with the <u>white race</u>, would be at once impracticable and disastrous. It would be economically impracticable, and the <u>European races</u> would suffer from complete segregation no less than the <u>natives</u>. But it would be disastrous to the <u>native</u> population, for it would condemn them to stagnation, moral, intellectual and material, and experience elsewhere in the world has shown that to keep the <u>African race</u> on the path of progress, the constant stimulus of contact with <u>European races</u> is essential. (1926: 3-4). [my emphasis—SF]

These two excerpts (11, 12) indicate the extent to which there is a distinction in colonial Africa, between two types of person, as Mamdani (2001:654) puts it, 'those indigenous and those not indigenous; in a word, natives and nonnatives'. Importantly, the system developed for administering the affairs of black Africans in most British colonies was one of indirect rule, carried out by a Native Authority, which comprised a hierarchy of tribal chiefs who were appointed from above (Mamdani, 1996: 53). The very clear distinction of citizen and subject was replicated in the separation of systems of education, justice, agriculture and administration for whites and blacks.

In the first half of the twentieth century, official government nomenclature underwent increased domestication or localisation so that native was used to classify a system of administration for the management of black Africans. In the colonial period in Rhodesia, the Native Affairs Department was the umbrella body responsible for African education whereas education for whites was the preserve of the Department of Education (Mlambo, 2014: 102). The 1936 Native Registration Act restricted the free movement of African people into and within urban areas, requiring African men to carry a pass proving authorisation to be in town (Mlambo, 2014: 109). Overseeing the implementation of the system of native administration was the Chief Native Commissioner. So, in Southern Rhodesia (and Northern Rhodesia) until 1957, native was a designation of administrative offices for African affairs.

The extent to which the language used in Rhodesia to classify people by race had become embedded locally is evidenced in contemporary notes on nomenclature in work published abroad. For instance, in a political review of the basis for the Central African Federation published in an American journal in 1957, the writer offers the following footnote: 'Traditional usage in Africa refers to whites as "Europeans" and to blacks as "Africans" or "Natives," even though a European may be native to Africa and is permanently settled there' (Albinski, 1957: 187). This footnote indicates that the writer is predisposed to construe native in sense 3 and that his own use contrasts with what he refers to as the 'traditional' use, 5c, which is new to him. The preface to a study of African education in Southern Rhodesia published in the USA in 1960 remarks on the terminology used to refer to black Africans:

13. 'African' refers to African Negroes. They form an overwhelming proportion of the population of Southern Rhodesia; and 'African' is the designation they prefer. 'Native' has been the official term hitherto applied to African Negroes; the Government, however, intends to change it to <u>African</u> in all laws. (African Affairs in Southern Rhodesia, 1957, p. v.) African development in education in Southern Rhodesia. Franklin Parker, 1960. International education monographs No. 2. Ohio State University Press.) [My emphasis—SF]

Parker's gloss for his American readership is instructive as he adopts a term that was, by the mid-twentieth century, associated particularly with American experience to refer to a black person: Negro. In light of the fact that in the 1960s African Americans were beginning to eschew Negro in favour of black, it is possible that Parker's language for construal is slightly old-fashioned by this time (see OED online negro s.v. 1.a.).[18] Examples (12) and (13) suggest that upon discovering a terminology with which they are unfamiliar, outsiders felt it was necessary to offer some glossing of the local language for their target readership, in the latter case, Americans.

In the 1950s, the public discourse of Rhodesian politicians like the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, in speeches and presentations designed for British audiences, displays an apprehension of the polysemy of native and the rhetorical work it can be used to perform. In excerpt (14), in a speech to a joint meeting of the Royal Empire Society and the Royal African Society in London, Huggins uses the phrase African natives. The head noun here is natives and by modifying it with African, the speaker invites the inference that African natives constitute one subset of the natives of Southern Rhodesia. In other words, it seems that Huggins' language anticipates the notion (expressed by Albinksi, 1957) that whites (Europeans) as well as blacks (Africans) are natives of this particular place. Thus Huggins uses native in sense 3, opening it up to interpretation as sense 3a ('a person born in a place, region or country') or as sense 3b ('a citizen'). By doing so, he challenges implicitly the notion that Southern Rhodesia should be considered a colony occupied by white settlers only temporarily. This is a notion that the white supremacist Rhodesian government challenged explicitly in 1965 in its unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) from Britain, which signalled the rejection of black majority rule as a precondition for independence. Strikingly, then, it is possible that Huggins's selection of native in sense 3 might be construed as an attempt to claim for whites as well as blacks, the status of legal and legitimate citizens of Southern Rhodesia. This use recalls the adoption of native by New Zealand-born whites to distinguish themselves from settler immigrants in the early twentieth century (see section 3). African thus simply serves to specify the referents:

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[18] The OED includes the following note to its updated 2003 entry of Negro: 'The term Negro remained the standard designation throughout the 17th to 19th centuries, and was still used as a standard designation, preferred by prominent black American campaigners such as W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, until the middle years of the 20th cent. With the rise of the Black Power movement in the 1960s, the designation black was reclaimed as an expression of racial pride and, since then, the term Negro (together with related terms such as Negress) has fallen from favour and is now typically regarded as out of date or even offensive in both British and American English. Negro is still, however, used in positive contexts as part of the names of certain organizations, particularly the United Negro College Fund, and in historical context, with reference to baseball's Negro Leagues.'

14. I would like at this stage to say that I know there are a few <u>African natives</u> who have risen out of their environment in one generation and they have become knowledgeable, highly civilised beings. These are the people <u>whom you see over here</u> and they are the people who can lead their community to a higher standard, and they are, from the <u>European</u> point of view, a problem because they are so different from most of their fellow-men. (Huggins, 1952: 146). [My emphasis—SF]

Huggins quite explicitly addresses his British audience ('you see over *here*'), seeking to characterise for them, the difference between highly educated Africans who, for example, travel to Britain and 'their fellow-men' who do not. Huggins thus highlights the state of 'the Native question' in Rhodesia in the 1950s and indirectly alludes to the preoccupation of legislators in Africa and in Britain with the matter of a small number of whites governing a large black majority.[19] In his address, Huggins offers for consideration as a successful plan, the example of 'Southern Rhodesia, where an attempt is being made to improve the lot of the Bantu people and, as they advance, increase their opportunities so that the races can live side by side in complete amity, each with its own social life, but working together in a common cause—the improvement in the lot of all the people' (Huggins, 1952: 144). Huggins adopts multiple terms to refer to blacks in Rhodesia, including native, African and Bantu, the latter a term more often associated with the nomenclature of the apartheid government of South Africa (see below). However, when Huggins mentions Southern Rhodesian whites, he refers to them either as Europeans, or by nationality alone without modification: 'the average Southern Rhodesian regards Rhodesia as his home and his children's home and he knows that if he wishes to stay in Africa he must carry the African with him' (Huggins, 1952: 146). Accordingly, in this presentation addressed to a British audience, the apparent polysemy of native is complicated by the use of apparent synonyms to refer to blacks in Rhodesia. Huggins uses native in sense 5c, but when he specifies the term with the adjective African, the head noun has the force of sense 3a or b, thus allowing the logical inference that the country also has 'Europeans' (whites) who are also natives. However, presumably because the expression European natives is opaque and misleading, he opts simply for Southern Rhodesian, and as illustrated in the quotation, juxtaposes this with African (see Fitzmaurice, 2015). He also uses African(s) ('black') alone, in juxtaposition with European ('white'). He also adopts Bantu to refer to blacks in colonial Rhodesia, a use encountered in South African discourse and thus a choice that invites the reasonable inference that Huggins had some sympathy with apartheid ideology.

If my reading of the motivation for selecting one sense over another for native in the political rhetoric of Southern Rhodesian politicians is reasonable in that it signifies in part, the

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[19] The president of the Royal African Society, Lord Hailey, concluded the meeting with the following statement: 'It is fortunate that in Central Africa the problem is in hands so wise as those of Sir Godfrey Huggins. I know something, moreover, at first hand of his attitude towards the interests of the Africans in Southern Rhodesia, and what I am about to say may perhaps be of comfort to those who are anxious about the representation of Native interests in the political organs of the future. The interest shown by Sir Godfrey in regard to Native affairs is not merely theoretical; he has shown again and again a very lively personal interest in African affairs, and a wide practical knowledge of their feelings and their needs. That knowledge has been gained by personal inquiry into the affairs of the African Reserves.' Note his use of the term Africans to refer to blacks in Southern Rhodesia at the same time as Native and African to specify the domain of the law, rights, etc. pertaining to Rhodesian blacks.

argument that whites as well as blacks might be native to Rhodesia, it is evident that the polysemy of native is especially complex. On the one hand, it follows that the formal removal of native to label offices and departments responsible specifically for the administration of black peoples' lives would be entirely logical. And indeed, in Rhodesia in 1960, the official terminology to refer to offices devoted to the management of the affairs of black Africans was changed so that officers like 'Native Commissioner' were renamed 'District Commissioner' and, in 1962, the 'Native Affairs Department' was renamed the 'Ministry of Internal Affairs'.

On the other hand, such a wholesale shift of nomenclature underlines the fact that the use of native to refer to blacks had come to be recognized as highly pejorative and offensive and indicative of the negative attitude towards the referent on the part of the speaker. In other words, it must have been regularly associated with significantly negative connotations for it to have been removed from the official administrative discourse. Importantly, while any reference (however implicit) to race and racial difference might have disappeared from job titles, the distinct administrative systems for blacks and whites remained intact in Rhodesia.

In South Africa, native was replaced by Bantu as an official racial designation in 1951, when the Nationalist Party government institutionalised apartheid.[20] At the centre of the apartheid system was the notion that South Africa's population was made up of four 'racial groups', namely, white, coloured (mixed race), Indian (Asian) and African (black). Verwoerd's government appropriated Bantu—the name given to the southern African group of Niger-Congo languages (Bleek, 1862)—and focussed it to label (South African) black people. It also adopted a neologism, Bantustans, to label groups of native reserves into territories that were to become 'homelands' for distinct African 'nations', differentiated by language and culture. In this way, the apartheid system involved the process of assigning distinct ethnicities to groups of within the parameter of race.[21] The old 'Native question' in South Africa was reframed in apartheid terms as the project of ensuring that the whites remained the 'supreme race', in Rhodes' terms, 'lords' over the subject races. Thus 'Bantu' society was constructed

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[20] Ashforth (2014:76) reports the treatment of native in official South African documents such as that of the Native Economic Commission, appointed in 1930 by the Minister for Native Affairs, in Annex 11 on terminology: 'This word is now in common use throughout the Union for the Bantu-speaking peoples, and in that sense has acquired the force of a proper noun. It is accordingly used widely in the Report, and is written with a capital initial letter. It is not a very suitable word, however, inasmuch as it excludes all other people who are likewise "native" to the country. It also leads to such contradictions as "indigenous Natives" and "foreign Natives"….The Commission has also employed the words Abantu (as a noun) and Bantu (as an adjective), which would be more suitable than Native for general use.' See Mamdani's observation on this apparent contradiction in footnote 12 above. Notwithstanding the comments of the Native Economic Commission on terminology, from the 1950s, Bantu was used as a noun and an adjective in the official and everyday discourse of white South Africans.

[21] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for remarks on the complexity of South African terminology and its history. I acknowledge that there is a terminological minefield for anyone who writes about southern Africa, and agree entirely that the imposition of ethnic classifications, racial categories and language names on the pre-colonial linguistic ecology of southern Africa, grounded in Western precepts and experience, had the effect of consolidating colonial control in southern Africa and provided a conceptual basis for apartheid in post-colonial South Africa. However, treatment of South Africa in particular is beyond the scope of this study as my focus is on Southern Rhodesia and its renegade successor state.

as heterogeneous, and reserves were created 'national homes' to accommodate the plurality of cultures represented by the ethnic divisions within African society (Ashforth, 2014: 153 ff). Ashforth notes:

> Within the 'Bantu' group of the human species the [Tomlinson] Commission found subgroups differentiated by language and 'general cultural characteristics' (1;7). Four major linguistic divisions—Nguni, Sotho, Venda, and Shangaan-Tonga—are noted, and the Report claims that 'culturally, there are points of similarity as well as difference between the various groups and their subgroups' (2;13). (2014: 159).

Ashforth observes that because the term native bore the suggestion of 'historical antecedence to European colonization', Bantu was taken to be 'more accurate' (Ashforth, 2014: 185, fn. 23).[22] Thus official South African discourse exchanged native for terminology designed to serve government policy, a vocabulary based on tribalism, which favoured the extension of indirect rule under apartheid. This vocabulary, as emblematic of apartheid, immediately acquired pejorative meaning.   In contrast, the Rhodesians exchanged native for African as the former term was perceived as increasingly offensive, paternalistic and anachronistic on the one hand and as implying that whites could not be citizens on the other. Regardless, they did not reform or abolish the institutional segregation and the method of administration used to manage the lives of blacks in Rhodesia. The middle of the twentieth century thus witnesses a palpable split in attitudes toward the use of language in southern Africa to describe black Africans and the institutions designed to govern them. English-speaking colonials and republican South Africans and Rhodesians drop the term in official discourse but not the administrative institutions so designated.

As evidenced from the discussion in this section, the discourse of politicians and administrators in southern Africa in the colonial period when directed at the British government and its agents reflects the domestication or localisation of their vocabulary. As native is key to the structure of British colonial administration in Africa, the term is increasingly focussed so that its primary sense is 5c, to describe black Africans. This common shared use by colonial and British administrations ends in 1960.

In 1960, the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, addressed a meeting of the joint Commonwealth Societies in London (13 April, 1960) about his tour of Britain's African dependencies earlier that year. His own language is significant as he uses African to refer to black Africans. Macmillan refers to distinct people in different parts of Africa by name, thus the 'Basuto' (197), and the 'Yorubas', 'Ibos' and 'Hausas' as he remarks on the benefits for Nigeria to bind these different 'peoples' together (195). He reports being 'strengthened and

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[22] Ashforth (2014: 185, fn. 23) quotes the comments of Secretary for Native Affairs, Dr Werner Eiselen in 1957 as follows: 'Because they attach so much value to their Bantu languages and also to a number of Bantu culture traits, the colourless appellation Native is gradually being replaced with Bantu, which is, moreover, an indication of the government policy to establish progressive Bantu communities'. A careful reading of Eiselen's ethnological writing and political speeches challenges the tenor of this quotation. Eiselen, a social anthropologist and Afrikaner nationalist public intellectual prior to taking up politics, was instrumental in developing a variety of anthropology ('volkekunde') grounded in his belief in racial science, racial segregation and Afrikaner nationalism (Bank, 2015).

encouraged to hear of the harmony between the African and European inhabitants' of Bechuanaland (197), and being impressed that 'in Southern Rhodesia the proportion of African children attending primary schools is higher than in any other country in the whole continent of Africa' (196). In the case of South Africa, he laments that the government 'believe in the separate social, economic and political development of the black or coloured South Africans' (Macmillan, 1960: 198). The question is what shaped this newly differentiated vocabulary to recount his African experiences to his compatriots as well as to signal the new tenor of British official discourse.

What marks the distinct split in the ideological, social and political discourse of British administrations and colonial administrations is the decolonisation of Africa as Britain withdrew from her various protectorates, territories and colonies between 1949 and 1979. On February 3, 1960, Harold Macmillan addressed the South African Parliament at the end of his momentous trip to Africa to warn that the 'winds of change' were blowing through Africa. With this explicit acknowledgment of the importance of African nationalism, he signalled the rapid dissolution of Britain's empire in Africa (Hargreaves, 1996: 204). The rise and development of popular nationalist movements across Africa challenged the Colonial Office's preparations for orderly imperial departure. Johnson (2003: 191) notes that 'when colonies had been taken over there was a general expectation that they would, under British rule of 'protection', develop into modernised states'. However, in the post-war world, Britain did not have the financial wherewithal to support the development of the colonies in readiness for independence. At the same time, there were considerable problems in setting timetables for departure and identifying the groups that would assume power. The basis of colonial administration was indirect rule, where traditional rulers (like chiefs and headmen) and their descendants were the local leaders (cf. section 6 above). Colonial administrators like Lord Hailey, were anxious to reform Native Authorities and entrench them in the constitutional structures of the colonies and train new African elites to assume government roles (Hargreaves, 1996 : 129). However, change was accelerated by the emergence of African middle classes, educated along Western lines and organised in nationalist political movements, who were prepared to fight colonial rule to achieve immediate self government notwithstanding the Colonial Office's plans (Johnson, 2003: 191).

Britain's protracted and troubled 'demission of responsibility' in Africa, as Hargreaves (1996: 221) terms it, was presaged by political unrest which was expensive for the British Government to tackle.[23] British troops were embroiled in the Mau Mau emergency in Kenya from 1952 to 1956; there were riots in Cameroun (1955) and emergencies in Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1959). Britain recalculated the timetable for departure and granted independence in swift succession to Cameroun, Togo, Nigeria and Mauritania in 1960; to Sierra Leone and Tanganyika in 1961; to Uganda, Malawi and Zambia in 1962; and to Kenya

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[23] Hargreaves (1996: 172) notes that early in his tenure as Prime Minister, Macmillan ordered a 'cost-benefit analysis of colonial policy: a survey of the progress of individual colonies towards independence, accompanied by "something like a profit and loss account for each of our colonial possessions, so that we may be better able to gauge whether, from the financial and economic point of view, we are likely to gain or lose by its departure".'

in 1963.[24] After the break-up of the Central African Federation, Northern Rhodesia became Zambia and Nyasaland became Malawi in 1964. The third member of the Federation, Southern Rhodesia, the white settler self-governing colony, unilaterally declared independence from Britain in November 1965 and styled itself the republic of Rhodesia. In 1960, white South Africans voted by a narrow margin to make the country a republic and in 1961, South Africa withdrew her application to join the newly created British Commonwealth.

These developments provide the crux for the disappearance of native from British nomenclature about Africa and its replacement in Rhodesian and South African nomenclature. Britain's administrative structure adjusted to take account of the changes in her overseas responsibilities. Harold Wilson, Labour Prime Minister, renamed the Dominions Office the Commonwealth Relations Office in 1964, which was subsequently renamed the Commonwealth Office, and now the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It was designated the office responsible for managing British relations with her former colonies, many of which became members of the Commonwealth of Nations (Banton, 2015: 9; Hargreaves, 1996: 221).

Accordingly, the complex contingent polysemy which renders the use of native is again underpinned by major events. By 1960, then, the semantic-pragmatic structure of the polysemy of native is both complex and contingent, such that the choice of the term betrays a particular ideological stance of the speaker or authority.

7.   **Concluding remarks**

By 1960, then, native [5c] had disappeared from public and official discourse of the Colonial Office on the one hand and from the administrative nomenclature of the governments of newly independent countries in Africa on the other. The term was replaced in official South African nomenclature by a label—Bantu—that was associated with the apartheid system which prolonged racial segregation until 1994. In official Rhodesian discourse, African was commonly used to refer exclusively to black people, and in government nomenclature, native was replaced by a series of euphemistic labels designed to mask continued institutional segregation under the white supremacist government. The examination of private discourses is beyond the scope of this study but suffice it to say that native remained in the private discourses of white Rhodesians along with a violent and highly raced lexicon for talking about people in Africa (Fitzmaurice, 2015).

It is evident that social factors condition the specialisation of particular meanings for particular groups of speakers. The Scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth-century inaugurated the relationship of European (non-native) and (African) native as citizen and

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[24] Decolonisation continued into the 1970s, with tiny colonies like the Gambia attaining independence in 1965, and those protectorates that were dependent upon South Africa, like Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Basutoland (Lesotho) gaining independence in 1966 and Swaziland in 1968 (Porter, 1996: 342-3).

subject in in southern Africa. It was the threshold of the imperial language the British developed for governing native subjects. This language was gradually focussed and domesticated in the colonial governments in Africa as settlers and colonists adopted and then localised the discourse of government.

The history of the lexicon of British colonial administration in late modern English shows how its polysemy might be understood in terms of the social and material circumstances of speakers operating in different settings with different ideological and cultural contexts within the very same period. Thus, native for British imperial administrators in the 1880s, for example, is construable as the inhabitants of foreign territories. Accordingly, in this period, British imperial subjects include the foreign-born natives of India, the Caribbean, New Zealand, Queensland and the Cape. Soon after, whites born in New Zealand and Australia identify as natives, distinguishing themselves from other natives (indigenous aboriginal people). These uses bear specific senses in particular locations for particular people. It is in this sense that native is contingently polysemous; for colonial administrators, native is the designation of indigenous subject peoples in Britain's overseas possessions; for New Zealand-born whites at the end of the nineteenth century, native primarily distinguishes them from new (European) settlers. In different contexts, these New Zealand-born whites may deploy native to talk about the Maori subjects. By 1910, in southern African discourse, natives are exclusively black Africans.

The moments at which British colonies become independent are key discursive thresholds of semantic change. They represent a major schism in the uses and attitudes towards language between the erstwhile colonial power and its colonial citizens. Indeed, Britain's demission of her African colonies in the second half of the twentieth century marks the disappearance of official British colonial discourse and the increasing distance from British administrative language of the language of government in southern Africa. This account indicates that the history of meaning can be grounded in social and cultural change in general in a principled way as well as in terms of key historical events.

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