

A HISTORY OF AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA, 1944 –
1979

BY

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own independent work and has not been previously submitted by me at another university or institution for any degree, diploma, or other qualification. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

Signed: _____

Tawanda Valentine Chambwe

Dedication

To my grandmother, the late Georgina Chambwe – Mururi, proprietor of Maunganidze Store in Chinhoyi. Your story of how you started this business inspires this study.

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Abstract

The thesis examines the development of African entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia between 1944 and 1979. Using previously underutilized sources in the study of African entrepreneurship, such as the Native Trade and Production Commission of Inquiry (1944), business site application bundles from the Native Affairs Department and *The African Businessman*, amongst others, it contends that colonial policy on African commerce was ambiguous and at times contradictory. For the most part, Africans operated in a restrictive legislative environment, but they were able to carve, a niche for themselves within the grey areas of colonial policy ambivalence, albeit in a limited way. In excuse for its failure to open up commercial space for African entrepreneurs, the state often pointed to African business illiteracy. However, this was a mere red herring for deeper colonial legislative and deliberate structural challenges such as limited freehold rights, lack of capital, and a racialised business landscape that restricted African participation. The responses of African traders ranged from litigation to forming business associations. They reveal their resilience and desire for economic independence in a colonial and racist environment. The study begins in 1944 because of the centrality of the Godlonton Commission of 1944 in discussing African entrepreneurship and ends in 1979 at the end of colonial rule. It analyses these stories through critical junctures in colonial Zimbabwe's past from 1944, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, and the 1970s-armed struggle, up until 1979 on the cusp of Independence.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, general dealer, mill, freehold title, business site, business partnerships, business literacy, trade, African trader, Cooperative Societies, Economic History, Business History, Southern Rhodesia, Colonial Zimbabwe.

Opsomming

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die ontwikkeling van Afrika entrepreneurskap in Suider Rhodesië tussen 1944 en 1979. Deur gebruik te maak voorheen onderbenutte bronne in die studie van Afrika entrepreneurskap, soos, onder ander, die *Native Trade and Production Commission of Inquiry* (1994), besigheidspersoneel aansoek-bondels van die *Native Affairs Department* and *The African Businessman*; dit voer aan dat koloniale beleid oor handel in Afrika dubbelsinnig en met tye teenstrydig was en dat Afrikane in 'n beperkte wetgewende omgewing geopereer het. Afrikane het vir hulself 'n nis uitgekerf binne die grys areas van die ambivalensie van koloniale beleid, alhoewel in 'n beperkte wyse. As verskoning vir sy mislukking op handelsruimtes oop te stel vir entrepreneurs van Afrika, het die staat dikwels na besigheidsongeletterdheid onder Afrikane verwys. Hierdie was egter bloot afleidings van die dieper koloniale wetgewende en strukturele uitdagings, soos die beperkte eiendomsregte, gebrek aan kapitaal, en 'n rasgedrewe besigheidslandskap wat Afrikane se deelname beperk het. Die uiteenlopende reaksies van handelaars in Afrika het gewissel van die gebruik van die wet, tot die formasie van besigheidsassosiasies onthul hul veerkragtigheid en drang vir ekonomiese onafhanklikheid in 'n koloniale en rassitiese omgewing. Hierdie studie vertel hierdie stories deur kritiese kruispunte in koloniale Zimbabwe se verlede, soos die post-Tweede Wêreldoorlog, die periode van die Federasie van Rhodesië en Nyasaland, die *Unilateral Declaration of Independence* (UDI), en die gewapende stryd van die 1970s.

Kernwoorde: Entrepreneurskap, algemene handelaar, meul, eiendomsreg, besigheidspersoneel, sakevennootskappe, sake geletterdheid, handel, Afrika-handelaar, koöperatiewe verenigings

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Acronyms

African Business Promotion Association	ABPA
African Trading Stores	ATS
African Transport Operators Association	ATOA
Associated Chamber of Commerce of Rhodesia	ACCOR
Association of Rhodesia Industries	ARnI
British South Africa Company	BSAC
British South Africa Police	BSAP
Bulawayo African Chamber of Commerce	BACC
Bulawayo Chamber of African Traders	BCAT
Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce	BCC
Bulawayo City Council	BCC
Central African Mutual Association	CAMA
Charter Traders` Association	CTA
Chief Native Commissioner	CNC
Community Development	CD
Director of Native Administration	DNA
District African Traders Association	SDATA
District Commissioner	DC
District Native Commissioner	DNC
Enkeldoorn and District Businessmen`s Association	EDBA
Financial Trust for Emergent Businessmen Company	FEBCO
Gwanda African Chamber of Commerce	GACA
Harari African Traders Association	Harari Chamber
Highfield African Traders Association	HATA
Industrial and Commercial Workers Union	ICU
Institute of Business	IOB
Land Apportionment Act	LAA
Land Tenure Act	LTA
Liquor Licencing Board	LLB

Lomagundi African Traders Association	LATA
Mashonaland Kaffir Truck Wholesalers Association	MKTWA
Member of Parliament	MP
Ministry of Internal Affairs	MIA
Mount Darwin African Traders Association	MATA
National Archives of Zimbabwe	NAZ
Native Affairs Department	NAD
Native Commissioner	NC
Native Land Board	NLB
Native Land Husbandry Act	NLHA
Native Missionary Conference	NMC
Native Production and Marketing Branch	NPMB
Native Purchase Areas	NPA
Native Reserves Trust Fund	NRTF
Native Trade and Production Commission of Inquiry	NTPC
Post Office Savings Bank	POSB
Progress Trading Company	PTA
Provincial Native Commissioner	PNC
Rhodesia African Chamber of Commerce	RACC
Rhodesia Bantu Trading Cooperative Society	RBTC
Rhodesia National Affairs Association	RNAA
Rhodesia Omnibus Company	ROC
Rhodesian Hide and Produce Company	RHPC
Road Service Board	RSB
Salisbury City Council	SCC
Small Industrial Advisory Services	SIAS
Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress	SRBC
Southern Rhodesia Native Association	SRNA
Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation	TILCOR
Tribal Trust Land	TTL

United Federal Party	UFP
Vehicle Inspection Department	VID
Wedza African Businessmen`s Association	WABA
Zimbabwe African Business Union	ZABU
Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army	ZANLA
Zimbabwe African National Union	ZANU
Zimbabwe African People`s Union	ZAPU
Zimbabwe People`s Revolutionary Army	ZIPRA

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Maps

Map 1



A map of Southern Rhodesia showing the administrative provinces c1970s

Source: <https://www.mapsland.com/africa/zimbabwe/large-detailed-administrative-divisions-map-of-southern-rhodesia-zimbabwe-1969>

Map 2



Present day map of Zimbabwe showing places and major roads.

Source: <https://www.mapsofworld.com/zimbabwe/road-map.h>

Places with new names after 1980

<u>Previous Name</u>	<u>Current Name</u>
Belingwe	Mberengwa
Fort Victoria	Masvingo
Gatooma	Kadoma
Gwelo	Gweru
Harari	Mbare
Hartley	Chegutu
Marrandelas	Marondera
Que Que	Kwekwe
Salisbury	Harare
Sinoia	Chinhoyi
Umtali	Mutare
Urungwe	Hurungwe
Wankie	Hwange

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction to Study

My interest in African entrepreneurship stems from my personal experience growing up working in my grandmother's general dealer store. My father and some of my uncles had, at one time during their childhood, also served behind the counter of Maunganidze Store. Ms Georgina Chambwe, my grandmother, was a great storyteller and enjoyed filling up the long hours in between serving customers by telling us how she had started her business during the 1970s. Her story was one of both struggle and success and remarkably so for a black woman during the 1970s and 1980s. Her first business was a joint venture with her husband in the small town of Sinoia in 1976. However, after divorcing her husband in 1977, she lost her stake in the business and had to start anew. Using a dressmaking certificate she had acquired from a Catholic training course in the Salisbury African township of Highfield in 1963, and a sewing machine she had bought during her marriage, Ms Chambwe opened a tailoring business just next door to her former husband's store.

Furthermore, she also got a loan of 20 Rhodesian Dollars (R\$) from her sister, who worked for the Salisbury City Council, which she used to buy clothing material for her business.¹ While her former husband's general dealer store went burst in 1978, her own business grew in leaps and bounds from a dressmaking venture to include a general dealer store and a liquor store by the mid-1980s. So remarkable was her success that in 1983, she bought her first car, a Renault R4, and another Renault 16 in 1984 together with a house in the Sinoia Township by the end of the 1980s decade. Her story is noteworthy given that not many women were in business during the colonial period nor owned property.² In addition, her business grew during the 1980s when other African enterprises started during the colonial period were foundering.³ In addition to her business interests, Ms Chambwe was also involved in the nationalist politics of the 1960s and 1970s as a member of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) where she played a role in the local politics. Her experiences

¹ The thesis uses pounds (£) for the period up to 1970 when the UDI state adopted the Rhodesian Dollar (R\$). For more on this see T. Nyamunda, 'Financing Rebellion: The Rhodesian State, Financial Policy and Exchange Control, 1962-1979', (PhD Thesis: University of the Free State, 2015).

² It was not until 1980 that the post colonial state moved to award women the right to own property. For more on this see T. Barnes, "'Am I a Man?': Gender and the Pass Laws in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930 – 80,' *African Studies Review*, 40, 1 (1997), 67.

³ S. D. Taylor, 'Race, Class and Patrimonialism in Zimbabwe,' in R. Joseph (ed) *State, Conflict and Democracy in Africa* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

led me to do this study for her story of business success and nationalist politics does not fit in the conventional narrative of business failure and collaboration with the colonial state characteristic of the depiction of African entrepreneurship in Zimbabwean historiography.⁴ Because of its rarity, my grandmother's story triggers the interest of academic inquiry into African business and entrepreneurship in colonial Zimbabwe.

Recent literature suggests a growing interest in African entrepreneurship, together with the indigenisation of post-colonial economies in an attempt to reverse the colonial legacy of the economic marginalisation of Africans by both post-colonial states and academics.⁵ However, these studies focus mainly on the post-colonial period, while those that centre on the colonial period place blame for the failure of African business ventures on the inexperience of African traders.⁶ The experiences of Ms Chambwe and many other African traders suggest otherwise, however. This study historicizes the experiences of African traders during the colonial period and unpacks the structural impediments militating against the development of African entrepreneurship.⁷ One of these was deep-seated colonial views about African entrepreneurial ability as the Native Commissioner (NC) for Bulawayo intimated to the Native Trade and Production Commission of Inquiry (Godlonton Commission) in 1944:

I am not in favour of cooperative trading in rural areas, but this should be our ultimate goal. The difficulties as regards finance, management, and the lack of commercial knowledge on the part of the African are almost insurmountable at the present. We are heading for disaster if such a system is introduced now. It will come in good time when the natives have developed more business acumen. In the meantime, let them be educated to this end by training themselves as

⁴ V. Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake: History and Business Culture of African Entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe*, (Harare, Baobab Books, 1997) and M. West, 'The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 965', (PhD Thesis: Harvard University, 1990). A detailed engagement with this scholarship is in the literature review section.

⁵ Literature that looks at African entrepreneurship and indigenisation in post-colonial Zimbabwe include Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake*, Taylor, 'Race, Class and Patrimonialism in Zimbabwe,' T. Nyamunda, 'The State and Black Business Development: The Small Enterprises Development Corporation and the Politics of Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment in Zimbabwe', *Historia*, 61, 1 (2016), M. Ndakaripa, 'State, Civil Society and the Politics of Economic Indigenisation in Zimbabwe, 1980 to 2016', (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2016). In South Africa there is work that looks at the experiences of the Black Economic Empowerment with indigenisation such as R. Southall, 'African Capitalism in Contemporary South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7:1 (1990), 38-70.

⁶ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake* and West, 'The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 965'.

⁷ Entrepreneurship in this study refers to the various forms of formal businesses that Africans were involved in during the colonial period.

general dealers, hawkers, and butchers in reserves, native areas, and native townships.⁸

This thesis demonstrates that ideas about ‘the lack of commercial knowledge’ among Africans became embedded in the colonial perceptions of African entrepreneurship. Some scholars such as Volker Wild and Michael West largely followed the same argument.⁹ This dissertation, therefore, challenges the idea that places the failure of African entrepreneurs solely on their shoulders. Admittedly, there were Africans who had poor business management skills. On a personal level, Ms Chambwe accounted for her success in business to good business practice whilst her erstwhile husband was the exact opposite. But business failure due to bad practice was not peculiar to Africans alone. Even Europeans failed on a similar basis. Besides, that there were Africans who succeeded despite the prejudicial perception that they lacked knowledge or had bad practices suggests that one needs to look beyond these factors.

Placing the blame squarely on Africans follows the general trope among colonial administrators of blaming Africans for the problems affecting them without taking cognisance of the colonial environment in which they were operating. This thesis thus examines, from 1944, the colonial atmosphere and the multiple effects it had on African entrepreneurship and commerce. The dissertation notes that colonial authorities’ focus on poor business management, such as the NC for Bulawayo, cited above, masked structural impediments that militated against the growth of African entrepreneurship throughout the colonial period. These handicaps come from the nature of the operating environment created by the state. The study posits that state policies towards African entrepreneurship were at times ambiguous and inhibitive and at other times they were enabling to the development of African entrepreneurship. Such contradictions, emanating from ambiguities of state policies, had a massive impact on the operational capacities of many African entrepreneurs. It affected the very nature of the business an African could embark on, access to trading sites in rural and urban areas and business licences as well as access to capital. By so doing, the thesis challenges studies that have pinned African business failure to business illiteracy and culture.¹⁰

⁸ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Written Memorandum, the Bulawayo NC to the Native Trade and Production Commission of Inquiry (NTPC), 19 July 1944.

⁹ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake* and West, ‘The African Middle-Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 965’.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

African traders were undoubtedly, victims of ambiguous colonial policies aimed at keeping their development in check. However, within this framework of policy ambiguity, African entrepreneurs, carved a niche for themselves to the extent that by the end of colonial rule, some prominent African entrepreneurs like Aiden Mwamuka, Roger Boka, Paul Matambanadzo and Solomon Tawengwa, to name a few, had establishments ranging from butchers and general stores, night clubs to fleets of buses and trucks. By the end of the colonial period, they had become important players in the colonial economy as this thesis will show. However, accumulating such wealth was no mean feat. Their successes were built on the foundations laid before the Second World War in the late 1930s into the 1940s decade onwards. The post-war generations just as the earlier generations, articulated their ideas about entrepreneurship in spite of the overbearing voice of the colonial state. They appropriated colonial platforms such as the Godlonton Commission of 1944 to speak to the colonial state and demanded their rights within a confined colonial environment. By the 1950s into the 1960s decade, this involved the use of the law through lawyers in litigation, their membership in the African Councils in the African reserves, and the voices of African Members of Parliament (MP). Business associations, such as the Mount Darwin Traders Association (MATA) (1962 -63), Zimbabwe African Business Union (ZABU) (1963 -64), Rhodesia African Chambers of Commerce (RACC) (1972 – 1979), and the African Business Promotion Association (ABPA) (1978 – 79) became an avenue of cooperating with but also critiquing the state as the tide of African nationalism began to swell.

The thesis follows several interrelated themes about African entrepreneurship over time. It examines ideas about African entrepreneurship and their relationship to colonial perceptions of African business knowledge. As pointed out, while the state's argument on the fortunes of businesses centred on business knowledge, the thesis contends that competition from established non-African traders and challenges over business sites in rural and urban areas mattered most. Contestations between the state and African entrepreneurs centred on the presence of non-African traders in rural areas and the allocations of business licences and business sites. White traders such as the African Trading Stores (ATS) continued to get preferential treatment in getting trading sites throughout the colonial period in spite of the stated objectives of the Land Apportionment Act or the recommendations of the Godlonton Commission.¹¹ The disruption brought about by the implementation of the Native Land

¹¹ During the late 1940s, white traders were consolidating their interests in the African reserves as this file confirms NAZ, S2385/514, CNC, African Trading Stores, Memorandum of Association of the African Trading Corporation

Husbandry Act (NLHA) from the 1950s onwards and the changes brought by CD in the post 1962 period made business sites spaces of contestation to the disadvantage of Africans interested in entrepreneurship in the African reserves.¹² The problem of accessing trading sites extended to African designated spaces such as urban townships. During the entire period under study, it was a mammoth task for Africans to get trading licences in comparison to their white and Indian counterparts. In the late 1950s and into the 1960s decade, the experiences of African traders, in their fight for freehold title articulated nationalist ideas that went beyond narrow sectoral interests as some studies suggest.¹³ This is detailed in Chapter 3 and 4.

Besides trading sites, access to credit had significant effects on African business fortunes. Indeed, throughout the period under review, African traders did not have formal access to credit. In part, this was because Africans did not have title deeds, which could be used as collateral to acquire loans. Moreover, the failure to obtain title deeds was closely linked to colonial land policies that were unfavourable to Africans. Even when they did not have formal access to credit, Africans did manage to grow their businesses, acquired capital from other sources. These included, for example, their savings and from some partnerships between African and white traders during the 1950s and early 1960s and formed various buying groups and at one time tried to form a bank of their own. Hence, the thesis will examine various ways in which Africans acquired capital, including the novel experiment of the African Loan and Development Company (ALDC) to fund African traders during the 1960s and together with its 1970s predecessors such as the Institute of Business (IOB), the Financial Trust for Emergent Businessmen Company (FEBCO) and the Small Industrial Advisory Services (SIAS).¹⁴ While the issues discussed thus far had a tremendous impact on African business fortunes, the 1970s

(Rhodesia) Limited, c1948. It was not until the intensification of the armed struggle during the 1970s that white traders left the African reserves. See *The Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 'Extinction looms for White Trader in Country Areas', 14 June 1979.

¹² For more on the impact of the NLHA and Community Development on Africans See J. Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893 – 2003* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2006), W. A. Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development, and State Making in Zimbabwe* (Ohio: Ohio University, 1998), W. Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions: Conservation and Development in Zimbabwe's South-East Lowveld* (Oxford: James Currey, 2007), M. Bratton, 'Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia,' *A Journal of Opinion*, 9, 1/2 (1979), 56-62.

¹³ While Michael West argues that the interests of African traders were homogeneous and largely sectorial, Munochiveyi encourages a more complex understanding of African nationalism as exhibiting multiple voices. For more on this please see West, 'The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 1965' and M. Munochiveyi, 'Becoming Zimbabwe From Below: Multiple Narratives of Zimbabwean Nationalism', *Critical African Studies*, 4, 6, (2011), 84-108.

¹⁴ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Business Aid Clinic Breakthrough', 4 October 1979.

war of liberation further imposed another challenge as African businesspersons, just as ordinary Africans, were caught between two warring armies as explained in Chapter 5.

A Survey of African Entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia up to 1944

This thesis is a historical investigation of African entrepreneurship in colonial Zimbabwe between the years 1944 and 1979.¹⁵ It begins in 1944 because of the centrality of the Native Marketing and Production Commission of Inquiry (Godlonton Commission) in discussing colonial ideas about African entrepreneurship and ends in 1979 at the end of the colonial period. But to understand the difficulties of African entrepreneurship from the Godlonton Commission onwards, a brief survey of African businesses ventures before the Godlonton Commission is necessary.

Colonial officials` rhetoric was unfavourable about African capacity to engage in business despite the African`s long history with commerce from the pre-colonial times to the early years of the colonial encounter. Trade with the outside world preceded colonialism with trade relations between the African peoples of the Zimbabwean plateau and the outside world dating back to the time of the Great Zimbabwe State. The literature on the Zimbabwean plateau polities by H. H. K. Bhila, David Beach, Stanley Mudenge, and Innocent Pikirayi has demonstrated that Shona polities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were partly organised around local and regional trade with the Portuguese, the Swahili, and Arabia.¹⁶ Although this trade advantaged Europe and Asia because of the skewed exchange patterns, Africans did exercise a measure of control over some of the terms of business.

One of the early polities of the Zimbabwe plateau, such as the Mapungubwe state (1100 – 1280), owed part of its success to the East Coast trade with the Swahili.¹⁷ Although there is

¹⁵ For the purposes of this study, African entrepreneurship comprises of general dealerships, wholesalers, mills, restaurants, butcheries, bottle stores, transport, garages, metal workshops, greengroceries, hotels, and bakeries amongst other forms of businesses.

¹⁶ For more on this see H. K., Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, (Harlow: 1982), D. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900 – 1850*, (Edinburgh: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), S. Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House; London: James Currey, 1988) and I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of Southern Zambian States* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture*, 113.

dispute over the centrality of trade in Mapungubwe's successor state, Great Zimbabwe (1290 – 1450), scholarship agrees that the polity controlled and 'regulated trade over a large portion of the plateau as an adjunct to its connection with the Swahili coast.'¹⁸ Other African states that followed the demise of Great Zimbabwe during the 15th century, such as the Mutapa State (1450 – 1900), the Torwa, and Rozvi States (1450 – 1860) had a more complicated commercial relationship with the Portuguese before the 18th century.¹⁹ The presence of the Portuguese on the Zimbabwean plateau created African elites who controlled the trade at the trading *feiras* dotted across the Zimbabwean plateau up to the Indian coast. During the 19th century, international trade became increasingly cosmopolitan in response to the economic upheaval happening in Europe during this time.²⁰ Consequently, bands of Europeans representing the Afrikaners, the English and the Portuguese from the East jostled to control trade with the Ndebele and the remnants of Rozvi and Torwa states.²¹ The endgame of these European powers was eventual colonial subjugation.

The societies of the plateau successfully took advantage of this period to trade hunting rights, ivory, and cattle for guns, horses, and an assortment of manufactured commodities. This phenomenon continued into the early years of colonialism with Africans accumulating wealth. Phimister observes that 'dominant classes among the Shona and Ndebele were able either to deploy established political and social authority or mobilize existing forms of wealth in order to concentrate accumulation in their own hands as far as possible.'²² The violent dispossessions that followed the 1893 Anglo/Matebele war and 1896 Chimurenga/Umvukela uprisings, together with taxation and forced labour that followed the introduction of colonial rule disrupted African capacity to engage in foreign trade advantageously.²³ Additionally, environmental calamities such as the rinderpest epidemic of 1896 reduced the number of African owned cattle and, therefore, their ability to trade and exchange.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 142.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 176 – 181 and 222 – 230.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 240.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² I. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890 – 1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London: Longman, 1988), 15.

²³ *Ibid*.

Notwithstanding, the capacity of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to impact and control African lives during its rule over Southern Rhodesia was at best patchy, and some Africans continued to produce for the market.²⁴ For example, the Shangwe people of Gokwe in Southern Rhodesia resisted incorporation into the wage market by focusing on cash crop production well into the colonial period.²⁵ They cultivated a local variant of tobacco known as *inyoka*, which they sold successfully among the locals.²⁶ The crop was so successful that European traders made sojourns into the area to buy the crop, and the Shangwe remained relatively uncaptured until well into the 1940s.²⁷ The examples above debunk the colonial narrative that Africans were uneconomic. On the contrary, Africans showed that they were economic beings who eked out an independent existence regardless of the exploitative nature of colonialism. However, the exploitative structure of the colonial economy ensured that the gains accruing to Africans were limited and of diminishing returns. Phimister captures this well in an example of Fort Victoria describing the trade between Africans and white settlers as ‘institutionalized ‘raiding’ of the peasant produce surplus for the ultimate benefit of the capitalist sector’ during the period of Company rule.²⁸ Ultimately, the colonial state managed to incapacitate the ability of Africans to participate in the colonial economy.

Equally important, the BSAC colonial imposition came with different ideas of doing business that excluded business practices that had made Africans successful before colonization. The BSAC’s Westminster style of administration came with demands on commerce that advantaged white settlers over Africans. The end of the 19th century was a period when Europe, having undergone a massive industrial revolution, celebrated the power and potential of the ‘firm’ and ‘company.’ The ‘company’ had already proved able as a vehicle of ‘effective occupation’ and economic exploitation in colonial Africa. Colonial belief in the Chandlerian firm was high in Southern Rhodesia even after the demise of the BSAC in 1923. This created colonial notions of how a business enterprise operated and informed colonial rhetoric on the

²⁴ These themes are explored in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977).

²⁵ B. Kosmin, ‘The Inyoka Tobacco Industry of the Shangwe People’, in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 276.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ I. Phimister ‘Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia’, in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 261.

position of Africans in business. However, Africans had effective business management systems developed during pre-colonial times that were different from the Chandlerian approach.²⁹ Nimi Warikombo asserts that these indigenous management systems came under attack from the colonial enterprise intent on exploiting Africa.³⁰ In Southern Rhodesia, this meant colonial demands to register a business and to have books of accounts necessary when applying for credit. Colonial business management systems, therefore, excluded Africans from participating fully in colonial commerce.

In addition to using 'new' business management systems, the colonial state and settlers also used statutory regulation to exclude Africans from participating fully in commerce. For example, settlers protested the decision by the British South Africa Company (BSAC)³¹ to award a building contract to an African in Salisbury in 1891.³² However, the first exclusionary instruments did not explicitly reference Africans but targeted traders of Indian descent since they posed an immediate threat to white traders. During the same decade, settler merchant commercial organisations such as the Tuli Trading Association and the Scottish African Corporation lobbied the BSAC to prevent Indian traders from setting shops in urban centres of Salisbury, Bulawayo, and Umtali.³³ For the greater part of the 1890s decade, the BSAC was able to stave off settler pressure to keep Asian traders from the main urban business centres such as Salisbury, Fort Victoria, and Bulawayo. However, by the turn of the century, the state began to cave into white trader demands. For example, the Immigration Restriction Ordinance of 1903 racially targeted Asians by declaring them *persona non grata*.³⁴ Furthermore, after 1904, the state began a process of not renewing trading sites occupied by Asian traders, and

²⁹ A. Chandler, *The Invisible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1977). Chandler's approach to studying economic history, which favoured the use large corporations as case study and by using their books of accounts as sources became known as the Chandlerian approach.

³⁰ See N. Wariboko, 'The Intersection of Religion and Business Behaviour in Africa', in Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola, (eds) *Black Business and Economic Power* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002) and N. Wariboko, 'The African World View and the Structure and Strategy of Traditional Business Enterprises: The Case of Kalabari of Southern Nigeria', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 8, 2 (1999), 18-50.

³¹ The British South Africa Company was formed by Cecil John Rhodes with the sole purpose of finding the Second Rand on the Zimbabwean plateau. In 1889, the Company was granted a Royal Charter to establish colonial structures on behalf of the British government. Its mandate over Southern Rhodesia ended in 1923 with the coming of Responsible Government.

³² P. Stigger, 'Minute Substance versus Substantial Fear: White Destitution and the shaping of Policy in Southern Rhodesia', in R. Morrell (ed.) *Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880 – 1940* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992), 144.

³³ *Ibid*, 145. – Indians were targeted mainly because they posed the greatest threat to white traders during the early colonial period.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

the net result was to force Asian and other settler minority traders, mostly of Jewish and Greek origin, into the African reserves where they did not compete with the politically powerful white traders.³⁵ The state found it easy to employ these discriminatory measures on African traders when they also began to threaten settler enterprises during the interwar period and beyond.

African responses to the introduction of the colonial economy over time led to rural differentiation as some Africans were able to accumulate wealth while others were forcibly absorbed into the colonial wage economy.³⁶ The ability to appropriate any of these options discussed in the preceding paragraph resulted in and was the result of rural differentiation. Thus, differences among the Africans affected how they responded to the state's attempt to curb the success of African agriculture. While some responded by increasing their agricultural productivity by tapping into their knowledge of farming and the landscape, others opted for new livelihoods altogether, such as wage labour or trading. Those with large herds of cattle, for instance, disposed of them for cash while others loaned them out to their neighbours as draught power. Nonetheless, the state further impoverished African livelihoods through the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) in 1930. The land act was a culmination of a process of land alienation that began in 1890 following colonial conquest.

Although the state purported that the LAA 'protected' African land rights, in reality, it was 'the Magna Carta of racial segregation' and underpinned the exploitative apparatus of the colonial state.³⁷ The state used this act to bar Africans from operating businesses in European areas, although white traders continued to trade in the African areas. Notwithstanding, some relatively affluent Africans, who had acquired wealth through rural entrepreneurship or wage employment, were able to buy up land under limited circumstances within the Native Purchase Areas (NPA) under the LAA. Here they operated under freehold land title and relatively unrestricted by official state harassment characteristic of the African reserves.³⁸ The NPAs

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ G. Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianisation of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia,' *The Journal of Development Studies*, 6, 3, (1970), 222.

³⁷ A. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 61.

³⁸ For a discussion of the Native Purchase Areas see P. S. Nyambara, 'Colonial Policy and Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1904-1953', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 33, 1, (2000), pp. 81-111, A. K. Shutt, 'Purchase Area Farmers and the Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia, c. 1931-1952,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1997), pp. 555-581 and A. P.

represented a paltry 7.8% of arable land compared to 51% under European control.³⁹ Peasant agriculture and rural differentiation discussed above are crucial in understanding the formation and nature of African businesses during the colonial period since it was mostly from the more successful peasant farmers and those working in towns that the class of business owners emerged.

By the 1930s, Indian and white wholesalers had emerged, supplying several traders working in the African reserves, mines, farms, and urban locations.⁴⁰ Some of these wholesalers, such as Lasovsky Bros, Kaufman & Co. and, Patel and Sons, had started as small retailers before building up to become the prominent suppliers of the 1940s.⁴¹ Entering the wholesale business was a difficult feat to achieve, and most traders remained small and running on marginal profits. In light of the impact of the Great Depression (1929-31), the retail trade in African areas became the preserve of white settlers without the capital to venture into agriculture and those willing to live in the harsh conditions of the African reserves.⁴² These traders tended to be of Jewish, Italian, or Indian origin.⁴³ The interests of the traders, like that of the other settler economic groups, found representation in pressure groups such as the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce (BBC), the Mashonaland Kaffir Truck Wholesalers Association (MKTWA). The state saw the traders as useful in extracting as much capital from the African reserves through the supply of manufactured goods and by marketing African agricultural commodities such as maize. Furthermore, the retail trade in African areas gave employment to many white settlers within the context of the poverty and unemployment caused by the Great Depression.⁴⁴ Equally important, the commerce in African areas formed a small part of the international trade connections that Southern Rhodesia had with Britain and the wider international community.

Cheater, *Idioms of Accumulation: Rural Development and Class Formation among Freeholders in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Mambo Press, 1984.)

³⁹ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 62.

⁴⁰ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/1/2/1, Oral evidence from Motibai P. Patel, by the NTPC, 30 June 1944.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² B. Kosmin, *Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community of Zimbabwe* (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1981), 12, 38 and 41.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ See NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from the Mashonaland Kaffir Truck Wholesalers Association (MKTWA) to the NTPC, 19 September 1944 and Memorandum from Sub-Committee Appointed by the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce (BBC) to Prepare Evidence for Submission to the NTPC, 9 September 1944.

The presence of non-African traders in commerce in the African areas did not mean the absence of African traders. Enterprising Africans found ways to compete with and to exist among white and Indian traders. Statistics from NCs` reports coupled with evidence submitted to the Godlonton Commission hints at some of the activities and magnitude of African entrepreneurs in the African reserves. Africans sometimes opted for the business that avoided direct competition with non-African entrepreneurs. For instance, the Location Superintendent for Bulawayo wrote to the Godlonton Commission, giving statistics of the African businesses in the Bulawayo African locations. He listed ‘forty general shops comprised of cycle repairers, shoe repairers, tailors, carpenters, barbers, watch repairers, Rhodesian products, tinsmith, bed, and mattress repairers.’⁴⁵ These commercial activities reflect, in no small measure, the extent to which the colonial state had barred Africans from participating in the more lucrative businesses. Consequently, Africans resigned to engage in activities that required a small capital investment or licences such as barbers, tinsmiths, and dressmaking.

At times, as the Godlonton Commission revealed, Africans did not always shy away from competing directly with non-African traders in the African reserves. CNC Henry Simmonds told the Godlonton Commission that, of the 204 general dealer stores registered in the African reserves, in Southern Rhodesia, African entrepreneurs owned 50, and they also dominated in areas such as hawking and butcheries.⁴⁶ For example, of the 113 butcheries operational in the African reserves, Africans owned 67% of them.⁴⁷ The dominance of Africans in the meat business is hardly surprising. As chapter three demonstrates, this was because of the colonial state`s destocking programme aimed at culling African cattle.⁴⁸ As a result, the Native Affairs Department (NAD) encouraged Africans to apply for butchery licences. What these statistics from the Bulawayo Native Administration and the NAD prove is that Africans were entrepreneurial and made the most of a difficult situation within the context of forced destocking. In the urban areas, Africans avoided direct European competition while in the

⁴⁵ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from the Location Superintendent, Bulawayo, the NTPC, 22 July 1944.

⁴⁶ Ibid, Memorandum from the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Simmonds, the NTPC, 22 July 1944 – A long time serving official of the NAD, Simmonds became CNC in 1940 replacing Charles Bullock. For more on the nature of the NAD before the 1940s see M. C. Steele, ‘The Foundations of a Native Policy: Southern Rhodesia, 1923 – 1933.’ (PhD Thesis: Simon Fraser University, 1972), 222.

⁴⁷ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from the CNC Simmonds, 22 July 1944.

⁴⁸ Destocking was a colonial campaign began during the 1930s with the aim of controlling environmental degradation by culling African cattle. As Historians of this subject have shown, destocking was a way of not only alienating African owned land but also of asserting colonial control. For more on this see Machingaidze, ‘Agrarian Change from Above’, 563-64, and A. Shutt, ‘The Settlers’ Cattle Complex: The Etiquette of Culling Cattle in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1938’, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (2002), 264.

African reserves; they took advantage of the opportunities that the colonial state programme of destocking offered to enter the meat industry. African proto-nationalist movements of the 1930s represented by the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) and the Southern Rhodesia African Missionary Conference protested the presence of Indian, European, and Chinese traders in African areas.⁴⁹ West argues that the prominent African figures of the time, such as Masocha Ndlovu and B. J. Mnyanda ‘sought to project black capitalists in the most favourable light’ as part of the racial upliftment movement of the time.⁵⁰

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that Africans were able to engage in various forms of entrepreneurship with some measure of success. During the pre-colonial period, commerce was organised in ways that were different from modern ideas of business that came with the colonial encounter. As Phimister and others have observed, some Africans were able to organise these indigenous forms of doing business to take advantage of the new openings created by the colonial encounter during the 1890s.⁵¹ Subsequently, the state actively attacked the ability of Africans to participate in commerce. This was especially so during the 1930s when the state, paranoid about African competition, came up with a raft of laws aimed at crippling the African position within the colonial economy.

Literature Review

The literature on colonial Zimbabwe has variously analysed the different types of African economic activities ranging from but not limited to, peasant agriculture, wage employment, the informal sector, and private business enterprises.⁵² Works on the latter includes inquiries into African peasantisation that emerged during the 1970s decade to the early 1980s, works on white and Indian traders that came out roughly the same period as the peasantisation literature and the socio-cultural studies of the 1990s decade. These works have arrived at differing and sometimes conflicting conclusions and by engaging this literature, I bring out the strengths and

⁴⁹ West, ‘The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 965’, 264.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 264 – These ideas are further developed in M. West, ‘Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift: The Rhetoric of African Business Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe’, *African Affairs*, 92, 367 (1993), 263-283.

⁵¹ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 15.

⁵² Informal sector here refers to illegal business enterprises managed by Africans such as beer brewing and Shabeens. The term informal economy itself emerged during the 1970 pointed to business activities that existed outside the orbit of official institutions. For more on this see for instance K. Hart, ‘The Informal Economy’, *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, 10, 2 (1985), 54 – 58.

limitations of each of the three-broad works of literature in the manner in which it handles the subject of African entrepreneurship. The overall objective is to explore new avenues of interrogation.

Historians David Beach and Stanley Mudenge, amongst others, set the tone for the development of Africanist literature that emerged during the 1970s decade that recasts the nature of African participation within the colonial economy.⁵³ Organised along the lines of the 'rise and fall thesis' popularised by Colin Bundy, which sought to account for the peasantisation of Africans in colonial Africa during the early colonial period. Key to this argument is the claim that that peasants managed to take advantage of the new markets created by the colonial economy to venture into primary commodity production.⁵⁴ In colonial Zimbabwe, this process was triggered by the mining economy of the first three decades of colonial rule and in South Africa by diamond and gold mining at Kimberley and the Witwatersrand respectively.⁵⁵ Works by Phimister and Bundy on colonial Zimbabwe and South Africa, respectively are concerned with disproving the colonial narrative that African economies were stagnant and incapable of producing for the market. Bundy finds compelling evidence of African ingenuity and adaptability to the new colonial economy among the peasants of Transkei, South Africa.⁵⁶ Phimister arrives at the same conclusion in his study of the process of peasantisation, and then depeasantisation, in Southern Rhodesia.⁵⁷ This literature is important in questioning the stereotype of the African trader that dominates the existing scholarly work on African entrepreneurship in colonial Zimbabwe.⁵⁸ It disproves the colonial narrative that Africans were incapable of engaging in entrepreneurship.

⁵³ Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900 – 1850*, D. Beach, 'The Shona Economy: Branches of Production' in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (Eds.) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902* and Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*.

⁵⁴ C. Bundy, 'The Transkei Peasantry, c.1890 – 1914: Passing through a Period of Stress', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (Eds.) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) and Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Bundy, 'The Transkei Peasantry, c.1890 – 1914'.

⁵⁷ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

⁵⁸ Wild, 'Profit not for Profit's Sake, Wild, 'Black Competition or White Resentment?' and West, 'Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift' and West, 'The African Middle-Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe.'

The period of relative prosperity among the peasant communities of Southern Africa and colonial Zimbabwe was short-lived. Primitive capital accumulation under the BSAC rule destroyed African agriculture and forced Africans into wage employment.⁵⁹ However, this process was uneven and affected African peasants differently. While it led to the impoverishment of particular communities and individuals, some remained unscathed. Both Phimister and Pius Nyambara provide exciting stories of prosperous peasants who rose above the rest to accumulate wealth.⁶⁰ At the same time, Barry Kosmin demonstrates how the Shangwe people managed to escape wage employment and continued to produce a local variety of tobacco successfully up to the start of the 1920s before going through a period of decline afterwards.⁶¹ Some of the more enterprising peasants managed to diversify into other forms of businesses, by moving into the Native Purchase Areas (NPAs) while others engaged in commerce.⁶² Peasant farmers sometimes owned and managed retail trade stores and mills in the African reserves and the NPAs. One of the challenges confronting African entrepreneurs was undercapitalisation. Formal financial institutions deemed Africans a credit risk. Thus, success in peasant agriculture became one of the common ways in which Africans could raise capital for business in spite of the colonial restrictions. This study builds on this literature which shows the ability of African traders to convert their success in agriculture into business in spite of the restrictive colonial environment as the thesis demonstrates in chapter 4 and 5.

In addition to the above, this work also draws on the scholarship that looks at the role and activities of white and Indian traders in colonial Zimbabwe by Barry Kosmin, Eira Kramer, and Timothy Burke.⁶³ Kosmin argues that the retail trade, with its low capital requirements, was an easy entry occupation for most minority white ethnic groups. More importantly, and as this study shows, the retail trade was characterised by complex trade networks that involved local and overseas manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers. Indian and white traders were successful because they controlled these trade networks. This literature is vital to this study

⁵⁹ Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective,' and Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*.

⁶⁰ Phimister, 'Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1890 – 1914', 262 and Nyambara, 'Colonial Policy and Peasant Cotton Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1904-1953', 85.

⁶¹ B. Kosmin, 'The Inyoka Tobacco Industry of the Shangwe People: The displacement of a Precolonial Economy in Southern Rhodesia, 1898 – 1938' in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (Eds.) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 279.

⁶² Cheater. *Idioms of Accumulation*, 104.

⁶³ Kosmin, *Majuta: A history of the Jewish community of Zimbabwe*, 11, and Kramer, 'The Evolution of Policy: Trade and Production in the Reserve Economy of Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 1952', (PhD Thesis, University of Zimbabwe) 47.

since it deals with a group of traders that provided competition to African entrepreneurs. Kosim's study goes up to 1943 while Kramer's Ph.D. thesis ends in 1952. However, this study adds to this literature by showing some of the activities of makes the case that white traders in African areas right up to the end of colonial rule.⁶⁴

The work on white and Indian traders sometimes tends to treat Africans as passive victims of unscrupulous white traders, unfairly dealt with by white retailers. Burke details how it was standard practice for white traders to short-change African consumers during the 1930s.⁶⁵ This study complicates this narrative, revealing how even some African traders also engaged in exploitative practices like their white and Indian counterparts. Another key aspect that emerges from the existing literature is the tough nature of the business environment, so much that even the relatively privileged white and Indian traders found it challenging to break even.⁶⁶ The sector was characterised by stiff competition, overtrading, and low margins of profit.⁶⁷ As this study demonstrates, this made it all the more difficult for African entrepreneurs to succeed, as they did not have the advantage of economies of scale and the links to international suppliers, as did the Indian and white traders.

This study also builds on the cultural literature that emerged during the 1990s. The cultural literature, which speaks to African entrepreneurship, includes work by Volker Wild, Angela Cheater, Timothy Burke, Elvis Muringayi, and Leslie Bessant.⁶⁸ Its prime focus and endeavour were to come up with a multiplicity of narratives that gave a more nuanced and balanced history of Africans. The cultural approach marked a shift from the Africanist narrative, with its focus on Marxist determinism, discussed earlier in the section. It covers a wide array of themes, from

⁶⁴ B. A. Kosmin, 'Ethnic and Commercial Relations in Southern Rhodesia: A socio-historic study of the Asian, Helene and Jewish Populations, 1898 – 1943,' (PhD Thesis: University of Rhodesia, 1974) and Kramer, 'The Evolution of Policy'.

⁶⁵ T. Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 72.

⁶⁶ Kismon, Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community of Zimbabwe, 41.

⁶⁷ The Rhodesian Parliamentary Debate, Trading Practices, 19 July 1972, Col. 1074.

⁶⁸ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake*, V. Wild, 'Black Competition or White Resentment? African Retailers in Salisbury 1935-1953', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 17, 2 (1991), 177-190, L. Bessant and E. Muringayi, 'Peasants, Businessmen, and Moral Economy in the Chiweshe Reserve, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930-1968', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 4 (Dec., 1993), 551-592 and Cheater, *Idioms of Accumulation*, M. O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2002) and Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women*.

the influence of culture on business, the African middle class, the role of pan-Africanism in business to consumerism, and advertisement targeting the African community.

Works by Volker Wild and Michael O. West examine African businesses in colonial Zimbabwe.⁶⁹ This study builds upon and differs in a significant way with these studies. Wild's work argues that culture was the biggest impediment to African entrepreneurship. Besides, his argument exonerates the colonial state as an obstacle to the development of African entrepreneurship but pins African failure to bad business practice. Challenging Wild's findings, the thesis makes the case that the colonial state was not indifferent to the development of African entrepreneurship. Wild argues that the state did not inhibit the development of African entrepreneurship but insisted on good business practice. If anything, the state erected structures that excluded Africans from profitable ventures that would challenge white enterprises. It only allowed attempts by Africans to pursue an independent economic occupation very circumscribed conditions determined by various colonial legislation. This ambiguity in policy was the result of the changes that occurred within the socio, political, and economic landscape of Zimbabwe. Thus, by looking at the development of African entrepreneurship over time, this study is at a vantage point to trace the nature of these ambiguities and contradictions in state policy with regards to African entrepreneurship.

On the cultural aspects of business, Wild concludes, in his 1998 study that Africans ran their enterprises 'not for profit's sake.'⁷⁰ He contends that African entrepreneurs could not grow or reinvest their profits, spending the money they made on 'hedonistic pursuits.'⁷¹ He further blames this on a culturally influenced African business concept determined by kith and kin relations, hand to mouth management, superstition, and poor business management in general. Wild arrives at these conclusions partly because of his use of anthropological tools in his study of African entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe. Wild's ideas on African entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe are akin to the cattle complex theory, which argued that Africans kept cattle for their symbolism and status and not for economic reasons, which has also been refuted and

⁶⁹ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake*, Wild, 'Black Competition or White Resentment?' and West, 'Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift' and West, 'The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe.'

⁷⁰ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake*.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 155.

dismissed.⁷² In any case, Wild's work followed the generally trope of what D. Clarke described and dismissed as early as 1979 as the 'cultural rhetoric model' which he categorised as comprising of writers:

Who have sought to explain the differential economic position of Black and White in Rhodesia in strong culturalist terms. Reader, for instance, has argued that 'Europeans do not acquire their occupational expertise so much from their formal education as from the general cultural milieu in which they are reared. Not only are they exposed to western technology from the earliest possible moment, but they grow up in an atmosphere of a profit-maximising, production-oriented, monetary culture'. In short, they are born capitalists. Whites, it is argued, acquire their skills from birth and almost 'unconsciously from growing up in a European environment'⁷³

In contrast, this study shows that culture was ever evolving. In doing so, it builds upon studies on peasantisation referred to in the previous paragraphs that make a case that Africans made rationale economic decisions.⁷⁴ Wild's views on these matters are not dissimilar to those of West. In accounting for the failure of African enterprises, West opines that:

Chief among these, and not unrelated to the external factors, was ignorance of elementary business techniques by far too many Africans venturing into the field of business. Various observers, from government officials to concerned Africans, agreed that this was a severe barrier to the advancement of black capitalism.⁷⁵

This thesis challenges these views and demonstrates that the colonial state's overfocus on African business skills masked its deliberate failure to promote African entrepreneurship. As this thesis demonstrates, African enterprises failed because they lacked freehold title, credit facilities and from competition from European enterprises.

Literature that looks at African entrepreneurship from the rest of Africa was also useful in constructing this study. Colonial West Africa, for instance, had a more successful African business class in comparison to Southern Africa. In West Africa, Africans did not only produce primary export commodities such as cocoa and palm products but were just as instrumental in

⁷² M. J. Herskovits, 'The Cattle Complex in East Africa, *American Anthropologist*', *New Series*, 28, 1 (1926), 230-272.

⁷³ D. G. Clarke, 'Settler Ideology and African Underdevelopment in Post-war Rhodesia, *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics, The Quarterly Journal of the Rhodesian Economic Society*, 8, 1, (1974), 17.

⁷⁴ Bessant and Muringayi, 'Peasants, Businessmen, and Moral Economy in the Chiweshe Reserve', *Cheater, Idioms of Accumulation*.

⁷⁵ West, 'The African Middle-Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe', 304.

their distribution and marketing in exchange for import-manufactured commodities.⁷⁶ Andrew Beveridge, Galvin Kitching, and Joey Powers have written on the history of African entrepreneurship in Zambia, Kenya, and Malawi.⁷⁷ Beveridge traces the development of African businesses during the colonial period and the first few years of independence while Kitching uses Marxist theory to understand the class formations (including African entrepreneurs) in colonial Kenya, with African traders a part of a network that syphoned resources out of Kenya.⁷⁸ Joey Power looks at the experiences of Africans in business development in Nyasaland and notes that there was a delicate balance between ‘individual’ ideas about business and traditional concepts of wealth.⁷⁹

Sean Maliehe looks at the strategies that African traders in colonial Lesotho took to establish space for themselves in an environment dominated by European trading firms. As this study will show, some African traders in Southern Rhodesia often resorted to some of these networks as a gateway into business.⁸⁰ These studies are essential in appreciating African business development in Zimbabwe since African entrepreneurs across colonial Africa went through almost similar experiences. These challenges included lack of capital, competition from Indian traders, and government ambivalence, amongst others. The work by Maliehe on Lesotho demonstrates that the experiences of African traders in colonial Zimbabwe were similar to those of traders in places such as Lesotho. The literature on South Africa is also significant to this study. The most critical studies on African entrepreneurship are those by Leo Kuper and Roger Southall with their focus on class formation in South Africa before the apartheid period leading the way.⁸¹ For Kuper, although entrepreneurship was one of the many ways apart from education, religion, and civil service employment that Africans became part of the bourgeoisie, they faced a myriad of restrictions that made it difficult to succeed in business.⁸² Southall, on

⁷⁶ R. Alence, ‘The 1937-1938 Gold Coast Cocoa Crisis: The Political Economy of Commercial Stalemate’, *African Economic History*, 19 (1990 - 1991), 77-104 and P. Bauer, ‘Origins of the Statutory Export Monopolies of British West Africa’, *The Business History Review*, 28, 3 (Sep., 1954), 197-213.

⁷⁷ A. Beveridge, ‘Economic Independence, Indigenization, and the African Businessman: Some Effects of Zambia's Economic Reforms’, *African Studies Review*, 17, 3 (Dec., 1974), 477-490, G. Kitching, *Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petite Bourgeoisie, 1905-1970*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) and J. Power, ‘Individual Enterprise and Enterprising Individuals: African Entrepreneurship in Blantyre and Limbe, 1907 – 1953’, (PhD Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1990).

⁷⁸ Kitching, *Class and Economic Change in Kenya*, 165.

⁷⁹ Power, ‘Individual Enterprise and Enterprising Individuals’, 399.

⁸⁰ S. Maliehe, ‘An Obscured Narrative in the Political Economy of Colonial Commerce in Lesotho, 1870–1966’, *Historia* 59, 2, (2014), 44.

⁸¹ L. Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie: Race, Class, and Politics in South Africa*, (New Haven, 1965).

⁸² *Ibid*, 282.

the other hand, focuses on the effect of apartheid on African entrepreneurship. He argues that apartheid's impact on African entrepreneurship was not even with the period of high apartheid characterised by gains for African businesses.⁸³ Southall and Lucky Mathebe, and S. Motsuenyane write on the role of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce (NAFCOC) in promoting African businesses in South Africa.⁸⁴ NAFCOC played a very instrumental role in lobbying the state and other African entrepreneurs. These works are essential in understanding and drawing comparisons with the role of business associations such as ZABU, RACC and the ABPA in the development of African businesses in Zimbabwe. These business associations played a critical role as the voice of African entrepreneurs during the years of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Ian Smith's UDI.

In addition to the above, the thesis also complicates the scholarship on African nationalism in colonial Zimbabwe by interrogating the role of African entrepreneurship in the struggle against colonialism. It does this by reimagining the place of African traders in Southern Rhodesia and engages literature on African nationalism that depicts African traders as an aloof middle class that shunned politics and sought accommodation with the colonial state.⁸⁵ On the contrary, African entrepreneurs were just as involved in politics as were workers, peasants, and the educated elite. In engaging the colonial state, nationalist literature claims that African nationalists were more confrontational compared to their compatriots in business.⁸⁶ This study demonstrates that African entrepreneurs also spoke the language of nationalism just as forcefully. In making this argument, the thesis draws from Munyaradzi Munochiveyi, who cautioned against viewing African nationalism as monolithic.⁸⁷ According to Munochiveyi, Zimbabwe's nationalist history should be re-inscribed with 'multiple, diverse, and complex historical subjects.'⁸⁸ As Munochiveyi emphasises

But personalized experiences of colonialism, such as confronting the job colour bar, provided unique moments for him and others to intellectually question

⁸³ Southall, 'African Capitalism in Contemporary South Africa', 40.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 49 and L. Mathebe, 'Black Entrepreneurship and the Origins of NAFCOC (1920 – 1980)', MA Dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, 1994 and S. M. Motsuenyane, *A testament of hope / the autobiography of Dr Sam Motsuenyane* (Johannesburg: KMM Review, 2011).

⁸⁵ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*.

⁸⁶ For an insight in the historiographical turns in the study of African nationalism in colonial Zimbabwe, see the seminal works by B. Raftopoulos, 'Problematizing Nationalism in Zimbabwe: A Historiographical Review', *Zambezia*, 26, 2, (1999), 115-134 and I. Phimister, 'Zimbabwean Economic and Social Historiography since 1970', *African Affairs*, 78, 311 (Apr., 1979), 253-268.

⁸⁷ Munochiveyi, 'Becoming Zimbabwe From Below.'

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 103.

white privilege, colonial subordination, and racialism. This personal intellectual work, intertwined with the social positions of most Africans during Rhodesian rule, is critical to any assessment of the early and later periods of Zimbabwean nationalism.⁸⁹

This study adds to this multiplicity of views by focusing on African businesspeople, one of the many strands of African nationalism. By reimagining African entrepreneurs as key actors in the nationalist struggle, this thesis also takes a cue from Allison Shutt's position on previously ostracised individuals like Jasper Savanhu, who, like African traders, had to articulate nationalism under "tight corners" in the context of the labour movement.⁹⁰

I foreground the role of African business in politics and engage literature on African nationalism and the formation of labour and political organisations. This scholarship has focused on the main political and labour movements such as the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), the ZAPU, and the Southern Rhodesia African Trade Union Congress.⁹¹ The work that exists on African entrepreneurship has stressed that African business associations were regional and represented limited class interests. West, for example, argues that business associations such as the Bulawayo Chamber of African Traders (BCAT) and the Salisbury and District African Traders Association (SDATA) were sectorial in their demands. As a result, he argues, they engaged local authorities on specific grievances such as informal African hawkers and 'white-owned bakeries making retail sales in the African townships, cutting into a market hitherto dominated by African general dealers.'⁹² However, silent in this literature on African nationalism and business associations is the less-known formations such as the ZABU, MATA, and RACC and their leaders such as J. Munyoro. More important, were the connections in leadership that existed between the political organisations and the business associations of the late 1950s to the 1960s. For instance, Josiah Chinamano, journalist and prominent African nationalist, headed ZABU at the same time as he was deeply involved in African nationalist politics. The activities of African business associations give new insights into the commercial

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 88.

⁹⁰ A. Shutt, 'Writing Jasper Savanhu's biography from his Awkward Self-Narratives', *African Studies*, 78, 2, (2019), 220.

⁹¹ For more on this see B. Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1945 – 1965' in Raftopoulos B. and I. Phimister (Eds), *Keep On Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1900 – 97* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1997), 72 and Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 145 and T. Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940 – 1964* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2008).

⁹² West, 'The African Middle-Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 965', 292.

side of African nationalist politics compared to how African traders are portrayed in the conventional literature on African nationalism.

This thesis also takes a cue from Norma Kriger`s work on the war of liberation that argues that guerrillas used intimidation and coercion to gain support from the masses, which included African traders.⁹³ Recently, Nathaniel Chimhete`s take on ZANLA activity in the Melsetter area of Southern Rhodesia has demonstrated the acrimonious relationship that sometimes characterized the relations between guerrillas and African civilians in the African reserves. The latter, Chimhete opines, depicted their experiences through songs that denigrated the guerrillas.⁹⁴ On the contrary, Julie Frederikse shows that business owners were enthusiastic in their support of the liberation struggle.⁹⁵ Consequently, this thesis contributes to an ever-growing body of literature that challenges the linear narratives of the armed struggle that depicts relations between nationalist fighters and African civilians as harmonious.⁹⁶

Equally, central to this study is literature that analyses the nature of the colonial administration of Africans in the African reserves. The works by Diana Jeater and Allison Shutt, for instance, reconstructs the everyday interactions of Africans with colonial administrators and their interlocutors.⁹⁷ Jeater`s work on the attempts by missionaries, settlers, and colonial officials to translate the bible into vernacular languages and to exert their authority over Africans resulted in the creation of the ‘native mind’ with Europeans as African experts.⁹⁸ Jeater`s expose of how NCs became experts of Africans is essential in understanding how African notions of business became second fiddle to colonial ideas about business. Shutt on the other hand, shows how colonial patronage worked in the interactions between colonial officials and Africans.⁹⁹

⁹³ N. Kriger, *Zimbabwe`s Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁹⁴ N. Chimhete, “‘Pasi nemakomoredzi—ii!’ (Down with comrades!): ZANLA guerrilla fighters – civilian relations in Gudyanga, Melsetter, Rhodesia, 1975–1980’, *Critical African Studies*, (2019), 14.

⁹⁵ J. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves: Masses vs Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), 69, 94, 95, 125 and 129.

⁹⁶ For more on this literature see T. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War: A Comparative Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), D. Lan, *Guns and Rains: Guerrilla and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985) and K. D. Manungo ‘The Role of Peasants Played in Zimbabwe`s War of Liberation with Special Emphasis on Chiweshe District’, (PhD Thesis: Ohio University, 1991).

⁹⁷ D. Jeater, *Law, Language, and Science The Invention of the “Native Mind” in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1930* (London: Heinemann, 2006) and A. Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation: Racial Etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910 – 1963* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2015).

⁹⁸ Jeater, *Law, Language, and Science*.

⁹⁹ Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*.

Colonial patronage is central in the construction of this thesis since colonial officials used this to map their understanding of Africans to engage in business and to deny or reward some Africans with business sites. Equally critical in understanding the politics around trading site allocation in the African reserves is the work by Jocelyn Alexander, William Munro, and Michael Bratton.¹⁰⁰ Alexander demonstrates how there was an implosion in the NAD as a result of the changes brought by the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA), which created internal conflicts.¹⁰¹ With the abolishing of NLHA at the end of the federal period, its successor statutory instruments created space for Community Development (CD), which created challenges for African traders.¹⁰² Munro articulates that the colonial state during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period

Seized on the community development language of “self-reliance” to disengage the state from rural development and to refract accountability through traditional authorities by focusing local conceptions of rights and civic responsibilities on those authorities. But it did not loosen the bonds of strict social control by DCs. Consequently, this policy intensified rather than mitigated local political struggles, resulting in policy paralysis.¹⁰³

For African traders, as this thesis shows, it became a challenge to obtain trading sites from African chiefs or to negotiate for freehold title. Hence the traction gained on this front during the federal period was lost. For the government, this was a convenient way to escape discussing the amending of the LAA.

Methodology and Sources

This study employs a qualitative research methodological approach relying on archival and oral sources. The study sourced most of the archival material from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), the Herald House, and the Government Collections of the University of Zimbabwe. The files comprised of the written and oral evidence of the Godlonton Commission together with correspondences and annual reports from the NAD, ranging from the 1940s to the early 1960s. The NAD material also included African Council minutes from particular districts and years. In addition, the files comprised of annual reports of the Salisbury Director

¹⁰⁰ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, and Bratton, ‘Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia’.

¹⁰¹ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.

¹⁰² Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State* and Bratton, ‘Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia’.

¹⁰³ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, 144.

of Native Affairs (DNA) from the 1950s to the early 1960s. The material on Salisbury contained the correspondence over business sites from the Native Superintendent for Highfield from 1958 to 1962. Complementing this range of archival material are newspapers, periodicals, and magazines. In addition to drawing on *The African Daily News*, *The National Observer*, *The Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, *The Bantu Mirror*, and *The Zimbabwe Times*, amongst others, the thesis uses *The African Businessman* (1961 – 1969), which contains detailed information on the activities of African traders during the 1960s, as a key source. *The Rhodesia Herald* and *The Rhodesia Sunday Mail* (1965 – 1979) were critical in piecing together the 1970s story. The thesis also uses legislative assembly debates from the 1950s onwards with an eye on contributions by African legislators. African parliamentarians, some of them traders, identified with the interests of African entrepreneurs hence they are a legitimate source into understanding the experiences of African traders during the period under review. For an insight into some of the experiences of African traders during the 1970s-armed struggle, the thesis draws upon oral narratives with African entrepreneurs and their siblings and children.

The nature of the archival material presents advantages and challenges that partly shape the structure of the thesis. The Godlonton Commission is critical as a source for historians of colonial administration, agriculture, and those seeking to understand colonial conservation or the genesis of the NLHA in Southern Rhodesia.¹⁰⁴ However, before this thesis, no significant work had used the Godlonton Commission's oral and written testimonies to understand the nature of colonial perceptions on African entrepreneurship. The thesis also draws on NAD material that includes annual reports, correspondences, and African Council minutes together with some extracts from the Bantu Mirror. The annual reports of the NAD contain references to African traders, whereas the files on trading sites carry correspondences with conversations on the politics of business licencing in the African reserves. The application for lease site bundles contain, until now, were unused material on the contestations that accompanied lease site allocation. The material gives a unique perspective on how and why NCs excluded Africans from entrepreneurship in the African reserves. The Salisbury and Bulawayo Director of Native Administration (DNA) annual reports, together with the correspondences from the Superintendent of Natives for Highfield, provide a picture of the African business landscape in

¹⁰⁴ Several works, not least, Kramer, 'The Evolution of Policy', V. Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from Above: The Southern Rhodesia Native Land Husbandry Act and African Response', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1991), 557-588 and Alexander, *The Unsettled Land* draw upon this very important source.

the colony's African townships during the federal period. In discussing matters of African administration, colonial officials reveal, through the Godlonton Commission and the business site bundles, the impact of colonial ambiguity on African entrepreneurship. Thus, the thesis uses the colonial archive creatively and by reading it 'against the grain' to reconstruct the experiences of African entrepreneurs during the 1940s, 50s and early 1960s.¹⁰⁵ As A. Stoler framed it

In reading "upper-class sources upside down", we sought to read against the languages of rule and statist perceptions. "Un-State-d" histories were to demonstrate more than the warped reality of official knowledge, to elucidate their textual properties and the violences condoned by such political distortions.¹⁰⁶

For example, although the Godlonton Commission and the NAD correspondences on business sites carried colonial narratives also inherent in them are stories that highlight African trader agency.

Government records at the NAZ on African entrepreneurship go up to the early 1960s and miss the crucial years leading to the end of the federal period and the 1970s. As a solution to this archival limit, the study uses *The African Businessman* as a key source. The weekly paper was run by the African Newspapers, the publishers of *African Daily News*, and was most active between 1961 and 1963.¹⁰⁷ *The African Businessman* was to African entrepreneurship what *The African Daily News* was to African nationalist politics. Edited by Elias Rusike, and commanding a wide readership among the business community and the state, the paper carried insightful reports of the everyday experiences of African traders in Highfield, Harari, Bulawayo, and some African reserves such as Mt Darwin.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, this also presents challenges in that, like most newspapers covering African issues, the paper mostly covered Africans in urban areas. The paper gave generous space to African traders, and its editorials and letters to the editor commented on colonial policy on African entrepreneurship. The paper also holds the only record of the activities of the ALDC and the African business association movement of the 1960s and discussed in chapter four. After 1963, it became a monthly, and its

¹⁰⁵ For more on the challenges presented by the colonial archive see A. L. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 46 – 47.

¹⁰⁶ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 47.

¹⁰⁷ S. Dombo, 'African Newspapers Limited and the growth of Newspapers for Africans in Southern Rhodesia', *Media History*, (2016), 1 – 25.

¹⁰⁸ Elias Rusike was one of the veteran journalists in Zimbabwe and went on to publish top independent newspapers in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

content became less political as the UDI regime moved in to curb dissent within the media.¹⁰⁹ Thus it joined a host of other newspapers, such as ‘The Daily News, Chapupu, Dissent, The Zimbabwe Sun, The Gonakudzingwa News, and the African Home News’¹¹⁰, which were either banned or censored after 1964 following the shift in white politics in Southern Rhodesia. Despite the paper's obvious importance, the current literature on the African middle class and entrepreneurship does not use this source. Because of the censoring of the paper after 1963 and its folding in 1969, the story of the African business association movement is no longer as detailed. Although, newspapers such as *The Rhodesia Herald* covered news of RACC and the ABPA during the 1970s, the stories do not carry as much information compared to the coverage of *The African Businessman* during the early 1960s. Notwithstanding, *The Rhodesia Herald* is important in reconstructing the experiences of African entrepreneurs during the late 1960s and 1970s period.

The 1970s-decade chapter draws on many sources, which include multiple newspapers such as *Moto*, *National Observer*, *The African Times* and *The Zimbabwe Times*, TILCOR annual reports, and some African Council minutes from the District Commissioner. While *The Rhodesia Herald* of the 1960s rarely covered African entrepreneurship, this had changed somewhat during the 1970s, with African traders receiving some coverage in the colonial mouthpiece. This shift is accounted for by the paper's interests in the African middle class because of the shift in politics during the 1970s in response to the threat of decolonisation. However, to piece together the experiences of African traders with the liberation war, the thesis draws on oral narratives from African traders, their siblings, and children. Although the study carried out several interviews with African entrepreneurs, most of the information that the participants revealed was already well said in the written primary sources save for the insights they brought to the armed struggle. Consequently, oral narratives contribute to piecing together the experiences of African traders with the war. However, informants were sometimes reluctant to talk about their experiences during the war and in the case of the children of African traders, they tended to repeat the comfortable trope of how African traders aided the liberation armed struggle. To counter this bias, attributed to memory, selection and even forgetfulness, the study attempted to steer the line of conversation towards the armed struggle.

¹⁰⁹ Dombo, ‘African Newspapers Limited’, 20.

¹¹⁰ A. King, ‘The Central African Examiner, 1957 – 1965,’ *Zambezia*, 23, 2, (1996), 134.

Thesis Structure

Chapter two examines ideas and rhetoric on African entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia as they were reflected upon by the Godlonton Commission in 1944. It contends that colonial rhetoric undermined capacity to engage in business, over and above the legislative and exploitative apparatus of colonialism, to exclude Africans from participating in commerce. The chapter observes that in 1944, the Godlonton Commission brought to national discourse African entrepreneurship and exposed the colonial rhetoric on African business literacy. The chapter draws evidence from the testimonies of NAD officials, liberal whites such as Rev Ibbotson, white business interests, and Africans. The chapter contributes to the historiography on African entrepreneurship by showing how colonial rhetoric on the ability of Africans to engage in business shaped colonial policy on African entrepreneurship.

Chapter three analyses the politics and contestations that accompanied the allocation of business sites in the African reserves between 1945 and 1955. It argues that the business sites became a space of conflict pitting officials in the NAD and other government agents because of the changes in African administration that the Godlonton Commission suggested, and the NLHA wanted to implement. The results were disastrous for African traders caught up in this conflict. They had their applications for business sites denied, delayed, and for those who already had trading leases, cancelled. The chapter demonstrates some of the ways that Africans responded to the politics around business site allocation. These included engaging lawyers, appropriating African councils and, operating around the grey areas of the business site allocation process, amongst others. The chapter adds to the historiography on African entrepreneurship in colonial Zimbabwe by exposing some of the structural challenges that African traders faced in an attempt to participate in formal colonial commerce.

Chapter four explores the fortunes of African traders during the federal period. It contributes to the literature on the African middle class during this period by interrogating how African traders fared under the federal rhetoric of 'racial partnership.' The study investigates some of the business partnerships that African traders entered with white business. It also examines attempts by the colonial state to reform the LAA. The chapter contributes to literature on this period by showing that colonial efforts to improve the position of African traders were

ambiguous and insincere. African reaction to this policy contradiction and rhetoric came through African members of the Southern Rhodesian legislature, business associations, and through *The African Businessman*. It also demonstrates that the realisation of the futility of the 'racial partnership' came late for African traders compared to the other members of the African middle class in Southern Rhodesia. The chapter also gives a historical background of African experiences with finance through cooperative societies and some of the early forms of business associations. It shows how the novel intervention of the ALDC to fund African traders led to the establishment of many regional business associations culminating in the formation of ZABU, the first genuinely national African business association. The chapter considers the position of this business association movement within Zimbabwe's historiography on nationalism. It concludes that although the business association was an offshoot of the activities of the ALDC, the association's leadership and eventual agenda points to a nationalist consciousness. Furthermore, the chapter traces colonial attempts to educate African traders through government programmes and private initiatives. It outlines the role of *The African Businessman* in this regard and therefore challenges the connection that West and Wild make between poor business literacy and the failure of African businesses.

Chapter five discusses the nexus between the colonial policy of community development and late colonial attempts by the Smith regime to accommodate African entrepreneurs to avert the impending decolonisation during the UDI period. It argues that the shift in colonial policy from the NLHA to Community Development elevated the position of African chiefs, thus creating conflict between traditional leaders and African traders. This approach allowed the state to deflect demands by African traders for land freehold and business sites. It further contends that the state's efforts to 'develop' the TTLs through TILCOR created tensions with African traders. At the same time, the state tried to accommodate African traders by creating consultancy and funding opportunities through SIAS, FEBCO, and the IOB. Like their predecessor, the ALDC, these organisations did not make a success of funding African entrepreneurs but instead focused on business literacy. Although these measures might have aided African traders in the urban areas, for those in the TTLs, there was no reprieve as they bore the brunt of the war. The chapter shows how African traders in the rural areas had their businesses ruined by the war. Africans responded to all this through African members of the legislature and by organizing into business associations such as the RACC and the ABPA formed to take advantage of the state's vulnerabilities in the face of decolonisation.

The conclusion, which makes up chapter six, highlights the key issues discussed in the thesis and points to new areas of research and perspectives. In particular, the thesis invites further research into the role played by African traders as individuals and as a collective in nationalist politics. The narratives of African entrepreneurs, as the thesis shows, have been sidelined by historical memory.

Chapter Two: Colonial Rhetoric and Ideas about African Entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia: The Godlonton Commission, 1944

Introduction

This chapter examines ideas and rhetoric about African entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia in 1944. It contends that a range of factors shaped white settler and state perceptions about African participation in commerce through the Godlonton Commission of 1944. These included primitive accumulation, settler fears of African competition, and racial paternalism as espoused through the NAD.¹ During the thirty years of British South Africa Company (BSAC) rule, the state severely restricted African independent enterprises and in parallel, championed nascent white settler capital. The above notwithstanding, Africans were able to adopt and adapt to the changing demands of the colonial economy by producing for the emerging markets.² In any case, Africans had participated in the global merchant trade before formal colonial occupation by employing indigenous ideas on commerce developed over centuries. Following the formal colonial occupation, the state deliberately used the perception that Africans were ‘uneconomic’ as a convenient excuse to explain away their deliberate efforts at crippling African participation in commerce. The state’s rhetoric on African entrepreneurship culminated in the 1944 Native Trade and Production Commission of Enquiry (Godlonton Commission).

The Godlonton Commission’s primary focus was to restructure African agricultural production, marketing and conservation for the benefit of the settler economy, but it also engaged ideas on African entrepreneurship as one of the ways of achieving this goal.³ Overall, the Godlonton Commission dismissed African entrepreneurship by questioning the African’s ability to understand business concepts that the colonial state deemed as ‘complex’ business enterprises such as holding companies and cooperatives. As D. G. Clarke notes:

The group whose ideology is being examined here is essentially, though not exclusively, the white community’s whose ideas, beliefs about and attitudes towards black economic structures, enterprise and labour have created an ideology, sometimes unsophisticated and in other instances sophisticated, which

¹ For more on the state’s efforts to protect white settlers from African competition see Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 173. For an insight into how racial paternalism evolved within the NAD see Steele, ‘The Foundations of a Native Policy’.

² See Palmer and Parsons (Eds.) *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*.

³ Kramer, ‘The Evolution of Policy’.

has been readily expounded to 'explain' African underdevelopment in Rhodesian society.⁴

G. Thompson agrees with Clarke's position and notes that, 'in common with the general racism of white settlers, these ideas shifted responsibility for the consequences of state policies that impoverished blacks to essentialised African characteristics.'⁵ While colonial officials, among others, differed in opinion, the tone of the Godlonton Commission was that Africans were incapable of engaging in commerce. Instead, colonial officials stressed that Africans needed guidance from whites in running a business.⁶ The Godlonton Commission's stance represented the colonial state's attitude towards African development based on careful guidance from above. Equally important, the state's approach reflected a move towards 'high modernism' synonymous with the Post Second World War period with its obsession with expert and technical knowledge in the management of the African reserves.⁷ This came to the fore during the deliberations of the Godlonton Commission with the colonial state attempting to steer African agriculture and entrepreneurship towards marketing and consumer cooperatives.

The chapter aims to show how the colonial state, through the Godlonton Commission, continued to undermine African entrepreneurship. When the question of cooperatives came up for discussion during the Godlonton Commission, African ability to engage in business was dismissed with officials of the NAD preferring state managed cooperatives. This rhetoric, as the chapter demonstrates, was conveniently appropriated by white trader associations to protect their business interests in the African reserves. Although there were dissenting voices from white liberals, who advocated for African entrepreneurship, these were often framed in racial paternalism. The chapter concludes by highlighting the criticism of government policy on African entrepreneurship from Africans invited to speak at the Godlonton Commission.

Origins of the Godlonton Commission

In March of 1944, the premier of Southern Rhodesia Godfrey Huggins invited W. A. Godlonton to lead the Native Trade and Production Commission of Enquiry. Godlonton, a practising

⁴ Clarke, 'Settler Ideology and African Underdevelopment in Post-war Rhodesia, 17.

⁵ G. Thompson, 'Cultivating Conflict: Agricultural 'Betterment', the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) and Ungovernability in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1951–1962', *Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*, 29, 3 (2004), 16.

⁶ *Report of the Native Trade and Production Commission of Inquiry*, 1944.

⁷ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 45 – 47.

lawyer in South Africa and a firm believer in the grand tradition of commissions of inquiries brought with him experience in the workings of commissions and law.⁸ The other commissioners were Robert Halsted of the Department of Supply, W. Munro of the South African Timber Company, Floris Johnstone, who was the Provincial NC for Bulawayo, Roland Starkey of the Shabani Mine and Arthur Pendered who acted as the Godlonton Commission's Secretary.⁹ Of the five Godlonton Commission officials, Johnstone had direct 'knowledge' of Africans while Pendered was an 'expert' in African agriculture, trade, and marketing. Pendered later played an essential role in the implementation of the NLHA and the reorganisation of African agriculture during the post Second World War period.¹⁰ Kramer observed that the choice of commissioners, picked from industry, reflected the colony's focus on the secondary industry during this period while the choice of Johnstone, the NC for Bulawayo, served as a token to Africans.¹¹ Having a NC on the Commission served to dissuade accusations that policy making did not consider African voices. In reality, however, NCs were ill suited to represent Africans for they often shared the same interests as those of the colonial state. Notwithstanding the above, the commissioners lacked experience or knowledge of their subject matter, still less African entrepreneurship. Not surprisingly, the Godlonton Commission's set up reflected the racial prejudice of the time and the vested interests of organised business such as the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce (BCC) and the Mashonaland Kaffir Truck Wholesalers Association (MKTWA).

The Godlonton Commission's terms of reference revolved around the marketing of African agricultural commodities. The first term of reference looked at the production and marketing of all commodities produced by Africans and conditions of trade generally as it affected Africans. The second tackled the possibility of forming cooperatives in rural areas, both producer and consumer, and the chance of developing rural industries while the third looked to examine the possible benefits of setting up marketing boards, which would take over the marketing of peasant products. Fourth, the Godlonton Commission sought to find ways to incorporate Africans within the colonial exchange system by encouraging the use of cash over barter.¹² After the failure of Alvord's interventionist programmes in the African reserves, the

⁸ Kramer, 'The Evolution of Policy', 215 – 19.

⁹ Ibid, 219.

¹⁰ M. J. Drinkwater, 'The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas: An Application of Critical Theory', (PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia, 1988), 88.

¹¹ Kramer, 'The Evolution of Policy', 218.

¹² Ibid.

colonial state hoped to induce Africans to change their farming practices through improved marketing of agricultural commodities. However, various literature has shown that the problem lay not in African farming practices but the racial distribution of land that advantaged settlers over Africans.¹³ It was the second term of reference, with its focus on African run cooperatives that spoke explicitly at the idea of African entrepreneurship in the African reserves. As will be shown, colonial officials, including those within the NAD and the other experts, held strong views on the inability of Africans to conduct business or cooperatives. Others, like Rev Percy Ibbotson, who felt that Africans could run cooperatives still packaged their ideas in the rhetoric of colonial paternalism characteristic of the period.¹⁴

The written and oral evidence presented to the Godlonton Commission contains rich conversations between and among officials of the NAD on African entrepreneurship.¹⁵ Officials in the NAD proffered wide ranging ideas on how African entrepreneurship could aid the state's efforts at agricultural marketing in the African reserves. These colonial panaceas revolved around setting up an African cooperative movement run either by the state or by Africans under European stewardship. The ideas on African entrepreneurship that carried the day are hardly surprising because the Godlonton Commission heard evidence from senior, current and retired officials of the NAD. These officials formed part of the most conservative element of settler society who believed in racial segregation and paternalism. Some, like Colonel Clive Lancaster Carbutt, had been involved in informing the colony's so-called "native policy" during the 1930s decade when the most racial and segregationist pieces of legislation such as the LAA, the Maize Control Act, and the Industrial Conciliation Act became law.¹⁶

The boom in white commercial agriculture spurred on by tobacco farming at the start of the Second World War made it expedient for the state to speed up the implementation of the LAA. The challenge, however, was that by the 1940s, the African reserves were already going through a colonial induced environmental crisis.¹⁷ The state's failure to reverse this trend through Alvord's centralisation by persuasion programme partly led to the institution of a

¹³ See for example Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from Above', 562.

¹⁴ Rev Percy Ibbotson was a white liberal missionary with the Methodist Church and was involved with African self-help programmes.

¹⁵ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/1, The 1944 NTPC, Oral (1 – 4) and NAZ, ZBJ 1/2, the 1944 NTPC Written (1 – 3).

¹⁶ Steele, 'The Foundations of a Native Policy', 319.

¹⁷ Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from Above', 562.

commission of inquiry in 1944.¹⁸ The Godlonton Commission looked at both marketing and agricultural production in the African areas.¹⁹ In its terms of references and recommendations, the Godlonton Commission found the white trader as part of the problem in the declining marketing value of African agricultural commodities. While, settler and Indian merchants operating in the African areas had served the colonial state well by extracting surplus on behalf of the colonial state from Africans during the time of the BSAC and the interwar period, the Second World War created new challenges that made the lone white trader in the African reserves a liability. More importantly, Indian and white traders came under the spotlight at the beginning of the 1940s for their unscrupulous and exploitative trade practices in the African areas.²⁰ The unfair trade practices by white and Indian traders created a disincentive for African farmers to improve their agricultural methods and up their maize production. After the Godlonton Commission, this became the overall objective of the NLHA.

Commerce in African areas was firmly in the hands of European and Indian traders who ran wholesale and retail stores. While some white traders like Kaufman Sons & Co, Lasovsky Bros, the African Trading Stores, N. Richards, among others, operated on a big scale, others barely scraped by and relied on the buying and selling of maize.²¹ Because, such small scale retailers had extraordinarily small profit turnovers from the stock they carried, they relied mostly on the trade in maize to break even. Although the manufacturing sector had expanded during the war years, traders in African areas still relied on imports from South Africa, Europe, and the USA.²² During the Great Depression and the Second World War, the colonial State was wary of rural traders' unfair trade practices. Timothy Burke, Eira Kramer, Leslie Bessant, and Barry Kosmin have written extensively on how rural traders used exploitative measures such as the box system, tokens, tickets, and beaten out tins to squeeze profits out of African maize growers.²³

In 1943, C. D. Dryden, founder of the Rhodesian Hide and Produce Company (RHPC), proposed that the government take ownership of his company and transform it into an African

¹⁸ The programme began in the late 1920s as a colonial attempt to encourage Africans to practice good farming practices. It was led by Alvord, an American agriculturist. However, his efforts had largely failed by the outbreak of the Second World War. For more on this see Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from Above'.

¹⁹ NAZ, S482/21/44, Office of the Prime Minister: Commission Re. Native Trading.

²⁰ Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women*, 72.

²¹ NAZ, S915/75, Trade and Commerce Policy, Minutes of Meeting of Group 13, 29 August 1945.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women*, Kramer, 'The Evolution of Policy', Kosmin, 'Ethnic and Commercial Relations in Southern Rhodesia' and Bessant, 'Coercive Development: Peasant Economy, Politics and Land in the Chiweshe Reserve, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1940 – 1966', (PhD Thesis, Yale University, 1987).

cooperative company.²⁴ The Dryden proposal became the immediate impetus to the establishment of the Commission as the state saw an opportunity to create a more efficient marketing system for African agricultural commodities. Dryden had established the Hides and Trade Company during the early 1930s. It operated in the African reserves where it bought cattle and goat hides which were processed for the export market. The NAD found the idea of an African cooperative attractive for several reasons. For instance, the NAD saw the Hide and Trade Company as a good outlet for African owned cattle within the context of colonial efforts at culling African cattle in the reserves. Secondly, the colonial state hoped that African cooperative societies would help remove non-African traders from African reserves.²⁵ Such an initiative would fit in squarely with the state's belief in Separate Development.²⁶ Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins had reiterated the same position in a White Paper on Native Policy in 1940.²⁷ In an address to the Mashonaland Native Welfare Society the same year, Huggins warned of the 'disastrous results that would flow from creating a state of affairs in which all intelligent Africans would wish to live in the urban areas.'²⁸ Urging Africans to reinvest their energies in the African areas, he said, 'there was no reason why natives should not aspire to any occupation, trade or profession in their own areas.'²⁹ As the Secretary for Native Affairs explained, an African cooperative would 'provide something to take the place of the cattle as the Native bank.'³⁰

The Commission and African Entrepreneurship

The Godlonton Commission is a crucial lens into looking at how the state, together with its various actors, settlers, and Africans, conceptualised the idea of African entrepreneurship. The Godlonton Commission was the first attempt by the state to debate the incorporation of Africans in business in the overall colonial policy. Commissions were influential during the colonial period in settling and resolving perceived problems in the regulation and control of African political, social, and economic lives. As Adam Ashforth argues in a study of South

²⁴ NAZ, S482/21/44, Letter from the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Prime Minister, 7 March 1944.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ The colonial state's policy on African development, known as Separate Development in government corridors and anchored on the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930, generally governed the state's stance towards African entrepreneurship in the African reserves and urban areas. According to this segregationist policy, Africans had to develop in their areas free from European competition.

²⁷ NAZ, S482/21/44, Letter from the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Prime Minister, 7 March 1944.

²⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, 10 January 1940.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ NAZ, S482/21/44, Letter from the Secretary of Native Affairs to the Prime Minister, 7 March 1944.

Africa, commissions into African affairs were a way of legitimating the colonial state's policy on Africans.³¹ In her work on colonial commissions in the Dutch East India, A. L. Stoler shows how the Commissions' 'solutions were often preordained and agreed upon before they were carried out.'³² Dickson A. Mungazi arrived at similar conclusions in his study of the nexus between colonial commissions and the evolution of policy on African education in colonial Zimbabwe.³³ Through them, the State could rehearse, reinforce, and legitimise its policies on African issues.³⁴

In South Africa, such inquiries included the South African Native Affairs Commission, the Native Economic Commission, the Native Laws Commission, and the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas.³⁵ Colonial Zimbabwe closely matched this South African grand tradition of commissions. Some of these include the Morris Carter Land Commission of 1925, the Native Affairs Commission of 1930, and the 1943 Howman Commission, the Godlonton Commission into Native Trade and Production of 1944, and the 1958 Urban Affairs Commission. These inquiries looked at a wide array of matters on Africans affairs such as the urban and rural lives of Africans.

The Godlonton Commission is peculiar in that, although its primary focus was on African agriculture and its marketing, it implicitly engaged with ideas about African businesses and entrepreneurship. Its deliberations on African consumer and marketing cooperatives, African traders, and their business acumen and ideas on business training for Africans offer us a glimpse into the psyche of the state on how it conceptualised African entrepreneurship. The state's notion of African entrepreneurship followed its stance on African agriculture. The Godlonton Commission reveals that the colonial state and settlers viewed African businesspersons, like their compatriots in peasant agriculture, as lacking in the skills needed to run a successful business enterprise. The state cited the so-called African 'backwardness,' illiteracy, and lack of financial discipline as reasons impeding the development of their entrepreneurial endeavours and development within their community. Business remained the domain of white settlers who had the mandate to train and guide Africans on how to run a business.

³¹ Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa*, 2 – 4.

³² A. L. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain, Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 141.

³³ D. A. Mungazi, 'A Strategy for Power: Commissions of Inquiry into Education and Government Control in Colonial Zimbabwe', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1989), 267.

³⁴ Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa*, 7 – 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

Several interest groups gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission. The diverse group included officials in the NAD, businesspersons, white business groups, and “experts” on African affairs such as Rev. Percy Ibbotson. The Godlonton Commission also interviewed “experts” on running cooperatives in South Africa and Britain. While Africans managed to express their views to the Godlonton Commission, the questions that its officials asked and the way the inquiry transcribed their responses, followed along the lines of fundamental paternalism. The opinions of the CNC, the PNCs and NCs are relevant as avenues of gazing into the colonial state’s attitude towards African entrepreneurship because of the centrality of the NAD in the issuing of business leases in African reserves through its arms such as the Native Reserves Trust Fund (NRTF) and the Native Land Board. The contribution of the “experts” on Africans, marketing and cooperatives tended to dovetail with the views of the NAD. While the evidence from white and Indian traders and business associations such as the BCC corroborated the position of the NAD officials and the experts on Africans, they were motivated more by the need to protect their business investments in African areas from African entrepreneurs.

In discussing the potential of African cooperatives in Southern Rhodesia, officials of the Godlonton Commission, the NAD and several settlers who gave evidence to the inquiry frequently referred to the history of the cooperative movement in Europe and among white settlers. The cooperative movement has its origins in 19th century industrial Britain. Workers in Rochdale faced with dwindling wages and a rise in the cost of living formed a consumer cooperative known as the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers.³⁶ Referred to as the Rochdale Principle, the model pioneered by the Rochdale workers inspired other cooperatives in Europe, the USA, and colonial Africa during the last half of the 19th century and the first half of the following century.³⁷ In Southern Rhodesia, white settlers formed agricultural cooperatives to market their products and obtain farming inputs at relatively low prices. The Rhodesian Farmers’ Cooperative is an example of such a cooperative formed in Southern Rhodesia during the early colonial period.

³⁶ M. A. Marini and A. Zevi, ‘Just one of us’: Consumers Playing Oligopoly in Mixed Markets’, *Journal of Economics*, 104, 3 (2011), 240.

³⁷ See B. B. Fowler, ‘The Cooperative Yardstick’, *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 13, 3, *Cooperatives* (1948), 446 and T. W. Guinnane, ‘State Support for the German Cooperative Movement, 1860—1914’, *Central European History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2012), 208 – 32.

CNC Simmonds, for example, suggested to the Godlonton Commission that African cooperatives could collaborate with the more established white farmers cooperative, the Rhodesian Farmers Cooperatives. If this were adopted, CNC Simmonds reasoned, the African cooperates would gain the advantage of networks and markets already established by the Rhodesian Farmers' Cooperative.³⁸ Importantly, the participants of the Godlonton Commission often referred to the European and the settler farmer cooperatives to prove just how the Rochdale cooperative was too complicated for Africans to appreciate.

Other colonial states in both Anglophone and Francophone Africa had experimented with the idea with varying success and for different purposes. By the end of the 1940s, Nyasaland and South Africa had a more established cooperative tradition than Southern Rhodesia. In Nyasaland, cooperatives had begun during the early 20th century. African entrepreneurs in Nyasaland, unlike those in Southern Rhodesia, had begun early on the colonial period and competed successfully with non-African traders.³⁹ Consequently, the African business community in colonial Malawi was able to establish successful business organisations such as the Native Industrial Union, which later morphed into the African Industrial Society.⁴⁰ Paradoxically, as Joey Power explains, it was because of the success of individual Africans in business that the colonial state saw the need to establish African cooperatives. The goal was to reign in successful planters and traders by diverting their energies from politics to an economic programme controlled by the state.⁴¹ W. G. Ballinger was invited by the Godlonton Commission to speak on the African cooperative movement in South Africa.⁴² Social engineering also figured prominently in the idea of African cooperatives in South Africa. Led by the Catholic Church and the white liberal movement, Paul B. Rich locates the state's support of cooperatives as part of an endeavour to curtail the growth of Garveyism among the African middle class.⁴³

NAD officials who gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission were interested in cooperative societies for different reasons however. Where advocates of African cooperates in

³⁸ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/1, Oral Evidence from CNC, Simmonds to the NTPC, 1 June 1944.

³⁹ Power, 'Individualism is the Antithesis of Indirect Rule', 321 - 22.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Ballinger worked for the office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies in South Africa and was also the organising secretary of the Friends of Africa (FOA).

⁴³ P. B. Rich, 'Bernard Huss and the Experiment in African Cooperatives in South Africa, 1926 - 1948', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26, 2 (1993), pp. 297-317.

colonial Malawi saw potential among Africans, Southern Rhodesia's settlers were sceptical. For instance, while Simmonds favoured the establishment of an African cooperative movement, he questioned their ability to do so without European supervision. According to the CNC:

The existing system is mainly operated by the trader (sic), and the improvement, I think, is allowing a native cooperative to do what the trader is doing today. I think it would be advantageous to both.⁴⁴

The Godlonton Commission asked Simmonds at length on the practicality of establishing African-run cooperative societies to handle the marketing together with the supply of manufactured commodities to African areas. Simmonds, like most colonial officials, felt that Africans could not manage cooperative societies. Simmonds explained, 'I think for some time they will require European supervision in the way of auditors and accounting officers.'⁴⁵

The other NCs agreed with Simmonds on the need to establish state-run African cooperatives. Carbutt, for instance, a former CNC and long serving member of the NAD, agreed with CNC Simmonds' position.⁴⁶ Carbutt had a long history with the NAD and had helped shape several policies that affected Africans. Importantly, he was CNC during the formative years of the policy of Separate Development during the 1930s. Carbutt had little confidence in the ability of Africans to run a business enterprise such as a marketing and consumer cooperative. As he explained:

I don't see him (African) going straight into these things. I think there will be a long period in between were this marketing board would be run by Europeans. Then probably gradually little stores outside connected with the main depot. They could be taken up as they fall vacant by natives.⁴⁷

The District NC for Buhera also supported the idea of a state managed African cooperative, marketing, and trading society headed by a Director of Native Marketing.⁴⁸ He argued that such a cooperative would be in charge of the buying and selling of African produce together with the responsibility of importing and then retailing manufactured goods through retail stores established throughout the country.⁴⁹ The cooperative society would eventual takeover 'all existing stores in the reserves and other native areas.'⁵⁰ The above shows that there was

⁴⁴ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/1, Oral Evidence from CNC Simmonds to the NTPC, 1 June 1944.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Former CNC, C. L. Carbutt to the NTPC, 3 August 1944.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from the NC for Buhera District to the NTPC, 30 May 1944.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

consensus among most NCs over the importance of state control of African consumer cooperatives.

The ideas around cooperative marketing pushed by officials of the NAD aimed at boosting African production of food crops. With settler commercial farmers abandoning maize for the more lucrative virginia tobacco, Africans needed to be encouraged to fill in the gap in maize production.⁵¹ Consequently, the NCs who gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission saw African cooperatives as a solution to what they deemed a marketing crisis in the African reserves. For example, colonial officials pushed for state managed African cooperatives to help ease the problem of grain marketing by offering producers value for African grains. In any case, the colonial state already used statutory marketing in the cattle and commercial maize sectors.⁵² State-controlled marketing was hardly a new experience in Anglophone Africa. In British West Africa, the colonial office established marketing boards with the aim of valorisation and stabilising the price of cocoa and other vegetable oils during and after the Second World War.⁵³ Whereas in British West Africa, the goal was to help Britain to save precious pounds in the context of the Second World War through cash crop production, in colonial Zimbabwe the state, through the Godlonton Commission, directed Africans towards the cultivation of food crops. Stabilised marketing through state-run African cooperatives, unlike middlemen, had the potential of increasing the overall productivity of African reserves by offering reasonable market prices for African agricultural products such as maize.

Proponents of African state-controlled cooperatives during the Godlonton Commission hoped that Africans in the reserves and urban areas be able to buy manufactured commodities of better quality than those in supply from white, Indian, and some African traders. Describing the retail trade, NC Simmonds neatly explained, ‘I think with a few exceptions what we generally term “kaffir truck” does not always mean the best value for money. It is generally something that can be sold fairly cheaply.’⁵⁴ As Godlonton explained, during the oral evidence hearing, ‘the object of setting up cooperative stores would be to reduce the price of goods to the native or alternatively return any profit to the natives by way of a dividend.’⁵⁵ Therefore, a state-assisted

⁵¹ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 234.

⁵² *Ibid*, 173.

⁵³ D. Meredith, ‘State Controlled Marketing and Economic Development: The Case of West African Produce during the Second World War’, *The Economic History Review, New Series*, 39, 1 (1986), 77-91.

⁵⁴ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/1, Oral Evidence from CNC Simmonds to the NTPC, 1 June 1944.

⁵⁵ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from E. H. Beck to the NTPC, 3 August 1944.

African cooperative would provide ‘good prices’ for African grains and, at the same time, improve the quality of consumer commodities available to Africans in the reserves.⁵⁶

One of the biggest hindrances to the growth of African entrepreneurship up to this point was the unavailability of formal lines of credit to finance the start businesses. Hamstrung by a lack of capital or access to financial lending institutions, individual Africans in business had to save money from meagre earnings over many years. The most common source of savings was from working in the gold mines of South Africa, government employment, and peasant agriculture. The scholarship that exists rightly demonstrates the ability of Africans to save money outside the formal channels involved capital stored in cattle and informal thrift clubs.⁵⁷ However, the state did not recognise some of these African forms of capital accumulation as the statutory destocking of African cattle suggests.⁵⁸ The cost of opening a business was substantially high for most Africans. Despite this, many Africans found several ways of banking their savings.

By the 1940s, in addition to investments in cattle, many Africans held savings with banking institutions such as the state-controlled Post Office Savings Bank.⁵⁹ For instance, as Simmonds explained to the Godlonton Commission, the number of accounts held by the POSB rose by 1000 during the Second World War, from 9540 in 1942 to 10841 in 1943.⁶⁰ The bank emerged in 1905 to serve both white and African bankers.⁶¹ Clerks, messengers, teachers, medical orderlies, and municipal workers made up many of the Africans with bank accounts with the POSB. While the uptake of POSB accounts was mostly an urban phenomenon, Simmonds explains that even in the African reserves, this method of keeping money was also becoming popular. So much so that in 1943, the office of the NAD provided facilities for operating Savings Bank Accounts at 12 different NCs offices, which are remote from the Post Office.⁶² Apart from Banks, Africans had several other more informal ways of banking. In spite of the efforts of the colonial state to encourage Africans to bank with the POSB, Madimu and Msindo

⁵⁶ The concern of the colonial state was to ensure that Africans fill in the gap in food production and not necessarily that they get competitive prices for their maize.

⁵⁷ P. Muguti, ‘Reciprocity and the Moral Economy of Exchange: African Tea Parties in Harare Township, 1945-1960s’, (MA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2018). In this thesis, Muguti examines some of the informal ways of financial investment that Africans engaged in colonial Harari.

⁵⁸ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 237.

⁵⁹ For more on the history of this bank see T. Madimu and E. Msindo, ‘Towards Banking Inclusion? The Post Office Savings Bank (POSB) in Southern Rhodesia, 1905 – 1945,’ *African Economic History*, 47, 1 (2019), 54 – 91.

⁶⁰ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/1, Oral Evidence from CNC Simmonds to the NTPC, 1 June 1944.

⁶¹ Madimu and Msindo, ‘Towards Banking Inclusion?’, 54.

⁶² NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/1, Oral Evidence from CNC Simmonds to the NTPC, 1 June 1944.

stress, the bank remained unpopular with Africans preferring ‘alternative African economies’ that ‘were more lucrative and fully managed by the Africans themselves.’⁶³ These included investing money in cattle, keeping deposits with the mines, and thrift clubs, among others.

The colonial state envisaged African cooperatives as a way of pulling capital together amongst Africans to challenge the monopoly held by white and Indian traders. Investing in cooperatives would add to the other traditional methods of saving amongst Africans, such as banking and keeping cattle. Carbutt, for instance, imagined a cooperative entity organised like a dividend company with Africans having the opportunity to buy shares. For Carbutt, such alternative methods of saving would go a long way in aiding the colonial efforts at destocking. As he explained,

They could even take shares that is the third method, rather cumbersome. If we are reducing the number of cattle he can hold, the only other outlet at the moment is to put his money in the Post Office Savings Bank which gives him 2%, which is hardly comparable to running a herd of cattle and getting so many calves per annum.⁶⁴

Importantly, African cooperatives, as Carbutt imagined them, could afford Africans with an opportunity to make money through the shared profits of cooperative marketing and selling.⁶⁵

The Godlonton Commission invited experts on African cooperatives from South Africa to speak on the experiences of the cooperative movement and African cooperatives in that country. These experts included Ballinger and Father Huss. Ballinger also served as the organising secretary of the Friends of Africa (FOA).⁶⁶ FOA, a white liberal organisation, was organised and run by Ballinger and his wife Margaret Ballinger and aimed at “helping” Africans develop and start several self-help projects.

The cooperative movement was more established in South Africa than it was in Southern Rhodesia, with many of them emerging during the 1920s and 1930s. Ballinger told the Godlonton Commission that the white-owned cooperatives were very prominent and were built around agricultural marketing and consumer cooperatives in the four provinces of South Africa.

⁶³ Madimu and Msindo, ‘Towards Banking Inclusion?’, 54.

⁶⁴ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Former CNC, C. L. Carbutt to the NTPC, 3 August 1944

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum on Cooperation and its Development in the Union of South Africa issued by the Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies to the NTPC, June 1944.

Unlike the African cooperatives, which were unregulated, the white cooperatives fell under the Cooperative Societies Act. Cooperative marketing and supplying served several purposes for the white farming community in South Africa. Apart from obtaining cheaper consumer goods and the best market prices for their agricultural products, cooperation also aided in the access to financial credit with the Land Bank. To illustrate the importance of the cooperative movement to the white community, Pretoria had a ministry of Cooperative Societies to cater to the needs of white marketing and consumer cooperatives. Father Bernard Huss, on the other hand, was a Catholic priest based in Natal at the Marianhill mission.⁶⁷ As Father Huss explained, Africans established some of these cooperatives with his help and that of the Catholic African Union (CAU). Father Huss, through the Catholic Church, created the CAU to counteract growing radicalism among the African middle class in the Transkei. Huss had written a pamphlet on business and cooperative management titled *Rural Organisation among Transkeian Natives*. In all, the *Transkeian* administration printed over 2000 copies.⁶⁸

The bulk of the African cooperatives in South Africa were concentrated in the Transkei area, there were about 31 African cooperative societies with over £1500 banked with the post office.⁶⁹ However, without any statutes dealing directly with African cooperatives, many of them operated informally outside the ambit of colonial control. Father Huss, the foremost advocate of African cooperatives, told the Godlonton Commission that most of the cooperatives had started as thrift clubs collecting as little as ‘tickeys, sixpences and shillings’ from members.⁷⁰ In spite of the relative success of the African cooperative movement in South Africa, both Huss and Ballinger took issue with the inability of Africans to run a business enterprise and/or a cooperative movement. They pointed at how most cooperatives ended up as thrift clubs and were controlled by the ‘educated’ to the detriment of the “simple” African.

In addition, the South African government commissioned a committee to investigate the possibility of establishing cooperative societies in the Transkeian Territories. Its report, published in 1943, was damning in its assessment of the African cooperatives already in

⁶⁷ For more on Father Bernard Huss, see Rich, ‘Bernard Huss and the Experiment in African Cooperatives.’

⁶⁸ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum on Cooperation and its Development in the Union of South Africa issued by the Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies to the NTPC, June 1944.

⁶⁹ Ibid, Memorandum, Report of a Departmental Committee Appointed to investigate the possibility of establishing Cooperative Societies in the Transkeian Territories, 1943.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

existence and the ability of Africans to manage them. The conclusions of the Trollip report, chaired by a Transkeian Magistrate, W. F. C. Trollip, not only influenced Ballinger's evidence but mirrored the perceptions that colonial officials and white settlers had about African businesses and cooperatives in Southern Rhodesia. Pretoria established the Trollip inquiry, under the custodianship of Trollip 'an ex magistrate who had taken a great interest in the birth and development' of African cooperatives.⁷¹ The inquiry investigated around thirty African cooperatives during the years 1937 and 1938 with 'only a few found to be achieving their object.'⁷² Its report, described by Ballinger as 'tragic, distressing and discouraging' recommended that:

The books of the various societies operating in the territories should be audited annually by a competent accountant, an itinerant organizing officer be appointed to Superintendent them and further assistance be given to the council to enable these appointments to be made.⁷³

These recommendations aimed at solving the perceived weaknesses of the African cooperatives. The shortcomings of African cooperatives, as Trollip highlighted, revolved around their failure to conform to the guidelines on how cooperatives functioned. It noted that the 'true cooperative spirit' in African cooperatives was often compromised by their large sizes, their inability to follow regulations and laxity in the manner they gave out loans. 'Rates of interest were frequently too high and prompt repayment was not sufficiently insisted upon,' continued Trollip. Even more, Trollip explained, 'bookkeeping, and business methods are generally extremely bad; laxity and negligence were added to pure ignorance.'⁷⁴

There is no doubt that the experiences of the African cooperative movement in South Africa, especially as Ballinger expressed in his testimony and the Trollip Report, influenced how the idea of African entrepreneurship was engaged by and conceived through the Godlonton Commission. Primarily, criticisms against African cooperative societies dwelled on the lack of business savviness amongst Africans. Several current and former officials of the Natives Affairs Department, such as Carbutt, Simmonds, and others, made this clear. As the NC for Bulawayo candidly pointed out:

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

I am not in favour of cooperative trading in rural areas, but this should be our ultimate goal. The difficulties as regards finance, management, and the lack of commercial knowledge on the part of the African are almost insurmountable at the present. We are heading for disaster if such a system is introduced now. It will come in good time when the natives have developed more business acumen. In the meantime, let them be educated to this end by training themselves as general dealers, hawkers, and butchers in reserves, native areas, and native townships.⁷⁵

Neale Tylor, the Location Superintendent of the Bulawayo Location, dismissed the ability of African traders to understand business methods. Giving examples from Bulawayo urban, he stated that African entrepreneurs in the African section of Bulawayo were seldom at their businesses and employed far too many employees. Baffled by how Africans ran their businesses, Tylor pointed out that, 'they seem foolish, they won't attend to their own businesses,' explaining to the Godlonton Commission that, 'I don't know what they do. One barber, there seems to spend all his time in the canteen with a very little guitar, or they walk around and talk to their friends.'⁷⁶

The NC for Bulawayo scoffed at the idea of Africans running a cooperative society stating that Africans still needed more time to learn how to run a business.⁷⁷ The NC for Bulawayo felt that without European supervision, 'there would be a tremendous amount of abuse to start within an African run cooperative.'⁷⁸ Ballinger expressed the same sentiments when discussing African cooperative societies in South Africa, whose failure he attributed to educated Africans taking advantage of the other partners within the cooperative.⁷⁹ In a written memorandum to the Godlonton Commission, the NC for Buhera District explained that Africans in the reserves did not buy from African businesses because these stores were undercapitalised and without the right stock.⁸⁰

The Natives throughout the district are unanimous in their dissatisfaction with the present system of trading. And they complain more bitterly of stores run by their own people than of those run by Europeans. A native owner of a general dealer's business has insufficient capital, is thus unable to carry the same volume and variety of stock as a European, and looks to exorbitant profits both in goods and in grain to make his business pay.⁸¹

⁷⁵ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Written Memorandum, the Bulawayo NC to the NTPC, 19 July 1944.

⁷⁶ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Neale Tylor, Location Superintendent for the Bulawayo Location to the NTPC, 22 July 1944.

⁷⁷ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Written Memorandum, the Bulawayo NC to the NTPC, 19 July 1944.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Written Memorandum W. G. Ballinger of the Friends of Africa and Registrar of Cooperatives in South Africa to the NTPC, 1944.

⁸⁰ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from the NC for Buhera District to the NTPC, 30 May 1944.

⁸¹ Ibid.

The argument that Africans did not want to buy from other Africans was one, which was mentioned continuously during the Godlonton Commission. NCs charged with issuing out business site leases in the African reserves sometimes used this argument as justification in denying African entrepreneurs the space to operate.

The Godlonton Commission's spotlight on the poor business skills of African entrepreneurs was disingenuous. By the 1940s, the colonial state was reluctant to support the development of African education. Up until the convening of the Godlonton Commission, African education owed its progress to missionary efforts. The literature on the subject rightly suggests that the colonial state created a colour bar curriculum that advantaged white students at the expense of African learners.⁸² While white pupils learnt arithmetic and business, essential in entrepreneurship, African students at either mission run schools or government-controlled institutions such as Domboshawa were restricted to areas of learning that streamlined them into the cheap labour market. The overall objective was to provide capital with ultra-cheap labour and at the same time, protect white livelihoods from African competition. Official colonial inquiries into African education such as the Hole, Graham, and Kerr Commissions of 1906, 1910, and 1951 respectfully helped legitimise this skewed status quo in colonial education.⁸³ As Mungazi explains, 'from that time to the Kerr Commission education in colonial Zimbabwe was nothing more than an exercise in manual labour for the sole purpose of providing cheap labour to the white entrepreneur.'⁸⁴ This evidence of systematic neglect of African education suggests that the colonial state, through the NAD, was insincere in its derision of African business skills.

White and Indian traders with vested commercial interests in the African reserves also appropriated the idea that Africans could not manage a business. The MKTWA, representing white and Indian traders criticised African knowledge of business and expressed doubt in the success of African run cooperative focused on marketing or in supplying consumer commodities. The MKTWA lashed at the proponents of African cooperatives like Rev. Percy Ibbotson for 'knowing little of the psychology of the native, nor have they had experience in native trade. Conclusions arrived at by such witnesses, that supported African cooperatives and

⁸² For more on African Education please see West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 36 and Mungazi, 'A Strategy for Power'.

⁸³ Mungazi, 'A Strategy for Power', 274.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

entrepreneurship, 'will doubtless be treated with reserve.'⁸⁵ The MKTWA took exception with the idea of 'commercialising the native' and gave another dimension in their opposition to African entrepreneurship. In a memorandum to the Enquiry, the MKTWA argued that the state should develop the social, educational, and agricultural aspects of African lives instead of promoting the development of African entrepreneurship. As the MKTWA explained,

The evidence given by the Medical Director and the Director of Native Agriculture have testified that these essentials have been sadly neglected. A healthy peasantry working on the land on proper agricultural lines would render a great service to the community as a whole than a half-baked and sickly commercially minded native.⁸⁶

However, within the context of the LAA, non-African traders resented the competition that African entrepreneurship posed. Consequently, the ideas raised above by the MKTWA were red herring aimed at protecting their commercial interests in the African reserves.

Where the MTKWA implicitly pushed their agenda, the BCC was crudely candid. It defended the position of non-African traders in the rural areas by arguing that the sector employed many settlers who would be unemployed if the state went ahead with encouraging African entrepreneurship through African cooperatives. The Chamber urged the colonial state to tread carefully in its handling of settler traders in the African areas arguing that they, 'would be deprived of their livelihood should the government decide to alter the existing system, and unemployment would result.'⁸⁷ The BCC went beyond threatening the colonial state with the consequences that would ensue from unemployed settlers by pointing out that Indian and white traders had critical skills that African traders did not have. The Chamber argued, 'the present importers of Kaffir Truck are in the best position to purchase from different world markets the goods required for this colony'⁸⁸ and that they had developed elaborate connections with importers through the world. An African cooperative, the Chamber posited, '... cannot possibly buy as competitively as the present old establishment organisations who are forced, by competition, to be continually on the lookout for up to date goods at the lowest market prices.'⁸⁹ However, as the next chapters demonstrate, white business attempted to shift from this position

⁸⁵ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from the MTKWA to the NTPC, 19 September 1944.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Memorandum from Sub-Committee Appointed by the BBC to Prepare Evidence for Submission to the NTPC, 9 September 1944.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

during the late 1950s and 1960s as they sought to 'accommodate' African entrepreneurs within the context of the colonial rhetoric of racial partnership.

Importantly, like most of the witnesses to the Godlonton Commission, the BCC poked holes into the capacity of Africans to engage in business. In their written memorandum, the Chamber explained that an African cooperative, as envisaged by the Godlonton Commission, would require supervision from Europeans. Without this supervision, the Chamber pressed, pilfering, and mismanagement would ensure. In any case, the Chamber explained, Africans did not like to buy from other Africans pointing out that,

Natives were disinclined to purchase trade goods from their compatriots. This has been proved from time and again. A native in charge of a store, being replaced by a Whiteman, the store has increased its turnovers three or fourfold.⁹⁰

Nonetheless, the literature on minority and disadvantaged groups in business has shown how their businesses grew from support from members of their group. A case in point is the growth of African American businesses in the USA during the first half of the twentieth century.⁹¹ In colonial Zimbabwe, West suggests that African entrepreneurs often used this tactic to wade off competition from non-African traders.⁹²

The foremost advocate for the development of African entrepreneurship through African cooperative societies was Rev Percy Ibbotson of the Methodist Church and the Native Welfare Society. While the speakers at the Godlonton Commission were sceptical about the potential of entrepreneurship amongst Africans, Ibbotson was more confident. Ibbotson's ideas on African cooperatives and entrepreneurship are important in discussing Africans and businesses, for they directly contradicted the views of the NAD and the Godlonton Commission itself. His oral interview provided an insightful exchange on and about colonial ideas on development. Ibbotson believed that an African cooperative in place of the current scenario of non-African traders could help bring sanity in the marketing and retail trade in the African reserves. The running theme in the evidence given to the Godlonton Commission was that Africans lacked the right business skills to manage a retail store, let alone a cooperative society. Ibbotson, however, argued that although Africans still needed guidance in running a business, this could be solved through training in business management skills. Ibbotson suggested a training centre

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ See for instance Boyd, 'Survivalist Entrepreneurship among Urban Blacks during the Great Depression'.

⁹² West, 'Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift', 270.

for African traders organised along Domboshawa. According to Ibbotson, Africans attending this business school could be:

Trained in simple business routine, account keeping and so on, and as a practical project, a cooperative store would be run at the training centre so that those pupils taking this course would receive practical training in running a store, costing, invoicing and all this sort of thing, as a practical project.⁹³

Ibbotson argued that the colonial state had to give Africans a reasonable opportunity to learn how to manage a business. He explained that already, ‘there are Africans who are very successful in business. There are some in Salisbury, some in Bulawayo, and one in the Plumtree district. If they do this without training whatsoever, what are they likely to do when they bare trained?’⁹⁴ For all his spirited defence of African cooperatives and entrepreneurship, Rev Ibbotson belonged in the camp of the white liberal movement during the 1930s and 40s that believed in patronage as an instrument of guiding Africans towards a European ideal of development. Ibbotson was part of the African Welfare Society that emerged during this period, ostensibly to aid in African development through patronage and undercut the African proto-nationalist movement spearheaded by radical African political organisations such as the ICU.⁹⁵

However, for the Godlonton Commission, some officials in the NAD and the non-African business community, a cooperative society was a complicated business concept that Africans could not possibly comprehend. For instance, Godlonton pressed Ibbotson on whether Africans could get a cooperative society running.⁹⁶ He clarified his position to Ibbotson, pointing out that with a cooperative society, ‘you not getting into the realms of something quite different when you get into the question of a cooperative store in the reserves, which is a very much more complicated system concerning the books and the organisation.’⁹⁷ What followed was a pained attempt by Godlonton to explain the complexities of a cooperative enterprise to Ibbotson. As Godlonton put it:

The system is quite a complicated one. The costumer has to receive a suitable chit, or invoice, to prove his purchases, and, generally, you are complicating the whole system of storekeeping far beyond the normal trader`s store in the Reserve today. If you mean that kind of store, do you yourself feel that can be run by any native today, just on his own, with a European coming along one a week for a month to see his books?⁹⁸

⁹³ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Rev Percy Ibbotson to the NTPC, 1944. (n.d.).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 32.

⁹⁶ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Rev Percy Ibbotson to the NTPC, 1944. (n.d.).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Ibbotson responded by citing the success of African cooperatives in South Africa. Five cooperatives, the Reverend remonstrated, were being managed successfully without the aid of European supervision.⁹⁹ As expected, Ballinger of the Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies in South Africa protested Ibbotson`s position on the success of the cooperative movement in that country.¹⁰⁰

In explaining the failure of some of the African Cooperative movements in South Africa, Ibbotson pointed out that these societies had failed because of a lack of ‘European supervision or control.’¹⁰¹ He stressed that he had engaged with Pretoria, writing 140 letters, suggesting to them that, ‘Europeans should be in this business, European advisors (sic), with boards of directors.’¹⁰² In Southern Rhodesia itself, Ibbotson had helped start a consumer cooperative society with a group of Africans resident in Bulawayo.¹⁰³ This cooperative venture shows just how Rev Ibbotson believed in colonial patronage and the idea of the ‘inspired’ European guiding the ‘backward’ African. Writing to the Prime Minister, Rev Ibbotson explained that ‘until I discussed the matter with them, a true conception of what a Co-operative Society is, nor much idea of how to form one. The wish to improve their situation by this means is, however, very strong and justified.’¹⁰⁴ As such, although Ibbotson defended African entrepreneurship and African cooperatives like the one he had helped start in Bulawayo in 1940, he also acknowledged, as did many others who gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission in the limited ability of Africans in business.

African Narratives at the Godlonton Commission

Although Africans had the opportunity to speak and give evidence to the Godlonton Commission, their views were silenced and subsumed into the broader narrative of the commission, which was evidently against the development of African entrepreneurship. The Godlonton Commission picked prominent Africans who included successful farmers, businesspersons, artisans, politicians, and socialites in both the reserves and urban areas to give evidence. Conveniently, Africans invited to provide evidence to the Godlonton Commission

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ NAZ, ZBJ 1/2/1, Written Memorandum W. G. Ballinger of the Friends of Africa and Registrar of Cooperatives in South Africa to the NTPC, 1944.

¹⁰¹ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Rev Percy Ibbotson to the NTPC, 1944. (n.d.).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ NAZ, S482/126/40, Letter from Rev Percy Ibbotson to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 21 March 1940.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

belonged to the camp of the African middle class, which believed in accommodation and non-violent confrontation with the colonial state. Commenting on Africans from the Chiweshe reserve who were invited to give evidence to the Godlonton Commission, Bessant argues that Powys-Jones, the NC for Chiweshe, ‘selected Andrew Midzi, the senior agricultural demonstrator for the reserve, and Joseph Gusha, a “progressive” village headman from the northern part of the reserve to testify.’¹⁰⁵

Leaders in the leading political formations such as the Native Missionary Conference (NMC) and the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress (SRBC) also gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission. Writing on the Zimbabwean African middle class and its participation in the proto-nationalist movement before the post Second World War period, West observes that ‘the most prominent members of the African petty bourgeoisie ... disassociated themselves from the attacks on the colonial regime.’¹⁰⁶ Among the members of the SRBC and the NMC who gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission was Aaron Jacha and Mathew Rusike, respectively. Even Charles Mzingeli, the erstwhile firebrand member of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa, had found a political home in the segregated branch of the Southern Rhodesia Labour Party. A few months before the Godlonton Commission sat, Mzingeli had led an effort by the Native Advisory Board to take over control of the sale of vegetables in the African township of Salisbury from African traders and give a monopoly to the municipality.¹⁰⁷

In response to the lobbying, the local authority ‘has undertaken the sale of vegetables in the location eating house at comparatively lower prices in order to force down the prices charged by African sellers at the market.’¹⁰⁸ *The Bantu Mirror* observed that this move ‘created ill feeling, among African retailers, of certain individuals in the Township’ such as Mzingeli.¹⁰⁹ The trade unionist had ‘openly and frankly spoke against profiteering at the market’ by pointing out that ‘African businessmen must be taught that running a business means serving a community, and must learn, too, to serve the community and themselves by collective buying if only they could.’¹¹⁰ Paradoxically, despite the accommodation politics of the Africans who

¹⁰⁵ Bessant, ‘Coercive Development’, 111.

¹⁰⁶ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 140.

¹⁰⁷ *The Bantu Mirror*, ‘Black – Marketing in the Salisbury African Township’, 1 January 1944.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission and their propensity sometimes to side with the colonial authorities against the interests of African entrepreneurs, they were the right constituency to speak on African entrepreneurship for most of them dabbled in business projects of various kinds. Moreover, as Bessant explains, ‘Midzi and Gusha showed in their testimony that they were not merely “yes-men” for Powys-Jones and the government.’¹¹¹

The views of prominent Africans, such as Jasper Savanhu and Mzingeli, both traders with general dealer stores in Bulawayo, were mixed. While Savanhu’s evidence to the Godlonton Commission tended to flow with the narrative of the colonial officials, Mzingeli was more critical. Quizzed by the Godlonton Commission, if he ‘thinks the African is sufficiently advanced to form cooperative stores on their own,’ Savanhu was sceptical, expressing his pessimism in the success of the venture in the African reserves.¹¹² Mzingeli thought that the African cooperatives, as the Godlonton Commission and officials in the NAD conceived them, would fail in the African reserves. He especially took exception to the top down approach of the cooperatives. He was also against the idea pushed by the “experts” on cooperatives and African affairs such as Ballinger, Rev Ibbotson, and NCs such as Simmonds that the African cooperatives would require European stewardship. According to Mzingeli African cooperatives would not work because, ‘the African people like anybody else, like to be responsible for their own affairs.’¹¹³ Mzingeli rightly connected ideas on African cooperatives to other measures of the colonial state, such as destocking and Alvord’s “good” agricultural practices that sought to control African lives.¹¹⁴

In interviewing Africans, the Godlonton Commission attempted to keep the narrative on African cooperatives and entrepreneurship harmonious with the views of the NAD and the other experts on Africans who gave evidence. The commissioners often gave lectures during the oral hearing of the Godlonton Commission on what a cooperative society was and how it functioned and liked to interrupt seemingly informed Africans, like Savanhu, who was the editor of the Bantu Mirror, the first solely African newspaper in Southern Rhodesia, at the time and Mzingeli who headed a labour movement. For instance, one of the commissioners quipped

¹¹¹ Bessant, ‘Coercive Development’, 111.

¹¹² NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Jasper Savanhu to the NTPC, 4 August 1944.

¹¹³ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/2/1, Oral Evidence from Charles Mzingeli to the NTPC, 3 July 1944.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Savanhu to explain his understanding of a cooperative society to which he responded that it is a,

Businesses in which people put in money in the form of shares, and they employ someone to sell goods in that shop – it should be somebody with a knowledge of the business – and he gets a monthly wage. The others buy their requirements there, and they share the profits according to the money each one has put in.¹¹⁵

The commissioner quickly dismissed Savanhu describing what he had explained as a partnership and not a cooperative. What followed was a long monologue on the ‘complexities’ of a cooperative society. Afterwards, the commissioners asked Savanhu if Africans were accepting of the cooperative to which Savanhu simply responded, ‘that would be good.’¹¹⁶ This condescending questioning was immanent to the questioning subjected to Africans who appeared before the Godlonton Commission.

The oral evidence heard by the inquiry from a group of Africans from the Shangani Reserve is another example where the Godlonton Commission imposed its narrative over that of Africans.¹¹⁷ In a written memorandum submitted to the Godlonton Commission, the group had articulated an interest in their reserve developing into a township.¹¹⁸ According to the group, they ‘considered it a dire necessity for decent townships to be established in the reserves.’¹¹⁹ Although townships were not a factor in the African reserves during the 1940s, they were to take centre stage during the late 1960s and 1970s as one of the core aspects of the government’s growth point programme.¹²⁰ As the following chapters will show, the growth points, together with the townships that would coalesce around them, played a central role in the Smith government’s objective of developing African entrepreneurship. However, while giving oral evidence, some of the delegates from the Shangani Reserve shifted on their position on townships, which they had presented in their memorandum. In their oral statement, they pointed out that the idea of a township would prove unpopular with the older constituency of the Shangani Reserve. As one of the delegates put it, ‘that is, of course, the opinion of the other people, but we know it is a disturbing factor for the old people if we carry through these things

¹¹⁵ NAZ, ZBJ 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Jasper Savanhu to the NTPC, 4 August 1944.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Africans from the Shangani Reserve to the NTPC, 21 August 1944.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ The Growth Point programme was part of the rural development agenda of the Smith government during the 1970s. Its purpose was to recreate urban amenities centered on industries. In a way, it was a recreation of past policies such as Separate Development.

now (townships).'¹²¹ A little incensed by the vacillating of the Shangani Reserve delegation, Godlonton in a patronising tone reprimanded the group:

Do you realise that this commission has to go back to Salisbury and make recommendations to the government. When you people cannot agree amongst yourselves as to what you want, it is very difficult. You have written down you want townships, and now I gather that you don't want them. Those of you who would like townships in the reserves stand up (None stood up).¹²²

While one can only speculate on the motives of the Shangani Reserve delegation, what is, without doubt, was the ability of Commissions, as instruments of state power, to impose the official narrative. Ashforth points out that, commissions were rituals whose performances served to authorise and reaffirm the colonial state's narrative.¹²³ More importantly, Africans that appeared before the Godlonton Commission performed in a manner they thought would be acceptable to the colonial state in general and the Commissioners in particular. Allison Shutt has arrived at similar conclusions in her work on racial etiquette in Southern Rhodesia.¹²⁴ To a certain extent, the Godlonton Commission managed to mute the voice of its African participants by speaking over them and through the sheer exercise of state authority through the Commission.

Nevertheless, some Africans who gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission managed to articulate their ideas on African entrepreneurship, which contrasted with some of the views of the NAD. The Shangani Reserve delegation, for example, gave varied responses to the Godlonton Commission. One of the delegates was a general dealer store owner and opposed the presence of white traders in African areas or their replacement with a state controlled African cooperative. The Shangani African businessman used the colonial state's policy on Separate Development to legitimise why the state had to reserve the African reserves for African entrepreneurs. He explained his position as follows:

I hear the suggestion, but I am afraid I don't agree with it ... the feeling of the African people today is that the African people want to go back to the reserves and carry on their own trades. The feeling is known to the NC that we don't want the white traders in the reserves. We want those people to leave the reserves and give us a chance to trade in our own areas.¹²⁵

¹²¹ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from Africans from the Shangani Reserve to the NTPC, 21 August 1944.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ashforth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth Century South Africa*, 9.

¹²⁴ Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*.

¹²⁵ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from an African Businessman part of a group of Africans from the Shangani Reserve, the NTPC, 21 August 1944.

Two other prominent Africans, politicians, and traders shared the position expressed by the Shangani African businessman detailed above. Aaron Jacha and Mathew J. Rusike's written memorandum to the Godlonton Commission read like a nationalist manifesto on why the African reserves should be reserved for African traders.¹²⁶ Jacha and Rusike were no strangers to controversy and had on several occasions come into conflict with the colonial state. Jacha was a successful farmer in the African Purchase Area and a former government clerk. His brother, Rusike, was a Wesleyan Methodist minister.¹²⁷ Jacha was involved with the Southern Rhodesia Native Association (SRNA) and continued in it when it morphed into the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress.¹²⁸

Rusike, on the other hand, was part of the influential Wesleyan Methodist Church synod as well as a member of the Native Missionary Conference. As Michael West rightly points out in his work on the African middle class, Jacha and Rusike, just like Mzingeli and Savanhu, belonged to the emerging African middle class with aspirations of creating their place in the sun within the confines of the colonial space.¹²⁹ They urged the colonial state to ban white, Indian, and Coloured traders from the African reserves as per provisions of the Land Apportionment Act and the spirit of the policy of Separate Development.¹³⁰ They argued that profits accruing to African traders went on to develop the African reserves as opposed to non-African traders who invested elsewhere.¹³¹

Some African traders who gave evidence to the Godlonton Commission were equally opposed to the idea of an African cooperative with a monopoly on trade as they were of non-African traders. W. Tsiga, an African entrepreneur, expressed his displeasure with the idea of a cooperative society.¹³² Tsiga was the proprietor of two general dealer stores in Goromonzi and in Harari, an African location in Salisbury. His business in Goromonzi specialised in the buying and selling of grain.¹³³ Arguing that a state controlled African cooperative would cripple businessmen, Tsiga pointed out that, 'I don't think it would be any good because that should

¹²⁶ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/2/1, Written Memorandum by two African Traders, A. Jacha and M. J. Rusike, to the NTPC 1944. (n.d.).

¹²⁷ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 153.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/2/1, Written Memorandum by two African Trader, A. Jacha and M. J. Rusike to the NTPC 1944. (n.d.).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² ZBJ 1/1/2/1, Oral Evidence from W. Tsiga, a Goromonzi African Trader, the NTPC 4 July 1944.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

be left to the people. What would those that are trading do if the government did it?’¹³⁴ Jacha and Rusike, on the other hand, did not entirely oppose the idea of the government assisting African entrepreneurs.¹³⁵ While they argued that ‘commerce should not be carried out by the government,’ they lobbied for ‘the establishment of a central African wholesale store which will import goods for Africans.’¹³⁶

Rusike and Jacha also argued for a more significant say in the issuing of trading sites. This role was the purview of the NAD, with the District NC exercising discretion. As the third chapter will show, the lease application process often advantaged non-African traders at the expense of African traders. In their memorandum, Jacha and Rusike requested that the ‘applications to open businesses in the area which is under the councils should be referred to such councils for their views.’¹³⁷ African councils were created during the 1930s to include Africans in the decision making of the NAD. Traditional chiefs, headmen, and prominent Africans were some of the people who were co-opted by the District NC into the African Councils. Although the African council had all the semblance of a democratic institution, witnessing interesting debates on African rural development, the District NC, however, controlled it. Minutes of the African councils from the 1950s have shown that Africans sometimes used the council to create space for themselves in business ahead of non-African traders.

Conclusion

The Godlonton Commission was the first time that the colonial state and others with interest in commerce in the African reserves seriously engaged with the idea of African entrepreneurship. From the discussion above, it is clear that there was a complexity of ideas on the potential of African entrepreneurship. Officials of the NAD hoped that African cooperatives, couched in the language of cooperative societies, would solve a myriad of problems affecting African agricultural marketing in the African reserves. For instance, NCs expected African cooperative societies, once in place, would help reduce the price of manufactured commodities from those currently available from non-African traders. These interventions in African development, far from solving African grievances, aimed at establishing effective control over Africans. Colonial ideas about African entrepreneurship, expressed through the NAD, set the tempo of

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/2/1, Written Memorandum by two African Businessmen to the NTPC 1944. (n.d.).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

how colonial officials and institutions treated the subject of African entrepreneurship. Thus, the chapter questioned literature that has used African business illiteracy to justify the failure of African enterprises during the colonial period. The chapter also demonstrated how the colonial rhetoric on African entrepreneurial inability was appropriated by white and Indian businesses to justify their presence in the African reserves. The chapter demonstrated that in spite of the colonial rhetoric on African entrepreneurship dominant during the course of the Godlonton Commission, Africans were able to articulate their own ideas about African entrepreneurship. The following chapter will consider the politics around the allocation of trading sites by the NAD. It will demonstrate how ideas around African entrepreneurs, discussed in this chapter, influenced the decisions of colonial officials when awarding trading sites.

Chapter Three: Business-Sites as Spaces of Contestations in the African Reserves: African Traders and the Native Affairs Department, 1945 to 1955

Introduction

The state's attempt to reorganise African political, social, and economic lives, endorsed by the Godlonton Commission and reaffirmed by the 1951 NLHA, created contradictions and ambiguities in the awarding of business sites in the African Reserves. This chapter examines the politics around the allocation of business sites in the African areas between the end of the Second World War and the first half of the 1950s decade. It looks at how some of the NAD ideas on African entrepreneurship discussed in the preceding chapter played out during the licence application process. The immediate post Second World War period was a time of tremendous change in the African reserves. It argues that the Second Colonial Occupation, together with the state's response to the decolonisation movement taking place across colonial Africa, upended the balance within the Native Affairs Department, creating conflict over the role and purpose of business sites in the African reserves. District Native Commissioner's (DNC) patronage over African reserves, the hallmark of colonial African administration before the Second World War, conflicted with the state's new focus necessitated by the Second Colonial Occupation and the need to push back against the decolonisation movement of the post War period. This conflict, as the chapter demonstrates, manifested itself in contestations within the NAD over business sites.

Business sites became points of conflict within the NAD and with Africans over the implementation of the NLHA in the African reserves. G. Thomson has shown how a closer inspection of the workings of the NLHA 'illuminates other contradictions of settler colonialism, particularly the conflicts within the bureaucracy and white interests that influenced the law's introduction and implementation.'¹ Scholarship on the Act has shown how the objectives of the NLHA were multi-faceted. It was just as much a conservation law as it was an agricultural and labour legal instrument.² Literature on the subject has shown how the

¹ Thompson, 'Cultivating Conflict', 3.

² For more on this see Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions: Conservation & Development in Zimbabwe's South-East Lowveld* (Oxford: James Currey, 2007), Machingaidze, 'Agrarian Change from above' and W. R. Duggan, 'The Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and the Rural African Middle Class of Southern Rhodesia', *African Affairs*, 79, 315 (1980), 227-239.

NLHA had dire consequences for African lives in the African reserves.³ On the other hand, Ian Phimister warns against generalising the impact of the NLHA arguing that, ‘a large number of better-off peasants came through the Land Husbandry Act, if not exactly unscathed, then more or less intact.’⁴ Nonetheless, as this chapter establishes, the decisions over who and where one was given a business site were intricately linked to the debates around the introduction and, later, the implementation of the NLHA.

Regulations Governing Commerce in African Areas

A complicated bureaucratic process governed the process of acquiring trading leases in the African reserves and urban areas. In the first instance, the NLHA ‘provided for the designation of village and business sites in the reserves and SNAs, as part of Rhodesia's grand segregation plans.’⁵ Although this process applied to all races, it weighed heavily on African applicants who often found it difficult to meet some of the requirements as the preceding paragraph will show. A typical licence and lease application necessitated a string of correspondence between the CNC and his lieutenants, the Provincial Native Commissioners (PNC) and the NCs. The application itself had to get the endorsement of the other arms of the NAD, such as the NRTF. Besides, the Medical Health Officer and the British South Africa Police (BSAP) had to give their seal of approval. The cumulative effect of this was that business lease applications by Africans, as this chapter shows, suffered from the prejudices and conflicting interests of the various arms of the state.

Scholars have shown how the colony’s ‘native policy’ was mainly a ‘native problem’ on how to control African lives and curb African competition against the white working middle class.⁶ Consequently, the meaning of the LAA remained very fluid and was no guarantee against encroachment by non-African commercial capital on African areas. Despite the policy of separate development, the DNCs often ruled against trading lease applications by Africans. Mainly targeted were Africans deemed ‘undesirable’ or those in government employment such

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ I. Phimister, ‘Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia's Land Husbandry Act Reviewed’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 2 (1993), 237.

⁵ Thompson, ‘Cultivating Conflict’, 5.

⁶ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 192.

as orderlies and agricultural land demonstrators whose services they felt, was needed elsewhere.

Under the 1941 amendment to the LAA, Africans could and did open businesses on European owned farms and mining concerns. According to ‘sub-section (2) (ii) of section 28 of the LAA, 1941, as amended by Act 15 of 1944,’ Africans interested in running a business in a farm or mining area had to seek the consent of the owner of the farm or mine and the approval of the Governor.⁷ Although the LAA of 1930 mandated that Africans should reside in the African reserves and African Purchase Areas, a sizable number remained on European farms, mines, Forests Reserves, and alienated lands.⁸ Consequently, business opportunities for general dealer stores and restaurants existed in these large pockets of Africans settled outside the African reserves and African Purchase Areas.

The LAA was no guarantee that Africans could trade in the African areas. In addition to existing legislation, one needed an exclusive licence. There existed different licences for each distinct business. For instance, there were separate licences for a general dealer store, a butchery, and a mill and those selling aerated water or buying grain. Those interested in opening a restaurant had to satisfy conditions under the Native Inns and Eating Houses Act. These licence classifications covered the most common types of businesses in the African reserves and African townships in urban areas. These different licences, with unique demands on potential African applicants, made it cumbersome for Africans interested in expanding their business or establishing enterprises offering more than one service. This is significant given that most of the businesses in the African areas during the period covered offered ancillary services. For example, a general dealer store usually worked well with a mill business on the side. As a result, many entrepreneurs in the African reserves were keen on having both. As the chapter shows, the process of getting a single licence was long, arduous, and expensive. An additional licence usually took up to two years of correspondence before the NAD granted the licence. Generally, NCs were against Africans, opening more than one business and thus limiting Africans business expansion.

⁷ NAZ, S2400/3764, CNC, Leasing of Sites Umtali, Executive Council Resolution, 27 April 1948.

⁸ Machingaidze, ‘Agrarian Change from Above’.

Furthermore, a medical report had to accompany an application for any of the licences discussed above. A favourable report from the Public Health Department was notoriously challenging to get. As studies on colonial Africa's medical history suggest, as Swanson suggests for South Africa, colonial health officials viewed Africans as contagions and aimed at controlling African spaces from infecting the settler population.⁹ Consequently, Medical officers viewed lease sites, stores, and restaurant buildings in both the African reserves and African locations as suspect and subjected them to a strict standard. The Medical Health Officer writing to restaurant site applicant Makak in the Lower Gwelo Reserve, outlined that he had to:

Provide adequate sanitary conveniences at your business premises on the Lower Gwelo Reserve Road near the Ngamo River, Lower Gwelo Reserve. Such sanitary conveniences must be at least 15 feet in depth, and covered over with reinforced concrete slabs, having suitable apertures. The latrine buildings must be constructed of burnt brick, smooth plastered on the inside with cement plaster, with adequate light and ventilation.¹⁰

These demands by the Public Health Department placed a high premium on the costs of starting a business for Africans. A price that most aspiring African entrepreneurs, with little capital, could not afford.

In addition to meeting the health regulations entrepreneurs also had to provide a police report as part of the licence application bundle. To obtain this report, an applicant had to have their fingerprints taken and assessed by the BSAP for any criminal record. Given that the colonial state was nervous in its dealings with its colonial subjects, this requirement was problematic. Several studies have shown how the colonial state criminalised African activities and movements. As Tapiwa Zimudzi explains, 'the colonial courts were characterised not only by racism but also by a lack of professional judicial training on the part of many of its magistrate.'¹¹ Consequently, as the chapter argues in the subsequent sections, most African business license applicants failed the criminal record test. While there is no evidence of overt

⁹ M. W. Swanson, 'The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909', *The Journal of African History*, 18, 3 (1977), 387-410.

¹⁰ NAZ, S1018/29, The NC, Gwelo, Native Eating Houses, 1941 – 1950, Letter from Senior Government Health Officer to Makak, Ngamo River, Lower Gwelo Reserve, 7 July 1949.

¹¹ T. B. Zimudzi, 'African Women, Violent Crime and the Criminal Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900-1952', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, 3 (2004), 503.

racism favouring white traders, African applicants often failed to get licenses based on decades-old criminal convictions and light convictions such as traffic offences.

NAD officials also demanded that Africans interested in business be able to read and write. This requirement was less clear, and colonial officials often disagreed on the importance of literacy. As this chapter shows, Africans came up with ways of proving their business literacy. Africans could do so through personally hand-written application letters, asking other people to write for them, or by referencing past education and work experience. Nonetheless, as the previous chapter showed, a majority of the NCs frowned on the capacity of African entrepreneurs to engage in business. Consequently, African business literacy became a site of struggle between NC's on the one hand and the CNC on the other who tried to reign in on the excesses of his subordinates to patronise African traders.

The allocation of trading sites in the African reserves was also affected by the NLHA. The process of its establishment after the Second World War and its implementation after 1952, upended the NAD creating business sites as points of conflict. These internal tensions, over the implementation of the NLHA act played out in the allocation of trading sites in a way that disadvantaged African traders. Heads of departments in various agents of the NAD, as proceeding paragraphs will demonstrate, conflicted over the intents and purposes of trading sites in the context of the NLHA.

Business sites and Returning African Soldiers

Notwithstanding the complicated application process, African ex-servicemen received preferential treatment in the awarding of licences immediately after the end of the Second World War. Scholars writing on the post Second World War period have analysed the role and impact of returning African war veterans within the grand scheme of the Second Colonial Occupation and decolonisation.¹² During the post Second World War, Southern Rhodesia

¹² For more on African ex-servicemen see A. M. Israel, 'Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads: Protest and Politics in Post-War Ghana', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30, 2 (1992), 359-36, L. Grundlingh, 'Aspects of the Impact of the Second World War on the Lives of Black South African and British Colonial Soldiers', *Transafrican Journal of History*, 21 (1992), 19-30, D. Killingray, 'Soldiers, Ex-Servicemen, and Politics in the Gold Coast,

attempted to accommodate thousands of returning African and European ex-servicemen with varying success. The scholarship on the post Second World War has grappled with the effect that the rehabilitation of European ex-servicemen had on the economy.¹³ Among other things, the government gave them agricultural land, which had an impact on the economy and the land tenure pattern. Tobacco farming witnessed a surge while the state forced Africans to relocate to the ever increasingly crowded reserves as they made way for the European ex-servicemen.¹⁴ Besides, historians of African nationalism in Zimbabwe and, indeed, the rest of Anglophone Africa have shown how the return of African ex-servicemen also helped to stimulate the rise in African nationalism. The post Second World War colonial state, all too aware of the kind influence that the African soldiers had on politics back home, attempted to rehabilitate them by offering opportunities in education, government, and business.

Africans who participated in the Second World War fell into three regiments, the Rhodesian African Rifles, the Royal Air Askari Corps and the Internment Camp Corps. Upon their return, Southern Rhodesia, and the rest of colonial Africa was faced with the challenge of how to assimilate these men who had served the Empire during the war. On the war front, the Rhodesian African Rifles and the Royal Askari Corps, together with the other regiments from the rest of British Africa, such as the King's African Rifles of East and Central Africa, had fought side by side with Europeans as equal men. Their experiences on the war front were different from the racial segregation and discrimination that they experienced back home. Perhaps more importantly, the African war veterans were able to acquire useful skills while on the front, which they were eager to benefit from once they were back home.¹⁵ These developments both frightened and inspired the colonial state. On the one hand, the experiences of the African veterans would lead to their demand for greater freedoms and other employment opportunities protected by the racial colour bar. Alternatively, the colonial state saw an opportunity in straitjacketing ex-military African men into agents of 'positive' change within the African reserves.

1939-50', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 21, 3 (1983), 523-5 and E. P. A. Schleh, 'The Post-War Careers of Ex-Servicemen in Ghana and Uganda', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 2 (1968), 203-220.

¹³ A. S. Mlambo, *White immigration into Rhodesia: From Occupation to Federation* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publication, 2002).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ D. Johnson, 'The Impact of the Second World War on Southern Rhodesia, with Special Reference to African Labour, 1939-1948', (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1989), 102.

It is within this context that African ex-servicemen got first preference in the allocation of lease sites for those interested in business. The broader aim was to stop African ex-servicemen from becoming a destabilising force by rehabilitating them back into society on the colonial state's terms. The rehabilitation involved creating economic opportunities for African veterans. These rehabilitation opportunities included government employment, land in the African purchase areas, bursaries, training as medical orderlies, and loans to kick start agricultural projects.¹⁶ In a memorandum circulated within the NAD, the Secretary of Native Affairs pitched his plan for African veterans of the Second World War who might be interested in trade in the African reserves. Proposing the programme, he explained that:

It is desirable that the scheme for European ex-servicemen should be adopted to meet the needs of African ex-servicemen ... I am putting a scheme before the Native Reserves Trustees whereby ex-servicemen with a little capital should be given the opportunity of engaging in the trading business.¹⁷

The scheme was the first time that the state had contemplated giving financial aid to Africans interested in business.

The Secretary of Native Affairs farther ordered NCs to stop the granting of trading leases to other applicants until the African veterans interested in storekeeping had obtained stores. He proposed the construction, on behalf of the servicemen, of 'model stores ... in order that they may conserve their capital for the provision of trade goods.'¹⁸ The statement was an implicit admission by the NAD of some of the structural flaws in the department's policy towards African entrepreneurship. Starting a business in the African reserves required a substantial financial investment compared to requirements for the urban areas. One had to invest money in building the store to the specifics of the Public Health Department, whereas, in the urban areas, the municipality constructed the buildings and leased them out for rent to entrepreneurs. To that end, the Secretary of Native Affairs pointed out that he was in engagement with the Auditor General so that they 'utilise some of the surplus dip tank funds by way of loans to the Native Reserves Trustees to finance the building scheme.'¹⁹

¹⁶ NAZ, S3292/56/4/1, Circular on the Rehabilitation Benefits Applicable to African Servicemen on their Discharge from the Armed Forces, Southern Rhodesia, c1948.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

This development, coming on the back of the Second World War and the Godlonton Commission of 1944, had several implications for both white and African traders. It marked the first attempt by the colonial state to target Africans in the promotion of entrepreneurship in the African areas. Writing to the NC for Wedza in 1947, the CNC recommended the application for a lease site to open a general dealer store by a decorated African ex-serviceman, Muwengwa.²⁰ A holder of the '1939/45 and Burma Stars', the African ex-serviceman had served as a Private of the Rhodesia African Rifles.²¹ Another African who benefited from his service during the Second World War was Mathew Mukubise.²² Although from Northern Rhodesia, Mukubise had been part of the Union Forces.²³ The NC described Mukubise as 'intelligent and likely to make a success of a business.'²⁴

Not all African veterans of the Second World received favourable recommendations in the awarding of lease sites for trading, however. NCs often used their authority to exclude African ex-servicemen they felt were undesirable. Unlike Mathew Mukubise, whom the NC for Bikita described as 'intelligent,' Y. G. Yardley had no kind words for Zivanayi of Zimuto Reserve in the Fort Victoria District.²⁵ Zivanayi had served as part of the Rhodesian African Rifles under the South East Asia Command between the years 1944 and 1946. Having arrived from the front, he was keen on establishing a business in the Zimuto Reserve.²⁶ The PNC for Southern Mashonaland, apart from describing the veteran as illiterate and a nuisance, bluntly barbed out that Zivanayi was 'not one of the better type of men who saw service.' He added that Zivanayi 'puts a great deal of side, and I found him wearing two medal ribbons to which he was not entitled.'²⁷ As Shutt has convincingly demonstrated, NCs obsessed over how Africans carried themselves and, therefore, would take exception to a military 'impostor' like Zivanayi.²⁸ In Umvuma, an African ex-serviceman with the Rhodesia African Rifles failed to obtain a trading lease for a mill in Chilimanzi Reserve because he was from Portuguese Mozambique. The NC

²⁰ NAZ, S2400/3761, CNC, Leasing of Sites Wedza, Letter from the ANC, Wedza, to the CNC, 4 October 1947.

²¹ Ibid.

²² NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC, Leasing of Sites Bikita, Letter from L. Powys-Jones, Assistant to the CNC to the PNC, Southern Mashonaland, Application for Assistance in Starting Business: Returned African Soldiers.

²³ Ibid, Letter from the NC Bikita to the PNC, Southern Mashonaland, 9 September 1946.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ NAZ, S2400/2400, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Fort Victoria, Letter from Letter from the PNC, Fort Victoria to the CNC, Application by Zivanayi – Ex R.A.R. for store site in the Zimuto Reserve at Gurajena Kraal.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ A. Shutt, 'The Natives Are Getting out of Hand': Legislating Manners, Insolence and Contemptuous Behaviour in Southern Rhodesia, c. 1910-1963, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 3 (2007), 653-672.

for Chilimanzi ‘considered that’ lease sites in African reserves ‘should be reserved for indigenous natives, and I, therefore, do not recommend the application.’²⁹

These examples show that the NCs tended to deviate from official colonial policy. Although the rehabilitation of African ex-servicemen by giving them business sites was part of colonial policy, NCs sometimes considered local factors to the detriment of potential African entrepreneurs who had seen service during the Second World. As the following sections of this chapter show, this also reflected a recurring trend by NCs who consciously selected amongst Africans whom to award business sites beyond the programme to rehabilitate the African veterans of the Second World War.

Although the rehabilitation of African ex-servicemen as entrepreneurs aimed at promoting African entrepreneurship, it sometimes disadvantaged other Africans interested in business. After the end of the Second World War, the NAD only gave preference for business sites to African veterans at the expense of the other African applicants. For example, in 1945, the CNC wrote to the PNC for Midlands instructing that, ‘it has been decided that no more sites will be leased for general dealers businesses until the return of the African members of the military forces from active service.’³⁰ In Umtali, Toyisepi was refused a licence in 1945 because, as the Civil Commissioner put it, it was not in the interests ‘of returning ex-servicemen and the possibility of a European setting up as a Baker in the European area of Odzi – which I feel is to be desired.’³¹ Consequently, although the government policy of giving business sites to returning African soldiers hoped to promote African entrepreneurship, writ large it disadvantaged other Africans who were not soldiers from getting trading sites.

²⁹ NAZ, S2400/2400, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Fort Victoria, Letter from the PNC, Fort Victoria to the CNC, Application by Zivanayi – Ex R.A.R. for store site in the Zimuto Reserve at Gurajena Kraal.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ NAZ, S2400/3762, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Umvuma, Letter from the CNC to the PNC, Midlands, 6 October 1945.

³¹ NAZ, S2400/3764, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Umtali, Letter from G. C. Gisborne, the Civil Commissioner to the PNC, Umtali, 7 July 1945.

African Teachers, Land Development Officers, and Orderlies interested in Business Sites

Although Africans in government employment were among those interested in acquiring trading permits in the African reserves, they did not get the preferential treatment that African ex-servicemen, discussed above, received. A general dealer store, restaurant, and mill held appeal for Africans working for the government for several social and economic reasons. The colonial state expected Africans to return to the reserves after retirement. In general, as Thompson explains,

Many men strove to limit their participation in the labour market, which required access to other sources of money for taxes and other family needs that required cash. Most oscillated between waged labour and fanning, but some men, mainly older ones, were able to stay in the reserves, avoiding employment through crop and cattle sales, as well as cash provided by their sons and other relations.³²

Consequently, upon retirement, African teachers, orderlies, land development officers, and messengers coveted the trader tag, which was associated with high social standing and respect. Equally important, an independent vocation such as running a general dealer store allowed some Africans to escape from colonial control and harassment that peasant agriculture could not afford. Economically, the opportunities that entrepreneurship offered African government employees were immense. It was an effective way to augment one's income and to continue a comfortable lifestyle after employment. As a result, it is hardly surprising that African government workers flooded business site applications between 1944 and 1955.

Unlike the case with the African ex-servicemen, some officials within the NAD were not interested in having government workers, in light of the implementation of NLHA, venturing into entrepreneurship. Thompson notes that 'what was truly new about the NLHA was that it provided officials with extensive coercive powers and brought a number of earlier programmes together into a comprehensive scheme.'³³ Statutory restrictions prohibited government workers from running a business. In 1946, the NAD refused an application for a mill site in the Zimunya reserve to an African member of the BSAP working for the Criminal Investigation

³² Thomson, 'Cultivating Conflict', 17.

³³ *Ibid*, 5.

Department.³⁴ In the same district of Umtali, the NC also refused Amos Mwazodani's application for a general dealer lease site.³⁵ Amos Mwazodani later managed to obtain the lease after the intervention of the CNC.³⁶ The CNC's intervention came after Mwazodani's lawyer, C. Bowles, had written to the NAD reassuring them of his client's undertaking 'that in the event of the lease and the general dealer licence being granted to him, he will immediately resign from the Government Service.'³⁷

While the correspondence within the NAD and with Mwazodani's lawyers does not show the nature of Mwazodani's government employment, other African government employees who applied for business sites were not as lucky. District officials of the NAD were averse to Africans in 'critical' government positions such as Land Development Officers, Orderlies, Agricultural Demonstrators, and teachers leaving employment for entrepreneurship. In a meeting of the Native Affairs Advisory Board and Directors of Native Administration held in 1956, the Department of Native Education told the gathering that it was concerned with African teachers engaged in commerce.³⁸ The Board resolved that the government should discourage teachers from running businesses.³⁹ Three years earlier, an African identified as Fani had his trading lease application in Mubaira Reserve of Mashonaland, about 90 km from Salisbury, denied. At the time, Fani was working as a Land Development Officer.⁴⁰ Writing to the Secretary of Native Economic Development, the PNC stated that, 'I do not support this application; I think he should be encouraged to stick to his government job which is also for the good of others.'⁴¹ In this way, NAD officials barred African government workers interested in business from resigning if they perceived that this would affect their ability to administer the African reserves. Land Development Officers were critical in the Department's efforts at managing and controlling land resources in the African Reserves.

³⁴ NAZ, S2400/3764, Letter from the CNC to the PNC, Umtali, Application for a Mill Site: Zimunya Reserve, 28 September 1946.

³⁵ Ibid, Letter from G. C. Gisborne, the Civil Commissioner to the PNC, Umtali, 7 July 1945.

³⁶ Ibid, Letter from P. C. Bowles to the CNC, 18 July 1945.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ NAZ, S160/DMW, CNC, Minutes of the Meeting held between the Native Affairs Advisory Board and Directors of Native Administration, 9 May 1956.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ NAZ, S1033/05, CNC, Trading Sites, 1947 – 1954, Letter from the PNC, Northern Mashonaland to the Secretary of Native Economic Development, 22 January 1953.

⁴¹ Ibid.

However, NAD officials were not always in consensus on this matter. A clear example of conflicting interpretations of colonial policy on African entrepreneurship within government happened in the Bikita District, 130 km from Fort Victoria, in 1950. The NC for Bikita rejected an application for a business site at Rozwa Business Centre by an African Medical Orderly.⁴² The PNC disagreed with the NC and stated so in a letter to the CNC. In the strongly-worded missive, he explained his position thus:

In your minute of September 3rd, 1949, discloses the attitude that a Government trained Native Medical Orderly is banned from giving up his work to run a store. I do not hold with it and have stated so repeatedly. Yet now that your directions have been compiled with, there is still objection. I recommend the grant of a lease in the Rozwa Business centre, Bikita to the applicant; only in that way can a native advance and provide the example.⁴³

The disagreement between the two colonial officials reflected the contradictions among colonial officials in the NAD over business sites in the African reserves. Although the PNC supported the granting of store sites to Africans working for the government, his language reflected the colonial patronage synonymous with his peers. The NAD's standpoint towards African government workers interested in business, couched in patronage, reflects some of the structural challenges that hindered the growth of African entrepreneurship during the colonial period. With no access to loan facilities, most African businesses raised capital from work in government, mining or peasant agriculture. Therefore, the NAD's policy of refusing applications for store sites from government workers discouraged applications from amongst Africans that had access to capital.

There were exceptions to the rule, however. Mandiwana, a member of the BSAP had his application for a lease site to start a butchery business in the district of Fort Victoria accepted by the NC after the Cattle Sales Permit Committee 'had granted him a cattle quota of six head per month' despite his employ with the BSAP.⁴⁴ This ambiguity in policy is explained by the high degree of discretion that NCs sometimes exercised. This discretion was often influenced by colonial patronage, and Mandiwana's application came with a good recommendation from

⁴² NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC: Leasing of Sites: Bikita, Letter from the NC Bikita to the PNC, Application for Store Site in Bikita Native Reserve: Rozwa Business Centre, 5 June 1950.

⁴³ Ibid, Letter from the PNC, Southern Mashonaland to the CNC, Application for Store Site in Bikita Native Reserve: Rozwa Business Centre, 5 June 1950.

⁴⁴ NAZ, S3156/3/2, CNC, Trade Leases, Letter from the NC, Fort Victoria to the PNC, Application for Butchery Site: Mandiwana, 18 October, 1952.

the Officer in Command for Gwelo, Major Streater who ‘testified to his character.’⁴⁵ In the context of the colonial state’s efforts at destocking, butcher’s licences were more accessible compared to other licence types such as for a general dealer store or an African Restaurant. This ambiguity across districts and NAD officials both impeded and enabled the growth of African entrepreneurship. The following sections will show how some Africans used their patronage links with colonial officials to obtain lease sites, as did Mandiwana.

Colonial Patronage and African Traders

In addition to barring African government workers from resigning to take up entrepreneurship, NCs also used tried to select, based on character, those they awarded trading leases. NCs were nervous about the influence that traders might have within the African community. A store was not merely a space of commercial transaction but was a site of interaction between Africans and other groups. The centrality of stores bothered NCs who tried to give business sites only to Africans they deemed ‘progressive’ while refusing the same for those they thought ‘undesirables.’ Progressive could mean Africans who were acceptable to white sensibilities of respectability, as Allison Shutt suggests in her work on ‘racial etiquette’ in Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁶ At the same time, the 1940s and 1950s was a period the colonial state placed faith in ‘education in “progressive” attitudes and scientific agriculture, such that better discipline and a greater sense of responsibility will develop.’⁴⁷ These issues mattered importantly to the NC for Bikita, F. S. McCabe, who explicitly commented that ‘in native areas, stores have a big influence on the people in the vicinity, and I have always felt that in administering an area one should always bear this in mind.’⁴⁸

Consequently, the district office of the NAD sieved through African applicants for business sites by looking at ‘character,’ and business literacy. In some cases, NCs gave preference to Africans indigenous to the district and at times offered business sites to European and Indian traders with significant capital. The process was arbitrary and differed from one district to the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*.

⁴⁷ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 45.

⁴⁸ NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC, Leasing of Sites, Bikita, Letter from the NC Bikita to the ANC, Southern Mashonaland, 11 March 1948.

other and created ambiguity in colonial policy implementation of commerce in the African areas creating conflict within the NAD and other concerned stakeholders. Describing the ‘nebulous’ nature of the NAD operated when dealing with Africans, Shutt states:

Neither the Native Regulations nor the NAA described or defined insolence or contemptuous behaviour, and, except for the broad categories of contempt and poor manners, NCs thought little about the definition of insolence; it was obvious to them. The nebulous nature of insolence and contemptuous behaviour meant that NCs and other officials might define as insolent or contemptuous any speech, gesture, act or manner that they regarded as meant to insult, defy, ridicule or mock.⁴⁹

Some Africans lost out on the licence application process because certain NCs felt that they were a bad influence in their constituency. The NC for Bikita, F. S. McCabe, cited in the preceding paragraph, exemplified this attitude and in 1948, stressed that ‘applicants must be of good character and recommended by the chief of the area where the site is to be located.’⁵⁰ Later that year, McCabe opined in correspondence to the ANC for Southern Mashonaland, ‘stores that are not well provided by the right type of native can become the utmost undesirable places both from a health and a moral point of view.’⁵¹ These views were widespread during the 1940s and 1950s and were not limited to McCabe. Maxim Zwikaramba applied for a lease site at Chibeso Kraal in the Masembura Reserve, some 10 km from Bindura. The ANC for Mazowe wrote to the Native Reserves Trust, informing them against granting a licence to Zwikaramba, whom he described as a ‘nuisance to this office.’⁵² The ANC for Mazowe added that Zwikaramba ‘is a most undesirable type of a person to be granted the privilege of a lease of land in the reserve which, if granted, would be abused.’⁵³ In his work on the Jews and the Greeks in colonial Zimbabwe, Kosmin observed that the colonial state often denied European minority groups the opportunity to trade within the African community because they were considered a bad influence on Africans.⁵⁴ However, as these examples from Bindura and Bikita show, this treatment was not limited to the Greeks and Jews alone.

Colonial patronage did not only hinder Africans from obtaining licences but also disrupted African businesses. NCs arbitrarily shut down businesses belonging to Africans and at times,

⁴⁹ Shutt, ‘The Natives Are Getting out of Hand’, 661.

⁵⁰ NAZ, S2400/3803, Statement by F. S. McCabe, the NC Bikita, Application 11 November 1948.

⁵¹ Ibid, Letter from the NC Bikita to the ANC, Southern Mashonaland, 11 November 1948.

⁵² NAZ, S2400/S3804, CNC, Leasing of Sites, Bindura, Letter from the ANC to the NC, Mazowe District, 21 August 1947.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Kosmin, ‘Ethnic and Commercial Relations in Southern Rhodesia’.

refused to renew trading leases. In certain instances, NCs refused applications by Africans to expand their businesses. In the Sinoia district, an African only identified as Mataki had his butchery shut down and licence taken away by the NC for Sinoia.⁵⁵ In explaining his capricious action to the CNC, the NC for Sinoia stated:

I had received numerous reports to the unhygienic condition of Makati`s butcher shop. He failed to report here in answer to verbal messages sent to him, so when I had the opportunity of visiting his shop, I found it and the slaughter pole in a disgraceful condition. He was absent at his home in the Hartley district.⁵⁶

NCs often intertwined the implementation of the NLHA with the politics of the business site as the following example from Fort Victoria shows. The NC for Fort Victoria thought of using the threat of cancelling a lease site to coerce Nyevera of Zimuto Reserve to comply with the colony`s destocking regulations.⁵⁷ Nyevera owned a large herd of cattle, which he was refusing to destock. As the NC pointed out,

In view of this fact I would like to suggest that the attached approval of the lease of an eating house in Zimuto reserve be withdrawn ... I think the cancellation of the offer will induce others to carry out instructions promptly. I have taken other measures to deal with the rest of the delinquents.⁵⁸

Elsewhere in 1952, Danziger and Lardner-Burke were informed by the NC for Hartley that he was ‘not prepared to recommend’ that their African client ‘operate two businesses. He must choose.’⁵⁹ Through his lawyers, Tigere had expressed a desire to expand his restaurant by adding a general dealer store.⁶⁰ As a result, a cap was placed on the ability of Africans to expand their businesses.

In other instances, government agencies such as the BSAP had considerable say in the awarding of business sites. The police force played an instrumental role in the surveillance of Africans on behalf of the colonial state. In this instance, NCs used the BSAP in ‘verifying’ African applicants for lease sites. While other districts NC`s took into consideration the report of the BSAP to decide on whether to award a lease site, the NC for Gwelo, for instance, relied

⁵⁵ NAZ, S2400/3758, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Sinoia, Letter from C. P. Bowels, Solicitor to the CNC 16 September 1947 – Destocking meant reducing the number of cattle to meet the carrying capacity of the area.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ NAZ, S2400/3765, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Fort Victoria, Letter from the NC Fort Victoria to the PNC, Southern Mashonaland, 27 July 1949.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ NAZ, 1033/05, CNC: Trading Sites, Letter from the NC, Hartley to Danziger & Lardner-Burke, Solicitors, 20 October 1952.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

exclusively on the BSAP reports.⁶¹ As underscored earlier in the chapter, the colonial state tried to police and control African lives. The objective was to monitor African movement and activities to protect the wellbeing of the white settler community. In August of 1947, Sergeant J. A. H. Brereton for Gwelo wrote to the PNC for the Midlands, advising that Somabula's licence must be cancelled. Somabula's restaurant was located on a mine where it served African mine workers and Africans going through the area.⁶² The BSAP sergeant asked the NAD to shut down the business since it 'is surrounded by Europeans and is therefore not a suitable place to have a native eating house.'⁶³ Brereton cited several 'complaints by the Europeans of riotous conduct and that the place is not clean or kept in a sanitary condition.'⁶⁴ A year later, the BSAP objected to a licence application by Mpompe, pointing out that, 'I consider it would be most undesirable for a native eating house to be so near the European village.'⁶⁵ These examples demonstrate how colonial patronage, in both the NAD and in colonial agents such as the BSAP, structurally worked against Africans interested in business.

Another example of how colonial patronage structurally impeded the growth of African entrepreneurship during the period covered was the NAD's insistence on financial literacy as a must-have for African entrepreneurs. The previous chapter looked at how the colonial state through the Godlonton Commission debated on ideas around African entrepreneurship. Proceedings from the Commission showed that most officials in the NAD felt that Africans could not possibly understand basic business literacy, let alone run a complicated business venture such as a cooperative society. As this chapter shows, these feelings ran deep and were a cause of licence refusal to Africans during the 1940s and 1950s. Perhaps more importantly, African literacy and business became a matter of constant bickering between officials and sub-departments in the NAD.

Some NCs insisted that Africans possess financial literacy as a prerequisite for issuing a licence. Notorious for insisting on this requirement during the late 1940s and early 1950s was McCabe, the NC for Bikita. In a statement circulated among his NAD district officials in 1948,

⁶¹ NAZ, S1018/29, Native Eating Houses, Letter from J. A. H. Brereton Sgt, Member in Charge, British South Africa Police to the PNC, 5 August 1947.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, Letter from the Member in Charge Gwelo, to the NC, 8 July 1948.

he insisted that African entrepreneurs ‘must have experience of the business and knowledge of bookkeeping and therefore be able to read and write.’⁶⁶ Furthermore, he demanded that Traders be familiar with ‘the controlled prices of various articles’ while keeping ‘informed of up to date changes in these.’⁶⁷ In other districts, NCs followed this regime to the letter. In Bindura, Maxim was denied a licence because, apart from his blindness, ‘is quite incapable of conducting the business himself.’⁶⁸ This was the case when the infamous NC for Bikita, McCabe, did not recommend Budaza`s application for a butchery. As expected, McCabe had refused the licence because of Budaza`s illiteracy, pointing out that ‘Budaza, in common with most natives in this area who apply to set up in business, has practically no experience of the trade.’⁶⁹ To prove his point, McCabe attached a handwritten letter by Budaza, which he phrased as a specimen of his writing.⁷⁰ The handwritten letter is attached below.

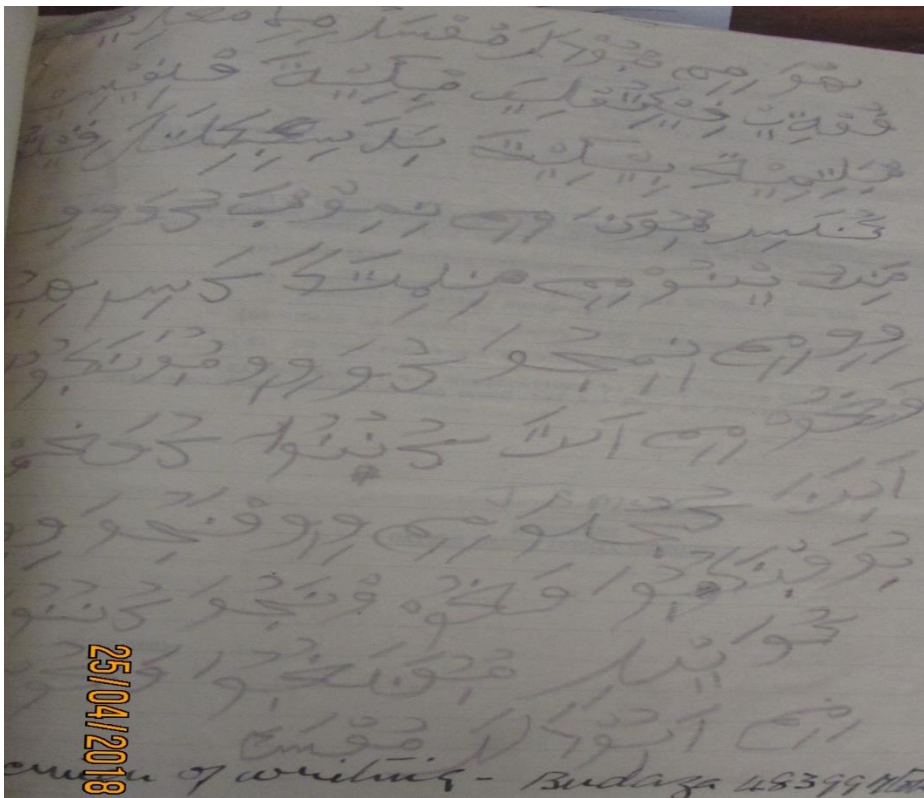


Image 1: Budaza`s Handwritten Application letter for a Business Site, 1948

⁶⁶ NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC, Leasing of Sites Bikita, Statement by N. C. McCabe, NC, Bikita, August 1948.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ NAZ, S2400/8304, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Bindura, Letter from the ANC to the NC for Mazowe District, 21 August 1947.

⁶⁹ NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC, Leasing of Sites Bikita, Statement by N. C. McCabe, NC, Bikita, August 1948.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

NCs sometimes denied licences to Africans despite their success in other economic spheres such as formal employment or peasant agriculture. A. G. Yardley refused to recommend an application by Zwidzai to run an African restaurant in the Zimuto Reserve of Fort Victoria District. Like the NCs for Bikita and Bindura, the PNC for Southern Mashonaland argued that Zwidzai ‘knows nothing of business, and the articles which he could sell would allow him little profit and would be of no assistance to natives’ even though Zwidzai was ‘once a soil conservation demonstrator.’⁷¹ Titus Woyo also went through a similar experience when applying for a store site in the Bikita Reserve. The NC for Bikita spoke glowingly of Woyo’s success in peasant agriculture, explaining that ‘Woyo is a successful stockman and agriculturist. He reaped 130 bags of maize this season, has 35 head of large stock, two ploughs and a scotch cart, etc.’⁷² Notwithstanding, the NC for Bikita decided not to recommend the licence expressing that Woyo’s ‘experience of storekeeping is nil.’⁷³ Furthermore, the NC was ‘not convinced’ that Woyo ‘will not dispose of his stock and give up his lands if he is granted the store site.’⁷⁴

Officials in the NAD argued over the importance of business literacy as a prerequisite for African entrepreneurs interested in business. Drawing on colonial patronage, NCs maintained that Africans had to have basic business skills if they were to avoid financial ruin. Consequently, as the above cases show, many Africans had their applications turned down. Sometimes, however, the CNC had to intervene and veto some NCs who would have refused a licence application by an African because they were illiterate. In the case of Zwidzai of Zimuto Reserve cited earlier in this section, the CNC eventually intervened explaining that:

If the applicant has been warned that he is likely to lose money on his business proposition and still desires to make the attempt, it is not considered that he should be refused a lease for this purpose.⁷⁵

The CNC’s defence of Zwidzai in this instance did not necessarily mean that he was less patronising of African ability than his subordinates were. Instead, the CNC, as the following

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid, Letter from the NC, Bikita to the PNC, Application for a Store Site: Woyo Titus 11492 Bikita, 11 November 1945.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

sections will show, was under immense pressure from Africans who employed several ways, such as litigation, to appeal against some of the decisions made by NCs.

In other instances, other departments within the NAD, such as the NRTF and the Department of Native Economic Development, objected to the arbitrary rulings of NCs. These other arms of the NAD often had conflicting interests with those of the NCs. For example, they were more interested in the revenues from leases and, in the case of the NTPB, with the marketing of peasant agricultural produce. The NTPB came into existence towards the end of the 1950s as a recommendation of the 1944 Godlonton Commission. Conflict within the NAD over African administration was inherently insidious to African interests. As the example from the Urungwe District shows, conflict over store sites in the African reserves tended to affect African entrepreneurs negatively.⁷⁶ Arthur Pendered, the leading advocate for African agricultural and land reform after the Second World War favoured established retailers with the ability to market African grains. In the Urungwe District, he objected to the NC, who preferred African traders to Indian or white traders.⁷⁷ Writing to the CNC, Pendered pitched for an Indian Firm, Patel Bros, which he felt would better serve the district than ‘Native storekeepers’ whose ‘stocks of goods are small and uninteresting.’⁷⁸ In any case, he argued, African traders ‘buy no grain, which is the only commodity the inhabitants have to sell,’ while ‘the Indian traders in the reserve traded 4500 bags of grain in 1948 which would not otherwise have come on to the market.’⁷⁹

The Consolidation of White Traders in African Areas

On the surface, the policy that influenced the issuing of business sites in the African reserves was the programme of Separate Development. The CNC and some NCs often pointed to this policy when supporting African entrepreneurs over white and Indian applicants to business sites. In some cases, NCs extended the meaning of Separate Development to mean that only those Africans indigenous to that district were entitled to business sites. However, as this

⁷⁶ NAZ, S2400/3767, CNC, Leasing of Sites Urungwe, Letter from A. Pendered, Marketing Officer of the Native Trade and Production Branch to the CNC, Trading Site Urungwe, 18 January 1949.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

section will show, this policy did not always hold, and white/Indian traders remained visible and in competition with African entrepreneurs. After the Second World War, the big trading firms such as the African Trading Stores (ATS) and N. Richards started to consolidate their interests in the African reserves. When justifying the presence of these big non-African firms, NCs often cited overtrading and the interests of African consumers. Overall, this affected negatively African entrepreneurs interested in business during this period. This section will also show how the fluidity of the policy of Separate Development did not just disadvantage Africans but helped some entrepreneurs to enter non-African commercial spaces.

The competition for business sites between Africans and European/Indian traders was often intense that NCs had to resort to the policy of Separate Development in deciding who gets a lease. Just months after the conclusion of the Godlonton Commission, the ANC for Wedza refused to recommend John Frost's licence application in preference of an African only identified as Bofo.⁸⁰ The NC for Marandellas described Frost as 'of the poor white type or coloured' expressing his anxieties of having a person of his 'class in a reserve.'⁸¹ Barry Kosmin and Ibbo Mandaza discuss, in separate studies, some of the reasons for the colonial state's 'anxieties' with European minority groups, usually poor, and coloureds who were in frequent contact with Africans.⁸² It is within this context that the NC for Wedza's apprehension with Frost ought to be considered. Perhaps more importantly, the NC waded into the all too familiar rhetoric of Separate Development pointing out that he 'did not favour a European of this type' since 'there are natives who are desirous of providing adequate trading facilities for the natives resident in the reserves.'⁸³ These types of decisions were replicated elsewhere, as the Shangani example discussed below shows.

⁸⁰ NAZ, S2400/3761, Leasing of Sites Wedza, CNC, Leasing of Sites, Letter from the NC Marandellas to the CNC, Application for a Tailoring Site, Wedza Reserve: John Frost, 21 June 1948.

⁸¹ Ibid, Letter from the ANC Wedza to the NC Marandellas, Application for a Tailoring Site, Wedza Reserve: John Frost, 3 July 1948.

⁸² I. Mandaza, *Race Colour and Class in Southern Africa, a Study of the Coloured Question in the Context of an Analysis of the Colonial and White Settler Racial Ideology, and African Nationalism in Twentieth Century Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi* (Harare: Sapes Press, 1997) and Kosmin, *Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community of Zimbabwe*.

⁸³ NAZ, S2400/3761, Leasing of Sites Wedza, CNC, Leasing of Sites, Letter from the ANC Wedza to the NC Marandellas, Application for a Tailoring Site, Wedza Reserve: John Frost, 3 July 1948.

In 1951 C. Bissett, the NC for Shangani, refused a store site application by K. G. Mathieson, a white trader, explaining that ‘there is no room for European traders in this district.’⁸⁴ In a missive to the PNC, he elucidated that the Africans in his district, led by Chief Madhlisibanda had made a ‘unanimous’ decision that Mathieson’s application must be refused because:

There were already nine stores in the reserve, and Special Native Area owned and run by Europeans and that there was an increasing desire on the part of the natives to run their own stores and that because of the LAA, as amended, Natives were now being excluded from European area so should Europeans be excluded from land reserved for Natives.⁸⁵

Cumulatively, the impact of the policy of Separate Development did not help Africans. Other factors, discussed in the coming paragraphs, entailed that the benefits of Separate Development were far in between.

For one, NCs did not favour African entrepreneurs from other districts. For them, the policy of Separate Development extended beyond race. This meant that only Africans indigenous to the locale had the right to business sites in that district. For example, in the Nyajena Reserve, Murangwa had his application turned down because he ‘was not a local man and was likely under the influence of an Indian storekeeper for whom he worked.’⁸⁶ Earlier in 1945, in Chilimanzi Reserve, the Acting NC for Umvuma expressed disfavour ‘in the granting of sites within the reserve to strangers when there are many potential local applicants for business sites.’⁸⁷ Consequently, Africans with the capital and resources often fell out of favour because they were not locals.

Concerns over overtrading in the African reserves was a key concern among some NCs. The prescribed distance between two competing businesses was 15 miles, but sometimes NCs used their discretion to circumvent this regulation. While the rule on overtrading affected traders across racial lines, it tended to affect African entrepreneurs more. When determining lease site applications, NCs often thought in terms of African consumers and not African entrepreneurs.

⁸⁴ NAZ S2400/3766, CNC, Leasing of Sites Shangani, Letter from C. Bissett, The NC for Shangani to the PNC Matabeleland, Application for a Store Site, Shangani Reserve: K. G. Mathieson, 24 January 1951.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ NAZ, S2400/3765, CNC, Leasing of Sites Fort Victoria, Letter from the PNC, Fort Victoria to the CNC: Application for a Mill Site, Nyajena Reserve, 3 February 1949.

⁸⁷ NAZ, S2400/3762, CNC, Leasing of Sites Umvuma, Letter from the Acting NC to the PNC Gwelo, Application for a Trading and Mill Site, Chilimanzi Reserve, 2 November 1945.

Consequently, they every so often opted for traders with abundant stock and capital who, often, tended to be white, Indian, or large European firms like the ATS. Because of the rule on overtrading, African entrepreneurs found it difficult to break into the market against the established white and Indian traders. As we have seen elsewhere in the chapter, there was no collective understanding among colonial officials of what constituted overtrading. There was a lot of bickering over this subject in letters between the CNC and the NC and between the NAD and other colonial statutory bodies such as the NRTF and the NPMB. The result was a very ambiguous colonial policy on commerce in the African reserves that impeded the growth of African entrepreneurship.

The NC for Bikita, whom we met earlier, making a fuss over African business literacy, also tried to control overtrading in his district. Among some of the reasons the NC for Bikita turned down Woyo`s licence application, was that the area he wanted to set up a business already had a ‘good and well established trader.’⁸⁸ In Mubaira Township, C. A. Hinde, the NC for Hartley refused Fani`s licence because, among other things, the township already had ‘ample trading facilities.’⁸⁹ The NAD`s insistence on overtrading was accompanied by an increase in the competition for business from white and Indian traders to the disadvantage of African traders. African consumers and some NCs preferred White and Indian traders to African Traders because the former had a relatively cheaper and broader variety of stock. In the District of Urungwe, the African community professed a preference for Patel Bros, who ran the Magunje Store. According to Pendered, the Marketing Officer of the NTPB, in a communiqué to the CNC in 1949, ‘The Assistant Native Commissioner held a meeting with Chief Chanetsa and his people to ascertain their views on the application. He states that Chanetsa and the great majority are in favour of granting the lease.’⁹⁰ Patel Bros obtained the lease even though the area in question already had more than four African businesses.⁹¹ In other cases, European traders were bullish and did not tolerate any African competition as happened in Bikita. G. Hughes, a butcher, threatened to close his business if the NC gave a lease site for a butchery to

⁸⁸ NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC, Leasing of Sites Bikita, Letter from the NC, Bikita to the PNC, Application for a Store Site: Woyo Titus 11492 Bikita, 11 November 1945.

⁸⁹ NAZ, 1033/05, Letter from C. A. Hinde, the NC, Hartley, to F. Howe-Fly, Solicitors, 8th October, 1953.

⁹⁰ NAZ, S2400/3767, CNC, Leasing of Sites Urungwe, Letter from A. Pendered, Marketing Officer of the Native Trade and Production Branch to the CNC, Trading Site Urungwe, 18 January 1949.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

an African identified in the NAD correspondences as Budaza.⁹² The NC explained in his letter to the PNC, Southern Mashonaland, that Hughes was adamant that if ‘a butchery starts here, he will close down his own.’⁹³ The NC for Bikita rightly identified Hughes` antics as bluffing, explaining that he had ‘the impression that’ Hughes ‘rather objects to the competition’ from Budaza.⁹⁴ However, the NC went on to deny Budaza`s application worrying that ‘should it then be found that Budaza is not capable (In view of the latter`s inexperience, a likely event) a very awkward situation would arise.’⁹⁵

In addition to the NAD`s preference for individual white and Indian traders such as the Patel Bros, the post Second World War was also characterised by a consolidation of white business interests in the African reserves. As early as 1945, a year after the Godlonton Commission sat, N. Richards, a white Trader with interests in the African reserves, started the process of registering his business as a limited liability company.⁹⁶ With a substantial capital of £9000, the N. Richards & Company limited hoped to diversify its business interests in the Fort Victoria District.⁹⁷ Importantly, Richards hoped to pre-empt any African competition in light of the Godlonton Commission`s recommendation to gradually weed out white and Indian traders from the African reserves.⁹⁸ The ATS was the epitome of the efforts by white traders to adapt to the post Second World War environment whose colonial policy was hostile to their presence in the African reserves. The ATS couched its language in the policy of Separate Development and allowed Africans the opportunity to buy shares in the business. More importantly, the company also appropriated the colonial language of patronage and in its correspondence with the NAD, talked of protecting African traders from competition from white traders by training Africans in business skills and eventually surrendering the business to Africans at a time when they were ready.

⁹² NAZ, S2400/3803, CNC, Leasing of Sites Bikita, Letter from the NC, Bikita to the PNC, Southern Mashonaland, 13 June 1949.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ NAZ, S2400/3765, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Fort Victoria, Letter from Winterton, Holmes and Hill to the Minister of Finance, 4 December 1945.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The ATS, more than any other white trading concern, reflected the conflict within the NAD over the future of commerce and African entrepreneurship in the African reserves. The Company emerged from the merger of the Farmers Co-op with businesses belonging to Pandelis Vafeas, mainly located in the Gutu District.⁹⁹ The Company began trading in the winter of 1948 and had a total of £237,425 in issued capital spread over 949,700 shares selling at five shillings each.¹⁰⁰ Its board of directors included F. E. Harris, H. W. Foster, H. Leishman, A. L. Millar, Ellis Robins, L. T. Tracey, and P. Vafeas.¹⁰¹ By 1949, the African Stores reported to its shareholders that it now had stores in Gutu, Chatsworth ‘together with four other trading stores in the Gutu District, and five stores in the Mtoko, Murehwa and Bindura District.’¹⁰² The origins narrative of the Company are interesting since they reflect an attempt by a group of white traders such as Vafeas and Business Organisations, such as the Farmers Coop, to feed off the sentiments of the Godlonton Commission and secure their business interests.

The constitution of the ATS mirrored some of the suggestions made by C. D. Dryden of the RHPC, before the sitting of the Godlonton Commission. Dryden had suggested that the colonial state could solve the problem of marketing of African grains by taking over his Company, the RHPC. As such, L. T. Tracey and Vafeas tried to achieve in 1947 what Dryden had failed to do in 1943. In pitching their business venture, Vafeas and the Farmers Coop spoke of how the ATS would go a long way in providing gainful employment to educated Africans.¹⁰³ Importantly, Tracey explained to the Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, that their venture ‘will be able to absorb an increasing number of such natives and the training they will get ... will be very much profitable for them than learning the hard way with often insufficient capital and lack of business experience.’¹⁰⁴ The company’s appropriation of the rhetoric on business skills reflects an effort to speak directly to some of the concerns raised by the Godlonton Commission in 1944, that worried over Africans’ lack of business skills.

⁹⁹ NAZ, S2385/514, CNC, African Trading Stores, Memorandum of Association of the African Trading Corporation (Rhodesia) Limited, c1948.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Report of the Directors to be presented at the First Annual General Meeting of Shareholders, 30 April 1949.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid, Letter from L. Tracey, Farmers’ Coop. Limited to Mr. Baggot, the Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister, 5 February 1948.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

In order to woo the colonial state into supporting the ATS` venture, the company offered the government a post on its Board of Directors. It gave the Governor of Southern Rhodesia the power to nominate the person to sit on the Board in a well-calculated move by the ATS to link its objectives with those of the NAD. Revealingly the Governor also chaired the Board of Trustees of the Native Affairs Trust responsible ‘for the granting all trading leases within the Native Reserves.’¹⁰⁵ More importantly, the point man of the ATS wrote to the Governor suggesting that he nominate Arthur Godlonton to this position,¹⁰⁶ the chairman of the NTPC in 1944, discussed in the previous chapter. As Tracy explained to the Governor, ‘the drafting of the Deed of Trust and the Memorandum and Articles of the Trust Company were, in fact, mostly Mr. Godlonton's work.’¹⁰⁷ As the evidence suggests, the ATS tried to connect its objectives with those of the colonial state.

The colonial state`s response to the ATS` overtures was ambivalent. While it appreciated the benefits to commerce that the Company would bring to the African reserves, they were nonetheless reluctant to support the creation of a monopoly. The Secretary for Native Affairs quickly dissuaded the Prime Minister from accepting the ATS` offer of a seat on the Company`s board.¹⁰⁸ He pointed to a conflict of interest on the part of the Governor as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the NRTF. Besides, the Secretary for Native Affairs cited a possible backlash from other traders stating that:

I am of the opinion that it would be most inadvisable for the Governor to appoint a director to the trust, for if he does so, it is almost certain that at some time circumstances will arise which will embarrass him in his position as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Native Reserves Trustees of the Native Reserves.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps more importantly, the Secretary for Natives Affairs warned that the government must be careful to strike a balance between the advantages of business standards the company would bring ‘and, at the same time, reasonable scope must be left for the growth of Native trading enterprise.’¹¹⁰ After accepting the advice of the Secretary of Native Affairs, the Prime Minister

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Secretary to the Prime Minister, ATS (Rhodesia) Limited, 27 May 1948.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

then wrote to Tracy declining the offer of a position in the Company's Board fearing 'a great deal of political trouble' that would ensue.¹¹¹

During the early 1950s, the Company used the same tactics to ward off competition from rival white traders. In the areas that the ATS set up shop, they helped African traders in applying for leases and supplied some of them with goods. Citing overtrading and unhealthy competition, the ATS urged the NAD against the allocation of leases to more white traders, arguing that this was detrimental to African traders who would be unable to compete. In the Chikwizo Reserve of Mtoko District, the ATS protested the award of a lease site to W. J. Lowry of the Mtoko Trading Store in 1950.¹¹² Tracy, the Managing Director of the ATS, argued that the Mtoko Trading Stores would result in overtrading in the area already adequately catered for by their stores. In addition, the ATS pointed to the colonial policy that stated, 'European trading stores in Native Reserves and Areas should not be in excess of what is required to stiffen trade carried by Africans' and that the lease given to the Mtoko Trading Stores would militate against the possible success of African traders who might start-up small shops there.'¹¹³

The NC for Mtoko District, Morris, the PNC, and the Assistant Marketing Officer (AMO) of the NPMB saw through the ATS' feigned concern for African entrepreneurs. In a letter to the CNC, the AMO stated that he had discussed the matter with the NC for Mtoko and had gathered this as 'another case where African Stores, like other traders, do not like competition, and now they are put forward the theory that the granting of this site will prejudice native trading in the area.'¹¹⁴ As highlighted earlier in the paper, the NC for Mtoko, like the NC for Bikita, McCabe, gave priority to the interests of the African residences of their districts while everything else was secondary. In this case, the interests of the NPMB, to find reasonable market prices for African grains, matched hand in glove with those of Morris.¹¹⁵ The colonial state had established the NPMB through the Native Production and Marketing Act of 1948 to raise funds for colonial conservation.¹¹⁶ Critically, the case of the ATS during the early post Second World

¹¹¹ Ibid, Letter from G. M. Huggins to Tracey, Managing Director of the ATS, 3 June 1948.

¹¹² Ibid, Letter from the CNC to the Managing Director, African Stores Ltd, Store Sites: Chikwizo Reserve, 26 July 1950.

¹¹³ Ibid, Letter from L. T. Tracey, Managing Director of the ATS to the CNC, 7 July 1950.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, Letter from the AMO to the CNC, Complaint African Stores Ltd, 18 July 1950.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, 237.

War offers an excellent example of how White traders sought to remain relevant in African areas within an environment of policy hostility. Importantly, the ATS shows the contradictions that existed between colonial policies on the one hand and its implementation on the other. The colonial state found itself conflicted between supporting African entrepreneurs and providing for African communities who cared more for the marketing of their agricultural produce and obtaining quality consumer goods. As the numerous examples presented here show, it was the later proposition that carried the day.

African Voices at the Godlonton Commission

African responses to the colonial state's policy ambiguity with regards to African entrepreneurship were many and varied. As a result, some enterprising Africans were able to obtain business sites and operate successfully. Their methods included taking advantage of colonial patronage and the ambiguity of regulations on business in the African reserves and elsewhere. While some Africans obtained licences by misrepresenting their experience, skills, the capital they had, or who they were, others attempted to follow the law to the letter by complying with the application process. The process involved elaborately handwritten applications, obtaining good recommendations from whites, and engaging the services of lawyers amongst other measures. Lawyers were also handy in contesting cases where NCs arbitrarily cancelled licences. This section shows that African entrepreneurs were not passive victims of the state's policy ambiguity on commerce or the patronage that came with it. Instead, the section presents African traders as sophisticated participants who knew the regulations and took advantage of the policy ambiguity discussed elsewhere in the chapter. Enterprising Africans exploited these grey areas to create space for themselves. Importantly, some African entrepreneurs understood the psych of the state and used colonial patronage to create space for themselves.

Africans interested in business used the policy on Separate Development to validate their claims for space in the African reserves. As we have seen in 1951, the people of the Shangani reserve, together with their Chief, Madhlisibanda, implored the NC for Shangani, Bissett, to

refuse K. G. Mathieson's, a European, application for a store site.¹¹⁷ Bisset explained to the PNC that the people of Shangani Reserve 'were unanimous that the application should be refused on the grounds that there were already nine stores in the reserve and Special Native Area owned and run by Europeans.'¹¹⁸ Invoking the LAA, the Africans of Shangani had expressed 'an increasing desire on the part of the natives to run their own stores.'¹¹⁹ This was not the first time that the people of the Shangani African Reserve had expressed this desire. In 1944, they had voiced the same sentiments during the hearing of the Godlonton Commission.¹²⁰ African Chiefs were often malleable and subject to NAD influence. As was often the case, NCs used them to validate their decisions against both African and European/Indian traders. However, as seen from the Shangani African Reserve example, African entrepreneurs also often sought to use the office of the Chief to push for their interests.

In the absence of any organised business formations representing rural African traders during this period, Africans in business in the African reserves often had to resort to local political institutions set up by the NAD to register their interests. This involved manipulating the office of the local chiefs by obtaining his consent, as discussed above, or by using the African Councils. The African Councils came into being in 1937 through an Act of Parliament, the African Councils Act. Like the Advisory Boards in the African urban areas, the purpose of the African Councils was ostensibly to give Africans a role in matters affecting their community and governance. Writ large, writers on African urban and rural politics have dismissed these colonial institutions as rubberstamp organisations meant to validate colonial control of African everyday lives.¹²¹ However, the experiences of African entrepreneurs who were councillors in the African Councils paints a picture of how Africans used this colonial tool to their advantage. For this argument, the section will draw on examples from the Belingwe East Reserve and Lower Gwelo Reserve African Councils between the years 1944 and 1955.¹²²

¹¹⁷ NAZ, S2400/3766, CNC, Leasing of Sites Shangani, Letter from C. Bissett the NC for Shangani to the Provincial NC, Matabeleland, 24th January 1951.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ NAZ, ZBJ, 1/1/3, Oral Evidence from an African Trader part of a group of Africans from the Shangani Reserve, the NTPC.

¹²¹ See for example, Chitofiri, 'Urban protest, Citizenship and the City', Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence*.

¹²² NAZ S2881/4, African Councils, Minutes and Others 1944 – 1955 and S2881/1 Belingwe East Reserve African Council.

The minutes of African Council meetings offer engaging narratives of Africans claiming space to trade and contesting unfair competition from European and Indian traders. In the Lower Gwelo African Reserve, African traders used their seats in the African Council not only to object to the unfair trade practices of Europeans but to keep them out as well.¹²³ Africans who participated in this council also expressed an aversion towards African traders from outside their district. In 1951, D.C.M. Parkhurst, the NC for Lower Gwelo, clashed with the African members of his district's African Council over the underhand trade practices of a European general dealer, A. Friend. Friend employed African runners who bought hides at a reduced price of 2/6 per lb than the one used at his store, and that of other stores ran by Africans pegged at 1/8 per lb.¹²⁴ Over and above this, the European trader held a General Dealer's licence and not a Stock and Produce Dealer's licence needed to trade in hides.¹²⁵ At the meeting of the Lower Gwelo Reserve African Council, an African referred to as Nyambi and 'holder of a stock and dealers licence' protested against the unfair trade practices of Friend.¹²⁶ As Nyambi explained at the meeting, 'it was not fair that a European general dealer should be allowed to compete against native residents in the area who hold Stock and Produce Dealers Licenses.'¹²⁷ Although Parkhurst supported Friend's business activities since he provided competitive rates for African produce, an African trader of hides, Macomba, 'suggested the Government fix a price for hides which would do away with competitiveness between Africans and European exploiters.' Notwithstanding Parkhurst's remonstrations, the African Council 'voted 19 out of 23 in favour of his resolution.'¹²⁸

Predictably, Parkhurst refused to endorse the overwhelming African vote against the European trader, maintaining that 'I am in favour of such competitive trading because it is advantageous to the seller.'¹²⁹ As this chapter has shown, NCs consistently justified their actions in the name of protecting 'the interests of natives' which, more often than not, meant African primary commodity producers.¹³⁰ This caveat ran deep, and Parkhurst used it again in 1953 to dismiss a request by the African members of the Lower Gwelo African Council to bar African traders

¹²³ NAZ S2881/4, African Councils, Minutes and Others, Minutes of Meeting held at Maboloni in the lower Gwelo Reserve on Wednesday 28th March 1951.

¹²⁴ Ibid, Letter from Parkhurst, NC for Lower Gwelo, to the PNC, Midlands, 18 April 1951.

¹²⁵ Ibid, Minutes of Meeting held at Maboloni in the lower Gwelo Reserve on Wednesday 28th March 1951.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid, Letter from Parkhurst, NC for Lower Gwelo, to the PNC, Midlands, 18 April 1951.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

from other districts from conducting business in their council area.¹³¹ This was after Simon Makenyeza, from outside the Lower Gwelo District, had applied for a business site to run a carpentry shop despite the fact that other NCs consistently barred Africans from other District from applying for licences in their areas of jurisdiction.¹³² While the minutes of the Lower Gwelo African Council reaffirmed the haziness of colonial policy together with the perception that these councils were rubberstamping colonial institutions, they, nonetheless, also offer a glimpse into how Africans used these bodies to advance their interests.

African councillors in the Belingwe East Reserve African Council articulated and represented the interests of African traders effectively and with greater success than the Lower Gwelo African Council. In 1953, for instance, the NC for the Belingwe East Reserve, H. M. Fletcher, held the motion pushed by the African Councillors of the African Council to block Crossley's application for a general dealer store.¹³³ Although three voters out of twenty Councillors had dissented, arguing that the Reserve would benefit from the increased prices in grain that Crossley's store would bring, with the latter arguing for the paramountcy of African entrepreneurs in the granting of trading lease sites.¹³⁴ These African councillors were successful at a time when NCs from other districts to sacrifice the interests of African producers for the sake of African entrepreneurs. Later that year, the African councillors voted against the suggestion that the NAD establish a grain-grinding mill in the African reserve stating that they 'were against interfering with private enterprise stating that a Trader had already applied for a site in that township to erect a mill.'¹³⁵

Equally important, the Belingwe East Reserve African Council contested the NC and the Chief's authority in consenting and recommending licence applications. At a meeting in 1948, Hamandishe, a vocal African and member of the African Council, asked the Chairman to give the councillors greater say in giving consent to business leases applications, a role traditionally played solely by the Chief. In agreement, NC J. A. Pitout expressed that 'chiefs should retain

¹³¹ Ibid, Minutes of a meeting council held at Maboleni on Tuesday the 22nd of May 1953.

¹³² NAZ, S2400/3765, CNC, Leasing of Sites Fort Victoria, Letter from the PNC, Fort Victoria to the CNC: Application for a Mill Site, Nyajena Reserve, 3 February 1949.

¹³³ NAZ, S2881/1, Belingwe East Reserve Native Council, Minutes of the `19th Meeting of the Belingwe Reserve (East) Native Council held at Mataga on Tuesday 11th August 1953.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, Minutes of the 21st Meeting of the Belingwe East Reserve Native Council held at Mataga on 20 November 1953.

their authority in consenting to new leases in their area but that they should seek advice of councillors from their area.¹³⁶ Later in 1953, the African councillors went against their Chief, Negobe, who had given consent to a European to open a general dealership at Mataga. The councillors reversed the decision by the Chief, who had received ‘a present of a blanket, tea, and sugar’ from Crossley, the European applicant.¹³⁷ The councillors voted against the chief’s decision pointing out that the ‘six European stores in the Reserves were sufficient for the people’s needs.’¹³⁸

In the absence of any national or local effective form of business organisation representing African entrepreneurs, African councillors of the Belingwe East African Council – no doubt traders themselves – took advantage of the council to lobby for their interests. Missives between the NC, Belingwe, and the PNC discussing private meetings of councillors at an African restaurant at Mataga suggest that there was a great deal of caucusing among the entrepreneurs represented in the Belingwe East African Council.¹³⁹ In 1951, the African Council requested the NAD to help African traders in the reserve in sourcing products at wholesale rates. Identifying the needs of African traders with those of the Belingwe African Reserve residents’ grievances against the rising costs of living, Chief Ngungumbana articulated to the council that:

African traders in the Council area were increasing, that owing to long distances and lack of transport, traders found great difficulty in procuring goods that most traders were compelled to procure their goods at retail prices and so pushed up the costs of living for the Africans.¹⁴⁰

The council eventually decided to set up a committee made of three African councillors to approach ‘Nash & Co. of Mataga Store and African Store Keeper Sijene to endeavour to see if either of them could arrange to supply African traders with goods on more favourable terms.’¹⁴¹ In evidencing the success of the Belingwe East Reserve Council’s triumph in petitioning the government, the PNC pressed the Assistant Secretary in the NAD to ask the NPMB through its

¹³⁶ Ibid, Minutes of Meeting held at Mataga on 23 September 1948.

¹³⁷ Ibid, Minutes of the 19 Meeting of the Belingwe Reserve (East) Native Council held at Mataga on 11 August 1953.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid, Letter from the PNC, Southern Mashonaland to the NC, Belingwe, Belingwe Reserve (East) Native Council: Minutes of ninth Meeting, 18 September 1950.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, Minutes of Meeting held at Mataga on 13 December 1951.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Marketing Officer to find a lasting solution to the plight of the African traders.¹⁴² Writing back to the PNC, the Marketing Officer of the NPMB stated that he had approached both the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce and the Mashonaland and Matebeleland Wholesalers Association who had provided him with a list of wholesalers willing to trade with the Belingwe African Traders.¹⁴³ The activities of the Belingwe East African Council represents the ability of African entrepreneurs to use colonial institutions and narratives to push for their interests.

For many Africans in business, co-operating was not always an option, and others acted individually by engaging the services of lawyers. African traders engaged lawyers not only as litigants but also as a way of speaking to the NAD. The latter option enabled African entrepreneurs to offset some of the colonial patronage synonymous with NC's when they spoke directly to Africans. Instead of speaking over Africans, litigation forced the NAD to speak directly to African entrepreneurs. Karekwaivanane has noted that:

From the 1950s, law increasingly provided both the language and the locale for debates between Africans and settler authorities over the political questions that were the Rhodesian body politic.¹⁴⁴

African traders used lawyers when applying for licences, contesting lease refusal, in requesting to expand their businesses and when challenging the arbitrary actions of some NCs. Scholarship on Africans and the law in Southern Rhodesia has debated on the degree and effectiveness of African legal consciousness.¹⁴⁵ While colonial authorities regarded Africans as ignorant of the law, George Karekwaivanane has shown how during the 1960s and 1970s Africans used colonial legal systems aimed at harnessing and exploiting them to their advantage.¹⁴⁶ In addition, the pioneering works of Elizabeth Schmidt and Zimudzi have focused on African agency.¹⁴⁷ Schmidt looks at how women took advantage of the law to escape African patriarchal control during the nascent days of colonial rule, while Zimudzi discusses how women involved in violent crimes consciously took advantage of the judicial

¹⁴² Ibid, Letter from the PNC to the Assistant Secretary, Administration: Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the Belingwe Reserve East Native Council at Mataga on the 13 December 1951.

¹⁴³ Ibid, Letter from the Marketing Officer to the PNC, Wholesale Trading with African Storekeepers. Belingwe East Native Council Minutes 13 December 1951.

¹⁴⁴ G. H. Karekwaivanane, *The Struggle Over State Power in Zimbabwe: Law and Politics since 1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 40.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁴⁷ E. Schmidt, 'Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women, and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1939', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16, 4, (December 1990) and Zimudzi, 'African Women, Violent Crime and the Criminal Law in Colonial Zimbabwe'.

system to obtain lenient sentences.¹⁴⁸ Karekwaivanane`s important work on law and politics in Zimbabwe offers fresh perspectives on the complicated legal interactions between people and the state.¹⁴⁹ This section builds upon this and shows how African traders during the post Second World War up to the mid-1950s used lawyers to engage the NAD over trading lease sites actively.

When engaging the NAD for trading lease sites, some African entrepreneurs engaged the services of lawyers. Law firms and individual lawyers such as Winterton, Holmes, and Hill; Stumbles and Atherstone; Danziger & Lardner-Burke; P. C. Bowles and F. K. Bilang were popular with African Traders. Fani, a Land Development Officer, applied for a general dealer site in the Hartley District through Frederick Howe-Ely, a solicitor, in 1951.¹⁵⁰ In another example, Nira Kenneth Murefu, of the same district as Fani, approached the NC for Hartley through his lawyers Stumbles and Atherstone over a transfer of business. Murefu had bought the business for ‘£110 of which £12 has already been paid as a deposit and £78 is held by us in trust.’¹⁵¹ Stumbles and Atherstone further added that ‘before we proceed to the other formalities of the transfer, we would be grateful if you would confirm that our client has been accepted by the Native Authorities in your area.’¹⁵²

For two years, African trader Tigere engaged with the NC for Hartley through his lawyers, Danziger & Lardner-Burke, over his African restaurant and later a general dealer store. Tigere`s interactions with the NAD through his solicitors, which stretched from 1951 to 1953, included paying for his annual lease and licence fees and later on an application to expand his business by adding a general dealer store.¹⁵³ During the years 1951 and 1952, Tigere`s lawyers engaged with the NC for Hartley over supposedly unpaid rentals. In correspondence with the NC, Danziger & Lardner-Burke insisted that their client did not have any dues owing. In a letter, Danziger & Lardner-Burke explained to the NC that ‘we do not understand your reference to the rent being due, as we have personally paid Tigere the sum of £6 for two years.’¹⁵⁴ His

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Karekwaivanane, *The Struggle over State Power in Zimbabwe*’.

¹⁵⁰ NAZ, S1033/05, Letter from Frederick Howe-Ely, Solicitor, to the NC, Hartley, 13 September 1951.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Letter from Stumbles & Atherstone, Solicitors for Nira Kenneth Murefu to the NC, Hartley, 28 August 1954.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, Letter from Danziger & Lardner-Burke to the NC, Hartley, 4 September 1951.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1952.

lawyers also added that ‘It is in order to avoid this difficulty in the past that he has gone to the expense of procedure of asking us to forward the cheques.’¹⁵⁵ It was through this formalistic legal parlance that some African entrepreneurs were able to speak at par with the NAD and avoid the patronising language of the NCs.

African Traders also engaged the services of legal representatives when protesting the arbitrary actions of NCs. The NC for Sinoia received a reprimand from the CNC after he arbitrarily closed Makati’s business because he had ‘received numerous reports to the unhygienic condition of Makati’s butcher shop.’¹⁵⁶ This was after Mataka had sought relief from the CNC through his lawyer, P. C. Bowles. Writing to the CNC in a strongly worded letter, Bowles stated that ‘this action would appear to be somewhat arbitrary and I am not aware of any authority entitling the Native Commissioner to take such action.’¹⁵⁷ As these examples show, using legal representatives allowed African Traders to question the authority of the NAD and some of the patronage that came with it. In a sign that some NCs did not take the legal consciousness of African entrepreneurs lightly, Tigere had his licence application, lodged through his lawyers, to expand his business by adding a general dealer store to his African restaurant repeatedly rejected by the NC for Hartley. On the 2nd of October 1952, the NC wrote to Danziger & Lardner-Burke, informing them that ‘I should be glad if you would inform Tigere that I am not prepared to recommend that he be allowed to operate two businesses.’¹⁵⁸ Barely two weeks had passed when he wrote again to Tigere’s lawyers telling them that he had given their client the go-ahead to expand his business ‘after seeing Tigere personally.’¹⁵⁹ In her work on racial etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, Allison Shutt informs that NCs were very attentive to how Africans related to them. Drawing from Shutt’s work, Tigere’s continued use of solicitors in his communication with the NC for Hartley may have been read as insolence.¹⁶⁰

While some Africans took advantage of colonial institutions, such as the African Councils, and employed the law to create space for themselves in business, others decided to find clandestine

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 28 January, 1952.

¹⁵⁶ NAZ, S2400/3758, CNC, Leasing of Sites: Sinoia, Letter from the CNC to P. C. Bowles, a solicitor, 16 September 1947.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, Letter from C. P. Bowles to the CNC, 12 August 1947.

¹⁵⁸ NAZ, S1033/05, Letter from the NC, Hartley, to Danziger & Lardner-Burke, 2 October 1952.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 20 October 1952.

¹⁶⁰ Shutt, ‘The Natives are getting out of Hand’.

ways of obtaining business sites. For example, some African traders found people to write application letters for them and used fronts in applying for business sites, among other methods. During the 1940s, a store site in the Shangani Reserve near the NCs office became a site of struggle, which best exemplifies how some Africans were able to beat the system to their advantage. The general dealer store was the subject of interest from three European women, three African traders, a coloured trader, the chief, and the NC for Nkai.¹⁶¹ The store's siting, near the NC's office, made it a very lucrative business that generated interest from the entrepreneurs mentioned above. At the centre of this struggle was an African trader, identified in the NAD correspondence as Yona.¹⁶² Yona's approach epitomises some of the strategies that Africans used to obtain and retain business sites as well as access trading goods at favourable rates.

Yona took over the store from Mrs. Cahill in 1941 and traded up until the end of the Second World War. He lost the store after spending 18 months in prison for a criminal conviction of receiving stolen property.¹⁶³ Yona's case is fascinating since it reveals some of the ways African traders obtained trading goods for the NC for Shangani writes 'I understand that he had a working arrangement with a friend in Bulawayo who stole goods from wholesalers and sent them out here to be sold by Yona.'¹⁶⁴ Yona's methods of obtaining trade goods is revealing given that one of the biggest hurdles for African entrepreneurs, as the next chapter will show, was a lack of capital or the means of obtaining commodities at competitive rates.

Having lost his store because of the criminal conviction, Yona still managed to find means of retaining the business. He successfully used his relatives, Samson Mabuko and Kefasi, to reapply for the same business site.¹⁶⁵ Although the NC had expressed reservations over the two new applicants on account of Mabuko's minor criminal convictions, the CNC awarded them the licence because Mabuko was a veteran of the Second World War.¹⁶⁶ As the chapter shows, returning African ex-servicemen received preferential treatment in the awarding of business

¹⁶¹ NAZ, S2400/3766, CNC, Leasing of Sites Shangani.

¹⁶² Ibid, Letter from the NC for Shangani to the PNC for Matebeleland, 25 May 1948

¹⁶³ Ibid, Letter from C. A. Hinde, CNC to the PNC, Matebeleland, 28 February 1948.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, Letter from the NC, Nkai to the PNC, Matebeleland, 29 December 1947.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, Letter from the NC, Shangani Reserve to the PNC, Matabeleland, 20 June 1947.

sites as part of their wartime benefits.¹⁶⁷ As this example shows, Yona displayed an understanding of the thinking of the NAD, and soon after the war, the Department's policy showed a clear preference for African ex-servicemen, and therefore, the choice of Mabuko was not random. Later, when there was a fallout between the three 'partners,' which involved litigation and a dissolving of the business, Yona engaged Frank Robert Berman, 'a well-dressed man of a prosperous appearance' who, as the NC explained to the PNC, 'arrived here in a large car.'¹⁶⁸ In his application for the store site, Frank Robert Berman said he would employ Mabuko as his storekeeper. Besides, the NC wrote to the PNC stating that Berman 'seems on a friendly basis with the present owner Yona. In view of what has happened in the past I must suspect any transaction in which Yona is involved.'¹⁶⁹ Although this last attempt by Yona to retain the store through Berman failed, it showed the lengths to which some Africans went to obtain and keep business sites. In addition, the Yona/Berman partnership represented some of the instances of cooperation between white and African businesses prior to the federal period.

Conclusion

The chapter discussed the experiences of African traders as they tried to obtain trade sites in the African reserves. It demonstrated that store sites were a contested space between African entrepreneurs on the one hand and white/Indian traders on the other. The NAD and the other arms of the government, such as the BSAP and the Public Health Department, tried to use business sites to control African social and economic spaces. This, in turn, created conflict within the government on how best to promote and use African traders within the confines of the NLHA. CNCs, for instance, were conflicted between implementing the policy of separate development to the letter and the NCs' demands for autonomy in the awarding of business sites. Some NCs and the Native Production and Marketing Board (NMPB) were interested in traders, seldom Africans, with the capacity to market African agricultural produce, whereas the NRTF cared more for the revenues from the business site fees.

¹⁶⁷ NAZ, S2400, Letter from the Secretary to the Treasury to the Auditor General and the Secretary of Native Affairs, Rehabilitation of African Ex-Servicemen, 17 March 1947.

¹⁶⁸ NAZ S2400/3766, CNC, Leasing of Sites Shangani, Letter from the NC, Shangani Reserve to the PNC, 27 October 1947.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, Letter from the NC, Shangani Reserve to the PNC, 29 December 1947.

The experiences of African ex-servicemen and government workers interested in entrepreneurship show just how colonial patronage impeded Africans in obtaining commercial space in the African reserves. Importantly, NCs insistence on business skills, topical during the Godlonton Commission`s hearing in 1944, hindered Africans from getting store sites. Africans responded in several ways in their contest for trading space in the African reserves. Some of the strategies included using African Councils, engaging lawyers, and as the experiences of Yona showed, clandestine methods and subterfuge.

Chapter Four: Contesting for Space: African Entrepreneurship during the Federal Period, 1956 to 1964

Introduction

Between 1955 and 1964, the colonial state under the Central African Federation (CAF) (1953 – 1963) half-heartedly pursued a policy of racial partnership that did little to change the fortunes of African traders. The mixed fortunes of African commerce during this time is reflective of the policies and politics of the federal period. For instance, the rhetoric of racial partnership of the period opened space for African traders, although within a constrained environment. Although the business interests of Africans expanded from the archetypal general dealer store of the pre-1950s to include other types of businesses such as petrol service stations, bottle stores, and the transport sector, only a few Africans managed to enter these sectors.¹ These marginal gains were, in part, the product of colonial attempts to make good of their rhetoric on racial partnership and create a bulwark against the rising tide of radical African nationalism. In the same vein, there was much rhetoric among the colony's urban area authorities such as Salisbury, Bulawayo, and Que Que directed at giving African traders freehold title. Colonial rhetoric on racial partnership created ambiguity in the state's policy on African entrepreneurship. Just like in the African reserves during the 1940s, government arms bickered amongst themselves on the subject of African entrepreneurship. Efforts by individual white entrepreneurs to enter into partnerships with African traders were politically self-serving and aimed at penetrating the African market.

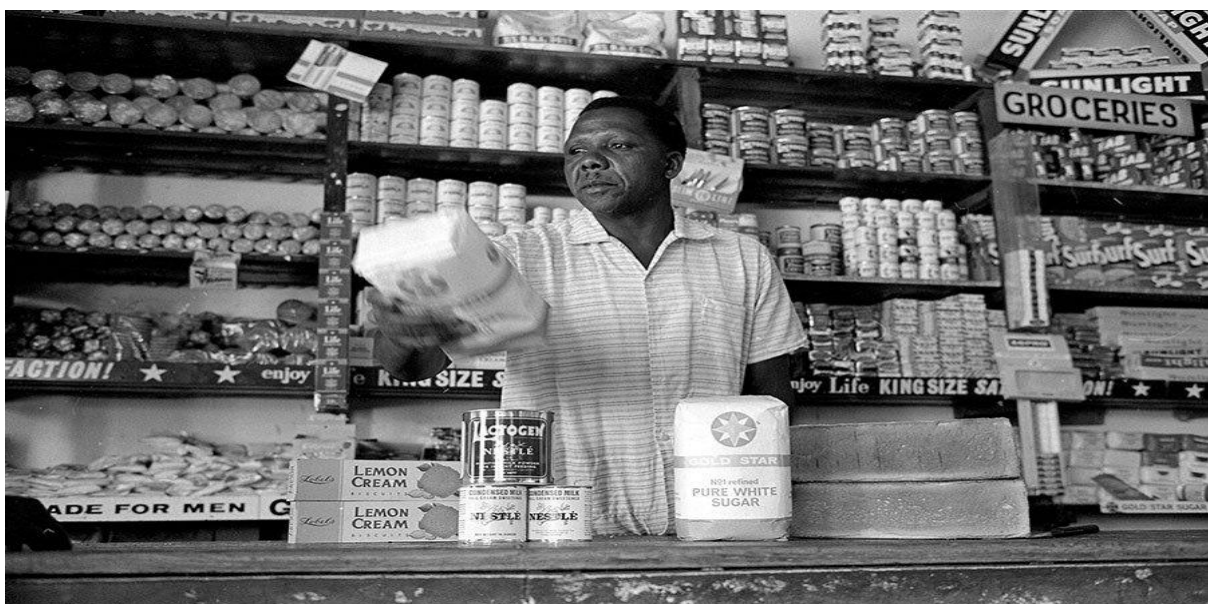
In addition, the chapter discusses the financing of African businesses and the development of business associations that it triggered. It concludes by discussing the debate around business literacy that emerged around the same period. By so doing, the thesis engages these central issues in the context of the ambiguity in the colonial state's policies on African commerce during this period. A financial firm dedicated to financing African farmers and traders, known as the African Loan and Development Company (ALDC), emerged in 1962. The ALDC marked the first attempt to finance African traders, and its activities partly account for the sprouting of many business associations during this time culminating in the formation of the

¹ NAZ S3615/8/1/2, Church and Business Stands and NAZ S3615/5/49/6 Highfield Business Stands. (These licence application files from Highfield show the expansion and diversification of African business interests during the federal period.)

Zimbabwe African Business Union in 1963. Business associations such as the Harari African Traders Association (Harari Association), the Highfield African Traders Association (HATA), ZABU, and its affiliates gave agency to African traders. Besides, African legislators and *The African Businessman* complimented the lobbying of these civic bodies. The chapter foregrounds the role of African business in politics and engages literature on African nationalism. This scholarship has focused on the main political and labour movements such as the ZANU, ZAPU, and the Southern Rhodesia African Trade Union Congress.² Silent in the historiography on African nationalism is the less-known business associations and their leaders such as J. Munyoro and Enoch Mwayera and their role within African politics. The activities of African business associations convey new insights into the commercial side of African nationalist politics compared to how African traders are portrayed in the conventional literature on African nationalism.

Contesting and Sharing Space: The fight for Freehold Title and Business Partnerships in an Era of Racial Rhetoric

Image 2



An African general dealer store in Salisbury c1960s. Source: *Christian Monitor*

The rhetoric of racial partnership became the buzz of the period used by the colonial state to lure African elites into supporting the abortive CAF. Although the African middle class were

² Raftopoulos, 'The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1945 – 1965,' 72. See also Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*.

opposed to the federation during its formative years, with opposition galvanised around the leading nationalist associations of the time, they failed to stop the establishment of CAF.³ Afterwards, African elites relented to state pressure and resigned to gaining as much as they could from ‘racial partnership.’⁴ African leaders such as Joshua Nkomo and Jasper Savanhu, for example, participated in the parliamentary election into the Federal Parliament while many leading African political elites joined multiracial political formations such as the Inter-Racial Association of Southern Rhodesia and the Capricorn Africa Society.⁵ African traders, on their part, lobbied for freehold title in the African reserves and African townships and called for the opening up of the European business centres to all races.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Southern Rhodesia’s Magna Carta, the LAA, came under renewed scrutiny from the state, parliament, and African traders. On it hinged the very fabric of white Rhodesian society through the provision of a racial hierarchy that protected European political, social, and economic rights at the expense of the Africans, who were in the majority, and those of other minority groups such as Asians and coloureds. While colonial officials and their supporters argued that the law protected African land rights, livelihoods, and ‘traditions,’ the reality is that the LAA formed the basis of Rhodesian racial segregation and exploitative apparatus.⁶ Calls for its amendment increased after the Second World War and emanated primarily from the pressure occasioned by the industrial development of the period, land, and environmental pressure in the African reserves and liberal federal policies whose rhetoric preached the softening of racial segregation in the colony.⁷ Besides, advocates for African enterprises urged the colonial state and the municipal authorities to open up the central business areas of the urban areas to African investment. In the same vein, African entrepreneurs defended the protection from European competition that they enjoyed in the African reserves and townships and demanded its enforcement.

³ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 178.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ For more on this read R. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1977).

⁷ For an insight into these issues read Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions*.

The experiences of African traders with freehold during the period under discussion reflects the ambiguity of colonial policy on African entrepreneurship. This ambiguity in colonial policy was also a reflection of the fractured nature of colonial society during this period as A. Cousins notes:

There were, of course, variations in European opinion and changes over the years. Thus, one can distinguish differences between the following groups: Native Affairs Department (NAD), the UFP backbenchers, UFP government ministers, the DP members of parliament, editorial writers and sub-editors in press.⁸

There was pressure on the Southern Rhodesian state to give concessions to African urban elites under the banner of racial partnership. The 1958 Plewman Commission's Report on Urban Affairs' recommendations on the 'status of Africans as residents in segregated towns and cities' criticised the LAA.⁹ Although Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead agreed with the Plewman Commission, he faced resistance from the white parliamentary bench.¹⁰ Legislators from both the Dominion Party and the United Federal Party (UFP) were adamant about maintaining the LAA and its paternalism, claiming that the law protected African traders from European competition. In 1960, the legislator for Hatfield and a member of the Dominion Party, Stewart Edward Aitken-Cade was pessimistic about the prospects for African traders without the legal protection, describing the LAA as 'proactive', and that the African trader would be 'jeopardised' if exposed to the full force of the economic competition of the non-African.'¹¹ At the same time, the local authorities were in the process of removing African traders in the European business areas to the African townships. For Salisbury, the evictions were part of a process of enforcing the LAA that had begun in the 1940s. The Director for Native Administration (DNA) for the Salisbury City Council (SCC) reported in 1952 that more than 40 businesses had agreed to relocate to 'alternative trading premises in the native urban areas.'¹² By 1955, the SCC had managed to move the remaining traders in the European areas to premises in the Highfield Village Settlement and the Community Centre in Harari Township.¹³

⁸ A. Cousins, 'State, Ideology, and Power in Rhodesia, 1958-1972,' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 24, 1 (1991), 47.

⁹ Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, 89.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 91.

¹¹ Southern Rhodesia Parliament, the Land Apportionment Bill, November 1960, Col. 2982 – 2984.

¹² NAZ, S/SA 6175, Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration, 1952.

¹³ *Ibid*, Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration for the Municipal year 1 July 1955 to 30 June 1956.

While the white bench in parliament was uncompromising in its stance on the LAA, the Edgar Whitehead led government sought a ‘media via’ approach and attempted to offer concessions to African traders in urban areas.¹⁴ Addressing Parliament, the Minister of Native Affairs, Quinton urged the local authorities to open the industrial areas to African traders and industrialists. Quinton stressed that government will, ‘in the future, the industrial sites of the country should become multi-racial and that all industry should be sited, quite irrespective of race.’¹⁵ Besides, the UFP led parliament amended the LAA to allow European entrepreneurs to form joint companies with Africans in African townships.¹⁶ As the editorial of *The African Businessman* noted, ‘the European financier is now permitted under certain conditions, to own a building in an African area, although, except in special circumstances, he can only let it or sell it to an African.’¹⁷ *The African Businessman* praised this amendment to the LAA, which left ‘the principles of separation and of the paramountcy’ intact while bringing ‘a measure of flexibility and pliability, which will be recognised.’¹⁸ In 1961, Quinton informed parliament of the government’s keen interest in ‘opening up the business areas of this country.’¹⁹ He pointed out that he had pitched the idea to favourable reception, at that year’s Municipal Conference.²⁰ The aldermen had then promised the Minister of Native Affairs that they would form a working committee to look into the matter.

Other parliamentarians felt that the government’s efforts at opening up trading areas to Africans were not enough. Contributing to the debate, the legislator for Highlands Harry Pichanick urged the colonial state to allow Africans to trade in the central business district as opposed to the industrial areas. ‘I would have thought,’ Pichanick argued, ‘that the business area had a much greater need for opening up, particularly in the areas where Africans do their purchasing and trading.’²¹ African traders were not happy with these half measures by the government. An editorial of *The African Businessman* captured this mood reporting that African traders in Harari and Highfield ‘had hoped that the Land Apportionment Act would be amended in such a way as to enable African Traders to trade in the centre of town or buy property in parts of the

¹⁴ *The African Businessman*, ‘Editorial: Making Things Better’, 21 April 1961.

¹⁵ Southern Rhodesia Parliament, the Land Apportionment Bill, November 1960, Col. 3809.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *The African Businessman*, ‘Editorial: Making Things Better’, 21 April 1961.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Southern Rhodesia Parliament, Land Apportionment Bill, 9 June 1961, Col. 5559.

²⁰ This was an annual meeting of local authorities. They were influential and discussed town planning and African administration.

²¹ Southern Rhodesia Parliament, Second Reading: Land Apportionment Bill, 15 June 1961, Col. 5768

residential and business areas of towns.’²² C. M. Chiweshe, a Harari African trader, criticised the concessions the government had made to African entrepreneurs. He said although he was in support of the amendment of the LAA, this should ‘not necessarily mean that Europeans can run businesses in African townships because the African townships are just like suburbs.’²³ N. Mhlanga, another of Harari’s entrepreneurs, felt that opening the city’s business areas without the concomitant improvement in credit facilities available for Africans would bring harm to African Traders.²⁴ The African response to the government’s ‘media via’ shows a consciousness on the part of the African traders on the structural problems facing them.

Added to the territorial government’s vacillating was the continually shifting position of the local authorities. While the colonial state, through its territorial legislature debated amending the LAA, it was the onus of the municipalities to implement these reforms. The cities of Salisbury and Bulawayo were reluctant participants in the UFP’s liberal programme of partnership. Consequently, African townships in the two cities became theatres of contestations between African traders and council officials and thus reflected conflict between national and local governments. Applications for business stands inundated the DNA of Highfield between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s.²⁵ For example, in 1961, the DNA received 160 applications for just 11 business stands in Highfield.²⁶ To accommodate African traders’ demands for title, the DNA for Salisbury shifted from its policy of building and then leasing shops to Africans. Instead, Africans now had the option of building their shops on a 99-year lease basis.²⁷ Explaining how this would work, S. F. Finnis, Assistant Secretary for DNA, pointed out:

This law requires that when an African businessman wants to erect a building, either for business or residential purposes, he shall apply to the government for an Agreement of Purchase of a stand. This agreement will contain two things – namely, that he shall erect a building whose minimum value will be stated and secondly that the building will be erected within a limited period, generally not less than one year.²⁸

DNA appointed a committee of three made up of Henwood, the township manager, I. H. Samuriwo, and Aiden Mwamuka to look at applications for both business and residential

²² *The African Businessman*, ‘Editorial: The Land Amendment Bill and Business’, 17 June 1961.

²³ *Ibid*, ‘Businessmen’s Forum’, 9 September 1961.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ NAZ S3615/8/1/2, Church and Business Stands and NAZ S3615/5/49/6 Highfield Business Stands.

²⁶ *The African Daily News*, ‘11 Business Stands: 160 Applications’, 11 February 1961.

²⁷ *The African Businessman*, ‘Africans May Build Business Premises in Townships’, 14 April 1961.

²⁸ *Ibid*, ‘Africans Given Full Title of Business, Residential Stands’, 21 April 1961.

stands. Both entrepreneurs commanded respect in business circles while Samuriwo was a federal Member of Parliament.²⁹ In addition, West has described Samuriwo as ‘easily the most prominent African capitalist of the post-war era’ running a large transport enterprise together with other business ventures.³⁰ A list published by *The African Businessman* of residential stand owners in Marimba Township can give us an insight into the number of Africans applied for business stands.³¹ Marimba was a residential area created to cater to the African middle class. The list included business people and some of their relatives such as Peter P. Patsanza, Joseph T. Samuriwo, and Alfred T. Mwamuka. The last two were no doubt, relations of both Samuriwo and Mwamuka, who formed part of the three-man committee.³²

In January of 1962, the Bulawayo City Council (BCC) also followed Salisbury’s lead in making Africans shop owners. The thirty shops up for sale to African entrepreneurs included groceries, butcheries, petrol service stations, and hairdressing salons across the African townships of Makokoba, Mpopoma, Mzilikazi, and Sizinda.³³ In Sizinda, the Bulawayo Municipality planned to engage a construction to build shops for sale to Africans.³⁴ African traders in Bulawayo’s African townships welcomed this development. In an interview with *The African Businessman*, Mr. Patsika and an identified Mzilikazi businessman welcomed ‘the idea because it makes us property owners here in town, and above all, it gives us the opportunity of practising responsibility and all the qualities that a businessman owning property should have.’³⁵ In other municipal areas like Gwelo, aldermen ‘voted in favour of opening both sides of Main Street to African business.’³⁶

Consequently, Gwelo became the first urban area to allow African traders to do business in its central business district in December of 1962. Encouraged by this development, officials of SCC started debating expanding the area Africans could trade beyond the African townships and the industrial areas to include the Central Business District.³⁷ Despite these positive

²⁹ *Ibid*, ‘Committee to Give Stands’, 21 April 1961.

³⁰ West, ‘The African Middle Class Formation, 1890 – 1965’, 288.

³¹ *The African Businessman*, ‘Africans Given Full Title of Business’.

³² *Ibid*.

³³ *The African Businessman*, ‘Africans May Buy Shops in Bulawayo’, 13 January 1962.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ *Ibid*, ‘African Businessmen Approve Proposals’, 13 January 1962.

³⁶ *Ibid*, ‘Salisbury Trading Area may soon open to African Businessmen’, 8 December, 1962.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

developments, *The African Businessman* reported that no African trader had taken up shop in either the industrial areas of Salisbury or the Main Street of Gwelo.³⁸ African traders understood this too well, arguing that the opening of the central business areas to Africans was an empty gesture if not followed by credit lines at favourable terms. As Enock Mwayera rightly observed, ‘there is only a small chance for an African to run a business in the city centre – if the Africans get some financial assistance to start the business to establish themselves to the same stage their competitors are.’³⁹

That government’s policy on African entrepreneurship was contradictory is shown by the UFP’s ambivalent stance on the LAA and African traders. In October of 1962, two committees established by the UFP recommended repealing the LAA and open the country’s business areas to all races. While acknowledging that the LAA had helped protect Africans from European competitors, they concluded that ‘the Act cannot be maintained simply for the benefit of the less efficient African traders.’⁴⁰ However, with elections in March of 1962, the UFP began backtracking on its commitment to repeal the LAA. On 30 January 1962, Edgar Whitehead gave a press conference meant to allay the fears of the white electorate over the government’s intentions over the LAA.⁴¹ The Prime Minister explained that the government would place safeguards to ensure that the business areas opened to Africans would not degenerate into slums. At the conference, he explained that ‘safeguarding legislation would prevent overcrowding of homes, nuisance such as parties which go for the whole night disturbing neighbours.’⁴²

Apart from the UFP’s vacillating, some officials of the NAD did not share the state’s liberal policies. In his annual report of 1962, S. E. Morris, the CNC, defended the LAA role in protecting ‘the African businessman in both the rural and urban areas, taking their first steps into the business economy.’⁴³ As Morris saw it, Africans could not possibly ‘hold their own in a multi-racial economy if the LAA was repealed immediately, but by experience, they have

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, ‘African Businessmen Condemn Move to Open Salisbury City Area to all Races’, 27 July 1963.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, ‘Urban Areas to be Opened to all Races’, 3 February 1962.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ‘Traders Take C.N.C. to Task’, 4 August 1962.

acquired derives from the protection of their probationary period under the LAA.⁴⁴ Several African traders from Harari and Highfield did not share Morris's defence of the LAA. They described Morris' views as old fashioned, and Christopher Chinhamora pointed out that African traders wanted 'all the towns to be open to all trading purposes as to purchase property. Only the townships or suburbs should be left to the inhabitants to carry on business.'⁴⁵ A Highfield hotelier agreed with Christopher Chinhamora, pointing out that the CNC was out of touch with the needs of African entrepreneurs. He explained that 'what we need is equal opportunity and the right to raise money in the same way the Europeans do.'⁴⁶ The editorial of *The African Businessman* was equally critical of the CNC's report.⁴⁷

Despite the government's rhetoric of opening the country's business areas to all races, African traders continued to face challenges in this regard. Following the amendment of the LAA to allow for partnerships involving Europeans and Africans to own land across the LAA divide, I. H. Samuriwo and Clifford Pockets formed a business partnership in late 1962 known as the Chikokerano Trading Company.⁴⁸ Pockets and Samuriwo decided to locate their business premises in the Monomotapa Buildings, a European area under the LAA. The DNA placed a stay on this application because it was a European area.⁴⁹ Both Samuriwo and Pockets protested the arbitrariness of the DNA. Disappointed, Pockets and Samuriwo addressed a press conference at the office of *The African Businessman*. Pockets explained that they had hoped Chikokerano Trading Company would be 'an experiment in practical partnership – the very policy that the government is advocating.'⁵⁰ Promising to take the matter to court, Samuriwo concluded by telling the press that 'the government should take vigorous steps to enforce partnership ... and that it was high time all industrial and commercial areas were made open to all races.'⁵¹ *The African Businessman* added its weight in criticising the government and the DNA, explaining that:

There is no doubt that though the disadvantages of the LAA might not have been obvious to African businessmen fifteen years ago, today, it has become a stumbling block to the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Editorial: The CNCs Report and African Businessmen', 4 August 1962.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 'Editorial: Mr Samuriwo's Application', 11 August 1962.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 'Samuriwo's Application Deferred', 11 August 1962.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

progress of African Businessmen like Mr. Samuriwo. The sooner the Act is done away with, the better will be things for African businessmen.⁵²

As the experiences of the Chikokerano Trading Company and the annual report of the NAD show, colonial policy on African entrepreneurship was deeply fragmented. The NAD and the DNA for Salisbury disagreed with the political rhetoric of the UFP led government.

For the UFP, the LAA was a politically delicate subject. They tried to balance between giving concessions to African traders and maintaining the dominance of the white electorate within the urban space. Consequently, the UFP's commitment to repeal the LAA in general and open the colony's business spaces to all traders regardless of race kept being pushed beyond the next election. This was clear from the Prime Minister's address to the Rhodesian Legislative Assembly in August of 1962.⁵³ Nervous of an electoral defeat in the upcoming December 1962 elections, Edgar Whitehead told the parliamentary gathering that the repealing of the LAA would come only after the general elections of 1963.⁵⁴ Kurambgwa Moyo, an African trader, criticised the PM in *The African Businessman*, stating that 'all I can see ... is that Sir Edgar wants us to remain under the restrictive conditions of the Act. He wants to win an election through our suffering.'⁵⁵

Although the political fortunes of the UFP were on the wane in 1963, the African voice in parliament found agency with the inclusion of 15 African legislators.⁵⁶ Their presence is reflected in the increased frequency with which matters affecting African traders were raised during the oral questions section and the debate over critical legislative bills such as the Land Apportionment Bill and the Liquor Amendment Bill between 1963 and 1968. In 1963, legislators such as Peter Chanetsa of Bindura, P. H. Mkudu of Manicaland, L. M. Kadengwa of Hunyani, J. M. Gondo of Ndanga, P. J. D. Rubatika of Makabusi and R. C. Makaya of Narira were particularly vocal over these issues.⁵⁷ During the oral answers section in February of 1963, Chanetsa questioned the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs, John Hartley Howman, on title deeds for African traders in the rural areas. The legislator for Bindura asked Howman

⁵² *Ibid*, 'Editorial: Mr Samuriwo's Application', 11 August 1962.

⁵³ Southern Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates, the Land Apportionment Bill, 8 August 1962, Col. 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵⁵ *The African Businessman*, 'Businessmen Deplore Delay in Repeal of Land Act', 18 August 1962

⁵⁶ Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI', 109 – 110.

⁵⁷ Southern Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates, Land Apportionment Act (Trading), 18th August 1963, Col 93.

what he was doing to ‘enable African Traders who own properties in the rural areas of Southern Rhodesia to obtain title deeds to their land so that they may use them as security for money they wish to borrow for the expansion of their businesses.’⁵⁸ Chanetsa also inquired from Howman in his capacity as Minister of Local Government⁵⁹ if ‘he is aware that Europeans are operating hot dog stalls, bread delivery services, and other commercial activities in African Townships of Bindura, Shamva, Highfield and elsewhere.’⁶⁰ He closed by demanding that the government protect African traders in the townships by taking ‘steps to prohibit these practices.’⁶¹

An example of the ability of African legislators in articulating the grievances of African traders occurred in August of 1963. The Mount Darwin Traders Association (MATA) had written a strongly worded letter to the NC for Mount Darwin complaining about the presence of European traders in the Kandeya Reserve.⁶² In the letter published in part by *The African Businessman*, J. E. Munyoro, the Chairman of the MATA, complained that:

A Greek and a European have been granted new leases for General Dealer, Milling, and Liquor trades by the authority of your Chiefs and the Kraalhead of Kandeya Reserve of Mt Darwin on petty reasons that African traders were incompetent to meet the people`s demands.⁶³

Munyoro added that they were ‘shocked as well as being suspicious of the action of some of your chiefs in rushing in Greek, Indian and European traders ... in a duly Tribal Trust Land as read with the Land Apportionment Act.’⁶⁴ As chapter three shows, NCs were inclined to offer trading leases to Europeans over Africans. Importantly, African chiefs sometimes accepted “gifts” in exchange for trading sites. Later in the year, Chanetsa also raised concern in Parliament over European competition in the Kandeya Reserve in the District of Mount Darwin, which fell under his constituency.⁶⁵ He pressed the Minister of Law and Order, Clifford Walter Dupont, if there had been any prosecutions against the European traders

⁵⁸ Ibid., Oral Answers: Title Deeds (Rural Traders), 15 February 1963, Col. 141 – 142.

⁵⁹ John Hartley Howman held three ministerial portfolios in 1963. He served the ministries of Internal Affairs, Local Government and African Education. These were ministries that dealt with African affairs in various ways.

⁶⁰ Southern Rhodesia Parliament Debates, Oral Answers: European Traders (African Townships), 1 March 1963, Col. 821.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *The African Businessman*, ‘Mt Darwin Branch of ZABU Protests to the Chief’s Council: Munyoro sends Letter’, 10 August 1963.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Southern Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates, Oral Answers: The Land Apportionment Act, 21 August 1963, Col. 1726.

operating in the Reserve.⁶⁶ What this case shows is the close connection that existed between the civic activism of business associations and legislators such as Chanetsa.

As had become standard practice among colonial officials when quizzed over the subject of the LAA and title deeds for African traders, they gave a generalised blanket answer. Howman, for example, gave Chanetsa a scripted answer to his question on title deeds for African traders explaining that private tenure existed only for land in the NPAs. Howman went on to point to the advantages of communal ownership of land in the African reserves and that the ‘Tribal Authorities through their Provincial Chiefs Assemblies and Chief’s Council, have expressed the strongest opposition to individual ownership in, or transfer to Native Purchase Area of Tribal Trust Land.’⁶⁷ These were some of the arguments underpinning CD from 1962. Chapter five discusses how this policy approach affected African traders in the African reserves. Perhaps more than any other case, the Kandeya Reserve question showed the ambiguity of colonial policy on African entrepreneurship. Dupont, the Minister of Law and Order, seemed to misinterpret the position of the LAA, stating that the European traders were ‘not in contravention of the LAA’ since their stores in Kandeya Reserve ‘are run by Africans, although they are leased to Europeans.’⁶⁸ MP Mkudu queried Dupont’s interpretation of the LAA, wondering whether Africans could also run shops in European areas using European storekeepers.⁶⁹ Howman, in his capacity as the Minister of Internal Affairs, was obliged to intervene, explaining that ‘a European may be permitted to occupy and lease land *in the African areas* (my emphasis) when it is for the benefit of Africans.’⁷⁰

The above notwithstanding, African traders in African townships seemed to fare better than their counterparts in African reserves. For instance, the SCC announced at ‘an historic occasion’ that the council had offered to Africans ten residential and business freehold titles.⁷¹ At the event, the Highfield Town Manager, E. D. Roper, said, ‘this is the first time that any Africans in Salisbury have acquired freehold title to properties in the township.’⁷² Prominent

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid, Oral Answers: Title Deeds (Rural Traders), 15 February 1963, Col. 141 – 142.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Oral Answers: The Land Apportionment Act, 21 August 1963. Col. 1726.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ *The African Businessman*, ‘First Freehold Title in Salisbury Townships’, 15 June 1963.

⁷² Ibid.

African traders in Highfield, such as C. C. Chinamora, Enoch Mwayera, S. Mayera, A. J. Mushore and K. M. Sithole obtained title deeds to business stands at the ceremony. Mushore and Sithole received two stands each.⁷³ Besides, one of the top bus operators in the country during the colonial period, J. K. Ruredzo, was able to buy land in the Southern Industrial area of Salisbury.⁷⁴ *The African Businessman* reported that Ruredzo forked out £3195 for the land, a substantial amount of money at the time.⁷⁵ Ruredzo saw himself as paving the way for other African traders in buying land beyond the African townships. Speaking to *The African Businessman*, he explained how difficult it was for him to convince the council to sell him the land.⁷⁶ He pointed out that he refused to buy the land on the council terms, which sought to bar other African traders from doing the same. The bus operator candidly pointed out, ‘it is now high time the government was aware that no African will accept any move which is an advantage to one African or to the European community only.’⁷⁷ Although the Municipality of Salisbury issued a statement refuting Ruredzo’s allegations, other bus operators felt inspired by his story.⁷⁸ For example, the Mushandirapamwes, who owned several businesses in Highfield, also applied for land after seeing the success of Ruredzo.⁷⁹ The Ruredzo story shows how African traders were able to connect their struggles and milestones to the broader and national interests of traders.

The political environment of the federal period, together with a growing African market, created unique business partnerships between Africans and Europeans. Offered mostly by Europeans, these partnerships reflected a need by small firms to break into the African market that was restricted by legal handicaps built around the LAA. For powerful business associations such as ACCOR, inviting African members into their fold served to aesthetically present themselves as in line with the UFP’s rhetoric of partnership. Taking advantage of an amendment to the LAA that allowed Europeans to run businesses in African areas if Africans owned 51% of the company’s shares, European businessmen such as Clifford Pockets formed various ventures with African entrepreneurs. Others, such as ACCOR, invited top African traders of the time, such as Samuriwo and Mwamuka, to become members. The most important

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, ‘African Bus Operator Buys £3 195 Worth of Land in the City’s Industrial Area’, 3 August 1963.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, ‘Ruredzo’s Statements on his Application Refuted’, 12 October 1963.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, ‘More Bus Operators Apply for Plots in the City’s Industrial Areas’, 7 September 1963.

of these partnerships came from Clifford Pockets, a former Dominion Party member with conservative views on Africans, who formed a joint property company with African Traders. In addition to this, he invited Africans into the board of his bakery, the Pockets Bakery.

Before this development, Europeans and Africans often went into business partnerships to beat the restrictions of the LAA. The NAD and other African traders sometimes accused successful African entrepreneurs of acting as fronts for European traders and wholesalers. Known as dummifying, Africans also employed this practice to their advantage as a way of raising the much-needed capital for starting their businesses. In other instances, Africans could also get into partnership with Europeans as a way of trading in European areas as the annual report of the DNA for 1956 suggests.⁸⁰ Reporting on the activities of three companies jointly owned by Europeans and Africans, the DNA stated that they had ‘commenced business activities from shops and offices situated in the European area of the City.’⁸¹ Describing the arrangement as ‘obscure,’ the SCC promised to investigate the matter. What is clear, however, is that by the turn of the decade, some European firms adopted the strategy – aided by a tweak in the LAA – to break into the African market.

In 1961, some European firms invited Africans to buy shares in their companies. Rothman and Pall, a cigarette manufacturing company, was the first of these, opening its doors to applications from Africans in March of 1961. *The African Businessman* reported that the shares ‘were oversubscribed, and the applications had to be closed after one minute.’⁸² Rothman and Pall even went further and invited Africans to apply for executive positions in the company.⁸³ Stating her argument within the rhetoric of ‘racial partnership,’ Mrs. A. Z. Mwamuka, the wife to one of the top African entrepreneurs of the period, welcomed the move stating that ‘we hope that this trend will continue and the country will be multi-racial. Sometime back, such things were not known.’⁸⁴ By 1963, Rothmans and Pall reported at its annual general meeting that 20 Africans held shares with the company.⁸⁵ Other firms, like Pats Pools, opened its shares to Africans. Seeing an opportunity to advertise his business, the Director of the football pool said

⁸⁰ Annual Report of the Salisbury DNA, 1 July 1955 to 30 June 1956.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *The African Businessman*, ‘African shareholders in Cigarette Co’, 14 April 1961.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, ‘Executive Posts for Africans’, 28 April 1961.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, ‘African shareholders in Cigarette Co’, 14 April 1961.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, ‘Rothmans Shareholders Meeting: Africans Present’, 5 January 1963.

‘I have no idea how it all started, but I told them that they could apply for the shares like anybody else ... because we are a Rhodesian Company and do not differentiate between black and white Rhodesians.’⁸⁶ Two other investment companies, the Rhodesian Unit Trust and the Dominion Unit Trust, also offered Africans shares. The two Trusts had investments in mining, tobacco, cement, and sugar.⁸⁷ *The African Businessman* reported the Director of the joint Trusts, G. C. Beadle, as saying that he was ‘anxious to have African shareholders and will make special arrangements for the convenience of African investors.’⁸⁸ The editorial of *The African Businessman* encouraged its readers to buy shares in these enterprises, pointing out that Rothmans and Pall was a ‘well-tried company’ while the Rhodesian and Dominion Trust had local and well-known businessmen like Leslie Pocket.⁸⁹

The most interesting of the business partnerships that African entrepreneurs were involved in during the early 1960s were those fronted by Clifford Pockets. In July 1961, Pockets launched a real estate company known as Harare Holdings, which promised equal partnership for Africans.⁹⁰ Harare Holdings planned to invest in construction in African areas and at its launch, stated that ‘most of the African business tycoons in and around Salisbury who have all received a letter of invitation from Mr. Clifford Pockets.’⁹¹ The company planned to build several shops in Harari township worth £46 000 with Clifford and his brother Leslie Pockets offering £18 000 of the amount. Using language synonymous with the federal period, the Clifford brothers justified the venture explaining that they ‘were aware that normally Africans cannot own property in town of their own, and this was an attempt on their part to bring Africans into the property business.’⁹² The editorial of *The African Businessman* welcomed Harare Holdings, pointing out that ‘in light of the developments in this country, it was inevitable that partnerships such as this should come into existence.’⁹³ African traders such as James Chiweshe felt that the company was ‘the best scheme ever offered to Africans by Europeans.’⁹⁴

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, ‘Football Pools Firm will Accept African Shareholders’, 28 April 1961.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, ‘Rhodesian And Dominion Unit Trust Say: Africans Invite to Buy Shares in New Trusts’, 24 June 1961.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: The African Businessman’, 24 June 1961.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Property Owning Company: Equal Partnership offered to Africans’, 15 July 1961.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

⁹² *Ibid*.

⁹³ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: A Project Worthy of Support’, 15 July 1961.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, ‘Businessman Reactions to the Proposed New Company Harare Holdings’, 29 July 1961.

As early as January 1962, the Harare Holdings was already showing signs of progress with the ‘building of a shopping arcade in Harari’ in earnest.⁹⁵ By April of the same year, the building of the arcade was almost complete, with seven shops ready for occupation. Described as ‘the moving spirit of the project’ by *The African Businessman*, a triumphant Clifford proclaimed that he was ‘convinced that it is a pattern which will soon be followed by other businessmen in the Federation. Partnership has become a fact and has been put into reality.’⁹⁶ The Board of Harare Holding was multiracial and was made up of the two Pockets brothers, Mwamuka, Samkange, Samuriwo, and Chiweshe.⁹⁷ Besides, Clifford fronted the Harare Holdings property as an ‘all race center ... with a free atmosphere’ with no challenges expected from the LAA.⁹⁸ *The African Businessman* also quoted the DNA, Gibbs, as agreeing ‘that the Wonder Business Centre is the first and the only building in Salisbury with such a free atmosphere.’⁹⁹

Because of the Harare Holdings venture, Clifford Pockets emerged as the face of racial partnership in business. *The African Businessman* found Pockets’ exploits in this front at a time ‘where words like Multiracialism and Partnership have developed a monotonous sound which has no effect in the every day (sic) life of its citizens.’¹⁰⁰ In addition to the favourable editorials from *The African Businessman*, the RNAA also invited Pockets to speak on his experiences with ‘Partnership in Business.’¹⁰¹ During the talk, Clifford presented his treaties on racial partnership, arguing that the state’s ‘evasiveness and ambiguous’ policies on this subject had led to the rise in radical African nationalism. He argued that ‘practical partnership’ and not patronage, as reflected in Harari Holdings, was the best way of ensuring that the state’s policy of racial partnership became a reality.¹⁰² Commenting on Clifford’s speech to the RNAA, the editorial of *The African Businessman*, as had become synonymous with the paper, praised Clifford pointing out that ‘It is common knowledge among African Businessmen that Mr. Pocket is the only European Businessman who puts partnership in practice. He is the only man who does not talk only but does what he says.’¹⁰³

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, ‘Africans and Europeans in Partnership’, 27 January 1962.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, ‘Harare Holdings Partnership in Reality’, 7 April 1962.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, ‘Directors of Harare Holdings’, 7 April 1962.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, ‘Harare Holdings Partnership in Reality’, 7 April 1962.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Good Example’, 7 April 1962.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, ‘Partnership in Business’, 9 June 1962.

¹⁰² *Ibid*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Show by Practical Means’, 9 June 1962.

A litmus test for the Harare Holding company and its experiment in racial partnership in business came in August of 1962. Samuriwo, one of the shareholders in the company, applied for a licence to run a general dealer store at the newly completed Harare Holdings building, and the DNA turned down his application. As discussed in the chapter, Briggs cited the LAA for refusing to grant the application.¹⁰⁴ Surprisingly, barely four months had passed when Briggs had described the Harare Holdings venture as the only multiracial business space in the city.¹⁰⁵ The vacillation of the SCC is reflective of the ambiguity of colonial policy on African entrepreneurship during the period covered by the chapter. Officials of the SCC were happy to appear in support of opening business space for Africans when under the public glare but refused applications for business licences in the safe environs of the SCC offices.

While Clifford Pockets might have appeared as the symbol of racial partnership in business, the experiences of Pockets Almaks Bakery in 1964 cast him in a different light. Just like Harare Holdings, Pockets Bakery had African Shareholders and James Chiweshe as a board member. Applauding the Pockets Bakery for including an African with ‘sound judgement and is not afraid to speak his mind or face unpalatable facts,’ *The African Businessman* said the Bakery, which depended on ‘African patronage would benefit from the advice of an African on their board.’¹⁰⁶ However, several months later, Pockets sold the Pockets Almaks Bakery to Lobels without consulting the African shareholders of the company. The title of the lead article and editorial of *The African Businessman* screamed “the end of an experiment,” explaining that this was,

Much more the selling of a bakery to another baker. It marks the end of an experiment, which can be described as “Partnership between Black and White Business.” Mr. Pockets believes very strongly in this, and the selling of the bakery must appear to him and to some other people as evidence that the experiment is not possible.¹⁰⁷

However, a series of articles appearing in *The African Businessman* the same month looking at the connection between business and the political boycotts in 1964 casts doubt on Pockets’ commitment to racial partnership. The row over the political boycotts in the African townships

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, ‘Samuriwo’s Application Deferred’, 11 August 1962.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, ‘Harare Holdings Partnership in Reality’, 7 April 1962.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Congratulations Mr. Chiweshe’, 13 July 1963.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: The End of an Experiment’, September 1964 (In 1964 the paper became a monthly).

of Salisbury had bread and the Pockets Almaks Bakery at the centre.¹⁰⁸ Political boycotts were an important form of protest used by African nationalists in colonial urban spaces to register displeasure with colonial urban administrators. In 1956, African urban civic society groups successfully organised a bus boycott targeted at, as Timothy Scarnecchia puts it, ‘high bus fares and rising prices for other consumer items.’¹⁰⁹ In organisation, the 1964 business boycotts were similar to the 1956 bus boycotts. While it is not clear who planned the bread boycott or why, *The African Businessman* noted that ‘it was organised from within the bakery by employees who wanted to get rid of some other employee whom they alleged treated them and African customers in general, badly.’¹¹⁰ With the help of African nationalists from the African Caretaker Council, the workers of Pockets Almaks Bakery ‘went to storekeepers to whom they were supposed to deliver bread and told the storekeepers not to buy the bread because it was being boycotted.’¹¹¹ What followed, the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Political Boycotts notes was a series of intimidation and blackmailing tactics targeted at the Pockets Almaks Bakery and other businesses.¹¹²

Following the boycott of the Pockets Almaks Bakery, Pockets decided to sell the concern to Lobels.¹¹³ However, before the boycotts of 1964, Pockets had received a backlash, through a bread boycott, for the comments he made as a member of the Dominion Party during the 1950s. *The African Businessman* reported, the ‘statement ... was considered by many Africans as derogatory to Africans.’¹¹⁴ The boycott of his bakery, then Wonder Bakery, ended after he made an apology and through the intervention of Charles Mzingeli. It is within the context of the earlier boycott that Pockets’ flirtation with racial partnership comes to light. His businesses relied on an African market for their survival and hence the attempt to recruit African shareholders as surety against the possibility of political backlash. When the Harari Holdings project was still in the books, a ‘leading businessman commented that he ... was not certain about its location. He thought that it was too near the hostels and that if there were a riot, it

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, ‘The Boycott Business’, September 1964.

¹⁰⁹ Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, 79. For more on the bus boycotts of September 1956 read Raftopoulos, *The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe 1945 – 1965*, 75 and Chitofiri, ‘Urban protest, Citizenship and the City’, 136.

¹¹⁰ *The African Businessman*, ‘The Boycott Business’, September 1964.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹¹² Southern Rhodesia Parliamentary Debates, ‘Political Boycott’, 16 September 1964, Col. 386 – 387.

¹¹³ *The African Businessman*, ‘Lobels Buys out Pockets Bakery’, September 1964.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*.

would very likely be stoned.’¹¹⁵ The history of Pockets` bakeries with boycotts and the location of the Harare Holdings building made it business sense to incorporate Africans as shareholders. When this failed in 1964, Pockets sold off the Pockets Bakery to the detriment of its African shareholders. Racial partnership in business was more about protecting white business interests and penetrating the African market and less about developing African entrepreneurship.

The Financing of African Traders: The African Loan and Development Company

The unavailability of credit facilities targeting Africans was one of the biggest challenges facing African entrepreneurs in Southern Rhodesia and the rest of colonial Africa. The literature on the history of banking shows that minority groups, together with subject groups in colonial spaces, struggled to access formal credit channels.¹¹⁶ This scholarship argues, and convincingly that Africans in business failed to get credit because of the racial structure of the 20th-century banking system together with the vested economic interests of big business. For this reason that African entrepreneurs in colonial Nigeria decided to form their banks. One of the first African owned banks in colonial Nigeria was the Nigerian Bank, established in 1931.¹¹⁷ Apart from West Africa, very little work exists on indigenous banks in the rest of colonial Africa. Southall`s work on African entrepreneurship in apartheid South Africa stands out and shows that it was not until the late 70s that African traders established a bank through the efforts of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce (NAFCOC).¹¹⁸ In mapping attempts by African traders in Southern Rhodesia to access formal channels of credit during the 1960s, this chapter fills this lacuna by discussing the experiences of African entrepreneurs with banking. African traders in colonial Zimbabwe never established an indigenous bank as in Nigeria, but they nonetheless debated establishing a wholly African

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, ‘Businessmen Reactions to the Proposed New Company Harare Holdings’, 29 July 1961.

¹¹⁶ For more on this see C. Uche, ‘Indigenous Banks in Colonial Nigeria’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43, 3 (2010), 467-487, D. Chukwu, ‘The Economic Impact of Pioneer Indigenous Banks in Colonial Nigeria, 1920 -1960’, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 19 (2010), 93-109 and L. Ammons, ‘The Evolution of Black-Owned Banks in the United States Between the 1880s and 1990s’, *Journal of Black Studies*, 26, 4 (1996), 467-489. You can also see A. Henderson, ‘Richard R. Wright and the National Negro Bankers Association: Early Organizing Efforts among Black Bankers, 1924-1942’, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 117, 1/2 (1993), 51-8.

¹¹⁷ Uche, ‘Indigenous Banks in Colonial Nigeria,’ 469.

¹¹⁸ Southall, ‘African Capitalism in Contemporary South Africa’, 49.

bank.¹¹⁹ These discussions often took a nationalistic hue and, therefore, recast the role of African traders within the nationalist movement during the 1960s.

Towards the end of 1961, the ALDC, a private firm, stepped up to provide financial assistance to African entrepreneurs, farmers, and cooperative societies.¹²⁰ The company started with a capital of £100 000 with African traders promised 50% of the loans.¹²¹ Modelled along, and inspired by the colonial policy of racial partnership, the credit firm was the brainchild of Colin Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick arrived in Southern Rhodesia from Britain in 1948. He had an expansive career working with financial institutions and remained the ALDC's chairman throughout the firm's existence.¹²² The African Directors of the credit firm hailed from among African Purchase Area farmers and African traders. For example, one of its African directors in 1961 was W. H. Kona, an African trader. In its brief existence, it went on to include Africans such as the journalist and later nationalist Nathan Shamuyarira and businessman Alden Mwamuka. During a well-publicised meeting of the Board of Directors, the ALDC stated that it focused on 'the provision of finance, various forms of loans, credits, guarantees to African businessmen, African farmers and African Cooperative Societies.'¹²³ The finance company charged an interest fee of 1 ½%. However, by the late 1960s, the ADLC had stopped funding African traders. It did continue, nonetheless, to provide funding to African farmers and agricultural cooperatives.

In a paper published by *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics* in 1968, Kirkpatrick outlined the philosophy of the ADLC.¹²⁴ Although he penned the article with a focus on African farmers, having stopped funding African traders by 1968, his views are important in understanding why he thought Africans needed credit facilities like those provided by the ADLC. In the paper, Kirkpatrick mentions his admiration of modernisation theories of development singling out the

¹¹⁹ Africans in Southern Rhodesia debated about forming an African bank between 1961 and 1962. See for example, two stories that appeared in *The African Businessman*, 'Businessman's Forum (An African Controlled Bank)', 23 September 1961 and 'Commercial Bank for Africans Suggested', 10 February 1962.

¹²⁰ C. Kirkpatrick, 'The Role of the African Loan and Development Company in African Agriculture', *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics*, 2, 2 (1968), 23.

¹²¹ *The African Businessman*, 'Finance Company is non-Political', 12 May 1962.

¹²² Kirkpatrick, 'The Role of the African Loan and Development Company in African Agriculture', 23.

¹²³ *The African Businessman*, 'More Information', 13 January 1962.

¹²⁴ Kirkpatrick, 'The Role of the African Loan and Development Company in African Agriculture', 22.

writings of Arthur Lewis.¹²⁵ Early Africanists literature, such as Arrighi's seminal paper on labour supplies, has dismissed colonial theories of development premised on the modernisation theory.¹²⁶ In addition to this, Kirkpatrick believed that the development of the colony depended on the settlers' ability to 'raise the standard of living and the cash incomes of the African population, and in particular of those hundreds of thousands now scratching a subsistence living out of the soil.'¹²⁷

Furthermore, his board included former officials of the NAD like Cramer while the finance company had the blessing of J. H. Quinton, a former Minister of African Affairs. From these individuals, as the chapter shows, the company adopted the paternalism of the NAD. From the above, one can conclude that the ALDC was a blend of modernism economics, paternalism, and ideas of racial partnership widely espoused during the 1950s and early 60s. Consequently, it is not surprising that the ALDC failed in its efforts to promote African entrepreneurship and resigned to the safe space of financing African Purchase Area farmers.

During its first few months, the ALDC received a fervent of inquiries from African traders eager to get credit to start and expand businesses. By the first week of March 1962, the company had received over 300 applications from traders and farmers. *The African Businessmen* reported that of the 300 applicants, 120 were African businessmen from across the colony.¹²⁸ By October, the credit firm had given loans, credit, and guarantees to over 450 traders.¹²⁹ The level of assistance to African traders was unprecedented, and comprised of cash loans, which the ALDC provided to 70 African farmers and traders with the latter group making up 71% of the beneficiaries.

While this financial aid to African traders was unparalleled at the time, the bulk of the help went to African farmers' cooperative societies with the 'Company indirectly assisting over 4000 African farmers who are members of cooperative societies.'¹³⁰ From the table above,

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Arrighi, 'Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective', 197 – 199.

¹²⁷ Kirkpatrick, 'The Role of the African Loan and Development Company in African Agriculture, 22.

¹²⁸ *The African Businessman*, 'The Progress of Finance Company', 10 March 1962.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 'ALDC has assisted over 450 Traders', 13 October 1962.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

most of the traders who got credit from the ALDC came from the African townships, as the above table suggests.

By the end of 1962, the ALDC was reporting that some of the traders that had received the credit firm's funding and were failing to pay back the money.¹³¹ To cushion against risk, the ALDC began assisting African traders organised into cooperative societies and business associations. Before this development, African traders had begun to coalesce around local business associations to collectively lobby for credit from the ALDC. Covering a meeting between Kirkpatrick and Mount Darwin African traders and farmers organised through the NC's office, *The African Businessman* reported that, 'Mr. Kirkpatrick, the Chairman of the Company, explained to the audience how the Company gives credit to individual traders and farmers. He gave an example of how they had helped the Gutu traders who had formed themselves into an association.'¹³² Consequently, a flurry of business associations organised around the Zimbabwe African Business Union (ZABU), sprang between 1962 and 1963 to get credit from the ALDC. Examples of such associations included the Lomagundi African Traders Association, Enkeldoorn and District Businessmen's Association, Wedza African Businessmen's Association, and the Charter Traders' Association, amongst others. As a result, the directors of the ALDC, who included Shamuyarira, went on a whirlwind of tours across the colony meeting representatives of local business associations, and through their efforts, African traders in Lomagundi got £5000 worth of loans from the ALDC.¹³³ By May of 1964, Kirkpatrick reported in the ALDC's annual report that 'some 30 new associations were formed, of which 11 have received financial assistance from us.'¹³⁴ As this chapter shows in the following section, these business associations were more than just tools in getting ALDC aid but reflected the politics and nationalist fervour of the period.

Despite the novelty of the ALDC's project of funding African traders, it came under criticism from African entrepreneurs. African traders took to letter writing to *The African Businessman* to express their displeasure with the ALDC. One applicant of an ALDC loan was 'worried' that

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 'African Loan and Development Company to help 4600 African businessmen and farmers through co-operative societies', 24 November 1962.

¹³² *Ibid*, 'ALDC holds Meeting', 25 August 1962.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 'African Traders' Association gets 5000 Loan from ALDC', 6 July 1963.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 'The African Loan and Development Company Limited', May 1964.

‘from the time the company was formed, I have not heard of any businessmen who were given some money.’¹³⁵ In the letter, the trader advised the ALDC to back its claims to assisting African traders with concrete figures of businesses that had benefited.¹³⁶ Besides, the ALDC faced further criticism for demanding that African entrepreneurs applying for loans produce records of their businesses. For instance, a Harari businessman complained that although the ALDC had seen his business records, they refused him credit nonetheless.¹³⁷ In another letter to *The African Businessman*, Max Mabiza of Zimuto Siding in Fort Victoria complained that the demands of the ALDC on African traders were excessive, concluding that the credit firm ‘helps only developed businesses.’¹³⁸ Mabiza argued that the requirement that African traders learn bookkeeping and have business records dissuaded small African traders from applying for credit from the ALDC. Explaining some of the structural challenges African traders faced in keeping proper books of accounts, he pointed out that ‘here in Fort Victoria where I live, there is no African bookkeeper operating on his own. There are only those employed by the government. So it is difficult for us to have bookkeepers to look after our books in a proper manner.’¹³⁹ The ALDC defended its position on bookkeeping, stating that ‘in all fairness, it must be agreed that no bank will, commercial institution or even a private individual can be expected to lend money to a person who cannot produce any form of accounts.’¹⁴⁰ Both the colonial state and private players involved with African traders, as chapter two and three showed, obsessed over bookkeeping and business records. As the following section shows, the government, together with private firms such as the ALDC, worked towards developing a curriculum on bookkeeping for African traders.

African traders also criticised the ALDC for charging high-interest rates for its loans. Furthermore, some African entrepreneurs felt that the credit firm should have offered more cash loans compared to guarantees. A group of Bulawayo African traders wrote to *The African Businessman* accusing ‘the Company of no significance, for giving African businessmen credits instead of cash, and for being like a government institution.’¹⁴¹ Besides, some African

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, ‘Our Readers’ Views’, 14 April 1962.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, ‘Businessman Complains about ALDC’, 6 October 1962.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, ‘Readers’ View: ALDC helps only already Developed Businesses’, 2 March 1963.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, ‘ALDC Replies to Allegations’, 2 March 1963.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, ‘Chairman of the ALDC Replies to Bulawayo Critics’, 18 August 1962.

traders criticised the firm's 'bank rate of 7% and 1% negotiating fee.'¹⁴² Reporting on the views Enoch Mwayera, a prominent voice among African traders, *The African Businessman*, said the vocal entrepreneur was displeased 'with the conditions under which loans were offered to people' and that 'the company was charging a very big interest on the loans given to traders and also the time given to repay the money was too short.'¹⁴³ Besides, Mwayera criticised the ALDC's preference for associations when giving loans.¹⁴⁴ Describing the 'criticisms levelled against the Company as not really justified,' *The African Businessman* defended the ALDC's interest rates of 7% per annum. It argued that, in comparison, commercial banks and building societies charged a premium of 7 ½ % and 7 ¼ %, respectively.¹⁴⁵ The paper added,

We suppose that there is no question whether or not the Company should charge any interest at all. We take it that everybody agrees that the Company cannot lend money without charging any interest because it would soon go out of business altogether. It would have no money with which to pay its staff or rent for its offices.¹⁴⁶

In a response written to the editor of *The African Businessman*, the ALDC echoed the sentiments of the newspaper's editorial. In a rhetorical question, the ALDC quipped, 'do you realise that the commercial banks charge a rate of interest of 7 ½ percent on bank overdrafts, and bank overdrafts are not usually granted unless covered by some security?'¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, as a show of transparency, the credit firm invited Mwayera 'to visit the Company's offices and discuss with him his criticism of the company which appeared in *The African businessman* of 27 July.'¹⁴⁸ There is no record on whether Mwayera took up the invitation from the ALDC.

By 1964, the ALDC began divesting its energies from providing financial aid to African traders and focusing more on African farmers in the Native Purchase areas. Instead, the company would provide extension services with a focus on equipping African traders with the right bookkeeping skills. *The African Businessmen* quoted the Chairman of the ALDC, Kirkpatrick, as saying that 'farmers are proving themselves to be better credit risks than traders.'¹⁴⁹ Kirkpatrick pointed out that the firm 'had to write off during the year, bad debts and other

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 'Finance Company is non-Political', 12 May 1962.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 'African Businessmen Condemn Move to Open Salisbury City Area to all Races', 27 July 1963.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 'Editorial: ALDC Interests Charges', 3 August 1963.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 'Mwayera Invited to ALDC Offices', 17 August 1963.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 'Editorial: Financing African Enterprises', May 1964.

losses totalling £2831.¹⁵⁰ Besides, *The African Businessman* observed, even the business associations formed primarily to get loans from the ALDC proved disappointing in repaying loans.¹⁵¹ In August of 1964, a sombre editorial of *The African Businessman* warned African traders that the ALDC might soon stop supporting them since ‘traders generally are poor risk; that they do not repay their loans, individually or as associations.’¹⁵² Because of the reasons outlined above, the ALDC had stopped funding African traders by the end of 1964.

The shift in the ALDC’s policy marked the end of a novel experiment, privately initiated, to fund African traders. The ALDC initiative to finance African traders preceded government programmes of the 1970s aimed at providing capital and extension services to African entrepreneurs.¹⁵³ The ALDC is significant in the history of African entrepreneurship because of its novelty. There is no information on the success of the businesses that the ALDC funded, save for the fact that the credit firm found African traders a credit risk. Nonetheless, the ALDC’s two-year flirtation with African businesses offers a unique opportunity to look at African experiences with credit during the colonial period. Perhaps more importantly, the ALDC’s experimentation with funding African traders was similar to other trails in racial partnership in business discussed above. Like the other ventures, fronted by Clifford Pockets, Kirkpatrick’s dabble with African entrepreneurship was brief and collapsed together with the federal period. The credit firm then resigned to the familiar and comfortable landscape of African agriculture. In summation, the ALDC stopped funding African traders because of the credit risk associated with the group and the colonial fatigue with racial partnership that the ALDC also represented.

The African Business Association Movement

The African business association movement emerged during the 1950s and 1960s. The development coincided with the emergence of radical African nationalist politics in Southern Rhodesia.¹⁵⁴ The early forms of collective political action amongst Africans to push business

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, ‘African Loan and Development Company Limited’, May 1964.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Financing African Enterprises’, May 1964.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Open Letter to African Traders’, August 1964.

¹⁵³ These programmes will be discussed in chapter five.

¹⁵⁴ See Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 128 – 148.

interests occurred under colonial institutions of patronage such as the African Councils, Urban Advisory Boards, and Native Welfare Societies. While African business associations galvanized around specific grievances affecting their constituency of African traders, they also articulated a national message that resonated with the African politics of the time. More importantly, the leaders of these business associations were also involved in the labour and political movements; hence, the crackdown on the main political parties by the colonial state during the 1960s led to a leadership crisis within the African business community. The clampdown partly explains the demise of most of the African business associations that had emerged during the federal period. This section discusses the emergence of these proto African business associations. The formation of the Zimbabwe African Business Union (ZABU) under the leadership of Nathan Shamuyarira in 1962 marked the zenith of this proto movement.

While African business associations did not leave any paper trail of their activities, occasional mention of some of their activities appeared in the African oriented newspapers and the colonial archive. In a story that appeared in *The Bantu Mirror* of 1944, for example, Charles Mzingeli encouraged African entrepreneurs to form themselves into a business association. Articulating this need in a tone laden with the nationalistic sentiment of the moment, Mzingeli opined ‘African businessmen must be taught that running a business means serving a community, and must learn, too, to serve the community and themselves by collective buying if only they could form a sort of ‘African Chamber of Commerce.’¹⁵⁵ The first business associations in Southern Rhodesia, however, were not national but reflected local interests. In 1956, *The African Daily News* reported on the activities of the Bulawayo African Chamber of Commerce (BACC), fronted by B. Matewele, a local businessman. The business association, formed in 1942, was one of the longest-running organised groups for African entrepreneurs.¹⁵⁶

Although members of this business association had ‘been able to fight and achieve quite a number of things for its members’ and ‘were pleased with the manner in which the work of the organization was carried out in 1956’, they still yearned for a form of national representation.¹⁵⁷ For example, in 1959, BACC established a wholesale business, the African General Traders.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ *The Bantu Mirror*, ‘Black – Marketing in the Salisbury African Township’, 1 January 1944.

¹⁵⁶ *The African Businessman*, ‘African Chamber of Commerce’, 20 May 1961.

¹⁵⁷ *The African Daily News*, ‘Bulawayo Chamber of Traders said to be doing well’, 19 December 1956.

¹⁵⁸ *The African Businessman*, ‘African Chamber of Commerce’, 20 May 1961.

At that meeting, BACC had extended an invitation to the ‘Salisbury Branch of the Chamber’, which did not show up. Expressing their regret in the Salisbury branch’s no show, the Bulawayo African businessmen told *The African Daily News* that they were ‘disappointed by the attitude shown by the Salisbury branch of the Chamber in failing to meet the Bulawayo people after so many letters had been written to the secretary of the Salisbury branch without success.’¹⁵⁹ That same year, the annual report of the Salisbury DNA, outlined the activities of the Salisbury African business association. The above notwithstanding, the local Salisbury business associations planned to merge and form a more representative organization. The DNA reported that ‘it is pertinent to note that two new organizations, the Salisbury and District African Traders Association and the Salisbury African Chamber of Commerce, came into being and subsequently amalgamated to become the Southern Rhodesia African Traders Association.’¹⁶⁰ While there is no record on the activities the Southern Rhodesia African Traders Association or the attempt of the Bulawayo Chamber of traders to woo their Salisbury counterparts, these reports point to an early nationalistic sense among African traders in Southern Rhodesia.

By the turn of the 1950s decade, the most active African business associations were the Highfield African Traders Association (HATA) and the Southern Rhodesia African Transporters Association (SRATA). Among HATA’s members were some of the most prominent African entrepreneurs, such as Aiden Mwamuka and Enock Mwayera.¹⁶¹ In keeping with the tradition at the time, the chairman of HATA was also a prominent African nationalist, Josiah Chinamano. Chinamano, a high-ranking ZAPU official, together with his wife Ruth, were in the throes of nationalist politics during the 1960s.¹⁶² Another veteran nationalist and trade unionist, Charles Mzingeli, headed the Harare African Traders Association (Harare Association).¹⁶³ Some of the problems that Harari Chamber lobbied the SCC and the colonial state included specific trade concerns such as the right to freehold title to land, concern over hawkers taking business from licensed traders¹⁶⁴, and relaxation of the shopping hours in the

¹⁵⁹ *The African Daily News*, ‘Bulawayo Chamber of Traders said to be doing well’, 19 December 1956.

¹⁶⁰ NAZ, S/SA 6175, Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration for the Municipal Year 1st July 1956 to 30th June 1957.

¹⁶¹ *The African Businessman*, ‘The Highfield Traders Association’, 21 April 1961.

¹⁶² For more on the political careers of Josiah and Ruth Chinamano read Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, 118 – 119 and 148 – 149.

¹⁶³ For more on the political career of Charles Mzingeli read, Raftopoulos, ‘The Labour Movements in Zimbabwe 1945 – 1965’, 61.

¹⁶⁴ *The African Businessman*, ‘The Highfield Traders Association’, 21 April 1961.

African townships.¹⁶⁵ In 1965, *The African Businessman* carried a report on the Harare Association's protest against 'certain city bakeries supplying bread to unlicensed traders.'¹⁶⁶ A perusal at these concerns may point to mundane trader grievances divorced from the broader nationalist struggles of the day. However, by demanding title to business sites, the Harari Chamber challenged directly the colony's skewed land ownership patterns, which affected all Africans. African traders in the urban townships urged the colonial state to reform legislation on shop hours, which required all traders to close shop at 6:30 in the evening. In agreement, the editorial of *The African Businessman* argued that 'most residents come home at about 6:30 PM and need more than thirty minutes within which to purchase groceries.'¹⁶⁷ Ruth Chinamano, the wife of Josiah Chinamano, who managed a general dealer store in Highfield, protested these restrictions, pointing out that they start selling 'at 5 pm. During the day, we do not do business. We should be allowed to sell things up to any time, as long as we can get customers to buy.'¹⁶⁸

Business associations such as HATA, the Harari Chamber, BACC, and ATOA were useful in articulating local and sector grievances.¹⁶⁹ The preceding paragraphs show the relationship between the broader nationalist struggles and trader complaints against the state and local authorities. Nevertheless, beginning in 1961, African traders started to call for the formation of a national business association. The chairman of HATA, Chinamano, was a principal advocate of this venture. Linking the idea of a business association to the other African organized groups, Chinamano said:

It is evident that the African ... comes to town he finds it necessary to join organised labour-Trade Unions, which are becoming strong. Africans are not only workers now, many of them are employers. It is essential that they should be organized to protect their own interests as employers and businessmen. They should be protected against big dealers, wholesaler, local authorities, etc. etc.¹⁷⁰

Other African traders agreed with Chinamano. Prominent Highfield entrepreneur, Enock Mwayera, felt that the idea of a national business association had great appeal among African businesspeople. However, not all African entrepreneurs saw the need for a national association

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 'Highfield Traders' Association Meets: Hawkers Main Problem to fight', 12 October 1963.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 'Editorial: A Genuine Case', February 1965. (After 1965, the paper became a monthly issue.)

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 'Editorial: African Businessmen', 28 April 1961.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 'Should Shopping Hours Restriction be abolished in the African Township?' 30 December 1961.

¹⁶⁹ Chapter four discusses the role of the African Transport Operators Association in fighting municipal monopoly of the transport business.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 'National Support for Businessmen's Organisation', 8 July 1961.

for African traders. J. Onyimoh said he was cautious about the idea of a national business association arguing that African entrepreneurs had to ‘join European Chambers of Commerce and not found one of their own which would be limited by lack of experience and lack of funds.’¹⁷¹ Onyimoh, through the African Secretarial Services, managed the books of some African businesses.

Onyimoh’s pessimism concerning a national African business association did not deter other African entrepreneurs from joining businesses in a similar trade. For example, in October of 1961, the Marembo Funeral Services, Highfield Undertakers, and Ayawo Society Funeral Services merged to form the Zimbabwe African Funeral Services. Explaining the merger, S. M. Marembo of the Marembo Funeral Services said they had ‘found that there was a lot of cheap competition resulting in canvassing for bodies at the hospital. In order to expand the business, so that the African community will know that one firm of that nature being run by Africans for Africans we decided to join hands.’¹⁷² West argues that African business associations were sectorial in their interests and this seems to be the case for the ZAFS.¹⁷³ However, while this was a merger of businesses as opposed to the amalgamation of business associations, the reasons for the merger articulated ideas in currency that spoke to the need by African traders to unite. In a nationalistic tone, Marembo described the Zimbabwe African Funeral Services as ‘one firm’ that was ‘being run by Africans for Africans.’¹⁷⁴ Curiously, the name of the morgue was itself a nod to the contemporary debates on nationalism. African nationalists had begun to use the name Zimbabwe to refer to Southern Rhodesia.

The section on financing African traders shows the relationship that developed in 1963 between African traders and Kirkpatrick’s ALDC. This relationship, the section argues, led to the formation of a flurry of business associations eager to get loans and credit from the ALDC. An interesting relationship also developed between the ALDC and the Mt Darwin African Traders Association (MATA). Mt Darwin traders used the close association between their business association and the ALDC to get loans and credit. Perhaps more importantly, this relationship culminated in the formation of the Zimbabwe African Business Union (ZABU) at the beginning

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, ‘African Funeral Services Amalgamate’, 21 October 1961.

¹⁷³ West, ‘African Middle-Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe’, 292.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

of 1963. MATA was formed in August of 1962 following a meeting between the small town's African entrepreneurs and officials from the ALDC.¹⁷⁵ Munyoro, the chairman of MATA, was a vocal Mt Darwin trader and an advocate of a national business association for Africans. Because of the success of MATA, African traders from all over the country developed an interest in imitating the methods of the association in their areas.

Consequently, MATA, together with stakeholders involved with African entrepreneurs such as the ALDC, the Institute of Adult Education, and the Rhodesian Institute of Management, organized a conference for African traders for 23 March 1963. *The African Businessmen* described the conference as 'probably the first of its kind to be held in Southern Rhodesia.'¹⁷⁶ The planning around this conference set the tone for the formation of a national business association for Africans. The conference hoped to inculcate African traders with business skills to help grow their businesses and apply for loans from the ALDC. The following section discusses the intrigue among African traders, the colonial state, together with private players in business skills.

The anticipated conference eventually happened in early March of 1963, with more than 300 African traders of various entrepreneurial persuasions in attendance from across Southern Rhodesia.¹⁷⁷ African traders at the conference took advantage of the ensemble of a large group of traders to form ZABU on the sidelines of discussing matters such as the grain trade, title deeds, and missionaries in competition with African traders in the African reserves.¹⁷⁸ The conference established an interim committee to draft the constitution of ZABU. The committee included many known African nationalists such as Nathan Shamuyarira, Josiah Chinamano, and Stanlake Samkange. The committee also included the chairman of MATA, J. Munyoro. Although funding for the conference came from European partners, the nationalist feeling among African traders was high. When it came to the name of the new organization, Shamuyarira proposed the name Zimbabwe African Traders and Transport Association, suggesting that 'the name should not include the name "Southern Rhodesia," since he and many

¹⁷⁵ *The African Businessman*, 'Conference of African Traders and Storekeepers Will Discuss a Variety of Business Matters', 23 February 1963.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 'African Businessmen Meet in City: Zimbabwe African Businessmen's Union Formed', 16 March 1963.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

other people did not approve of that name.¹⁷⁹ Suggesting that Shamuyarira's proposed name excluded other African entrepreneurs in other trades, Samkange then came up with the name Zimbabwe African Businessmen Union.¹⁸⁰ The presence of top African nationalists at this conference suggests the close relationship that existed between African traders and the African political questions of the day. Perhaps more importantly, the preference for the name "Zimbabwe" over "Southern Rhodesia" shows how much African traders identified with the politics of the leading African political parties that used the term Zimbabwe as an identity marker. In fact, at ZABU's first meeting of the interim committee, Shamuyarira revealed how the name "Zimbabwe" had caused 'ill feelings' among the organization's 'well-wishers' who felt that the business association had become 'a cover for a political organization.'¹⁸¹

The experiences of ZABU and MATA in 1963 shows that the leadership of the African business association movement was not confined to African traders in the townships of Salisbury and Bulawayo. The literature on the African middle class and nationalism has tended to focus on Africans in Bulawayo and the Salisbury townships of Highfield and Harari. The respective works by Ranger and Scarnecchia, for instance, focus primarily on Bulawayo, Harare, and Highfield.¹⁸² While the scholarly attention on these African townships is understandable, given that they were a hub of nationalist and middle class activity, the focus is also a methodological problem. *The African Businessman* shows that the stewardship of the African business movement was in the hands of traders in Mt Darwin through their association MATA. In elevating the position of Munyoro and MATA within the African business association movement and broader nationalist struggle, this thesis takes a lean on Munochiveyi who has observed that:

Because in much of the nationalist scholarship on Zimbabwe, metanarratives of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle lump people like Mutezo into the category of 'the masses' (either as an undifferentiated rural peasantry or as urban workers),

¹⁷⁹ *The African Businessman*, 'Caretaker Committee of Z.A.B.U. Elected: Shamuyarira is Convenor', 16 March 1963.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 'The Zimbabwe African Businessmen's Union Interim Committee meets – Secretary Reports', 6 April 1963.

¹⁸² See for instance T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of a Southern African City, 1893-1960* (London: James Currey, 2010) and Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*. The two texts are centred on Bulawayo and the two African townships of Harari and Highfield respectively.

their anti-colonial politics and contribution to the Zimbabwean struggle are too often muted and/or subordinated to the roles played by elite nationalists.¹⁸³

The success of MATA in steering the formation of ZABU, together with their success in getting loans from the ALDC, led to the formation of several trader's associations during 1963. In an interview with *The African Businessman*, a Msengezi businessman, K. V. Goredema, vowed to help establish a business association in his area pointing out that 'if the Mount Darwin Traders' Association has been able to organize such a big conference and be served so well by people in its area, why not with us in Msengezi?'¹⁸⁴ Following the success of the March African businessmen conference, J. Munyoro and some members of MATA went across the country, helping establish ZABU branch associations. For example, in March, three officials of MATA travelled to Chiweshe for a meeting with 50 traders from the area.¹⁸⁵ In April, Munyoro, who by the time had ascended to the position of secretary of ZABU, addressed African traders in Urungwe at Charles Clack Mission in Urungwe District.¹⁸⁶ At other tours, the Chairman of ZABU, Nathan Shamuyarira, sometimes accompanied Munyoro as the Fort Victoria meeting shows.¹⁸⁷ Through this tour of the colony's business areas, Munyoro, Shamuyarira, and MATA helped establish several African trader associations in Chiweshe, Urungwe, Lomagundi, Sipolilo, Fort Victoria, Wedza, Makoni and Charter.

The ideas around business and methods of engaging the state expressed by ZABU and its affiliates reflect a blend of nationalism and cooperation with the state. The literature on the African middle class during this period has shown that during the federal period, this class sought accommodation within the confines of the stated policy of racial partnership.¹⁸⁸ The experiences of ZABU and its leaders, which included nationalist leaders like Shamuyarira and entrepreneurs like Munyoro, show that the position of the African middle class during the federal period was complicated. As demonstrated, the occasion that marked the formation of ZABU involved interaction with white business as well as African nationalists feeling.¹⁸⁹ These seeming contradictions characterized the activities and objectives of the African business movement in 1963. The talk given by Munyoro to African traders during his tour of the colony

¹⁸³ Munochiveyi, *Becoming Zimbabwe from Below*, 88.

¹⁸⁴ *The African Businessman*, 'ZABU Branch will be formed', 23 March 1963.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 'Chiweshe Reserve Z.A.B.U Meets: Munyoro Appeals for Unity among Businessmen', 30 March 1963.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 'Mr Munyoro Addresses Urungwe African Traders: Urungwe Association Formed', 13 April 1963.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Fort Vic. Businessmen Meet: Shamuyarira Appeals for Unity among Businessmen', 4 May 1963.

¹⁸⁸ Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, 74.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 'African Businessmen Meet in City: Zimbabwe African Businessmen's Union Formed', 16 March 1963.

during this time shows that ZABU aimed to project the African trader as a reliable ally of the state able to push the state's programmes. Reflecting on the importance of businessmen to an audience of Chiweshe traders, Munyoro said African traders had the civic responsibility to curb unemployment and 'that a greater measure of cooperation could be achieved by chiefs, council leaders, Teachers, and businessmen if the government worked its schemes through businessmen in the rural areas.'¹⁹⁰ At the African businessmen conference held in March, Munyoro expressed that 'the African businessmen community can be the focus of community development schemes.' On the same occasion, he also talked of the 'duty' of the African business movement 'to fight against the restrictions imposed by law on African traders. For example, the right to title deeds for business centres.'¹⁹¹ This ambiguity within the African business movement reflected activism in "tight corners" among African traders that sought to win gains from the colonial state within a constrained business and political environment.¹⁹²

Perhaps more importantly, the relationship between ZABU and the ALDC reflected this contradiction more succinctly. One of the main objectives of the first national representative African business association was 'to take full advantage of the existence of the African Loan and Development, the Rhodesian Institute of Management and the Institute of Adult Education at the University College.'¹⁹³ Indeed, the need to get credit from the ALDC spurred the formation of many of the trader associations throughout Southern Rhodesia discussed in the preceding paragraphs. As this chapter has shown, organizations like the ALDC operated within the confines of colonial policy, which was not clear on the role of African entrepreneurs within the colonial economy. The leadership of the African business association movement also reflected the ambiguous position of ZABU. Apart from leading ZABU, Shamuyarira also sat on the board of the ALDC. In addition to this, he was also a lecturer at the Institute Adult Education at the University College of Rhodesia through which position he spearheaded the teaching of bookkeeping to African traders. The following section discusses the inherent problem associated with the teaching of business skills. These contradictions within ZABU came to a head towards the end of 1963, leading to its implosion.

¹⁹⁰ *The African Businessman*, 'Chiweshe Reserve Z.A.B.U Meets: Munyoro Appeals for Unity among Businessmen', 30 March 1963.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 'Mr Munyoro's Speech at Salisbury's African Traders Conference', 30 March 1963.

¹⁹² This concept is developed in Shutt, 'Writing Jasper Savanhu's Biography', 220.

¹⁹³ *The African Businessman*, 'Mr Munyoro's Speech at Salisbury's African Traders Conference', 30 March 1963.

ZABU sought to use its unique and ambiguous position, discussed above, to seek concessions from the colonial state. At its first meeting, the African traders resolved to make ‘representations to the Prime Minister,’ which ‘would be made personally to him on such matters as the GMB, Title Deeds, education.’¹⁹⁴ Samkange was also present at the meeting and pointed out that it was ‘appropriate’ that the delegation to the Prime Minister include Colin Kirkpatrick, who had the right ear of Prime Minister Winston Field. As such, although the name and constitution of ZABU’s board sought to tap into African nationalism, its leaders still believed in operating within the confines of the racial paternalism of the federal period. Apart from Kirkpatrick, the delegation also included Shamuyarira, Munyoro, Chinamano, Marembo, and Mandizvidza. At the meeting, which happened in May 1963, the letter read to Winston Field contained many issues pertinent to African traders such as the question of title deeds, the right to trade anywhere, competition from missionaries in the African reserves the monopoly of the UBC in the transport trade. Field’s response was nothing more than unenthusiastic, promising ‘to give a much-detailed reply to the points raised.’¹⁹⁵ The Prime Minister’s response to the ZABU delegation was symptomatic of the state’s attitude towards African entrepreneurship during the period covered by this study.

Despite the impressive beginnings of ZABU, by 1964, the business association had all but collapsed. Signs of fracture were noticeable towards the end of 1963, and four distinct reasons account for the demise of Southern Rhodesia’s first national African business associations. As the preceding paragraphs show, the leaders of ZABU occupied an ambiguous position within the business association movement. Shamuyarira and Samkange, for instance, who were part of the interim committee of ZABU, also sat on the board of the ALDC. Uncomfortable with his position, Shamuyarira decided to resign from the board of the credit firm, stating that ‘his position has always been confusing’ and that ‘because of his political views, the company’s future would be hampered.’¹⁹⁶ He explained that his decision aimed at keeping the integrity of ZABA’s independence intact and that ‘ZABA must be an independent organization. ZABA and ALDC’s dealings should be concerned of two sides – the giver and the receiver, and as such, no one can play both sides.’¹⁹⁷ It is no coincidence, however, that Shamuyarira’s decision

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, ‘The Zimbabwe African Businessmen’s Union Interim Committee meets – Secretary Reports’, 6 April 1963.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, ‘Shamuyarira Resigns from African Loan and Development Company’, 31 August 1963.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

to leave the ALDC happened together with the state's crackdown on the political leadership of the African nationalist movement to which Shamuyarira was a part. In many ways, Shamuyarira's resignation from the ALDC also marked an end to the honeymoon between the colonial state and elite Africans in Southern Rhodesia.

Perhaps equally important, the ALDC decided to stop funding African traders around the same time. As this chapter demonstrates, African traders had supported the formation of ZABU, in part, on the predicate that the ALDC would provide credit to members of the business association. Consequently, when the ALDC decided to end its relationship with African traders, support for ZABU began to wane. With the state's crackdown on the political leadership of the colony's main African political parties, ZABU was left with a leadership crisis. As highlighted above, the African business association movement had made an effort to recruit its leadership from among the African nationalists. Chinamano led the Highfield business association while Charles Mzingeli stewarded the Harari Chamber.

Similarly, ZABU's board included Shamuyarira and Samkange. Colonial officials such as NCs also began to deny ZABU's branches permission to conduct meetings as happened in Wedza in August of 1963 when the NC demanded 'to see the association's constitution before he could grant permission to hold the meeting.'¹⁹⁸ In addition to this, ZABU became the victim of political infighting among its leaders. In October of 1963, one ZABU's affiliate business associations in Mahesukwa, through its leader S. Marembo launched an attack against Shamuyarira. The Mahesukwa African Traders Association accused the leadership of ZABU of participating in the 'nationalist split in the country.'¹⁹⁹ Marembo pointed out that since ZABU was nonpolitical, 'its leaders should not have taken sides with those people who have broken away from the banned ZAPU.'²⁰⁰ In response, Shamuyarira described Marembo's statement as 'irresponsible and unrealistic.'²⁰¹ Because of this fallout, Marembo and Chinamano tendered their resignation from the ZABU committee.²⁰² While ZABU continued into 1964, its momentum had withered. In an apocalyptic header, *The African Businessman*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 'New Native Commissioner Refused African Traders Meeting,' 17 August 1963.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 'ZABA Branch Dissatisfied with Leaders,' 2 November 1963.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 'ZABA Chairman Replies to Marembo', 9 November 1963.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 'Two Resign from ZABA Committee', 9 November 1963.

asked whether ZABU was dead. In clear indication that ZABU had suffered from the Rhodesian political crackdown, an African trader quipped that it was ‘quite clear to the whole country of Southern Rhodesia that ZABU is not a political party or intends to be. What we want now is cooperation in this great country.’²⁰³

The Education of the African Businessman

This section discusses the state’s efforts and those of private players to educate African traders. It looks at the content and impact of this curriculum on the development of African entrepreneurship during the 1960s. It also shows that private players such as the ALDC, the Rhodesian Institute of Education, and the University College of Rhodesia also took up the mantle to inculcate African traders with the right set of business skills. Lastly, the section also looks at the role of *The African Businessman*, in propagating colonial thinking on African traders and education. The paper, as the leading voice for African traders between 1961 and 1969, also served as a bookkeeping guide. The newspaper carried caricatured feature stories like the ‘Shoko and Shoko,’ a trope on the African businessman. In discussing these issues, the chapter engages with the literature on colonial education and the inadequacy of colonial top-down strategies when dealing with African matters.²⁰⁴ This rich historiography has rightly shown that colonial interventions often ‘deliberately’ missed and ignored the colonial challenges encountered by Africans. As this chapter proves, the challenge was not in the inadequacy of African business skills, but a structural business environment that disadvantaged Africans in business. Clarke observes that:

An important aspect of this ideology has been its propensity to direct attention away from the institutional structure as a contributory cause of Rhodesian underdevelopment. In particular, this has manifested itself in various forms of racism in attempts to explain black poverty as a result of human-specific characteristics ‘peculiar (unfortunately) to the African population’.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ *Ibid*, ‘Is ZABA Dead September 1964’, September 1964.

²⁰⁴ For more on African Education see West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, 36 and Mungazi, ‘A Strategy for Power’, and C. Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans’ Education in Southern Rhodesia, 1918-1940*, Portsmouth New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2002. For an insight into colonial interventions in African agriculture see Wolmer, *From Wilderness Vision to Farm Invasions* and Machingaidze ‘Agrarian Change from Above’.

²⁰⁵ Clarke, ‘Settler Ideology and African Underdevelopment in Postwar Rhodesia’, 17.

This section also engages with West and Wild's work on African entrepreneurship in colonial Zimbabwe, which dismissed African business culture as 'profit not for profit's sake' by showing that this was part of the colonial thinking around which African entrepreneurship nurtured and developed.²⁰⁶ West, for example, points out that there 'was ignorance of elementary business techniques by far too many Africans venturing into the field of business.'²⁰⁷ This interpretation took directly from the colonial archive that typically stereotyped the African trader. As Clarke ably demonstrates, colonial ideology suggested that

The real causes of African underdevelopment are predominantly internal to the psyche, make-up, ways, behaviour, tradition and culture of the African, externalizes the origins of inequality from itself, on the one hand — by absolving itself of any responsibility for 'directing and structuring' the alignment of market forces —while, on the other hand, it attributes this causal responsibility almost entirely to the subjects of underdevelopment.²⁰⁸

Because of the structure of the colonial economy, colonial officials imagined Africans as either workers or peasant farmers. NCs, for example, characterized Africans who eked a livelihood outside this narrow vision as seeking an 'idle life, get rich quick and acquire a certain social prestige.'²⁰⁹ The CNC's reports between 1952 and 1960 paint a grim picture of the ability of Africans to engage in business. For instance, the CNC's report for 1952 pointed out that 'it is patently clear that far too many Africans are entering into business with no practical qualifications.'²¹⁰ The 1953 report worried that 'a large number of Africans are paying in hard cash for the experience of savouring the prestige of being businessmen.'²¹¹ In 1954, the CNC lamented that 'it is the ambition of almost every Native to become a storekeeper, but he does not possess the business acumen essential to success.'²¹² In his 1956 report, the CNC decried that many African traders were failing in business because of 'inexperience and a lack of business training and acumen.'²¹³ By the turn of the 1950s decade, the NAD still felt that 'for among the majority of these businessmen there is very little knowledge of the fundamental principles of buying and selling.'²¹⁴

²⁰⁶ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake* and West, 'African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe', 303 – 306.

²⁰⁷ West, 'The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe', 304.

²⁰⁸ Clarke, 'Settler Ideology and African Underdevelopment in Postwar Rhodesia', 18.

²⁰⁹ Annual Report of the CNC for the year 1952

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid, 1953.

²¹² Ibid, 1954.

²¹³ Ibid, 1956.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 1960.

In 1960, the colonial state, through the NAD, decided to implement an ‘experimental’ programme to train Africans in necessary business skills. The Native Reserves Trust (NRT) developed ‘courses for the training for all types of businessmen to include knowledge of the elementary principles of bookkeeping, business methods, and management.’²¹⁵ Funds available to the NRT bankrolled the programme.²¹⁶ African traders contributed to this fund through the money they paid for lease sites in the African reserves. The NRT created ‘an ad hoc committee, including the advisor on Technical Education and members of the Native Education Department.’²¹⁷ The committee came up with a two-week programme that targeted, at its first trial, 120 African traders with Standard IV with successful participants receiving a Master Businessman badge at the end. The NRT selected three government schools in Umtali, Gwelo, and Goromonzi to host the teaching of these courses. Reporting on this, *The African Businessman* informed that experts in bookkeeping methods would conduct the lectures in addition to ‘discussions led by prominent Europeans in business from the Chamber of Commerce, the Rhodesian Institute of Management and other organizations.’²¹⁸ The annual report of the CNC for 1961 notes that ‘of the 90 students who attended 30 qualified for the Master Businessman’s Badge and Certificate.’²¹⁹

The import and intent of the curriculum for African traders mimicked in a significant way the training of African farmers at the colonial agricultural centres.²²⁰ The editorial of *The African Businessman* praised the course for its timely intervention but that it ‘should have been given years ago when the people now attending them were of school going age.’²²¹ On the same note, the CNC regretted that ‘the wastage of students was high. It became clear that to profit from such a course, these businessmen, many of whom left school years ago, must have some form of preliminary training for all businessmen and over 350 enrolled.’²²² The literature on colonial education has shown how the curriculum the state developed for Africans was inadequate. Importantly, education for Africans at the government schools or the mission stations aimed at ushering Africans into work within the exploitative settler economy. Carol Summers has

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 1961.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ *The African Businessman*, ‘100 Businessmen Back to School’, 14 April 1961.

²¹⁹ Annual Report of the CNC for the year 1961.

²²⁰ P. S. Nyambara, ‘A History of Land Acquisition in Gokwe, Northwestern Zimbabwe, 1945-1997’, (PhD Thesis: Northwestern University, 1999), 197.

²²¹ *The African Businessman*, ‘Editorial: Africans and Big Business’, 5 May 1961.

²²² Annual Report of the CNC for the year 1961.

described how Africans negotiated and contested this form of education provided by the government and the missionaries.²²³

To train as many African traders as possible, the NRT also came up with a parallel training scheme entirely in the hands of the NC. The Special Rural Businessman`s course of Private Study included subjects such as English, Arithmetic, Book Keeping, and Business Methods. African traders interested in the course had to take a test examined by the NC of that district. Successful participants then proceeded with the `special course of Private Study` at a fee of £5.²²⁴ Like the conventional programme offered by the government schools, the reward of the NC`s private course of study was a Master Businessmen Badge and Certificate.²²⁵

Consequently, on October 9, the Governor of Southern Rhodesia, Humphrey Gibbs, presented 10 African traders with Master Businessman Badges and Certificates.²²⁶ Speaking at the event, the CNC, S. E. Morris explained that African traders needed training because they `know nothing about the elements of business methods, of which accounting and bookkeeping are a basis.`²²⁷ He added that this scheme became necessary since Africans were making `their first steps into the realm of business, and few of them are equipped to meet the full blast of economic competition owing to a lack of experience and training.`²²⁸ However, an editorial of *The African Businessman* criticized the event for its lack of diversity. For although government officials and the white business community were well represented, very few African businessmen attended.²²⁹

Private firms also joined government efforts to train African traders in business skills. For example, the BSAC invited 20 African traders attending a course on business management at Goromonzi Secondary School on a tour of the Company`s Citrus Estate in Mazowe.²³⁰ Speaking during the tour, the Managing Director of the BSAC, E. Newsom said `I should also

²²³ Summers, `Educational Controversies`, 3-25.

²²⁴ *The African Businessman*, `To all African Businessmen in Rural Areas: Private Study Course`, 3 June 1961.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, `Government to Award Certificates and Badges to Master Businessmen`, 10 June 1961.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, `African Businessmen Receive Awards`, 7 October 1961.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, `African Businessmen are at a Great Disadvantage`, 14 October 1961.

²²⁸ *Ibid*.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, `Editorial: Poor Public Relations`, 14 October 1961.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, `Business Gossip`, 12 May 1961.

like to compliment the government on its enterprise in starting the courses of instruction for Rural African Businessmen as this is a very great step forward in helping Africans manage successfully their own business affairs.²³¹ ACCOR also organized tours for African traders ‘designed to explain the complexity of the business world to African storekeepers and traders and give them an insight into manufacturing, transport, and distributive organizations.’²³² The chairman of HATA liked the idea pointing out that:

It is a very good idea if ACCORN could organize such things to enlighten business people on simple methods of bookkeeping, not much of business philosophy. If men and women could be taught what things to buy and where to buy them according to their demands, this is a brilliant idea.²³³

Other companies, like the Shell Company, worked with the NRT to come up with a film on bookkeeping for African traders. The film would augment the state’s training scheme for African traders discussed above.²³⁴ Describing the film, the Chief Clerk of the NRT, A. C. Scarce, said ‘in order to get a message to the African traders a special form has been devised in the form of a film which will be shown in the tribal areas. The film was devised to fill the gap in the African businessmen’s knowledge.’²³⁵ The literature on film and the cinema in colonial Africa shows how this was a powerful media of colonial propaganda.²³⁶ Other white businesses, apart from the BSAC and the Shell Company, invested in various ways in the training of African traders. These included the ALDC and the Rhodesian Institute of Management. As chapter four shows, the politics of racial partnership during the federal period meant that white businesses were more than eager to associate with African development.

The other form of training for African traders took the form of sponsored visits to the USA and the United Kingdom. For instance, the American consul in Southern Rhodesia sponsored Christopher Chinhamora’s, a Highfield business person, trip to the United States to tour and learn from African American businesses. Commenting on the trip, *The African Businessman* said, ‘when Mr. Chinhamora arrives in New York, a programme will be drawn which will take him to the various parts of the United States, including the Southern States of America where

²³¹ *Ibid*, ‘Company Director Praises Courses for African Businessmen’, 20 May 1961.

²³² *Ibid*, ‘Tours for African Businessmen?’ 17 March 1962.

²³³ *Ibid*.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, ‘The Training Scheme for Rural Businessmen’, 3 March 1962.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, ‘Training Scheme for Businessmen’, 14 April 1962.

²³⁶ For more on this see, K. Chikozho, ‘A post-colonial reading of the Central African Film Unit’s (CAFU) comical films: colonialists and African perspectives’, *African Identities*, 16, 1, (2018), 103-115.

Negroes have made great progress in business.’²³⁷ On his return from the USA, Chinhamora reported he had toured ‘Super Markets, Giant Food Markets, Farmers Markets, Restaurants, and Manufacturers of various foodstuffs’ and expressed his admiration of African American businesses in the South.²³⁸ *The African Businessman* urged the Americans ‘to invite other African businessmen in all the territories of the federation to go on such tours.’²³⁹ Other African traders, like Kenneth Marechera, funded their private trips overseas. Marechera visited Britain with the purpose of ‘observing the business methods and practices there.’²⁴⁰ The American Consul also funded Winer’s, the American specialist in small businesses’ visit to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.²⁴¹ The USA was interested in courting prominent Africans in the context of the ongoing cold war with Russia and China. Scarnecchia has shown that the American consul in Southern Rhodesia was involved in funding African nationalists and trade unionists.²⁴² Moreover, as this example shows, American interests extended to African traders.

One of the objectives of ZABU, apart from those discussed in an earlier section, was to help in the education of African entrepreneurs. That the organisation prioritized the teaching of business skills was hardly surprising given some of the stakeholders, such as the ALDC and the Rhodesian Institute of Management, involved in the formation of the business association. The ALDC encouraged African traders to keep proper books of accounts and demanded these books before giving loans. The Chairman of ZABU, Nathan Shamuyarira, lectured in the Adult Education Department of the University College of Rhodesia and had stakes in helping with the teaching of business methods to African traders. Consequently, Kirkpatrick invited several firms such as the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Tobacco Co, Mining Companies, Castle Brewery, and the African Pharmaceuticals, among others. Some of these firms were already offering parallel programmes targeting the training of African traders. In addition to this, a college, the Citizenship College offered ‘a one month course on business management’ at the cost of £25.²⁴³ In an editorial outburst, *The African Businessman* bemoaned the haphazard manner in which the government and white business were falling over each in trying to teach African traders business skills. It succinctly pointed out that:

²³⁷ *The African Businessmen*, ‘Businessmen go Overseas’, 22 July 1961.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, ‘Chinhamora Returns from United States’, 7 October 1961.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Congratulations’, 22 July 1961.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Businessmen go Overseas’, 22 July 1961.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, ‘Cooperative Buying Catching on among African Businessmen’, 28 October 1961

²⁴² Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*, 100.

²⁴³ *The African Businessmen*, ‘African Businessmen Training Urged at Traders Conference’, 23 March 1963.

No one has ever thought it necessary to go to the businessman and find out whether he wants to be educated at all. And if he does, what exactly he would want tuition in. It would appear to be a simple matter for ordinary folk – but of course, learned educationists are not simple folk. No one has even dreamed of the necessity to co-ordinate all these courses that are being offered but again, such a thing would be too simple for educationists. Educationalists my foot!²⁴⁴

At the meeting organized by Kirkpatrick, it was resolved that ‘the Ranche House should be the focal point of training African businessmen and that as much as possible, while not preventing anybody from running any course they wanted, where they wanted, the courses should be held at the Ranche House.’²⁴⁵

The ALDC and ZABU, in collaboration with the colony’s tertiary institutions, which included the University College of Rhodesia, the Ranche House, and the Central African Correspondence College developed two, two-week pilot courses for June 1963. The course would cost £30²⁴⁶ and included instructions in ‘Chain of Distribution of Goods, buying ... receipts of goods ... adding machines and the stock book.’²⁴⁷ Consequently, the training offered by the Ranche House became the first structured programme for the teaching of business skills to African traders running parallel to the training scheme offered by the NRT discussed above.

The African Businessman shared with the colonial state the idea that Africans lacked in modern business skills needed in running a successful business enterprise. As such, the paper took it upon itself to fill in this void by providing information designed to teach Africans business skills. The editorials of the paper, written by Elias Rusike, urged African traders to participate in government training programmes discussed above. The paper also gave generous space to white capital initiatives to train African traders. When ZABU, through its well-wishers, came up with its training scheme centered on the Ranche House College, it was widely advertised by the paper. Besides, *The African Businessman* also widely advertised ZABU’s training scheme centered on the Ranche House College. Apart from encouraging African traders to participate in these state and private training schemes, *The African Businessman* also carried a series of articles authored by guest writers on business management. The long running series,

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Educating the African Businessman’, 6 April 1963.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, ‘African Businessmen’s Educational Needs Discussed: Co-ordinating Committee formed’, 6 April 1963.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, ‘Letter to the Editor: H. G. Pardy, Principal, Ranche House College’, 11 May 1963.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, ‘Ranche House College Enters It’s Second Phase of Training’, 15 June 1963.

penned by F. Bray in 1961 and from 1962 by Edison Sithole, centered on “tips on how to expand a business.” After the call by ZABU and the ALDC for the training of African traders, the paper introduced the “Trader Talks” in 1963. The “tips on how to expand a business” and “trader talks” series carried information on buying, selling, pricing, investing, and bookkeeping, among other things. Other articles, like the one that appeared in the paper’s weekly of 8 July and written by Hilary Preston, focused on how the African trader can attract the African housewife to his store and wares.²⁴⁸ Describing one of these articles, the editor of *The African Businessman* said, ‘we trust that our readers will not only “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest” Mr. Bray’s tips but will also apply them in the administration of their businesses.’²⁴⁹

Perhaps the most infamous of these articles targeting African traders was the “Shoko Shoko” series. Penned by an anonymous white writer, going by the moniker Shingi Shingi, the series centered on the fictional character of an African businessman called Shoko Shoko. The plot of “Shoko Shoko” followed along the lines of similar fictional characters that appeared in *The African Daily News* such as “The Eccentric Magaisa and “Zinwambanje, the Opium Drinker.”²⁵⁰ The Article played on the trope of the African businessman and in the manner in which NC imagined them. Describing Shoko Shoko, Shingi Shingi said,

Mr. Shoko Shoko, himself, is a very big man with plenty of money and plenty of fat on his big body. He has a big head, big eyes, big nose, big mouth and big feet, (I think his shoes are size eleventeen) and big everything. Consequently, he has a big American car, a big big shop, a big house, and a big wife. Everything about Mr. Shoko Shoko is Big, and he talks big too as a really big businessman should.²⁵¹

In addition to his largess, the African businessman did not pay his creditors, did not keep books of account, and overspent. Shoko Shoko also had several wives. One of his wives was aptly named Gore-wife, a play on the idea that he married a new wife every year.

Additionally, the African businessman was interested mostly in his social standing in his community. The caricature of Shoko Shoko ties in well with the way that NCs imagined

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, ‘The African Businessman and Women Customers’, 8 July 1961.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, ‘Editorial: Tips on How to Expand a Business’, 3 June 1961.

²⁵⁰ S. Dombo, ‘Daily Struggles: Private Print Media, the state, and Democratic Governance in Zimbabwe in the Case of the African Daily News (1956-1964) and the Daily News (1999-2003)’, (PhD Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2014.)

²⁵¹ *The African Businessmen*, ‘Shoko Shoko Deals with his Creditors’, 14 April 1961.

African traders in their correspondences and annual reports. In 1952, for example, the CNC described Africans interested in business as chasing after nothing more than a comfortable life and social prestige.²⁵² These articles aimed, as did similar stories that appeared in *The African Daily News*, to educate African traders on how not to run a business. The Shoko Shoko story is important because his characterization became part of the myth of who and what made up an African trader in colonial Zimbabwe. Wild and West seem to fall for this in their discussion of the business culture of African traders in colonial Zimbabwe.²⁵³

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the colonial state's stated policy of racial partnership, policy remained marred by contradictions and ambiguity. As the chapter demonstrated, the UFP promised to amend the LAA for the benefit of the African middle class but in the end, failed to deliver because of political considerations. While African entrepreneurs did gain ground during this period, these were half measures reluctantly given. Thus, this work speaks to some of the literature on the federal period that concluded that racial partnership was half-hearted and no more than political rhetoric.²⁵⁴ More importantly, the Rhodesian front, which took over after 1963, was less sympathetic to the plight of African entrepreneurs. The chapter discussed several themes explicitly tied to the experiences of African traders during the federal period. It showed that the experiences of African traders around debates on forming an indigenous bank were similar to those of Africans in other parts of colonial Africa. As the first financial firm to offer credit to Africans, the ALDC treaded on uncharted terrain. In the end, its blend of paternalism and modernization approaches in financing African entrepreneurs. The firm eventually stopped financing African entrepreneurs because of the credit risk that they carried. Nonetheless, the firm offered a unique opportunity to study the experiences of African traders with formal channels of credit. What this shows is that Africans faced a myriad of challenges, not least booking skills that forced them to default on their debt. The federal period was a high point in the collective experiences of African traders. The period witnessed the establishment of several cooperative societies, economic buying groups, and friendly societies. In the end,

²⁵² Annual Report of the CNC for the year 1952.

²⁵³ Wild, *Profit not for Profit's Sake*.

²⁵⁴ Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI, 1940 – 1965,' in Raftopoulos and Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe*.

these cooperative projects collapsed because of an uncertain legal environment and the unavailability of capital.

Besides, the period also witnessed the development of proto business associations culminating in the formation of ZABU at the beginning of 1963. As the chapter demonstrates, ideas around this movement borrowed from the potent nationalism of the time but at the same time sought to accommodate colonial ideas of community development. Furthermore, the period covered by this chapter saw colonial interventions aimed at 'educating the African businessmen.' The training scheme for African entrepreneurs, as the chapter argued, leaned heavily to other colonial policies seen in African agriculture. In an environment dominated by the rhetoric around racial partnership, white businesses scrambled with their programmes for the training of African traders. What this frenzy missed is that the problems facing African traders were not skilled related but structural. Consequently, the training schemes for African traders became mere red hearing, like other colonial policies, for the real problems facing African commerce.

Chapter Five: African Entrepreneurship under the UDI period, 1965 to 1979

Introduction

The chapter discusses African entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia between the years 1965 and 1979. It examines this within the context of the colonial policy of Community Development (1962 – 1979) and settler anxieties about decolonization during the 1970s.¹ The UDI period, like the other epochs in Southern Rhodesian history, witnessed the continuation of policy ambiguity and contradictions that impeded the development of African commerce. During this time, there was a roll-out of CD as the flagship policy of state intervention in the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). UDI ‘development’ policies targeted at the TTLs such as the Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR) created contradictions in state interventions directed at African traders. Apart from Tilcor, other state and private interventions aimed at funding and creating space for African traders. Africans responded to these state interventions through business associations, such as the Rhodesian African Chamber of Commerce (RACC) and the African Business Promotion Association (ABPA). RACC focused its energies on challenging the position of Tilcor in the TTLs. Its sister organisation, the ABPA, aimed at taking advantage of the political dispensation ushered in by Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The chapter concludes by discussing how the liberation war and the state’s response to it disrupted the activities of African traders in the TTLs. Through oral narratives, the chapter shows that African traders in the rural became targets from both state and guerrilla agents. The result was state sanctioned closure of businesses and looting and murder from guerrilla fighters. The chapter advances three central arguments. Firstly, it contends that the UDI’s flagship policy of CD continued to undermine the position of African traders in the African Reserves. Secondly, when it failed because of the rise in the decolonisation discourse, the colonial state attempted to incorporate African traders during the late 1970s. Lastly, although most African traders opposed CD, some of them attempted to take advantage of decolonisation to gain commercial space for themselves.

¹ I am aware of the contemporary theoretical undertones that the term decolonization carries, however I use the term in a very conservative way to describe the process leading to the end of formal colonialism in Southern Rhodesia during the 1970s.

Community Development and African Traders

The year 1962 marked a watershed in state intervention methods in the African reserves. It became clear to most colonial officials involved with the NAD that the NLHA, enacted a decade earlier, had failed in its objectives. If anything, it had helped recruit rural Africans for the African nationalist cause. CD sought to achieve the same goals but through minimum state intervention.² The policy aimed at devolving responsibility for development decisions to Africans through their traditional authorities. Already in 1957, the colonial state had passed the African Councils Act, whose goal was the establishment of local authorities, akin to the Urban Advisory Boards in the Townships, in the African reserves.³ The federal government had envisaged the councils as a panacea to African involvement with the growing nationalist movement.⁴ The Ian Smith regime inherited these ideas as soon as they came into government and adapted them to their own political needs targeted towards perpetuating settler hegemony.⁵ The policy found backing in pieces of legislation such as the Land Trust Lands Act (1967) and the African Law and Tribal Courts Act (1969), culminating in the Land Tenure Act (1969).⁶

Consequently, CD and the apparatus of legislation attached to it gave limited power to Chiefs and African councils in the awarding of lease sites and bottle store licenses in the TTLs. More importantly, as William Munro, Michael Bratton, and Gloria Passmore argue, CD created an alliance of convenience between traditional authorities and the colonial state. Consequently, the Smith regime was able to deflect calls for freehold title by African traders through African chiefs. Demands for freehold title by African entrepreneurs, as this chapter shows, created conflict between traditional authorities and African traders.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as the preceding chapters show, African traders had agitated for the right to title for the business sites they operated.⁷ With the backlash that followed the

² Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, 143.

³ Bratton, 'Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia', 57.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, 143.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁷ In the African townships, the white-run urban authorities tried to appease African demands with half-hearted measures that gave some form of title to some African entrepreneurs. In the African reserves, the Welensky government invoked the LAA to Africans interested in acquiring title deeds arguing that the law 'protected' African rights to land.

implementation of the NLHA, an ancillary to the LAA, the UDI government sought to find more subtle ways of enforcing the LAA through the Land Trust Lands Act (1967) and the African Law and Tribal Courts Act (1969). In 1971, the African Member of Parliament (MP) for Mpopoma, L. J. Mahlangu, asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, Lance Smith, on ‘the general policy of his Ministry in considering whether or not trading sites to non-tribesmen in Tribal Trust Land.’⁸ Smith responded that the government considered ‘the best interests of the people of the area and whether the Tribal Authority recommends the issue of such leases.’⁹ In this way, the UDI government was able to deflect its responsibility to provide land rights to African traders in the TTLs to ‘tribal authorities.’

A convenient alliance also emerged between African legislators in the Rhodesian Parliament and African traders in challenging the UDI state over freehold title for African traders. The African MPs used the legislature to contest the state’s position on freehold title in the TTLs throughout the 1970s. In pitching the motion for title deeds for African entrepreneurs, Mahlangu argued that title would ‘give a stake to a businessman in the tribal areas, to give him the opportunity to invest his money which will be secured. As it will be noted, the present set up of the state of affairs does not give any security to a man who would like to invest in the Tribal Trust Land.’¹⁰ In arguing the motion, the legislator cited minutes from the Gwanda African Chamber of Commerce (GACA) and a correspondence between a District Commissioner (DC) and a solicitor representing an African trader. In addition to this, Mahlangu also gave an example of an African trader who had come into conflict with an African Chief in Tjolutjo over a business site. Reading minutes from GACA, which represented African business interests in Gwanda, Essexvale, Matopo, and Kezi, Mahlangu said the traders were finding it difficult to obtain credit without title deeds. Furthermore, the business association pointed to the lack of security and permanency in the TTL lease since ‘the tribal chief, the district commissioner, and provincial commissioner and the Minister can ask the trader to move from premises without any form of compensation.’¹¹ In this way, African traders were able to use their proximity to the colonial state, through African legislators, to demand title and to contest the arbitrary authority of African chiefs over lease sites in the TTLs.

⁸ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Oral Answers: Leases: Tribal Trust Lands, Col. 2129, 1971.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Motion: Title Deeds, Col. 7 – 8, (1974).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

CD and its tool of traditional authorities were anathemas to the individualism that African traders represented through their demand for title deeds. Mahlangu presented this conflict clearly in the example he gave, during a parliamentary session, of an African trader who came into conflict with an African Chief in the Tjolotjo District. The trader had built a store on a trading site in the district, but when he wanted to sell the investment, he came against resistance from the traditional authority that ‘did not approve of the man who wanted to take over this business, so the entire building just stood there without being bought by somebody.’¹² When some African traders attempted to appeal against the arbitrariness of the local chiefs, the District Commissioners usually responded that they ‘cannot interfere in the internal affairs of the tribal authority with the businessman.’¹³ Mahlangu implored the state to give African traders title and ‘not leave a highly educated man, a man of finance, at the mercy of the ignorant man.’¹⁴ Other African legislators such as Mlingo, L. Dewa, A. Mungate, R. Sadomba, and T. Zawaira endorsed Mahlangu’s motion. These parliamentarians rightly connected the failure of most African enterprises as rooted in their lack of security of tenure. The conversations discussed above recast the roles of African legislators within the nationalist movement, where nationalist literature portrays them as collaborators of the colonial state. Nevertheless, the literature on CD and rural administration during this period points to the fact that ‘the turn to chiefs was intended to distance the state from its coercive role and to legitimize authority over people and land in customary guise.’¹⁵

Moreover, some African chiefs savored the power and influence that came with Community Development. Chiefs often saw African traders, operating outside the confines of communal cooperation, as a threat to their power. Contributing to the motion on title deeds in parliament, the MP for Matojeni constituency, L. Dewa, protested the arbitrary authority that Chiefs possessed in deciding trading site applications. The African MP pointed out that ‘this causes difficulties in many ways when the chief for several reasons – probably personal reasons – might not accept that Mr. So-and-so should be allowed to establish a business in that particular place.’¹⁶ African traders and legislators also accused the chiefs of demanding bribes in

¹² *ibid.*, Col. 9 – 10, 2 October 1974.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*, Col. 12, 2 October 1974.

¹⁵ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 63.

¹⁶ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Motion: Title Deeds, Col. 15 – 16, 2 October 1974.

exchange of trading sites while the Ministry of Internal Affairs turned a blind eye as happened in an example given by the MP for Matojeni:

I know of a case where a man wanted to operate a general dealers shop, and then the chief put a condition that he must pay \$30 before he would process his form. This gentleman tried to appeal to the higher authorities than the Chief, and he was told, “Well, you have to comply with what the chief requires you to do, I cannot interfere in a deal between you and the chief.”¹⁷

A. Mungate, the MP for Zambesi, concurred with Dewa stating that ‘You have to give the chief some money or carry some beer to give him while discussing. Then the chief must be drinking some beer that you have brought, and then perhaps you can discuss this matter.’¹⁸ CD allowed African chiefs to extend their lines of patronage and capital accumulation through state authority. Consequently, African chiefs could and did extract revenue and benefits from trading sites in their districts. This made chiefs convenient allies of the state in undermining African entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia during this time.

District Commissioner (DCs) also used the sites to force African traders to cooperate with the state’s conservation efforts in the TTLs. Although CD was meant to redress the coercive aspects of the NLHA, DCs continued to act arbitrarily in respect of trading sites. Speaking on this, Zawaira, the legislator for Kunyasi cited a letter from the DC for Belingwe that read:

I again spoke to all the Belingwe chiefs about the matter. They disagree with the requirement of applicants for leases having to first have their contours up to standard before this office deals with their applications. All of them represented that they wanted the practice to continue, their reason being that if a man was privileged to be given a lease, then it was only right and proper that any landlord who was already using the Tribal Trust Land should be properly conserved.¹⁹

As a result of the role DCs, in alliance with the chiefs, played in denying Africans trading sites and in the state’s refusal to provide African traders with security of tenure, business associations such as the Ben Muccheche led Rhodesia African Chamber of Commerce (RACC) launched an attack on both CD and African chiefs.²⁰ For example, in May of 1975, RACC refused an invitation to attend a meeting of the Council of Chiefs ‘to discuss the question of title in the Tribal Trust Lands.’²¹ RACC was the immediate successor of the Zimbabwe African

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Col. 25 – 26, 2 October 1974.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Col. 36, 2 October 1974.

²⁰ Ben Muccheche belongs to the second generation of African entrepreneur leadership who rose to prominence during the 1970s. He owned a transport company with a large fleet of businesses.

²¹ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Mussett Attacks African Trade Chamber for Snubbing Chiefs’, 29 May 1975

Chamber of Commerce discussed in chapter four. Responding to the ‘snub,’ the Minister of Internal Affairs, Jack Mussett, ranted, ‘well, I am not prepared to see the council of chiefs treated so disrespectfully. They are the leaders of the tribal people of Rhodesia.’²² The president of the Council Chiefs, Senator Chirau, agreed with Mussett stating that ‘the chamber’s action was a deliberate insult to the chiefs. Title is contrary to African custom and has, therefore, always been opposed by chiefs.’²³ Traditionally, the institution of the Chief allied itself with the colonial state. Under Community Development, chiefs enjoyed perks that included a salary hence Chirau’s spirited defense of communal ownership of land.²⁴

The sale of liquor in the TTLs represented another arena of conflict between African traders and traditional authorities. African councils, under the arm of the DC, ran liquor outlets in the TTLs modelled along African beerhalls in the urban areas. Like in the African townships of Southern Rhodesia’s major urban areas, the revenues from the sale of liquor went to the provision of social amenities in the African council’s area of jurisdiction. Evidence from the minutes of the Bushu African Council in Mashonaland Central during the 1970s reveals that the dynamics around the allocation of bottle store licences to African traders were often complicated and changed over time. In 1972, the African Council rejected an African trader’s application to establish a bottle store in the district. Some of the reasons given for the refusal were that ‘the bar would affect the profits being made at the council’s already existing beer garden at Chakonde.’²⁵ Additionally, the African Council had planned ‘to establish a similar bar in the area, and the Liquor Licensing Board might disapprove their application, the reason being that a bar already exists in your area and so you cannot build another.’²⁶

Whenever opportunity availed itself, African legislators questioned the authority of traditional authorities through African Councils to deny African traders the chance to run bottle stores in the TTLs. In 1973, African legislators T. T. Zawaira and J. B. Hove of Kunyasi and Pioneer constituencies asked the MIA, Lance Smith, on the Ministry’s position on African Councils

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, 161 – 62.

²⁵ NAZ, S3706/1, Minutes of the 15th Meeting of the Bushu African Council, 9 May 1972.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

which monopolized the liquor business in their districts. As highlighted above, Smith's response cited the cliché on the autonomy of traditional chiefs to make their by-laws:

There may be cases where councils have decided that they do not wish to allow bottle stores in their area ... but I must advise hon. Members that it is not our deliberate wish to interfere with the decisions of councils, which are the representatives of the local people.²⁷

During another debate on African beer, the same year, Lance Smith, put it more bluntly stating that, 'In view of the fact that large sums of money accrue to African councils in tribal areas from the sale of African beer, it is not considered wise to allow private enterprise to sell African beer in these areas.'²⁸ As chapter four shows the colonial state and the local authorities tried to hold on to their monopoly in the sale of African beer and this continued even under the UDI's CD.

The Muccheche-led RACC debated a wide range of subjects affecting their relationship with African chiefs in the TTLs at a meeting held in September of 1974. They resolved that African traders had to establish relationships with chiefs sympathetic to their plight, noting that 'the development of the TTLs will always depend on the enlightenment of the chief in the district. There were forward-looking chiefs in some areas, with the opposite in others.'²⁹ Some of the delegates at the meeting felt that RACC should recruit some chiefs to assist in appealing to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to review its increase in lease fees in 1974.³⁰ An African trader attending a RACC meeting held in September of 1974 revealed 'that some chiefs in the Tribal Trust Lands had not been told or consulted when the Land Board decided to increase lease fees by more than 250 percent.'³¹ Perhaps more importantly, the lease fee increase revealed that African chiefs did not possess any significant say under CD since decisions that mattered over these spaces sometimes occurred without their knowledge. The Ministry of Internal Affairs retained authority over development planning of the TTLs in its hands, and revenues collected from lease sites went to the state and not the African councils. In summation, although chiefs sided with the colonial state in undermining African traders, they were never involved in the

²⁷ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Oral Questions: African Councils, Col. 1939 – 1940, 1973.

²⁸ *Ibid*, Oral Questions: African Beer, Col. 505 – 506, 1973.

²⁹ *Moto*, 'Some Chiefs not told of increase in lease fees – Delegate', 21 September 1974.

³⁰ *The Sunday Mail*, 'Rent Hike in TTLs', 25 August 1974.

³¹ *Moto*, 'Some Chiefs not told of increase in lease fees – Delegate', 21 September 1974.

state's decision making process. As a result, the interests of chiefs and those of traders sometimes coalesced as the above example demonstrates.

Tilcor's Interventionist Programmes in the Tribal Trust Lands: African Traders' Opposition to Tiltrade

While CD managed to divert attention from the state over trading sites and land title, the Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation (TILCOR) came into direct conflict with African traders in the TTLs during the period under examination. Established in 1968 through an Act of Parliament, TILCOR was part of statutory interventions that formed part of the bedrock of Community Development.³² The Smith regime modelled TILCOR along South Africa's Bantu Investment Corporation.³³ The state hoped that TILCOR, working hand, and glove with CD would achieve where the NLHA had failed in 'developing' the TTLs and in halting the surge in African nationalist activity and by curbing the influx of Africans into the urban areas. TILCOR ran for sixteen odd years before making way to the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) under unceremonious circumstances.

During this period, TILCOR was under the leadership of Warwick Bailey. Bailey was a direct successor to other colonial officials at the centre of African development over the years, which included Emory Alvord and Arthur Pendered.³⁴ In some ways, Bailey was like Colin Kirkpatrick of the African Loan and Development Company that financed African traders and farmers during the 1960s. Bailey, like Alvord, Pendered, and Kirkpatrick, was a firm believer in racial patronage and colonial interventionist programmes targeting the African community. At the helm of TILCOR, Bailey piloted several agricultural, industrial, and commercial enterprises in the TTLs. These projects included the Katiyo Tea Estate, Chisumbanje Development Company, Umtali Leather, Berkfield Consolidated, The Market, John Rowett

³² For more on this see, Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*.

³³ For more on the workings of the Bantu Investment Corporation and African traders see L. Bank, 'Between Traders and Tribalists: Implosion and the Politics of Disjuncture in a South African Homeland', *African Affairs*, 93, 370 (1994), 75-98.

³⁴ Alvord was an American Agriculturist influential in pioneering state interventionist programmes in African agriculture during the 1930s. Pendered was the Secretary to the Godlonton Commission discussed in chapter two. He was also the undersecretary of the NMPB in the NAD and was influential in the implementation of the NLHA.

and Sons, and TILTRADE, among others. These projects were at the center of the Growth Point programme, the flagship policy of TICLOR, and the colonial state in the TTLs.³⁵

The Growth Point policy aimed at creating centres of economic activity that would kick start development in the TTLs. Its three pilot industrial complexes, located at Chisumbanje, Zimunya, and Seki, were to lead the way for the establishment of similar projects across the TTLs. In its 1971 annual report, TILCOR stated that its Growth Point policy aimed at ‘the promotion of a variety of commercial enterprises with emphasis on sophisticated trading facilities.’³⁶ They also pointed out that they ‘endeavored to stimulate and bring about the establishment of at least one major commercial centre in each of the TTLs of the country.’³⁷ The state, through TILCOR, tipped Seki to become the next industrial hub in the TTLs. A South African daily held that,

Seki is to be a city in its own right serving as a residential area for many of Salisbury’s African workers, but with its own modern and attractive business center. Its industrial area is already well developed as Tilcor has succeeded in attracting factories worth several million dollars.³⁸

The purpose of TILCOR and its projects was neither for African traders nor for Africans living in the TTLs. As scholars such as Alexander and Munro reveal, the use of TILCOR and Community Developed served the political survival of the Rhodesian Front. Enterprises like the Seki helped to halt African demands for the abolishment of the draconian LAA. It is in this context that the comments by the Minister of Local Government and Housing William Irvine to the *Rhodesia Herald* are revealing ‘the government wants to make as attractive as possible for Africans to live and work in the Tribal Trust Lands.’³⁹ More explicitly, the state hoped that TILCOR would halt the surge in nationalist feeling and the growing support for the liberation war among Africans in the TTLs. To that end, *Moto* reported in June of 1973 that the ‘government is to spend more than \$4m next year on development in the northern border areas where Security Forces have been clashing with “terrorists” ... shops and other businesses would be established, and it was hoped that Africans will open such businesses.’⁴⁰

³⁵ *The African Times*, ‘New Tribal Corporation goes to Work’, 12 March 1969.

³⁶ TILCOR, Annual Report, 1971.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ NAZ, MS/308/19/2, African Business Promotion Association, 1970s, *FM*, ‘Industrial Growth of an African City’, 26 October 1973.

³⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘More Appeal in TTLs Aim’, 22 November 1973.

⁴⁰ *Moto*, ‘Millions set aside for Development of Boarder Areas’, 2 June 1973.

Despite these grand schemes, there existed an uneasy relationship between the objectives of TILCOR and those of Community Development. These contradictions ultimately undermined the position of African traders in the TTLs. While CD invoked ideas of African tradition – however skewed, TILCOR sought to bring to the TTLs private enterprise. As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the relationship between African traders and chiefs was acrimonious. Similarly, African traders felt that TILCOR was not doing enough to support Africans in business. There was a great deal of confusion on how TILCOR would assist African traders. Would Africans hold shares in TILCOR? Would African traders get loans and other extension services from the corporation? African legislators tried to get answers to some of these questions from the Minister of Ministry of Internal Affairs throughout the time that TILCOR existed. The answers they elicited were often vague. On funding African entrepreneurs, Lance Smith, the Minister of Internal Affairs, told Parliament during an oral questions session that:

Forty applications for financial assistance have been received by the Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation from African businessmen. Financial assistance has been granted to one applicant, 30 applicants were rejected after full investigations into the potential viability of the projects submitted, and nine applications are being investigated.⁴¹

As with other schemes to fund African traders during the colonial period, applicants usually failed because of perceived weak business models. The colonial state and other private players often used business literacy to exclude Africans from funding opportunities.⁴² In response to A. T. Mungate's question on whether Africans could hold shares with TILCOR, the Minister of Internal Affairs gave a red herring answer that 'there is nothing to prevent Africans, who wish to do so, from owning shareholdings in a number of the companies already located there and with whom Tilcor is either associated or involved.'⁴³

Among the several TILCOR projects in the TTLs, Tiltrade affected and irked African traders mostly. Established by TILCOR in 1971, Tiltrade was a large retail chain store that ran supermarkets in the TTLs. The colonial state had also long harbored the idea of building a retail store in the TTLs.⁴⁴ By the 1970s, this colonial patronage had not waned and showed in the concept behind TILCOR and its subsidiary Tiltrade. The retail chain had the financial backing

⁴¹ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Oral Questions: Tribal Trust Land Development Corporation Act Col 1954, 1971.

⁴² See Chapter four.

⁴³ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Oral Questions: TILCOR, Col. 300, 1972.

⁴⁴ The colonial state also debated this idea during the 1940s as chapter two shows.

of the state through TILCOR and significant white capital that included Rhodesian Breweries, David Whitehead, and Heinrich Chibuku.⁴⁵ All three companies were involved with the African market. David Whitehead was a textile firm that bought cotton from African farmers while Heinrich Chibuku manufactured African beer. TILCOR claimed that African traders and Africans, in general, could purchase and invest in Tiltrade and that 10 000 extra shares were available for interested African investors.⁴⁶ By the end of 1972, Tiltrade had opened two supermarkets in Chisumbanje and Mutema worth over \$250000.⁴⁷ The investment constituted a substantial capital investment compared to the small general dealer stores synonymous with African traders in the TTLs. Describing Tiltrade, the chairman of Tilcor, Bailey, stated, 'its aim was the promotion of well-managed trading facilities in the TTLs and training of African storekeepers, managers, and salesmen.'⁴⁸ Bailey's reference to 'well-managed trading facilities' and to 'training' of Africans invoked a common excuse used by white businesses to enter the African market.⁴⁹ More importantly, the state often pointed to the African inability to run a modern business to explain away the structural challenges facing African entrepreneurs.⁵⁰

Unhappy with the entry of a large retail chain into their traditional market, African traders were quick to launch an attack against TILCOR in general and Tiltrade in particular. In Chisumbanje, where Tiltrade set up its first supermarket, the Gazaland African Traders Association (GATA) protested against the retail chain and accused it of unfair trading practices by 'charging lower prices than they do for ploughshares, mineral drinks, and biscuits.'⁵¹ GATA's chairman, Dexter Chagwheta, complained that 'it is a startling change of Government policy that both white and black Rhodesians should be pushed out of the way by a government established big business.'⁵² The general dealer store was the archetype of most African managed enterprises during the colonial period. African enterprises had small stock and were underfinanced.

⁴⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Self-Made Tycoon Slams Tiltrade's TTL Role', 15 November 1975.

⁴⁶ *Sunday Mail*, 'Tiltrade Denies "Robbery" Claim', 24 December 1972.

⁴⁷ See *Sunday Mail*, 'Tiltrade Denies "Robbery" Claim', 24 December 1972 and *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Controversy over effect of Tiltrade on African Business', 22 July 1974.

⁴⁸ *Sunday Mail*, 'Tiltrade Denies "Robbery" Claim', 24 December 1972.

⁴⁹ See chapter two and four.

⁵⁰ See chapter four.

⁵¹ *Sunday Mail*, 'Tiltrade Denies "Robbery" Claim', 24 December 1972.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Consequently, it was no surprise that Africans traders and African business associations were up in arms against TILCOR and its subsidiary, Tiltrade. African traders were able to connect their experiences with Tiltrade with the contradictions inherent in colonial policy. Colonial officials had always defended the LAA as a legal instrument that protected African traders from European competition. Reflecting on this apparent contradiction, the chairman of GATA mused, ‘it is a startling change of Government policy that both white and black Rhodesians should be pushed out of the way by a government established big business’⁵³ while an African trader in one of Salisbury’s townships remarked, ‘Tiltrade is run by European banks and other interests. The money they make in the TTLs goes into white pockets. Why are there no African shareholders or Directors? How can Africans be trained if they are not allowed to participate.’⁵⁴

By 1975 Tiltrade had expanded its operations, and the Chairman of RACC Ben Mucheche remonstrated that the large chain store was ‘now running supermarkets in direct competition with the small African trader at many growth points, claiming that this is not helping advancement’ and suggested the store concentrate on wholesaling.⁵⁵

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Self-Made Tycoon Slams Tiltrade’s TTL Role’, 15 November 1975.



Source: TILCOR Annual Report (1974) – Africans queuing to buy in a Tiltrade Supermarket.

TILCOR's chairman Bailey responded to these protests by African entrepreneurs and business associations by accusing them of 'great distortion of the true position.'⁵⁶ He dismissed the accusation of unfair trading practices stating that 'if some traders find our prices are lower than theirs, it is either because they themselves are being exploited by wholesalers who charge inflated prices, or they are exploiting tribesmen by charging high prices.'⁵⁷ It is unclear why TILCOR collapsed during this time. However, TILCOR's ideas for the TTLs were affected by the intensification of the war by the end of the first half of the 1970s decade together with government disillusionment. In 1977, for instance, Bailey accused by government officials,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

African politicians, and traders of giving TILCOR ‘wishy-washy support’ and of letting Ian Smith down.⁵⁸ The years between 1977 and 1978 were inundated by press reports of TILCOR inefficiencies and misuse of money. For example, the *Rhodesia Financial Gazette* of December 1978 reported that the administration of ‘TILCOR was chaotic’⁵⁹ while another indicated that the state would ‘step in’ to curb losses in the corporation.⁶⁰ By 1979, the Agricultural Development Authority had replaced TILCOR, as the new state-interventionist platform in the TTLs.⁶¹ It was not just TILCOR that suffered from the war and state disillusionment; African traders in the TTLs fared just as poorly as the following section demonstrates.

Decolonization and African Entrepreneurship

The mid-1970s brought with it warming of attitudes by the UDI regime and white business towards African traders, at least for those in urban areas. Two critical political and economic events explain this development. By this time, political pressure from international isolation and the armed struggle was mounting on the Smith government to make concessions towards African nationalists. Closely related, the economy was also beginning to falter under the weight of economic sanctions and the increasing costs of the war.⁶² Consequently, white-owned businesses began to rethink African traders as an avenue into the African market. By 1972, the African population in urban areas and the TTLs numbered 5.5 million.⁶³ Prominent voices within the white business community, such as ACCOR, began to advocate for a relaxation of the racial, colonial legislation that disadvantaged African traders and stopped them from investing in African areas. Perhaps equally important, these circumstances brought African traders to the fore within the broader discourse on decolonization. African traders could form a buffer against socialism in the event of majority rule.

Consequently, white business together with the state created organisations, such as the Institute of Business (IOB), the Small Industries Advisory Services (SIAS), and the Financial Trust for Emergent Businessmen Company (FEBCO) to fund and provide consultancy to African

⁵⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Bailey slams wishy-washy Support’, 17 February 1977.

⁵⁹ *The Rhodesia Financial Gazette*, ‘Tilcor Chaotic’, 15 December 1978.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Tilcor Losses – State steps in’, 22 December 1978.

⁶¹ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Projects must Continue’, 1 February 1979.

⁶² Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 161.

⁶³ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘The Turning Point’, 2 July 1973.

enterprises. Besides, the Smith regime, the business community, and the African middle class started to push for African training in business management with the hope of creating managing directors out of Africans for its top firms. African traders, encouraged by these developments, organized themselves into business associations such as the African Business Promotion Association (ABPA) formed in 1977.

Despite the pretenses of CD and TILCOR, there was a growing interest among white businesses in the African market. The 1970s witnessed a marked interest from white and big business in the African market. During the federal period, white companies had shown interest in the African market. Some small white enterprises, discussed in Chapter four, entered into halfhearted partnerships with African traders aiming to break into the African urban market. Within the context of the economic slump of the UDI period, there was a renewed zest within the white business community in the African market.⁶⁴ At the RMTA congress, the Management Coordinator of the Central African Weaving Mills, Joe W. van den Bergh, spoke on the need for Rhodesian capital to tap into the African market, which constituted about '85 percent of the total Rhodesian African population.'⁶⁵ He stated that 'it is indeed every Rhodesian manufacturer's responsibility to motivate his fellow countryman to create this cash economy, that will, in turn, benefit the industrialist by creating a larger home market.'⁶⁶ Other companies, like the Rhodesian Breweries, David Whitehead, and Heinrich Chibuku, were already involved with the African market through Tiltrade, as the earlier section shows. By 1975, the *Rhodesia Herald* – the country's leading newspaper – carried occasional supplements aimed at demonstrating the potential of the TTLs as an investment destination. For example, the business section of the paper carried a supplement on the African market with pieces such as 'African business has its problems,' 'testing the buying pulse of TTLs,' 'agencies find out what will sell' and another titled 'Africans play a major role in Rhodesian economic expansion.'⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Evidence that white business went through a slump during the UDI is that two Bills aimed at assisting small white business were tabled in the Southern Rhodesia Parliament during the 1970s.

⁶⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'TTLs – Huge Market waits to be Tapped', 5 July 1973.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 'The African Market', 21 November 1975.

These surveys on the potential of the African market stressed the need to reform Southern Rhodesia's restrictive measures on business in the African areas. For instance, ACCOR established a research institution in 1969, The Tribal Areas of Rhodesia Research Foundation (TARRF), to also look into the 'development' of the TTLs.⁶⁸ Although the TARRF's objectives remained mundane and tailored along the state's Community Development, the foundation showed ACCOR's an implicit interest in the African market. Explicitly, the Secretary-General of ACCOR – James van Heerden – expressed to the Commission of Inquiry into Racial Discrimination that 'there should be a relaxation of the Land Tenure Act to allow Africans and Europeans to obtain title in business areas in the Tribal Trust Lands.'⁶⁹ Despite the calls from various quarters against the Land Tenure Act, traditional authorities, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and individuals like Warwick Bailey, who headed Tilcor, remained adamant in their defense of the UDI regime's land tenure regime. Bailey viewed 'the abolition of the Land Tenure Act with horror'⁷⁰ while Lance Smith thought that 'to open up the TTLs to the wider economy would destroy the balance in many African lives.'⁷¹ As established above, by the mid-1970s, Rhodesian businesses had begun to bear the brunt of the economic embargo and the intensification of the war and were looking for avenues to diversify their investments.

The 1970s were unprecedented in government and private efforts to fund and provide consultancy to small traders and African entrepreneurs. The political and economic realities of the 1970s decade made it imperative for some officials in the UDI regime and circles within the white business community to engage with African traders. This milieu within government and business imagined African traders as a gateway into the African market, as discussed above, and as a bulwark against the encroachment of socialist ideas. This engagement came through in the form of funding and advisory services. As such, the bodies established during this period became the direct successor of the ALDC established in 1962 and discussed in chapter four. The first of these institutions was the Small Industries Advisory Services (SIAS) established in 1972 in conjunction with the United Nations Development Fund.⁷² Other similar institutions established during this period included the Institute of Business (IOB) and the

⁶⁸ A. J. B. Hughes, 'The Tribal Areas of Rhodesia Research Foundation', *NADA: The Rhodesia Ministry of Internal Affairs Annual*, XI, 2 (1975).

⁶⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Freehold Titles Needed in the TTLs', 6 December 1975.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 'Land Tenure Act Essential – Bailey', 5 December 1975.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 'Africans Protected by TTLs', 6 December 1975.

⁷² Nyamunda, 'The State and Black Business Development', 50.

Financial Trust for Emergent Businessmen (FEBCO). At the same time, some African traders represented by business associations used the state's vulnerability to angle for tangible concessions. The African Business Promotion Association (ABPA), formed in 1977, pushed for the establishment of an African Bank.

Several players involved with big businesses such as the Association of Rhodesia Industries (ARnI), the Standards Association, and the Rhodesian Institute of Management – among others - contributed to the formation of SIAS. Its services were strictly advisory and targeted at the manufacturing sector.⁷³ Initially, SIAS did not explicitly assist African businesses, although it gravitated towards this role towards the end of the 1970s decade as the decolonization debate gathered momentum. The above notwithstanding, the state often pointed to SIAS as evidence of its assistance to African traders. A year into SIAS's formation, Mungate asked the Minister of Commerce and Industry on how they were aiding 'Africans engaged in small industries.'⁷⁴ It was because of the inadequacies of SIAS in assisting African traders that RACC, together with ACCOR, established the IOB in 1975.⁷⁵ Like SIAS, IOB focused on providing consultancy and skills training to African traders. The partnership between RACC and ACCOR reflects the anxieties of white traders to establish connections with African traders. On the board of the IOB sat prominent African traders such as Ben Muccheche and Solomon Tawengwa. Tawengwa was a business mogul who ran hotels and owned a fleet of buses.⁷⁶ FEBCO, established in August of 1978, was the last of the institutions set up during the 1970s for African traders. It was the initiative of the government through the Reserve Bank and the commercial banks in Southern Rhodesia.⁷⁷ Like the IOB, FEBCO had African traders such as Muccheche on its board of directors.⁷⁸ FEBCO was different from SIAS and IOB in that it provided funding for African traders through the country's commercial banks. Aware of the fact that most African traders lacked collateral, FEBCO offered a 'guarantee for half of the loss

⁷³ C. Shaw, 'The Nature and Scope of the Institute of Business, Small Industries Advisory Service', *Institute of Business Newsletter*, 1978.

⁷⁴ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Oral Questions: African Businessmen, Col 1796, 1973.

⁷⁵ *Institute of Business Newsletter*, 1975.

⁷⁶ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Economy must aid Masses', 30 November 1977.

⁷⁷ *Institute of Business Newsletter*, 1978.

⁷⁸ *Illustrated Life Rhodesia*, 'You can't go far without an Overdraft', 23 November 1978.

of interest and capital if the borrower defaults.’⁷⁹ In its first year, FEBCO assisted ‘38 small businessmen to gain bank loans of almost \$130000.’⁸⁰

SIAS, IOB, and FEBCO were similar in many ways, with their roles in African entrepreneurship overlapping. For one, FEBCO depended on the services of SIAS and IOB to assess applications submitted to it for funding.⁸¹ Like the ALDC of the early 1960s, SIAS and the IOB also focused on teaching business management skills to African traders. Consequently, the two offered very similar programmes that concentrated on bookkeeping skills in the form of seminars, workshops, and film. The IOB’s Newsletter, like the *African Businessman*, discussed in chapter four, carried material on business management that targeted African traders.⁸² Apart from its newsletter, ‘more than 800 people attended courses ... and the institute hopes to increase this to 2800 during this year’ in 1976.⁸³ In 1978, the IOB screened films that ‘covered the most pressing problems facing the small businessman today.’⁸⁴ Similarly, SIAS screened a film titled ‘the balance sheet barrier.’⁸⁵ Its plan for 1978 aimed at ‘mounting seminars of longer duration incorporating office organisation, basic business records, and salesmanship training.’⁸⁶ Overall, the SIAS, IOB, and FEBCO duplicated each other’s roles, and very few Africans received aid from the institutions since they all offered extension services. It was because of this that the Zimbabwe Rhodesia government attempted to bring the three bodies under one umbrella.⁸⁷ *The Rhodesia Herald* reported that:

There is support for the move from every sector of the economy, and government Ministers have also been urging progress. Delay in creating the new body could see support wane, or worse still, the dilution of finance and skills by the establishment of competing organisations. There are already several organisations in the field ... a new developmental finance corporation to assist black businessmen is being created by the Industrial Development Corporation.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘How FEBCO will process Applications’, August 1978.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Small Businessmen helped with \$130000 Loans’, 2 August 1979.

⁸¹ *Institute of Business Newsletter*, 1978.

⁸² *Ibid*.

⁸³ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘800 attend IOB Courses’, 12 January 1978.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, ‘Business Films’, 20 April 1978.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, ‘Profit and Loss in a Factory’, 13 April 1978.

⁸⁶ *Institute of Business Newsletter*, 1978.

⁸⁷ Zimbabwe Rhodesia came about in June of 1979 after Ian Smith’s Rhodesia Front entered into an agreement known as the Internal Settlement with moderate African nationalists represented by Abel Muzorewa’s United African National Congress (UNCA). The government lasted for 6 months.

⁸⁸ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Business Aid Clinic Breakthrough’, 4 October 1979.

The corporation had the support of not only the state but white business as well. The ‘business clinic,’⁸⁹ known as SEDCO, only came to fruition in post-colonial Zimbabwe and combined the services of the three institutions.⁹⁰ As argued earlier in the chapter, these institutions were an attempt to win over African traders at a time when the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia project needed a buy in.

The state’s approach towards African entrepreneurship during the 1970s reflects some of the contradictions that existed in Southern Rhodesia in an environment of decolonization. In essence, CD was an antithesis to the individualism that bodies like SIAS, IOB, and FEBCO espoused. While these institutions encouraged African traders to engage in good business practice, this was hardly enough for them to get credit without the necessary title. Equally, African traders often complained of structural racism in their efforts to get funding from commercial banks through FEBCO. For instance, the *Zimbabwe Times* carried a story in August of 1978 of an African trader who complained of racism from a bank. The trader alleged:

The development officer was expected to visit our office to discuss some of the facilities available to a newly registered company ... but when we mentioned the African name of the owner of our company, his attitude changed ... When the development officer failed to appear for the appointment, we phoned him, and he said that he had totally forgotten about it ... he then suggested that if we were still interested, we could come see him at his office.⁹¹

The trader gave this as an example of ‘shocking’ and covert racism that still permeated Southern Rhodesia and exposed claims of ‘racial harmony’ during the late 1970s. Consequently, in spite of the state’s efforts to win over African traders, racism in the awarding of credit facilities continued to undermine the state’s efforts.

By the late 1970s, it became apparent to most observers, not least the colonial state, that Southern Rhodesia was headed towards decolonization under black majority rule. It was at this time that various constituencies within the Southern Rhodesia body politic began to angle for space in the anticipated post-colonial state. For business, as shown in the preceding paragraphs, the panacea lay in giving African traders a share in the economy. Politically, the Rhodesian

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ For more on the nexus between SEDCO and Indigenisation in post-colonial see Nyamunda, ‘The State and Black Business Development’ and Ndakaripa, ‘State, Civil Society and the Politics of Economic Indigenisation in Zimbabwe, 1980 to 2016’.

⁹¹ *The Zimbabwe Times*, ‘Discrimination Alleged in Finance House’, 2 August 1978.

Front allied with moderate African nationalist movements to establish the abortive Internal Settlement of Zimbabwe Rhodesia during the last six months of 1979. The liberation movements of ZANU and ZAPU, on the back of a successful armed conflict and enjoying the support of the Organisation of African Unity, the Frontline States, and the world at large demanded complete independence under majority rule. The position of African traders within the decolonization debate during the late 1970s is curious. Sensing the anxieties of white capital and the colonial state with the impending majority rule, African traders started demanding their place in the sun. They did so through business associations such as RACC, the African Business Promotion Association (ABPA), and the Progress Trading Company (PTA) that emerged during the 1970s. African traders' ideas about decolonization articulated through these associations are essential in understanding their position in nationalist historiography during this period. It is instructive that RACC and the ABPA emerged during the 1970s after a long hiatus in African trader association activity following the demise of the ZABU in 1963.

The formation of RACC in 1973 was able to reignite business association activity among African traders in Southern Rhodesia.⁹² The organisation and operations of this association reflect 'agency in tight corners.' From the onset, RACC sought to avoid nationalist politics. Its name suggested an attempt at conforming to the UDI regime, unlike its predecessor ZABU, that openly invoked nationalist feelings. RACC recruited its leaders from within the business community who included Mucheche and Tawengwa. These individuals also sat on the boards of the companies of white capital and top banks. Tawengwa, for instance, sat on the board of the powerful mining magnate Rio Tinto while Mucheche was a director in the Reserve Bank. Furthermore, both Tawengwa and Mucheche were involved in the boards of the IOB and FEBCO.⁹³ Equally important, these men were not part of conventional nationalist politics. The unassuming appearance of RACC has led some commenters to dismiss African traders as collaborators of the colonial state. Unlike ZABU, which invoked nationalist sentiments through its name, RACC chose to 'conform' as its subtler name suggests. Despite its outward appearances of conformity, a closer look at the activities of RACC reveals that it was able to challenge colonial policies that disadvantaged African traders. From its early days, as the earlier sections show, RACC challenged both CD and the policies of TILCOR much to the ire

⁹² *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Africans set up Chamber of Commerce', 28 November 1973.

⁹³ *Illustrated Life Rhodesia*, 'You can't go far without an Overdraft', 23 November 1978.

of the MIA.⁹⁴ The business association understood that the problems bedeviling African entrepreneurship in Southern Rhodesia stemmed from pieces of legislation such as the LLA and the LTA that denied Africans freehold.

RACC used every available occasion to insist that the business association was apolitical.⁹⁵ However, the association's statements show an attempt to create space for African traders by taking advantage of the colonial fears of impending decolonization.⁹⁶ In 1977, for example, leaders of RACC such as Tawengwa warned that Southern Rhodesia would head towards socialism if white capital did not 'share the fruits of the system' with African traders.⁹⁷ At a seminar organized by the IOB, Tawengwa criticized the LTA stating that 'free enterprise should be free enterprise and should not be mixed with racial thinking.'⁹⁸ He also reiterated the same message later in the year while speaking at a meeting of the Umtali branch of the Rhodesia Institute of Management, Tawengwa stroked these fears stating that:

The free enterprise system would not succeed in Rhodesia if the responsibility was left in the hands of a few white people. As a black businessman, I say that the business community has a responsibility now to take positive steps to ensure that we involve as many people in the free enterprise system.⁹⁹

RACC played an essential role in articulating African trader grievances during this period. Their methods sought to find accommodation within the boundaries of the colonial state. When the UDI regime came face to face with decolonization, African business association leaders such as Tawengwa did not hesitate to use the state's vulnerability to demand greater inclusion and space within the Rhodesian economy.

A new African business association, the ABPA, emerged in mid-1978.¹⁰⁰ The emergence of the business association was, perhaps, encouraged by the signing of the Internal Settlement Agreement between Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front and Abel Muzorewa's United African National Congress together with other moderate African nationalists.¹⁰¹ The business

⁹⁴ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Mussett Attacks African Trade Chamber for Snubbing Chiefs', 29 May 1975.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 'Businessmen to stay out of Politics', 1977.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 'African Businessmen seek Bigger Role', 19 July 1977.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 'Share fruits of the System', April 1977.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 'Involve Africans in Free Enterprise', 20 June 1977.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 'Economy must aid Masses', 30 November 1977.

¹⁰⁰ *The BBC – Salisbury in English*, 'Black Businessmen's Organisation', 1600 GMT, 22 June 1978.

¹⁰¹ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 169.

association had a membership of 4500 African traders.¹⁰² The ABPA, under the leadership of Tarisai Ziyambi, did not shy away from politics and sought to use the decolonization politics to their advantage. Ziyambi was for some time the ‘erstwhile representative of the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole’s Zanu Pf in Western Europe’ signaling his sympathies and those of the ABPA with moderate African nationalist.¹⁰³ The ABPA’s launch, held at the Jameson Hotel in Salisbury, was well subscribed with attendants from representatives of white capital such as financial institutions, the Rhodesian National Farmers Union, and ACCOR, among others.¹⁰⁴ While appealing for funding from the corporate world at the launch, Ziyambi criticized the exclusion of Africans from participating in commerce, stating that:

It is this one-sided beneficial economic structure that has brought about discontent among and resentment by the black participants, who have lost no chance in exploiting it to the full, thereby creating political instability which is the root cause of our political problems.¹⁰⁵

Where RACC shied away from participating in conventional politics, the ABPA was more bold. In August of 1978, the ABPA ‘invited’ representatives of the main nationalist parties ‘to a meeting on the political situation in Rhodesia.’¹⁰⁶ Later in 1979, the business association attempted to send a delegation to the constitutional talks in Lancaster slated for December of that year.¹⁰⁷ Its secretary, Pollant Mpofo, pointed out the ABPA delegation ‘would fight hard at talks to see that any future Government adopted a more pragmatic economic approach to ensure “equal benefit of the national cake by all the country’s communities.”¹⁰⁸ In the end, the ABPA contingent failed to make it for the talks because of disagreements within the association over their involvement in politics.¹⁰⁹ It was perhaps because of this that RACC attempted to distance itself from the ABPA.¹¹⁰ It was probably because of its bold attitude towards politics together with white capital anxieties about decolonization that the ABPA received a great deal of goodwill from big business.¹¹¹

¹⁰² *The Rhodesia Financial Gazette*, Blacks to Fight Bank Ruling, 16 March 1979.

¹⁰³ NAZ, MS/308/56/3, African Development Fund, 1978, NW, ‘Black Businessmen Aim for Big Time’, 19 July 1978.

¹⁰⁴ *Zimbabwe Times*, ‘Business Promotion Body Formed’, 22 June 1978.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, ‘African Business Body Appeals for Funds’, 23 June 1978.

¹⁰⁶ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Parties to present views at Meeting’, 18 August 1978.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, ‘Black Business Sending Team to Conference’, 28 August 1979.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, ‘The African Business Promotion Association’, 29 August 1979.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, ‘Businessmen seek War Compensation’, 14 October 1978.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, ‘Association “thinking big”: Good Reaction to new African Business Body’, 29 June 1978.

Just like RACC, the ABPA pushed for the reform of legislation that disadvantaged African traders. The ABPA also pleaded with white businesses to include Africans as directors in some of Rhodesia's top firms. In addition, the ABPA is notable in its attempt to form an African Bank.¹¹² African traders had always felt the necessity of an exclusively African bank to tackle their pressing need for credit, as chapter four shows. However, November 1978 was the first time that Africans, through the ABPA, attempted to form an African bank by applying to the Registrar of Banks.¹¹³ In early 1979 there was talk that the Reserve Bank might not approve the ABPA's proposal at the behest of 'some white businessmen.'¹¹⁴ The ABPA's public relations officer Naison Chitsama said these white businesspeople:

Were holding meetings to influence the Registrar of Banks not only to delay the registration of the ABPA bank, but also to obstruct its establishment on the grounds that it would not be in the interests of the white community to allow Africans to run a bank.¹¹⁵

Drawing on Afrikaner and African American examples, Chitsama defended the need for an African bank stating that

We are not asking for any favour. All we want is an opportunity to operate our own bank in terms of the Banking Act as has been done in other countries such as the United States and the Republic of South Africa where Negroes and Afrikaners respectively have established their own community bank.¹¹⁶

Nonetheless, in February of 1979, the Registrar of Banks rejected the ABPA's proposal to establish a bank. In his rejection letter, the Registrar John Gurney stated that apart from meeting the prerequisite of the Banking Act, a prospective bank must have the 'ability to compete for deposits and customers with institutions which are already operating and maintain the services it plans to provide without prejudicing its solvency.'¹¹⁷ The timing of the bank proposal attempted to take advantage of the anticipated decolonization. When their first attempt to launch a bank failed, the ABPA appealed to the Minister of Finance, hoping that an African Minister under the anticipated Internal Settlement of Zimbabwe Rhodesia would approve the African Bank.¹¹⁸ Commenting on the matter, the *Rhodesian Financial Gazette* noted the significance of decolonial politics at play stating that:

¹¹² *National Observer*, 'African Bank is Wanted', 18 January 1979.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *The Rhodesia Financial Gazette*, 'Blacks to Fight Bank Ruling', 16 March 1979.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

It could be a very tricky decision for the new Minister. It is almost certain that this portfolio will be handled by a black, and there could be considerable grassroots pressure on him to make a major decision to aspiring local businessmen in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.¹¹⁹

Mpofu, the ABPA's secretary invoked a postcolonial vision under African rule stating that, 'the biggest consumers and spenders of the future will be blacks, and under the new racial order brought about by majority rule there will have to be an evening out of Black and White salaries', and therefore an African bank was a necessity.¹²⁰

When the Internal Settlement government took office in June of 1979, there was high optimism within the ABPA that their bank would now come to fruition. However, this did not happen, as the new African Finance Minister under Zimbabwe Rhodesia rejected the ABPA's pitch to establish an African bank. The business association's secretary registered his disappointment with the UANC led Zimbabwe Rhodesia stating that:

The decision was a slap in the face of those who believe in the free enterprise system and proved the UANC-dominated administration was quite incapable of sweeping away both the political and economic anomalies of the Rhodesian Front for the benefit of the Africans¹²¹

The experiences of the ABPA with the Smith/Muzorewa government reflect the challenges of the Internal Settlement as a decolonization alternative. African moderates who included a good number of African traders had hoped that Zimbabwe Rhodesia would bring the much-needed change in their fortunes. In the end, the Internal Settlement regime was short-lived, lasting only six months.

Other African traders saw an opportunity in the state's vulnerability towards the end of the 1970s to enter into new economic spaces that remained exclusively reserved for white businesses. One such area was the Import/Export scheme started in 1965 that prioritized foreign currency allocations to critical companies in the economy. However, the scheme mostly benefited white traders because of its insistence on past performance before an allocation. The state relaxed this requirement in 1979 to allow African traders to benefit from the

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'African Bankers Hit Out', 17 March 1979.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

programme.¹²² Consequently, one of the first African traders to benefit from this programme was Rodgers Boka, who got a permit for the importation of cosmetic products.¹²³ Boka was a schoolteacher turned entrepreneur who, by the end of the colonial period, ran a wide range of business and became one of the most successful African entrepreneurs in post-colonial Zimbabwe. Anticipating the repeal of the LTA because of the Internal Settlement, some Africans began applying for businesses in European areas such as Houghton Park, Hatfield, and along Salisbury Street in Salisbury. The bottle store license was the most sought after as the Liquor Licensing Board revealed to the Rhodesia Financial Gazette.¹²⁴

African Traders and the Armed Struggle

The intensification of the armed struggle during the 1970s disrupted the efforts of the UDI regime to 'develop' the TTLs through CD and TILCOR. Although the armed conflict had begun in the mid-1960s, with sporadic attacks of sabotage, the impact of the war took a turn for the worst during the early 1970s.¹²⁵ The fact that Africans supported African nationalism and took to war, despite the stated objectives of both Community Development, is an indictment of the failure of colonial interventionist policies in the TTLs during the 1960s and 1970s. African traders equally found themselves in a precarious position. Suspected by the state of aiding guerillas and accused by the later of allying with the UDI regime, their businesses suffered from arson, with a considerable number of stores coming under attack from the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the military wings of ZANU and ZAPU respectively. At the same time, the colonial state closed and relocated many African stores to protected villages fearing that they were assisting African fighters. The effect of the war was to ruin many African traders while it proved decisive in removing white and Indian traders from the TTLs. The state's programme to assist those who lost property as a result of arson from guerrillas, the Victims of Terrorism Fund, aided white and Indian traders, and seldom African traders. By looking at the experiences of African traders with the armed struggle during the 1970s, the section questions the

¹²² Southern Rhodesia Parliament, Committee of Supply, Col. 2090, 31 August 1979.

¹²³ *Rhodesia Herald*, 'Ex-Teacher Granted Import Allocation', 12 July 1979.

¹²⁴ *Rhodesia Financial Gazette*, Africans Seek Licences, 23 February 1979.

¹²⁵ Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 162.

‘metanarrative’ that characterises the liberation struggle as universally supported. As Munochiveyi described this dominant trope as follows:

Different histories of Zimbabwean nationalism emerged, but with one common theme: the guerrilla or liberation war. In most of the early and dominant narratives of Zimbabwean nationalism, the guerrilla war, along with its chief protagonists – guerrillas, guerrilla leaders, and an undifferentiated group of rural peasants – took centre stage. In this literature, authors subordinated or silenced all other forms of struggle against the Rhodesian colonial regime, and reified the guerrilla war narrative as singularly important in the telling of Zimbabwe’s anticolonial history.¹²⁶

As early as 1973, reports from the country’s leading dailies showed an increase in attacks on business sites in the TTLs by ZANLA. *The Rhodesia Herald* reported in February of 1973 that a store in Madziwa had burned to the ground under unclear circumstances resulting in the loss of stock worth \$4000. While the report does not say what caused the fire, comments appearing in the article that ‘Rhodesian Security Forces have recently been involved in intensive searches of terrorists’ in the TTL offer clues that armed nationalist fighters may have been responsible for the razing.¹²⁷ In the same month of February, the state forced businesses and schools to close in the Chiweshe TTL because of ‘what government officials called security reasons.’¹²⁸ The drastic measures followed the fatal maiming of Leslie Jellicoe, a 72-year-old British tourist by guerrillas who ‘have staged a series of hit and run raids.’¹²⁹ The affected African traders pointed out that they ‘believed that the closures are a “collective punishment” on them because of official suspicion that they are aiding Black Nationalist guerrillas.’¹³⁰

The war affected African traders in many ways. While some proudly recounted how they had assisted *vana mukoma*,¹³¹ with clothes and food, others narrated bad experiences with guerrillas that included arson, destruction of businesses, murder, and displacement. Still, for some, it was a mixture of everything. The daughter of prominent and pioneer entrepreneur Paul Matambanadzo, Bella Matambanadzo, expressed mixed feelings about her father’s involvement with the armed struggle.¹³² Matambanadzo’s business empire had grown from modest beginnings during the 1950s to a successful enterprise during the 1970s. Between 1967

¹²⁶ Munochiveyi, *Becoming Zimbabwe from Below*, 90.

¹²⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Store in Madziwa Burns’, 16 February 1973.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, ‘Rhodesians Close Shops near Boarder’, 6 February 1973.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ The term was used to affectionately refer to guerrillas.

¹³² Bella Matambanadzo interviewed by author, Harare, 5 February 2019.

and 1972, Matambanadzo was able to establish bus depots in Salisbury, Bulawayo, and Chiredzi.¹³³ These depots became his launch pad into the TTLs. Wild notes that the transport mogul was successful because he ‘turned his routes into long-distance services, particularly on secondary roads where his chances of obtaining a permit were higher because there was no competition from the white entrepreneurs who serviced the big overland routes.’¹³⁴ In a way, the structure of his business success primed him for an encounter with the 1970s armed struggle. Bella Matambanadzo spoke with pride about how her father had contributed to the war effort by supplying the guerrillas with clothes, among other things. At the same time, she recounted how her father lost an entirety of his fleet of buses, which numbered over 60 by 1979 through guerrilla arson.¹³⁵ These conflicting narratives marked the experiences of most African entrepreneurs during the 1970s armed struggle and question metanarratives of the war that either celebrate or dismiss it.

Theodore Mhlanga, the son of a Sinoia African trader, recounted a similar experience. His father ran several general dealer stores, butcheries and bottle stores in Sinoia and the surrounding TTLs such as Karoi and Magunje.¹³⁶ Mhlanga had trained as an artisan in Chipinge after completing his secondary education at Mt Selinda. Afterward, he then moved to Guruve, a TTL in Mashonaland Central where he got government and missionary contracts to build dip tanks and schools, respectively. Sometime in 1962, he moved to Sinoia, where he opened his first general dealer store. By the 1970s, his business empire had grown to include a Sinoia supermarket and bottle store and butcheries in Karoi and Magunje. With businesses dotted between the town of Sinoia and the surrounding TTLs, Mhlanga was able to establish a transport business that involved the movement of grain, fertilizer, and cotton. In addition to this, he was able to start a construction business. During the 1980s, he was able to leverage this to build houses, clinics, and schools in Sinoia. Such was Mhlanga’s success that he led the local chamber of commerce, the Sinoia African Chamber of Commerce. Because some of his businesses were based in the TTLs of Karoi and Magunje, Theodore Mhlanga mentions that his father had contributed to the war immensely sometimes at the cost of the financial well-being of his family. Mhlanga recalls that guerrillas would often come to his father demanding clothes, food, and money. He reminisced that his father’s farm in Chitomborwizi

¹³³ Wild, *Profit not for Profit’s Sake*, 226 – 227.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 227.

¹³⁵ Bella Matambanadzo interviewed by author, Harare, 5 February 2019.

¹³⁶ Theodore Mhlanga interviewed by author, Chinhoyi, 16 February 2019.

came under attack from the Rhodesian Security Forces because he was suspected of harboring guerrillas. In addition, Mhlanga also remembers how, when he was still of school-going age during the late 1970s, the family faced financial difficulties at home because of the war.¹³⁷

An African trader and salesperson, Rakson Nyamunda, who ran a wholesale business between 1975 and 1980 that offered delivery services to African enterprises in the TTLs, in and around Makonde District, narrated some of his experiences during his delivery sojourns.¹³⁸ His line of business provided him a unique perspective on the nature of African entrepreneurship as well as the impact the war had on these businesses in the TTLs. He mentioned how the war forced many white and Indian traders from the TTLs. He added that this opened space for African traders in post-colonial Zimbabwe for some of the white traders did not return to their old trading forts after 1980. A story that appeared in the Rhodesian Financial Gazette corroborates Nyamunda's recollection of events from this period.¹³⁹ The newspaper reported that Christopher Peech's family business was forced to close down all but one of their 25 retail stores across the colony because of the war. Explaining his decision to close shop, Peech said that:

Between 1974 and 1978, 11 stores were burned down, and a total of about 30 terrorist attacks were made on family property. In addition, the stores were constantly burgled by terrorists or pseudo-terrorists. Daily journeys through the TTLs on farm roads meant constantly running the risk of being ambushed or of running over mines. The business was coming to a standstill, and we were constantly presenting claims for property either stolen or destroyed.¹⁴⁰

During the war, it became particularly dangerous for African entrepreneurs in the TTLs. Nyamunda explained how just dangerous it was to run a business in an environment of war by pointing out that:

Some African businesses were affected while others were not. Those who were affected were those who did not cooperate with the comrades. Comrades demanded that African traders supply them with food, jeans, and medical supplies. If you did not do so, the guerrillas deemed you a traitor who told the soldiers the whereabouts of *vakomana*. Many African traders were killed because of this. Businessmen were between a hard place and a rock.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Rakson Nyamunda interviewed by author, Norton, 20 February 2019.

¹³⁹ *The Rhodesian Financial Gazette*, 'Extinction looms for White Trader in Country Areas', 14 June 1979.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Rakson Nyamunda interviewed by author, Norton, 20 February 2019.

As the war gathered momentum, soldiers usually mounted roadblocks along the roads leading into the TTLs. If they found the African trader in possession of jeans¹⁴² or any item that they suspected was for guerrillas, ‘one could be shot on sight.’¹⁴³ Nyamunda also narrated a near encounter he had with the African guerrillas while on a routine delivery in Gokwe. The African fighters stopped his car and took off with two boxes of biscuits. Immediately after, and he was on his way, an army truck passed him with Rhodesian security forces. He says that this incident left him ‘shaken.’¹⁴⁴

Other African traders were not as fortunate, however. An encounter with African guerillas meant the destruction of property, displacement, and death. Johannes Bumhira, an African trader at Karereshi in Hurungwe, went through this ordeal. Bumhira began his business trading in grain during the 1950s. As his business grew, he expanded into transportation where, with his two Ford Dexter trucks, he ferried grain, cotton, and other agricultural commodities. During the 1970s, his business enterprise went on to include a butchery and a general dealer store trading in ‘foodstuffs, inputs, bicycles, and spare parts.’¹⁴⁵ His business and family came under attack in 1977 after ZIPRA guerrillas suspected him of working with the white government. Recounting the incident, his grandson, Wisdom Bumhira said that

What I heard is that in 1978, he was sold out by his ‘enemies’ to *vakomana* on allegations that he was a front for white traders, but this was not true because, before that, he supported the freedom fighters with tinned foods and tenderfoot (shoes). When ZIPRAs killed him, he was coming from collecting money from his other shop at Masanga. Along the way, he was waylaid by guerrillas and shot three times with an AK47 while he stood by the door of his car. My father, Nicholas Bumhira, was following behind, driving a truck with maize grain. He, too, was stopped and almost shot. He was saved by the leader of the guerrillas, who said, “Let him go bury his father.”¹⁴⁶

Following the murder of the African trader, the guerrillas hounded his family until they fled the area. Narrating the events of the fateful day, Wisdom Bumhira explained

The ZIPRAs sent a small boy to gather information on what was happening at the township. The boy later turned out to be our Good Samaritan, for he warned my mother, who was storekeeping that the guerrillas had sent him, and they

¹⁴² Jeans became synonymous with clothes worn by guerrillas during the 1970s.

¹⁴³ Rakson Nyamunda interviewed by author, Norton, 20 February 2019.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Wisdom Bumhira interviewed by author, Hurungwe, 8 January 2019.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

planned to kill everyone. My mother gave the boy some food from the shop while we hastily packed, preparing to flee. We first stayed in Karoi, then Chinhoyi and Kwekwe before finally settling Gatooma`s Patchway mines, 100 km from Salisbury.¹⁴⁷

He added that they lost all their grandfather`s investments to pillaging that included fully stocked stores, cattle, and property in their homes. They only returned to their home in Hurungwe after independence in 1983.¹⁴⁸ At Patchway Mine, were the Bumhira family relocated, and true to the entrepreneurial spirit, Nicholas Bumhira opened another business.¹⁴⁹ These oral narratives show the precarious position of African traders in the TTLs within the context of a war. African traders in the TTLs had to maintain contacts with white traders who controlled the wholesaling end of the general dealer trade. These connections made them a target of ‘selling out’ accusations. As Kriger has shown, peasant and the rural elites often appropriated the intimidation tactics of the guerrillas to settle personal scores.¹⁵⁰

The state did very little to protect African traders in the TTLs. If anything, their interventions disrupted African business. One of these measures included the mass relocation of Africans from their homes into protected villages. The UDI regime devised protected villages as a way of starving the nationalist guerrillas of peasant support in the TTLs. These forced displacements affected African traders who had to shut down their business or relocate. In 1977, the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the DC closed down several stores in the Wankie Tribal Trust Land.¹⁵¹ The state often argued that they allowed African traders to re-establish their stores within the ‘consolidated villages.’ Responding to criticisms over shutting down African businesses, the DC for the Wankie District Rupert Goosen said:

Because we were forced to close the stores in the Tribal Trust Lands, we had to provide some sort of alternative. We couldn’t just shut them down. So we gave proprietors the chance to relocate themselves in the selected areas and gave them every assistance to do so.¹⁵²

Although nationalist guerrillas disrupted and affected African businesses through arson and rent-seeking behavior, the state was ever keen to present a picture of normalcy in the TTLs. Hayman, the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1978, told parliament that ‘there has been an 18 ½

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Kriger, *Zimbabwe`s Guerrilla War*.

¹⁵¹ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Ex-Diplomat Launches Scheme to beat Terrorism in Wankie District’, 29 June 1977.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

% increase in the number of African owned businesses since 1973.¹⁵³ These numbers represented an increase from 12299 leases in 1973 to 14572 in 1978.¹⁵⁴ Like the DC for Wankie, Hayman argued that businesses the state had forced to close because of the war, ‘the owners have been granted an alternative site in the protected village and the lease has remained valid.’¹⁵⁵ However, this could hardly compensate for the investment lost from the disrupted business.

Perhaps equally important, African traders did not benefit from the Victims of Terrorism (Compensation) Act established to assist those who had lost property because of the war. White businesses and farmers were able to draw from the compensation fund. In 1973, African legislator Sadomba inquired from the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the number of Africans who had ‘received benefits from the Terrorist Victims Relief Fund.’¹⁵⁶ Responding on behalf of the MIA, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources Senator Van Heerden said no African had drawn from the fund because they were not familiar with ‘procedures involved.’ Unsurprisingly, bookkeeping became a common excuse among colonial officials in accounting for why Africans did not get compensation from the state. In 1979, the Mashonaland Wholesalers Association warned African traders against not keeping ‘accurate records of their stock,’ pointing out that ‘thousands of store owners in rural areas could face heavy financial losses through terrorist attacks.’¹⁵⁷ As the previous chapters have shown, bookkeeping was a convenient red herring used by the state to explain the failure of African businesses. In this instance, it was used to explain away some of the real factors why African traders could not draw from the Victims of Terrorism (Compensation) Act.

Three main factors explain why African traders could not benefit from the Victims of Terrorism (Compensation) Act. For one, some African traders did not keep books of accounts. As shown in the above paragraph, the documents were critical in assessing the extent of damage done by nationalist guerrillas. Secondly and in any event, for those traders who did keep these documents, ‘their records are being destroyed when their store is attacked by terrorists’ and

¹⁵³ *The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) - Salisbury in English*, ‘African Business Activity in the Tribal Trust Lands’, 1600 GMT, 8 September 1978.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Rhodesia, Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, Terrorist Victims Relief Fund, Col. 1484 – 1485, 1973.

¹⁵⁷ *Rhodesia Herald*, ‘Store men Lose out as Records Destroyed’, 8 August 1979.

therefore ‘a large number have lost out on their claims.’¹⁵⁸ In interviews, African traders or the children and siblings did not recall any trader getting compensation for property destroyed because of the war. Thirdly, as one informant mentioned, the risk that came with associating with the colonial state when one was a trader in the TTLs with guerrilla activity.¹⁵⁹ Kriger mentions in her work on Mutoko some of the intimidation tactics practiced by the ZANLA nationalists against the African peasantry.¹⁶⁰ Consequently, an African trader smarting from a guerrilla attack could not afford to fraternize with colonial officials. For some, the only option was to flee, as did Johannes Bumhira in 1977.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the Victims of Terrorism (Compensation) Act, like all colonial statutory measures at the time, benefited whites at the neglect of Africans in the TTLs whom the UDI regime mostly saw as allies of nationalist guerrillas.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the chapter argued that implementation of CD and TILCOR projects during the UDI period created contradictions in the state’s attitude towards African traders. As the chapter demonstrated, the central role played by traditional authorities under CD created conflict between African chiefs and African traders. At the same time, some of TILCOR’s projects, such as Tiltrade, competed against African entrepreneurs. The intensification of the war after 1975 upended both CD and the TILCOR projects. These developments did not mean much for African traders who found themselves caught up in the conflict between the security forces and the African nationalist fighters with the state offering no remedy. The chapter added new insights, through the experiences of African entrepreneurs, into the failed colonial projects of CD and TILCOR during the 1970s. Perhaps equally important, the state and white business became nervous about the impending decolonization and sought to create alliances with African traders. On their part, African traders and business associations such as the ABPA saw an opportunity in the discourse on decolonization to carve space for themselves. However, just like the moderate African nationalists who entered into the Internal Settlement Agreement with Smith’s Rhodesian Front, the optimism of African traders met with disappointment as the ABPA’s attempt to form an African bank shows. The thesis demonstrated through oral

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Rakson Nyamunda interviewed by author, Norton, 20 February 2019.

¹⁶⁰ Kriger, *Zimbabwe’s Guerrilla War*.

¹⁶¹ Nicholas Bumhira interviewed by author, Hurungwe, 8 January 2019.

interviews the devastating effect that the war had on African entrepreneurs operating in the African reserves. The ambiguity of colonial policy on African traders was clearly demonstrated the lack of support, and protection, that African traders affected by the war got from the colonial state. Importantly, the thesis added to the growing voices against the celebratory metanarrative the war and showed how it was a complex affair for those caught up in its path.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The study has analysed African entrepreneurship from the Godlonton Commission of 1944 to the end of the colonial period in 1979. It established that this period was one of mixed fortunes for African traders in colonial Zimbabwe. The 1944 Godlonton Commission set the tone on how colonial institutions such as the NAD interacted with and interpreted the place of African entrepreneurs in the broader scheme of the colonial project. For instance, in the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial state sought to use business sites to manipulate Africans to cooperate with the aims of the NLHA. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Southern Rhodesia government used entrepreneurship as a way to secure African support for the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In the same vein, the UDI's TILCOR and CD claimed to increase African independent participation in colonial commerce, managed to deflate African demands for both business sites and freehold title. These colonial policies on African entrepreneurship were not without opportunities however. Enterprising Africans manipulated the process of business site allocation, used the federal rhetoric of racial partnership and the colonial state's anxieties over decolonisation during the 1970s to win space to trade for themselves. The thesis also demonstrated that the methods that African traders employed in creating space for themselves, recast their place in the historiography on African nationalism in colonial Zimbabwe as keen and active participants against the colonial state.

Prior to the sitting of the Godlonton Commission in 1944, Africans participated actively, against the odds, in the colonial economy. In fact, Africans had a long history of commercial activity dating back to the precolonial times (pp.6 – 7). Their commercial success had partly helped to anchor the Great Zimbabwe, Mutapa and Rozvi States.¹ During the early years of colonial encroachment, Africans were able to use centuries of commercial experience to produce for the new colonial economy. However, colonial demands for cheap labour together with racist policies and attitudes ensured that the exclusion of Africans from the mainstream economy. Regardless, Africans did continue to trade throughout the period of BSAC rule and the interwar years. In addition, African entrepreneurs also suffered from the introduction of

¹ For more on this see Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom*, Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900 – 1850*, Mudenge, *A Political History of Munhumutapa c1400-1902*.

‘new’ colonial ideas of business management, which sideline African form of business successful during the precolonial and early colonial period.

One of the key themes in the study is how colonial policy shaped the experiences of African traders in Southern Rhodesia. It established that colonial policy was both ambiguous and contradictory throughout the period under examination. The study concluded that the state was insincere in its support of African enterprises and the successive colonial governments maintained strong policies that entrenched economic benefits for whites while peddling cheap rhetoric about African advancement and racial partnerships at different intervals. For example, pieces of legislation that structurally impeded the growth of African entrepreneurship, such as the LAA, remained intact. Thus, African traders were a convenient tool used by both the federal and the UDI governments to promote the rhetoric of racial partnership and to placate African nationalists in a period of decolonisation, respectively. In this regard, the thesis challenges West and Wild’s argument that premised African business illiteracy to understanding their lack of success. Instead, it has shown that African business illiteracy became a convenient excuse used by the colonial state to explain away the exclusion of African entrepreneurs from the mainstream economy.²

The study also looked at some of the ways that African traders challenged the colonial state’s ambiguous position on African enterprises. For instance, some African traders in the African reserves used colonial institutions such as the African Councils designed to propitiate radical African nationalism to push for their interests (pp. 85 and 88). Other traders sought legal recourse by engaging lawyers in the trading lease application process and as a way of speaking back at NCs. This evidence speaks to the literature on Africans’ use of the legal space to contest colonial racial injustice.³ Some African traders, through their knowledge of the colonial legal structure and not ignorance of it, managed to operate illegally by taking advantage of the ambiguity in colonial policy (pp.91 – 92). In addition, the study has shown how the early 1960s was a high point in African business association activity culminating in the formation of ZABU and its successor associations of the 1970s, such as the RACC and the ABPA. Although these

² West, ‘The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 1965’, and Wild, *Profit not for Profit’s Sake*.

³ For more on this see Karekwaivanane, *The Struggle over State Power in Zimbabwe* and Zimudzi, ‘African Women, Violent Crime and the Criminal Law in Colonial Zimbabwe.’

pressure groups emerged in an environment of racial partnership, by the end of 1963, they had appropriated the language of radical African nationalism to push for their interests during this time (p.124). From the 1950s onwards, African members of parliament in the colonial legislature used their position to question the state's stance on African entrepreneurship. In doing so, the thesis managed to position African traders and legislators within the nationalist movement. African traders participated within the nationalist politics of the day through their associations such as ZABU, MATA, RACC and the ABPA. Equally so, African legislators were able to articulate African trader grievances.⁴

The discussion in chapter two interrogated the genesis and nature of some of the deep-seated colonial ideas on African commerce. Hitherto, no study had sought to interrogate colonial ideas on African entrepreneurship as espoused through the Godlonton Commission of 1944. A relook at the Godlonton Commission, with an eye on what colonial officials thought about African traders, established that these ideas were entrenched racial views. The deliberations of the Godlonton Commission reaffirmed these ideas by setting the tempo on how the state interacted with African entrepreneurship. Chapter two highlighted the opinions of key colonial officials in the NAD, such as former and current NCs, who were the key drivers of state policy on African issues. It argued that the state's perceptions of the ability of Africans to manage a business were influenced by racial paternalism. The Godlonton Commission engaged in ideas on African business management skills through the veneer of consumer and marketing cooperatives and concluded that Africans were not capable of participating successfully in business (pp. 37, 39 and 42). Past and present officials of the NAD, such as Carbutt and Simmonds, felt that although African cooperative societies were desirable, these still needed European stewardship. The white liberal movement represented by Father Huss, Rev Percy Ibbotson, and Ballinger embodied this stewardship. As the chapter showed, these individuals came in as the expert voices and were involved in African cooperatives in both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (pp.43 – 46). Although these 'liberals' were optimistic about African participation in cooperative societies, they were nonetheless, also influenced by racial

⁴ West, 'The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890 – 965' argues that the interests of African traders were sectoral while Munochiveyi, 'Becoming Zimbabwe From Below', 103, explores the multiple ways nationalism manifested itself.

paternalism. In this way, the study speaks to the literature on the ways in which colonial paternalism within the NAD impacted African everyday lives.⁵

Chapter two further demonstrated that some of the criticisms of African participation in commerce represented the stakes of white commercial capital trading in the African reserves. It further argued that the MKTA and the BCC conveniently appropriated the language of the NAD intending to secure their business interests in the African reserves that were under threat from the commission and the suggested African cooperative societies (p.47 – 48). Despite attempts by the state to censor Africans at the Godlonton Commission, they still articulated their ideas on entrepreneurship that were at variance with those of the state. Africans who gave evidence expressed their opposition to African state-controlled cooperatives preferring to form their independent societies. Of significance was the example of an African trader from Shangani, who was opposed to both white traders and cooperative societies in the African reserves (pp.55 – 56). In addition, officials of the Godlonton Commission were condescending towards Africans called in to provide evidence (p.54). This was the case, although some of the Africans called to give evidence were veteran politicians and journalists such as Mathew Rusike, Charles Mzingeli, and Jasper Savanhu.

Chapter three examined the conflict that business sites generated in the African reserves and among colonial officials between 1945 and 1955 in light of the shift in colonial policy culminating in the passage of the NLHA.⁶ The chapter demonstrated that the first ten years following the Godlonton Commission witnessed contestations in the NAD over the purpose and utility of business sites. NCs sought to use these sites to reward African veterans of war, and ‘progressive’ Africans while simultaneously punishing ‘undesirable’ Africans who did not have business skills or those who flaunted colonial conservation measures such as destocking. At the same time, a newly created arm of the NAD known as the NMPB headed by Arthur Pendered preferred to give business sites to white traders they felt could market African grains (p.79). At the centre of this conflict was the CNC, who sometimes tried to reign in his

⁵ Jeater, *Law, Language, and Science* and Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*.

⁶ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State* and Bratton, ‘Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia’.

subordinates in the NAD by coming to the defence of some African traders (pp.90 – 91). African responses to the conflict over business sites were as many as they were varied.

The thesis showed that African ex-servicemen became the first group of Africans to benefit from a deliberate state programme targeting African entrepreneurship. Just as in other parts of colonial Africa, colonial enterprises sought to find an inlet to absorb Africans who had fought on the side of the allied forces during the Second World.⁷ In Southern Rhodesia, the colonial state offered business sites to some of the returning African ex-servicemen. The downside of this programme, however, was that it blocked other Africans, such as government clerks and medical orderlies who had not served during the Second World War but were interested in trading. The response of some of these Africans, so excluded, was to exaggerate their war record while some used ex-servicemen acted as fronts when applying for trading sites as did Yona, who used Mabuko, a Second World War veteran to keep his trading site in Nkai (p.92).

By focusing on the politics of African business licencing and sites, the thesis contributed to the historiography on the NLHA.⁸ It demonstrated that the NAD side-lined African government workers involved in conservation work and the administration of the African reserves from entrepreneurship (p.66). The literature on post-war colonial conservation demonstrated the vital role that agricultural demonstrators and teachers played in the implementation of colonial intervention programmes. Furthermore, as Alexander explains, the period was one when the colonial state celebrated expertise knowledge and could ill afford to lose skilled African personnel to entrepreneurship.⁹ However, as the chapter showed, colonial officials were not agreed on this position. However, African agricultural demonstrators, medical orderlies, and teachers found creative and innovative ways of starting businesses in the African reserves by using relatives or fronts when seeking trading licenses from the NAD.

Work by Shutt and Cheater has shown how NC sought to control, through colonial patronage, every aspect of African lives in the African reserves.¹⁰ This literature and argued that some NCs arbitrarily denied ‘undesirable’ African traders business sites and rewarded those they

⁷ Israel, ‘Ex-Servicemen at the Crossroads’, Grundlingh, ‘Aspects of the Impact of the Second World War on the Lives of Black South African and British Colonial Soldiers’.

⁸ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State* and Bratton, ‘Settler State, Guerrilla War and Rural Underdevelopment in Rhodesia’.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Jeater, *Law, Language, and Science* and Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*.

thought were ‘progressive.’ The third chapter gave several examples of instances when this happened (pp.70 – 73). The use of colonial patronage by some NCs in the awarding of business sites represented an attempt by NCs to hold on to the authority they possessed in the African reserves during the interwar period. The thesis argued that the response of the NC is brought to bear in light of the changes that the NLHA brought to colonial administration in the African reserves. The central theme of the Godlonton Commission on African business literacy was carried over to the post-war period with NAD officials denying trading sites to Africans they perceived to be illiterate. Crucially and contrary to the position of West and Wild on the matter, NCs actively used business management to deny Africans the right to business sites (pp.74 – 75).¹¹

Although the colonial state’s policy of Separate Development barred non-African traders from the African reserves, they remained very active throughout the immediate post-war period. The thesis demonstrated that the implementation of this policy often resulted in bickering among officials in the NAD. NCs and African Councils often invoked this policy when awarding business sites to African traders ahead of white traders. However, in certain instances, some NCs and the NPMB preferred white traders to African entrepreneurs in allocating business sites because they could afford to buy African produced grain and had a variety of stock on their shelves compared to under capacitated African traders. Consequently, white firms such as the ATS expanded their hold of business sites in the African reserves during the 1950s (p.76). Africans who were interested in entrepreneurship came up with ingenious ways of tackling colonial racial patronage in the awarding of business sites. They sometimes appropriated legal structures, designed to suppress African independent participation in colonial commerce, to circumvent limitations using fronts for example.¹²

The late 1950s to early 1960s was a period of high expectation among African traders. Using previously untapped sources such as *The African Businessman*, the study reaffirmed, in chapter four, long held views about the rhetoric of racial partnership during the federal era. It contributed to the historiography of the fortunes of the African middle class during the federal period by demonstrating that African entrepreneur hopes that the federal government’s stated goal of racial partnership to translate to increased economic opportunities for Africans were

¹¹ Wild, *Profit not for Profit’s Sake* and West, ‘The African Middle Class Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe.’

¹² Scarnecchia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*.

met with disappointment.¹³ While the realization of the futility of racial partnership came early for other African elites, for African traders, it dragged on until towards the demise of the federation. The state and business offered limited opportunities for business and of partnership to some African traders. Efforts to remove some of the structural impediments to the growth of African entrepreneurship through the amendment of the LAA came out as mere political gimmicking by the UFP. At the end of the federal period some of the business partnerships emerged merely as efforts by white traders to break into the African market.

Chapter four also argued that the UFP attempted to create a narrative that suggested that the state was sincere about amending the LAA to allow Africans to trade in the CBD and to own properties in the African townships (pp.99 – 101). Sensing the state`s seeming willingness to talk about the LAA, African traders, together with their African counterparts in the Southern Rhodesia Legislative Assembly, attempted to leverage this to obtain freehold title for Africans. The municipal authorities of Salisbury, Bulawayo, and Gwelo gave halfhearted measures that allowed African traders to have title to some of the buildings that they were renting from the local government in the African townships. African attempts to lobby the local authorities to allow them to trade in the CBD elicited a push back from the urban white settler community. In the end, only a few bus operators, such as the affluent Samuriwo, were able to buy up land in the industrial area to set up garages.

Also explored are some of the business partnerships that emerged across racial lines during the federal period. Some of the partnerships and instances saw Africans offered opportunities to buy shares (pp.107 – 110). White businesses entered into these partnerships or offered shares to Africans merely for show. Moreover, as the Pockets Bakery case exposed, business partnerships were often a way for white business interests to break into the African market (pp.110 – 112). In the end, African traders made insignificant gains during the federal period, which led them to organise into business associations, which became increasingly radical towards the end of the federal period.

¹³ *Ibid*, West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class* and Raftopoulos, ‘The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1945 – 1965’.

The literature on African businesses in Southern Rhodesia has demonstrated that formal lending institutions denied African traders credit but no study had looked at the experiences of African traders with the ALDC during the federal period (p.112). The formation and flourishing of business associations during 1962 and 1963 was partly in response to the activities of the ALDC. Nevertheless, the African business associations of the late federal period exhibited sentiments for the radical African nationalism of the period. Thus, a tenuous relationship existed between African traders and the radical African politics of the time. While they sought to draw benefits from what racial partnership had to offer, they were also under pressure to show support for the African nationalist cause. Besides, the thesis engaged with colonial ideas around African business literacy and noted that that concerns about African literacy in business raised during the Godlonton Commission and used to deny business sites to Africans culminated in the pioneering of state programmes to teach African traders bookkeeping. The ALDC tied its aid to financial literacy while business associations also made it part of their core values. Rather business literacy was a mere red herring used by the colonial state and the ALDC to describe away the experiences of African traders with credit.

Besides, the ALDC provided part of the drive behind the formation of business associations, for it funded only those traders who were organised into business chambers. It was partly because of its activities that the MATA emerged to take the lead in the formation of ZABU (pp.122 – 126). In 1963, however, the ALDC abruptly ended its funding of African businesses, pointing out that they were a credit risk. While this was true; the ALDC's shift in policy is also tied to the end of the rhetoric of racial partnership during the federal period. With the ALDC distancing itself from African traders, ZABU soon took a life of its own by embracing nationalist politics. Its leaders, as chapter four showed, were part of the core leadership of the nationalist movement. Thus, when the colonial state launched a crackdown on African political parties, ZABU suffered a leadership crisis leading to its demise. ZABU's successor associations, RACC, and ABPA were less willing to be confrontational with the UDI regime.

The UDI period created new challenges for African traders. The thesis stressed that the colonial state's shift from the NLHA to CD as a driver of administration in the TTLs generated conflicts between African traders and chiefs (pp.139 – 145). With the DCs out of the spotlight, the thesis made the case; the colonial state was able to deflect responsibility for amending the LAA or

bias in business site allocation to African chiefs. The state's flagship agent for rural development, TILCOR, also antagonised African traders. Although the contemporary proponents of TILCOR pitched it as an entrepreneurial intervention in the TTLs, African business people had few opportunities to buy shares with the statutory corporation. Instead, the thesis argued, some of TILCOR's ventures, such as the retail chain, Tiltrade, competed directly with African traders.

The study further showed that the state's anxieties over decolonisation chiefly influenced efforts to fund African traders through IOB, SIAS, and FEBCO (p. 151 and 154 – 156). It concluded that these efforts failed since, as the ALDC discussed in chapter four, these formations focused more on African business literacy while ignoring structural issues that impeded African business development, such as the lack of freehold title among Africans. In addition African traders, sensing the vulnerabilities of the settler community over decolonisation, organised to demand concessions from the colonial state. The ABPA sought to establish an African bank under the Zimbabwe Rhodesia dispensation (p160). That the African bank proposal died a stillbirth is an indictment of the fact that even under the Muzorewa government, the settler community was determined to maintain settler dominance of the main tiers of the economy. With the intensification of the liberation war, African traders based in the TTLs suffered loss in property and lives while others were displaced (pp. 162 – 169). African traders found little reprieve from the Victims of Terrorism Compensation Fund aimed at aiding those who had suffered arson because of the war.

The study contributes to scholarship on African entrepreneurship in Southern and Central Zimbabwe. It engages with literature by West and Volker that has linked the failure of African businesses to illiteracy and shows that this was not necessarily the case (p.129). Long-held colonial views about African capacity, as the Godlonton Commission exposed, created myths about the African trader which became an excuse for the state's failings. In reality, the study demonstrated, business sites were contentious spaces that NCs used to the disadvantage of African traders while white and Indian traders, such as the ATS, got preferential treatment. During the federal period, white traders in the ilk of the Pocket Brothers took advantage of racial partnership to make profits from the African market in the guise of collaborating with African entrepreneurs. During the 1970s, statutory boards such as TILCOR created challenges

for African traders and became an entry point into the African market for white capital through Tiltrade. As the study demonstrated, the presence of white traders in the African rural areas ended on the eve of the post-colonial period after attacks on white businesses from nationalist fighters became overwhelming.

By tying together several threads in Zimbabwe`s historiography on colonial administration of the Africans in rural areas, the study showed that African entrepreneurship was also negatively affected by the implementation of the NLHA during the 1950s and 1960s. This created contradictions between colonial patronage, synonymous with the NAD during the interwar period, and the changes that the NLHA sought to bring to the African reserves to the detriment of African interested in business sites. Later, during the UDI period, the colonial state attempted to take a step back from rural administration through CD but still maintaining the racist status quo of the settler state as affirmed by the enduring legacy of the LAA. The result was a conflict between African traders and traditional authorities in alliance with the UDI regime.

The study adds to the literature on the federal period by showing another strand of the experiences of the African middle class through African entrepreneurs. It notes using previously underutilised sources that African entrepreneur participation in racial partnership was initially marked by optimism. African traders of various walks eagerly participated in colonial programmes on racial partnership with the hope of getting freehold title, space in previously restricted areas and capital. Their hopes in the promises of racial partnership soon translated to disillusionment as only a few privileged African traders such as Samuriwo and Mwamuka were admitted into the circles of white businesses. These individuals were able to break into the liquor trade for instance while, at the same time, the ALDC experiment with funding African traders came to naught by the end of the federal period.

The response of African traders to their exclusion from racial partnership, as individuals and collectively, recasts their place in Zimbabwe`s scholarship on African nationalism. Previously ostracised for cooperating with the colonial state and for having narrow sectorial interests, the study demonstrated to the contrary that African traders exhibited that nationalist agency. It showed the connections that existed between the convectional nationalist platforms of the

1960s with African traders through business associations such as ZABU. It further demonstrated that evidence of nationalist fervour among African traders might not be found in the usual places like the culturally and politically significant African township of Highfield in Salisbury or among the more prominent African entrepreneurs such as Mwamuka. Indeed, the experiences of the business association movement showed that leadership came from the previously unknown MATA in rural Mount Darwin and its leader Munyoro. During the 1970s, understudied associations such as RACC and the ABPA led by Ben Muccheche and Tarisai Ziyambi respectively sought to challenge the UDI polices on African entrepreneurship. Where RACC was cautiously confrontational, the ABPA sought to engrain itself with the politics of the moment, such as decolonisation under Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, to win concessions from the state. Recent work on African nationalism, led by Shutt, has urged that scholarship to relook at the ambiguities and complexities African nationalist agency during the colonial period.

The study also contributes to the literature on the liberation struggle. Using oral narratives, it shows that business sites in the TTLs, the epicenter of nationalist guerrilla activities became targets of both the colonial state and nationalist freedom fighters. While the colonial state sought to starve the armed struggle of support by relocating and closing business sites, the guerrillas often looted African stores and murdered their owners accused of collaborating with the colonial state as happened to the Bumhira family and their businesses in Hurungwe (pp.166 – 167).

In summation, the thesis contended that colonial policy on African entrepreneurship suffered from a conflict between colonial patronage and the demands of the NLHA during the 1940s and 50s. During the federal period, the policy of racial partnership sent false hope and mixed signals to African traders who were disappointed by the end of 1963. During the UDI period, the aims of CD conflicted with those of TILCOR. In the end, African traders found their demands for title complicated by CD and facing competition from Tiltrade. Throughout the period under review, the colonial state consistently obsessed over the weakness of African business literacy. The thesis stressed that this was merely a red herring that excused the state's exclusion of African entrepreneurs from mainstream colonial commerce. African entrepreneurs responded by using, to their advantage, colonial pacification institutions such as African councils, employing the services of lawyers, operating illegally, and by forming business

associations. In most cases, they appropriated colonial rhetoric on African entrepreneurship as happened with racial partnership during the federal period and decolonisation during the 1970s. At these various platforms of response and resistance, African traders articulated African nationalism, although within a restricted environment.

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