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Seeing Like a Second City: Contested Development in the African
Townships of Late Colonial Bulawayo, Rhodesia, 1949-1977

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Erratum:

The quote, “It would be suicide of the white race...” on page 1 (and paraphrased on pages 49 and 91) was erroneously attributed to Donald Macintyre in the original version of this thesis. Though Macintyre endorsed the statement and expressed similar sentiments at the same meeting and elsewhere, it was in fact Charles Olley who uttered it. The author noticed and corrected this in April, 2020.

At the same time, the author amended some ambiguous phrasing in the abstract, as follows:

Original:

This thesis is a historical ethnographic study of late colonial planning and development in the racially segregated townships of a southern African city: Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). It analyses how the municipal township administration – with its high proportion of black and white social scientists, under the directorship of a noted anthropologist, Dr Hugh Ashton – executed an ambitious development drive to *stabilise* and *improve* the African townspeople.

Amendment:

This thesis is a historical ethnographic study of late colonial planning and development in the racially segregated ‘African townships’ of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). It analyses how Bulawayo’s municipal township administration, which included a number of social scientists (both European and African) and was directed by a noted anthropologist, Dr Hugh Ashton, executed an ambitious development drive to ‘stabilise’ and ‘improve’ the African townspeople.

Declaration:

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Abstract

This thesis is a historical ethnographic study of late colonial planning and development in the racially segregated ‘African townships’ of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). It analyses how Bulawayo’s municipal township administration, which included a number of social scientists (both European and African) and was directed by a noted anthropologist, Dr Hugh Ashton, executed an ambitious development drive to ‘stabilise’ and ‘improve’ the African townspeople. For nearly three decades, Ashton’s department pursued a vision of creating modern, stratified and property-owning communities, informed by the teleological tenets of ‘detrribalisation’, ‘urbanisation’ and ‘modernisation’ theories. This vision increasingly clashed with the Central Government’s segregationist agenda to re-establish the Rhodesian city as a ‘white space’ in the 1960s and 1970s. By systematically analysing why, and how, the Bulawayo City Council persisted with its township development vision, even under this reactionary regime, the thesis sheds light on profound ideological disjunctures within the Rhodesian state, and how the conflicts that arose therefrom reconfigured influence, expertise, and authority in the state bureaucracy.

This secondary city case study contributes to the historiography of late colonial developmentalism, which refers to metropolitan and state interventions to stabilise and modernise African urban labour across colonial Africa, in response to the crises emerging from social, political and industrial changes during the Second World War. This process broadly entailed abandoning the half-hearted interwar approach to warehousing transient migrant workers, and ramping up the provision of housing, amenities and social programmes commensurate with the basic requirements of settled (albeit second class) communities. It signified an increase in the importance of *upliftment* and *individual improvement*, relative to more direct modes of control in managing the African population.

The thesis contributes to this historiography, by focusing on the everyday practicalities and politics of *getting things done* at the local level, with scarce resources and under pressure from multiple stakeholders. It does this by analysing a significant corpus of records on the protracted negotiations, conflicts and experiments that characterised township development in Bulawayo, from municipal, national and newspaper archives. Archival research was supplemented by interviews with former ‘African’ and ‘European’ administrators, who provided insights into the institutional culture of the township administration. By thus opening the ‘black box’ of the colonial state bureaucracy, the thesis reveals the embeddedness of contemporary analytic and moral concepts within the everyday practical struggles of administration. This serves to counterbalance an overly functionalist interpretation of post-war development as a unitary state project of domination and consent.

The study identifies three key characteristics of township development in Bulawayo that extant theories of late colonial urbanism do not adequately account for. Firstly, it was significantly decentralised. The city council spurned government expertise, tapped into regional, continental and global knowledge exchange networks, and implemented policies that often contradicted central government agendas. Secondly, the progressive developmental ideas that defined Bulawayo’s particular approach were not only guides to action, but also emerged as *ex post facto* rationalisations for actions that were financially and administratively expedient. Thus, progressivism was wedded with pragmatism: more spatially integrated housing development reduced capital costs; extensive home ownership schemes enlisted the resources and energies of Africans; landscaped municipal beer gardens provided a significant and vital source of revenue. The resultant spectacle of impressive progress was achieved at no undue cost to either the European ratepayer or the industrial employer, and the skilful rationalisation of *ad hoc*, experimental decisions and compromises in terms of moral and political imperatives of modernisation imbued the development process with a sometimes-misleading sense of coherent intention. Thirdly, decisions made at the critical juncture of the 1950s had strong path-dependent effects, setting Bulawayo on a trajectory from which it was increasingly difficult to diverge. The combination of these factors bequeathed a localised legacy of autonomy, self-reliance and comparatively integrated, socially stratified townships to post-colonial Bulawayo – contrasting starkly with the capital city in ways that still matter today.

Lay Summary

This thesis examines how colonial urban administrators tried to bring conditions of stability and what they considered to be a better state of life to the segregated African communities of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, after the Second World War. At the head of the administration department dealing with this project, for nearly three decades, was an anthropologist called Dr Hugh Ashton, who with his team of anthropologically-trained Black and White staff, executed an ambitious development campaign, informed by contemporary theories about social change and progress. Ashton's vision was to help what he regarded as migrant 'tribespeople' adjust to the bewildering strangeness of modern life, by creating townships for various income-levels, and schemes for residents to buy their own homes. This vision clashed with the reactionary policies of the right-wing Government in the 1960s and '70s, which sought to re-establish the city as a space exclusively for Whites, where Blacks could only reside on sufferance. The thesis seeks to understand how and why administrators managed to pursue their own development agenda under this reactionary regime. It thereby aims to shed light on the ways in which influence, expertise and authority were (re)configured in the late colonial state bureaucracy.

This secondary city case study contributes to the historical scholarship on developmentalism after the war, which refers to interventions from Metropolitan Governments (e.g. Britain) and colonial states to stabilise and modernise African urban labour across colonial Africa, in response to the crises emerging from social, political and industrial changes during the Second World War. This process broadly entailed abandoning the half-hearted interwar approach to warehousing transient migrant workers, and ramping up the provision of housing, amenities and social programmes commensurate with the basic requirements of settled, yet second class, communities. It signified an increase in the importance of upliftment and improvement – improving not only people's welfare but also their habits and character – relative to more direct modes of control, in managing the African population.

The thesis contributes to this historiography, by focusing on the everyday practicalities and politics of *getting things done* at the local level, with scarce resources and under pressure from multiple stakeholders. It does this by analysing a significant corpus of records on the protracted negotiations, conflicts and experiments that characterised township development in Bulawayo, from municipal, national and newspaper archives. Archival research was supplemented by interviews with former 'African' and 'European' administrators, who provided insights into the institutional culture of the township administration. By thus opening the 'black box' of the colonial state bureaucracy, the thesis reveals the embeddedness of contemporary analytic and moral concepts within the everyday practical struggles of administration. This serves to counterbalance interpretations of post-war development that place excessive emphasis on the function of townships to a strategizing colonial state – conceived as a singular actor – seeking to maintain domination and garner consent.

The study identifies three key characteristics of township development in Bulawayo that extant theories of late colonial urbanism do not adequately account for. Firstly, it was significantly decentralised. The city council spurned government expertise, tapped into regional, continental and global knowledge exchange networks, and implemented policies that often contradicted central government agendas. Secondly, the progressive developmental ideas that defined Bulawayo's particular approach were not only guides to action, but were also used to give moral and political meaning to actions that were in fact financially and administratively expedient. Thus, progressivism was wedded with pragmatism: more spatially integrated housing development reduced capital costs; extensive home ownership schemes enlisted the resources and energies of Africans; landscaped municipal beer gardens provided a significant and vital source of revenue. The resultant spectacle of impressive progress was achieved at no undue cost to either the European ratepayer or the industrial employer, and the skilful rationalisation of *ad hoc*, experimental decisions and compromises in terms of moral and political imperatives of modernisation imbued the development process with a sometimes misleading sense of coherent intention. Thirdly, decisions made at the critical moment of the 1950s, when established ways of doing things were subject to drastic change, had strong path-dependent effects, setting Bulawayo on a trajectory from which it was increasingly difficult to diverge. The combination of these factors bequeathed a localised legacy of autonomy, self-reliance and comparatively integrated, socially stratified townships to post-colonial Bulawayo – contrasting starkly with the capital city in ways that still matter today.

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Finally, I would like to say *ngiyabonga kakhulu* to the best city in the world... *Bayethe Bulawayo!*

List of Abbreviations:

AAD:	African Administration Department (Bulawayo)
B.A.T.:	Bulawayo African Townships (umbrella term for Makokoba, Mzilikazi, Nguboyenja and Barbour Fields)
BCCA:	Bulawayo City Council Archive
BPRA:	Bulawayo Progressive Residents' Association
BURA:	Bulawayo United Residents' Association
CBD:	Central Business District
LGA:	Local Government Association
NAZ:	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NDP:	National Democratic Party
RA:	Residents' Association (incl. Leaseholders' Associations & Tenants' Associations)
RF:	Rhodesia Front
TTL:	Tribal Trust Land
UFP:	United Federal Party
URP:	United Rhodesia Party
Urban Areas Act:	Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act
ZAPU:	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZNA:	Zambia National Archive

Notes on Terminology:

Country names:

Colonial Zimbabwe was called Southern Rhodesia until 1964, when it dropped the “Southern”, as Northern Rhodesia became Zambia. In 1969, it became the Republic of Rhodesia, and from 1978 it was Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, until 1980 when it became independent Zimbabwe. When referring to colonial Zimbabwe in general, I use the name Rhodesia.

Race categories:

In the period under study, Black people were most commonly referred to as ‘Natives’ by colonial officials until the early 1950s; thereafter the term ‘Africans’ became the norm, but the term ‘Natives’ remained in use. Whites were commonly referred to as ‘Europeans’. Throughout this thesis I use the terms ‘African’ and ‘European’, in accordance with historiographical convention. [The other relevant race categories in terms of Rhodesia’s segregationist legislation were “Coloureds” and “Asians”.]

African Administration Department name changes:

In 1949, the Bulawayo City Council established a Native Administration Department. This Department underwent various name changes:

1949-53:	Native Administration Department
1953-63:	African Administration Department
1963-75:	Housing and Amenities Department
1975-today:	Housing and Community Services Department

I use the term “African Administration Department” (AAD) when referring to the department generally, as the most appropriate descriptor of its broad remit.

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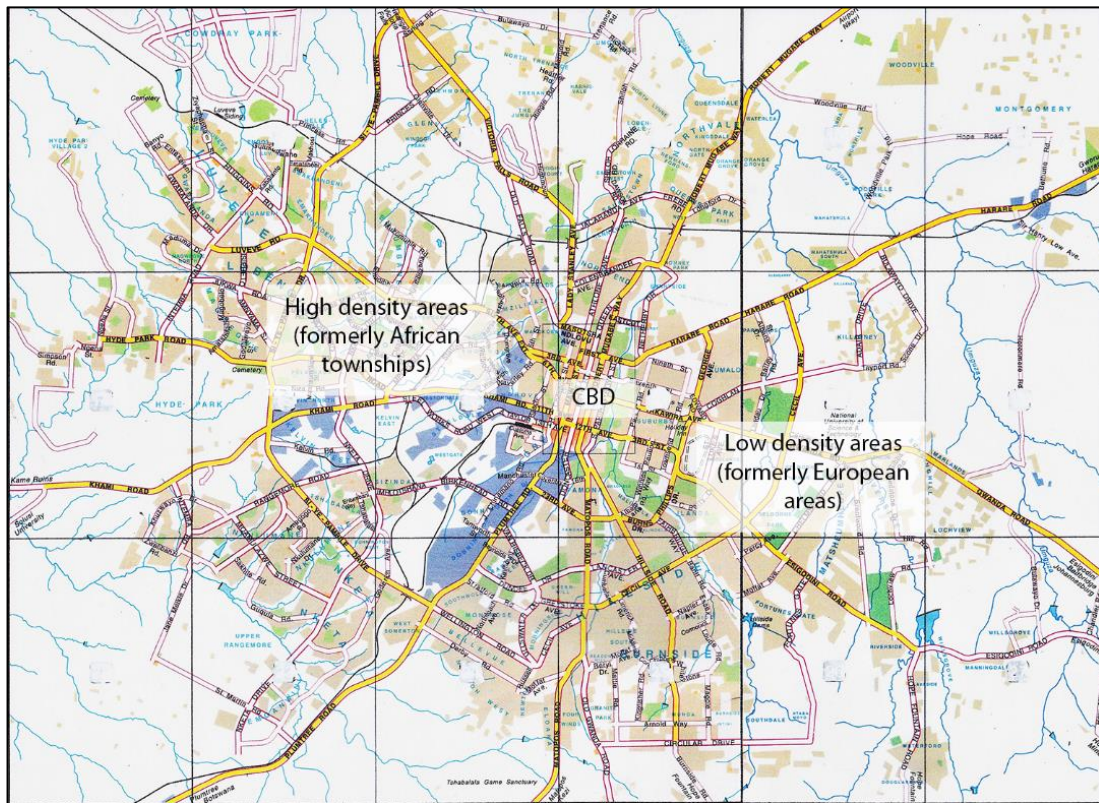


Figure 2: Map of Bulawayo [Source: Bulawayo Council map book, 1997]

1. Introduction

“It would be suicide of the white race in Rhodesia”, asserted Charles Olley, mayor of the colony’s capital, Salisbury, at a meeting of municipalities in 1945, “to adopt the policy of an employed native having the right to bring his wife into town with the obligation of the white employer to accommodate the wife.” Indeed, it would “destroy tribal life and put nothing in its place”, exclaimed Donald Macintyre, mayor of the second city, Bulawayo, who was leading the protest.¹ These big city leaders were opposing government legislation aimed at ‘stabilising’ the African urban workforce after the Second World War, and their apocalyptic imagery reflected a deep sense amongst many European settlers at the time that urban areas were essentially *white spaces*, where African workers would have to temporarily reside on sufferance, but would never truly *belong*. As essentially ‘tribespeople’, these workers were expected to retain their roots in the native village.

But the mayors’ protestations came at a turning point in the history of colonial urbanism, and they soon found themselves on the wrong side of history. The domineering mayor of Bulawayo, in particular, remained intransigent in the face of change, until a crisis at the post-war juncture rendered his attitudes untenable. Rapid war-time industrial growth without a concomitant expansion in housing and services had led to a crisis in Bulawayo’s African areas.² Just a few hundred metres to the west of the town centre, approximately 15,000 Africans lived in the overcrowded and unsanitary municipal ‘Location’; many more occupied austere hostels, cottages and rudimentary shacks in the municipal workers’ compound and other industrial compounds.

¹The Herald, 21 December, 1945, in T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of a Southern African City, 1893-1960* (Oxford, James Currey, 2010), p. 128.

² Bulawayo was the industrial hub of the colony. It is located in the south western semi-arid region of Matabeleland, as indicated in Fig. 1.

When, in 1948, a South African commissioner described these areas as “possibly the worst slums in the world”, Macintyre and his council finally realised that something had to change in their approach to ‘native urban administration’.

And change it did. The reorientation was dramatic. Within three decades, by the eve of Zimbabwean independence, the landscape of western Bulawayo had been transformed. From the western edge of the grid-iron town centre, African townships stretched out to the horizon, housing a population that had increased more than tenfold. These townships had the highest rates of family housing, home ownership, and socioeconomic stratification in the country. Once deemed the most reactionary and intransigent Council in the colony, Bulawayo had come to be regarded as “progressive”. Why and how did this change come about?

This thesis analyses the interesting case of African township development in Bulawayo, to contribute to our understanding of the new ways in which African people were accepted, housed, and governed by colonial authorities in the towns and cities of British Africa after the Second World War. Examining the activities of municipal administrators tasked with actually delivering the housing and services for the ‘stabilisation’ and ‘improvement’ of the African population in the post-war era, the inquiry focuses on the significant disjunctures between central and local development visions, which intensified under the right-wing Government of the 1960s and ‘70s. Showing how Bulawayo battled, with some success, to pursue its own township development vision despite limited state resources, this thesis nuances a historical narrative of colonial urban development as largely directed from the top.

The historical development of African townships was always determined by colonial officials’ ideas about the place of Africans in the ‘white’ urban areas. The idea that Africans did not really belong in these areas was always in tension with the concomitant desire to extract value from African labour, in industry and domestic service. Until the Second World War, the solution to this contradiction was a cyclical migrant labour system, whereby most African workers spent merely a few months at a time in urban employment, before returning to the rural hinterlands or their countries of origin. Their transient presence was reflected in the rudimentary character of public housing: austere, barrack-like, crowded hostels for male workers – a warehousing solution. This generally resulted in inhuman living conditions, which contributed to considerable urban unrest in the late 1930s and 1940s. (This cyclical labour system notwithstanding, many African women and men did settle long-term in most early colonial towns.)

Post-war urban development was a response to these crises. It was about creating conditions of stability for the African urban workforce, in order to both pacify and extract more value from it. But it went further than merely providing conditions for stability. In line with a very

long tradition of ‘civilising’ Africans, the late colonial development drive involved ‘improving’ Africans in the urban setting. In the post-war era, improving Africans meant helping them to ‘detrribalise’ and ‘modernise’.

This stabilisation and improvement policy challenged not just ideas about the essence of Africans, but also moral geographies of race, as it threatened the ‘white cities’ with visions of permanent African settlement. For this reason, urban racial segregation in some colonies, such as Southern Rhodesia, was actually entrenched at the same time as African worker stability was promoted. The policies of urban stabilisation/improvement on the one hand, and segregation on the other, were always in tension in the late colonial period, and municipal councils and central government officials often disagreed about how to balance these two goals.

Stabilising and improving Africans required heavier state intervention – in terms of effort, expertise and resources – than ever before. We have extensive accounts of the outcomes of such interventions, including the impacts on colonial subjects and how the latter resisted and reordered these top-down development schemes. We also have insightful functional explanations of how they served as direct and indirect means of rendering the population governable, in the service of state control. However, we have fewer accounts of municipalities’ long-term experience of actually delivering development, including the visions, strategies, power relations, and institutional cultures that emerged in the process at the local government level. Consequently, the legacy of colonial urbanism is often considered to be rather generic, with capital cities taken as prime exemplars of “the” colonial city, and the heterogeneous histories of secondary towns being overlooked.

To nuance this picture, this study undertook to uncover the political struggles and everyday material resourcefulness involved in Bulawayo’s shift from being reactionary to being more “progressive”, pursuing a post-war developmental vision that was increasingly at odds with the Central Government. It examined development planning and policy formulation over a 28-year period, focusing particularly on the activities of the new, post-war African Administration Department of the City Council, which had the broad remit of providing housing, services, recreational facilities, libraries, and welfare programmes in the African townships. All decisions “from above” concerning the townships passed through its Head Office. Municipal archives were the main source of information, supplemented by national and newspaper archives and interviews with former administrators. This is a “historical ethnography”³, in that it foregrounds the everyday

³ Borrowing the term as used by Ilana Feldman in her study of urban administration in colonial Gaza: *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917-1967* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2008).

practices, relationships, and where possible even emotional attachments of state actors – regarding their activities as *social*, i.e. not imbued with some essential ‘stateness’.

The central protagonist of this account of township development was Dr Hugh Ashton, the Bulawayo Council’s director of African Administration. Anthropologically trained and progressive in vision, he was profoundly influential in reorienting the Council’s whole approach to ‘African affairs’, and established a cohort of social-scientific administrators in his department – amongst whom were several Africans in high positions – which was exceptional for Rhodesia. Every major concern passed through his office, making him the ultimate authority on township development in Bulawayo. Leveraging this position, he exerted influence both downwards and upwards in the state bureaucratic hierarchy, sometimes reaching to the very top levels of Government. His right-hand man at the head of the township Welfare Section, Dr Eric Gargett, the most senior African member of his staff, Michael Ndubiwa, and the Council’s long-term town clerk, Eddie White, also feature in this study.

The late colonial drive to create stability and improvement/upliftment brought new costs and new uncertainties, and the African Administration Department began its work, in the 1950s, under conditions of extreme resource and knowledge scarcity. By analysing how the Department tried to fulfil its mandate under these conditions, and over the protracted late colonial period in Rhodesia, the thesis brings to light three main characteristics of the development process: firstly, it was significantly decentralised – shaped by the initiative and vision of local state agents, the regional, continental and sometimes global knowledge exchange networks they tapped into, and the city’s historical resistance to top-down interference. When the Government tried to impose its policies, conflict often ensued.

Secondly, it was a hugely experimental and endlessly compromised process, adapted to the conditions that pertained in Bulawayo in the post-war context of rapid social change, and responsive to an active African civil society demanding to be treated as citizens, not subjects. Pragmatic solutions were married with progressive ideals, such as enlisting the human and financial resources of African residents through self-building and home ownership, developing the townships in a more spatially integrated manner to reduce infrastructural costs, and establishing Southern Africa’s most elaborate beer garden complexes for a lucrative (though controversial) source of revenue. Financial, political and moral rationalisations of these strategies imbued the *ad hoc*, experimental and often contingent development process with coherent, modernising intent. The resultant spectacle of progress imposed no undue costs on European ratepayers and industrial employers, enhanced the city’s image for public relations, and offered a durable future for African residents to further invest in.

Thirdly, the trajectory of township development was subject to strong path dependent effects. Because the 1950s were a critical juncture at which a new approach to ‘native administration’ was adopted, decisions made at this time set Bulawayo on a particular developmental trajectory from which it was increasingly costly – economically, politically, administratively, and socially – to diverge. Having found common ground with the Central Government during the “liberal” era of Rhodesian national politics in the 1950s, the Bulawayo Council subsequently fell out with the right-wing Rhodesia Front Government of the 1960s and ‘70s. Having established more spatially integrated townships, acquired extensive localised knowledge through trial and error, and forged its own practical norms and style of governing, the Council came to resist the detached, ill-conceived and reactionary policies formulated at the top. This experience, and the staff who were conditioned by it, bequeathed a particular localised legacy to post-colonial Bulawayo.

These three factors to a significant extent account for the more progressive developments that arose in Bulawayo over the protracted late colonial period. Achieved at no undue *economic* cost to the European ratepayer or the industrial employer, this progressivism was highly resourceful. But it came at a theoretical social “cost”: of accepting permanent African settlement close to the town, and a proliferation of African beer gardens and recreation centres, even in European neighbourhoods. The capital city was less willing to impose such social costs on its European ratepayers.

In the following sections, I discuss, firstly, the broader history of post-war developmentalism in Africa, to put this study in context; secondly, the ways in which colonial developmentalism has come to be understood in terms of top-down strategies to appease, pacify and improve Africans (in an often totalitarian manner with detrimental effects); and thirdly, the ways in which this thesis contributes to this literature.

The origins of colonial developmentalism

Bulawayo’s post-war reforms can only be understood in the context of broader continental reforms. In the 1940s, long-established modes of colonial rule in Africa were deemed untenable and in need of revision. As this section shows, this involved more than just a new strategy of rule. It involved new ways of understanding colonial subjects, and their rights to settle in colonial towns and cities. This section examines the impetus for reform, and how it transformed colonial urban government and governance in ways that still have ramifications today.

In the interwar period, colonialism was justified in terms of the doctrine of ‘trusteeship’. This doctrine was about holding in trust the territories of African peoples believed to be deeply embedded in their static, traditional ways of life, not yet able to cope with the modern world. The doctrine served not only to legitimise the empire, but also to veto the calls of white settlers for self-government in their respective colonies. According to Robert Pearce, trusteeship was a “quasi-theological doctrine”; this made it heretical to reduce it to a precise definition: “vagueness was its strength”.⁴ Whilst metropolitan governments (Britain, France) were thinking about labour in their own societies in new ways – around issues of standards of living, wages, housing, unions – they were unable to think of African urban workers in those terms.⁵ African migrant workers were considered to be essentially tribal; their potential to ‘detrribalise’ in urban areas was something officials feared. According to Werlin, this idea that Africans did not belong in the towns stemmed from the ideas of the 18th and 19th century philosophers Edmund Burke and Herbert Spencer, who thought that, “Traditional culture was an ‘organic’ structure of mutually dependent parts – a fragile chain of shared history and traditions – which would readily be disrupted by any radical reform, leaving a cultural void accompanied by violence and decadence.”⁶

Although there had in fact been some early proposals by Lord Milner, a leading figure in the British colonial establishment, for ambitious intervention and development in the British colonies in 1919-20, the British Government had not been amenable to this.⁷ Lord Lugard, who most famously articulated the doctrine of ‘indirect rule’, insisted that development could disturb what he perceived as the delicate equilibria of African tribal societies, which should be preserved.⁸ Such a stultifying view of African society ignored dynamic changes taking place.

This steadfast belief that Britain’s trusteeship role would last for centuries was shattered by a wave of workers’ strikes in several parts of the Empire in the latter half of the 1930s. This “shock from below” forced officials to address the ‘labour question’. There was a genuine belief in the British Colonial Office that it was not just unemployment, but poor housing and services, that had provoked unrest. Officials therefore stressed the need for some *tangible improvements* to the lives of the colonised. As George Creasy of the Colonial Office complained in 1939, there had been:

⁴ R. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938-48* (London, Frank Cass, 1982), p. 4

⁵ F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 23-56

⁶ H. Werlin, ‘The Nairobi City Council: a study in comparative local government,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 8, 2 (1966) p. 187

⁷ F. Cooper, ‘Development, modernization, and the social sciences in the era of decolonization: the examples of British and French Africa’, *Revue d’histoire des sciences humaines*, 1 (2004), pp.11-12

⁸ *Ibid.*

too much emphasis on the desirability of making the African (or West Indian, etc.) into a more efficient producer or labourer for the needs of the country. This is a point which, of course, will appeal to the Treasury... I feel, however, that so far as the Colonial Office is concerned our real aim should be the more general one of turning the African into a happier, healthier, more prosperous individual in which case all the other subsidiary objects will automatically be attained.⁹

And another key official, Malcolm MacDonald, claimed that unless proper social services were soon provided, Britain would deserve to lose her colonies.¹⁰ But the Treasury took a very different view; it wanted to keep the colonies self-sufficient, and avoid elevating Africans' expectations of social services to a level that the colonies could not themselves sustain. The Treasury regarded metropolitan expenditure on colonial welfare as putting the colonies "on the dole".¹¹

Indeed, the colonies up to 1940 had been subject to a rigid system of economic self-sufficiency. In the 11 years since the old Colonial Development Act of 1929, a mere £9m had been approved by the Treasury for all the British colonies (and only £6.4m actually spent by them). This 1929 Act had a landowners' conception of development – to develop the "imperial estates" so they could trade with the United Kingdom. But after 1939, the Colonial Office began to view social welfare and economic growth as mutually supportive.¹² This formula came to be known as "development". Development was inspired by three key imperatives: to legitimise colonialism in the eyes of both the colonised and the wider world; to improve the efficiency of labour; and to socially, economically and morally "uplift" African subjects. These were all mutually supportive, but it was the spectre of further strikes and riots that brought the last of these to the fore, for the first time. Putting it starkly, Cooper argues that, "In 1939, the labour question was assimilated into the development question. And in those terms it remained."¹³

Therefore, from 1940, there was a massive escalation of metropolitan funding to the colonies. The Colonial Welfare and Development Act of 1940 was the first time that money was pledged purely for improving the living standards of the colonised. The Act pledged an annual £5m for development and £0.5m for research, for the next 10 years.¹⁴ Whilst the British Treasury was sceptical about "putting the colonies on the dole", the Colonial Office tentatively suggested

⁹ George Creasy, Minute, 30 November 1939, to Draft Outline of Statement of Policy, quoted in F. Cooper, 'Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept', in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley, University of California Press 1997), p. 67

¹⁰ MacDonald, Minute, 14 January 1940, CO 859/19/7475, PRO, in Cooper, *ibid.*

¹¹ J. Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Oxford, James Currey, 2000), pp. 42-50

¹² Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, p. 69-73

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 111

¹⁴ (Actual expenditure remained far lower than these limits, but increased rapidly from 1943.)

that welfare and economic development went together. The 1945 CW&D Act ramped the amount up to £120m for the period 1946-56 (and an additional £80m was approved for 1955-60), and there was much more flexibility in how these funds could be spent.¹⁵

Although an emerging younger generation of Colonial Office officials in the early 1940s had moved discussion at the CO towards “a colony-centred understanding of development... not obviously dictated by an overriding concern for Britain's economic interests,”¹⁶ after the war (which had been used as justification for continued but temporary economic exploitation of the colonies), the promise of true colony-centred development did not materialise. The Metropolitan Government had massive post-war reconstruction costs and was seriously financially dependent on the US, whose lend-lease scheme to aid in the war effort was terminated in 1945, requiring repayment. The post-war Labour Government of Clement Attlee continued to employ welfarist rhetoric about colony-centred development, but in practice welfare and development were conceived as a way to boost economic productivity and the export of much-needed raw materials to Britain, especially after the country's balance of payments crisis in August, 1947.¹⁷ (This economic imperative constituted a shift from the initial conception of colonial welfare as an antidote to disorder.¹⁸)

But the post-war development drive also involved a new technocratic approach to ‘modernising’ African societies. Certainly, the increased sophistication of colonial administration had already begun in the interwar period when the Colonial Office attempted to apply “metropolitan standards of government to colonial bureaucratic practice”¹⁹, but during the Second World War, officials in the CO had increasingly come to regard the colonial ‘Native Administration’ systems as rather primitive. Therefore, from 1946, the CO began to transform colonial administrations into the English-style local government system. A central figure in this reform effort was Arthur Creech-Jones, who was promoted to Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1946. Whilst he and his officials in London accepted the need for reform, convincing the Colonial Service – the administrators on the ground in Africa – of the desirability of these changes, was another matter. In a famous Despatch to the African Governors on 25th Feb, 1947, Creech-Jones pronounced the end of ‘Indirect Rule’, and called for “efficient and democratic local government” as the key to success.²⁰

¹⁵ E.R. Wicker, ‘Colonial Development and Welfare, 1929-1957: The evolution of a policy’, *Social and Economic Studies*, 7, 4 (1958), pp. 170-192.

¹⁶ L. Butler, ‘The Ambiguities of British Colonial Development Policy, 1938-48’, in A. Gorst, L. Johnmann and W. Lucas (eds), *Contemporary British History, 1931-1961* (London, Pinter, 1991), p. 121 and

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-140.

¹⁸ Cooper, ‘Modernizing Bureaucrats’, p. 70-71

¹⁹ Lewis, *Empire State Building*, p. 35

²⁰ Pearce, *The Turning Point*, pp. 141-159; Lewis, *Empire State-building*, pp. 95-6.

There is general scholarly consensus that these post-war reforms signified a turning point in colonial Africa, characterised as a shift from trusteeship to development²¹, from a *laissez-faire* approach to modes of heavy interventionism²², or, most famously (and cynically) – as a “second colonial occupation”.²³ As Richard Stren put it for the case of Kenya, African urban administration in the interwar period had been “characterized by a predisposition toward control”, whereas after 1944, “a much more sophisticated appreciation of the interrelated problems of development and administration clearly emerged...”²⁴ A dissenting view on this period is held by Joanna Lewis, who claims that in Kenya, whilst intentions and initiatives changed significantly, in terms of administrative practices and outcomes “the reality was closer to continuity rather than marked by cleavage.”²⁵ And on the topic of continuity, it is worth remembering that this post-war development drive did have deeper roots in earlier ideas about developing Africa, “stretch[ing] back to the *mission civilisatrice* and constructive imperialism doctrines of the late nineteenth century.”²⁶

Continuities notwithstanding, a key change was that colonial bureaucrats no longer stymied, but indeed tried to encourage, the emergence of a stable African working class in the late 1940s.²⁷ The strikes and protests of that decade had not constituted a linear process of class formation and worker unity; in fact, they had been most effective when they involved mass mobilisation of petty traders and the unemployed, *not* just workers. But by actively intervening to create a working class, colonial bureaucrats ceased to blur the distinctions between Africans of various occupation, skill and inclination. They began “to separate workers vertically and horizontally into hierarchies and occupations and to separate workers from other Africans.”²⁸ Labour policy changed as officials *re-imagined* Africans.

This re-imagining of Africans now meant that urbanisation and ‘detrribalisation’ were no longer feared, but instead carefully managed. Social scientists, notably researchers at the Rhodes Livingstone Institute (RLI) in Northern Rhodesia, began to take an interest in these processes.

²¹ R. Harris, ‘From Trusteeship to Development: How Class and Gender Complicated Kenya’s Housing Policy’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 34 (2008), pp. 311-337

²² A. Burton, ‘Townsmen in the making: social engineering and citizenship in Dar es Salaam, c.1945-1960’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 36, 2 (2003)

²³ D. Low and J. Lonsdale, ‘Introduction: Towards the New Order, 1945-63’ in D. Low and A. Smith (eds), *History of East Africa*, 3 (Oxford, 1976), pp. 1-63

²⁴ R. Stren, ‘The Evolution of Housing Policy in Kenya’, in J. Hutton (ed.), *Urban Challenge in East Africa* (Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1970), p. 61

²⁵ J. Lewis, ‘The Ruling Compassions of the Late Colonial State: Welfare versus force, Kenya, 1945-52’, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 2, 2 (2011), n.p.

²⁶ Hodge, (2018) *Developing Africa*

²⁷ F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, p. 273

²⁸ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, p. 262

For example, the RLI researcher James Clyde Mitchell entered this field just as the old attitude that Africans were mere workers on sufferance was being revised. He noted how,

This point of view has led to inadequate family accommodation and a preponderance of housing for single men, a general lack of provision for old age care, inadequate provisions for land ownership and for invalidism. These conditions have done nothing to encourage a settled family life in the towns.²⁹

The new focus on managing rather than preventing these processes of social change inspired government ministries and municipalities to launch ambitious projects in housing, services, amenities and activities for social upliftment. This was about turning tribal Africans into second class citizens – never on a par with Europeans – who would enjoy some limited political, civic and social rights, but also acquire a sense of financial, moral, and political “responsibility”. Managing this process of detribalisation required a shift from the earlier direct forms of control, to more indirect modes of improvement.³⁰

Stabilisation and improvement

The building of townships to stabilise migrant communities was determined by the ways in which colonial governments and municipal councils conceptualised African urban citizenship. I use the term ‘urban citizenship’ to include political rights to vote, civil rights to own property and speak freely, and social entitlements to health and housing, as well as the obligations to behave and participate in certain ways.³¹ It was also determined by African *acts* of citizenship, i.e. claiming a citizenship status and refusing to be treated as subjects.

Late colonial authorities regarded the entitlements of public housing and services to come with obligations to take on some of the financial, moral and governing “responsibilities” associated with “modern” urban life. As Andrew Burton explains, “[C]olonial administrators abandoned the static notion of the ‘tribesman’ for a discourse that identified Africans as in the process of becoming citizens, with corresponding rights and responsibilities derived from and

²⁹ J. Clyde-Mitchell, ‘Labour and Population Movements’, in K. M. Barbour and R. M. Prothero (eds), *Essays on African Population* (New York, 1962) p. 237, in Ferguson, ‘Modernist narratives, conventional wisdoms, and colonial liberalism: reply to a Straw Man’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20,4, (1994) p. 636

³⁰ This does not mean that direct control disappeared, indeed it often increased, but its importance relative to indirect modes of governing diminished.

³¹ A. Marston, and K. Mitchell, ‘Citizens and the state: citizenship formations in space and time’ In C. Barnett and M. Low (eds), *Spaces of democracy: Geographical perspectives on citizenship, participation and representation* (London, Sage, 2004), pp. 93-112.

owed to the state”.³² However, official discourses about rights, entitlements and “responsibilities” in the city were often inflected by both a lingering hostility to African urban settlement, and a strong paternalistic impulse to guide the process of Africans becoming citizens. Through organised programmes as well as through the spaces of the built environment itself, the modern urban African was to be socially engineered.

Applied in a hubristic top-down manner by developmental “experts”, such interventions often had destructive effects. These top-down impositions of order “virtually ignored the everyday spatial life-world of the majority of the residents.”³³ This was not incidental but *inherent* to a top-down approach: the “absolute faith in the power of the state to plan, direct, implement, and manage development schemes” often resulted in what Jennings calls a “coercive utopia”.³⁴ Residents both confronted colonial authorities with demands for improved housing, services and freedom of movement, and physically and symbolically reordered the built environment through the practices of everyday life. Such actions by residents are best captured in the more dynamic concept of citizenship as “not merely a legal fact” but also “an everyday act that operates at multiple scales.”³⁵ However, the power of African civil society was usually undermined by structures of discrimination and disempowerment.³⁶

In the following subsections, I present an overview of these perspectives on late colonial urban development, drawing particularly on studies of Kenya, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa – where the historiography is richest, and with whom the Bulawayo Council shared the most lessons and experiences. This is followed by a critique and explanation of how this thesis contributes to the historiography of this period. I argue that this rich and insightful literature on singular overarching state strategies of development on the one hand, and its outcomes and impacts on the other, would be enhanced by greater focus on the mid-level municipal actors who played such a significant role in formulating and implementing urban development policies in the course of their often decades-long careers, often in opposition to central governments.

³² Burton, ‘Townsmen in the making’, p. 331

³³ G. Myers, ‘Designing Power: Forms and Purposes of Colonial Model Neighborhoods in British Africa’, *Habitat International*, 27, 2 (2003) p. 201

³⁴ M. Jennings, ‘Building Better People - Modernity and Utopia in Late Colonial Tanganyika’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 3, 1 (2009), pp. 94-111

³⁵ C. Lemanski, ‘Infrastructural citizenship: Spaces of living in Cape Town, South Africa,’ in K. Ward, A. Jonas, B. Miller, D. Wilson, (eds), *The Routledge Handbook on Spaces of Urban Politics*. (London, Routledge, 2018), p. 351.

³⁶ Jennings, ‘Building better people’, p. 96.

Stabilisation: family housing and secure tenure

To what extent did the post-war stabilisation policy, discussed above, actually manifest in better housing and improved security for renters and home owners? Did the rhetoric and intention translate into action? And how did central government or municipal housing authorities find the resources and means to achieve this? This section addresses these questions for British Africa at large, whilst chapters 3 and 4 address them for Rhodesia specifically.

Scholars have documented a relative surge in urban public housing projects in most British colonies after the war, and in primary as well as secondary cities, albeit with significant variation between and within colonies. In most colonies, employers had played a major role in housing their employees in the interwar period, and after the war, the state – mostly municipal councils and sometimes central governments through ministries or housing boards – stepped up to play the major role. In Nairobi, for example, 12,000 units were built by the city council in the boom period between 1945-52.³⁷ Dar es Salaam, on the other hand, was less well-resourced; despite population growth of 121,000 between 1948 and 1962, only 4,839 housing units were built.³⁸ But even ambitious building programmes were rarely sufficient to keep up with housing demand in rapidly expanding cities. The small but rapidly growing town of Lusaka built 4,440 African houses with 1-4 rooms in 1950-52, yet by 1957, 20% of the city lived in unauthorised compounds.³⁹ And as for Nairobi, “By the eve of independence, in 1963, the Nairobi cityscape was already characterized not by ‘model’ housing estates, but by burgeoning shanties...”⁴⁰

It was not just capital cities that ramped up efforts. Secondary cities also joined in and were sometimes even more proactive. In the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, according to a Ten Year Development Plan of 1947 to build a “settled urban society”, African labour camps were “transformed into mosquito-free towns with water-borne sanitation, tarmac roads, street lighting, over-crowded but well-built houses, clean open spaces, public transport for Africans and civic administration” by municipalities and mining companies.⁴¹ Indeed, far more resources in N. Rhodesia were ploughed into urban than rural development in the 1950s, accentuating the rural-

³⁷Stren, ‘The Evolution of Housing Policy’, p. 71

³⁸ R. Stren, *Urban Inequality and Housing Policy in Tanzania* (Berkeley, Uni California Press, 1975) p. 37, quoted in A. Burton, ‘The Haven of Peace Purged: Tackling the Undesirable and Unproductive Poor in Dar es Salaam, ca.1950s-1980s’, *Journal of African Historical Studies*, 40, 1 (2007), p. 125

³⁹ C. Rakodi, ‘Colonial Urban Policy and Planning in Northern Rhodesia and its Legacy’, *Third World Planning Review*, 8, 3 (1986) p. 210

⁴⁰ D. Anderson, ‘Corruption at City Hall: African housing and urban development in colonial Nairobi’, *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 36-37, 1 (2001), p. 140.

⁴¹ H. Heisler, ‘The creation of a stabilised urban society: a turning point in the development of N. Rhodesia’, *African Affairs*, 70, 279 (1971), pp. 125-145; see also R. Prain, ‘The Stabilization of Labour in the Rhodesian Copperbelt’, *African Affairs*, 55.221 (1956), pp. 305-312

urban divide.⁴² Even in less resourced colonies like Uganda, secondary towns, such as Jinja, had their existing mud and wattle houses, deemed impermanent because built by indigenous methods, cleared and replaced with municipal housing schemes.⁴³ The results amongst secondary cities were varied. And in the case of Rhodesia, the second city of Bulawayo became even more proactive than the capital, as this thesis bears out.

As well as general increases in house-building, there were changes to housing styles, as the stabilisation policy prioritised married accommodation. The early archetypal form of worker housing was the barrack-like block or “hostel” for single male workers. This was a cheap warehousing strategy and an easy way to maintain control. In the 1940s and ‘50s, single-family cottages increasingly replaced single men’s hostels. According to Robert Home, the hostel and the family cottage were “collectively the commonest built element in the colonial landscape”.⁴⁴ But there were many exceptions to the standard range of colonial African house designs. For example, Mombasa had a scheme with low-cost “Swahili-style” houses.⁴⁵ In several colonies there were experiments with “hybrid” designs, combining indigenous designs and materials, such as thatch and bush-pole roofs, with bricks and concrete.⁴⁶ (These were often considered to be “semi-permanent” due to the inclusion of indigenous materials.) And as important as changes in house design, were the addition of “modern” services, such as electricity, running water and sewerage reticulation. These service infrastructures developed incrementally, and their invariable inferiority to those in the European ratepaying areas reflected their different citizenship statuses.

African housing also began to reflect socioeconomic stratification.⁴⁷ This was an answer to the demands of the emergent African middle class. As Michael West argues, “[I]here were fewer areas in which the ‘progressive’ urbanized African in Southern Rhodesia felt more restricted than in choice of housing. Indeed, housing was a touchstone of the ability of the African middle class to control its own destiny.”⁴⁸ Wealthier households could finally enjoy some social and spatial differentiation from lower classes, in townships intended to cultivate European bourgeois

⁴² Heisler, *ibid.*

⁴³ A. Byerley, ‘Mind the Gap! Seeking Stability Beyond the “Tribal” Threshold in Late-Colonial Uganda: The Role of Urban Housing Policy, 1945–1960,’ *African Studies* 68, 3 (2009), pp. 429-464.

⁴⁴ R. Home, ‘From Barrack compounds to the single-family house: planning worker housing in colonial Natal and Northern Rhodesia’, *Planning Perspectives*, 15 (2000), p. 327.

⁴⁵ R. Stren, ‘A Survey of Lower Income Areas in Mombasa’, in J. Hutton (ed.), *Urban Challenge in East Africa* (Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1970), p. 98.

⁴⁶ See e.g. R. Harris, ‘Development and hybridity made concrete in the colonies’, *Environment and Planning A*, 40,1 (2008), pp. 15-36; R. Harris and G. Myers, ‘Hybrid housing: improvement and control in late colonial Zanzibar’, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 66, 4 (2007), pp. 476-493.

⁴⁷ See Harris, ‘From Trusteeship to Development’.

⁴⁸ M. West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002). pp 99-100

domestic habits (see the next section on ‘improvement’). For this class, semi-detached houses with a yard were a favourite design in many colonies.⁴⁹

These better-class neighbourhoods were often called ‘model townships’. Most model townships were built after 1945, displaying “more extensive, involved, integrated plans with more elaborate forms” than earlier grid-iron bachelor schemes.⁵⁰ Sometimes they involved transforming existing pre-colonial urban areas, as in the case of *Ng’ambo* in Zanzibar, which had existed since the mid-1850s, and was redesigned and segmented along race and class lines in the late 1940s.⁵¹ More often they were built from scratch. In Nairobi, for example, a number of schemes with shops, schools, social centres and sports facilities popped up after the war, starting with an “experimental” scheme called *Ziwani*.⁵² And it was not just municipalities and central government agencies that built model townships. Employers often copied them for their own workers, such as *Makongeni* in Nairobi, which was built by the railways for its 5,000 workers, and boasted “welfare clinics, a club, a library and reading room, a dance hall and tea room, football grounds and even tennis courts.”⁵³ Similarly in Bulawayo, both municipal and employer-built model townships were constructed from the 1950s.

Once the policy of labour stabilisation was under way, and it was to some extent accepted that permanent African communities would grow in the urban areas, the right to buy homes on leasehold or freehold title was tentatively introduced. This was considered an important way to appease the emergent middle class and further stabilise communities, and is the subject of chapter 4. Many colonial officials debated the various merits of home ownership, seeing it as a way to root people in the town and abandon their rural roots.⁵⁴ The extension of tenure rights to urban Africans was not a linear process, however. In Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, the legislation periodically changed, such that tenure rights were extended and then later curtailed again.⁵⁵

In these ways, evidently, the post-war development drive did translate into significant tangible outcomes in many cities. Whilst there is still a lot of work required to document

⁴⁹ S. Dalberto, H. Charton and O. Goerg, ‘Urban Planning, housing and the making of ‘responsible citizens’ in the late colonial period: Dakar, Nairobi and Conakry’, in S. Bekker and L. Fourchard (eds.), *Governing Cities in Africa* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2013), p. 51

⁵⁰ Myers, ‘Designing Power’, p. 201

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199

⁵² Anderson, ‘Corruption at City Hall’, p. 147.

⁵³ L.W. Thornton White, L. Silberman & P.R. Anderson, *Nairobi: Master Plan for a Colonial Capital. A Report Prepared for the Municipal Council of Nairobi* (London, HMSO, 1948), p. 18, quoted in Anderson, ‘Corruption at City Hall’, p. 147.

⁵⁴ A notable proponent of these views was Sir Ernst Vasey, of the Nairobi City Council, who wrote a lengthy and influential report on the matter in 1950.

⁵⁵ See R. Davenport, ‘African Townsmen? South African Natives (Urban Areas) Legislation through the Years’, *African Affairs*, 68, 271 (1969), pp. 95-109.

systematically how Africans were housed and the extent to which the development promise was delivered, much of the scholarly interest is on how development was conceived as a way to improve and uplift African townspeople, a project framed by colonial authorities as one of their moral obligations, but usually analysed in a post-structural framework as a way to render Africans more governable.

Improvement: making responsible citizens

To colonial authorities, building stable communities involved more than the provision of entitlements such as modern housing and amenities. It also meant helping tribal Africans adjust to this new environment by moulding them into modern townspeople. This was attempted through modifications to the built environment and careful management of the private and public activities of the residents. Hence, it involved more elaborate and sophisticated state interventions in the lives of Africans to guide and shape their conduct than had hitherto taken place in the comparatively *laissez-faire* interwar period.

Improvement through Space

The colonial obsession with imposing a top-down ‘order’ on urban space represented a strong environmental determinist philosophy. As Garth Myers phrased it, colonial officials always saw the work of rule as “a highly geographical project”.⁵⁶ Colonial planners were inspired to seek “physicalist solutions to social, economic and political ills”.⁵⁷ This geographical project entailed a range of direct and indirect modes of governing through space, from segregation and surveillance to the ‘model townships’ believed to improve the character of their inhabitants. This sub-section discusses some of the “spatial strategies” universally employed, and how they changed in the late colonial period.

Most colonial towns shared a number of generic spatial forms after the 1840s, when a planning model that had evolved since the early 1600s was replicated across the empire. This model included the following features: planning and laying out the town in advance of occupation; laying wide streets in geometric gridiron form; demarcating a central public square; demarcating

⁵⁶ G. Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa* (New York, Syracuse University Press, 2003), p. 19-20.

⁵⁷ A. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy*, (London, Routledge, 1990), p. 54

spacious, rectangular plots of standard size; allocating some plots for public purposes; and leaving a commonage or green belt encircling the town to distinguish it from the countryside.⁵⁸

From early on, racial segregation was a key feature of colonial towns. Africans were confined to certain areas, known as 'locations', separated by buffer zones from European, and sometimes also 'Asian' and 'Coloured', residential areas. Dualism was one of the defining feature of colonial cities (although in recent decades there has been more recognition of the actual hybridity of colonial urban space⁵⁹). One reason for keeping the colonised separate from the settler population was health concerns, namely the spread of disease. This planning feature is therefore often referred to as the "sanitation syndrome".⁶⁰ Africans in the locations would be subject to compulsory medical checks.

Another interpretation of why Africans were restricted to locations, was that they facilitated a ready cheap labour supply for industrialists. This Marxian interpretation was based on the assumption that the colonial state was entirely "captured" by capital. However, this reductionist account of the state as "a sentient being organising capital's hegemony"⁶¹ has since been revised. More sophisticated understandings of the state's relation to capital see the former as the "protector of capitalist social relations" but not a blind "servant of capital".⁶² Jennifer Robinson argues that the colonial state was a semi-autonomous actor.⁶³ It used locations as a "territorial strategy" to enhance its relatively weak control over the colonised, which she calls the "Location strategy".⁶⁴ This functionalist, centralised interpretation of colonial planning remains popular.

Influx controls through pass laws and registration systems ensured that only people in productive employment resided in towns. South Africa stuck to its guns on this policy, but other colonies loosened these systems of control from the mid-1950s. For example, the East Africa

⁵⁸ R. Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013)

⁵⁹ W. Bissell, 'Between Fixity and Fantasy: Assessing the Spatial Impact of Colonial Urban Dualism', *Journal of Urban History*, 37, 2 (2011), pp. 208-229

⁶⁰ M. Swanson, 'The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909', *The Journal of African History*, 18, 3 (1977), pp. 387-410

⁶¹ J. Lonsdale, 'States and social processes in Africa: a historiographical survey', *African Studies Review* 24, 2-3 (1981), p. 187 in S. Dubow, 'Holding 'a just balance between white and black': the native affairs department in South Africa c. 1920-33', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12,2, (1986), p. 218

⁶² J. Lonsdale, and B. Berman, 'Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914', *Journal of African History*, (1979), p. 489 in John L. Comaroff, 'Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts and Fictions, *Social Identities*, 4:3, (1998), p. 325

⁶³ Inspired by Michael Mann.

⁶⁴ J. Robinson, "A Perfect System of Control? State power and 'native locations' in South Africa", *Environment and Planning D*, 8 (1990), pp. 136-162.

Royal Commission (1955) and the Southern Rhodesia Urban Affairs Commission (1958) regarded them as both impracticable and inhibiting of the exchange economy.⁶⁵

A less strategic, less direct, and more diffuse form of spatial power is identified by Timothy Mitchell in his study of colonial Egypt. He argues that modern practices of drawing up plans – of streets, rooms, courtyards with *exact* dimensions and magnitudes – “introduce space as something apparently abstract and neutral, a series of inert frames or containers”, within which things and people can be divided and contained.⁶⁶ This produces certain effects which Mitchell calls ‘enframing’. Enframing makes the isolated subject feel contained and surveyed, and thereby induces self-regulatory behaviours. Other ways of ordering space that do not have this enframing effect, then appear as fundamental *disorder*.

Whilst Mitchell’s cogent account of governance in Egypt cannot be so neatly applied to many other colonies in Africa (such as Swaziland or Uganda⁶⁷), it is a useful way to understand the common perception that colonial planners had of pre-colonial and unregulated colonial-era African settlements as fundamentally disorderly and undisciplined. Colonial planners perceived a number of ills resulting therefrom, such as a lack of social conscience and sense of responsibility,⁶⁸ requiring “physicalist solutions” in the form of top-down impositions of grid-like order.⁶⁹ For this reason, they often razed unregulated settlements and replaced them with grid-iron ones, or embarked on “clearing out and cleaning up” campaigns in existing urban areas such as around Stone Town in Zanzibar.⁷⁰ The overall effect in many new colonial African townships was a sense of ‘containment’ and surveillance. Indeed, a leading African nationalist in Rhodesia described them as “nothing but enlarged and consolidated back quarters for servants”.⁷¹

The concept of ‘enframing’ applies at the scale of the individual house, too. Plans for colonial houses conjured a neutral framework within which things could be precisely placed, with a clear distinction between “inside” and “outside”. This usually contrasted with different senses of order in precolonial homes, where objects were not just arranged differently, but the whole space was not conceived as a neutral container of things. Colonial planners, of course, did not consciously view the order they imposed in terms of its ‘enframing’ effects. However, they did

⁶⁵ R. Davenport, ‘African Townsmen? South African Natives (Urban Areas) Legislation through the Years’, *African Affairs*, 68, 271 (1969), p. 96

⁶⁶ T. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, CUP, 1988), p. 44

⁶⁷ Comaroff, ‘Reflections on the Colonial State’, p. 336

⁶⁸ See e.g. G. Myers, ‘The Unauthorized City: Late colonial Lusaka and postcolonial Geography’, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 27 (2006), pp. 301-2

⁶⁹ Myers, *Verandahs of Power*.

⁷⁰ *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 150

⁷¹ Herbert Chitepo, ‘The Impact of Legislation on the Community’, presented by M. Wakatama, (The National Convention of Southern Rhodesia, 1960), p. 97

regard African housing as a “vital instructional space” for managing detribalisation and modernisation.⁷² This explicit connection between domestic design and the improvement of moral character had its origins in 19th century Britain and her early colonies. For example, in 19th century Lahore, British officials had believed that traditional domestic architecture “eschewed progressive change”.⁷³

In the late colonial period, it was particularly the emergent middle class who were induced to “voluntarily and freely submit themselves to certain forms of behaviour”⁷⁴ through their occupation of model townships and homes. As Dalberto et al. argue, “government housing programmes were developed to encourage specific social, economic and cultural groups to internalise the anticipated roles and behaviours of the new ‘responsible’ urban African citizen.”⁷⁵ The concept of model townships had its roots in turn-of-the-century utopian planning ideologies, such as the English planner Sir Howard Ebenezer’s concept of a garden city. The Scottish planner Patrick Geddes conceived of the planner as a “miracle-worker” who would create “wonders of beauty and veritable transformation schemes”.⁷⁶

An early example of a model township inspired by these utopian ideas was McNamee Village in Port Elizabeth, Union of South Africa, built in 1936. Robinson describes how the planning process was “surrounded by a self-consciously noble, liberal, and even religious rhetoric”, and the resultant township was hailed as “a model throughout the Union and beyond”.⁷⁷ Each house had “a closed-in front garden, fenced in by trim hedges, in which residents grew grass lawns and flowers or cultivated vegetables.”⁷⁸ It resembled a garden city with a central open space from which roads radiated outward:

The houses were to be situated on numerous cul-de-sacs which were on the one hand intended to provide privacy, variation in appearance and safe playing areas for children. On the other hand they were employed in order significantly to reduce the costs of service provision (water, sewerage, electricity) by cutting down the road frontage.⁷⁹

⁷² A. Byerley, ‘Mind the Gap! Seeking Stability Beyond the ‘Tribal’ Threshold in Late-Colonial Uganda: The Role of Urban Housing Policy, 1945-1960’, *African Studies*, 68, 3 (2009), p. 430.

⁷³ However, they did admire its “unstudied simplicity” and functionality: W. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (Univ. Minnesota Press, 2008) p. 158

⁷⁴ Dalberto, *et al.*, ‘Urban Planning, housing and the making of ‘responsible citizens’ p. 43

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45

⁷⁶ Patrick Geddes, quoted in R. Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, p. 141

⁷⁷ J. Robinson, ‘The Politics of Urban Form: Differential citizenship and township formation in Port Elizabeth, 1925-1945’, *Kronos*, 20 (1993), p. 53.

⁷⁸ G. Baines, ‘Narratives of New Brighton: Representations of the Port Elizabeth Township in Official Discourse, cultural memory, and Public History’, *African Studies*, 64, 2 (2005), p. 246

⁷⁹ Robinson, ‘Politics of Urban form’, p. 55

Here, Robinson succinctly presents the interplay of utopian ideals with very material imperatives, namely to reduce costs. It is something that the post-structural focus on the late colonial *rationalities* of government tends to occlude; namely, the *practicalities* of actually delivering housing and services.

Responsibilisation through Social Programmes

If spatial strategies to discipline and improve were subtle and not always verbally articulated, social programmes to inculcate a sense of financial, political, cultural and moral responsibility in Africans were more explicit. Officials moved “far beyond the narrow economic focus of early colonial planning” in their attempts to improve the “entire world of the African”.⁸⁰ These concerted post-war efforts to make African people modern reflected fundamental changes in race-thinking. The scientific racism that had been prevalent until the Second World War held that only those who were phenotypically ‘White’ could achieve “White genius and Western civilizational prowess”. However, this gave way to a more meritocratic post-war idea that Black Africans could reach levels of “White genius” too.⁸¹ This was reflected in the post-war idea of modernisation as a *universal* process, which, as Cooper argues, “had a liberating element to it which gave it considerable credibility among people emerging from colonial rule and those sympathetic to their actions: all people, regardless of origins, could participate in progress and enjoy its fruits.”⁸²

The most explicit techniques for social engineering in the late colonial period were organised home making, recreational and cultural activities. Churches had played an important role in this regard until municipalities became more proactive in the late colonial period, especially through their ‘social welfare departments’. Domestic science classes and home-craft clubs targeted women to become good housewives and home makers, modelled on European bourgeois domesticity.⁸³ They also organised recreational activities and other participatory activities, “aimed at nurturing responsible African townsmen, implanting a new civic identity among the formerly ‘detribalized.’”⁸⁴ Officials often believed that with these activities they were filling a cultural vacuum in these detribalising communities, apparently oblivious to grassroots initiatives in cultural, associational and political life. African townspeople often resented the paternalism of official programmes, and repurposed community facilities for their own self-organised activities,

⁸⁰ Jennings, ‘Building better people’, p. 97

⁸¹ C. Gabay, *Imagining Africa: Whiteness and the Western Gaze* (Cambridge, CUP, 2018), p.

⁸² Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, pp. 381-82.

⁸³ M. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 70

⁸⁴ A. Burton, ‘Townsmen in the making’, p. 335

or battled with authorities to be allowed to run their own organisations, as happened with organised African football in Bulawayo.⁸⁵

Chapter 5 deals with this moral notion of making Africans ‘responsible’. But in order to complement existing literature which has focused more on the social engineering programmes just mentioned, the chapter instead examines less programmatic and more politically contested types of responsibility – namely *financial* and *governing* responsibility. Financial responsibility was associated with the essence of “economic man”, which was what many officials began to promote in British Africa in the 1950s. Across Eastern and Southern Africa, conferences and commissions began talking about “the need for the native to become and be treated as an *economic person*”, through the ownership of his own home.⁸⁶

Home ownership was therefore rationalised not only as a convenient way to offload housing costs from municipalities onto individuals (discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis), and to create stability and contentment especially in middle class communities (chapter 4 of this thesis), but also, crucially, as a way to help Africans absorb the “cultivating influences of our modern civilisation” (as a Nairobi municipal officer put it in 1945⁸⁷) and take up an entrepreneurial spirit, which is the way it is examined in chapter 5. By thus acquiring a sense of “economic value”, Africans were expected to become more industrious and less tempted by the lures of communism.

Governing responsibility, acquired through participation in ‘urban management’, is the second type discussed in chapter 5. The universal system for training Africans in urban management was the ‘African Advisory Board’ system, or some variant of this. Such boards were conceived both as a form of indirect representation for Africans in local government, *in lieu* of full political rights, and a form of *apprenticeship* in urban management for the Board Members. Restricted to an advisory role, these boards were usually toothless, and a far cry from full political rights of the urban citizen that African nationalists demanded in most colonies in the 1950s. Even Europeans recognised the obsolescence of these advisory systems but were reluctant to offer

⁸⁵ For example, in Tanganyika, community centres were designed for the education and betterment of Africans aspiring to higher living standards, but ended up being reconstituted as social clubs where members preferred to drink and dance, to the chagrin of officials. (Jennings, ‘Building Better People’, pp. 103-104); On the tensions around organised African football in Bulawayo, see O. Stuart, “*Good Boys, Footballers and Strikers: African Social Change in Bulawayo, 1933-53*” (PhD thesis, SOAS, 1989); See also P. Kaarsholm, “Si Ye Pambili – Which Way Forward?: Urban Development, Culture and Politics in Bulawayo”, in B. Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History* (Harare, Weaver Press, 1999), p. 227-256

⁸⁶ Ashton’s report on the Second Annual Conference of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs (IANA), East London, SA, 14th – 17th July, 1953/BCCA/A13/20 (Transfer Box 479)

⁸⁷ Kenya National Archive/TP/1/24, Native Housing Authority, 27/12/1945 in Dalberto, Charlton and Goerg, ‘Urban planning, housing and the making of ‘responsible citizens’ pp. 50-51

direct representation on municipal councils.⁸⁸ In Rhodesia, the advisory board system remained in operation until 1978 just 2 years before independence.

In some colonies, forms of limited direct representation in local government were tentatively offered to Africans. For example, in Northern Rhodesia, there was some experimentation with creating self-governing African towns,⁸⁹ but in most of its urban areas the Government tried to introduce direct representation and faced obstruction from the municipal councils until independence.⁹⁰ In Dar es Salaam, the African areas were converted into ward councils under the municipal council. But their powers were negligible; the government placed no faith in elected African representatives, and African interest in the system was not successfully stimulated.⁹¹ In Rhodesia, various heavily contested options of direct representation on the ‘parent council’ or the creation of semi-self-governing townships were mooted, but never came to much.

Nurturing Responsible Drinkers

Colonial authorities were also particularly concerned with encouraging morally ‘responsible’ and ‘respectable’ behaviour around the consumption of alcohol. They felt that alcohol consumption should be carefully monitored, and they demonised illicit drinking for its socially degenerative effects. Alcohol legislation discriminated against Africans, and law breakers were punished harshly, sometimes with eviction. Therefore, alcohol was deeply connected with African urban citizenship, and is the subject of chapter 6.

Discriminatory liquor legislation in most colonies meant the only alcoholic beverage on offer to Africans was traditional, opaque ‘African beer’⁹² made from sorghum and rapoko, with a weaker alcohol content. They were prohibited from drinking clear ‘European beer’, wines and spirits. It was only in the 1950s that such restrictions were relaxed. In Southern Rhodesia, the lifting of restrictions happened incrementally and on a social class basis: first European beer and wines were allowed, then spirits a few years later, with educated Africans being given permits some years ahead of the rest.

In order to control drinking whilst profiting in the process, a universal system was developed, whereby colonial municipal councils monopolised the sale of African beer and made

⁸⁸ However, in Bulawayo they enjoyed more power and legitimacy.

⁸⁹ R. Davenport, ‘African Townsmen?’ p. 96

⁹⁰ C. Rakodi, ‘Colonial Urban Policy’.

⁹¹ A. Burton, ‘Adjutants, agents, intermediaries: The Native Administration in Dar es Salaam township, 1919-61’, *Azania*, XXXVI-XXXVII (2001-2), pp. 112-113.

⁹² Often also referred to as “kaffir beer” or “native beer”.

sure it was consumed in municipal amenities. This beer monopoly system generated substantial revenues for municipalities, to fund township development. It was pioneered in Durban, and has therefore come to be known as the “Durban system”. Its origins go back to the 1908 Natal Native Beer Act, which enabled municipalities to exercise a monopoly on beer sales within their jurisdictions, with revenues going to a special ‘Native Administration’ fund, to be used for African welfare provisions (schools, hospitals, hostels, etc.). Durban jumped at this opportunity, and according to Swanson, “Beer revenues became the key financial support of a more intensive and comprehensive programme of paternalistic administration than ever before...”⁹³ It spread to several colonies to the north, including the Rhodesias, and as far north as Uganda and Sudan.⁹⁴

This system produced the classic “municipal beer hall” in most colonial towns. Municipal beer halls tended to be austere, were only open during daylight hours, and only sold African beer (until legislative changes came in). They were especially uninviting to elite men, who came to favour the illicit drinking dens in people’s homes, known as ‘shebeens’, where they could clandestinely enjoy ‘European beer’ or home-brewed spirits in cosy surroundings, unsupervised.⁹⁵ Some municipalities, such as Bulawayo, therefore adopted a dual strategy of crackdowns on shebeens and illicit brewing, and putting in extra effort to improve the atmosphere of municipal facilities to try to entice punters away from shebeens.

The combination of discriminatory liquor legislation, uninviting municipal beer halls, and heavy-handed crackdowns on shebeens and illicit brewing tended to provoke moral and political struggles between authorities and residents in many urban areas. These battles were waged along class and anti-colonial lines. In the 1930s and ‘40s the emerging African middle classes made demands for equal drinking rights to the European settlers on the basis that they were now as ‘civilised’ as them; but they were less inclined to defend these rights for their uneducated African brethren.⁹⁶ From the 1950s, African nationalists encouraged (and sometimes pressured) township residents to boycott or even sabotage municipal drinking facilities as symbols of state oppression, and valorised the shebeen as a site of resistance.⁹⁷ For example, in the Northern Rhodesian

⁹³ M. Swanson, “The Durban System”: roots of urban apartheid in colonial Natal’, *African Studies*, 35, 3-4 (1976), p. 174

⁹⁴ C. Rogerson and A. Tucker, ‘A Strange Case of Beer: The State and Sorghum Beer Manufacture in South Africa’, *Geoforum*, 16, 4 (1986), p. 16

⁹⁵ B. Mpofo, ‘Articulating Regional and Ethnic Dissent: Bulawayo’s Politicians and their Campaigns to Legalise Shebeens’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 3 (2014), pp. 479-498.

⁹⁶ M. West, ‘Equal Rights for all Civilised Men: Elite Africans and the Quest for European Liquor in Colonial Zimbabwe’, *International Review of Social History*, 37, 3 (1992), pp. 376-397.

⁹⁷ N. Chimhete, ‘African Nationalism, Municipal Beer Outlets and Shebeens in Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1960s-1980s’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 44, 5 (2018), pp. 815-831.

Legislative Assembly in 1962, one African member proclaimed: “I think as soon as we have an African government in this country, [beerhalls] will be the first thing it will hit at.”⁹⁸

This section has presented post-war trends in state-led urban development across British Africa – from laissez-faire to more sophisticated interventions, in order to promote stabilisation and improvement of African townspeople, usually within their own segregated areas. As Myers states, “We must be cautious about making a blanket argument, but there are enough commonalities, especially for the British colonies, to speak of a general pattern”.⁹⁹ Commonalities resulted from the spreading of ideas and lessons through several key institutions. There was of course the Colonial Office in London, from which top-down directives were issued to the colonies. Then there were also horizontal connections between cities across the continent, through direct correspondence and sharing of ideas and experiences; through the *Journal of African Administration* (est. 1949); and through regional organisations such as the Southern African *Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs* (est. 1952), whose members would meet at annual conferences and also acquire standardised administrators’ diplomas.

But what is also important, and in need of explanation, is the variations in urban development policy and practice. Firstly, there were obvious variations between colonies. The Colonial Office did not impose blanket policies on the colonies. Its officials realised that, “It was always necessary to strike a balance between the need for a general pan-African advance and the recognition of the tremendous variety of conditions in the individual colonies”.¹⁰⁰ As Berman argues: “The relationship between the Colonial Office and individual colonies tended to be less one of direct command and more a complex and often protracted process of bargaining and negotiation”.¹⁰¹ Indeed, colonial officials often circumvented directives from London for ideological and practical reasons, realising how difficult it was to implement Colonial Office modernisation projects.¹⁰² Southern Rhodesia, which attained responsible self-government in 1923, was a dominion in all but name, and therefore enjoyed considerable independence in African affairs.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Job Michello, *Proceedings of the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council (NRLC)*, 18 June 1962, para. 804. In C. Ambler, ‘Alcohol, Racial Segregation and Popular Politics in Northern Rhodesia’, *Journal of African History*, 31 (1990), p. 295

⁹⁹ Myers, ‘Designing Power’, p.194

¹⁰⁰ Pearce, *The Turning Point*, p. 49

¹⁰¹ B. Berman, *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya: The dialectic of domination*. (Nairobi, East African Publishers, 1992). p. 76

¹⁰² A. Eckert, ‘Regulating the social: social security, social welfare and the state in late colonial Tanzania.’ *The Journal of African History* 45,3 (2004), pp. 467-489.

¹⁰³ The Colonial Office could veto discriminatory legislation, but never did, until the European settler regime unilaterally declared independence from Britain on 11th November, 1965.

Secondly, colonial states were themselves decentralised to varying degrees, giving municipalities space to formulate their own development agendas and strategies, which resulted in internal variation between towns and cities. In Rhodesia, with its English-style local government system, municipalities enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. Indeed, they had much more responsibility in terms of housing provision than English councils, as well as significant powers in terms of administering and legislating in their areas.¹⁰⁴ This enabled municipal councils not only to unite in a ‘Local Government Association’ which challenged Central Government on urban policy and legislation, but also to pursue their own agendas which sometimes challenged the urban policy framework of Central Government. To understand this, we need more focus on municipal actors and agendas over a sustained period.

Seeing like a second city

Since the state came to play a much greater interventionist role in urban African affairs after the war, new urban policy frameworks were devised. But within these national frameworks there was always room for municipal manoeuvre. In Rhodesia, this room for manoeuvre enabled municipalities to do more than just execute Government policies with a greater or lesser degree of enthusiasm. It allowed the municipal councils – and especially an autonomous one like Bulawayo’s – to establish their own institutional cultures and local ways of doing things, to formulate a local development vision and tap into decentralised knowledge exchange networks. This section makes the case for longer-term processual analyses of township development, as planned and carried out at the municipal level. It furthermore explains why it is important to counterbalance the predominant focus on ‘*power over*’ colonial subjects, with accounts of local state actors’ ‘*power to*’ mobilise resources in order to get things done.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴On the other hand, they had fewer responsibilities in the domains of health and education, though the Bulawayo Council did begin to build schools with beer profits from the 1950s. C. Palley, *The Constitutional History and Law of Southern Rhodesia, 1888-1965* (Oxford, OUP, 1966), p. 644

¹⁰⁵ Cf. theories of urban governance in modern Western cities, and particularly Clarence Stone’s ‘regime theory’: e.g. B. Peters and J. Pierre, ‘Urban Governance’, in P. John, K. Mossberger and S. Clarke, *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Politics* (Oxford, OUP, 2012), pp. 71-86; C. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1989).

In recent decades it has become a truism to say that the state was not a “monolithic agent of domination”¹⁰⁶, thanks to some historians’ efforts to “thoroughly unpick” the colonial state.¹⁰⁷ An excellent example of this disaggregation of the state is Saul Dubow’s pioneering analysis of ideological tensions between different Central Government departments in South Africa, with respect to their approaches to ‘native affairs’ and race relations.¹⁰⁸ But most of the literature on intra-state tensions is concerned with rural development policy, rather than urban development policy.¹⁰⁹ This is the case for the Zimbabwean historiography, where in recent decades scholars have increasingly shed light on the significant tensions within the Rhodesian state, but particularly with regards to rural development policy: agrarian policy, conservation policy, land redistribution, the creation of reserves, etc.¹¹⁰ William Munro was early to recognise this character of the Rhodesian state, writing in 1998:

In general, scholarly depictions of the “colonial settler state” have implied a cohesion, continuity, and institutional effectiveness that an analysis of rural development policy calls into question... [Community development] highlights not only a growing incoherence and ineffectiveness of social control strategies, but also a state profoundly weakened by internal tensions.¹¹¹

However, in the historiography of colonial urbanism in Rhodesia and beyond, intra-state tensions are often elided in depictions of the colonial city as an ideal-type – a space shaped by the coherent, intentional efforts of a unitary state to render the subject population legible and manageable, in the high modernist manner reminiscent of James Scott’s “Seeing Like a State”.¹¹² This approach elides the different ways of “seeing” at the central and municipal government levels, and the financially, administratively and ideologically-based conflicts that these differences gave rise to. Often taking capital cities as exemplars of “the” colonial city, the scholarship has focused on identifying the general functionality of the African townships to an overarching state strategy of

¹⁰⁶ J. Alexander, ‘Rethinking the state and political opposition through the prism of the prison,’ *Critical African Studies* 4,6 (2011), p. 70

¹⁰⁷ A. Burton and M. Jennings, ‘Introduction: The Emperor’s New Clothes? Continuities in Governance in Late Colonial and Early Postcolonial East Africa,’ *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 40, 1 (2007), p. 1

¹⁰⁸ S. Dubow, ‘Holding ‘a just balance between white and black’: the native affairs department in South Africa c. 1920–33,’ *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 12,2, (1986), pp. 217-239.

¹⁰⁹ See e.g. F. Becker, ‘The Bureaucratic Performance of Development in Colonial and Post-Colonial Tanzania,’ *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 35, 1 (2014), pp. 61-76; and the special issue of the *Journal of African History*, 41, 1 (2000): ‘Lessons Learned: Development Experiences in the Late Colonial Period’. All of the studies are rural.

¹¹⁰ For further discussion of the pinnacle of technocratic intervention in the rural context – the Native Land Husbandry Act – and its impact on urban areas, see chapter 4.

¹¹¹ W. Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State: Conservation, Community Development, and State Making in Zimbabwe* (Centre for International Studies, Ohio, 1998), p. 143

¹¹² J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have failed* (New Haven, Yale Uni Press, 1999).

maintaining control and garnering consent. For example, Robinson refers to townships/locations as a “state territorial strategy”¹¹³; Myers seeks to uncover the “forms and purposes of model townships”;¹¹⁴ Jennings claims: “Development in Tanganyika in the 1940s and 1950s was at heart an attempt to create a new form of society, a new identity, forged by the state, and oriented towards the vision of that state,”¹¹⁵ and connects this to “efforts to create systems and structures of power and control.”¹¹⁶ And Hickel talks about a singular state vision, for example:

Recognizing that urban Africans – who were needed as labour – could not be “retribalized”, and fearing that social anomie would give rise to political unrest, the state undertook to forcibly relocate slum residents into segregated planned townships, where they could be “civilized” for the purposes of control. This was a reluctant colonialism – an unwilling embrace of the civilizing mission – and a considerably more expensive back-up plan devised to deal with the leakages of indirect rule. It was the state’s perception of urban Africans as “in-between” and “polluted” that propelled this new modernizing project.¹¹⁷

Some post-structuralist frameworks of analysis present late colonial reforms in an even more schematic fashion, as a shift from one universal governmental rationality to another. For example, in his analysis of changing official justifications for African township housing in late colonial Uganda, Andrew Byerley identifies a clear shift in the “operative rationality of colonial governmentality”, from a “sovereign diagram that crudely won extractive-effects from indistinct colonial bodies” (pre-WWII), to an “anatomy-political diagram” that formed “docile” and “productive” bodies (1945-53), to a “bio-political diagram” where “a modern rationality of power aimed to conduct the conduct of a population in the seemingly self-regulating field of the *social*...” (1953-60).¹¹⁸ Inspired by Foucault’s totalising conceptions of power (biopower and governmentality), such studies focus on the state’s “political, regulatory and disciplinary practices as opposed to other functions like service delivery”.¹¹⁹

Whilst earlier generations of urban geographers, anthropologists and historians must be given due credit for their empirical work on African township development, there is still a lack of

¹¹³ Robinson, ‘A Perfect System of Control?’.

¹¹⁴ Myers, ‘Designing Power’.

¹¹⁵ Jennings, ‘Building Better People’, p. 94

¹¹⁶ Jennings, ‘Building Better People’, p. 97

¹¹⁷ J. Hickel, ‘Social Engineering and Revolutionary Consciousness: Domestic Transformations in Colonial South Africa’, *History and Anthropology*, 23, 3 (2012), p. 309

¹¹⁸ Byerley, ‘Mind the Gap!’, p. 431. See also D. Scott, ‘Colonial governmentality’, *Social text*, 43 (1995), pp. 191-220. See also D. Scott, ‘Colonial governmentality’, *Social text* 43 (1995), pp. 191-220.

¹¹⁹ T. Bierschenk and J-P. Olivier de Sardan, ‘Ethnographies of Public Services in Africa: An Emerging Research Paradigm’ in T. Bierschenk and J-P. Olivier de Sardan (eds), *States at work: Dynamics of African Bureaucracies* (Leiden, Brill, 2014) p. 53

systematic analysis of how these townships were actually built up over time, and the key agents, development visions, institutional norms and practices, and knowledge exchange networks, that emerged in different towns through these processes. Harris and Hay noted in 2007 that, “No systematic attempt has been made, for any of the colonies in question [Kenya, Tanganyika, Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia], to document how urban Africans were housed.”¹²⁰ And Kirsten R  ther et al. point out that, still, “No systematic and comparative attempt has been made so far to document in a long-term perspective how the implementation of housing for Africans worked.”¹²¹ Thus, the legacy of colonial urbanism is usually conceived in rather generic terms,¹²² something Natalie Moss notes in her recent study of local government in Kenya: “The legacies bequeathed to local authorities differed immensely between councils, and this had important consequences for the post-colonial trajectories of local government in different regions”.¹²³

In this respect, the literature on apartheid South Africa has paid the most attention to tensions between municipal councils and central government.¹²⁴ For example, whilst Jennifer Robinson ultimately views African townships in quite functional terms (see above), her in-depth studies of Port Elizabeth’s City Council do emphasise the “competing and fragmenting tendencies within the institutional apparatus” of the state.¹²⁵ Just like Bulawayo, PE had been singled out for its neglect of African housing in the interwar period, before it switched to become one of the models of progressive township administration in SA.¹²⁶ Having thus reformed, the PE Council found itself resisting apartheid policies and resenting the “high-handed manner” of policy making.¹²⁷ Thus, the PE council had to find ways of gaining access to development resources “without being co-opted into implementing undesirable and ‘unreasonable’ policies.”¹²⁸ Even when PE’s urban African administration became more aligned with central government in the

¹²⁰ A. Hay and R. Harris. "‘Shauri ya Sera Kali’: the colonial regime of urban housing in Kenya to 1939." *Urban History* 34, 3 (2007), p. 505.

¹²¹ See ‘Employment-tied Housing in (Post)colonial Africa’, available at <https://housing.univie.ac.at/project/>, accessed 24th September, 2018.

¹²² See e.g. Rakodi, ‘Colonial Urban Policy and Planning’; Burton and Jennings, ‘Introduction: The Emperor’s New Clothes?’.

¹²³ N. Moss, ‘The Dilemma of Councillors: The History of Local Government in Kenya, c. 1945-2010’ (PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2016), p. 39.

¹²⁴ See e.g. J. Robinson, “‘Progressive port Elizabeth’: Liberal politics, local economic development and the territorial basis of racial domination, 1923–1935”, *GeoJournal* 22,3 (1990), pp. 293-303; A. Christopher, ‘Apartheid planning in South Africa: the case of Port Elizabeth’, *Geographical Journal*, (1987), pp. 195-204; B. Taylor, ‘Local government and ‘Coloured’ residential segregation in Port Elizabeth, 1964–1976’, *South African Geographical Journal* 76, 1 (1994), pp. 20-26.

¹²⁵ J. Robinson, *The Power of Apartheid: Race, power and space in South African cities* (Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann, 1996), p. 28

¹²⁶ J. Robinson, ‘The Politics of Urban Form: Differential Citizenship and Township Formation in Port Elizabeth, 1925-1945’, *Kronos*, 20 (1993), p. 49.

¹²⁷ Taylor, ‘Local Government and Coloured Residential Segregation’, p. 20

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22

1950s, it retained a local character, and “attachments to the interests and needs of the locality and the people who lived there remained important.”¹²⁹ Particularly important in Robinson’s analysis is her attention to key local administrators, notably John McNamee.¹³⁰

Urban histories of Rhodesia, by contrast, have focused more on the experiences and resistances of township residents. Thus, we have richly detailed accounts of urban political movements¹³¹, residents’ associations¹³², municipal beer hall boycotts¹³³, culture and sporting associations¹³⁴; struggles of the urban poor¹³⁵ and women¹³⁶, residents’ unequal access to municipal water infrastructure¹³⁷ and electricity infrastructure¹³⁸, and other everyday social histories¹³⁹. There has been little sustained interest in the state actors and processes involved in urban development and governance. Busani Mpfu’s insightful study of African housing and services in Bulawayo¹⁴⁰ and Patel and Adams’ case study of the Chirambuhayo settlement in Salisbury¹⁴¹ are among the few exceptions. Yet, if the post-WWII period is important for

¹²⁹ Robinson, *The Power of Apartheid*, p. 195; exemplary studies for other colonies include David Anderson’s analysis of how the Nairobi City Council managed to sell to the European public its “progressive policy of public investment in African housing” after the war, which created an “apparently liberal and enlightened climate” until revelations of pervasive corruption in the council shattered this climate in 1955 (Anderson, ‘Corruption at City Hall’, p. 147); and William Bissell’s study of the modernisation of Zanzibar, which reveals the extent of chaos and confusion in the process of urban development planning (Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos and Colonial Power* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2011).

¹³⁰ Other administrators who have featured in historical studies are the urban planning theorist, Eric Dutton, who features in Myers’ work, and Tom Askwith, Nairobi’s influential township admin. officer, who appears in Harris’ work and other studies.

¹³¹ See esp. T. Scarnecchia, *The urban roots of democracy and political violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940-1964*, (Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2008); B. Raftopoulos, ‘Nationalism and labour in Salisbury 1953–1965’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21,1 (1995), pp. 79-93; E. Msindo, ‘Ethnicity and nationalism in urban colonial Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1950 to 1963’, *The Journal of African History* 48,2 (2007), pp. 267-290.

¹³² K. Chitofiri, ‘Urban protest, Citizenship and the City: The history of Residents’ Associations and African urban representation in colonial Harare, Zimbabwe’ (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2015).

¹³³ Chimhete, ‘African Nationalism’.

¹³⁴ Kaarsholm, ‘Si Ye Pambili?’; and Stuart, *“Good Boys, Footballers and Strikers”*

¹³⁵ B. Mpfu, ‘No Place for ‘Undesirables’: The Urban Poor’s Struggle for Survival in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 1960-2005’ (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2010).

¹³⁶ T. Barnes, “‘We are Afraid to command our Children.’ Responses to the Urbanisation of African women in Colonial Zimbabwe’ in B. Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni, (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999).; T. Scarnecchia, “The Mapping of Respectability and Transformation of African Residential Space” in B. Raftopoulos and T. Yoshikuni, (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999).

¹³⁷ M. Musemwa, ‘A Tale of Two Cities: The Evolution of the city of Bulawayo and Makokoba township under conditions of water scarcity, 1894-1953’, *South African Historical Journal*, 55, 1 (2006), pp. 186-209.

¹³⁸ M. Chikowero, ‘Subalternating Currents: Electrification and Power Politics in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1894–1939’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 2 (2007), pp. 287-306.

¹³⁹ E.g. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*; A Weinrich, *Mucheke: race, status and politics in a Rhodesian Community* (Paris, UNESCO, 1976).

¹⁴⁰ B. Mpfu, ‘The Dynamics of Providing Social Services in a Colonial Urban Authority, with Special Reference to African Housing and Social Advancement in Bulawayo, 1960-1980’ (BA diss., Uni Zimbabwe, 2004).

¹⁴¹ D. Patel and R. Adams, *Chirambuhayo: A case study of low income housing* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1981)

understanding colonial legacies of administration and governance on the continent at large, then it is particularly important in the case of Rhodesia, where independence was achieved only 35 years after the war – an extended period for the consolidation of late colonial developmental ideas, norms, and practices.

The consequence for the *post*-colonial scholarship on Zimbabwe has been a reference to a rather generic Rhodesian legacy, citing Salisbury as an exemplar of “the” Rhodesian city, with scant attention to the alternative development trajectories of Bulawayo and smaller secondary towns. A notable exception is Preben Kaarsholm, who observed that:

One thing which seems particular to the history of Bulawayo is the ‘liberalism’ and the high-profile modernisation ideology which was characteristic of the City Council's African Administration (later Welfare and Amenities) Department from about 1953 onwards... Many people in Bulawayo also tend to be proud of what they claim to be the relatively higher standards of their townships as compared to those of Harare, of the housing provided and of the municipal welfare and community services offered.¹⁴²

But as the evidence in this thesis bears out, we cannot make sense of Bulawayo’s comparatively progressive developments in terms of disembedded ‘liberal’ and ‘modernist’ ideas alone. These ideas were deeply embedded in struggles to mobilise resources and get things done. They were as much about *rationalising* pragmatic actions as they were guiding principles for action.¹⁴³ In order to examine this embeddedness of developmental ideas in everyday problem-solving practices, the thesis opens the ‘black box’ of the machinery of the state¹⁴⁴, to uncover the protracted planning and negotiation processes involved in township development.

Bulawayo presents a particularly interesting case of urban administrators wielding significant agency and authority in local development, to the extent of influencing national policy ‘from below’. The findings of this inquiry confirm Bernstein and Mertz’s observation that,

[I]t is simply not the case that some parts of the state decide while others merely carry out those decisions in a humdrum, mechanical fashion. Actual bureaucrats in actual bureaucracies, just like people in all sorts of other settings, constantly make decisions,

¹⁴² Kaarsholm, ‘Si Ye Pambili?’, pp. 226 and 232.

¹⁴³ Cf. Nicholas Rose on modern governmental rationalities in *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), pp. 24-28

¹⁴⁴ This notion is discussed by Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, ‘Ethnographies of Public Services in Africa’, p. 41

interact with others, exceed their own control. As a lived social world, the administrative setting is not as drab and lifeless as it appears from the outside.¹⁴⁵

This approach resonates with recent ethnographies of state bureaucracies in present-day Africa¹⁴⁶ and the Indian subcontinent.¹⁴⁷ As the anthropologist Nayanika Mathur points out, bureaucratic practices:

do not occur mechanically despite that oft-repeated metaphor of the machine of the state...with all its connotations of a unitary system working on automatic. The intentionality that is often attributed to the state-as-monolith collapses once the ethnographic black box... is opened up...¹⁴⁸

Examining the social world of the local state bureaucracy in this way provides insights into Bulawayo's particularism, and the particular legacy it bequeathed to the post-colony, which is vitally important for both historical and contemporary urban studies in the country.¹⁴⁹ The next sections elaborate how this study was conducted, and how the thesis is structured.

¹⁴⁵ A. Bernstein and E. Mertz, 'Introduction: Bureaucracy: Ethnography of the State in Everyday Life', *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 34, 1 (2011) p. 7. Note: This observation is hardly new. In public administration it has long been recognised that the dichotomy between administration and politics was both descriptively and prescriptively invalid. Indeed, the anthropology of bureaucracy owes much to the fields of public administration and sociology of organisations.

¹⁴⁶ See esp. G. Blundo and P. Le Meur (eds), *The Governance of Daily Life in Africa: Ethnographic Explorations of Public and Collective Services* (Leiden, Brill, 2009);

¹⁴⁷ See e.g. N. Mathur, *Paper Tiger: Law, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State in Himalayan India* (Cambridge, CUP, 2015); M. Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2012); A. Gupta, *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India* (Duke University Press, 2012)

¹⁴⁸ Mathur, *Paper Tiger: Law, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State*, p. 5

¹⁴⁹ See T. Ranger, 'City versus State: Historical Antecedents to the Current Crisis', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, 2 (2007) pp. 161-192.

Methodology

This thesis is based upon archival research and oral history interviews conducted in Zimbabwe and the UK. I visited Zimbabwe four times between 2015-18 for a total of 11 months.¹⁵⁰ In this section, I discuss the research process and how it was shaped by my positionality.

Archives:

Archives were my main source of information. The major part of my inquiry was conducted at the Bulawayo City Council archive (BCCA). The Chronicle Newspaper archive (Bulawayo) and National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ, Harare and Bulawayo branches) were also invaluable sources of information. Additionally, I retrieved a few documents and magazines from the Oxford Bodleian Library and the Edinburgh University Special Collections.

My project took shape at the BCCA. But this was not a linear process, and I was not the only one directing its course. Out of tens of thousands of intricate and endlessly repetitive details of daily administration obtained at the City Hall archive – from council and committee minutes, reports, and numerous official correspondences on issues of housing, recreation, schools, trading, beer gardens, clinics, schools, etc. – a sense of the council’s routine functioning and rhythm began to emerge. Faced with more information available than I could ever begin to process, I decided to set the parameters of the study in the last decades of white rule in Rhodesia. I compiled an extensive digital archive of housing, the liquor undertaking, recreation, welfare, trading and industry – but subsequently narrowed the focus to housing schemes, and the integral beer gardens (an appendage to every scheme) and township advisory boards. Yet the broader range of my data was always useful for a holistic overview of township administration.

Even the narrower focus left me with an overwhelming amount of documentation to process, as I was not interested in the mere outcomes of specific schemes, but rather in following protracted development processes over time. Even a fairly minor decision might pass through multiple departments (e.g. Town Clerk’s, City Engineer’s, African Admin), and committees (e.g. Finance, African Admin., Works, General Purposes, etc.) before finally arriving in the Council

¹⁵⁰ I also spent three months in Zambia conducting research at the National Archives in Lusaka and in the second city of Ndola, on African housing in Ndola in the 1950s. I used these documents to get a sense of urban policy in another second city in the region, but only make direct reference to them once, for comparative purposes.

Chamber for a vote. Often decisions fizzled out or were deferred somewhere along this process, but usually endlessly renegotiated. Whilst there was often a master folder(s) dedicated to any one housing scheme or issue, to follow every step in the policy process usually involved following the paper trail through multiple folders and minutes. Given the time involved, I created a digital archive of many thousands of documents from relevant folders, to consult throughout the writing up process.

At the BCCA, I was not the only active agent in the research process. The Senior Records Assistant, Elias Mdluli, played an important role, since, in the absence of a complete archive catalogue¹⁵¹, he retrieved folders that he deemed both directly relevant, and of potential tangential interest, based on my initially vague inquiries. This meant that, especially in the early stages of research, he played a significant role in directing the course of my inquiry into areas I did not know existed. But even as my later inquiries became more specific, he would occasionally surprise me with interesting documents, reports, folders that I could not know to ask for. For this I am very grateful. The experience of working at the City Hall was educative in itself. Through informal conversations with several officers, clerks, and typists, I learnt about the historical identity of the institution and was put in touch with several informants.

I treated the Council archive not just as a source, but also as a subject, by analysing the affective quality of the bureaucratic correspondence and report-writing. This approach has been called “reading along the archival grain” by Ann Stoler, who questions the common assumption in colonial studies that colonial states were characterised by efficient scientific management, and that they were therefore “information-hungry machines” and “laboratories of modernity”.¹⁵² She draws attention to the *sentiments*, such as doubt, expressed in the archive. Rather than treating these affective dimensions as a smokescreen of rule, she argues for taking them seriously as constitutive of colonial rationalities of rule. Although she focuses on 19th century Dutch colonialism which differs in important ways from modes of rule in post-war Rhodesia, I found this way of approaching the archive to be useful. It drew my attention to the leveraging of different notions of ‘common sense’ to make a point (even in the most mundane correspondences), the anxieties around conceptual categories upon which urban governance was based, and some of the deliberate strategies of *not-knowing*.

¹⁵¹ It is currently being digitalised and completed.

¹⁵² A. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009).

I also paid attention to the materiality of the bureaucracy.¹⁵³ Bureaucrats claim to “represent, engage with, or constitute realities ‘in the world’ independent of the processes that produce documents,” but this is not the case.¹⁵⁴ Regimes of paper documents and filing systems actually shape governance. Hull refers to such documents as “graphic artefacts”. I paid attention to the role that graphic artefacts such as rent cards and lease agreements played in the process of establishing the citizenship status of Africans in the city. For example, Bulawayo’s unique rent card system was said to give Africans some sense of “proprietorship” and “responsibility”; lease agreements were vital evidence of tenure rights for residents, but they often failed to materialise for a long time after occupation, during which time lease conditions were altered, creating contestation between officials and African home owners.

At the Chronicle archive, hundreds of themed boxes full of newspaper clippings, dating back to the early colonial period, made for efficient searches on key topics, ranging from township housing, industrial development, and city council affairs, to news about politics and development in Salisbury City and the nation at large. This newspaper proved an invaluable source. At the NAZ and the Bodleian, I obtained information on the Rhodesian Government’s African housing policy, and the Bulawayo Action Group (a political pressure group), and miscellaneous.

Interviews

The interviews played an important part in my understanding of the more ephemeral aspects of colonial governance that the archives omit (even when read along the grain), such as the institutional culture of the City Council and its African Administration Department, racial privilege and prejudice within the administration, the way Council African employees were regarded by their communities during the anti-colonial struggle, etc. The interview data is not as central to the final analysis as the archive data, due to the study’s fine-grained focus on particular development processes.

I conducted oral history interviews in English with seven former employees of the AAD (5 Black, 2 White), three former residents’ association leaders, the son of the African Administration Director (Ashton), one former councillor, a few post-independence mayors and

¹⁵³ Inspired esp. by Matthew Hull’s *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2012).

¹⁵⁴ Hull, *Government of Paper*, p. 5.

town clerks, and a number of civilians who had been politically active in the past and present.¹⁵⁵ Apart from correspondence with three interviewees via email, all of the interviews were conducted in person and were between 40 minutes and 1.5 hours duration, but mostly over an hour. With two key interviewees I conducted follow-up interviews a year after the first. My interviews were unstructured, except that I had a pre-determined set of topics that I aimed to cover during the course of the conversation. For employees of the AAD this pertained to their professional lives including their working relationship with Hugh Ashton, the way they perceived the township administration, how others perceived it and them, the relations between Bulawayo and government/Salisbury CC, and the post-independence continuities and changes. For others, we discussed their relationships to the administration, township life and colonial-era politics.

Although this project is *not* a social history of township life as experienced by African residents,¹⁵⁶ I spent considerable amounts of time in the townships, at markets, beer gardens, shebeens¹⁵⁷ and in friends' homes, to acquaint myself with the places about which I was writing. Informal conversations with residents about the past helped my understanding of the lived experience of township life, past and present. Everyone I spoke with was critical of white minority rule in Rhodesia, and the racialized nature of urban government, unsurprisingly. However, some judged certain aspects and people of the colonial city council favourably, especially the director, Ashton, who was held in very high regard and remembered fondly by Black, Indian and White residents. Some remembered the oppressiveness of segregation at the same time as reminiscing about the recreational amenities that have since fallen into disuse. Such mixed sentiments probably partly reflect disillusionment with the current situation in the country at large, and I interpret them as partial indictments of the present context. As Bissell argues, "Rather than viewing nostalgia as poor history, we need to engage with it as a social practice that mobilizes various signs of the past (colonial and otherwise) in the context of contemporary struggles."¹⁵⁸ But these mixed recollections no doubt also reflect the varied and complex experiences of colonial rule, that did not at all times conform to the master narrative of struggle, as Jacob Dlamini cogently argues.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Amongst the latter group, whom I do not cite directly but with whom I had deeply insightful conversations, are Pathisa Nyathi, Cont Mhlanga, Styx Mhlanga, Judith Todd, Mmeli Dube, Rashid Jogee, Jafara Ncube.

¹⁵⁶ I do not take colonial archival depictions of township life to necessarily be accurate representations of residents' lived experience.

¹⁵⁷ Unlicensed drinking dens in high-density residential homes.

¹⁵⁸ W. Bissell, 'Engaging colonial nostalgia', *Cultural Anthropology* 20,2 (2005), p. 218

¹⁵⁹ J. Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Jacana Media, 2009).

Positionality

My positionality as a former resident of Bulawayo, and a white male in my late 20s to early 30s during fieldwork, influenced my choice of Bulawayo as a case study, my interpretations of its history, and the way people discussed these topics with me. A simple insider/outsider dichotomy used to be attributed to the typical research situation, but as Merriam et al. point out, “In the real world of data collection, there is a good bit of slippage and fluidity between these two states.”¹⁶⁰ This was particularly the case for me. Having spent 13 formative years in Bulawayo (aged 3 to 16) with periodic visits since, I have a deep personal connection with, and intimate knowledge of, the city. A certain parochial pride no doubt colours my interpretations, particularly of its historical rivalry with Salisbury/Harare, despite my best efforts to assess the evidence objectively.

My Bulawayo upbringing facilitated connection with local residents whom I interviewed; but I was aware that my localness might have also provoked suspicions that I held uncritical or sympathetic views to the Rhodesian era – not uncommon in white society still today. I therefore found ways to convey my critical stance (short of announcing it directly), and indicated my openness to hearing any value judgments, negative or positive, about the country’s colonial past. Nevertheless, I am aware that people I spoke with may have subtly modified their accounts of the colonial past, given my identity. Conversely, my own interpretations of interviews and archival sources were undoubtedly inflected by my white male identity. For this reason, I have chosen to quote my informants directly where possible.

Chapter outline

The following chapters present, firstly, an analysis of the organisational reforms that occurred in the Bulawayo Council after the second world war, in response to its African housing crisis (chapter 2). Subsequent chapters examine the various ways in which this reformed Council worked to fulfil its mandate of stabilising and uplifting/improving the African population. The timeframe of 1949 to 1977 spans the 28-year career of the City’s first Director of African Administration, whose retirement in 1977 coincided with legislative changes that precipitated the breakdown of racial segregation. Below is an expanded outline of each chapter:

¹⁶⁰ S. Merriam, J. Johnson-Bailey, M. Lee, Y. Kee, G. Ntseane, and M. Muhamad, ‘Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures’, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20,5, (2001), pp. 405-416.

Chapter 2 examines the early history of the Bulawayo Council's policies on African settlement in the town, and how it restructured and reoriented its entire approach to African affairs shortly after the Second World War. The chapter contrasts the Council's earlier reactionary attitude to African migrant workers, with its post-war progressivism, under the influence of the anthropologist and zealous moderniser, Hugh Ashton. It examines his efforts to establish a new ethos and *esprit de corps* in the township administration, and to Africanise it. It analyses how these reforms entailed a new approach, from laissez-faire to heavy interventionism in township development, with some easing off of strict forms of control. In addition to highlighting these ruptures, the chapter also shows important continuities, in terms of Bulawayo's antagonistic relation to the central state, and rivalry with the capital city.

Chapter 3 examines how home ownership was found to be an effective way to enlist the resources and energies of Africans in resolving the housing shortage. Its promotion was rationalised in economic terms. A self-build home ownership scheme was pioneered in 1952, and thereafter home ownership schemes became a distinguishing feature of Bulawayo's townships. Africans came to be regarded partly as "consumers" whose "consumer preferences" had to be taken into account. Their preferences, combined with the need to lower infrastructural costs, led to a more integrated pattern of township development. Developing these home ownership schemes involved endless negotiation, experimentation and compromise, as officials and residents had different views on the housing and service standards acceptable to African urban citizens, and costs had to be reduced in every way possible. Over time, the transformation of the urban landscape was presented as a spectacle of steady progress, attracting industry and enhancing public relations. By evoking pre-colonial Ndebele royal and political figures in the naming of these new, raw townships, they were given a sense of history and permanence.

Chapter 4 looks at another rationalisation of home ownership – to stabilise communities and appease the middle class in particular, allowing them to "share in the rewards of progress". Here it was rationalised in political terms. Secure tenure in the form of long lease and freehold title for Africans contravened the spirit of the Land Apportionment Act, which designated urban areas as 'European' land. The issue was highly political. The Bulawayo Council was a strong advocate of tenure security (unlike the capital city council), but these rights had to be defended against increasing attack from the reactionary Rhodesia Front Government, leading to a number of confrontations between Ashton, councillors, and the Local Government Minister. Under tense political and economic conditions and innumerable regulations, the experience of residents with leasehold or freehold property was often one of considerable insecurity.

Chapter 5 examines the ‘responsibilisation’ of the African middle class. Both local and central government officials – even when their policies were in fundamental opposition – claimed that they nurtured a sense of ‘responsibility’ in African townspeople. Debates around home ownership and subsidised housing were framed in terms of financial responsibility vs paternalism. Similarly, debates about whether to give Africans direct representation in local government, or self-governing powers in semi-autonomous townships, or to simply empower the existing African Advisory Boards, were also framed in terms of a moral notion of ‘responsibility’ in governance/urban management. In these policy disputes, the Council and Government’s differences pivoted on the former’s more integrationist, state-directed vision of development, versus the latter’s segregationist, privatised vision of development.

Chapter 6 examines how pragmatism and idealism came together in the Council’s beer garden system. This system was designed to create a stable and respectable setting for the traditional pastime of beer drinking, and more exclusive venues for the sophisticates, away from the “socially degenerate” illegal drinking dens (“shebeens”). At the same time, it ensured a vital source of revenue for welfare, health and home ownership loans. The result was a proliferation of beer gardens in the urban landscape; indeed, it was the most elaborate beer garden system in southern Africa, embodying a moral and logical contradiction: how could the Council claim to be a progressive promoter of health, housing and welfare, whilst at the same time heavily promoting the consumption of alcohol? Ashton attempted to resolve this contradiction by beautifying these recreational spaces, adding elaborate facilities and marketing them as wholesome places of upliftment, whilst stigmatising the shebeens. But ultimately, the beer gardens were managed as a lucrative enterprise, and the moral qualms of administrators were never quite banished.

In conclusion, I re-state the case for analysing post-war urban development from the perspective of the urban administrators that dealt most closely with this highly charged project of accepting, settling and assimilating (or not) African workers and their families into the ‘white cities’ of colonial Africa. I discuss the legacy of having a liberal anthropologist at the helm, directing these processes in Bulawayo.

2. The Post-war Reorientation of the Bulawayo City Council

In the early days, Bulawayo was the primary city in Southern Rhodesia – the centre of industry, African and European cultural activity, a “laboratory for new African political ideas”,¹⁶¹ and the headquarters of the Rhodesian Railways, connecting the colony to South Africa and later Northern Rhodesia. It was in Bulawayo that the lawyer, Charles Coghlan, campaigned to shift from British South Africa Company administration to ‘responsible government’, instead of incorporating into the Union of South Africa. This campaign won the day, and the declaration of Southern Rhodesia’s new semi-independent status within the British Empire was made in Bulawayo in October, 1923. But the patriots of Bulawayo desired more than autonomy for the nation; they also desired autonomy for the town. Bulawayo’s white working class (which almost brought down the Government with strikes in 1929) united with the white commercial elites, who dominated the Municipal Council, to assert the city’s autonomy from the “effete, bureaucratic capital”.¹⁶²

The Bulawayo Council’s assertion of autonomy made it particularly averse to any top-down interference in its ‘native affairs’ policy. And until the late 1940s, its policy, or at least practice, was to commit the minimum of resources and expertise to developing the African side

¹⁶¹ T. Yoshikuni, ‘Linking urban history with precolonial and rural history: from the Zimbabwean experience’, *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 36-37, 1 (2001), p. 169.

¹⁶² Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 107

of town. Indeed, the Bulawayo Council gained a reputation for being the most neglectful in the country with respect to housing and services provision to the African community. The humiliating consequence was that it was singled out for periodic investigations by Government-appointed commissions of inquiry, to which the councillors reacted with defensiveness and intransigence.

Shortly after the Second World War, however, the Council's reactionary attitude became untenable. Facing an epic African housing crisis and huge pressure to implement reforms, the Council undertook structural changes that were to result in a complete reorientation in African affairs. Whilst this impetus to reform came 'from above', the new developmental vision was largely formulated 'from below', by the first Director of Native Administration, Dr Hugh Ashton, who served for 28 years in this role. The Council's approach changed from reactionary to progressive, at least by Rhodesian standards. Its long-standing desire for autonomy, however, persisted.

This chapter examines how this reorientation came about. The first part presents a historical overview of housing and services in the African urban area from the town's inception in 1893, until the moment of reform in 1949. This history reveals how the Council's housing policy was shaped by its perception of Africans as essentially tribespeople, merely temporary migrants to the town. The second part examines institutional reforms from 1949 and the switch from *laissez-faire* to heavy interventionism in township development.

Part 1: African administration in early Bulawayo, 1894-1949

King Lobengula of the amaNdebele founded two Bulawayos: the first in 1875, burnt down ceremonially by his lieutenant, Magwegwe, in 1881, to destroy its medicine secrets; the second a few miles away (where Government House now stands), blown up and set alight by the King's men in November, 1893, as the European column from Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company was spotted approaching the great kraal from the north east.¹⁶³ This kraal was over half a mile in diameter, surrounded by a wooden palisade with four big gates, wherein woven huts accommodated approximately 20,000 people. Lobengula's house stood on the edge of the central

¹⁶³ The Company had acquired a Royal Charter from the British Government. (J. Cobbing, 'The Ndebele Under the Khumalos, 1820-1896' (PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 1976), p. 347)

ceremonial space, next to the famous *ndaba tree* where the Rudd Concession for mineral rights was signed.

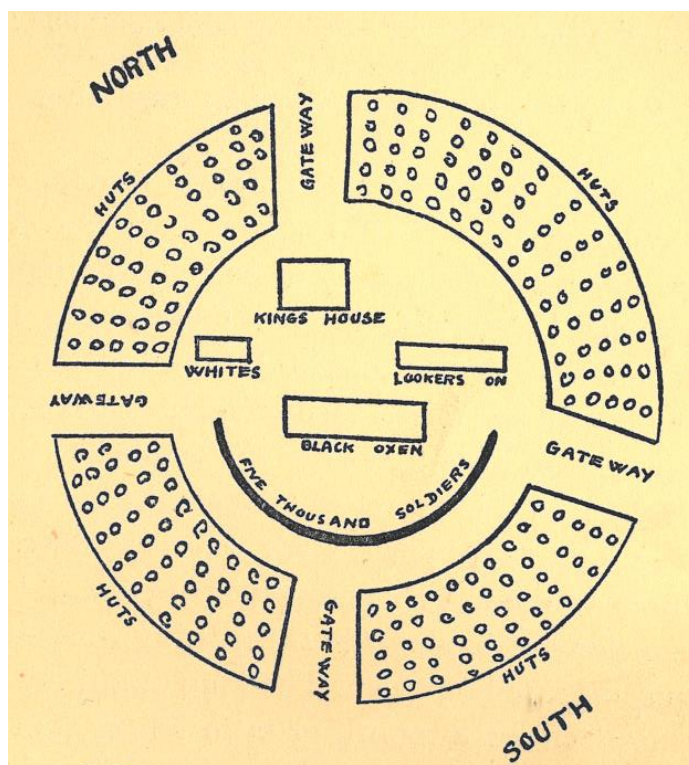


Figure 3: Lobengula's kraal, 1888 [Source: Matabele Thompson: *An Autobiography* (London, Faber and Faber, 1936), p. 120]

After this conquest of the Matabele, the third – European – Bulawayo was established three miles from the ruins of the old kraal.¹⁶⁴ Patrick Fletcher surveyed the new town, placing the central market square on a flattened mealie patch with a perfect rectangular (north-south) grid of streets and avenues, wide enough for a span of oxen to turn full circle. Here, the white settlers built wattle and daub huts with thatch pulled from the remains of the abandoned Matabele kraal. But the architecture of this settlement, nicknamed “Grasstown”, quickly changed

when the newly established Sanitary Board decreed in May, 1894 that straw huts were forbidden, for practical and symbolic reasons.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ According to Ranger, Rhodes chose the location of ‘his’ new town more for its symbolism than its practicality. And there were contemporary critics who wondered why on earth he chose that “barren dreariness of the high veld, the bleak wind-swept central plateau.” (Stanley Portal Hyatt quoted in Ranger, p. 15). But according to a professional town planning assessment in 1973, though the situation had natural disadvantages, the site was very well chosen and developed with clarity. (Bulawayo City Council Archive (BCCA)/Mallows, Louw, Hoffe and Partners, ‘Preliminary Assessment of Planning Problems: City of Bulawayo, 1972’, p. 10)

¹⁶⁵ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 16

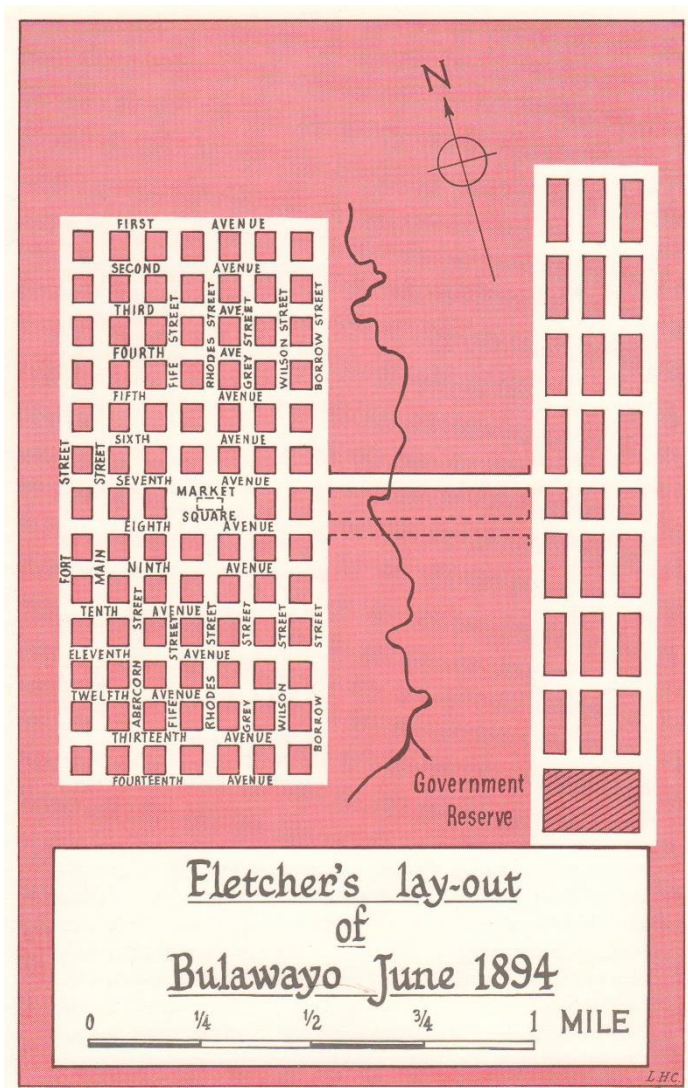


Figure 4: Fletcher's Plan of Bulawayo township and Eastern suburbs, 1894. [Source: O. Ransford, *Bulawayo: Historic Battleground of Rhodesia* (Cape Town, Balkema, 1968)]

Stands were auctioned off in the new Bulawayo, but the eastern side flanked by Borrow Street was more popular than the downwind western side flanked by Lobengula Street, which consequently ended up marking the boundary between white and black Bulawayo. On the 1st of June, 1894, the town was officially declared open by Leander Starr Jameson. Just two years later, the defeated Matabele launched an uprising, besieging the European population (and a number of Africans) behind sacks and carts in the town square. Just a year later, in 1897, the town was declared a municipality, and the Sanitary Board was replaced with a Municipal Council comprising 9 councillors.¹⁶⁶ This council quickly established departments of the Town Clerk, Treasury,

Public Works and Parks. In its first year the Council also established a public electricity supply.¹⁶⁷

To the west of Lobengula Street was Commonage "bush", with no plans for urban development. Yet, already in 1894, just a few hundred metres into this *Terra Incognita* which did not appear on the Annual Directory maps until 1935¹⁶⁸, the Native Location was established by the Sanitary Board. It comprised undemarcated plots of roughly 40 ft x 60 ft., leased at 5/- per month, on which Africans could build their own huts of wattle and daub (sometimes known as "pondokkies") in a context of limited official regulation.¹⁶⁹ From the beginning, it was populated

¹⁶⁶ E. H. Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo* (City of Bulawayo, 1957), p. 2

¹⁶⁷ 16 years ahead of Salisbury, according to Chikowero, 'Subalternating Currents', p. 288).

¹⁶⁸ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 16

¹⁶⁹ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 30

by both amaNdebele and immigrants of other ethnic groups from as far as the Cape Colony. By 1899, the population was 300. Boris Gussman noted that, “The Africans were left largely to their own devices and one scans municipal records in vain for references to African affairs.”¹⁷⁰ Because this Location was accorded legal status so early, it remained in place, just a few hundred metres from the CBD, even as it grew to a size and character that the European settlers were perplexed by. Unlike in Salisbury, Bulawayo’s Location was not subject to the 1906 Native Urban Locations Ordinance, meaning the Central Government and the British South Africa Police had no involvement in Bulawayo’s Location and its regulations, until 1946. In Salisbury, by contrast, the

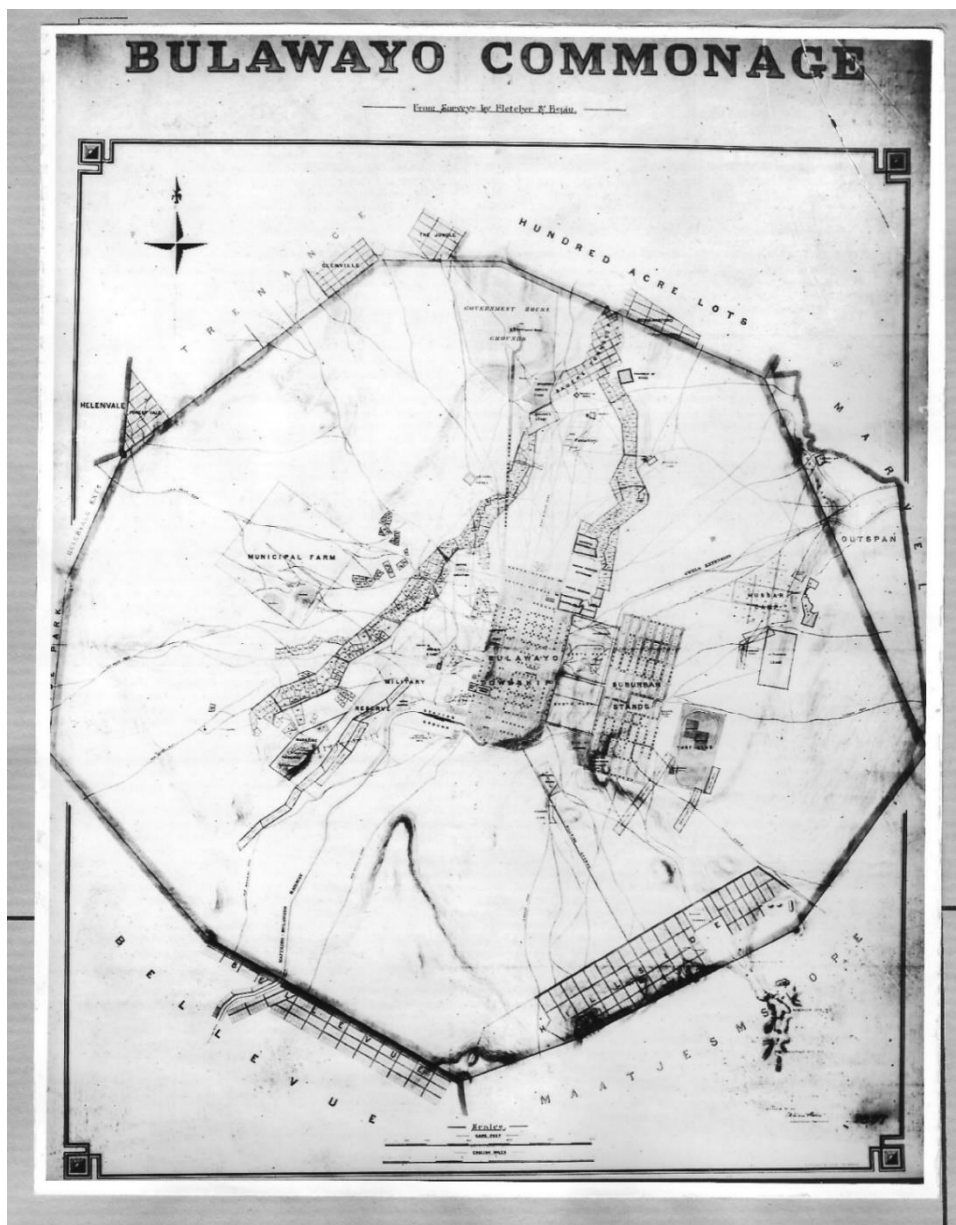


Figure 5: Bulawayo Commonage Map, 1897 [Source: NAZ/courtesy of Paul Hubbard]

¹⁷⁰ B. Gussman, *African Life in an Urban Area: A Study of the African Population of Bulawayo, 1948-50* (Bulawayo, The Federation of African Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia), p. 3

earliest African settlement was dismantled and moved well away from the CBD in 1907; with the new Location being subject to the Native Urban Locations Ordinance.¹⁷¹

It was only in 1912 that the Bulawayo municipal council stepped in and started building African housing out of brick. House-building was incentivised by public health concerns, conforming to the general colonial hysteria often referred to as the “sanitation syndrome” (see chapter 1), which inspired segregation and health checks for Africans.¹⁷² In 1897, the District Surgeon had reported that, “Venereal Disease is rife in [Bulawayo], particularly with regard to natives, who are a source of great danger to the public.”¹⁷³ But little was done about this, as Council and Government squabbled over who should pay for medical examinations. In 1901, the Government declined to cover half the costs, as the Council had requested, and it was only in 1918 that a part-time Medical Officer of Health was finally appointed. He did not begin with medical examinations until 1925, when a VD hospital was opened, but in the meantime turned his attention to housing and sanitation.

Location development was deemed disorderly and unhygienic. The rented plots were of a reasonable size but there were no restrictions on the type or number of dwellings built thereon. Therefore, the Council’s 1912 house-building programme, which had stalled, was revived again for the first time in 1920. Standard dwellings for tenants who could not (or would not) build a “suitable” house of their own were erected. These dwellings included bachelor blocks that were reserved for employees of particular companies (known as ‘tied accommodation’), and two-roomed cottages with kitchens. Whilst the rate of house-building fluctuated over the first half of the 20th century, it was always inadequate, as the municipality was particularly obsessed with economy and wanted no changes to the *status quo* of a migratory labour system.¹⁷⁴ The Salisbury Council was always more proactive, building Kaytor huts until 1921¹⁷⁵, and then 4-room brick dwellings.¹⁷⁶

But despite its unwillingness to commit expertise and resources, the Bulawayo Council still tried to impose an *enframing* order on the Location. In 1922, a complete survey was carried out, and “proper” development plans drawn up so the place could be laid out “properly”, with better roads. Between this time and 1937, fireplaces, and additional street lights, latrines, wash houses, and piped water and sewerage were all installed. Some plot-holders chose to build their own cottages. Indeed, there were a high proportion of home owners, with women well-

¹⁷¹ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 103

¹⁷² See Swanson, ‘The Sanitation Syndrome’.

¹⁷³ Quoted in Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ Ashton, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Circular corrugated iron huts, 12 feet in diameter.

¹⁷⁶ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 103

represented. Women home owners often made a living from taking in lodgers or renting out huts, whilst men dominated the cottage rental business.¹⁷⁷ But not all houses were deemed up to standard, so in 1929 the Council resolved to end private ownership (facing protestations from the *Bantu Women's League*). Any building work that did not conform to the Council's new building programme was halted; old buildings were gradually demolished and the occupants rehoused in new ones¹⁷⁸; a programme of 15 cottages per month was launched. The Council also continued to expropriate home owners quietly and smoothly until the last house was acquired in 1955.¹⁷⁹ But there were 24 old widow landlords who vehemently opposed this policy, and they were granted some grace.

Much of the Bulawayo Location, Commonage and private compounds remained in a state of dire poverty and overcrowding in the interwar period, and for this the Council was singled out through periodic commissions of inquiry, and reprimanded for its failings. One prominent Location activist, Martha Ngano, called for a Government commission of inquiry in 1925, and the outspoken trade unionist, Masotsha Ndlovu, also implored the Prime Minister, Howard Moffat, in 1928 and 1929 to visit the Location and hear their grievances. Moffat was certainly more sympathetic to such pleas than the Government's Native Department, who distrusted African trade unionists.¹⁸⁰ He had tried in vain to implement urban reforms in Bulawayo throughout the 1920s, always facing severe resistance from the Town Council. But finally, in February, 1930, he appointed the Jackson Commission to look into African affairs, starting with Bulawayo. Because it was headed by openly "liberal" individuals, the Bulawayo councillors and residents were immediately suspicious and hostile to the inquiry. As one European resident wrote, "We want more rule as far as the natives are concerned and less teaching".¹⁸¹ The commissioners reported that the Location had been managed with the bare minimum of accountability, as if it were the "private estate of the ratepayers". It described the Location as "an ill-defined and unfenced part of the Commonage" that was only loosely controlled. And it blamed both the "apathetic corporate conscience" of Bulawayo's whites and the lack of legislative stimulus from Government for this state of affairs.¹⁸²

The Council not only ignored the commission's recommendations; it also responded furiously to its indictments, with "one of the most ferocious documents in the whole history of

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104

¹⁷⁸ House owners' compensation would be based on a valuation agreed between the owner, the Location Superintendent and the Government's Native Department.

¹⁷⁹ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 9

¹⁸⁰ Moffat was the grandson of the famous missionary Robert Moffat, who was a friend of King Mzilikazi.

¹⁸¹ Bulawayo Chronicle, 22 February, 1930, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 109.

¹⁸² From two NAZ files: ZAN 2/1/1 and S 235/394; quoted in Ranger, 2010: 112

city/state relations in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.”¹⁸³ It warned that the report’s “claptrap” could incite some kind of uprising from Africans, and threatened an end to all cooperation with government. This was Moffat’s opportunity to push through legislation that he had been preparing, but in the end he failed to exert any influence on Bulawayo. The Jackson Commission was much less contested in the towns of Salisbury and Gatooma. But it was clear that “white Bulawayo was determined to do its own thing.” Indeed, Bulawayo’s opposition precipitated Moffat’s downfall.¹⁸⁴

It was then the turn of Moffat’s successor, Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins, to endure 20 years of wrangling with the Bulawayo Council (1933-53). As Ranger so vividly shows, this often played out as a personal stand-off between “Huggie” and the “Big City Boss” of Bulawayo – Donald Macintyre. This was because, “In Southern Rhodesia’s tiny municipal councils and equally tiny parliament, large issues easily became a joust between two rival champions.”¹⁸⁵ From 1933-53, Macintyre was the on-and-off Mayor of Bulawayo as well as Chairman of the Finance Committee. Meanwhile, he also had the politically contradictory identities of being a baker, industrialist and socialist MP. He shifted his allegiances between white artisans and white industrialists, but never sided with African workers. His most consistent position was being in opposition to Central Government.

In 1936, the Government decided it would take some responsibility, by stepping in to build a higher class ‘native village settlement’ called Luveve, 12kms from Bulawayo’s CBD, on the Commonage boundary. This was in fact a superior ‘model’ township (akin to those discussed in chapter 1), where each home had 2 or 3 bedrooms, a kitchen and washroom, to serve as a model for the Bulawayo municipality to aspire to. It accommodated mostly government teachers. However, according to West, Huggins envisaged Luveve like an urban reserve to which the emergent African middle class could be safely consigned.¹⁸⁶ Although it was hailed by the European press as “transplanting natives from huts to homes”, African residents were generally less impressed, not least because it was so far from town and work, and some feared it would be subject to heavier control. They boycotted it at first, but eventually saw it as a way to escape the undesirable, overcrowded ‘lower class’ townships.¹⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the Bulawayo Council did not entirely abdicate its own housing responsibilities at this time. It built some houses, playing fields, a clinic and new hall in the 1930s. However, this state of affairs reversed suddenly at the onset of World War II, due to two

¹⁸³ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 112.

¹⁸⁴ In that period government had to take these furiously autonomous city voters seriously, since most of the electorate was urban. (Ranger, ‘City versus State’, p. 163)

¹⁸⁵ Ranger, ‘City vs State’, p. 172.

¹⁸⁶ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 108

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 110

contradictory Council policies: firstly, the prioritisation of industrial growth, and secondly, the de-prioritisation of African house-building. The first policy was highly successful. Between 1941 and 1946, industry grew by 90% in Bulawayo, and 80% in Salisbury.¹⁸⁸ This resulted in a massive influx of African male workers as well as women to Bulawayo (which acquired city status in 1943.¹⁸⁹) The second policy, however, was disastrous. Apart from a spurt of building in 1939 and 1940, the rate of council building slowed and private building was prohibited. Thus, by the early 1940s, unprecedented slum conditions had arisen.¹⁹⁰

One problem was a war-time shortage of building materials, but there was also an ongoing dispute between the Council and Government about how to spend municipal beer profits. There was never enough money for basic African housing and amenities, and the Council therefore used a portion of beer profits for that purpose. But the Government always insisted that these profits should be reserved exclusively for welfare expenditure (clinics, football fields, etc.). Under the 1942 Native Beer Act, the Government finally tried to impose its will. This imposition was argued back and forth. “Principle, as well as Municipal pride were at stake”, and eventually, in 1945, the Government allowed the Council to use 50% of beer profits to meet capital costs for housing, which temporarily doubled the rate of construction. Surplus on the beer account soon dried up, but at least for the Bulawayo Council, “honour had been restored”.¹⁹¹ Yet still, the rate of house-building was completely inadequate. The Council was apathetic and preoccupied with other things.¹⁹²

Because of this hopeless housing situation, the Howman Commission came to investigate Bulawayo’s African affairs in November, 1943. Its indictment of Bulawayo was not taken well. Councillor Macintyre attacked the idea of “stabilising” the African workforce, saying this was what the industrialists selfishly wanted. In the interests of European ratepayers, he wanted to minimise African housing costs and ensure that Africans returned to where they “belonged” – the rural areas: “I think the best thing is for them to live in the open spaces of the Colony, running their

¹⁸⁸ P. Ibbotson, *The African in Industry* (Historical Ref. Collection of the Bulawayo Public Library, unpublished manuscript, 9th November, 1948), p. 4)

¹⁸⁹ Between 1936 and 1946 the African working population rose from 15,322 to 33,322. By 1951 it was 56 988. (D. J. Murray, *The Governmental System in Southern Rhodesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 315.)

¹⁹⁰ Ashton, *African Administration*, p. 3

¹⁹¹ Ashton, *African Administration*, p. 12.

¹⁹² In 1943, capital outlay on Bulawayo’s Native Affairs was 2.2% of total capital outlay; whereas in Salisbury it was 10.7%. The consequence was that, “Bulawayo’s Location is not as pleasing to the eye as is Salisbury’s”, but the calculation did not include beer profit expenditure; furthermore, Bulawayo employed African labour which was cheaper. However, all the major municipalities in South Africa, including Durban (which also used beer profits for housing) spent a higher proportion on African housing than Bulawayo, with the notable exception of Cape Town (1.2%) (Town Clerk’s report to Council, ‘Native Affairs Administration’, 7th July, 1944/BCCA/Transfer Box 4/rent, native admin.).

cattle.”¹⁹³ This could not have been a clearer expression of the sentiment that towns were for whites; Africans were not to be regarded as urban citizens. Despite the persistent efforts of Prime Ministers Moffat and then Huggins to cajole the Bulawayo Council to fulfil its municipal responsibilities in public housing and service provision, and to update its unsatisfactory Location Regulations from the 1890s, Bulawayo fought until the bitter end to maintain the *status quo*, whilst Macintyre boasted to parliament that only Bulawayo had entire control of its location, unlike Salisbury, where Government poked its nose in.

The housing crisis and the Council’s last stand

The Council was shaken from its reactionary and blasé attitude when the African Railway employees struck in 1945, demanding better pay and housing. Yet still it did not adequately address their demands, with the mayor blaming the housing crisis on an excess of unemployed Africans, and calling for proper influx controls to prevent this. He also complained that by providing subsidised housing for employees the Council’s ratepayers were in effect subsidising the railways and industrialists.¹⁹⁴ The solution should be higher wages, he argued. This issue of who should bear the financial burden of housing African workers was, and remained, highly charged (see chapter 5).¹⁹⁵

Whilst Macintyre theatrically rejected the reformist pressures from above and came up with clever ways to quell African unrest, his Council faced criticism from other quarters, and alarm bells were ringing within the ranks, too. The Reverend Percy Ibbotson – founder of the Native Welfare Society (NWS) of Bulawayo – periodically investigated African living conditions and was not afraid to expose the dire state of Bulawayo’s African housing¹⁹⁶, to which Macintyre retaliated by snubbing the NWS. In 1946, Ibbotson added to the chorus of voices claiming that the municipal *laissez-faire* approach to African housing was no longer tenable.¹⁹⁷ From inside the council, the Medical Officer of Health said the same:

Industrialisation of the City is progressing at a speed which many people do not realise, and though the temporary accommodation provided by the Council has done much to meet immediate needs, the urgency of the whole question is only partly abated. Natives

¹⁹³ Evidence to the Howman Commission, 26 Nov. 1943, NAZ Harare S1906/1 in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 121.

¹⁹⁴ Gussman, *African Life in an Urban Area*, p. 8

¹⁹⁵ BCCA/Mayors’ Minute for the year ended 31st July, 1945

¹⁹⁶ E.g. P. Ibbotson, *Survey of Urban African Conditions in Southern Rhodesia* (Bulawayo, Federation of Native Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia, 1943).

¹⁹⁷ P. Ibbotson, ‘Urbanization in Southern Rhodesia’, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 16, 2 (1946), pp. 73-82.

are still living around their places of employment in shacks of all descriptions and unauthorised and insanitary villages are springing up in various places in the neighbouring Commonage. Many natives are unwilling to abandon their shacks and their families for the monastic seclusion of the temporary Municipal Locations, and it would be entirely unreasonable to blame them. A new location or native township on a large scale... is probably the most urgent necessity which the Municipality has to face; extraordinary measures on expenditure are required for it now.¹⁹⁸

But the rates of municipal housing construction continued to be grossly inadequate. Indeed, between 1943 and 1949, the number of African men in employment in Bulawayo nearly doubled, from 25,000 to 48,000. Yet in that 6-year period, only 1,218 cottages, 228 rooms, and 2,528 temporary bed spaces for bachelors were built in total. In the Municipal Location, there were 15,362 inhabitants in 1949, and it was a slum.¹⁹⁹ With increasing exasperation, Huggins asserted that “we have to realize that a permanent urban class is arising”, and rather than view African housing as a national (=taxpayer) or municipal (=ratepayer) liability, he argued that the employer should be financially liable and the local authority should be administratively responsible.²⁰⁰ The *Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act* (“Urban Areas Act”) was to be the legislative impetus, and if “recalcitrant” local authorities did not fulfil their housing responsibilities, Government would step in, he warned. Characteristically, Bulawayo resisted this legislation whilst other councils acquiesced. Bulawayo councillors felt that neither the Council nor industrialists should be responsible. Rather, it should be a Central Government responsibility. In his role as a Southern Rhodesia Labour Party MP, Macintyre came from various ideological angles to attack the draft Bill.

He not only defended the town as a ‘white space’, but also took the African perspective, portraying the legislation as turning “the native into a feudal serf” in the town²⁰¹, because he would be tied to his employer, whilst in the villages tribal life would be destabilised.²⁰² In short, the Bulawayo Council favoured the *status quo*, and if anything was to change, it should be the Government taking more responsibility. Macintyre argued:

¹⁹⁸ Quoted in Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 12

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 11

²⁰⁰ Prime Minister (who was also the Minister of Native Affairs), in extract from Hansard, 23rd November, 1944. Motion: Natives in Urban Areas. P. 4 (BCCA/Transfer Box 4/ rent, native admin).

²⁰¹ Extract from Hansard, 24th November, 1944. Motion: Natives in Urban Areas. P. 15 (BCCA/Transfer Box 4: “rent, native admin”)

²⁰² Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, 129.

It is no cure, no solution of the problem to pass it on to someone else... You cannot pass it on as a solution to someone else who is in a much less advantageous position to deal with it than the central government themselves.²⁰³

Ultimately, what incensed Macintyre the most was the Government's attempt to compel Bulawayo to do something. He specifically asked what powers the Government had to "compel" municipalities to implement the Urban Areas Act. Clearly, there was a deep structural tension here – the Government believed Bulawayo should do its bidding, whilst the latter believed it was an independent city. One MP summed this up in his rebuttal to Macintyre:

Some hon. Members seem to have found the use of the word "compel" offensive. That objection is symptomatic of a state of mind in this Colony. It shows that there are numbers of people who have completely misunderstood the position of the local authorities vis-à-vis the central Government. It does not seem to be appreciated in Southern Rhodesia that the local authority is simply the delegate or the nominee of the central Government; it is there to carry out the dictates and the wishes of the central Government.²⁰⁴

Huggins was exasperated: "I have been negotiating with these people for ten years", he complained.²⁰⁵ He knew that there would be "calm waters" in Salisbury when the Bill was finally introduced into parliament in January 1946, and that the main opposition would come from Bulawayo. And indeed, Macintyre "called on all his resilience and rudeness to carry a doomed fight through the committee stages of the Bill";²⁰⁶ and he kept on fear mongering about the cities being swamped by "natives". Nevertheless, the Bill was passed in February, 1946, with Macintyre the only dissenter. Although Salisbury had also put up some resistance²⁰⁷, it complied with the Urban Areas Act from 1946. Bulawayo only did so from 1948.

Interestingly, African political and trade union leaders in Bulawayo aligned with Macintyre in opposing the new legislation, because they feared it would lead to more Council control and a

²⁰³D. MacIntyre, Extract from Hansard, 24th November, 1944. Motion: Natives in Urban Areas. (BCCA/Transfer Box 4/rent, native admin)

²⁰⁴ Extract from Hansard, 24th November, 1944. Motion: Natives in Urban Areas. P. 23 (BCCA/Transfer Box 4/rent, native admin)

²⁰⁵ Hansard, 23 Nov. 1944, quoted in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 127

²⁰⁶ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 130

²⁰⁷ The town clerk (Lovett) addressed the Salisbury Councillors: "I regret very much that I cannot agree that acceptance of the Prime Minister's proposals will provide the native with his Utopia or even improve his lot. My reason for making this irreverent assertion is the very simple one that it does not appear to have produced a more satisfactory state of affairs in the Union [of South Africa]...". (Town Clerk to the Mayor and Members of the City Council of Salisbury, 7th July, 1944. (BCCA/Transfer Box 4/rent, native admin).

new burdensome rent structure. In fact, the Southern Rhodesian Bantu Congress had petitioned the British government, alongside Macintyre, to disallow the Act; and the African Voters League even urged members to vote for Macintyre's Southern Rhodesia Labour Party in protest against the Act. But by 1948, their allegiance had shifted. As Ranger notes: "The Bulawayo Council, and Macintyre in particular, had become the villains".²⁰⁸ Whilst the government was trying to set up a Municipal Labour Board to resolve issues over Municipal African workers' pay, Macintyre was at a round-table in Salisbury trying to obstruct it. The Federation of African Trade Unions "called for an instant strike in support of Government against the municipalities".²⁰⁹ The strike spread nationwide, but appears to have been very different in Salisbury and Bulawayo.²¹⁰ In Bulawayo the protestors clearly targeted the municipality, and it had little choice but to give up its intransigent defence of the status quo, and initiate reform.

The first step that the Council took, was to invite an administrator from Port Elizabeth, John McNamee, to assess the situation.²¹¹ McNamee was appalled at the Bulawayo Location conditions, but especially some of the private compounds, which he described as "possibly the worst slums in the world".²¹² He explained that:

Labour drawn from these settlements cannot possibly be efficient, and living under such conditions must unquestionably be a factor in the creation of a spirit of hopelessness, sullenness, and desperation. And this spirit can early develop into mass disaffection.²¹³

With no other option, the Council reluctantly began to implement the Urban Areas Act. By doing so two years after Salisbury, it was able to learn some lessons about how *not* to hastily and aggressively displace residents to achieve full segregation, as Salisbury had done. The Bulawayo Chambers of Industry and Commerce, the British African Voice Association and the Federation of Trade Unions were pivotal in helping to "iron out" all the differences and accept the new legislation.²¹⁴

²⁰⁸ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 161

²⁰⁹ J.E. Ross, CID, 'Secret Memorandum'; Bulawayo CID to Officer Commanding, CID, Bulawayo, 9 April 1948, ZBZ 1/2/1, vol. 2; in Ranger, *Ibid.*, 161-2

²¹⁰ I. Phimister, and B. Raftopoulos, 'Kana sora ratswa ngaritswe': African Nationalists and Black Workers—the 1948 General Strike in Colonial Zimbabwe, *Journal of Historical Sociology* 13,3 (2000), pp. 289-324.

²¹¹ McNamee was the administrator who had administered the model township in Port Elizabeth, McNamee Village, discussed in the previous chapter.

²¹² This indictment echoed the words of the Minister of Health, Sir Edward Thornton, to describe Port Elizabeth's Korsten township in the early 1930s (Robinson, 'The Politics of Urban Form', p. 48

²¹³ J. P. McNamee, 1948, quoted in B. Gussman, *African Life in an Urban Area: A study of the African population of Bulawayo* (Bulawayo, Federation of African Welfare Societies in S. Rhodesia, 1952), p. 138

²¹⁴ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 4

This signified the end of half a century of *laissez-faire* administration of the African areas, and therefore a critical juncture in the history of Bulawayo. Thenceforth, the Council came to be known for pursuing the most proactive and progressive African development policies in the colony. This represented a significant reorientation both in the way Africans were regarded as urban citizens, and the manner in which they were thus governed and provided for.

Part 2: Post-war reform

Having seen how the Council was unwilling to accept and provide for permanent African communities until 1949, this second part of the chapter analyses how, at the critical mid-century juncture, the Council underwent a profound reorientation, setting township development on a new course. This redirection, however, was accompanied by continuities from the earlier period – namely the city’s fierce independence and its rivalry with the capital city. Whilst part one was presented chronologically, the following sections are thematic, elaborating different aspects of municipal reform after 1949.

The Urban Areas Act, which precipitated these major urban reforms, obliged Rhodesian municipalities to construct and administer new ‘native urban areas’, i.e. African townships. The finances of these areas were to be kept in a separate ‘Native Revenue Account’, which was subdivided into a Capital Account and an Income & Expenditure Account.²¹⁵ This meant that councils were not obliged to spend anything from the rate fund (i.e. European ratepayers’ money) on the African townships, and they rarely did. In the case of Bulawayo, further Government arm-twisting was required to kick-start African housing: the sale of industrial sites in the town was banned in 1951-2, until the City Council had proven that significant housing construction was underway (see chapter three).

In addition to the separation of accounts, the major organisational change introduced by the Urban Areas Act was to oblige the municipal councils of the larger urban centres to establish their own municipal ‘native administration departments’. These municipal departments would assume nearly full control of African administration and housing, and all ‘registration of service’ contracts for African workers in the town were transferred to them from the Central Government’s Native Affairs Department.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Report of the Urban Affairs Commission, 1958, p. 48/BCCA

²¹⁶ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 15

The African Administration Department

The Bulawayo Council founded its Native Administration Department in 1949, soon renamed the African Administration Department (AAD).²¹⁷ This Department was designed to be the “sole channel of communication” between the Council and the African public, according its director a powerful gatekeeper status. Its purpose was to become,

more intimately and continuously connected with Africans than any other single organisation, in many ways the buffer between the two races, [tasked with] easing tensions, particularly on the African side.²¹⁸

As we have seen, there were indeed tensions between council and residents, built up over decades, that needed “easing”. As John McNamee had stated sarcastically in 1948, “the relations between the native people and the local authority here are just a little bit strained”.²¹⁹ This new department of the council, designed to improve race relations, improve township living conditions, and improve *Africans themselves*, grew to over 100 graded employees and over a thousand ungraded, enabling far more varied and sophisticated “expert” interventions in the lives of African townspeople than ever before. Figure 1 shows the administrative structure of the AAD’s Head Office, and figure 2 shows the structure of each specific township office. The Department’s Head Office was located in the Heavy Industrial Areas to the south west of the town centre, several miles from the City Hall, where most council departments were headquartered. This symbolised its detachment from the administration of white Bulawayo.

²¹⁷ Hereafter referred to as the African Administration Department (AAD) or “the Department”. Note: in 1953, the Native Administration Department was renamed the ‘African Administration Department’. In February 1963, it was renamed ‘Housing and Amenities’, and in 1975 became ‘Housing and Community Services’. The name change from African Admin to Housing and Amenities in 1963 was intended to signify the trend away from racial differentiation. It was believed that “it was wrong in principle that the department should continue to be a segregated one, dealing with only one section of the community...” (Director’s annual report, 1963). However, in reality the name change was more symbol than substance. The renamed department was to be responsible for non-African housing schemes, although in practice it continued to deal overwhelmingly with the African townships and Coloured housing, but it did also take over some European and Asian housing responsibilities. Also, concomitant with the 1963 name change, the Council abolished its ‘African Administration Committee’ and replaced it with two committees: ‘Housing and Amenities’ and ‘Liquor Undertaking’.

²¹⁸ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 51

²¹⁹ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 169



Figure 6: Organisational Structure of the African Administration Department Head Office [Source: Adapted from Ndubiwa, 'African Participation in Urban Management', p. 12]

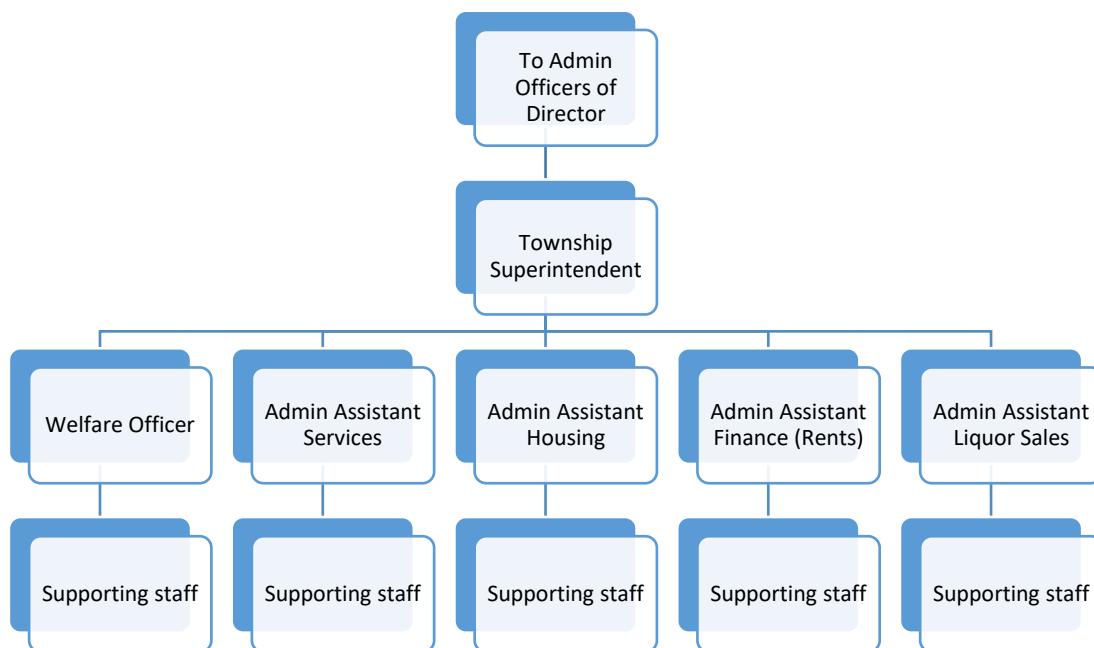


Figure 7: Organisational Structure of Township Office [Source: Adapted from Ndubiwa, 'African Participation in Urban Management', p. 12]

The first thing to do was appoint a director for this new department. The director was to be “someone who the natives see as their head, someone who is accessible to them”.²²⁰ Thus, the directorship was conceived as a fatherly role, both authoritative and yet accessible. The Council had a round of 4 interviews with 3 South Africans and 1 Rhodesian candidate²²¹, but remained unsatisfied. Two councillors then went to Johannesburg to interview a further two candidates²²², one of whom dropped out, so they ended up by default with Dr Edmund Hugo Ashton. At the age of 37, married and with two children, Ashton moved up to Bulawayo in August, 1949, to take on the last and longest job of his career. His profound influence over African township development in Bulawayo warrants some detailed discussion of his training, previous work experience, and political inclinations, because these factors shaped the way he built his Department and ended up running the townships.

Hugh Ashton was born in 1912, in Qacha's Nek, Lesotho, where his father was a district commissioner. He claims to have spoken better Sotho than English as a child, and for the rest of

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Mr N.G. Meyer of Kimberley, Mr C.A. Hignett of Durban, and Mr P. Venter of Germiston, and Assistant Native Commissioner of Gwelo, Mr N. Robertson.

²²² Mr E.R. Burnett, of the Vanderbijl Park Non-European Affairs Department and Dr Ashton of the Johannesburg Department.

his life felt he was “a Southern African through and through.”²²³ Ashton went to Rondebosch Bishops school, from where he obtained a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford. At Oxford he read Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), and became good friends with a fellow Rhodes scholar at New College, Bram Fischer, who was to become the famous anti-apartheid activist lawyer, best known for defending Nelson Mandela at the Rivonia Trial.²²⁴ After Oxford, Ashton went to the London School of Economics to complete a further undergraduate degree in anthropology in 2 years (1934-5). At LSE he was a regular attendee of Malinowski’s seminars, alongside Jomo Kenyatta, Max Gluckman, Meyer Fortes and other prominent anthropologists.²²⁵ He then proceeded to Cape Town, where he undertook his PhD in anthropology, supervised by Isaac Schapera. He conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Lesotho and submitted his thesis in 1939; it was later published as a respected monograph: *The Basuto: A Social Study of Traditional and Modern Lesotho*.²²⁶

But whilst training and researching as an anthropologist, Ashton racked up 10 years in the colonial service as a district officer in Bechuanaland.²²⁷ With his academic and practical knowledge, he assisted his mentor, Schapera, during fieldwork expeditions in 1939 and ’42.²²⁸ They maintained a lifelong friendship, with “Schap” visiting the Ashtons annually in Bulawayo.²²⁹ Another connection from the Bechuanaland days was the Khamas (Seretse and Ruth), who also visited the Ashtons in Bulawayo.

Ashton had also been private secretary to Sir William Clark, who was the British High Commissioner for Bechuanaland Protectorate, Swaziland, Basutoland and the Union of South Africa (1934-39), and whose daughter, Diana, Ashton married in 1941.²³⁰ In 1946, Ashton joined the African welfare department of the Johannesburg City Council, working in the African townships.²³¹ It is worth noting that this was actually a period of welfarist reform in the Union of South Africa, before the rise of Afrikaaner nationalism in 1949.²³² As a welfare officer, Ashton lectured for two years on African administration to some eminent students, such as Joshua

²²³ E. H. Ashton, ‘Introduction’, in H. Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens of Bulawayo: Integrated Drinking in a Segregated Society* (1974), p. xviii

²²⁴ Personal correspondence with Isabel Kretzmer, 6th March, 2017.

²²⁵ As evidenced by a photograph of a list of attendees of Malinowski’s seminars, posted on twitter by Freddy Foks.

²²⁶ (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1952)

²²⁷ Minutes of Special Meeting of the City Council of Bulawayo, 30th April, 1949 p.189/BCCA

²²⁸ I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (Oxford University Press, 1938) and ‘The Native Land Problem in the Tati District’, *Botswana Notes and Records*, 3 (1971), pp. 219-268

²²⁹ Personal correspondence with David Brokensha, 10th December, 2016.

²³⁰ Interview with Hugo Ashton, Oxford, 28th November, 2016

²³¹ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 169

²³² J. Seekings, ‘Visions, Hopes & Views about the Future: the Radical Moment of South African Welfare Reform’ and D. Posel, ‘The Case for a Welfare State: Poverty & the Politics of the Urban African Family in the 1930s & 1940s’, both in S. Dubow and A. Jeeves (eds), *South Africa's 1940s: Worlds of Possibilities* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), pp. 44-63 and 64-86 respectively.

Nkomo, who was to become the “father of African nationalism” a few years later in Bulawayo. Ashton maintained a friendship with Nkomo in Bulawayo, hosting him on occasion at his Hillside residence.²³³



Figure 8: Hugh Ashton in Bulawayo, 1976 [Chronicle, 25th Nov., 1976]

When Ashton applied for the Bulawayo director’s position in 1949, the Afrikaner nationalist party of D.F. Malan had just taken power in South Africa, and Ashton was eager to leave a political climate that he “did not like at all”.²³⁴ Ashton’s academic credentials and close association with prominent African leaders meant the Bulawayo councillors initially regarded him, with suspicion, as a “liberal”.²³⁵ He certainly got the seal of approval from several prominent white liberal contemporaries. For example, Doris Lessing described him as “courteous and liberal” after meeting him in 1955²³⁶;

historian Richard Gray referred to Ashton as a “far-sighted administrator”;²³⁷ Hardwicke Holderness, a liberal member of Garfield Todd’s Cabinet, also found Ashton to be a “highly civilised man”, and a “different kettle of fish” from his authoritarian Salisbury counterpart²³⁸; and the feminist academic, Gerda Siann, described Ashton as “a great deal more liberal than most of his counterparts throughout the Territory”.²³⁹

The reason these biographical details matter, is that in Southern Rhodesia, as this thesis aims to demonstrate, local state administrators could wield considerable influence over African

²³³ Interview with Hugo Ashton, Oxford, 28th November, 2016.

²³⁴ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 169; Interview with Hugo Ashton, Oxford, 28th November, 2016.

²³⁵ Mark Ncube interview with Ashton, Bulawayo, 1 June 1994, NAZ, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 169

²³⁶ D. Lessing, *Going Home* (Frogmore, Granada Publishing, 1968 [1957]), p. 189

²³⁷ R. Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the development of race relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* (Oxford, OUP, 1960) p. 271

²³⁸ H. Holderness, *Lost Chance, Southern Rhodesia, 1945-58* (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985).

²³⁹ ‘Bulawayo Diary’, DISA Archive (1959) p. 69

township policies and development, and at the same time, they could be of considerably different political inclination and vision.

Indeed, having an anthropologist in municipal African administration in Rhodesia was unusual. According to Ewen Greenfield, who worked for 10 years in the Department in the 1960s and at an administrators' training school, African administration jobs were often regarded as a "chuck away kind of thing" in Rhodesia; municipalities would typically hire "an old policeman or something like that to head up their African Administration Department". Consequently, Salisbury's Director in the 1960s and 70s, Rory Briggs, was "very impressed by Ashton. And he did recognise Ashton's total superiority, and he'd contact Ashton from time to time for advice and things like this."²⁴⁰

Reforming attitudes

The first thing that Ashton began to reform in Bulawayo was the attitudes of existing township staff. On his arrival in 1949, he noticed a pervasive "negative" attitude. In particular, he identified Donald Macintyre – "the big city boss" discussed in part one – to be the most "negative" and "reactionary". He found most councillors "insular and racist", "not at all helpful", and even "unbelievable", such as a railway trade unionist, John McNeillie, who felt compelled to wash his hands after meeting Africans.²⁴¹ These reactionary attitudes and poor manners were anathema to progress and cooperation. Apparently unwilling to hire people "sunk in the old Rhodesian right-wing attitudes", Ashton recruited some staff directly from England.²⁴² A Black former administrator who began his 36-year career in the Housing Department as a clerk in 1964, recalls that:

Ashton was different. You felt that difference. He looked at you as a human being. And similarly the staff that he employed was encouraged to adopt those attitudes, you know? He wanted fair treatment. And in fact, he regularly told his white counterparts, his staff, to respect Blacks.²⁴³

Much Masunda, who worked vacation jobs in the AAD in the 1960s, before landing a senior position with his law degree in 1970, says that:

²⁴⁰ Interview with Ewen Greenfield, London, 18th Jan, 2017

²⁴¹ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 188

²⁴² Interview with Greenfield interview.

²⁴³ Author interview with Jimmy Ncube, Bulawayo, 19 July, 2016.

He would sit down with you either at his office or he would come to your office – he had no issues about that – and you would have a constructive discussion as to what it is that he wanted to be done and why he wanted it done. His approach was disarmingly simple, but behind that veneer of simplicity, he was a very determined individual, he knew exactly what he wanted.²⁴⁴

There were several converts to this new approach, such as a Township Superintendent called Deric Cleary, who was at first sceptical, but ended up taking an active part in promoting African staff to leading positions.²⁴⁵ In his township reports in the late 1950s, it is evident that Cleary embraced his new paternalistic mission of helping African migrants transition to a “modern, Western” way of life.²⁴⁶

Ashton himself visited the USA, West Africa and the Congos for 6 months in 1959 to observe race relations and decolonisation, paying close attention to public administrations. In New York he noted with surprise how black and white clerks and typists in government offices got along on equal terms, “with what seemed perfectly natural and friendly relations between them”.²⁴⁷ And in West Africa he noted that the ‘Africanised’ public administrations were “probably more satisfactory than earlier Western forms,” because, he believed, they placed more emphasis on social relations than precision, impersonality, orthodoxy and urgency.²⁴⁸ Yet he also noted new young African officials and ministers who brought “considerably more drive, energy and ruthlessness to their office than occurred in Colonial days. Many of them work extremely hard, and expect comparable efforts from their subordinates.”²⁴⁹ He regarded many of these changes in West Africa favourably, and advocated much more “racial cooperation” and desegregation in the Central African Federation, but did not go so far as to advocate the end of colonial rule there.

To exert authority ‘upwards’ on councillors and ministers, he needed the collaboration of the Town Clerk.²⁵⁰ From 1952 to 1973, this was Eddie White.²⁵¹ White had the power to endorse

²⁴⁴ Author interview with Much Masunda, Harare, 24th June, 2018.

²⁴⁵ Personal correspondence with Ewen Greenfield, 10th December, 2016

²⁴⁶ In his later career in the 1970s, Cleary moved to Port Elizabeth and became its Director of African Administration.

²⁴⁷ But he noted extreme racial hostility in other areas. (E.H. Ashton, Report on trip to USA (personal collection of Hugo Ashton, 1959)

²⁴⁸

²⁴⁹ E.H. Ashton, Report on trip to West Africa (personal collection of Hugo Ashton, 1959)

²⁵⁰ The town clerk is the most senior salaried employee of a city council in the English local government system, effectively the chief executive.

²⁵¹ White was considered a regional expert on local government and was internationally respected, earning him the presidency of the Institute of Town Clerks of Southern Africa, and in 1965 the presidency of the Association of Town Clerks of the British Commonwealth. He was born and educated in Cape Town, and moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1930, when he immediately joined the Council as a secretary; in 1938 he

Ashton's proposals, and he often served as a conduit between Ashton and cabinet ministers. In 1961, Ashton helped to arrange a US 'Leader Grant' for White to visit the US to examine race relations and the civil rights movement. Apparently, "This opened White's eyes to the wider world and its problems, and it was after this that he actively helped to steer through some of Ashton's reforms..."²⁵² However, White was by no means progressive; after retirement, he stood for parliament on a Rhodesia Front ticket. Whilst the relationship between White and Ashton was congenial and usually cooperative, Ashton was often frustrated that they did not see eye to eye on many issues.²⁵³

Africanising the Department

The most significant change to the staffing of Bulawayo's township administration was a policy of 'Africanisation', meaning the hiring of Africans to graded positions. This began in 1958, with the controversial hiring of four African graduates to the AAD. For this, Ashton was branded a "negrophile" and the graduates were called "agitators", by a right-wing councillor, Jack Pain.²⁵⁴ In 1960, the notion of opening public administrations to all races was becoming a national conversation.²⁵⁵ In December 1960, a panel was convened to report confidentially on the promotion of "non-European advancement" in the municipal service in Bulawayo, i.e. on ways to remove the barriers that Africans faced to attaining higher grade positions.²⁵⁶ A special council committee considered the report for 3 months, wondering whether it was "really necessary at this stage" to actively promote non-European advancement, and asked for a follow-up report.

Finally, on the 7th of February, 1962, the Council adopted all of the non-European advancement recommendations, opening up positions in the Health Department and African Administration Department "as far as possible" to Non-Europeans, on the same terms and conditions as applied to Europeans – equal salaries, pensions, medical benefits and general conditions.²⁵⁷ This was implemented by:

was appointed Assistant Town Clerk; by 1949 he was Deputy Town Clerk, and in 1952 he became Town Clerk for 21 years until 1973. ('Honour for Town Clerk', *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 7th July, 1965; and 'Town Clerk is a Top Man in his Field', *Chronicle*, 1st Nov., 1968.

²⁵² Personal correspondence with E. Greenfield, 29th November, 2016

²⁵³ Interview with Hugo Ashton.

²⁵⁴ *Home News*, 25th October 1958, quoted in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 188.

²⁵⁵ E.g. at the National Convention held in Salisbury in 1960.

²⁵⁶ The panel comprised the Town Clerk and various Council department heads, including Ashton.

²⁵⁷ Council Minutes, 7th Feb, 1962/BCCA

- a) transferring existing African employees with appropriate qualifications to the European grading scheme (which meant a significant salary boost);
- b) placing unqualified but promising candidates (with ability, experience, commitment and/or integrity) on six months' probation;
- c) offering all future vacancies in the higher grades (in Health and African Admin.) to the best candidate, irrespective of race.

The all-European Municipal Employees' Association was consulted and had no objections to the advancement of non-Europeans "based on merit and responsibility", so long as "standards" were not lowered and jobs were not fragmented, and existing European staff were not displaced.²⁵⁸

In the 1960s, the AAD went furthest in Southern Rhodesia, in promoting Africans with higher degrees to higher grade positions. A few examples are: Miss Iwani Mothobi – a 22-year old with a degree in social anthropology and psychology from Fort Hare – appointed as a social worker in 1960 (after having worked vacation jobs)²⁵⁹; Miss Theodora Malaba, a 26-year old with a BSc in psychology and zoology from Roma University College with teaching experience and an excellent reference²⁶⁰; Miss E. Cicero, with a 3-year Diploma in Social Work from the Jan Hofmeyer School; Mr. E. Bulle, with a B.A degree and postgraduate diploma in education, became the Acting Manager of Stanley Hall – the most iconic social and political venue of the townships; Mr Phezulu, with a Bachelors in Social Science from the University of South Africa; Miss U. Dzivane, with a BA and postgraduate diploma in Education and Native Administration²⁶¹; Mr Mtshena Sidile, a long-term employee since 1950, obtained his BA in Social Science from the University of South Africa, and was awarded paid study leave by the Council²⁶² to study for a Masters in Social Work from Adelphi College in the US on an American scholarship (1961), which also allowed him to become a visiting scholar at Yale. In 1962, an African senior research assistant from the Rhodes Livingstone Institute was appointed to the Welfare section.²⁶³

Many of the African staff hired in this period were to remain in the Housing Department long after independence. Mtshena Sidile was to become the first African Director of Housing in 1982, retiring in 1990. Jimmy Ncube was hired in 1964 as a clerical assistant (short-hand typist),

²⁵⁸ The Association also requested that those who underwent probation sit an exam at the end, with two members of the Association being on the exam committee. (Confidential Report by the Town Clerk's Office to the Councillors, 2nd Feb 1962/BCCA)

²⁵⁹ General purposes committee minutes, 24th March, 1960 p. 732/BCCA. Mothobi shortly thereafter took leave to do a postgraduate course in social work in Wales.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ 'Non-European Advancement in Municipal Service', Confidential report to the General Purposes Committee, 17th Dec, 1960, Appendix 1/BCCA

²⁶² General Purposes Committee minutes, 23rd June, 1960, p. 2357/BCCA

²⁶³ African Administration Committee minutes, 9th April, 1962, p. 725/BCCA

and worked his way up to Senior Housing Officer, retiring only in 2000.²⁶⁴ Michael Ndubiwa's connection to the Bulawayo City Council began when he was still in high school. He came from a humble background, living in an overcrowded home in the Old Location of Makokoba, when he won a Council bursary in 1958. He then joined the Council as a clerk in 1962, and soon became Ashton's protégé. He completed a BA in 1964 (University of Lesotho), became the first African

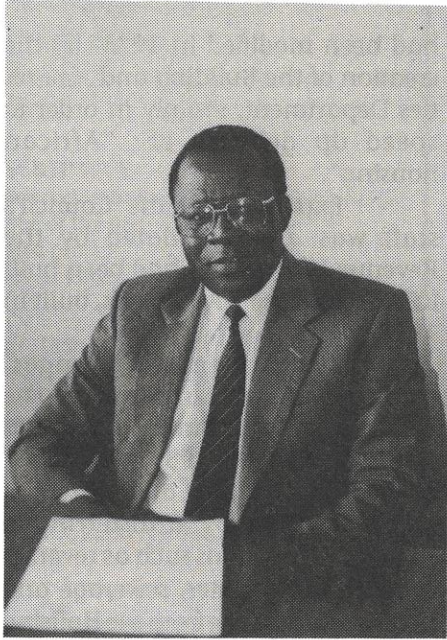


Figure 9: Michael Ndubiwa as town clerk in 1994
[Source: *Bulawayo Centenary Magazine*, 1994]

Area Controller in the liquor undertaking, then worked his way up through Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, Admin Officer, and Senior Admin Officer in the 1970s.²⁶⁵ He obtained an MA in Public Administration in 1972 from Birmingham (partly funded by a city council scholarship), was the first Black person in southern Africa to receive a diploma from the Southern Africa Institute of Town Clerks in 1978, became Deputy Town Clerk of Bulawayo in 1979²⁶⁶, and by 1984 was the first African Town Clerk in independent Zimbabwe, serving until 1999, when he retired after nearly 40 years of service to the Council.

Some high profile African politicians also passed through the Department in the 1960s, including Mike Hove, who joined the Housing Department after being one of two S. Rhodesian Africans in the Federal Parliament; Dumiso Dabengwa, who became leader of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) armed wing and a prominent politician after independence; and Josiah Gumede, who was later to become the only president of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia in 1979. Starting with a graded staff of 8 in 1949, the department had reached 108 by 1970, plus many hundreds of ungraded employees.²⁶⁷ By the end of his career, Ashton boasted that in terms of Africanisation, "My own Department in the Bulawayo Municipality would pass this test with about a 95% mark. It is possibly the most advanced in the country in this respect, though others are coming on."²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Interview with Jimmy Ncube, Bulawayo, 1st March, 2017.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Michael Ndubiwa, Bulawayo, 21st June, 2018

²⁶⁶ 'African to be Deputy Town Clerk', *Chronicle*, July 20th, 1979

²⁶⁷ Mayor's preface to the Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities [hereafter 'Annual report of the Director'] 1970/BCCA

²⁶⁸ E. H. Ashton, 'Moral Suasion': The Alfred and Winifred Hoernle Memorial Lecture on race relations, delivered in Cape Town in 1978, p. 19

In addition to reforming some of the most negative staff attitudes, and Africanising the Department, Ashton and some of his colleagues introduced a more scientific, modernising ethos to urban administration.



Figure 10: The African Administration Department in 1966 (renamed Housing and Amenities) [Source: Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities for the year ending 30 June, 1966]

Modernising the Administration

The 1950s saw an expansion and revamping of state bureaucracies in Southern Rhodesia, both in the urban and rural context. In the rural context this happened with respect to the Native Land Husbandry Act, which heralded a new technical and scientific approach to managing conservation and land tenure. As Michael Drinkwater put it: “The belief in the superiority of formal scientific knowledge was institutionalized in dogmatic form.”²⁶⁹ This high-modernist, coercive approach provoked huge backlashes from African farmers, and by the end of the 1950s it was deemed highly problematic. A shift occurred towards recognising the ‘human factor’, including Africans’ alleged spiritual connection to the land. This heralded a new policy of ‘community development’. The implications of this are discussed in chapter 5.

Meanwhile, in the urban areas there was considerable variation in the degree to which scientific approaches to administration were incorporated at the local level. Each municipal administration reformed and ‘modernised’ in different ways, with their respective directors of African Administration playing a pivotal role in this regard. Abe Abrahamson, a leading Bulawayo industrialist and Minister of Housing from 1958-62, remarked on how the “calibre” of municipal township directors varied considerably. He described Ashton as a “noted anthropologist” who

²⁶⁹ M. Drinkwater, *The State and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe’s Communal Areas* (Houndsmills, Macmillan, 1991), p. 77. As we will see in chapters 4 and 5, this belief in high modernism waned from the early 1960s, and was replaced by a policy framework of ‘community development’.

was “most helpful and cooperative”, and contrasted him to Salisbury’s township director in the 1950s, Colonel George Hartley, who “presided over the lives of thousands upon thousands of people with an attitude exactly the opposite of Ashton’s.” Abrahamson claimed that the material outcomes of their different approaches were only too visible “if you went into the townships.”²⁷⁰ A right-wing Local Government Minister of the Rhodesia Front in the 1960s “disagreed with [Ashton’s] politics” but admitted (in private) that he felt he “must take his hat off” to Ashton for his “active and intelligent role.”²⁷¹ He found Salisbury’s main townships “deplorable”, and Bulawayo’s much better off, “thanks chiefly” to Ashton.²⁷²

Under Ashton’s stewardship, a number of professional anthropologists joined the African Administration Department in the 1950s, embodying its modernising ethos. Among them was Dr Johan ‘Hans’ Holleman, who, like Ashton, had been supervised by Isaac Schapera in Cape Town. He worked in the Welfare Section. As Doris Lessing observed during a visit to the Department in 1955, Holleman represented a new progressive and scientific approach to African administration. She noted, with a hint of irony, how in a lecture that Holleman gave to 30 African welfare workers and three white officials, he referred to the audience as “gentlemen”, and “spoke well and clearly, and not at all in the patronising way that is so common to white officials. He might have been delivering a lecture to a group of fellow-anthropologists.” Lessing contrasted Holleman to some other Superintendents, observing how, “The difference between the old type of Native Department official and the new was clearly seen in the way they spoke of the Africans – one paternal, having no nonsense; one half-proud, half-apprehensive, the New Deal spirit.”²⁷³

Holleman gave lectures immersed in the sociological and anthropological theories of social change at the time, exemplified by the work of the Rhodes Livingstone’s Institute in Livingstone, with which Holleman was closely affiliated. In one “very cerebral” lecture that Lessing describes, he talked about the effects of industrialisation on “tribal patterns”, arguing that a woman in the rural setting was empowered, “secure in her place in the fabric of the tribe, with all her responsibilities and duties well marked out for her”, but when she comes to town she is reduced to being a mere wife and mother. Thus, addressing the listeners who were stirring with agreement, “the fabric of the tribe is broken, gentlemen, the fabric of the community is destroyed; and it is you who must rebuild it. It is your task, gentlemen, to create the new feeling of

²⁷⁰ P. Clingman, *The Moon Can Wait: A biography of the Hon. A.E. Abrahamson* (London, Penguin, 2004), p.146

²⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation, 7th January, 1963. US National Archives 2. RG 59 General Records of the Department of State. Central Decimal File, 1960-63. 745c.001/5-961 [courtesy of Brooks Marmor]

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Lessing, *Going Home*, p. 192.

cohesion.”²⁷⁴ This summed up the paternal role that expert administrators saw for themselves, in helping to ease the transition from tribal to urban life.

Another prominent anthropologist who joined the Department in the early days, was David Brokensha. With a DPhil in anthropology from Oxford, Brokensha had worked in district administration in Tanganyika, before making the move to Bulawayo in 1956, whereupon his mentor E.E. Evans-Pritchard told him, “The chap [Ashton] you are going to work with is, Schapera tells me, most delightful. Schapera knows him well”.²⁷⁵ He was supplied with a Harley Davidson to patrol “his” home ownership scheme of Mpopoma, and in his memoir he gushes that Ashton was, “An inspirational man to work with, an outstanding administrator who had created the best housing and amenities for Africans in southern Africa.”²⁷⁶ Brokensha’s enthusiastic sense of mission is reminiscent of administrators in Kenya, described as having “a strong sense of mission to these untutored wards...”²⁷⁷

In the 1960s, more freshly minted anthropologists and sociologists joined the Department (in addition to those mentioned in the ‘Africanisation’ section above), such as Ewen Greenfield, who had degrees in anthropology and law and joined the Department because he was intrigued by the sense that Western Bulawayo was as “an area of rapid social change”.²⁷⁸ But the Department still struggled to get enough qualified staff, exacerbated by immigration restrictions on hiring South Africans. The Council made “urgent representations” to the Minister to be allowed to hire 4 qualified South African social workers in 1961.²⁷⁹ If they spoke isiZulu, isiNdebele, Chinyanja or Shona it was a bonus. (All European employees were expected to take courses in an African language,²⁸⁰ and when staffed passed an exam in one of the major African languages they would receive bonus pay.²⁸¹) One of the most enthusiastic modernisers to join the Department in the 1960s was Eric Gargett. He soon became the Senior Welfare Officer, and he took a sabbatical in 1970 to write a PhD at the University of London on “Welfare Services in an African Urban Area”, later publishing a book called *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia*, which analysed the transition from ‘tribal’ to ‘modern’ urban life.²⁸²

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

²⁷⁵ D. Brokensha, *Brokie’s Way*, Available at: <http://www.brokiesway.co.za/book.htm>

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁷ M. Blundell, *So Rough a Wind* (London, Wiedenfield and Nelson, 1964), p. 74.

²⁷⁸ Author interview with Ewen Greenfield, London, 18th January, 2017.

²⁷⁹ African Administration Committee minutes, 31st Jan., 1961, p. 286/BCCA

²⁸⁰ African admin committee minutes, 12th Feb, 1958, p. 293/BCCA

²⁸¹ General Purposes Committee minutes, 23rd June, 1960/BCCA

²⁸² published at Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1977

Thus, as Ranger notes, “Ashton, with his team of ‘doctors’ in anthropology and sociology, was running the new African Bulawayo on ‘scientific’ lines”.²⁸³ Scientific administration was based on contemporary theories about social change, such as ‘urbanisation’, ‘detrribalisation’, ‘modernisation’, ‘industrialisation’ and ‘Westernisation’. These theories were all to some degree teleological, representing social change as a self-propelled, linear, and homogenising process leading to a clear end goal. In South-Central Africa, the Rhodes Livingstone Institute was producing the most cutting edge knowledge on these processes, identifying them as an early stage of a universal process through which other parts of the world had all been. The RLI’s research directly informed Ashton’s sense that social change in Bulawayo was not unique, but universal.²⁸⁴

These theories, especially modernisation theory, were “both analytic and normative”, in that they identified the inevitability of these processes whilst at the same time advocating “jumping on the bandwagon” and hurrying them along.²⁸⁵ These theories partially displaced the earlier perception of Africans as essentially tribal, and inspired a new sense that urban migrant communities were at an insecure in-between stage of transition. Adjectives like *bewildering*, *confusing*, and *insecure* were frequently applied to the urban environment in administrative discourse in Bulawayo. Targeted both as communities and now also as individuals, Africans were said to require tutelage and assistance in nearly every domain of urban life. As Ashton explained:

[O]ur immigrants are not only being urbanized and detrribalized, they are also becoming Westernized. The objective of my department is to help these sundry processes of change along as smoothly and painlessly as possible.²⁸⁶

This task of helping Africans adjust to the urban environment meant more than just supplying welfare and housing. It was about helping them acculturate, an intervention often referred to in the literature as “social engineering”. The Department’s Welfare Section was most explicitly concerned with social engineering but also social security, covering case work and counselling, youth clubs, dance clubs, home making, etc. It was overseen for most of the period in question by Dr Gargett, who was said to have “espoused the most fashionable tenets of modernisation theory”,²⁸⁷ and like many such welfare officers in late colonial towns, he regarded expert intervention as vital to preventing communities from disintegrating²⁸⁸, whilst tending to

²⁸³ T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p.190

²⁸⁴ Ashton’s report on the Rhodes-Livingstone Conference at Lusaka, 14th-17th Jan., 1958/Minutes of the African Admin. Committee, 12th Feb, 1958, p. 294/BCCA

²⁸⁵ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 117

²⁸⁶ E. H. Ashton, ‘Introduction’, in H. Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens of Bulawayo: Integrated Drinking in a Segregated Society* (New Brunswick, Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies, 1974). p. xviii

²⁸⁷ Kaarsholm, ‘Si Ye Pambili?’, p. 232

²⁸⁸ See Atkinson, *Cities and Citizenship: Towards a Normative Analysis of the Urban Order in South Africa, with Special Reference to East London 1950-1986*, (Durban, University of Natal, 1991).

overlook the initiative of Africans in creating their own political, cultural, sporting and financial associations.²⁸⁹ Gargett called for explicit social engineering, saying:

Houses were urgently needed to avert slums and the evolution of a new society called for skilled social engineering if the houses were to become homes, and migrants citizens.²⁹⁰

Of course, many (especially educated) Africans resented this general atmosphere of paternalism. As a prominent Bulawayo township personality, and editor of a local newspaper, Charlton Ngcebetsa, wrote in 1954,

When are the white people of this country going to make themselves understand, very clearly, that the Africans are no longer mental children who must be mentally spoon-fed? Someone is pulling too much wool over their eyes.²⁹¹

In Bulawayo, tutelage took place in many more domains than just the explicit civic education and home making programmes. It happened through practices around housing, advisory boards, beer gardens, trading, etc. Greenfield recalls that Ashton “definitely wanted to create a totally modern environment in which people could experience everything that came with good urbanisation. And so there were so many things that were done which were kind of frills.”²⁹² These frills went down to the most mundane procedures, such as creating a special rent card system which, apart from administrative convenience, was also justified as giving the tenant “some feeling of proprietorship in his house or lodging” and turning the township office into “a cheerful place of public resort” when rent was paid, creating an “invaluable” sense of community.²⁹³

It was not the case that in trying to create a modern environment, every remnant of tradition was discouraged. In Bulawayo, the inter-play of tradition and modernity was critical, reflecting the administrators’ sense that people still had strong and stabilising cultural roots in the village. For example, when the Council wanted to promote traditional dancing to keep adolescent girls busy and fit, it resolved “to assist the African community to develop a form of dance which would retain the traditional pattern but which could be wedded to modern conditions.”²⁹⁴ Tribal dancing was also encouraged through competitions.

The Department’s staff were schooled in these theories and this sense of mission to intervene and help migrants in their “transition” to urban life. This schooling was designed not

²⁸⁹ See Msindo, ‘Ethnicity and Nationalism?; and Kaarsholm, ‘Si Ye Pambili?’.

²⁹⁰ E. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1977), p. 5

²⁹¹ *Home News*, September 1954, p. 4

²⁹² Interview with Greenfield, 18th Jan 2017.

²⁹³ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 52

²⁹⁴ Finance Committee minutes, 5th December, 1961, p. 2662/BCCA

only to provide a common basis of understanding about social change, but also a departmental *esprit de corps*. Since the African Administration Department staff came from diverse backgrounds, it was considered of primary importance to “weld new members of the Department into a team” and to “build up a deep loyalty to the Council.”²⁹⁵ Until 1962, this was encouraged through a voluntary departmental lecture series for European staff only, the primary purpose of which was team building, the secondary objective being to help them pass the Departmental Examination. From 1962, when the higher grade positions were opened to Africans on the same terms, the lecture series was incorporated into a compulsory 6-month probationary course for all junior staff in the African Administration Department. The lectures covered:

1. Function of the African Administration Department
2. African Society: (a) Kinship organisation (b) Political organisation
3. Labour migration
4. Demographic composition of the urban areas.
5. Brief political history of Southern Rhodesia
6. Governmental institutions
7. Local Govt.
8. Land Apportionment Act
9. Land Husbandry Act
10. Social Change
11. Housing and Administration
12. Financial Control
13. Special urban problems (employment, crime, etc.)²⁹⁶

Staff were also encouraged to take vocational training courses and attain a diploma accredited by the South African Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs. By 1960, more than a dozen staff were members of this institute and were encouraged to attend its annual general meetings (on paid leave).²⁹⁷ In 1974, the AAD was re-organised and a “far greater emphasis on staff training at all levels” was introduced.²⁹⁸

This section has shown how the African Administration Department built its team and mission around a modernising and yet paternalistic ethos. Its mission of creating modern, stratified, home owning African township communities contrasted with the reactionary and negligent attitude to township administration of earlier times. But there has been a tendency in

²⁹⁵ African Administration Committee minutes, 1961, p. 2187/BCCA

²⁹⁶ African Administration Committee Minutes, 8th Nov., 1961, p. 2418/BCCA

²⁹⁷ See e.g. General Purposes Committee minutes, 23rd June, 1960, p. 2353/BCCA

²⁹⁸ Annual Report of the Director, 1974/BCCA

the literature to slot such ideologies and programmes into a universal late colonial ‘developmental rationality’, in the process eliding local particularity and the complex agency of low-level bureaucrats like Ashton. In the following five subsections, I elaborate five ways in which the developmental project took on particular local inflections in Bulawayo, distinguishing it particularly from the capital.

Social theories in practice

Firstly, local state administrators had their idiosyncrasies, and this significantly shaped the way the townships were administered. The township Head Office staff in Bulawayo embraced popular contemporary ideas about detribalisation, urbanisation, etc., but they did so in specifically critical, experimental, and rhetorical ways.

Eric Gargett, who, as noted above, was known for espousing fashionable tenets of modernisation theory, was in fact quite critically reflective. To be sure, it took a visit by the prominent anthropologist, Dr Lucy Mair, to help to shatter the Department’s hubris. She mocked them for thinking they were *spearheading* social change, suggesting that even if they worked flat out, they might just be able to *keep up* with it. Gargett was humbled by this observation: “We can oil the wheels of change”, he mused, “but we are not the initiators and originators that we sometimes imagine ourselves to be.”²⁹⁹ In talks and lectures he critically analysed the teleological assumptions and reductionist tendencies of the time. For example, in 1968 he argued that,

What we observe in the individual is not that he is either detribalised or not, but how in different settings he responds in terms of old or new patterns of living... It is a man’s aspirations, his orientation, which are the measure of his detribalisation: not how far he has travelled, but the direction in which he has set his face.³⁰⁰

This resembles James Ferguson’s arguments several decades later, with respect to the modernist narratives about urbanisation on the Zambian Copperbelt.³⁰¹ Gargett argued that the debate about ‘detribalisation’ had become “sterile”. He furthermore emphasised in one of his lectures that no social scientist could capture the complexity of African urban life: “We are talking of people. People who are by nature as diverse as any people are. People who are rapidly changing their way

²⁹⁹ E. Gargett, ‘The Welfare of the Urban Community’, *Homes and Social Planning Conference*, (Salisbury, 1968)

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ *Expectations of Modernity: Myth and Meaning on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Uni California Press, 1999).

of life, under tremendous pressures, so that our study of them is moving out-of-date even as we make it.”³⁰²

Prevalent ideas about tribal identity as the basis of communal solidarity were also regarded by Ashton and Gargett as too rigid. For example, in 1954, Ashton experimented with “cultural grouping” in a new large married housing scheme called Njube. In various sections of the township, rather than adhering slavishly to the order of the waiting list, he offered tenants the choice to cluster according to some kind of common identity, believing that this might be better than throwing people “pell-mell” together, wherein their customs would break down and community spirit would falter.³⁰³ But he was at pains to explain, even to a local newspaper, that he was not thinking about “culture” in some rigid sense like tribal affiliation, but rather in the broadest and most flexible sense.³⁰⁴ He believed, “Quite simply, that birds of a feather should be enabled to flock together”, to ease their adjustment to the “confusing and strange urban environment.”³⁰⁵ He proposed that, instead of tribal affiliation, people might prefer educational, occupational, religious, kinship or home origin groupings. As it turned out, the prospective tenants were not remotely interested in tribal grouping. The only grouping option that elicited some interest was to live amongst friends and church members.³⁰⁶ And so Ashton dropped this idea in future schemes.

However, even as the analytic usefulness of rigid concepts like ‘detrribalisation’ were being questioned by these administrators, these concepts were nevertheless deployed for rhetorical effect, in order to legitimise paternalistic interventions, rationalise particular redistributions of responsibility, and mobilise financial and human resources in township development, as the following chapters demonstrate.

Control and upliftment

Secondly, the emphasis on social upliftment and individual improvement, rather than direct control, in late colonial urban administration also took on a particular inflection in Bulawayo. Ashton’s pragmatism meant simplifying and thereby easing off on harsh regulations wherever

³⁰² E. Gargett, ‘The African in the Urban Areas’, Lecture delivered at the In-Service Training Course for History Teachers conducted by the Ministry of Education, 1974/BCCA

³⁰³ Native Administration Committee meeting, 10th November, 1954/BCCA

³⁰⁴ ‘Compatible Grouping in African Settlements’, *Sunday News*, 14 November, 1954/In BCCA/C8/Cultural Grouping Western Commonage grouping, p. 3

³⁰⁵ BCCA/C8/Cultural grouping Western Commonage, p. 4

³⁰⁶ Annual Report of the Director, 1955/BCCA

possible, generally reducing heavy-handed approaches, and taking a nonchalant attitude to security. This contrasted with his counterparts in Salisbury.

On taking office, Ashton accepted that the Old Location of Makokoba was a slum, and focused resources instead on new townships. He therefore decided to give up the home raids that were meant to flush out illegal occupants at Makokoba, believing them to cause unnecessary grievance. One Makokoba resident, cited in Ranger's social history, Gogo Madamu, remembers being raided at 4am by police, and dragged to Ashton's office, accused of being a prostitute. Ashton noticed that she was pregnant and rebuked the police sergeant, saying that if the woman had given birth, he would have had the sergeant and township superintendent arrested. The woman recalls: "The raids were stopped on that day...From there life began to be normal, we were living peacefully. Dr Hugh was a very good man".³⁰⁷ Due to such actions, the early indictments of Ashton "began to slacken and then to cease".³⁰⁸ As we see below, they did not cease entirely. However, a degree of mutual trust had been restored, perhaps well captured in the response of an old man in a shebeen in Makokoba, when I asked whether the name "Ashton" rang a bell: "Dr Hugh! We used to say he was more black than white!", he exclaimed.³⁰⁹

Ashton sought to make the township bye-laws simpler and less penalising. He was not convinced by the South African systems for drafting bye-laws (which most Rhodesian municipalities were following), which made "extensive use of penal sanctions" and contained all kinds of regulations already covered by other legislation, and prescribed rules for purely administrative matters.³¹⁰ Ashton could not see why all these matters had to be codified in the bye-laws, which should be kept "as brief as possible", leaving out what was already covered by other legislation and civil law. South Africa had a detailed framework of what Location/township regulations should embody, whereas Rhodesia's framework was simply that municipal bye-laws should be "for the good rule, government, control, use and occupation" of the 'Native Urban Areas'. Ashton wanted to make the most of this opportunity for simplicity:

Would this simplicity and generality permit us to get away from the detail that seems to have been required by the Union Act, and limit the bye-laws to the bare essentials for the "good rule" of the area?³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Gogo Madamu, interviewed by Linette Nyathi, Bulawayo, 2000, quoted in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 175

³⁰⁸ Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 186

³⁰⁹ Personal observation in Makokoba, August 2016

³¹⁰ Memorandum to the Town Clerk, 13 August 1952/BCCA/Transfer Box 58/Bulawayo African township regulations

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

He proposed using the common law that applied to landlord and tenant to deal with all tenancy matters. So long as the Council retained the right to evict a tenant under the due process of law, “We should adopt the civil approach where we can, and frame bye-laws where we cannot, or where administration can be facilitated without being duly restrictive or penalty-minded.”³¹² Later, in 1953, when discussing the township regulations with Advisory Board members, he again stressed that whilst other municipalities had cumbersome regulations, he felt they should be kept simple in Bulawayo, and he assured the Boards that they “should not feel that the native areas were being singled out for the imposition of a whole lot of regulation.”³¹³

The Department expended little energy on matters of law and order. Very little space is actually taken up in everyday paperwork with issues of crime and unrest. Furthermore, the African Administration Department’s annual reports, which were usually 9-10 pages long (plus appendices), rarely contained more than a paragraph or two on ‘Policing and Control’, and sometimes an appendix with simple crime statistics. The Department’s strategy with respect to crime was more cause than symptom-oriented, by employing both infrastructural solutions – installing street lighting in the main arterial roads; high tower lights from the mid-1960s – and a general policy of social upliftment.

Social upliftment was a solution to security problems, not just in general, but sometimes in direct response to a specific problem. For example, when men were getting rowdy at a beer garden and boxing ring in the most austere single men’s township, Ashton immediately proposed leisure pursuits “of a more cultural type”. It was 1952, and this austere scheme, later dismantled, was a legacy of the earlier attitude that African workers were in the town on sufferance. These men had been restricted to boxing, beer, once-a-week cinema and the occasional dance evening, and Ashton proposed introducing literacy, handicraft and woodwork classes immediately, even using decommissioned asbestos to erect two temporary huts for the purpose.³¹⁴ This symbolised the changing attitude to Africans’ place in the city and the sorts of lives they should live there. He made the connection between social upliftment and peace and order very clear in his 1957 treatise on African administration, stating that “the contribution of the Municipal housing policy, and the provision of sports fields, boxing tournaments, beer gardens and other social amenities... towards the reduction of crime... should not be ignored.”³¹⁵

This approach contrasted with that of Salisbury’s Director of African Administration in the 1950s, Colonel Hartley. Hartley depicted the “the very great majority” of Africans in Salisbury

³¹² *Ibid.*

³¹³ Advisory Board Minutes, September 1953/BCCA

³¹⁴ Native Admin Committee minutes, September, 1952/BCCA

³¹⁵ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 67

as comprising “a conglomerate and uncultivated mass whose horizon is still rural, tribal, and communal”. Dealing with this “mass” required direct control:

In the interests of law and order one unpalatable characteristic of this group has perforce to be recognised. Beneath a veneer of rustic simplicity the great body of this class of African comprises an unsophisticated mass which still requires administrative control, guidance and discipline. Thus, administration is obliged always to recognise that these form in our midst a volatile mob of primitive and undisciplined beings whose actions are quite unpredictable and whose attitude to the emotional stimulations of life are so naïve that unwittingly, but nevertheless inevitably, they may at any time become a menace to peace and security.³¹⁶

Another important aspect of control was the Pass Laws, and again here the two major cities differed in their policies. The Pass Laws were instituted in the early colonial period to control the influx of Africans to urban areas of the colony, and responsibility for their implementation was handed to municipalities with the Urban Areas Act. Although Ashton favoured some influx controls earlier on to build up “a more responsible, responsive and law abiding native population”,³¹⁷ he had in practice always been lax about the pass laws. Doris Lessing noticed the difference with Salisbury: “It is always a question of grace and favour, the disposition of a particular official. Thus, Salisbury is oppressive in the matter of pass offences; whereas in Bulawayo, under the liberal Dr. Ashton, things are much better.”³¹⁸ At the behest of the Bulawayo City Council, the pass law was repealed in 1961. Once it had been repealed, Ashton described this “discriminatory legislation” as having had “debatable administrative value”, not to say adverse political effects.³¹⁹

The Central Government’s actions often disrupted this more conciliatory approach of Bulawayo’s African Administration Department. As George Karekwaivanane points out, throughout the 1950s a number of often overlooked repressive laws were enacted – including the Subversive Activities Act (1950), the Public Order Act (1955), the Unlawful Organisations and the Preventive Detention Acts (1959) and the most notorious Law and Order Maintenance Act

³¹⁶ City of Salisbury: Annual Report of the Director of Native Administration for the Municipal Year 1st July 1956 to 30th June 1957. Weston Library (Oxford Bodleian). Box 625, File 5, SR II. Nat. admin. - Salisbury material, 1956, page 1-2. (*Emphasis mine.*)

³¹⁷ Ashton Report on IANA conference, 1952/BCCA/A13/20 (Transfer Box 479).

³¹⁸ D. Lessing, *Going Home*, p. 128.

³¹⁹ Annual Report of the Director, 1961/BCCA

of 1960 – whilst “government officials and legislators debated amongst themselves what actions they could legitimately take without betraying British legal traditions.”³²⁰

In this context, racial tensions heated up in Southern Rhodesia in the 1950s, as racial partnership increasingly seemed a farce, Garfield Todd was removed in a Cabinet revolt because of his ‘pro-African policies’, and in February, 1959, the Prime Minister, Edgar Whitehead, declared a state of emergency and banned the African National Congress under the Unlawful Organisations Act.³²¹ This was the first major disruption in Bulawayo since 1948, leading to sweeping arrests of township leaders, including 11 African Advisory Board members and 3 municipal employees, who were detained at Khami prison. As Ranger put it, “Ashton was outraged that his politics of collaboration had been senselessly disrupted.”³²² Ashton remarked that the leading lights in the African community whom he had come to know quite well were “generally responsible people, who did not fall into the category of ‘rabble rousers’. [They were] very different from the extremists in other parts of the country”.³²³ As he was heading out of the country, he instructed an administrator to check on the detainees at Khami Prison. The Welfare Department set up a system for relatives of detainees to be bussed to the prison;³²⁴ and on their release, the Council re-hired them.

It is evident that Ashton was ambivalent about the security situation as the racial tensions heated up. Whilst he accused the white electorate of being much too slow in “facing the new Africa” and ending racial discrimination, he seemed naïve about the level of support for African nationalist parties and movements, suggesting for example in 1959 that Joshua Nkomo did not “cut much ice in Bulawayo”.³²⁵ When a major disturbance broke out in Bulawayo in 1960, known as the *zhibi* riots³²⁶, causing £80,000 of damage to Council property, Ashton’s response was somewhat blasé. The riots were sparked off when a meeting of the National Democratic Party –

³²⁰ G. Karekwaivanane, *The Struggle over State Power in Zimbabwe: Law and Politics since 1950* (Cambridge, CUP, 2017), p. 81.

³²¹ A. Mlambo, ‘From the Second World War to UDI: 1940 to 1965’, in B. Raftopoulos and A. Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from the Pre-Colonial Period to 2008* (Harare, Weaver Press, 2009), p. 106

³²² Ranger. *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 208.

³²³ Annual Report of the Director, 1959/BCCA. (Interestingly, he believed the rounding up of “rabble rousers” would have actually been a legitimate exercise in the eyes of the African community if it hadn’t been done indiscriminately.)

³²⁴ Ironically, it was whilst helping detainees’ families, that a 20-year old Dumiso Dabengwa, junior welfare assistant, was exposed to nationalist ideas that inspired him to join the anti-colonial struggle. (Interview with Dumiso Dabengwa, Bulawayo, 19th June, 2018).

³²⁵ Ashton meeting with George Loft, Salisbury Club, 23rd Feb, 1959. Hoover Institution Archives/2006C21/ George Loft Papers [courtesy of Brooks Marmon].

³²⁶ See F. Nehwati, ‘The Social and Communal Background to ‘Zhibi’: The African riots in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia in 1960’, *African Affairs*, 69, 276 (1970), pp. 250-266 and Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, chapter 7.

to which Ashton had given the go-ahead despite rioting in Salisbury a week earlier – was banned in the last minute by the civil commissioner, unbeknownst to Ashton and without prior notice to the organisers of the meeting.³²⁷ Ashton attributed the cause of the *zhu* riots to mostly economic and social factors rather than political factors; namely, the unprecedented rates of unemployment, exacerbated by an influx of job seekers into Bulawayo (caused by drought and the Land Husbandry Act) combined with economic recession. He also attributed them to tensions arising between married and single tenants, between lodgers and home owners, and between “Matabeles” and “Mashonas” over perceived unequal shop allocations.³²⁸ He observed fairly casually that,

These riots, painful experience though they were, did prove of value in shaking the complacency of some who had accepted the unemployment situation and other grievances of the African people without further thought. They also promoted salutary investigation and improvement of the Security situation.³²⁹

Confidential reports after these riots show that security had been completely uncoordinated. The incensed Town Clerk resigned from the Government’s “farcical” local security committee as a result. The Town Clerk wrote,

I have come to the conclusion that the only way to get anything effective done is to work on our own and advise the Government of what we have done so that they can try and merge it into any overall plan they may be preparing.³³⁰

He proposed ways that the African Administration Department could “contain, dominate and suppress lawless elements” until the BSAP arrived at the scene, whereupon all responsibilities would transfer to the latter.³³¹ But the municipal police force was always feeble, concerned as it was only with minor issues. In 1959, the entire African Administration police force numbered just 180 (for a township population of 122,000³³²), and even when combined with the staff of the BSAP, the numbers were insufficient to carry out 24-hour patrols. Following the 1960 *zhu* riots, the Department’s police force was increased to 252 men. But the cash-strapped Department was never happy doing policing functions, especially without Government financial assistance. After

³²⁷ The day before the riots broke out, Ashton was seen by a Government informant escorting Guy Clutton-Brock (a supporter of the liberation struggle) and Professor Rousseau (a radical professor at the University College of Rhodesias and Nyasaland) around the townships. The Federal Minister of Finance, Donald Macintyre, sent a memo to Sir Roy Welensky reporting this and suggesting Ashton be questioned. (Donald Macintyre to Sir Roy Welensky, 1960, General Records of the US Department of State, RG59, Box 1696 [Courtesy of Brooks Marmon].)

³²⁸ Annual Report of the Director, 1960/BCCA

³²⁹ Annual Report of the Director, 1961/BCCA

³³⁰ ‘Security Measures’: Confidential report by the Town Clerk to the Council, 10th October, 1960/BCCA

³³¹ ‘Security Measures’ follow-up report, 11th October, 1960/BCCA

³³² City of Bulawayo Year Book, 1960.

the BSAP had opened two sub-stations at Mzilikazi township and the Western Commonage in 1961, there was a gradual handover over of nearly all crime prevention duties to the BSAP.³³³ The municipal police retained its main function of policing the beer gardens.

Political tensions in Bulawayo's townships increased in the 1960s, whilst African nationalist movements turned to armed struggle in the countryside from 1964. This civil war was fought primarily in 'the bush' between the two main guerilla armies of ZIPRA and ZANLA, and the Rhodesian National Army. However, support for nationalists was widespread amongst workers in the African townships (as well as African domestic servants in the European neighbourhoods³³⁴), whence the political parties and their leaders sprung.³³⁵ Whilst Ashton appeared fairly sympathetic to the African nationalist cause, he often attributed the politicisation of ordinary township dwellers to tactics of intimidation or group pressure, no doubt underestimating genuine autonomous support for the liberation struggle.

Although various protests occurred in the urban areas (particularly at the time of the 1972 Pearce Commission, although Bulawayo remained peaceful then³³⁶), and there were tactics such as beerhall boycotts (again more in Salisbury than Bulawayo³³⁷), the towns were not nearly as affected by the violence of war. Therefore, a detailed account of the liberation war's complexities and fluctuating intensities is beyond the scope of the present analysis, but it is interesting to note how rarely the broader context of war appears in the archives of day-to-day urban administration in Bulawayo, or even the more reflective annual reports of the various Council departments, even as the war escalated in the 1970s (especially after the independence of Mozambique in 1975).

The annual reports of Ashton and of the mayor rarely included more than a cursory mention of the "security situation", let alone "war". Remarkably apolitical, mayors' reports were usually only concerned with summarising mundane developments such as infrastructural improvements, supply dam levels, rate increases, general township development, frivolous events of the year, etc., whilst Ashton's reports detailed African housing progress, advisory boards, trading, health, family casework, recreation, sports, schools, libraries, arts and crafts, and the beer brewery. A brief one-line "thanks" to the police and the army would usually suffice. In fact,

³³³ African Administration Committee minutes, 28th November, 1961, p. 2610/BCCA

³³⁴ See e.g. J. Pape, 'Chimurenga in the Kia: Domestic workers and the Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe', in Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, *Sites of Struggle*, pp. 257-272.

³³⁵ See e.g. E. Msindo, 'Ethnicity and nationalism in urban colonial Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1950 to 1963,' *The Journal of African History* 48,2 (2007), pp. 267-290; 'B. Raftopoulos, 'Nationalism and labour in Salisbury 1953-1965', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21,1 (1995), pp. 79-93; Scarnecchia, *The urban roots of democracy and political violence in Zimbabwe*.

³³⁶ See the final section of this chapter, below.

³³⁷ See chapter 6

Ashton's more controversial reflections on national politics in the introductions to his 1960s reports³³⁸ actually diminished in the 1970s, despite the war escalating in that decade. For example, his comprehensive 30-page annual report for 1974, when the bushwar was raging and the death toll rising³³⁹, contained no mention of conflict and just two sentences on Police and Control: "1. The general atmosphere in the townships during the year has been relaxed and peaceful. 2. Our municipal police continued its main function of preserving law and order in the beer gardens and the odd few incidents that did occur from time to time were successfully dealt with."³⁴⁰

In 1976, when the war had escalated further, following Mozambique's independence and guerilla incursions at multiple points on the eastern border, the mayor made the briefest of mentions of this situation, and casually regretted that, "From the security point of view, this has been a most troublesome year and it has been virtually impossible for the police or the military to devote any time to civic affairs."³⁴¹ It was the troubled economy that was given far more attention than the security situation.

Although, as we shall see in the following chapters, Ashton was clearly exasperated by the politicisation of the African Advisory Boards and residents' associations from the 1960s, he and other councillors and officials used remarkably understated language in the way they reported violent incidents – such as grenade attacks in beer gardens or the sabotaging of water meters. This reflects their presumption that these were isolated incidents that lacked legitimacy or ideological conviction.

Again, by contrast, Salisbury Council was more willing to rationalise its actions in terms of security. In the 1970s, it justified removing African townships that were close to the CBD for security reasons, whilst Bulawayo was defending the rights of Africans to own homes in townships close to the CBD (see chapters 3 and 4). The Central Government also introduced new, distinctly authoritarian African township regulations in the 1970s, but Bulawayo chose not to adopt them, and the Minister of Local Government indicated that he would not intervene, "provided the municipality does not appear in danger of losing control."³⁴²

³³⁸ In which he audaciously criticised both the white and black trends in .

³³⁹ J. Mtisi, M. Nyakudya and T. Barnes, 'War in Rhodesia: 1965-1980' in Raftopoulos and Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, pp. 141-167

³⁴⁰ Annual report of the Director of African Admin., 1974/BCCA

³⁴¹ Minute of his Worship the Mayor, L. Sexon, for the year ending 30 June, 1976/BCCA

³⁴² Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 54

Ambivalent relations between administrators and residents

Thirdly, the increased sophistication and “scientific” basis of administration in the late colonial period did not mean that highly personalised modes of engagement with residents ceased. As paternalistic attitudes were increasingly challenged by residents, these engagements became ever more sensitive. However, they were often strangely ambivalent. Even vociferous and confrontational nationalist leaders sometimes forged genuine friendships with administrators, particularly Ashton.

The clearest role requiring personal connection was that of the township superintendent, who was expected to know the social dynamics of “his” township intimately. This paternal role was evident in the superintendent’s broad remit, which ranged from practical tasks such as rent collection, to welfare cases such as domestic disputes, to the more ephemeral task of “encouraging the development of a community spirit”.³⁴³ Some superintendents enjoyed congenial relations, whilst others made themselves deeply unpopular, and some residents who cooperated or assisted them were regarded as sell-outs.

But even head office staff valued personal interaction. There were remnants of the familial model upon which early colonial administration was based, and it was perhaps telling that a newspaper feature on Ashton some years after his retirement was entitled, “Father of the African Townships.”³⁴⁴ He must have carried with him some of the experience of 10 years as a District Commissioner in Bechuanaland, at a time when colonial administration was “looked on as an art to be developed, not a science to be applied,”³⁴⁵ and his interactions with residents ranged from visiting the beer gardens for a performative and demonstratively satisfying swig of ‘African beer’ amongst the punters, to imbibing an after-work European beer at the more exclusive township ‘cocktail bars’, to forging genuine and sometimes lifelong friendships, with residents and staff alike.

There was a sense in which township residents wanted *more* interaction with officials: they wanted officials to be more in touch with residents’ experiences, and sometimes said the Council “does not care about our feelings”. For example, the Senior Welfare Officer and his colleague was once directly challenged by the residents of Makokoba, for not relating to their experiences. He reported:

³⁴³ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 51.

³⁴⁴ ‘Hugh Ashton: Father of Townships’, *The Chronicle*, 26th Oct., 1987.

³⁴⁵ A. Kirk-Greene, ‘Public administration and the colonial administrator’, *Public Administration and Development* 19, 5 (1999) p. 509

They criticised both myself and the welfare officer [a woman] for being too detached, and invited me to spend more time on foot in the township, learning at first hand how many people are forced to eke out their existence; they felt that the welfare officer's treatment, both of themselves and of people who came to get their rations, was often abrupt and cavalier...³⁴⁶

The most intense forum of interaction between Department officials and residents was the Residents' Association meeting. RAs were established by residents themselves, in every township (there were sometimes more than one, and some exclusive to women), to support and supplement the Advisory Boards, which were usually regarded as toothless. The RAs needed to present a constitution for formal approval, before the Council's administrators would engage with them. However, Ashton always preferred to engage with Advisory Boards, whom he considered a more "official channel", and he discouraged RAs from becoming political, but in vain. Ndubiwa noted that the Department was generally "extremely cautious" in its dealings with RAs, seeing them as "attempting to usurp the role of the Board".³⁴⁷

The RAs were generally very proactive, popular and pulled no punches in their demands for better services from the Council. Their strong community support is evidenced by meetings attended by several hundred residents, with dynamic speakers. An umbrella organisation, the Bulawayo African Residents' Association (BURA), became a front for the Zimbabwe African People's Union.³⁴⁸ They increasingly became frustrated at their powerlessness in changing some key policies, such as rent increases and the denial of direct representation on Council to Africans. For this reason and in the context of the liberation struggle, many became quite non-collaborative with the AAD from the 1960s.

The Council's files detail hundreds of meetings with RAs. The RA meeting reports, written by superintendents, unsurprisingly tend to portray a scene of passion and posturing by community leaders, until the dispassionate, rational and impartial official finally intervened to deliver the "hard truths" about how the Council works and what is feasible or not. The patronising attitude of some officials greatly aggravated RA leaders. In the 1960s, as the nationalist movement geared up, the RAs became increasingly confrontational in their demands, and the meetings became a tussle for authority between community leaders and Council administrators.

³⁴⁶ Report on Meeting with Makokoba Tenants' Association, 7th October, 1964/BCCA/SO3/Transfer Box 449/ Tenants' Associations Bulawayo African Townships

³⁴⁷ M. Ndubiwa, 'African Participation in Housing Management in Rhodesia: The Bulawayo African Advisory Board' (MA Diss., Uni Birmingham, 1972), p. 47.

³⁴⁸ Interview with Joshua Malinga. 26 April, 2017. BURA still exists and is well respected, though it competes with the Bulawayo Progressive Residents' Association (BPRA).

The African Advisory Boards also had a chequered history. Given more powers in Bulawayo than in other towns, they were nevertheless fairly toothless in the 1940s and '50s. In the 1960s, they were dominated by Nationalist leaders and, unable to prevent a rent rise and negotiate a suitable arrangement for direct representation on the Council (see chapter 5), disbanded from 1964-68. In the absence of the Boards, the Department needed some channel of communication, and so established a free magazine called *Masiyepambili* ("Let's move forward" – the city's motto), which is still published today. Along with entertainment and township gossip, it served to propagandise development progress and gloss over political tensions. It was therefore frequently criticised by nationalists as a propaganda rag.

Yet at the same time, some of the most vociferous of the RA leaders, and some Advisory Board members, befriended Ashton. Naison Ndlovu, who co-founded the umbrella organisation, BURA in 1962, which became a front for ZAPU, frequently confronted the Council to demand better treatment and services for African residents.³⁴⁹ Yet, he told me, Ashton "was for the advancement of the black people, both commercial and political. But he had his own way of approaching; he looked unaggressive but his influence was felt."³⁵⁰ Their relationship was also ambivalent. Although Ndlovu took an oppositional stance to Council, he recalls also warning Ashton of impending violence on one occasion, and Ashton asking him to try to "tap the tail of the fish" to make it change its course, i.e. defuse the situation.³⁵¹

Ashton also befriended Joshua Malinga, who was involved with BURA and ZAPU. In these roles, Malinga took an oppositional stance to the Council's policies. But he, too, told me of his friendship with Ashton, who had known him since he was a small child. When later Malinga became CEO of the Jairos Jiri Association for the Blind and Handicapped (he is disabled from polio), they became colleagues as Ashton was the chairman of Jairos Jiri. Malinga recalls: "Hugh Ashton was my friend at the end, we were best friends; also Dr Eric Gargett ... We came from primitive administration to the best administration."³⁵²

The African staff of the AAD were in a potentially tricky position. Michael Ndubiwa, for example, was a supporter of ZAPU, and even went on barefoot marches across the townships with Joshua Nkomo; but Ashton also regarded him as a protégé, and the two developed a lifelong friendship that their families continue to this day.³⁵³ I asked several Black former staff of the AAD

³⁴⁹ Ndlovu was detained at Gonakudzingwa Prison in 1965.

³⁵⁰ Interview with Naison Ndlovu, Bulawayo, 27th April, 2017. Ndlovu became the first Black mayor of Bulawayo in 1981, and a member of the ZANU-PF politburo.

³⁵¹ Interview with Naison Ndlovu.

³⁵² Interview with Joshua Malinga. After independence, Malinga became a councillor, mayor of Bulawayo from 1993-5, and member of ZANU-PF's politburo.

³⁵³ Interview with Mike Ndubiwa, 2nd August, 2016.

about how their position, working for the Council, was perceived in their communities; none reported any particular controversy about their position. As Jimmy Ncube explained:

No but we had no clashes at all with nationalists. Well people were entitled to their views but in general we were accepted. We were accepted. We were not accused of being sell-outs and so on. We were doing our job; we were straightforward, and people appreciated what was right.³⁵⁴

Ashton, however, suspecting that staff might be subjected to political pressures, banned political affiliation amongst both African and European staff whose work required “manifest impartiality”, such as allocating shops and houses, or dealing with rent arrears.³⁵⁵ He claimed these restrictive rules would in effect be protective rules, as employees would feel freer to carry out duties without reprisal.

This account of relationships that existed between officials and residents is by no means comprehensive. There were some Council officials who made themselves deeply unpopular with their patronising approach; or who tried to spy on or co-opt residents as informants, and this often created suspicion in the African communities. On the other hand, as this discussion has shown, some of the interactions were characterised by ambivalence, and townspeople came to distinguish particular local state actors from “the state” at large.

The political agency of low-level state actors

Fourthly, the statements and actions of Head Office staff in Bulawayo’s township administration confirm the observation by Bernstein and Mertz that, “[I]t is simply not the case that some parts of the state decide while others merely carry out those decisions in a humdrum, mechanical fashion.”³⁵⁶ Lowly as they were in the state bureaucratic hierarchy, Ashton, Gargett and even the lower ranked officer, Mike Ndubiwa, infused political ideas into their work, and also vocalised their political opinions and thereby tried to effect policy changes.

Ndubiwa was in a lower-ranked position, but still used the opportunities he was given of conducting township surveys, to present a critical perspective on the hardships and indignities of

³⁵⁴ Interview with Jimmy Ncube, Bulawayo, 1 March 2017

³⁵⁵ He sought to ban them from holding office in a political party or speaking in public on controversial matters, and proposed adopting “overseas procedures” whereby council’s service was divided into: a) politically free, b) an intermediate group and c) politically restricted staff.

³⁵⁶ See chapter 1.

many a township dweller. Gargett published and lectured in a way that was critical of many development policies in the colony. And finally Ashton, who had by far the most clout in Bulawayo's township administration, was engaged with various liberal organisations that sought to influence national politics and legislation, with respect to issues that impinged directly on his development vision, including racialised land laws, labour laws, liquor laws, etc. He came to be diametrically opposed to the Rhodesia Front Government, and pushed back against its policies.

Ashton claimed that he was not a reformer, and that he left reform to the politicians. His goal, rather, was “encouraging the new places to be happy, comfortable, beautiful...for the townships to be places people were happy to be in.”³⁵⁷ However, this claim belies the many subtle and less subtle ways in which he sought to influence or circumvent unwanted policies. Ndubiwa recalls that in his daily work, “Ashton used all those strictures, you know the Land Apportionment Act [etc.] as an opportunity to actually do the reverse of what was intended...He found ways around things he didn't like.”³⁵⁸

One liberal group with whom he was affiliated was the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), of which he was the Southern Rhodesian representative from 1956 (remaining on its executive committee for many years).³⁵⁹ Another was the Bulawayo Action Group, of which he was honorary secretary in the 1950s. The Bulawayo Action Group was a political pressure group affiliated with Prime Minister Garfield Todd and his United Rhodesia Party (URP) from 1953-58, then with Todd's successor, Edgar Whitehead until 1962, when it disaffiliated from all parties. It comprised about 30 civic leaders in business, law and politics (including several territorial and federal ministers), most of whom were men. It was only in 1957 that the Group acquired its first two African members.

This was the most elite and impactful pressure group in the city, addressed fortnightly by top political figures, including prime minister (from whom the group members demanded policy explanations), often exerting some influence over policy.³⁶⁰ They regarded themselves as “sane and pragmatic liberals”.³⁶¹ The Group discussed mostly the politics of racial discrimination, including African wage levels, the franchise, and the Industrial Conciliation Act (workers' rights).

³⁵⁷ Mark Ncube interview with Ashton, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 187-188.

³⁵⁸ Interview with Mike Ndubiwa, Bulawayo, 2nd August, 2016.

³⁵⁹ Witwatersrand Historical Papers/AD1715/27.3.10 Correspondence 1961-67

³⁶⁰ Such as Donald Macintyre (Federal Minister of Finance), Cyril Hatty (Minister of the Treasury), Frank Owen (Minister of Home Affairs), George Ellman-Brown (Minister of Housing), prime ministers Garfield Todd and Edgar Whitehead on numerous occasions, Sir Roy Welensky (Prime Minister of the Federation) and other non-political figures as well. (NAZ/AC3 Action Group files)

³⁶¹ I. Hancock, ‘Sane and Pragmatic Liberalism: the Action Group in Bulawayo, 1955-65’, *The Journal of the Central Africa Historical Association*, 7 (1976), pp. 65-84.

As we see in chapter 4, Ashton lobbied through this group to whittle away at the legislation that was excluding Africans from enjoying tenure security in the city.

Ashton's counterpart in Salisbury, Colonel Hartley, was entirely opposed to such liberal organisations. He suggested that they would be "led by their ideals into disillusionment", because they did not understand the psychological makeup of "the African". He placed the onus on Africans to resolve racial tensions, by being more industrious, saying they were "congenitally incapable of recognising that they have any contribution to make if race relations here are not to deteriorate".³⁶²

In any case, the emptiness of the liberal 'racial partnership' rhetoric of the 1950s became obvious to African elites, who increasingly asserted that inter-racial socialising was no substitute for political and economic rights. As Joshua Nkomo quipped in 1959, "We don't want to swim with them in the pools – we want to swim with them in Parliament."³⁶³ Ashton appears to have been more aware of this than most Action Group members – the chairman praised him for driving the point home – and he tried to express to some leading figures, such as the Federal Prime Minister, Roy Welensky, that much less rhetoric and more substance in ending discrimination was required.³⁶⁴

Ashton was a gradualist sympathiser with anti-colonial sentiments, but not a radical supporter of the armed struggle. This gradualism has exposed liberals to the criticism that they legitimised colonial rule. Whether Ashton's actions were intended to legitimise, ameliorate, or undermine colonial rule, is not easy to adjudicate, nor is that the purpose of this discussion. Rather, it is to emphasise that he was not just an impartial administrator doing "the state's" bidding, but had political agency that impacted his work and, therefore, the development of the townships. Thus, when the Rhodesia Front came to power, and it was clear that the post-war pretensions of "polite governance and directed development" were unravelling,³⁶⁵ Ashton took an increasingly oppositional stance to many Government policies, both through bureaucratic correspondence and newspapers, portraying his Department as a pragmatic and reasonable mediator between extremist blacks and whites on both sides. This is reminiscent of Dubow's description of the South African liberal tradition as "a mediator between strongly opposed ethno-nationalisms".³⁶⁶

³⁶² Hartley's annual report for 1953, quoted in Holderness, *Lost Chance*, p. 119.

³⁶³ A. Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation: Racial Etiquette in Southern Rhodesia, 1910-1963* (Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2015). p. 138

³⁶⁴ Ashton letter to Welensky, 13th January, 1958/NAZ/AC3/1/1 Action Group (Correspondence and other papers)

³⁶⁵ Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*, p. 138.

³⁶⁶ S. Dubow, 'Uncovering the Historic Strands of Egalitarian Liberalism in South Africa', *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, 61, 140 (2014), p. 8

Conversely, Ashton's counterpart in Salisbury, Colonel Hartley, went on to become a Rhodesia Front speaker of the House.

Defending local knowledge

Fifthly, long-tenured urban administrators acquired a high-definition perspective, and emotional investment, in local matters, from which they believed officials and technocrats at Central Government level were detached. This led to intense defensiveness of local ways of doing things.

This belief was stated clearly by a speaker at a conference of the South African Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs in 1958. He argued that urban administrators were “virtually the sole custodians of the practical knowledge of dealing with the bewildering complexity of urban African administration”. The Central Government’s knowledge of Africans was “conditioned by its experience of rural (tribal) affairs”, meaning that Government officials only thought in terms of communities, and were “never required to minister so closely...to the needs of the individual as the urban administrator is called upon to do”.³⁶⁷

This led to a sense that Government officials were detached, motivated by other things, and therefore should not interfere with local ways of doing things. Ashton expressed such a view clearly to the Urban Affairs Commission of 1957, when it asked all municipalities to provide their views on the structures and policies of urban governance:

The conduct of native affairs is a dynamic ever-changing matter. It is not a purely technical, impersonal matter such as the supply of water or electricity [etc.]. It is a highly complex subject, dealing with the day to day and long-term relation between peoples and communities... Local initiative and variation will help keep the administration and conduct of native affairs flexible, whereas centralisation runs the risk of rigidity and eventually arterio-sclerosis. Moreover it will remove it from the hurly-burly of local politics and so miss their stimulating effects and realistic approach: it would also run the risk of becoming so divorced from local opinion as to lead to a serious rift and alienation of public support.³⁶⁸

It was not just the township administrators who defended their locally-honed expertise against top-down interference. Officers in other departments of the Council had a strong sense that their

³⁶⁷ Report on the 7th Annual Conference of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs, 1958/BCCA (emphasis in original).

³⁶⁸ Ashton’s answers to the questionnaire of the Urban Affairs Commission, 1957, p. 66/Oxford Bodleian Library.

local knowledge was superior. For example, when the Government insisted on its own planners being involved in Bulawayo's development, the Town Clerk rebutted: "[T]here is far too much central control and interference with local town planning schemes...Do they know more about the local conditions than the people on the spot?"³⁶⁹

This defensiveness of local ways of doing things undergirded every aspect of Bulawayo's township development. It enabled a local development vision, along with particular governing practices, relationships, expertise and *esprit de corps* to become established at this critical juncture in the city's history, forming patterns in the 1950s, which, like those of the built environment itself, became entrenched and resistant to change.

Late colonial continuities: autonomy and inter-city rivalry

Underlying the changes from the early colonial period in Bulawayo's African administration, were two long-standing continuities: resistance to interference from the Central Government, and rivalry with Salisbury. The desire for autonomy was evident in Bulawayo Council's reactions to every attempt by ministers of Native Affairs or Local Government to enhance their own powers and issue directives to Bulawayo. This became particularly acute in the 1960s and '70s, under the Rhodesia Front regime. In 1968 the councillors warned of the "dangers" that the 1968 Municipal Bill might allow the minister to misuse his power,³⁷⁰ and they noted his "dictatorial attitude"³⁷¹. On the 1971 Municipal Amendment Bill, the Town Clerk hit out at the "mandatory" and "dictatorial" powers it would give the minister.³⁷² Even the City Engineer wrote with concern to the Town Clerk, "It appears that the Minister intends to transfer to himself, where he considers necessary, many of the powers of a local authority, and I feel our objection to this is timely and well-founded."³⁷³

So persistent was the general tendency to defend local autonomy, that the Rhodesian President, Clifford Dupont, pleaded with municipalities to be more accepting of Government decisions: "The dividing line between loyal pride and parochialism is very narrow".³⁷⁴ But Ashton mused that Bulawayo's *particularly strong* tradition of autonomy may have something to do with the

³⁶⁹ Special Report of the Town Clerk, 5th April, 1965/BCCA-CS/T4-137/Town Planning: Need to review legislation

³⁷⁰ 'Goldwasser warns on new bill', *The Chronicle*, 31st August, 1968

³⁷¹ 'Kinleyside shocked: 'A dictatorial attitude', he says', *The Chronicle*, 8th August, 1968

³⁷² 'White hits at new powers for minister', *The Chronicle*, 3rd March, 1971

³⁷³ City engineer to town clerk, 25 Oct 1972, BCCA/ A13-3(box 703). Local Govt. Assoc.

³⁷⁴ 'Dupont's appeal to Councils', *The Chronicle*, 19 May, 1970

fact that the Council and the Government were “400 km apart instead of in the same locality.”³⁷⁵ It is a long independent tradition which, Ranger argues, still persists today.³⁷⁶ Although Bulawayo Council was not easy to cajole, the minister of Local Government still found it easier to deal with them than the capital’s council, saying it “arrived at decisions speedily, while delay was common in Salisbury.”³⁷⁷

Bulawayo faced a dilemma: whilst resisting interference from Government, the city has also resented being economically marginalised – with the Government channelling national resources to the capital and the Mashonaland provinces. As the opening to this chapter explains, Bulawayo had once been the primary city, and it remained the industrial hub. It marketed itself as the “City of Enterprise”, and to this end cheap, good African housing was an important part of the sales pitch. But Bulawayo’s development was completely outstripped by Salisbury’s during the Central African Federation years (1953-63). Salisbury experienced a boom in commerce and high-rise development, leaving the residents, newspapers and council in Bulawayo complaining that Salisbury “takes everything” – captured in the isiNdebele phrase “bamba zonke”.³⁷⁸ In 1967, the Mayor complained, “We have not yet seen the end of the fight for our rightful place in the development scene.”³⁷⁹ In 1971, another Bulawayo Mayor warned:

[I]t is essential to keep a constant eye on developments and particularly the actions of Government to see that what we have was not eroded...[C]entralisation of so many things in the Capital has a tendency to draw things to it and to make those concerned forget the existence of other areas.

In 1975, the Mayor found it “disquieting” that Salisbury had acquired so many advantages over time. “All the pleas in the past that Salisbury was getting too much and Bulawayo too little have not been heard.”³⁸⁰ In many the desire for autonomy and yet also resentment that the capital takes all the resources was a typical situation for a second city. Exactly the same kind of rivalry was playing out in Northern Rhodesia between the second city of Ndola, once the industrial and commercial hub, which was losing its status to the capital, Lusaka.³⁸¹ The Ndola Council accused

³⁷⁵ E. H. Ashton, ‘Moral Suasions’, Alfred and Hoernlé Race Relations Lecture, (Cape Town, 1978), p. 9

³⁷⁶ See Ranger, ‘City versus State’.

³⁷⁷ ‘Bulawayo Council system praised’, *The Chronicle*, 9th May, 1973

³⁷⁸ In 1956, the Bulawayo Chronicle wrote a piece titled “Bamba Zonke?” about the favouritism of Salisbury, saying, “As the business capital, the legislative capital, the judicial capital, the administrative capital and the centre of all communications except rail (and that may come) it combines Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Pretoria and seems set for growth at a giddy pace”. (‘Bamba Zonke?’ *The Chronicle*, 4th July 1956)

³⁷⁹ Mayor’s Minute, 1967/BCCA

³⁸⁰ Council minutes 19 March, 1975, p. 575/BCCA

³⁸¹ ‘Ndola Starts an Argument’, *Northern News*, 4th May, 1951/Zambian National Archive/Loc 3470

the Government of “artificially fostering” Lusaka’s development and said that “the rivalry between Lusaka and Ndola could not be described as ‘healthy’”.³⁸²

Not only did Salisbury seem to take everything, but its Council was perceived as being entitled, and for this it was accused of behaving like a “spoilt child”. A classic example of this rivalry was in 1954, when there was a bitter struggle between the two main cities over which would become territorial capital of Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury was already capital of the Federation). Salisbury won, after which it came to light that its Council had lied about the city’s water supply situation. At this point Bulawayo councillors, backed by Government ministers from Bulawayo, united in condemnation of the capital. One minister insisted that, “the country must resist strongly any attempt by the Salisbury Municipality to obtain a greater allocation of loan money than is their due.” A Salisbury councillor retorted that the minister should go back to Bulawayo and swing on his parish pump. Another minister described this response as sounding like “the wailing of a pampered child.”³⁸³ Bulawayo’s mayor admitted in his annual address of that year, “[W]e should get away from parochial inter-city rivalry which at times strikes a somewhat petulant and depressing note.”³⁸⁴

The “spoilt child” epithet stuck and was repeated over the years. At a Local Government Association Conference of 1969, which comprised all local authorities, the Salisbury City Council was so offended that its chosen candidate was not elected to the presidency of the Association, that it pulled out of the LGA altogether.³⁸⁵ A Bulawayo councillor accused them of acting like a spoilt child, whereupon a Salisbury councillor marched over to him and told him to “stop his nonsense”.

Bulawayo’s longing for more state resources was always in tension with its desire to avoid Government interference. The result was that the Council built and ran all of its African townships, with the exception of Luveve, built by Government in the 1930s, which the BCC took over in 1971. In contrast, Salisbury CC in the late colonial period focussed on rental schemes, and did not prioritise married housing. Apart from the municipal leasehold scheme of Mufakose, all of Salisbury’s home ownership schemes until the 1970s were administered by central

³⁸² ‘Plain Talk from the Governor’, *Northern News* 29.5 1951/NZA/LGH 1/16/44

³⁸³ *Chronicle*, 14 Feb, 1956.

³⁸⁴ Mayors’ minute, 1957/BCCA

³⁸⁵ ‘Salisbury is still sulking’, *The Chronicle*, 15 December, 1969 (The SCC only rejoined the LGA in 1972, and demanded 15 instead of 10 reps, as well as 3 members on the executive instead of just 2/BCCA/A13-3(box 703)

government.³⁸⁶ In this way, the two cities projected different identities and devised policies around different ideas about Africans' place in the city.

Another distinction between the two cities, was that Bulawayo avoided having a politicised Council, whereas Salisbury became heavily politicised in the 1960s. Until the 1960s, local government everywhere was fairly detached from national party politics. It had been all about individual personalities.³⁸⁷ But from the mid-60s, some candidates began to seek unofficial backing from a political party. In 1966, the Rhodesia Front campaigned to introduce party politics into local government, with Ian Smith arguing that he wished to harmonise and coordinate his central government policies with local authority policies, which alarmed many.³⁸⁸ It would mean signing a pledge to the party that if one crossed the floor or did not support party policy, one would resign from office. The Salisbury City Council candidates began officially vying for ruling party support, and the SCC soon became heavily politicised, dominated by RF councillors.³⁸⁹ The politicisation of Salisbury City Council created some problems for its townships administration. When the Salisbury African Admin director, Rory Briggs, made a number of "controversial statements" criticising his own Council's African township policies (including the lack of family accommodation) in his 1967 annual report, the RF caucus tried to get him to apologise.³⁹⁰

Whilst the RF formed caucuses in Salisbury and Gatooma, it did not do so in Bulawayo. The Bulawayo Council, by contrast, identified as apolitical. A Bulawayo Councillor proclaimed at a local government conference: "In Bulawayo we are of one mind, namely, we will not have politics in the Council. It is anathema to us. In Salisbury it has proved an abysmal failure and councillors are elected to outside offices by caucus and not on merit."³⁹¹ Yet, the Bulawayo Council was known for having more progressive councillors (but there were some RF members in the BCC³⁹²). One RF MP even described the Council as "almost communist" in the early 1960s, though this was a gross exaggeration.³⁹³ One factor to which this progressivism has been attributed was the dominant presence of members of the Jewish community.³⁹⁴ The Jewish

³⁸⁶ D. Davis, *Race Relations in Rhodesia: A Survey for 1972-3* (London, Rex Collings, 1975); Patel and Adams, *Chirambubayo*, p. 15

³⁸⁷ C. Palley, *The constitutional history and law of Southern Rhodesia 1888-1965* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1960) p. 630-1

³⁸⁸ 'Smith defends party politics in councils', *The Chronicle*, 7th May, 1966.

³⁸⁹ By 1968, the RF had a 9-7 majority on the Salisbury City Council, and all 5 committee chairmen were Rhodesia Front. ('RF Men elected again in Salisbury', *The Chronicle*, 3rd September, 1968)

³⁹⁰ 'Salisbury Front Caucus Defeated', *The Chronicle*, 22nd May, 1968

³⁹¹ 'Salisbury is still sulking', *The Chronicle*, 15 December, 1969

³⁹² See e.g. 'Land Act is RF plank in local elections battle', *The Chronicle*, 10th April, 1966.

³⁹³ R. F. James to the House of Parliament 'Gondo pleads: drop advisory board system', *The Chronicle*, 24th August, 1967.

³⁹⁴ In the post-war period Bulawayo had the largest Jewish community, which was particularly involved in the furniture and clothing sectors in Bulawayo. Between 1965 and 1973 there were 5 Jewish mayors in

community was by no means politically homogeneous, but the tendency was for Jewish Rhodesians to “veer toward a liberal attitude”.³⁹⁵ According to Barry Kosmin,

This heavy Jewish representation in Bulawayo municipal politics contributed to what was often regarded as one of the most liberal and far-sighted social and housing policies of any city in Southern Africa. This was in contrast with the extreme right-wing domination of politics in Salisbury local government. The result was that Bulawayo was unique in its avoidance of rioting during the Pearce Commission of 1971, whereas the Salisbury African townships have been a powderkeg and the scene of serious bloodshed during the 1970s.³⁹⁶

Whilst this explanation for the different situations of Bulawayo and Salisbury is somewhat conjectural, it does give an indication of how the two councils were perceived to have very different political inclinations.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced how the Bulawayo Council, once deeply reluctant to commit resources to African housing and services, and to accept the principle of permanent African settlements being established in the proximity of the ‘white’ town, underwent a significant reorientation mid-century. The establishment of the African Administration Department was instrumental to this, and the agent who most defined its approach and ethos was its director, Dr Hugh Ashton. He came to play a dominant role in defining how Bulawayo’s townships would develop, as the following chapters demonstrate. His influence was such that by the early 1970s, an ethnographer who spent some time in the Department observed that: “the personality of the Department was his personality, its conscience was his conscience...The townships had developed largely under his direction, and the problems which they in turn had created plagued and worried him.” The ethnographer furthermore noted that Ashton’s “integrity, skill and careful decision-making”, and also sometimes “authoritarian” and “capricious” tendencies, determined the Department’s whole style of administration.³⁹⁷

Bulawayo: A. Menashe (1965 - 1967), J. Goldwasser (1968 - 1970), H. Coronel (1971 - 1972), R.S. Harris (1972 - 1973) and E. Gordon (1973 - 1974).

³⁹⁵ I. Gerber, ‘The Jews of Rhodesia’, *Reconstructionist* (1977), p. 10

³⁹⁶ B. Kosmin, *Majuta: A History of the Jewish Community in Zimbabwe* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1981), p. 130

³⁹⁷ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens of Bulawayo*, p. 158

The Department hired many social scientists and, from the 1960s, African graduates to salaried positions (but not the top positions), so that it had the highest ratio of African graded staff in the country by the 1970s.³⁹⁸ Staff were acculturated into its modernising ethos and social scientific approach, through lectures and team-building efforts. Whilst Bulawayo's reforms reflected the new post-war developmentalism taking place across the continent, there were many local idiosyncrasies that came to define the way African townspeople were controlled, housed and governed in the city. The next chapters examine how the Council's pursuit of a localised post-war development vision – based on a more progressive notion of African citizenship – was shaped over the *longue durée* by conflicts with Government and other stakeholders, practical obstacles and, above all, resource constraints and strategies to overcome them.

³⁹⁸ Ashton, 'Moral Suasions'.

3. Housing Expansion and the Financial Imperative to Minimise the Costs of Reproducing the Stabilised Labour Force

In the 28-year time-frame of this study, the physical landscape of Western Bulawayo was transformed, whilst the population in municipal housing increased more than 10-fold. In this period, Bulawayo's housing development was characterised by high rates of married rental housing and home ownership schemes, and a comparatively spatially integrated pattern of township development, which represented a remarkable turnaround in both policy and practice, given that in 1945 the mayor had so vociferously opposed the principle of housing African families in the town.

Urban housing development in late colonial Rhodesia was generally framed in terms of three fundamental imperatives – financial, sociopolitical and moral. The financial imperative was to keep costs down and place no undue burden on white ratepayers, taxpayers, or industrial employers; the sociopolitical imperative was to ensure the African population remained stable and apolitical; and the moral imperative was to help Africans transition from 'tribespeople' into modern, 'responsible' and productive urban citizens. Both Government and the municipalities tended to rationalise their policies in terms of these imperatives, even as they often espoused profoundly different visions of development. The result was perpetual tension, especially between Government and Bulawayo (also *within* the Government and Council, though to a lesser degree). Through fierce negotiation, officials and politicians at both levels of the state attempted to assert their expert authority in addressing these key developmental imperatives.

This chapter examines the first imperative – to keep costs low and optimise limited resources in the drive to ramp up housing construction. The chapter focuses on the origins and maturation of the Council’s African ‘home ownership’ programme, which enlisted the energies and resources of African residents to “share the burden” of housing costs. It examines how constant experimentation, learning and compromise were required in the context of extreme resource and knowledge scarcity. Despite the sometimes *ad hoc* and contingent nature of this development process, it was imbued *ex post facto* with coherence and progressive intentionality. And the resulting spectacle of progress sold the city to industrialists and African workers alike as a place to belong and invest in.

The chapter begins by discussing the broader context of the changing political economy of labour at mid-century, when policies of stabilisation meant the costs of socially reproducing the labour force were shifted from rural African society onto (primarily) industrial employers, who in turn pressured municipal councils to keep these costs to a minimum. Following this, the chapter proceeds with a long-term processual analysis of the construction of home ownership schemes in the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s in Bulawayo. By conducting a processual analysis – focusing on the long-term processes of planning, constructing, maintaining, auditing and symbolically representing these housing schemes, rather than a policy and/or outcomes analysis – the chapter opens up the ‘black box’ of the everyday “state at work”³⁹⁹, shedding light on some of the circuits of (technical and administrative) knowledge exchange involved, modes of bureaucratic negotiation and (re)configurations of authority. The final sections of the chapter analyse various technical experiments to reduce costs, disagreements between state officials and residents over housing standards, and how the townships were symbolically represented as places of belonging, investment value and modern progress.

Bearing the financial costs of stabilisation

The circular migrant labour system of the interwar period had ensured that the costs of social reproduction of the urban labour force were borne by rural Africans operating in the subsistence economy. This had suited both the industrialists and the European ratepayers; neither wanted to bear the financial costs of providing adequate housing, clothing and food for the African labour force, and the ratepayers were also reluctant to tolerate the perceived social cost of permanent African encroachment on the ‘white space’ of the city. Thus, as we saw in the last chapter, the

³⁹⁹ Cf. Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, *States at Work*

first half-century of Bulawayo's development was characterised by a totally inadequate rate of municipal, government or employer-built housing for Africans. Despite a massive population increase during the war, the Council only built 263 houses in 1946; 242 in 1947; 244 in 1948; and 166 in 1949. The "Old Location" population alone had reached 15,362 by 1949, and it was a slum.⁴⁰⁰ The total Council housing stock by 1949 comprised 2,000 rooms and 2,000 cottages in the Location, as well as accommodation for 3,000 single men at the Rhodesian African Rifles and C.M.U (former Royal Air Force Central Maintenance Unit) Compounds, and special accommodation for 2,500 municipal employees – housing a total of 10 400 single men, 1 846 families, and 61 single women (in the Gertrud Macintyre hostel).⁴⁰¹

As Teresa Barnes points out, lists of African workers' demands in 1940s Southern Rhodesia show that they "were making more than narrow economic demands":

[T]hey wanted nothing less than for the state and their employers to shoulder a greater part of the burden of their reproduction and that of their families. The evidence suggests that the workers of the 1940s had no illusions about the extent to which the colonial order was ripping apart the reproductive fabric of their societies.⁴⁰²

It is worth bearing in mind that there were some differences in the ways African communities of the various towns of the colony were connected to their respective rural hinterlands. For example, according to Yoshikuni, the Shona peasantry were very much divorced from, and antipathetic towards, Salisbury, which was regarded simply as "the bastion of European colonisers", and a place of foreign migrants (of whom the longer-term dwellers were predominantly Malawians). In Bulawayo, by contrast, there was a much greater "urban-rural continuum", with many young AmaNdebele settling longer-term in the town from its inception.⁴⁰³ Enocent Msindo contests this demographic account of early Bulawayo, claiming that it was largely a "foreign" town in the early days⁴⁰⁴, but it seems clear that it still differed from Salisbury.

In any case, the considerable discontent and resultant unrest⁴⁰⁵ arising from the squalid living conditions and low wages in the urban areas during and after the Second World War "forced the settler state itself to acquiesce in the formation of a system in which a greater (although

⁴⁰⁰ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 13

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² T. Barnes, 'So That a Labourer Could Live with His Family': Overlooked Factors in Social and Economic Strife in Urban Colonial Zimbabwe, 1945-1952', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1 (1995), p. 98

⁴⁰³ T. Yoshikuni, 'Linking urban history with precolonial and rural history: from the Zimbabwe experience', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 36-37, 1 (2001), pp. 165-169

⁴⁰⁴ E. Msindo, *Ethnicity in Zimbabwe: Transformations in Kalanga and Ndebele societies, 1860-1990* (Woodbridge, University Rochester Press, 2012).

⁴⁰⁵ Notably the strikes of April 1948, mentioned in chapter 2.

still small) degree of responsibility was taken for African social reproduction.”⁴⁰⁶ The industrialists also came to see the value of a stable and suitably housed labour force in terms of increased *productivity*, but this shift in their attitude caused much controversy in Bulawayo. Councillor Donald Macintyre – the on-and-off mayor and “big city boss” whose allegiances had always shifted between ratepayers and industrialists – began to chastise the latter for “selfishly” advocating a permanent labour force on the white town’s doorstep. (Recall Macintyre’s belief that the best thing for Africans was “to live in the open spaces of the Colony, running their cattle.”⁴⁰⁷). Yet, as we saw in chapter two, even Macintyre and the notoriously intransigent Council had to admit by the end of the 1940s that the *status quo* was no longer tenable. In July, 1949 (just a month before Ashton arrived and redefined the city’s development vision), the Mayor acknowledged that:

The movement to replace migrant labour by a stable Native labour force has set in, and the need to consider accommodation for Natives as permanent urban dwellers with families must be taken into account.⁴⁰⁸

In any case, the Urban Areas Act, which Bulawayo had reluctantly acceded to in 1948, had given them no choice in the matter: it obliged the Council to construct and manage new housing schemes, and obliged the industrialists to pay a standard rent, in respect of each employee, to the Council. This shifted the economic burden of socially reproducing the urban workforce from rural society onto (primarily) industrial employers, effectively settling the decades-long dispute about whether they, or the European ratepayers, or the nation’s taxpayers, should bear these costs. Only occasional and very minimal funds were drawn from the Council’s “rate fund” (to which European property owners paid monthly rates) to cover some township admin and engineering costs, and the Central Government (i.e. the taxpayer) made some low interest loans and grants for African housing. But as we shall see below, Africans contributed considerable amounts of their own limited resources through the purchase of houses at full economic cost, and the consumption of considerable quantities of municipal beer, the profits of which were used for home ownership loans, rental housing grants, and other welfare expenditure.

⁴⁰⁶ Barnes, ‘So that a Labourer could live with his family’, p. 99

⁴⁰⁷ Evidence to the Howman Commission, 26 Nov. 1943, NAZ Harare S1906/1 in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 121.

⁴⁰⁸ Mayors’ minute, 1949/BCCA

When the Bulawayo Council had no choice but to adapt to these important structural changes in the political economy of labour, it finally began to undertake some large-scale African housing programmes, in fulfilment of its obligations under the Urban Areas Act. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister had become distrustful after nearly 20 years of dealing with Bulawayo's intransigence, and so in 1949 he had imposed a ban on the further sale of industrial stands in Bulawayo until he was satisfied that sufficient housing to cope with industrial expansion had been erected. The councillors were incensed at being singled out in this manner (even though they had gotten away with transferring 67 industrial stands that year before the ban was applied). The mayor protested that the ban came "without warning", and insisted that the Council was doing "everything in its power" to alleviate the African housing crisis, which would not be solved with "a policy of frustrating industrial development."⁴⁰⁹ Nevertheless, this ban did kick Bulawayo into action, and the Council gave full details of its housing plans to the Minister of Native Affairs so that, after 2 years, in 1951, the ban was lifted.



Figure 11: Family rental housing built at Mzilikazi in the late 1940s [Source: Bulawayo: Centenary of Development Magazine, 1994]

These obligations, threats and incentives imposed on the municipalities (but *especially* Bulawayo) at this post-war juncture, promoted a dramatic increase in the rate of house-building across the country: until 1946, total expenditure on African housing in the colony had amounted to a mere £721,382. Between 1946 and 1953, a further £3,476,466 was spent, bringing the total to £4,197,845.⁴¹⁰ But it still was not sufficient to tackle the housing backlog created initially by the war-time urban influx.

⁴⁰⁹ Mayors' Minute, 1950, p. 1/BCCA

⁴¹⁰ May, 1954, n.d./NAZ/S3615/1/1/1/1. Housing Policy.

Additionally, the promulgation of the Native Land Husbandry Act in 1951 had further severed the ties between the urban economy and the rural subsistence economy. Its aim of forcing Africans to decide between being “farmers or industrialists”⁴¹¹ was rationalised by Arthur Pendered – a key official in the expanded Government bureaucracy tasked with implementing this land reform – as follows:

The time has now come when all indigenous natives can no longer continue to maintain a dual existence as part-time employment in the European areas and part-time farming in the Native Reserves for, apart from its impossibility, it does not conduce to efficiency in either area, nor can the economy of the colony afford to offer satisfactory conditions in both areas for the dual mode of life.⁴¹²

It was presupposed that industrial development would help to take into employment the surplus rural population displaced by the Act who could not be accommodated in the Reserves and ‘special native areas’. It was estimated that 20,000 to 25,000 men per year would head for the urban areas of Southern Rhodesia to become permanent industrial workers (although this turned out to be an overestimate).

A minister warned the PM in 1953, “With the rapid industrialisation in the two main centres [Bulawayo and Salisbury] the position is deteriorating daily.”⁴¹³ Several Government departments raised the spectre of African uprisings. By 1953, the 6 largest towns had provided housing for 52,940 single men and 11,828 families, but there was a shortfall of 19,000 single and 7,500 married units. Since the war, the stringency on loan funds had forced Government not only to control local borrowings but drastically to curtail expenditure. Just addressing this backlog would cost £6 million, let alone keeping up with annual population increases, which would require capital of £2,5 million annually. Internal financial resources were deemed inadequate. External funding was therefore required, but Federal loans to Southern Rhodesia were so inadequate that the Government had to cut down loans to municipalities by a million pounds in 1954. The housing crisis became a serious threat to the success of the Federation⁴¹⁴. In 1955, the Minister of Trade and Industrial Development, warned that, “[T]he success of Federation and our endeavours to preserve racial harmony will depend very largely on our ability to employ the ever increasing Native overflow from the reserves.” He was deeply concerned that, “until reasonable

⁴¹¹ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, p. 100

⁴¹² S1217/9 Native Reserves Land Utilisation and Good Husbandry Bill, Introductory Note by A. Pendered (Marketing Officer), 10 April, 1948, in I. Phimister, ‘Rethinking the Reserves: Southern Rhodesia’s Land Husbandry Act Reviewed’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 2 (1993), p. 231

⁴¹³ Minister of Road and Irrigation to the Prime Minister, 24th June, 1954. NAZ/s3615/1/1/1/1 Housing Policy.

⁴¹⁴ ‘Native Housing: £6,000,000 needed by colony.’ *Rhodesia Herald*, 25 June, 1954

accommodation could be provided for the Native urban population the racial harmony which was so desirable for the success of Federation would not be achieved.”⁴¹⁵ The PM was advised in private that urban African housing should be regarded as “a special financial problem on its own” and no longer subject to “piecemeal treatment”.⁴¹⁶

Therefore, in 1954, Prime Minister Garfield Todd headed to the UK to appeal for £6 million for African housing in Southern Rhodesia. Doris Lessing, who was visiting Southern Rhodesia at this time and keenly observed African urban housing developments, cynically commented that, instead of taxing the country’s big companies and privileged whites, “the Government goes hat in hand overseas...as if the natives were a kind of responsibility for the international conscience”.⁴¹⁷ As it happened, Todd returned with a mere £1 million loan from the Colonial Development Corporation⁴¹⁸, which was a “bitter disappointment to municipalities...”⁴¹⁹ The Government then amended the Town and Country Planning Act to try to encourage township development by private enterprise.⁴²⁰ Arrangements were made with Building Societies, with Government providing a 90% guarantee. But there was little interest from the private sector.

Meanwhile, the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries continued lobbying to keep municipal housing rents in Bulawayo’s African townships low. In 1955, it requested an inquiry into administration and staffing of the Council’s African Administration Department to see if costs could be minimised, because it begrudged the £1/month standard rent charges for African housing. The Committee of Inquiry found that to house an average African individual or family (including services) for £1 per month was in fact a significant accomplishment on the part of the AAD! Yet, with manufacturing industry being the backbone of Bulawayo’s economy, the Mayor felt compelled to apologise to the industrialists, saying that with current costs it would not be possible to get the rent any lower, though he had “every sympathy with the view that rents should be kept as low as possible”. He reiterated that “Bulawayo’s future lies in industrialisation and every attraction must be offered towards this end. An important advantage is well-sited African housing readily available and we must not fall behind in this respect...”⁴²¹

⁴¹⁵ Minister of Trade and Industrial Development, George Ellman-Brown, quoted in *ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ Minister of Roads and Irrigation memorandum to Prime Minister Todd, 24th June, 1954/NAZ/S3615/1/1/1/1. ‘Housing Policy’

⁴¹⁷ Lessing, *Going Home*, p. 54

⁴¹⁸ Extract from Cabinet Meeting, 1st Nov. 1954: ‘Native Housing: Report on the Prime Minister’s visit to London’/NAZ/3602/35/2. Volume 2. ‘Native Housing Policy’

⁴¹⁹ Government report on Native affairs, 1954, quoted in D. Lessing, *Going Home*, p. 194.

⁴²⁰ Minister of Local Govt. to J. Braham, London, 12th Nov, 1954/NAZ/S3615/1/1/1/1. Housing Policy

⁴²¹ Mayor’s Minute (Councillor J.M. McDonald, MP) for the year ended 31st July, 1955, page 2/BCCA

In this context, the AAD had to struggle on with limited capital funds, and much less involvement from Central Government than the capital city experienced. The Finance Committee only budgeted one year ahead, which meant that Ashton's 5-year plans were always subject to cuts and adjustments. This made township development incremental and *ad hoc*, and forced the AAD to be resourceful, experimental and adaptive. Progressive policies such as embracing the notion of African permanent settlement and accepting more spatially integrated development, were also pragmatic – minimising service infrastructure costs and allowing the AAD to enlist the energies and financial resources of Africans.

These processes were, to be sure, significantly driven by the enthusiasm, pragmatism and progressivism of Ashton in a bottom-up manner. As Ashton claimed: “One of the major things that we got across to the Council and then the Government was to accept home ownership”.⁴²² But they were also shaped by structural factors – Bulawayo's autonomy and need to be self-reliant, its stronger industrial lobby and its lower ratio of European to African residents.

The rise of ‘modern’ townships

When Ashton arrived at the Council in August of 1949, he encountered negative attitudes, stifling racial stereotypes and an unimaginative, segregationist vision for future African township development. For one thing, the councillors were not even that convinced that there was such a high demand for housing. They claimed that it was actually inflated by the presence of unemployed Africans, whose expulsion from the town would do much to solve the housing problem. They were even having trouble letting some municipal accommodation that had been recently erected. This, Ashton opined, showed how blinded they were by the “traditional difficulty of Europeans to realise that native attitudes to housing are basically the same as any other racial group”.⁴²³ The reason the houses had been so difficult to let, he argued, was not that demand was low, but that the houses were “crude, unpopular and far from town.”⁴²⁴ It turned out that the Council needed to pay more attention to African “consumer preferences”, and this was something the AAD began to do in the 1950s.

The Council's grand plan for future African township development was segregationist and unimaginative. A 23,000-acre European farm called Hyde Park had been purchased in 1947, in anticipation of future housing needs. The farm was 8 miles West of the town centre. Initial

⁴²² Interview by Mark Ncube with Ashton, 1 June 1994, NAZ Byo branch.

⁴²³ *Ibid.* p. 12

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

development at this so-called ‘native village’ would be for 20,000 people, but the long-term objective was to accommodate 100,000 Africans there!⁴²⁵ By moving Africans from the Old Location to this remote site, it was hoped to secure residential segregation for Africans, Indians, Asians, Coloureds and Europeans “in separate suburbs but with equal amenities in each suburb.”⁴²⁶ The promise of equal amenities for Africans, despite their lack of representation on the City Council, and no access to the economic resources of the European population, was, of course, disingenuous. But as it turned out, these plans to restrict African housing to the urban periphery proved unaffordable, impractical and unpopular, and so a much more integrated pattern of development took place, closer to town.

Not only was there increased pressure to properly house the average low-skilled worker who would no longer rely on rural support, but the emergent African middle class clamoured ever louder for superior urban housing options commensurate to their social status.⁴²⁷ As Michael West put it:

Their objective was spatial separation from the African workers with whom they had been forced to live. They sought removal to a place - suburbia - where they could build homes, both physically and culturally, that would become the basis of a settled family life; in short, the members of the emerging African petty bourgeoisie desired a place to work out the middle-class domestic ideal as it had been transmitted to and transformed by them.⁴²⁸

The only distinctly more privileged neighbourhood for this class in Bulawayo, before mid-century, had been the Government-built “native village” of Luveve, reserved for Government teachers and nurses. But it was not ideal, as it was 12 kms from town. The rest had had to carve out spaces of exclusivity within the overcrowded Old Location – for example by booking out public venues like the iconic Stanley Hall for elite weddings.⁴²⁹ This class needed to be catered for, with an extremely tight budget and limited experience of housing stable, stratified African communities. Pursuant to the policy of stabilisation embodied in the *Urban Areas Act*, the 1950s saw significant changes in the types of African housing constructed in Bulawayo.

⁴²⁵ Mayor’s Minute, 1949/BCCA

⁴²⁶ Mayor’s minute, 1950/BCCA

⁴²⁷ As well as their calls for greater security of tenure (discussed in chapter 4).

⁴²⁸ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, pp 99-100

⁴²⁹ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, chapter 3

There were 4 types of African housing in the urban areas of Rhodesia:

- 1) Public rental housing
- 2) Home Ownership
- 3) Large employer housing
- 4) Domestic employer housing

With respect to the first type, the City came to distinguish itself (especially from Salisbury) with its particular emphasis on massively expanding the ratio of “married” (family) accommodation in the African townships, as well as providing for a range of socioeconomic strata. Thus, although there was an initial spurt in the construction of austere “bachelor” (single-men’s) housing in the early 1950s – a crisis-management measure to tackle the housing backlog (see appendix A) – the construction of single men’s schemes was scaled down thereafter; many of the existing schemes were either converted to married housing or, if sub-standard, demolished.⁴³⁰ The capital city, in stark contrast, continued to build a high ratio of bachelor accommodation.

The focus on married housing was facilitated by the departure of Donald Macintyre in 1953, signifying the end of an era. His successor to the Chair of the Council’s Finance Committee, Mayor Newman, immediately approved Ashton’s request to double the number of units at a proposed married housing scheme at Western Commonage No.3, from 1,400 to 2,800 units. This made it the largest housing contract that had ever been placed in the colony.⁴³¹ It was built in 19 months and came to be known as *Njube*. The Council successfully applied to the minister to approve its use of £100,000 from its accumulated beer profits to contribute to the £640,000 cost of this scheme.⁴³² Ashton later reminisced that this was the point when the Council finally “began to realise that housing was necessary”.⁴³³

For the second type of housing – the type elaborated in this chapter – Bulawayo was a pioneer in Rhodesia, and came to be known for having the highest rates of home ownership (40%) in the colony, if not the continent. The third type – large employer housing – dwindled in importance in the post-war period, as the Bulawayo Council gradually took over housing responsibilities from most industrial employers. Indeed, the Council found industrial employers were only willing to build cheap accommodation for their single employees, and extremely

⁴³⁰ See appendix A for an overview of rental housing development from 1949-77.

⁴³¹ A £421 817 contract was awarded to Messrs. Laing and Roberts to build 2440 semi-detached cottages (2 rooms and kitchen, 334 sq. feet / 31 m²) and 360 cottages (1 room and kitchen, 188 sq. feet / 17.5 m²) and a £51, 900 contract to Messrs. C.E. Braum to build individual aqua privies for each cottage. In total with all infrastructure the scheme would cost £640,000.

⁴³² £100,000 Grant for Native Housing Confirmed, mid-June 1954, in NAZ/S3609/35/2/ vol. 2. Native Housing Policy, 153-4 [p. 24]

⁴³³ Ncube interview with Ashton, quoted in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 187.

reluctant to build adequately for married employees, for whom accommodation tied to employers (whose employment requirements fluctuated and who were often regarded by the Council to be “unscrupulous”) was in any case not ideal.⁴³⁴ Therefore, in the 1950s the Council began to discourage and then cease to entertain offers from employers to build for their employees. The major exception was the Rhodesian Railways, to whom large areas of municipal land were leased for the building of high standard Railway accommodation.⁴³⁵

Finally, the fourth type – domestic worker accommodation – grew along with the size of the European population. By the mid-1950s, a significant number of African domestic workers (25,000) lived on the private premises of their European domestic employers on the eastern side of the city. This housing was not the responsibility of the Municipality, except that it ensured that regulations were adhered to.

Ashton’s first few years in office were about crisis-management. He had to strike a balance between rapidly building new schemes to reduce the backlog, and improving the appalling conditions of the existing Location. He did not just have to work this out himself, but in turn had to persuade the Council that the balancing act he proposed was the optimal use of limited resources.⁴³⁶ This was not a merely technical administrative process; it involved the deployment of skilled rhetoric in constant bureaucratic negotiation, as well as constant learning and experimentation.

The general state of Makokoba (the “Old Location”), the Municipal Compound and industrialists’ worker compounds in 1949, by Ashton’s own account, was horrific:

The housing was unbelievable, it was horrible. I went into the Municipal Compound. It was so disgusting there that I felt sick...Makokoba was grossly overcrowded...There was a great big quarry in the middle of where Barbour Fields comes round and I had never seen people living in such conditions... Terrible. I’m not surprised that people struck.⁴³⁷

Ashton decided to leave Makokoba’s development in abeyance, and focus on establishing new townships elsewhere. Despite the need for a great many accommodation units to reduce overcrowding, one of his Department’s first actions was to foray into superior housing for “the better type of native” at Barbour Fields (adjacent to the existing Mzilikazi married rental

⁴³⁴ Recall from chapter 2 that it was some of the employers’ own worker compounds that had the most squalid living conditions of all.

⁴³⁵ ‘Bulawayo’s answers to the Urban Affairs Commission questionnaire’ (Sept. 1957), p. 28/Oxford Bodleian Library

⁴³⁶ This usually entailed reporting firstly to the Native Administration and Finance Committees who would then adopt or amend his recommendations and put them to the Council for a vote. But he also corresponded directly with Council officials like the Town Clerk, City Engineer etc. all the time.

⁴³⁷ Interview by Mark Ncube, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 169.

township). Here, the City Engineer built 294 cottages (of the same type as in Mzilikazi, but on larger stands), with individual waterborne sewerage, which was a “radical departure” from traditional sanitation facilities. This scheme took advantage of an option in the Urban Areas Act for the building of ‘special accommodation’, charged at a higher rent than the ‘standard’ rent. Throughout the 1950s, Bulawayo was the only municipality to provide rental housing of different standards using the ‘special rent option’ (in Salisbury the Government stepped in to do so).

At first, a number of hawkers and second hand clothes dealers from N. Rhodesia and the Congo settled at Barbour Fields. They were not considered “a success” as tenants, because “they make no effort to improve their dwellings or gardens and tend to overcrowd their houses with relatives and friends.”⁴³⁸ Thereafter, a minimum income threshold and vetting of the “character” of applicants – people who would be more interested in maintaining their gardens and homes – was done to make it more “successful.” It soon became a popular choice of residence for teachers and nurses. The Council encouraged home improvements, but offered no compensation for this – except that the Superintendent would help tenants to find suitable successors who would compensate them adequately. This signified Bulawayo’s new approach of encouraging social stratification, and enlisting the energies and resources of the tenants. But Barbour Fields was still a rental scheme. The next experiment was with home ownership.

Pioneering home ownership

Although the Urban Areas Act was intended to improve the living situation in the townships, it created much upheaval at first. Many unauthorised occupants of overcrowded Makokoba and dwellers on European farms and properties on the urban periphery began to be ejected, and sent to an emergency camp set up at Hyde Park in 1951 (on the Minister of Native Affairs’ recommendation.⁴³⁹) There were already long-term squatter encampments on Hyde Park, consisting of families that had been evicted from the Location since 1929. Implementing the Urban Areas Act also involved removing Europeans and Asians from the African areas, expropriating European plots on the Western Commonage to incorporate them into the African urban area, and expropriating many Indian trading premises to give them to African tenants. Just a few still remained in the Old Location by 1952.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁸ Annual report of the Director, 1952/BCCA

⁴³⁹ NAZ/S2609/35/2; Vol. 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53

⁴⁴⁰ Annual Report of the Director, 1952/BCCA

Many families did not move to Hyde Park as instructed, and instead returned to Makokoba,⁴⁴¹ but there were still a total of 4,000 squatters at Hyde Park, living in ‘pole and dagga’ (pole and mud) huts and shacks, without sanitation. The idea was that they would be allowed to settle temporarily at the emergency squatter camp until “proper” council housing had been built. The Government Health Secretary identified the situation as a matter of “extreme urgency”.⁴⁴² During the prolonged inception of the Hyde Park scheme, however, its character changed completely, as it became the country’s first official African ‘home ownership’ scheme, beginning a trend that was to define Bulawayo’s African township development vision in the late colonial period...

Pumula: the unglamorous origins of post-war African ‘home ownership’

Realising that it would be years before these squatters could be “properly” housed elsewhere, the Council decided to declare part of Hyde Park a ‘Native Urban Area’ (under the Urban Areas Act), lay out 2,400 stands (40 x 80 ft), water infrastructure (one standpipe per 32 cottages), an aqua privy⁴⁴³ for each cottage, roads, offices, shops etc., and allow families to erect their own temporary dwellings, which, over time, could be modified, or else replaced by permanent Council cottages. The scheme was inspired by Moroka, in Johannesburg.⁴⁴⁴ There was a sense of improvisation here – the mayor said “it will be interesting to follow its development”.⁴⁴⁵ Then the Council decided to offer 10-year leases to these families, the first of which were signed in April 1952. The Bulawayo African Township Advisory Board unanimously supported the scheme, but suggested the leases be 25 years with option of renewal, and preferably freehold.⁴⁴⁶ (However, the Land Apportionment Act at this time still prohibited African freehold in urban areas, which were designated “European”.) In this *ad hoc* way, significantly shaped by circumstance, the first “home ownership” scheme in Rhodesia came into existence.

Applicants had to complete a declaration that they were:

- a) of good character

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Extract from Dr M.H. Webster annual report, 1952, NAZ/s2609/35/2 volume 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53.

⁴⁴³ An aqua privy is a small shelter with a squat plate erected over a septic tank, with a mechanism to prevent odour, flies and mosquitos.

⁴⁴⁴ E.H. Ashton, ‘Urban Native Administration in Southern Rhodesia’, Presentation to the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs Annual Conference (1955), p. 10, NAZ/GEN-1/ASH

⁴⁴⁵ Mayor’s Minute, 1951/BCCA

⁴⁴⁶ BAT Advisory Board minutes, 6th December, 1951/BCCA

- b) married to an approved wife as defined by the Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and registration Act or widowed or divorced, with minor children or other dependents living together as a family.
- c) following “some lawful occupation” within the proclaimed area of Bulawayo, and had been doing so for 2 years, or, if retired, had been working for at least 3 years immediately prior to the application.⁴⁴⁷
- d) earning above £8/month (preferably).

The suitability of applicants was judged by Ashton. He was able to exercise discretion to accept “very deserving cases” that did not meet the minimum 2 years working requirement. Because much of the scheme had been laid out before applicants moved in, they were allowed to choose which stands they wanted and could therefore live amongst friends. But most African community leaders were not fans of this scheme, and it was not a roaring success, which the authorities attributed to the following reasons: it was peri-urban and very far from the CBD and industrial sites; the costs were too high for many of the target families; aliens would not want to make a 10-year commitment; the supervised nature of the scheme meant that illicit brewing would be difficult. With respect to these shortcomings, there was conflict between the Council and the Government Health Secretary. The latter felt the Bulawayo administrators were being sticklers by insisting on a formal marriage certificate, arguing that,

The “myth” of the “single” native should be forgotten for all practical purposes. Nearly all adult natives have “wives” and there is no valid reason why they should also have a scrap of paper which does not alter their attitude to women in any way.⁴⁴⁸

Lessees at this new Hyde Park home ownership scheme were each given a loan from ‘Native Beer reserves’ of £30 for materials to build their own 2-roomed cottages, to be paid back at 2% interest over 9.5 years. Bulawayo was thus the first to take advantage of the Government’s amendment of the Native Beer Act in 1952, allowing beer profits to be loaned by the Municipality to Africans for self-building. As a Ministry memorandum in 1953 noted,

In Bulawayo, the Council which has accumulated a large surplus of native beer profits has obtained the consent of the Minister to make loans to natives to acquire their own

⁴⁴⁷ Native Admin Committee minutes, 9th April, 1952, p. 14/BCCA

⁴⁴⁸ Extract from Dr M.H. Webster annual report, 1952, NAZ/s2609/35/2 volume 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53.

homes in the native urban area...No other local authority has at the moment sufficient beer moneys to follow Bulawayo's lead.⁴⁴⁹

This was the first example of the beer garden system becoming an integral part of the progressive development vision (elaborated in chapter 6).

The Bulawayo Council decided that if this scheme was to be more permanent than hitherto planned, houses should be made of Kimberley brick or other "suitable" materials, *not* wattle and daub. The Kimberley bricks could be made in a nearby area, and moulds, wheelbarrows and other equipment borrowed from the Council. Aided self-help housing (also known as 'site and service schemes') is conventionally regarded as a 1960s innovation that took off in the 1970s after the World Bank cottoned onto it. But it was in fact pioneered in the 1940s, notably in Puerto Rico, and was still an experimental phenomenon in some colonies in the 1950s.⁴⁵⁰ This Bulawayo experiment was an early one in the global history of aided self-help/self-build/sites-and-services housing. These were the unglamorous origins of Southern Rhodesia's first official "home-ownership" scheme for Africans, which soon came to be known as Pumula ("place of rest") as it was popular with retirees. It also soon entered the mythology of the "progressive city", giving Africans an opportunity to become modern propertied citizens – despite the fact they had built and owned their own huts in the Old Location a few decades earlier, before private property ownership had been prohibited in 1929.

Pelandaba: a scheme for "better-to-do Natives"

Meanwhile, members of the emerging African urban middle class were clamouring for housing in some way commensurate to their status. It was discovered that home ownership schemes were an effective way to offload the financial burden of housing onto lessees, whilst at the same time satisfying their demands for secure tenure and exclusive neighbourhoods. Ashton was keenly aware of the potential of home ownership schemes as a way to address financial, sociopolitical and moral imperatives at once. With Pumula still an experimental project, he began promoting a "more ambitious and solid scheme of home ownership" for the "better-to-do" resident⁴⁵¹ – the

⁴⁴⁹ Dept. of Internal Affairs, Salisbury, 7th May, 1954/NAZ/S3615/1/1/1/1. Housing Policy. The reason the municipality needed authorisation, was that beer hall profits were regarded as a "trust fund" for African welfare, and only once the municipality had proven satisfactory provision of amenities, could it borrow the money at sub-economic interest rates for housing loans.

⁴⁵⁰ R. Harris, "The Silence of the Experts: "Aided Self-help Housing", 1939-1954", *Habitat Intl.*, 22, 2 (1998), pp. 165-189.

⁴⁵¹ Annual Report of the Director, 1952/BCCA

scheme that came to be known as Pelandaba – clearly explaining how it would address these imperatives: firstly, he argued, the Council was in a situation of “financial stringency”, and could not undertake any further largescale rental schemes. This was a financial justification for home ownership – to offload costs onto residents. Secondly, home ownership would be “a considerable step forward in the meeting of the genuine need for security of tenure in the urban areas”⁴⁵² and also address the “growing frustration and bitterness among the better class Africans who resent the denial of so many of the rewards of progress and enterprise”⁴⁵³. This was a socio-political justification – to appease and pacify the middle class. Thirdly, home ownership would give the African man “an appreciation of value”, and an “opportunity of helping himself and of learning that he must pay for, and therefore work for, what he wants”.⁴⁵⁴ This was a moral reason – to improve the African citizen.

As this section demonstrates, actually determining the specifications of Pelandaba ended up being a very complicated process, constantly revised in the face of financial constraints and uncertainty about the interest and financial situation of the prospective home buyers. When Bulawayo’s Native Administration Committee convened to discuss Ashton’s first report on this scheme, what concerned them was that this higher class scheme was essentially an *experiment* involving about 500 families, with no guarantee of success. They wanted to ascertain levels of interest before committing to any fixed plans, and agreed on the following list of key principles to enable “an outline scheme to be placed before the natives and their reaction judged”:⁴⁵⁵

- Siting at Hyde Park.
- Payment of a nominal ground rent plus essential services on an *economic* (i.e. non-subsidised) basis.
- Entering a lease of 25 years.
- Provisional lease conditions to include strictly residential purposes, building according to approved designs with approved materials, transfer of lease under certain conditions.
- House of minimum £300 in value, using a £150 loan raised from African beer profits, bearing interest of 2%, repayable over 15 years.

Between the laying out of this set up of principles, and the final establishment of the scheme, were 23 months of consultations and negotiations between Ashton, prospective tenants and African organisations, the Council’s Native Administration Committee, the Finance Committee, and the City Engineer. All of the “key principles” changed: the site, the loan period, the value of the loans

⁴⁵² Annual Report of the Director, 1954/BCCA

⁴⁵³ Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage/BCCA

⁴⁵⁴ Native Administration Committee Meeting, 21 August, 1952, p. 251/BCCA

⁴⁵⁵ Council Minutes 1952, Special Meeting of the Native Administration Committee, 14th January/BCCA

and loan interest rates, the lease conditions, and the minimum value of the houses, and even after construction was underway the physical structures needed redesigning. All of these adjustments were made in response to learning through practice about consumer preferences, soil conditions, new financial constraints, etc.

Firstly, Ashton consulted with the Advisory Boards, the secretary of the Federation of African Welfare Societies, and the Editor of the Bantu Mirror, on the “principles” of the scheme outlined above. They recognised a genuine desire among some African residents for a scheme of this nature, but only if the lease period was much longer. Therefore, since it was deemed “necessary to make the scheme as attractive as possible”, the scheme’s lease period and distant siting were reconsidered: Ashton recommended to the Finance Committee to make it a 40-year lease, but the Committee declined, to Ashton’s annoyance. “The length of lease goes to the very root of the matter as far as Africans are concerned”, he argued, and anything shorter would elicit a very poor response from eligible candidates, who in any case already had accommodation in the townships, and so would require “a fairly considerable attraction before agreeing to investing at least £300 which, to an African, was a lot of money” (not to mention the additional transport costs of commuting from Hyde Park).⁴⁵⁶ Ironically, Ashton was at this time still able to cite the Union of South Africa as a model to emulate: South African municipalities had offered long leases to Africans ranging from 30 years to 99 years, he pointed out, and “Pietermaritzburg had even granted freehold tenure”.⁴⁵⁷

Plans were altered, decisions were deferred; Ashton continued to reconsider and consult. The African Advisory Boards were instructed in June, 1952, to “go into this matter with great care”, to find out how many people may be interested in a 30, 40 or 99-year lease scheme, with houses costing at least £200-£300, and report back soon.⁴⁵⁸ In August, Ashton proposed relocating the entire scheme to the Western Commonage at site No. 6. He argued that relocating it closer to town would make it easier to sell: it would be 2½ miles from the industrial areas, therefore more convenient and cheaper in terms of transport; it would be adjacent to Western Commonage Nos. 1 and 2 (the bachelor schemes also known as *Iminyela* and *Mabutweni*), which would allow progressive development, meaning lower capital outlay and lower capital charges to tenants.

Furthermore, it would provide a “better frontage” to the European area on the other side of the Khami road, than if an ordinary township were built. This may have satisfied Europeans who felt threatened by African encroachment; but it did not satisfy the prospective better-to-do

⁴⁵⁶ Native Affairs Committee Meeting, 9th April, 1952/BCCA

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ African Advisory Board Minutes, 19th June, 1952/BCCA

African tenants who were threatened by the proximity of single men's townships. When they did eventually move in, there was considerable anxiety that the womenfolk would face harassment and other dangers when traversing these bachelor townships, which they had to do to buy groceries. (It was only in 1954 that this was eased when an enterprising African businessman established a mobile dry canteen in this home ownership scheme.⁴⁵⁹)

In addition to moving the site of the scheme, Ashton proposed other compromises, as he was eager to "press on with the scheme", given the lack of funds to build sub-economic housing at that time. He therefore proposed reducing the minimum value of houses from £300 to £150 to enable more families to participate. (Note that this was in fact lower than the value of the best rental housing at Barbour Fields, where each house cost £250 to build, plus £100 for sewerage connections.)

Ashton then recommended that the City Engineer build "demonstration cottages" (with 2 and 3 rooms) to "get the scheme started and to demonstrate the practical side of the scheme to the natives".⁴⁶⁰ These recommendations were all adopted by the Council.⁴⁶¹ In November, the City Treasurer then submitted a cost plan for a scheme of 500 houses, beginning initially with 86 houses. If the Government did not agree to this option, the City Treasurer suggested diverting funds from a different scheme.⁴⁶²

These frequent alterations and compromises show the complicated balancing act that was required of the African Administration Department: trying to consider multiple conflicting stakeholder interests – European residents, African tenants, Government ministers, industrial employers, and those who held the purse strings. At the same time as balancing these conflicting stakeholder interests, the administration was trying to put this scheme in the context of a long-term physical housing plan to provide for the estimated 5100 families and 5000 single men who would need housing in the next 4 years, whilst the Finance Committee refused to approve any capital expenditure beyond the next year.

In April, 1953, Ashton suddenly changed tack completely. He wrote to the Council's Native Administration Committee arguing that the only way to address the housing backlog would be to scrap the idea of an exclusive "better-to-do" scheme, and instead seek a compromise, by building an *austerity scheme* that would appeal to middle and lower income groups. He thought the

⁴⁵⁹ BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

⁴⁶⁰ Extract from minutes of Native Admin. Committee, 21 August, 1952/BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

⁴⁶¹ Native Administration Committee meeting 21st August, 1952/BCCA

⁴⁶² Native Admin Committee meeting extract, 12th November, 1952/BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage.

Council should cover 100% of the loan, rather than 50%, so as to “bring in those natives who have no capital”. The maximum loan amount should be £150 (enough to build a basic house of 2 rooms and an aqua privy), the 2% interest on the beer loans for building materials should be slashed, and/or the loan repayment period extended to 20 years. Water and electricity to each home would have to come later. The scheme should no longer be fully economic; sub-economic rates for services and other charges would enable more people to participate. However, the scheme should still only be subsidised by 9/- per month rather than the full 28/- as in the Bulawayo African Township areas (BAT)⁴⁶³. In other words, the whole “better-to-do” scheme was now expected to be much the same as Pumula. But Pumula had been handicapped by the fact that many lessees had neither time nor ability to build their own suitable houses, so here at Western Commonage number 6, it would be better if Council simply hired a contractor.

Loans for 500 houses at £150 would amount to £75,000 from beer profits. This would be a good solution until Council could build ordinary rental townships again:

The more houses Council can have built without incurring the heavy capital charges that are now inseparable from ordinary letting schemes built with loan capital, the better for the economic health of the City. Finally, the more the Council can develop Home-ownership, the better will be the social consequences.⁴⁶⁴

This justification succinctly shows how home ownership conveniently resolved financial and social problems at once. But by July 1953, the scheme had yet another set of specifications: 600 two-roomed cottages (expandable to 3 or 4 rooms) payable over 20 years with a 90% loan; 40 by 60 feet stands, ground rent equivalent to elsewhere (10 shillings); blocks of 16 stands, central ring road; provision for schools, shops, fields as a buffer zone against the adjacent Western Commonage No.1 bachelor townships, and (of course!) a beer garden. This required housing loans from Native Beer Funds of £90,000.

Ashton interviewed around 40 Africans representing different interests and income levels, and showed them the three prototype houses at the Western Commonage site. But with little time to consider the scheme, these viewers “had to use their imagination to visualise what it will be like when properly developed.” Ashton reported that,

Without exception, their reception to the proposals was enthusiastically favourable, and most of the comments were constructive and appreciative... When they can see with their

⁴⁶³ Makokoba, Mzilikazi, Nguboyenja.

⁴⁶⁴ Ashton report to Native Admin Committee, 8th April, 1953/BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

own eyes how the scheme develops, very many more will come forward to take advantage of it.⁴⁶⁵

There is a sense here that the aesthetics of modern development would enthral and inspire Africans. Ashton was excited about the scheme's prospects and thought there would be "no problem" getting 600 applicants. He even noted some who had £300 capital to put down up front, and so he now proposed raising the maximum loan amount from £150 to £400, to once again attract the wealthier. The Native Administration Committee resolved to proceed with development immediately and called for applicants.⁴⁶⁶

But the Finance Committee threw cold water on these ambitions, deciding that only 100 cheaper houses should be built to begin with (80 two-bedroom, 10 three-bedroom, 10 four-bedroom). Ashton relented, but insisted that "in view of the urgency of proceeding with permanent native housing", the scheme should proceed immediately, *without* Government approval. Agreements with the Minister were "final enough" and it was pointless to delay inauguration of the scheme.⁴⁶⁷ The lease was an un-concluded draft document, but this had worked fine in the case of Pumula. On 7th October, 1953, the Council adopted this recommendation.⁴⁶⁸ In November, Ashton wrote to an administrator in Ndola, Northern Rhodesia, asking for numerous details of its scheme: the size of sites, nature of services, nature of tenure, size and plan of houses, breakdown of charges to owners, type of financial and materials assistance to the owner.⁴⁶⁹

The Western Commonage No. 6 scheme finally got under way in December, 1953, 23 months after it had first been proposed. The first cottages were built of burnt brick with corrugated iron roofing, constructed either by African building contractors supervised by the City Engineer, or lessees themselves. A basic unit was 2 rooms (200 sq. feet / 18.5 m²) plus aqua privy. Tenants could extend or build larger cottages. Loans for this scheme were provided from beer profits at 2% interest over 20 years. The charge for "ground rent" (of the land) and services was 12s. 6d. per month.

⁴⁶⁵ Native Admin. Committee Minutes, 11th Aug, 1953/BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ Ashton special report to Finance Committee, 19th September, 1953, in BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

⁴⁶⁸ Extract from Council Minutes/BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

⁴⁶⁹ Ashton to R. Walker (supervisor of cooperative societies, Ndola), 7th Nov. 1955/BCCA/H4/4/1/Transfer Box 210). Western Commonage Number 6 Housing scheme

Because the scheme was funded from Council beer profits, it was subject to ministerial approval, which also meant the development plans had to be submitted to a Government Senior Town Planning Officer. This Ashton was willing to do, but when the Town Planning Office asked to see the plans for the surrounding townships (Western Commonage 1-5) to get an overview of where this one (W.C. 6) fitted in, Ashton resisted. He asked the City Engineer and Town Clerk “whether Government really has any jurisdiction or authority over our planning with the rest of these areas”.⁴⁷⁰ The Town Clerk checked the legislation and asserted that it did not have authority, and promptly declined the Government Town Planning Office’s request.⁴⁷¹ The TPO insisted with trepidation, “I trust that my request...will not be interpreted as an intention to interfere with your Council’s rights as a Planning Authority”.⁴⁷² This brief vignette provides an insight into the Central Government’s difficulties in exerting authority over municipalities, particularly Bulawayo.

Two years on, Ashton reported optimistically about lessees’ own development of this scheme: “Although small, it is proving most successful. Many tenants have added one or two extra rooms to the basic unit and several have built large and pleasing houses to their own design.”⁴⁷³ The scheme had come to be known as *Pelandaba* by the residents – meaning “our problems are over” – and the name stuck. But it turned out that the problems were far from over. Both the *Pelandaba* and *Pumula* schemes grew slowly due to a number of issues. *Pumula* was no longer a “glorified squatter camp”, but it was far from town, and so Ashton felt that “every encouragement” should be made to attract more people, by raising the loan amount, lengthening the repayment period, enlarging the core house size, allowing lodgers and offering freehold. Similarly, he found that *Pelandaba* needed to be better tailored to specific consumers:

Although it was meant to attract the better-to-do, the basic unit is too small, too rigid, and too difficult to extend to appeal to these people, and too expensive to appeal to poorer people.⁴⁷⁴

The main problems were that the loan limit of £150 in *Pelandaba* was too low, and there were rigid Treasury regulations on the sale of building materials, so departures from the core design were not encouraged; and finally, *after the scheme had started*, a clause for cancelling the lease due to liquor convictions was inserted into the lease.⁴⁷⁵ Ashton implored the Committee to remove such

⁴⁷⁰ Ashton memo to Town clerk, 2nd November, 1954/BCCA/H4/4/1 (transfer box 210). Western Commonage no. 6 housing scheme

⁴⁷¹ Town clerk to Senior Town Planning Officer, Matabeleland, 4th December, 1954/BCCA/H4/4/1 (transfer box 210). Western Commonage no. 6 housing scheme

⁴⁷² Senior Town Planning Officer, Matabeleland to the Town Clerk, 8th December, 1954, in BCCA/Transfer Box 180 - Home ownership scheme - Western Commonage

⁴⁷³ Annual Report of the Director, 1955/BCCA

⁴⁷⁴ RS 10-3 (TB298) African Admin Dept. four year plan [1955-57]/BCCA

⁴⁷⁵ This “double punishment” is discussed in chapter 4.

defects and give the scheme “freedom and encouragement”, because it was an important way of fostering “social segregation” and a stable middle class.⁴⁷⁶

He recommended increasing the loan amount to £250⁴⁷⁷, reducing the deposit to 5%, enlarging plots, allowing greater choice in home design, permitting lodgers, providing street lighting and reticulated sewerage to those who could afford it. And so the negotiations and alterations went on. Like the other housing schemes, it was not an outcome, but an ongoing process.

By the end of the decade, some leading businessmen and political figures, including the ‘father of African nationalism’, Joshua Nkomo, had built some fairly lavish houses. In 1959, the *Bantu Mirror* described how the City’s business elite had built houses at Pelandaba:

which compare favourably with any other houses in the poshest European suburbs of Bulawayo. Leading Africans too who are not businessmen have built their own houses which have turned this township into one of the most beautiful African suburbs in Bulawayo.⁴⁷⁸

The Council began to recognise that more “sophisticated” African residents harboured potential energy and resources that could be harnessed for their own good as well as the Council’s, rather than remaining a financial burden:

Africans have been building for themselves since Bulawayo started, except for the break from 1930 to 1952, and they are doing so today at Pumula and Pelandaba. Experience shows where there is careful supervision, they build solid and attractive homes. They have a wealth of talent and energy waiting to be released, and can also contribute their own private resources, which in aggregate can make a substantial contribution towards solving the housing problem.⁴⁷⁹

Despite the messy genesis of these first two home ownership schemes at Pumula and Pelandaba, they came to be symbols of pride and progressiveness for the Bulawayo Council. To its frustration, the Government did not always recognise its achievements. So when in 1956 the Prime Minister was reported in the *Chronicle* boasting that his Government had created the country’s “first” African home ownership scheme in New Highfields, Salisbury, Ashton was perplexed.⁴⁸⁰ He

⁴⁷⁶ RS 10-3 (Transfer Box 298) African Admin Dept. four year plan/BCCA

⁴⁷⁷ Which Council agreed to in March, 1958.

⁴⁷⁸ *Bantu Mirror*, 30th May, 1959. Quoted in West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 116.

⁴⁷⁹ ‘Urban African Affairs Commission, Bulawayo’s answers to the questionnaire’, (1957), p. 29/Oxford Bodleian.

⁴⁸⁰ BCCA/Transfer Box 310/ Home ownership schemes - Native areas

notified the Town Clerk, who wrote to the PM's Secretary reminding him of Bulawayo's pioneering schemes:

I may say that since this Municipality piloted these schemes, other Municipalities have shown a great interest in the experiment and have from time to time sent officials to Bulawayo to see the schemes and get information about them.⁴⁸¹

The Secretary replied to say that the PM did not mean to overlook Bulawayo, he had merely referred to Highfields as the first home ownership scheme because it had a 99 years' lease. But the PM would be pleased to have more information on Bulawayo's schemes.⁴⁸² The Town Clerk persisted, belabouring the point that Bulawayo was the first in this field:

While I fully appreciate what you say in your letter, I think we are getting into an academic argument over the points of difference in the respective leases which, in my humble opinion, hardly support the original unqualified reference to Highfields that "the first 100 families in Southern Rhodesia to be able to buy their own houses in town have moved in...". The fundamental point remains that long before the Highfields scheme, the two Bulawayo Home Ownership Schemes provided for Africans to buy or build their own houses.⁴⁸³

With that, the Town Clerk submitted detailed information on Pumula and Pelandaba, and said that the correspondence "can now be allowed to rest". But even Bulawayo's mayor weighed in, stating in his year-end speech of 1956 that, "Some emphasis was placed recently by the Prime Minister on the Government's Home Ownership Scheme at Highfield, Salisbury, as being the first. It possibly was the first for a very long lease of 99 years, but we must claim to be first in the field with our 1952 scheme."⁴⁸⁴ The Local Government and Housing Secretary did not even know how the self-building model worked at Pumula. He had seen a self-building scheme in the Congo, and asked whether Pumula worked in a similar way.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ Town Clerk to PM's Secretary, 27 March, 1956/BCCA/Transfer Box 310/ Home ownership schemes - Native areas

⁴⁸² Secretary to Town Clerk, 17th April, 1956/BCCA/Transfer Box 310/ Home ownership schemes - Native areas

⁴⁸³ Town Clerk to PM's secretary, 1st May, 1956/BCCA/Transfer Box 310/ Home ownership schemes - Native areas.

⁴⁸⁴ BCCA/Mayors Minutes for the Year Ending 31st July, 1956.

⁴⁸⁵ NAZ/S3609/35/2 volume 2. Native Housing Policy, 1953-55.

The mid-1950s planning situation

By the mid-1950s, Bulawayo's mayor was able to announce, "[W]e can justifiably point with pride to the fact that over the last five years the Council has provided and planned more housing for Africans than during the whole of its previous existence since 1897".⁴⁸⁶ It had been a low bar to beat, but this positive attitude was still a profound turnaround from the beginning of the decade.

With the acquisition and surveying of Commonage and adjacent farmland for future township development, the mayor said, "It is safe to say that no other centre is as well placed in respect of land and future native development as Bulawayo".⁴⁸⁷ This was Bulawayo's boast in its campaign to become the territorial capital of Southern Rhodesia at this time. It boasted the massive Njube married scheme underway, the "unique" home ownership schemes, and the fact that it had much surveyed land available for African housing on the Western Commonage, as well as three adjacent farms, acquired specifically for African housing, totalling 29,000 acres. The Council argued that, "As this area is contiguous to the Western Commonage, progressive, orderly development can take place and be economical in costs of service and transport."⁴⁸⁸ It was this progressive development that came to distinguish Bulawayo's townships from the ribbon development of Salisbury's. Even Salisbury's Director of African Administration admitted that Bulawayo had a major land advantage:

In Bulawayo, the City Council has some thousands of acres in the Western Commonage and Hyde Park regions on which to pursue development. Bulawayo has been fortunate too in that post-war development has taken place chiefly within its municipal commonage, so that comparatively little peri-urban development has resulted...It is Salisbury and its peri-urban areas which present the Colony's major problem.⁴⁸⁹

Part of this resulted from the original siting of the two cities. Bulawayo's original siting laid good foundations for future development. According to a professional town planning assessment, Bulawayo's overall situation in Zimbabwe had natural disadvantages, but its site was "very well chosen and developed with great clarity and imagination." Salisbury had a better overall situation, but its site was "wrongly chosen and badly developed".⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁶ BCCA/Mayor's Minute, 1955

⁴⁸⁷ BCCA/Mayor's Minute, 1954

⁴⁸⁸ City of Bulawayo: Memorandum on the Siting of the Territorial Capital, Prepared for Submission to the Select Committee (July, 1954), p. 11/BCCA

⁴⁸⁹ Colonel Hartley's annual report for 1957, Oxford Bodleian Library/Marjory Perham papers/Box 625, File 7, SR II. Nat. admin. - Urban African Affairs Comm., 1957.

⁴⁹⁰ Mallows et al. (1972). 'Preliminary Assessment of Planning Problems. City of Bulawayo', p. 10

In 1955, six top officials of the Bulawayo Council – Town Clerk, City Engineer, City Treasurer, Medical Officer of Health, City Electrical Engineer and Director of African Administration – compiled a report on the siting of future African housing in Western Bulawayo. Whilst considering natural factors (such as topography), social factors (such as European and African preferences), and productivity factors (such as the effect of travel fatigue on workers), their primary consideration was cost-cutting in order to make schemes viable.

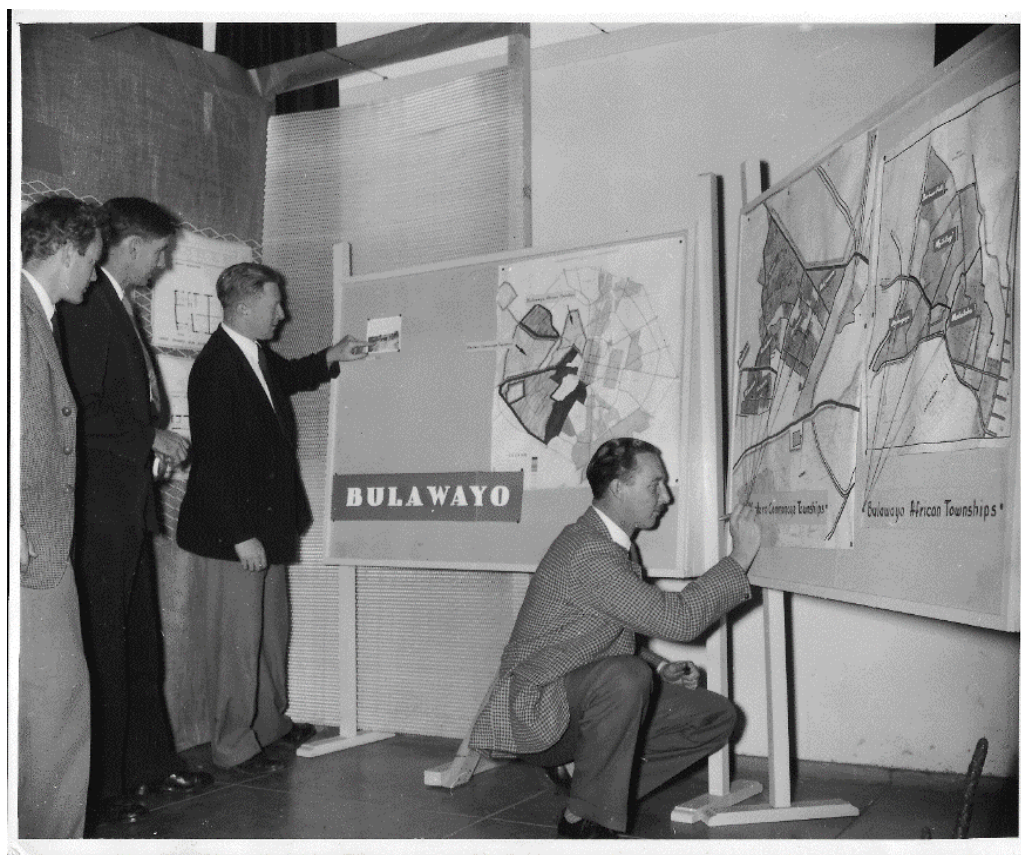


Figure 12: Planning the Bulawayo African Township [Source: NAZ/Undated, courtesy of Paul Hubbard]

In short: services were cheaper if they were extended from adjacent townships, and transport costs were cheaper if accommodation was closer to industrial sites. Sometimes African housing might even displace a designated European housing area, which was justified as follows:

[D]evelopment of industry and commerce, without which the ‘European’ areas would be practically worthless, is dependent upon native labour. The better the condition of the latter, the better for industry and commerce. Far from being harmful to European

interests, the use of these areas for native housing seems to us to be in the best interests of Bulawayo.⁴⁹¹

Salisbury's planning vision appears to have been quite different at this time. There was significant Government and judicial intervention. African housing schemes were planned for the urban periphery to avoid concentrated development, for security reasons. This was the Council's decision; the military had given no input to this plan and the police had assured the planners that they were not too concerned with concentrated development, provided certain safeguards were in place.⁴⁹² These divergences in the planning visions of the capital and the second city only became more pronounced down the line.

Mpopoma 99-year lease scheme

In the mid-50s, the Minister of Justice, Internal Affairs and Housing, George Ellman-Brown, had to come up with a persuasive African housing project to secure the £1 million loan that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had offered Prime Minister Todd's Government. Ellman-Brown conceived two massive 99-year lease schemes for Salisbury and Bulawayo, of approximately 3000 units each. The important difference between the two cities' schemes was that Salisbury's was located on *Government land* (at New Highfield, 2.5 miles from the nearest industrial area) and administered entirely by Government. To do this, the Government established an *ad hoc* departmental committee called the 'Highfield Management Committee'.⁴⁹³ This was the first home ownership scheme in Salisbury (the one the PM had boasted about), and it began a trend of the Government running home ownership schemes in Salisbury, whilst its City Council focussed on rental housing.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ Report of the Town Clerk to the Mayor, 1st March 1955, p. 5, in Council and Committee Minutes, January to March, 1955/BCCA

⁴⁹² An inter-departmental committee was established to try and coordinate better with Salisbury City Council. The minister of justice and internal affairs favoured expanding existing schemes to the east and west along the railway lines. In any case, he pointed out, "An authoritative Government statement on the siting of native townships in the Salisbury area is long over-due and the uncertainty which exists in regard to the matter is impeding development in the area." (NAZ/S3609/35/2 volume 2. Native Housing Policy, 1953-55).

⁴⁹³ It consisted of representatives of the Department of Native Affairs, Local Government and Housing, Lands and Townships, Engineering and Construction and the Treasury

⁴⁹⁴ By the 1960s, the Central Government administered multiple schemes in Salisbury: St Mary's, Seki, Dzivaesikwa and the home ownership schemes of New Highfields and Kambazuma. The Urban Affairs Commission regarded this combination of the Government and Salisbury Council managing adjacent schemes as a defective system. (G. Passmore, *Local Government Legislation in Rhodesia up to 30th September, 1963* (Salisbury, Dept. Of Government, 1966), p. 10).

In Bulawayo, on the other hand, the nearest Government land was more than 6 miles from the industrial areas.⁴⁹⁵ The Bulawayo scheme was therefore sited on 800 acres of *municipal land*, closer to the industrial areas. Whilst the loan came from Government, the scheme was administered entirely by the Council. As the Mayor proclaimed, this was “a handsome offer. Its acceptance was vital to Bulawayo’s prosperity. Bulawayo’s future lies in industrialisation and every attraction must be offered towards this end. An important advantage is well-sited African housing readily available and we must not fall behind in this respect...”⁴⁹⁶ This scheme was called Mpopoma, and it comprised 2,580 four-roomed houses, built from 1956-58 at a cost of over half a million pounds⁴⁹⁷.

Bulawayo’s administrators tended to feel that they had the best understanding, from trial, error and inquiry, of what prospective African tenants and home buyers actually wanted in a home. So when presented with the Mpopoma plans prepared by Central Government Planners up in Salisbury, they noticed a major problem: the stands were too small, and 80% of units were semi-detached, versus 20% detached. This, they pointed out, showed “little experience of consumer preferences”, and too much focus on cost.⁴⁹⁸ Government officials finally acknowledged that Bulawayo was right, and the plans were quickly altered to provide detached houses only. However, by this time, sewerage installation was underway, and so only minor adjustments could be made, such that the detached houses ended up being cramped on unduly small plots which had originally been designed for the semi-detached houses.⁴⁹⁹ Mpopoma’s superintendent opined that although the scheme was “otherwise excellent”, these small plots were a “serious flaw”.⁵⁰⁰ And the residents’ disappointed reactions proved them right: “People wanted to get a place where they have their small garden they can grow vegetables, they can have their own orange or mango fruit trees or something like that. But they thought the space was rather small.”⁵⁰¹

Mpopoma was the first township to be connected to a reticulated sewerage system, and each house had its own lavatory.⁵⁰² But lessees had to pay for the installation of a domestic metered water supply, or rely on the stand pipes at the end of each block of houses, which could be up to 109 yards away. Not only did this lower capital outlay for the scheme, but also served as

⁴⁹⁵ With the attainment of Settler Responsible Government in 1923, the Government granted Municipalities full title to the Commonage (Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 61)

⁴⁹⁶ Mayor’s Minute, 1955/BCCA

⁴⁹⁷ The house building was contracted to Laing and Roberts.

⁴⁹⁸ Report on Mpopoma Township, 1958/BCCA

⁴⁹⁹ They were mostly 33.5’ x 72.5’, although several plots were larger or included additional half-plots due to the uneven topography of the land.

⁵⁰⁰ Report on Mpopoma Township. 1958/BCCA

⁵⁰¹ Author interview with Dumiso Dabengwa, whose family were amongst the first tenants at Mpopoma, Bulawayo, June 2018.

⁵⁰² Built by Messrs. Kilburn and Co. at a cost of £74,841.

“a deterrent against excessive use of water”.⁵⁰³ Bulawayo has a semi-arid climate and suffers perennial water shortages, but this restriction evinces the second class status of African citizens, whose European counterparts on the other side of town enjoyed much higher consumption levels.⁵⁰⁴

Since Mpopoma was the first fully “economic” (i.e. non-subsidised) home ownership scheme⁵⁰⁵, the houses were specifically designed to take up to 2 lodgers, to help owners offset the high monthly loan repayments and service charges. The monthly charges were broken down as follows:

Lodger 1:	£1. 0. 0	(remitted by the employer)
Lodger 2:	£1. 0. 0	(remitted by the employer)
Lessee:	£1. 0. 0	(remitted by the employer)
Lessee:	11. 3	(remitted by lessee)
Total:	£3.11.3	

Of this total monthly payment, £2. 2. 9 was for redemption on the loan to cover capital costs plus interest (6%), payable over 25 years to the City Council, which forwarded it to the Central Government. The remainder was for service charges (administration, cleansing, lighting, water, sewerage and service maintenance) and lease of land, which went to the Council. As it turned out, there were rarely more than 3,500 lodgers, though there was space for 5,160.

During its first year running the scheme made a loss of £10,230 due to the extra staff needed for getting it all going and the capital outlay for cleaning equipment and transport. But this deficit was simply carried forward so that the scheme would indeed remain “economic”. There were also 12 sites made available to lessees who wished to “self-build”, using loans from beer profits rather than Government.

At Mpopoma, because it was the biggest home ownership experiment to date (see previous chapter), finding suitable applicants was a major exercise. Circulars were sent to applicants for waiting lists in other married housing schemes (Njube, Mzilikazi, Makokoba), mainly to tenants with higher incomes. Superintendents of other townships also spread the word to tenants in their townships (both legal and illegal occupants), sometimes using the public address

⁵⁰³ Report on Mpopoma, 1958/BCCA

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. Musemwa, *Water, History and Politics in Zimbabwe*, (NJ, Africa World Press, 2014).

⁵⁰⁵ Pelandaba remained sub-economic until the early 1960s, and Pumula remained sub-economic for longer because it was not deemed “sufficiently attractive”.

systems, to consider applying at Mpopoma. The Chambers of Industry and Commerce, as well as individual employers, were approached directly, and encouraged to send along suitable African employees to apply for an Mpopoma house. An illustrated brochure on the three home ownership schemes – Pumula, Pelendaba and Mpopoma⁵⁰⁶ – was distributed to them, with photographs of the first two and an artist’s impression of what Mpopoma would look like.

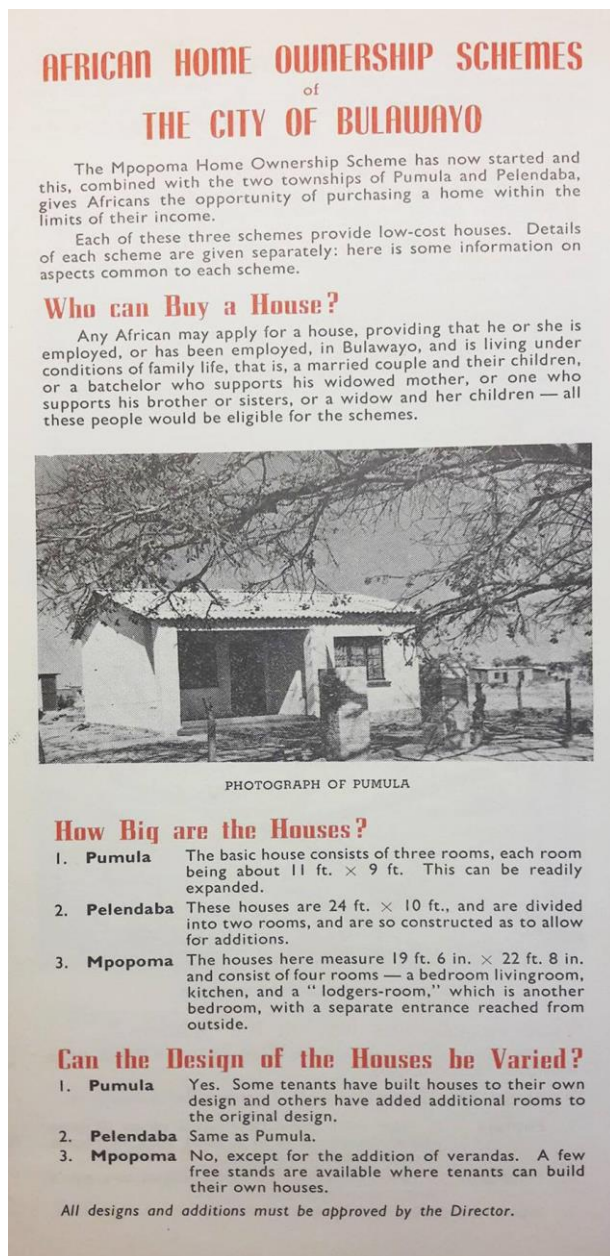


Figure 13: Home Ownership pamphlet inside cover

The brochure (figure 13) stated that, “Each housing scheme forms a self-contained township; each has, or will have, provision for schools, churches, medical facilities, social halls, beer gardens and trading premises to cater for every need”. Many employers persuaded their African senior employees to apply. The Bulawayo Chronicle, African Daily News, Bantu Mirror and Home News also helped to publicise the scheme.

The application process for Mpopoma began in July 1956, at a rate of about 120 a month, with the first lessees moving in in December, and the process continued at this rate until March 1958, when the scheme was full.⁵⁰⁷ Applicants were carefully vetted by the superintendent and an advisory committee. They had to fulfil the following criteria:

- They had to be African. Exceptions, however, were made for two coloured women with African husbands.
- The favoured applicants were married men, but the superintendent considered

⁵⁰⁶ See Appendix A.

⁵⁰⁷ There were in fact an excess of applications so several hundred had to be rejected.

some exceptional cases, accepting 55 single men, 21 widows, 6 widowers, 1 male divorcee and 6 female divorcees within the first batch of home owners.

- Applicants required a cash income of at least £8/month (wife's income not taken into account). It was thought at first that a lower income might suffice but "experience" showed this not to be true. In the end, the average income of lessees was £10.13.5d. per month, with some exceptions for domestic servants receiving £5 or £6 plus food rations.
- They had to provide an employment or self-employment certificate, unless they were widows or divorcees.
- Applicants had to be living in Bulawayo, but again there were a few exceptions for those who had special connections with the city, e.g. mission and government teachers or government servants, who could install sub-tenants until they returned to Bulawayo.

Applicants provided numerous details of their origins, work, family, etc., and when the scheme opened, the Advisory Committee recommended that the applicants be free to choose where they would like to live within the township, based on ethnic, religious or income groupings. But as the superintendent reported:

Experience has borne out the wisdom of this decision. Not one applicant enquired to ascertain either tribe or religion of neighbours, and the only factors which appeared to carry weight were:

- a) Proximity to main road or place of employment;
- b) A distaste for living adjacent to a beer garden.⁵⁰⁸

The "experience" referred to here, was the attempt by Ashton in 1954 to allocate housing at the Njube married scheme according to "cultural groupings" (see chapter 2). Despite this vetting, it turned out that it was the poorer residents, after all, who were more diligent with their payments. The superintendent complained wryly that, "The sophisticates of both sexes who have lived for some time in the urban areas are usually the least reliable in moral standards. This is borne out by the fact that many of the defaulters of monthly payments are among this group..."⁵⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the single men, widows, widowers, and divorcees for whom "exceptions" had been made to allow them to join the scheme, turned out to be, "good lessees, who have been regular payers, and who have managed their homes quietly and without trouble".⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ Recall how Ashton had offered compatible identity grouping in Western Commonage Number 3 a few years prior, discovering no interest in such groupings.

⁵⁰⁹ Report on Mpopoma, 1958/BCCA

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Once schemes were underway, the AAD looked for indications that these new home owners really embraced and believed in these schemes. For example, as soon as Pelandaba was underway, the superintendent claimed that through extensions to their houses, the residents were “materially shewing their confidence in Western Commonage 6. They are also making their stands attractive by keeping them clean and growing vegetables and flowers.”⁵¹¹ The superintendent of Mpopoma reported how, “some individuality was manifested by the bright colours painted over doorways and sills by the lessees”.⁵¹²



Figure 14: Housing at Mpopoma [Source: Director's Annual Report, 1960]

But the lessees themselves often complained about aspects of the schemes that undermined their exclusivity. For example, at Mpopoma, they felt that the lodger system brought an unsatisfactory “moral tone” to the scheme. Jerry Vera, a prominent socialite, sportsman and civic leader, even feared that the lodgers might turn the township into a slum.⁵¹³ At Pelandaba, the RA expressed great unease at living in close proximity to a large single men’s township (Iminyela), and asked that the men of Iminyela be switched with married couples from Makokoba.⁵¹⁴ Ashton responded that this would be impossible, but promised to build more amenities for Pelandaba residents to compensate. As Michael West states: “For some middle-class Africans, the joys of suburbia, along with its snobbishness, finally were becoming real.”⁵¹⁵

⁵¹¹ BCCA/SO4 (Transfer Box 152), Residents’ Associations W.A.T.,

⁵¹² Report on Mpopoma Township. 1958/BCCA (The houses had originally been sprayed grey, white, cream or terracotta based on a “cross section of African opinion”).

⁵¹³ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, pp. 110-115

⁵¹⁴ Superintendent Weeden report to Ashton, ‘Delegation: Residents’ Association Pelandaba’, 7 June, 1956/BCCA/SO4 (Transfer Box 152)/Residents’ Association W.A.T.

⁵¹⁵ West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 117

With Pumula, Pelandaba and Mpopoma growing and developing, the Chief Native Commissioner commended Bulawayo in 1957 for its “vigorous” policy on home ownership and the fact it had embarked on an ambitious programme for clubs, halls, sports grounds, and a wide range of medical and social services.⁵¹⁶ These schemes were ongoing processes and they interacted with one another – each scheme providing lessons for subsequent development. For example, at Pelandaba, the African Advisory Board (AAB) had been pushing for the lease to be extended from 30 to 99 years as at Mpopoma. The Council deferred decision on this matter until the success of Mpopoma had been ascertained. It was not expected that all units at Mpopoma would be sold so easily. Once its success was apparent, the AAB brought the matter up again, and Ashton recommended to Council that Pelandaba become a 99-year scheme, because the “standard of housing has risen considerably in spite of the handicap of the short term lease. If this were extended to 99 years, an appreciable impetus would be given to the scheme”.⁵¹⁷

But Ashton felt that a lease extension at Pelandaba should mean making the scheme *truly economic* like Mpopoma, by removing subsidies on service charges. The charges of 12/6d were insufficient to cover services and administration, which were about 25/- per month. It was, however, complicated to work out the economic service charges, because Pelandaba at that time still had very basic infrastructure – aqua privies – and the impending installation of water-borne sewerage infrastructure would make charges higher, which tenants should be forewarned of in their leases. So economic charges were not fully introduced,⁵¹⁸ but the Council in any case approved extension of the lease from 30 years to 99 years⁵¹⁹. As Ashton reported in June of that year:

The standard of building has risen progressively in both areas [Pumula and Pelandaba]. Pelandaba is now attracting some of the wealthiest Africans in Bulawayo and some houses costing over £2,000 are being built. The atmosphere at both townships continues to be excellent.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁶ Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Chief Native Commissioner and Director of Native Development for the year 1957, p. 13, The National Archives online.

⁵¹⁷ Ashton report to African Administration Committee, 5th May, 1958. BCCA/H4 - 4,1 (TB210) Western Commonage no.6 Housing scheme.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.* In 1962, Ashton wrote that since “Pelandaba is becoming a select area for the better-to-do, subsidisation to any degree is not justifiable...”. Because interest rates nationwide had gone up, consideration was given to bringing Pelandaba finally onto an “economic basis” by increasing service charges and interest rates for any new loan agreements from 2% to 6% or 6.25%. The European rate was 7.5%. (*The Chronicle*, 8th March 1962)

⁵¹⁹ Council resolution on the 21st May, 1958. BCC/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas.

⁵²⁰ Annual Report of the Director, 1958/BCCA

By the end of the decade, the home ownership schemes of Pumula and Pelandaba stood at 587 and 331 houses respectively. In 1958, a few other municipalities experimented with home ownership: Gwelo developed a scheme called Ascot; and Que Que developed a scheme that was “initially met with unenthusiastic reception” because the houses were very small and it was sited near a cemetery.⁵²¹

By this time, Bulawayo’s home ownership schemes were symbolic capital of the City Council. It was starting to be hailed as progressive, with its home ownership schemes winning accolades, predictably from the white Press, public and politicians. A *Parade* magazine journalist gushed in August, 1954 that “whole townships have sprung up almost overnight” in Bulawayo, that the home ownership schemes were a “great turning point in the history of Southern Rhodesia”, and it described how visiting the Hyde Park (Pumula) and Western Commonage Number 6 (Pelandaba) schemes was “one of my greatest experiences...a noble act that is going to transform and shape human relationships in this country towards a good end.”⁵²²

The first 99-year lease schemes of Mpopoma and New Highfields finally won over some African sceptics, although some argued that freehold would have been better.⁵²³ Even the sceptical Charlton Ngcebetsha was finally won over by Mpopoma. He argued, “Those who own houses in Mpopoma will be there for ever and ever. There is no unless about it at all. That is a fact. They will be there for all time.”⁵²⁴ But some wrote letters to the *African Home News*, saying that Ngcebetsha was being too positive of the scheme and fawning of Ashton. He was also accused of over-hyping tenurial security, whilst overlooking other issues. But the Council was able to present to the African community a durable future to invest in, which meant the Council could offload some of the financial burden of housing onto them.

The official African population housed in municipal schemes by the end of the 1950s was 9,498 families (about 45,000 men, women, children), 25,347 single men, and 133 single women, but the actual number of dwellers was estimated to be about 15% higher than this. An additional 500 families were estimated to be squatting on Hyde Park Farm.⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs, Chief Native Commissioner and Director of Native Development for the year 1958, p. 9, The National Archives online.

⁵²² *Parade*, August 1954, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*. 2010: 189.

⁵²³ *Bantu Mirror*, 12 March 1955 in West, 2002: 113.

⁵²⁴ *Home News*, 6 April 1957.

⁵²⁵ For comprehensive housing statistics for the year 1959, see appendix B1.

Home ownership in the 1960s

The African labour situation in Bulawayo at the beginning of the 1960s was more stable than it had ever been. A survey of 1835 employees at 10 firms found the situation as follows:

Length of Service	Percentage of employees (n=1835 from 10 firms)
12 months' service	25
12 to 24 months	20.8
2 years to 5 years	29.5
5 years to 10 years	16.9
10 years to 15 years	5.4
15 years to 20 years	1.5
More than 20 years	0.9

Table 1: Stability of African labour, 1961. [Source: African Administration Committee minutes, 8 Nov. 1961, p. 2464]

The increased stability of the labour force meant married housing was much more important than single men's housing. Ashton emphasised the "crying need" for more subeconomic married housing. It was particularly hard for workers earning less than £10 a month to find accommodation. Despite the prioritisation of married schemes (both rental and home ownership) in the 1950s, there were still 5,000 applicants on the married housing waiting list, a backlog that would cost about £3 million to address.⁵²⁶ Ashton therefore asked the Council in 1960 to accept, in principle and before funding had been considered, the necessity of building housing for a further 10,000 families and 3,000 single men (in two areas on the Commonage called Curti's Farm and Paradise Farm).⁵²⁷

The Council realised that ordinary Government loans for the plans would not suffice; special funds from overseas would be required – preferably £1 million per year for 5 years. It seems Ashton and the councillors were putting forward somewhat arbitrary figures. As it turned out, these funds were not forthcoming, and so cost-saving strategies took place, including converting rental schemes to home ownership, both existing ones, and ones that were still in the planning stage.

The Nguboyenja rental cottages, for example, got converted to home ownership. And on the 14th April, 1961, the Land Apportionment Act was amended to allow African freehold in the

⁵²⁶ Council Meeting Minutes, 18.10.61, p. 2255/BCCA

⁵²⁷ Joint Finance and Special African Housing Committee, 29.11.60, p. 3596/BCCA

urban areas. The Council immediately took advantage of this, by converting Barbour Fields township, which had always been for the better-to-do, to freehold tenure on the 17th of May, 1961. To Ashton this was the most significant event of the year. The Barbour Fields houses were sold at prices ranging from £405 to £475.⁵²⁸ Most tenants accepted conversion to freehold, but 23 chose to swap their homes with applicants from Mzilikazi. Two years after this conversion, Ashton reported that, “Barbour Fields...has proved popular. The majority of the purchasers are extremely house proud and several have extended and improved their houses”.⁵²⁹ A major scheme built at the beginning of the decade was Tshabalala. Its development story shows how outcomes never reflected a pre-conceived plan.

Tshabalala: a pre-fabricated “model township”

A strongly segregationist Councillor, Jack Pain, had assured European residents that there would be no African housing on the South West Commonage, which was adjacent to some European residential areas, because of poor soil conditions. All further development would be further north and west. But the City Engineer had made a mistake when he identified the poor soils, and so the Council had to announce that, indeed, African housing *would* appear on the South West Commonage. Pain was furious, and European residents felt betrayed, but could not prevent the scheme going ahead. It came to be known as Tshabalala.

Like every other scheme examined thusfar, the plans for Tshabalala (and even its name) changed constantly through negotiation and compromise. The first step was to make an announcement in the Chronicle, that a 386-acre site on the South West Commonage was about to be proclaimed a Native Urban Area for the purpose of building a large rental township.⁵³⁰ The announcement immediately prompted paranoid objections from European residents, who feared that it would devalue their properties in the suburb of Bellevue, which was three quarters of a mile away. They insisted that the distant areas of Luveve and Hyde Park would be more suitable, citing Jack Pain’s assurance. Ashton promised residents that a “special service” would ensure that “drunk Africans” would be under supervision on the access roads so as not to “disturb the peace and security”, but objectors were not convinced. One objector even questioned whether this township could be called a “model” when it crammed 16 houses into each acre: “Where does our ideal of political partnership for all races come in when one has 1 acre per house and the other

⁵²⁸ Repayable 6.5% over 25 years.

⁵²⁹ Annual report of the Director, 1963/BCCA

⁵³⁰ *The Chronicle*, 2nd December, 1959

1/16 acre only?”⁵³¹ The Council was intransigent, however, and even the Chronicle defended this type of integrated development, claiming that it would “prevent the ribbon growth of African townships as in Salisbury.”⁵³²



Figure 15: Advisory Committee on Tshabalala Township, examining the new site [BCCA/Director's Annual Report, 1959]

The township was designed to accommodate 2,500 families in 250 detached houses, 1,500 semi-detached, and 750 double-storey terraced flats.⁵³³ It would cost £1,368,000 and be completed in 15 months.⁵³⁴ It was to be a “model township”, with ancillary schools, shops, markets, girls’ hostel, cottage hospital, community centre complete with open air theatre and swimming pool, beer gardens, welfare centres and sports fields. A particular effort was made to preserve the indigenous trees, making it “relatively green and pleasant on occupation.”⁵³⁵ Inevitably, almost every aspect of the plans – the number of units, the rate of construction, the costs, and even its status as a rental scheme – changed.

⁵³¹ Minutes of Council Meeting held on 3rd Feb., 1960/BCCA

⁵³² “City Council will go ahead with new township”, *The Chronicle*, 3 Dec 1959

⁵³³ Minutes of the Town Lands Committee meeting, 6th May, 1960, p. 1049/BCCA

⁵³⁴ The houses were contracted to Lewis Construction Co. (Rhodesia) Ltd and the double-storey flats would be constructed by the Council/Council resolution, 20 July, 1960/BCCA

⁵³⁵ African Housing: Tshabalala Township (Bulawayo City Council: City Engineer’s Building Branch)/NAZ

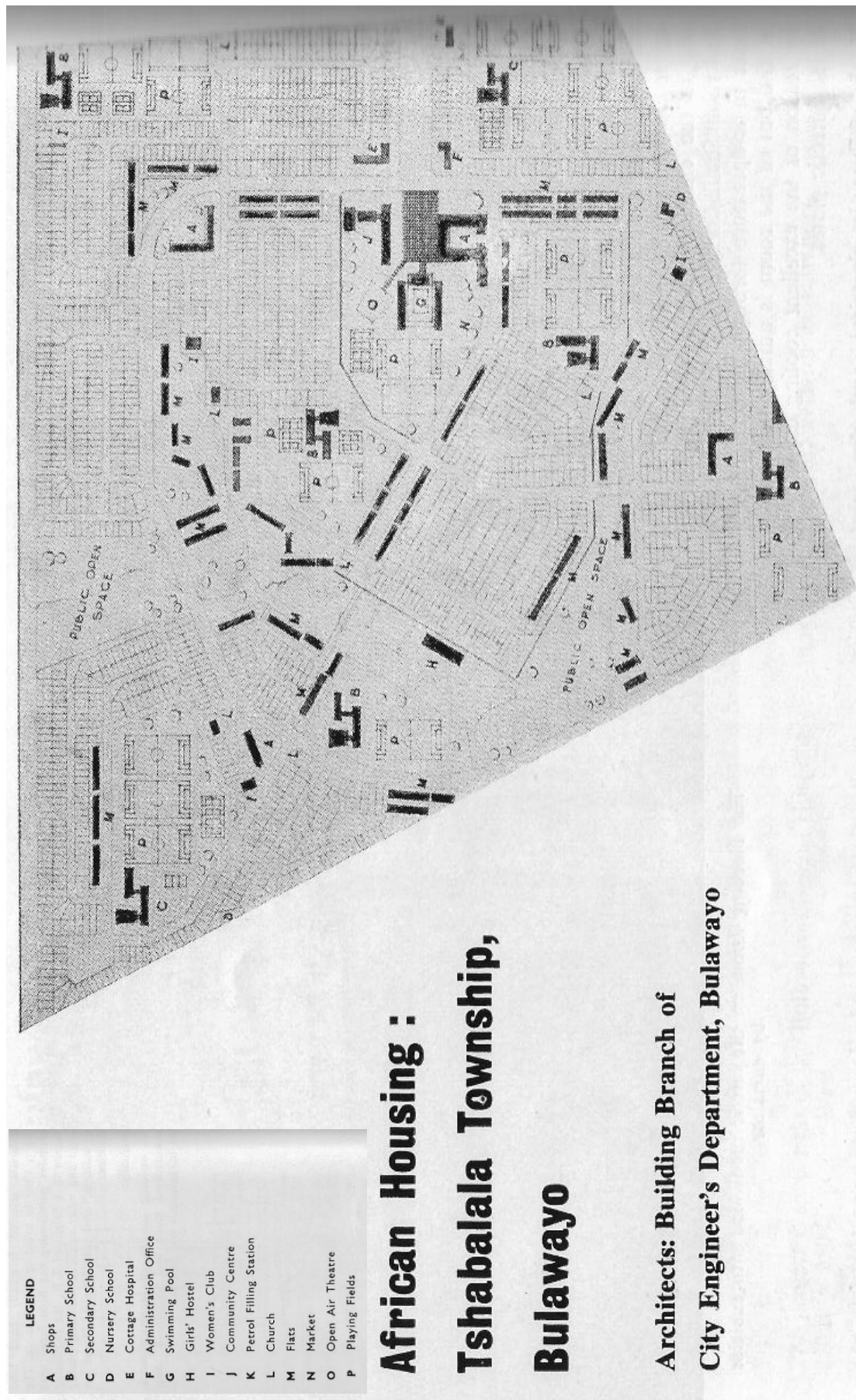


Figure 16: Tshabalala Plans [Source: NAZ Byo/City of Bulawayo Engineer's Department plan: African Housing Tshabalala Township (Courtesy Paul Hubbard)]

The first hitch was a delay in getting started on the houses, much to Ashton's frustration. He therefore tried to persuade the Council that it was necessary "in view of the real urgency to proceed with African housing" to proceed immediately with at least 100 double-storey flats, and that a number of petty "savings" on financial estimates for that year could be used. It was also desirable to retain the services of a highly efficient construction gang that had just done "an excellent job of work" completing Mpopoma South. Since it would be "a pity, as well as wasteful, to disband this specialised group"⁵³⁶, Ashton proposed transferring them to this new scheme forthwith. The progressive Mayoress, Margo Brett (a co-member of Ashton's in the political Action Group) supported Ashton's points and felt "perturbed at the thought of laying off labour", but the chairman of the finance committee was not convinced, and insisted that Ashton's recommendations would be "too severe for Council's financial resources at the present time".⁵³⁷

In the end, they all agreed that housing was a priority, but only 32 double-storey units, instead of 100, should be approved for the time being, as there was much uncertainty about the loan situation.⁵³⁸ The 32 flats turned out to be all that was built of the double-storey housing until many years later. Meanwhile, the single storey housing was also reduced by 10% due to funding constraints. These were the typical niggly negotiations whereby Ashton would try to coax councillors into proceeding with ambitious plans, but would often achieve partial success and partial deferral.



Figure 17: Houses at Tshabalala, 1960 [Source: *Bulawayo: Centenary of Development magazine*, 1994]

⁵³⁶ (comprising 6 Europeans, 42 African artisans and 132 labourers)

⁵³⁷ Finance Committee minutes, 7 Feb 1961 and 11th April, 1961/BCCA

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

Particularly striking in the Tshabalala case, is that it was suddenly decided, in the late planning stage, to convert the whole scheme to home ownership on an economic basis.⁵³⁹ The Council simply could not afford to subsidise Tshabalala, as this would incur an annual deficit of £80,000. There was doubt about whether there would be sufficient uptake if it was converted to home ownership, but Ashton was confident that there would be no problem selling the flats, because “The African community is becoming more and more anxious to own property”.⁵⁴⁰ Therefore the City Treasurer, in consultation with Ashton, came up with prices of £450, £510, and £565 for flats, semi-detached and detached houses respectively, and decided to model the whole scheme on Mpopoma and Mpopoma South, which had been such a success.⁵⁴¹ Each household would similarly have a 99 year lease, 3,000 gallons of water per month, and maximum 2 lodgers.⁵⁴²

Within the Tshabalala township, a unique cooperative scheme also arose, called the Mhlahlandlela Housing Cooperative Society, occupying 38 houses and 2 shops in an area of Tshabalala township, purchased freehold from the Council. The scheme was funded by a loan of £52,269 from the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust.⁵⁴³ The Society took out a mortgage bond against its land title to cover the Rowntree loan, and selected a Management Committee to



Figure 18: Mhlahlandlela Cooperative Housing [Source: Director's annual report, 1966]

⁵³⁹ Proposed by the City Treasurer on 7th March, 1961/BCCA

⁵⁴⁰ African Admin Committee meeting, 4th April, 1961, p. 697/BCCA

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴² Council Finance Committee Minutes, 11 April, 1961, p. 772/BCCA

⁵⁴³ Repayable over 40 years at 5%.

administer the housing estate, which Ashton described as a “pilot experiment which will be watched with considerable interest all over the world”.⁵⁴⁴

Magwegwe: low-income home ownership

Whilst Tshabalala absorbed many families who could just about afford to buy homes (provided they took in lodgers), there remained the major problem in the early 1960s of those earning between £8 and £10 who simply could not afford to own homes, and the Council struggled to build substantial sub-economic married housing schemes because of the reduction in revenue from supra-economic single men’s schemes. However, in 1963, the Council launched a low-cost married rental scheme on an area of the Commonage called Curti’s Farm, partly using a British loan (£360,000), of 975 four-roomed houses for 1,950 families (2 per house).⁵⁴⁵ This township came to be known as *Magwegwe*. Rent was sub-economic, the shortfall met from the Services Levy.⁵⁴⁶ It was the first township to have all ancillary buildings in place – beer garden, welfare hall, shops, office and school – before the houses were even occupied.⁵⁴⁷

The scheme expanded by 461 houses (for 922 families) in 1966-7. In 1968-9, a proposed expansion of 600 four-roomed houses for 1,200 families was suddenly altered. The whole scheme was converted to home ownership, with each house having three rooms for one family and the fourth room for one or two lodgers.⁵⁴⁸ To convince the Local Government and Housing Secretary, who wanted to maximise numbers of units, the Council proposed to omit from the plans the second toilet and second sewerage, water and electricity connections, and use the savings to provide 65 additional houses. This would reduce the cost of each house to within Government’s maximum cost limit, and it would be in line with Government’s avowed support for bringing housing on an *economic* footing.

⁵⁴⁴ Annual Report of the Director, 1963/BCCA

⁵⁴⁵ Constructed by Lewis Construction Co. Ltd (contract: £545 486.)

⁵⁴⁶ See chapter 5 for a discussion of the services levy.

⁵⁴⁷ Annual Report of the Director, 1964/BCCA

⁵⁴⁸ Town Clerk memo to Sec. Local Govt., 26th Sept., 1967/BCCA/N6A/39/Magwegwe home ownership



Figure 20: Magwegwe houses under construction. [Source: Chronicle, 10 Sept., 1968.]



Figure 19: Occupied Magwegwe house [Source: Director's Annual Report, 1970]

Extending existing schemes

The existing scheme of Mpopoma was only expanded by 51 houses over the decade, but the township acquired an extension – Mpopoma South – in 1960-61. Here, 228 detached houses and 280 double-storey flats (all with 4 rooms) were built. They were sold for £515 and £506 respectively.⁵⁴⁹



Figure 21: Flats at Mpopoma South [Annual report of the director, 1960]

All houses were installed with electricity load limiters and water meters, with an allocation of 3,000 gallons per month (covered by the service charge). The double-storey flats created some legal issues with regards

to the leases, because, as far as was known by the Department, this double-storey leasehold set up was “the first such attempted in Southern Africa.”⁵⁵⁰

Pelandaba grew gradually from 340 houses in 1960 to end the decade with 805 houses. But despite having been upgraded to 99 year leases at the end of the 1950s, there were still constraints on luxury development there. At the end of 1961, a private construction firm was very eager to acquire land in the Townships to erect 200 to 300 “high class” houses for African families. Pelendaba was the logical place to locate this superior housing scheme, but since the township already had a variety of building designs, Ashton considered the company’s “almost stereotyped design” would “spoil” the township.

Instead, in 1962, the AAD embarked on Pelandaba Extension for the wealthy. This extension comprised 40 new fully-serviced stands to be available for houses costing not less than £750, financed by building societies with Government guarantee.⁵⁵¹ Ashton proposed at least 40 loans of £1000 each from the Beer Fund, but the Council imposed a limit of 10 loans per year.⁵⁵² These loans were £1,250 each, at 6% interest, repayable over 25 years, and required a 10% deposit.

⁵⁴⁹ (paid off at a rate of £5 5 0 and £4 10 0 respectively per month, including service charges of £1 8s 6d which was again a non-subsidised (fully economic) rate)

⁵⁵⁰ Annual Report of the Director, 1961/BCCA

⁵⁵¹ BCCA/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas.

⁵⁵² Finance Committee minutes, 7 Feb 1961/BCCA

Purchasers could choose their own method of building and who to contract. But these progressive developments were hampered by uncertainty in both European and African politics and policy. By 1962, only 2 of these loans had been taken out, which Ashton attributed to unsettled conditions in the city, as well as the hope that the Land Apportionment Act would soon be repealed and wealthier Africans would be able to escape the townships altogether.⁵⁵³ This, of course, did not happen, as the RF came to power that year, and halted all progress towards desegregation.



Figure 22: Pelandaba House, 1960s [Source: Director's Annual Report, 1966]

Meanwhile, by the mid-60s the home ownership schemes in Bulawayo saw a three-fold increase in building plans submitted by the individual owners, for additions and alterations to their houses, as conditions seemed to improve economically and politically.⁵⁵⁴ It is worth noting at this point, that in fact the great majority of the population were still in unskilled or semi-skilled work. A survey in 1968 found that only 5% of household heads in Bulawayo were in “professional, technical, administrative, executive or managerial roles”, with high incomes. The next income level was clerks, at 4%, then transport, manufacturing and service workers making up the middle-income majority at 56%; labourers comprising 25% and the final 8% being sales workers, the

⁵⁵³ Annual Report of the Director, 1962/BCCA

⁵⁵⁴ Annual Report of the Director, 1966/BCCA

lowest paid group.⁵⁵⁵ The total population at the end of the 1960s in municipal housing of all kinds was 141,600.⁵⁵⁶

Home ownership in the 1970s

On the 1st of April, 1970, Greater Bulawayo was born.⁵⁵⁷ By incorporating all European peri-urban authorities (known as town management boards) into the municipality, the Council's administrative area more than doubled, from 29,346 acres to 59,383 acres. Thus, the European population under the jurisdiction of the City Council expanded from 38,290 to just over 50,000, and this made Greater Bulawayo the largest municipality in Rhodesia, until Salisbury followed suit shortly after, by incorporating its surrounding areas into Greater Salisbury.⁵⁵⁸ The total authorised African population in municipal housing was 147,900 in 1970. But the actual population was estimated to be approximately 159,900.⁵⁵⁹ An additional 36,000 Africans resided in non-municipal housing.⁵⁶⁰

The 1970s saw a great increase in African home owners' own extensions and expansions. There was also some attempt to woo the private sector – as per Central Government policy – but to little avail. For example, Council acquired Luveve township from the Government in October 1971, converting four fifths of the 1,559 tenants from rentals to 99-year long lease. Within a few years the whole township had been converted to leasehold with option to buy on freehold.⁵⁶¹ For Luveve's phase III development in 1975, private developers were meant to get involved. On the minister's exhortation, the Council had built high quality speculative housing there; the stands were surveyed and serviced "ready for the expected rush from the private sector", but "these hopes had not materialised."⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁵ Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 23

⁵⁵⁶ For comprehensive housing statistics for the year 1969, see Appendix B2

⁵⁵⁷ 'Greater Bulawayo is Born Today', *Chronicle*, 1st April, 1970.

⁵⁵⁸ Bulawayo reported a smooth consolidation process in the creation of Greater Bulawayo. In Salisbury there were serious complications. A commission had to be appointed because of "23 years of irresolution, attempted compromise, changing attitudes and intractable opposition" between the SCC and the peri-urban town councils. In giving evidence, one leading personality said, "if we had to deal with Bulawayo City Council, and not Salisbury City Council, then there would not be any necessity for [the commission] to be here." ('One Authority Urged for 'New' Salisbury', *Chronicle*, no date available.)

⁵⁵⁹ Annual Report of the Director, 1970 / BCCA

⁵⁶⁰ 11,400 on Railway premises, 20, 000 in domestic and commercial premises, and the remainder at the Cold Storage Commission, hospitals, police and prisons.

⁵⁶¹ Salisbury in the same year took over Tafara, Dzivaresikwa, Highfield, Kambazuma, St Mary's, Marimba Park and Glen Norah – all former Government-controlled townships. (Patel and Adams, *Chirambubayo*, p. 15.

⁵⁶² Finance Committee minutes, 10th Nov., 1975/BCCA



Figure 23: prototype house built at Pelandaba Extension [Source: Chronicle archive, 28 Feb, 1972]

However, home owners themselves began investing considerable amounts in their own homes, reflecting an increase in private arrangements for the financing and construction of house additions and extensions, as the following estimated values (in Rhodesian dollars) show:

Building Plans Approved⁵⁶³		
Year	No. of Plans	Estimated value
1969/70	59	22 000
1970/71:	96	44 900
1971/72	148	64 000
1972/73	174	168 343
1973/74	220	257 515
1974/75	282	445 992
1975/76	348	481 576
1976/77	375	446 890
1977/78	402	708 747
1978/79	469	671 042

These figures include some plans submitted for entirely new houses. E.g. the 1979 figure includes plans for 2 houses at Luveve (\$50,000), 1 at Pelandaba Ext. (\$16 000) and 5 at Pumula (\$13,700). These entirely privately arranged house constructions applied to about 6-9 dwellings per year (with an outlier of 26 in 1974-5).

⁵⁶³ Taken from annual reports of the Director of African Administration.

Dr Eric Gargett observed “a great interest and confidence in home ownership”, and at the same time, a low turnover in house occupancy, “suggest[ing] an attachment to the accommodation”. In 1972, only 4% of homes changed hands.⁵⁶⁴ However, he also pointed out that these trends were undoubtedly affected by the general shortage of housing available.



Figure 24: 'One of the new homes which are springing up in Pumula Township'. [Source: Chronicle, 15th May, 1977]

Meanwhile, several more rental schemes were converted to leasehold schemes. For example, in 1976, Mzilikazi, Nguboyenja and Njube rental townships were converted to 15, 25 and 30-year lease respectively, after much lobbying by the City Council to the Minister of Local Government and Housing. By the end of the decade, as the country transitioned to independence, Makokoba was the only township which had not been at least partly converted to home ownership.

⁵⁶⁴ Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 21



Figure 25: Rebuilt house in Barbour Fields, 1976 [Source: Chronicle, Chronicle, 23 Aug, 1976]



Figure 26: Three-roomed flats under construction at Barbour Fields, 1970 [Source: Chronicle, 23 Nov., 1970]

But whilst residents were investing large sums in their own homes, and the Bulawayo Council was converting many of its schemes to home ownership, the Government (and Salisbury) were pursuing very different development agendas. The Government wanted to curtail African housing development near town centres and industrial areas, and move it to peri-urban areas or even growth points in the 'Tribal Trust Lands' outside urban areas. This was a vision that Salisbury City Council embraced with even more fervour than the Local Government Minister.



Figure 28: Benjamin and Vivian Muvuti in their new home in Luveve, designed by an architect and costing approx. R\$20, 000. [Source: Chronicle, 5th Aug, 1975]



Figure 27: Mrs S. Patsika, a widow who ran a filling station, in her home in Pelandaba Extension, with her granddaughter. House built by Council, priced \$4000-\$6000. [Source: Chronicle archive, 17th Feb, 1974]

In 1971, Salisbury City Council called for a ban on the buying or allocation of any more land for African housing within its boundaries, and for the townships of Harari and Rugare (a railway township) to be disestablished. It was concerned about security. The chairman of its Health, Housing and African Administration Committee warned that with 8 large townships ringing the city, “What would happen if the residents become politically motivated? Salisbury could be caught in a stranglehold of strikes and mob violence.”⁵⁶⁵

At a Local Government Association conference in 1973, the Salisbury delegates presented views that were diametrically opposed to those of the Bulawayo Council. Salisbury’s Councillor Mr Thomas Ward gave a presentation in which he painted a vivid picture of Africans flooding to the towns, the reasons for which were “easily understood – the lure of money, beerhalls, football stadia, large shopping areas, swimming pools, medical facilities, education and a permissive society far removed from tribal discipline...”.⁵⁶⁶ He claimed that the surplus African population would flow from overcrowded townships into the European residential areas, creating lawlessness, nuisances and other social problems.

The crux of Ward’s argument was that more housing was not a solution, and that subsidised housing was economically impracticable and had created slums. The solution was rather to remove the “surplus” African population from the urban centres, halt the acquisition of any more municipal land for African housing, impose strict influx control measures, require that all Africans in urban areas carry identification cards with photograph and fingerprints, and introduce stricter tenancy regulations, such as expulsion of residents from the urban area after 2 months of unemployment. The money thus saved from diminished urban housing requirements should be channelled to the Tribal Trust Lands “to encourage the rural Africans to stay there.” Optimally, Africans would develop industrial growth points “in their own areas”. This view was profoundly segregationist – suggesting that Africans did not belong in ‘white’ cities.

Bulawayo’s delegates to the conference opposed this view. Bulawayo Councillor, Mr A. Menashe, said Ward’s thinking was out of date. He questioned why Africans should be sent back to the rural areas, especially after just two months of being out of work, whilst “the white man enjoyed the bright lights”.⁵⁶⁷ Bulawayo Councillor Mrs J.L. Sharland avidly endorsed a presentation by Professor Marshall Murphree of the University of Rhodesia – whose argument was exactly the opposite of Councillor Ward’s. Murphree had argued, with astounding teleological

⁵⁶⁵ *Rhodesia Herald*, 27 April, 1972, quoted in Davis, *Race Relations in Rhodesia* p. 303

⁵⁶⁶ T. Ward, ‘Influx control of the indigenous population from the tribal trust lands to urban centres’, paper presented to the Local Government Association Annual Conference, 22nd-24th May, Vic Falls, 1972./NAZ. Proceedings of the Local Government Assoc. Conf.

⁵⁶⁷ Local Government Association Annual Conference, 22nd-24th May, Vic Falls, 1972/NAZ Proceedings of the Local Government Assoc. Conf.

certainty (backed up with continental case studies, statistics and precise metrics) that rural to urban migration was essential to get the country onto the linear path to *modernisation* – “the rational, individualistic model of mechanized efficiency which most of us, rather vaguely, subscribe to.”⁵⁶⁸ Murphree cited the classic modernisation theorist, Daniel Lerner, to explain how rates of urbanisation and literacy must reach a certain precise threshold to achieve “take-off”:

If we are to modernize our African people, the process cannot be effectively delegated to the schools and the rural administrators alone. The locus of the modernization process does not lie there; it exists rather in the urban crucible.⁵⁶⁹

But the Rhodesia Front ministers and the Salisbury delegates were not primarily concerned with modernising “their” Africans; they were concerned with removing them, so the cities would return to being white spaces. The crux of Murphree’s argument, however, was that urbanisation was not just desirable but basically *inevitable*, because “take-off” was nigh: “Urbanization is an inescapable correlate of the modern industrial development of this Country...It is an irreversible, one-way phenomenon that cannot be stopped, only controlled and directed”.

Whilst everyone congratulated Murphree on his excellent presentation, Bulawayo’s Councillor Sharland made the most extensive commentary, imploring delegates to revise their entrenched views in light of his arguments. She suggested that instead of complaining about too many Africans, councils should admit that they had too few houses, and took the opportunity to hit out at Salisbury Council’s policies, particularly its failure to ensure security of tenure, which would exacerbate Africans’ “psychological withdrawal” from urban life. She accused the Salisbury Council of resorting to symptomatic, *ad hoc* responses to systemic urban change, which she argued, quoting Murphree, “is about as effective a therapy as the treatment of incipient pains of gangrene with aspirin”. Indeed, Salisbury was facing a serious housing crisis, and even the Local Government Minister rebuked the Salisbury councillors at the conference for “evading their responsibilities” by trying to relegate urban Africans to the peri-urban Tribal Trust Lands. The Salisbury Council found this attack “unfortunate”, and retorted that, if anything, the minister had abrogated *his* responsibilities.⁵⁷⁰

In 1973, the SCC established an industrial growth point at Seki township, far from the CBD. The Minister of Local Government was surprised that, despite having the lowest ratio of Africans to Europeans within its jurisdiction, of all the municipalities, the Salisbury Council was the *most* concerned about African encroachment. He pointed out that Salisbury’s housing situation

⁵⁶⁸ ‘Community Development in the Urban Crucible’, LGA Conference, 22nd-24th May, 1972/NAZ

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ ‘Partridge raps councillors on urbanisation’, *Chronicle*, 24th May, 1972.

was truly dire, that he had had to step in to build a large tied housing scheme – Glen Norah – and was minded to step in again.⁵⁷¹ In 1975, the Salisbury Council paid a team of foreign planning consultants to propose 6 development strategies. The strategies proposed varying degrees of integrated township development, and in 1979 Salisbury Council chose Strategy 6, to establish “towns of African character” in the Tribal Trust Lands – which was the most segregationist of all.⁵⁷² They chose this, despite the planners saying, “Apart from a substantial saving in existing good landscape and, in the first few decades, of fertile soils, this strategy has nothing to commend it, from the point of view of accepted developmental goals and objectives.”⁵⁷³ Patel and Adams reported at the end of the colonial period that, “Over the years, it would appear that the Salisbury City Council has not changed its approach to housing the Black population; in other words, it is still an attempt to off-load the problem elsewhere.”⁵⁷⁴

This analysis of the incremental development of the African township housing schemes of Bulawayo, with some comparisons to Salisbury, has drawn attention to the specificity of Bulawayo’s housing policies, and the combination of progressive ideas and pragmatic solutions that shaped them. Reducing this development to a “state strategy” of control, misses the interplay of idealism and practicality under local conditions.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷¹ LGA conference, 1973, p. 66/BCCA

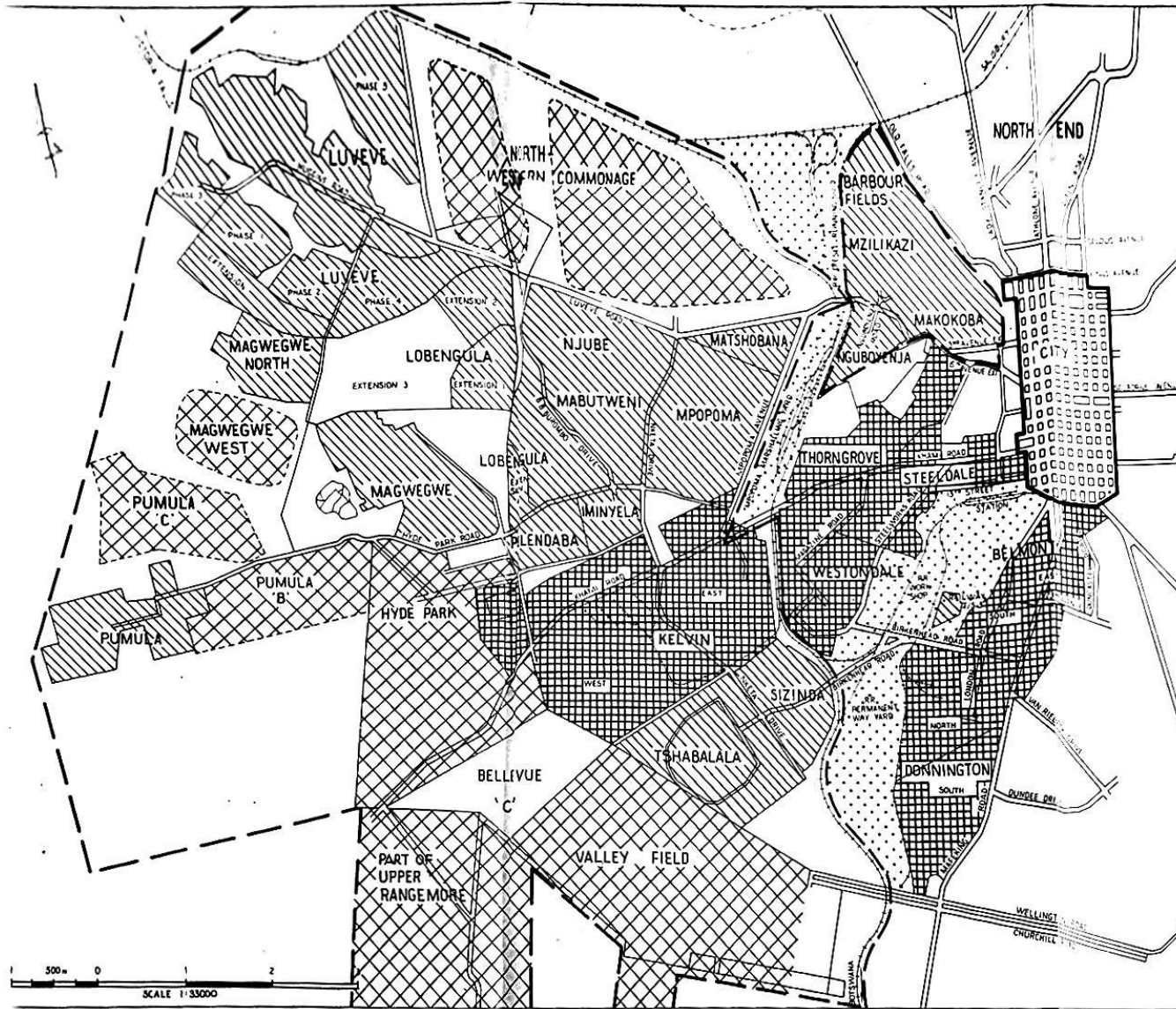
⁵⁷² Patel and Adams, *Chirambabuyo*, p. 19

⁵⁷³ Salisbury City Council, ‘Strategic Planning Report No. 11’ (Salisbury, City Engineer’s Department, Strategic Planning Team, 1976), p. 42, quoted in *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁵ For comprehensive housing statistics for the year 1977, see appendix B3

Figure 29: Map of Bulawayo's African Townships, showing existing and future housing development, 1979 [Source: BCCA/Local Development Plan No. 1 Western Area]









City Of Bulawayo
City Engineering Department
Town Planning Branch

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN No.1
WESTERN AREAS

PROBABLE FUTURE LAND USE

Notation:

- BOUNDARY OF STUDY AREA 
- CITY CENTRE 
- RAILWAY COMPLEX 
- EXISTING HOUSING AREA 
- INDUSTRIAL AREA 
- DEVELOPABLE HOUSING AREAS 

Map no. :	2
DATE	APRIL 79
DRAWN	P.R
	TPB 458/31

Engineering experiments: the quest for cheap yet sturdy house designs

Whilst home ownership was a convenient way to offload some of the financial burden onto the residents, problems arose in the need to economise on the house structures, to reduce costs so prospective buyers could actually afford them. In the sandy soils of Bulawayo, taking any shortcuts with the foundations of the house was risky. Nevertheless, this was done, the result being that numerous houses in home ownership schemes cracked. Cracking was so prevalent that it was factored into the design. Meanwhile, the City Engineer engaged in constant experimentation in house design to build an adaptable structure at minimal cost.

The municipalities in Rhodesia had room for manoeuvre in house design, unlike in South Africa, for example, where standards were enacted into law to ensure compliance by all housing authorities. These South African standards were established, from 1947, by the National Building Research Institute, which tried to determine appropriate minimum standards of accommodation based on a sociological analysis of the target groups.⁵⁷⁶ Rhodesia had no such centralised standards. Whilst the National Building and Housing Board did experiment with various house types and materials, finding that the traditional brick building with asbestos roof was the most sturdy, low-cost to maintain, and liveable,⁵⁷⁷ Bulawayo Council had to do its own experiments to adapt to local soil conditions. This search for the optimal design – sturdy, cheap, built from readily available materials, and fit for purpose – was typical in other colonial cities too. For example, a British Civil Engineer who visited Nairobi in 1953 remarked that,

Too much hope is put on a new method of building to produce a ‘cheap house’... There is no magic material which will build the perfect, permanent house for only a few pounds, though quite a few people in East Africa still seem to believe there is.⁵⁷⁸

Rather than consulting Government experts, the AAD sought inspiration from other colonies. For example, Ashton visited Germiston in South Africa to find out all about its home ownership

⁵⁷⁶ Deric Cleary, ‘An Overview of Low-Cost Housing’, Local Government Association Annual Conference (Umtali, 1976).

⁵⁷⁷ F. Cox, ‘The Southern Rhodesia African Home Ownership Schemes’, *Ekistics*, 8, 48 (1959)

⁵⁷⁸ Quoted in Anderson, ‘Corruption at City Hall’, p. 149.

scheme and was given permission to use some of its house designs.⁵⁷⁹ The Council's City Engineer was always leaning from abroad, too, especially Johannesburg.⁵⁸⁰

A cheap design, however, was not necessarily transferable from one place to another. As Bulawayo's Housing Department found out, the local soil conditions would cause no end of problems, particularly for "economic" housing schemes, where the capital costs were kept to a minimum in order to make the houses affordable. They required constant structural experiments by the City Engineer and Building Director, in collaboration with soil scientists, and it was decided that cracking should be accepted as inevitable, and factored into the cost/benefit analysis, especially for 'economic' schemes where the capital costs had to be reduced as much as possible with thinner walls and shallower foundations. But this not only created liability hassles for the Council, but could be disillusioning to tenants. Whilst home ownership was all about creating stability, the actual instability of the African home owners' status as an urban citizen manifested not just symbolically, but very tangibly in the visible cracks in the façades of their houses, in which they had invested considerable resources.

At Pelandaba, the first 150 houses were built with thinner walls (4.5"), lighter foundations and lower rooves to make them more affordable, but in the mopane soils (typical of mopane woodland), these foundations were unsatisfactory. During the first year several houses cracked. The City Engineer found that one of the test houses at Pelandaba was "completely unserviceable", and feared it could be a widespread problem.⁵⁸¹ He therefore conducted further experiments on the house to see if the failures could be overcome at a cost of just £25. Later houses were built with 9" walls.

Council paid for repairs to 62 cracked houses, but then more houses cracked, including the repaired ones. Apportioning financial liability became a contentious issue. Ashton insisted that the lessees could not be held responsible "in any way" for the cracks developing in their houses.⁵⁸² Therefore, the repairs were charged to the Native Revenue Account instead.⁵⁸³ The City Engineer carefully examined the area and also confirmed that the Council was obligated to repair the cracked houses, "by virtue of the encouragement it gave to the development of the scheme." But after this first round of repairs, he suggested the Council should disclaim any further responsibility. The Engineer argued that mopane soils were always liable to cause some cracking,

⁵⁷⁹ Ashton letter to F. Buitendag (Germiston Council), 10th Sept., 1952. BCCA/H4/4/1. (Transfer Box 210). Western Commonage Number 6 Housing scheme

⁵⁸⁰ Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council, 8th December, 1960. p. 3636/BCCA

⁵⁸¹ AAD report to the Finance Committee, 18th February 1955, BCCA/H4/4/1 (TB210) Western Commonage No.6 Housing Scheme.

⁵⁸² African Admin Committee minutes, 13th Feb, 1957, BCCA/Transfer box 310

⁵⁸³ Finance Committee minutes, 21st March, 1957, BCCA/Transfer Box 310

but it would not be dangerous, and would require periodic maintenance. Measures to prevent cracking completely were possible, but “not economically feasible”. Other measures, such as altering the design to place doors and windows as near to the ends of houses as possible, were implemented instead.⁵⁸⁴

In the home ownership scheme of Tshabalala, 865 houses cracked – 12% due to subsoil movement, the rest being minor and non-structural. The Council hired a soil scientist to inspect the area, and he noted that, “The soil conditions were far from ideal and varied considerably over short distances”.⁵⁸⁵ But, like the City Engineer, he believed that economic housing schemes should have up to 10% of all houses cracking. If no houses cracked it was “not good design but over-conservatism which results in unnecessarily extravagant construction.” The calculation was that overall repairs (£2 per unit) would cost less than building crack-proof houses, and after 8 years, soil movement would slow. Here, mutual responsibility was apportioned: for minor cracks the Council would supply the materials and the tenants their labour; for major cracks council would be fully responsible, but only for 2 or 3 rainy seasons; thereafter, tenants were fully responsible. The problem was that there were various types of cracking, and it was therefore difficult to decide whether the Council was liable or not in terms of the ‘agreement of sale’ contract.

Under these conditions, municipal engineers never ceased experimenting with ways to economise on foundations, structures and fittings whilst retaining a sound structure. For example, the City Engineer presented a unique house design whereby each room is built on a slab with some expansion joints between slabs:

This is a theory and I am unaware of any previous building designed on these lines so it is very important that we obtain some practical results before the idea is incorporated in any large scale building programme.⁵⁸⁶

He made it clear that all of these cracking problems could be solved by building excessively deep foundations, or by building on a rigid raft, but that these solutions were simply too expensive for economic housing schemes. The rejection of traditional architecture and framing of home ownership as the benevolent provision of “modern homes” was, quite literally, on shaky ground, as cracks appeared in the façade of the ‘home ownership experience’.

⁵⁸⁴ Extract from African Admin Committee minutes, 12th June, 1957/ BCCA/Transfer Box 310, p. 99

⁵⁸⁵ Extract from Housing and Amenities Committee minutes, 10th Feb, 1964, BCCA/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas [p.160-]

⁵⁸⁶ Extract from Director’s Report, 10th August, 1964, citing memo from City Engineer/BCCA/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas

Contesting housing standards

The specifications for a suitable ‘modern home’, in terms of living space, fittings, structural sturdiness and garden, were not just technical questions, of course. They were deeply ideological, based on ideas about African entitlements and requirements in the urban setting. The nature of these clashes was born out at a Housing Conference in Salisbury, 1968, where the main speakers were four Bulawayo officials and the Local Government Secretary, each defining African housing requirements according to a different rationality. The first speaker was the Local Government secretary. He framed housing as essentially an economic problem:

In pure economic and development terms, housing *per se* is not a top priority in that it has little if any ‘multiplier effect’ on productivity or national wealth... Although we would like to see more capital for housing, we have got to acknowledge the other real competing demands.⁵⁸⁷

His policy was simply “to build as many units of accommodation, albeit small in size, with the available resources”.⁵⁸⁸ The main focus should be on “essential health factors” – water, sewerage, refuse and roads. This vision of development was entirely devoid of any utopian imagery and did not consider residents’ preferences to be a relevant factor.

Bulawayo’s Building Director, Richard Agnew, then presented his analysis, framing African housing as fundamentally a technical problem.⁵⁸⁹ He went into great detail about the technicalities of house designs to ensure sturdiness, on expansive soils, at minimal cost. But Agnew argued that many of the standards in place in Bulawayo were unnecessarily extravagant. He found it “infuriating” that engineers like himself went to great lengths to design the optimal house within the upper price limit set by policy makers, only to discover that a luxury like electricity was installed afterwards. “The money could probably be better spent on the basic house”.

Agnew even considered the living space in terms of technical rationalities. He questioned whether a family of 6 required a 4-roomed house (as was the standard) of 360 square feet, when it could be suitably accommodated in one room of 180 square feet with bunks. He wondered why the minimum height of room ceilings had ever been 8’6”, and was glad it had been lowered to

⁵⁸⁷ Garmany, ‘Urban African Housing’, paper delivered at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning, 1968

⁵⁸⁸ Eric Garmany, ‘Urban African Housing’, presentation given at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning, (Salisbury, 1968), p. 26

⁵⁸⁹ R. Agnew, ‘Planning Urban Homes’, presentation at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning (Salisbury, 1968)

7'6". He claimed that township stands were generally "not put to much beneficial use" and could therefore be reduced in size, which would reduce both housing costs and service costs.⁵⁹⁰ He questioned whether the current Bulawayo minimum standard of one water point per housing unit was really necessary for basic low-cost housing. Sharing this facility between two families would reduce rentals and leave more money for essential food and clothing. Agnew questioned whether electricity was justified in low-cost housing. The capital cost of electricity installation increased rents. To get 2½ amps, "which is barely enough for a small hot plate", the charge was 12/6 monthly. In Agnew's opinion, "coal and candles would provide a more economic alternative."

Ashton then followed with his own presentation, drawing attention to the different competing rationalities of different speakers: "The rights and wrongs of one were not infrequently the wrongs and rights of another".⁵⁹¹ And he aptly put it, "Through all this welter of conflicting interests, the housing authority has to steer its perilous way."⁵⁹² He then proceeded to disagree vehemently with Agnew's technical rationality:

Mr Agnew questions our insistence in Bulawayo on providing electricity at a cost of £60 which increases the rent by 22/6d for a 2 ½ amp supply. "Coal and candles", he says, "would provide a more economic alternative." Would they? Perhaps on their own they would, but what of the convenience of electricity, its adaptability, the readiness with which higher amperages can be obtained, the cleanliness factor, the benefit to the township on a whole from the profit obtained from its sale, its relationship to street lighting and the people's own wishes? Where does the truth lie? Indeed, what is the truth? Are there not perhaps several answers, each valid from its own standpoint?

Here, Ashton was challenging the lingering conception of African housing as a *warehousing* solution – a solution conceived primarily in economic and technical terms. He brought in a moral dimension, and argued holistically in terms of the general standards and expectations of modern users. He went on about the diversity of the community and how housing should reflect this, to allow for individuality and personal requirements to be met. A year later, he wrote in a journal that: "Housing is really a moral problem. What you do about it depends on your sense of values".⁵⁹³ By taking this more progressive attitude, Ashton was able to be more resourceful.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ He proposed significantly reducing detached, semi-detached and terraced houses from 2,800, 2,450 and 1,750 square feet respectively, to 2,000, 1,800 and 1,200 square feet.

⁵⁹¹ Ashton, 'Finance and Administration', presentation at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning (Salisbury, 1968)

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*

⁵⁹³ E.H. Ashton, 'The Economics of African Housing', *Rhodesia Journal of Economics*, 3, 4 (1969), p. 29

⁵⁹⁴ Even with rental housing, costs were reduced by, for example, hiring African artisans instead of Europeans (Salisbury often favoured the reverse, adding hugely to construction costs (In 1961, when

The final speaker at the conference discussed above, was Mike Ndubiwa. His paper was on “The View of the Urban Dweller”, which, he said, was all too often overlooked. Based on extensive surveys he had conducted in Bulawayo, Ndubiwa presented a provocative account of township life and its hardships. He spoke of congestion, social awkwardness, conflict, and hygiene issues. He described the sad case of a family in Mabutweni struggling to fit their 7 members into a single room, and the awkwardness when the wife’s mother came to stay, requiring sleeping arrangements that would be unthinkable in a customary rural setting. He described communal latrines that were dirty, for which residents had “no sense of belonging or responsibility”, and he questioned whether such conditions were conducive to “easy adjustment and stability in urban areas”. He argued that even multi-roomed houses were sometimes too small; children were sometimes forced to sleep somewhere in the garden, kitchen or an outhouse, until the Health Department pounced on them.

He criticised the layout and design of home ownership houses. In terms of layout: stands were generally too small and houses were “cramped together in mass-produced sameness” in Mpopoma. This flew in the face of Agnew’s suggestion to reduce plot sizes. Ndubiwa argued: “As residents, we feel that the true meaning of planning is the injection of diversity and variety into a meaningful pattern”. Barbour Fields was better in this regard but it suffered from semidetached dwellings; detached houses were “a must for home ownership schemes”. In terms of house design, he argued that bedrooms should not open straight into the sitting room or kitchen, that the water supply should be inside the house and there should be proper bathrooms.

Recognising the limiting factor of finance in all of this, Ndubiwa argued that wages should be higher and housing should be a national concern, with Government providing low-interest loans for African housing. For the highest class schemes, Ndubiwa argued that they should be more exclusive – set quite apart from other Council schemes, should have freehold title, half-acre plots, minimum building values of £3,500, and owners should have more say in the design.

After his exposé of residents’ grievances, Salisbury’s African Administration director, Rory Briggs, made a backhand comment to him along the lines of: “Are people not grateful?”. Ashton, on the other hand, was congratulatory. As Ndubiwa recalls: “I think I got some promotion after that. It can show you how two people in similar positions... one is appreciative...

Salisbury CC awarded a contract to a much higher tenderer who employed only white labour, the Prime Minister criticised them for this, saying it contravened the Industrial Conciliation Act, and threatened the city’s future loans. ‘Contract Row in Council’, *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 21 Dec, 1960.)), and cost and land use efficiency were obtained through building multi-storey units, a first in the colony. One of the obstacles to this had been stereotypes about Africans’ living preferences. Ashton remarked: “The popularity of these flats does not support widely-held assumptions that Africans would not take to multi-double-storey buildings”. (Annual Report of the Director, 1959, p. 85)

Or even to take me up to Harare with them and Gargett and others...It just exposed me. I wasn't a big influential person, but I said certain things that came my way."⁵⁹⁵

In fact, the AAD needed to know about Africans' preferences for very pragmatic reasons. It was not the case that a housing backlog meant any new municipal schemes would automatically succeed. Their financial viability hung in the balance, meaning administrators wanted to ensure a scheme would be fully taken up by tenants who were not just financially solvent but also emotionally invested (see chapter 5). This meant they had to be sufficiently attractive. In addition to numerous inquiries before a scheme was carried out, they sometimes carried out audits afterwards.

In Mpopoma, a detailed audit was undertaken shortly after occupation had begun in 1958.⁵⁹⁶ It found many deficiencies: most tenants wanted verandahs (which had initially been planned and then scrapped) and ended up having to build them at their own expense. "Future schemes should include verandahs," the superintendent noted. Shelving and ventilators in the kitchen, individual rubbish bins, imported doors and obscure glass in windows had all been considered in the planning stages, but shelved due to cost. All of these compromises were regretted. Cross ventilation had been provided by eliminating beam-filling between the wall and roof at front and back of the house, but within a few months of occupation, 10 to 15% of lessees had closed this ventilation with brick or newspaper. Thus it was recommended that "any future scheme should have gauzed air bricks installed". The toilet cisterns were poor quality, the superintendent complained, and furthermore tenants who could not afford to be hooked up to a domestic water supply, often put bricks into the cisterns to deliberately cause overflowing, which broke them.

Some lessees without lodgers or with family members as lodgers preferred the lodgers' external door blocked and an internal door opened, and contractors agreed to make the alteration at no charge if requested in advance of building. But if lessees wanted to make their own structural alterations, there was strict control. They were not permitted to build outbuildings until the major portion of the loan had been redeemed, and in any case the limited plot sizes at Mpopoma inhibited such extensions. Furthermore, a constant watch was maintained to combat the "unsightly" poultry pens and 'kitchens', usually built from hessian and scrap corrugated iron. When found, lessees were made to demolish these unauthorised structures.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Mike Ndubiwa, 2nd August, 2016

⁵⁹⁶ Report on Mpopoma Township. 1958/BCCA

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Pressure from African civil society

It was not just through official consultations, surveys and audits that residents' concerns became known. Both the Advisory Boards and the engaged civil society of Residents' Associations and township publications constantly brought residents' preferences and demands to the Council's notice. Township residents did not accept the second class citizenship status bestowed upon them; they actively struggled for rights and entitlements to services in the city, politicising physical infrastructure in their relations with the state, in a way that the urban geographer Charlotte Lemanski calls "infrastructural citizenship".⁵⁹⁸ Tensions arose from residents claiming entitlements that the AAD either could not financially provide, or chose not to prioritise, and from the AAD trying to enlist the energies and resources of residents in the process of developing the built environment, which the residents also sometimes resisted.

The RAs were often very forthright in their requests, sometimes even posing them as straightforward demands. Residents had to choose between levelling their attacks at the AAD specifically, or the Council at large, and usually found the AAD to be a more effective target, because its interface bureaucrats – i.e. those at "ground level" interacting with residents – had to face the residents' frustrations directly. In one case, a superintendent of Magwegwe, Mike Hove, made a specific note, that in one meeting, "The tone of the meeting was quite different from those held in the past, in that instead of fighting the administration at our level, they quarrelled with the Council as a whole." In this meeting, the Magwegwe Tenants made a number of blunt demands, such as: "There is a growing need for both a vegetable market and a library in Magwegwe as well as a barber shop, and Council should provide these without further delay."⁵⁹⁹ Ashton's response, deferring to the Advisory Boards' recent decisions on libraries, reflected his reluctance to recognise the RAs as legitimate channels of communication.

Although Ashton's responses to RAs were usually courteous and considered, he often either delivered disappointing news as a *fait accompli*, or else directed them to the Advisory Boards. This diversionary tactic was evidently a way to avoid dealing with citizens' requests on multiple fronts. Ndubiwa argued that this non-recognition of the RAs was not helpful, and that the RAs should be given more of a hearing.⁶⁰⁰ Indeed, the RAs were infuriated that issues had to go

⁵⁹⁸ C. Lemanski, 'Infrastructural Citizenship', paper delivered at the Summer Institute in Urban Studies Conference (Manchester, 2018)

⁵⁹⁹ Report on Magwegwe Residents' Association Meeting, 7th May, 1972/BCCA/S021/Magwegwe Tenants' Assoc.

⁶⁰⁰ Ndubiwa, 'African Participation in Urban Management'.

through the impotent intermediary of the Board⁶⁰¹. They often demanded that Ashton attend their meetings himself. In one case when he did not show up, he was accused of “hiding”.

RA leaders also attempted to assert authority over superintendents. In one meeting of the Mpopoma Lease Holders’ Association, the chairman, Sidney Malunga, complained vehemently about the presence of three other (European) township officers, in addition to the superintendent. He called this a breach of protocol and an act of discourtesy. The superintendent said these other staff were there to learn the ropes, and that prior permission had been acquired for them to attend. When one of the Council officers tried to speak, Malunga instructed him to be silent. The officer protested that he had a right to speak, and the meeting was reported as being tense and confrontational.⁶⁰²

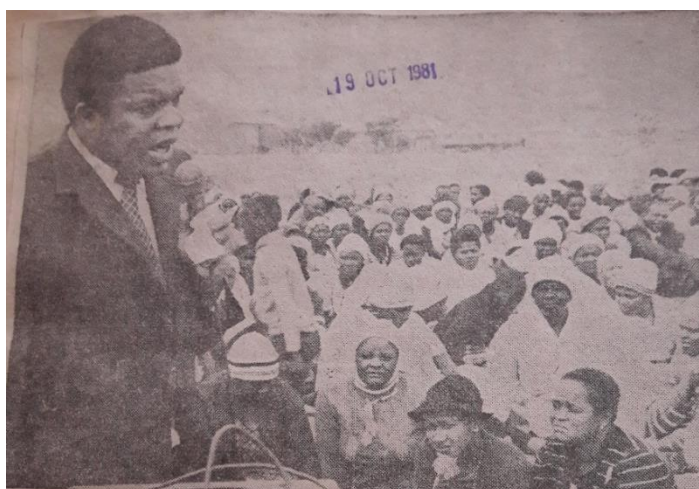


Figure 30: Sidney Malunga addressing residents in Gwabalanda.
[Source: Bulawayo Chronicle, 19 October, 1981]

Sidney Malunga became a leading voice for Mpopoma home owners, as well as a Trade Union activist, and took a strong oppositional stance towards the Council until, and indeed even after, independence.

In addition to the RAs, a platform for expression about infrastructural grievances was Charlton Ngcebetsha’s *African Home News*, published out of

Mzilikazi. The dominant voice in this publication was Ngcebetsha himself, and he frequently attacked the Council on basic infrastructural failings. He often took it upon himself to represent the down-trodden. For example, he attacked the City Health Department “on behalf of inarticulate Africans of Bulawayo” for its misplaced priorities:

In the Old Location there are very, very few waterstands and the Africans who live there are frightfully inconvenienced by the fewness of waterstands, so much so that many of them find themselves compelled, willy-nilly, to resort to using W/C impure and admittedly unhealthy water for cooking purposes and yet this Health Department is fully aware of the shortage of waterstands in the Old Location whilst it worries itself about

⁶⁰¹ (though the Boards did gain a bit more power, after they united into the Joint Townships Board in 1968, whereafter nearly every Board decision was accepted automatically by the Council’s Housing and Community Services Committee (see chapter 5)).

⁶⁰² Meeting held on 31st May, 1965 /BCCA/SO6 Mpopoma Tenants’ Association.

bottles of coca-cola which are being drunk by thirsty Africans in town. Does this make any sense at all?⁶⁰³

Despite the highly vocal appeals of residents through newspapers, letters, petitions, advisory boards and confrontational meetings, their concerns were often simply deflected by a Department that was itself hamstrung. The Head Office staff often complained that they were caught helplessly in the middle, between a population with legitimate grievances, and a system that imposed extremely tight funding constraints on township development. In this context, some residents found few other ways to make themselves heard than through acts of sabotage on infrastructure, such as municipal water meters. The AAD's response to this was simply that it would only hurt the residents. Therefore, although large and small *acts of citizenship* had some influence over the minor specifications of housing and services, when it came to major decisions about allocations of resources, rent rises, etc., their exclusion from the municipal franchise, due to the fact that townships were not "rateable areas" and the franchise was only accorded to ratepayers, meant the residents felt impotent when trying to communicate through official channels.

There is evidence, however, that township residents sometimes noted tensions between Council and Government, and perceived them in different moral lights. At one Makokoba Tenants' Association meeting, the Executive explained to its members the distinction between the Local Government and the Central Government. They warned that township superintendents could report individuals to Central Government and get them sent to Gonakudzingwa prison.⁶⁰⁴ But they also explained that the Council's hands were tied, as it was constrained by the policies of Central Government.⁶⁰⁵ Indeed, the tensions between councils and ministers in Rhodesia was quite obvious, to the point that the Minister of Local Government felt compelled to say to the Councils: "I would stress how important it is that both branches of Government, central and local, should be *seen* to be acting in concert" (my emphasis).⁶⁰⁶

Dabengwa recalls people perceiving that "the Bulawayo municipality really had thought about the plight of the Black people and they wanted to make a difference, but they could only go that far, and because of discrimination and discriminatory laws in the country, they couldn't proceed beyond that."⁶⁰⁷ He recalls openly "having a go" at the Administration for the appalling conditions at the men's township of Mshasha in the 1950s, saying "only animals were fit to occupy it". This shaming had some effect: "I really got a consolation that it didn't take long before those

⁶⁰³ *African Home News*, October 5th, 1957.

⁶⁰⁴ This prison was infamous for being the main detention centre of African nationalist leaders.

⁶⁰⁵ Makokoba Tenants' Association Meeting, Stanley Hall, 10th Dec. 1964, in BCC/A13/48 Makokoba Tenants' Association

⁶⁰⁶ Minister's speech to Local Government Association, 26th May, 1975/BCCA/H7c

⁶⁰⁷ Author interview with Dabengwa.

structures were pulled down”, he recalls. “At least we had a say. We could criticise our municipality openly. Harare didn’t have that sort of platform.”⁶⁰⁸

Naming new housing schemes

There was a newness, rawness and sameness to many of these townships when they were first occupied. In their planning stages, they had names that conjured the township space as a neutral container (in the sense discussed in chapter 1), within which the new schemes were ordered as a series, e.g. the Western Commonage areas were numbered 1-6; the areas around Makokoba were called “Urban Area A, B, C”. The Council was concerned about residents of these new schemes truly taking to them, and therefore relied on the residents themselves to supply names that may create some belonging.

In 1952, the African Advisory Board Members voted to rename Barbour Fields “Ashtonville”, as a tribute to Ashton. It was the white chairman of the Board who declined this suggestion.⁶⁰⁹ The first home ownership scheme at Hyde Park took on the name “Pumula”, meaning “place of rest”, because it was popular with retirees. The Western Commonage No. 6 scheme was renamed “Pelandaba”, meaning “Our problems are over”, because it symbolised the end of a long struggle by middle class residents for secure tenure and a more exclusive suburb.

The majority of schemes – both rental and home ownership – were named after pre-colonial Ndebele royalty and political/military figures. As Tsuneo Yoshikuni points out:

The urban history of Bulawayo could hardly be more different to that of Harare. Bulawayo is an extraordinarily history-conscious city whose inhabitants take for granted...the interconnectedness of urbanism and the precolonial rural past...The nomenclature of city sites, streets and suburbs was markedly precolonial or indigenous, in contrast to colonial Salisbury.⁶¹⁰

The naming of the South-Western Commonage scheme involved some controversy. The Advisory Boards suggested Tshabalala after a prominent former chief of the area, and it was chosen despite complaints from the white owner of a nearby farm called “Chabalala”.⁶¹¹ The small cooperative scheme within Tshabalala, called “Mhlahandlela”, was also named after a chief of the

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁹ AAB meeting, 2nd July, 1952/BCCA

⁶¹⁰ Yoshikuni, ‘Linking urban history with precolonial and rural history’, pp. 163-4.

⁶¹¹ Council meeting minutes, 16th November, 1960/BCCA

area. The scheme at Curti's Farm, begun in (1963), was renamed "Magwegwe" in 1965, after discussion with township leaders.⁶¹² Magwegwe was one of the most famous indunas (governors) of King Lobengula. He was often referred to as Lobengula's Prime Minister, and they allegedly drank poison together, following their defeat by the British. In the 1970s, King Lobengula was finally paid tribute with the naming of a large low-income rental scheme which was partly converted to home ownership. With this large low income township located next to Njube and Magwegwe, the Chronicle reported that, "naming it after the last Matabele king will complete a trio of illustrious Matabele names in the complex."⁶¹³ However, some Advisory Board members were not happy to name this low-income "shanty town" after such a venerated man, suggesting that it be named after his son Nyamande instead.⁶¹⁴ But Lobengula stuck.

Almost all of the rental schemes were also named after Ndebele heritage, apart from the earliest schemes of Makokoba (1912), named after the onomatopoeic nickname for a superintendent who walked around tapping his stick, and Luveve (1936), a type of butterfly, the nickname for Colonel Carbutt, a Chief Native Commissioner.⁶¹⁵ The married scheme of "Mzilikazi", built adjacent to Makokoba in 1946, was named after the first Ndebele king to settle in the area in the 1830s. Next, the new married scheme at "Urban Area B" was renamed "Nguboyenja" in 1952, who was a grandson of Mzilikazi. The single men's schemes at Western Commonage numbers 1 and 2 (1950-51) were named after Ndebele regiments – "Iminyela" and "Mabutweni" – on the suggestion of the white chairman of the Board. The Western Commonage No.3 scheme (1954) was about to be called "Rufaro" – a Shona word meaning "happiness", suggested by some residents – but the Ndebele members of the African Advisory Board refused to accept this. They wanted it named after Mzilikazi's grandson, "Njube", and the Shona members "graciously" gave in.⁶¹⁶ The "Sidojiwe flats" at the Light Industrial areas were named after Prince Sidojiwe, the last of the royal Ndebele princes.⁶¹⁷ "Ejingeni" and "Emsizini" flats in Makokoba were named by the Advisory Boards after administrative districts of King Mzilikazi.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹² NAZ Byo / Masiye Pambili 1965; also BCC/N6A/39/Magwegwe home ownership

⁶¹³ '1700 new African homes', *The Chronicle*, 1st Dec., 1971

⁶¹⁴ 'Row over choice of name for township', *The Chronicle*, 28th April, 1971

⁶¹⁵ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 109

⁶¹⁶ One member insisted it be "Prince Njube", but acquiesced to the shortened name. (AAB meeting, 21st Feb, 1952).

⁶¹⁷ African admin Committee, 1961 p. 2415/BCCA

⁶¹⁸ Housing and Amenities Committee minutes, 5th Sept, 1972, p. 2050/BCCA

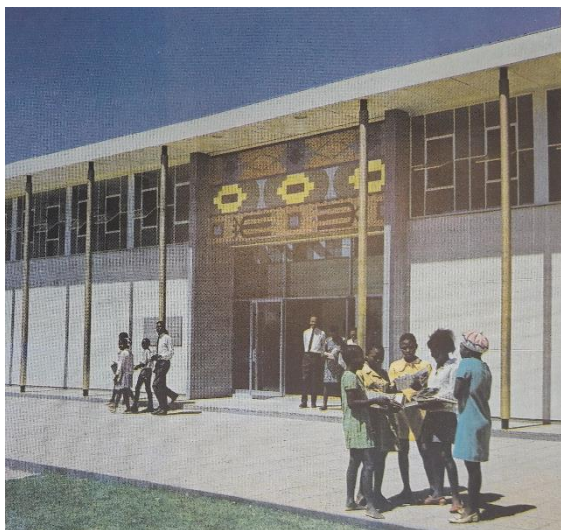


Figure 31: Mzilikazi Memorial Library, 1970 [Source: BCCA/Director's Annual Report]

The Bulawayo Council evidently encouraged this extensive referencing of pre-colonial history. In its own campaign to become the capital city of Southern Rhodesia in 1954, it highlighted the fact that the city was built on the site of King Lobengula's "Royal city". It argued that, "Because of Bulawayo's effective historical background it is impossible not to believe that the fact of its becoming the Territorial Capital of Southern Rhodesia would be of great importance in African psychology."⁶¹⁹ In 1968, Bulawayo also celebrated both its 75th anniversary as a

colonial town and the 100th anniversary of the death of Mzilikazi, marking the occasion with the opening of the Mzilikazi Memorial Library.

A spectacle of progress

Whilst the contested processes of township development took place 'behind the scenes' through endless meetings of committees, Advisory Boards, planners, engineers, and extensive bureaucratic correspondence, the townships were on display for visitors. Township tours were conducted, with a list of every visitor being reported to council at the end of each month, and summarised in Ashton's annual reports, under the heading "public relations". A broad range of ordinary and VIP guests were taken around over the years. David Brokensha recalls proudly showing the authors Doris Lessing and Jan Morris the township of Mpopoma where he worked, whereupon Morris reacted with charm and appreciation, but Lessing "refused to be impressed."⁶²⁰

Not all councillors agreed on the value of these tours. There was a clash when Councillor Edmunds felt that they were time-consuming and wasteful.⁶²¹ Councillor Hoyle responded that they were a public relations exercise not only for Bulawayo, but for Rhodesia. Visitors were not just "enlightened" but "staggered" at the level of development: "They go back with an entirely

⁶¹⁹ City of Bulawayo: Memorandum on the Siting of the Territorial Capital (1954), p. 26./BCCA

⁶²⁰ Brokensha, *Brokie's Way*, part 3. Indeed, Lessing commented in her book, *Going Home*, that Bulawayo's townships in the mid-50s were as drab and generic as anywhere else.

⁶²¹ 'Clash of Views on Township Tours', *The Chronicle*, 17th October, 1974

different concept.” Councillor Sharland confirmed that the visitors often telephoned to say how much they had learnt, which could only be good for public relations. Alderman Kinleyside said that Rhodesia was not getting good press overseas, and the tours would do nothing but good for Rhodesia.

The township development was also represented through reports, media and exhibits, creating symbolic capital for the Council. In 1967, a Bulawayo African housing exhibit at Rhodesia House in London was planned, with an official at Rhodesia House saying it would show Bulawayo’s “enlightened policies and sound development characteristics” which would be in the national interest.⁶²² And in the city’s interest, it was used to attract industry, such as in a publicity campaign selling Bulawayo as the “City of Enterprise”, boasting good, affordable African housing, in what Robinson (referring to this phenomenon in Port Elizabeth) calls “place entrepreneurialism”.⁶²³

It became an oft-repeated observation that Bulawayo led the way in home ownership. For example, the minister of Local Government Minister praised Bulawayo in 1961 for being “...well in advance of other areas in the provision of African housing, and particularly home-ownership schemes”. The mayor boasted that, “Bulawayo pioneered the way and now has the highest percentage of home-ownerships in the country.”⁶²⁴ An advisory board member declared: “Can anyone dispute the fact that Bulawayo is second to none in the provision of decent accommodation in this country?”⁶²⁵ And on the eve of independence, the *Chronicle* even went so far as to proclaim: “City leads world in owned homes”.⁶²⁶ Thus presenting these schemes as a spectacle of progress guided by an enlightened administration, the compromises, contingencies and cost-savings that shaped them were usually concealed.

⁶²² ‘Bulawayo Display for UK?’ *The Chronicle*, 14th Jan, 1967.

⁶²³ Robinson, ‘Progressive Port Elizabeth’.

⁶²⁴ Mayors’ minutes, 1967/BCCA

⁶²⁵ Masiyepambili, November issue, 1977

⁶²⁶ ‘City Leads World in Owned Homes’, *The Chronicle*, 29th Dec, 1970



Figure 32: Homecraft exhibition in the Mpopoma Recreation Hall [Source: Director's Annual Report, 1963]



Figure 33: Housing and Amenities exhibit at Central African Trade Fair, 1963 [Source: Director's annual report, 1963]

Conclusion

The post-war development drive in Rhodesia was first and foremost about stabilising the African urban community in a context of fast-paced industrialisation and a housing crisis. This stabilisation drive was launched under conditions of extreme resource constraint and limited experience of housing settled, stratified communities on a large scale. In this context, the Bulawayo Council, particularly influenced by Hugh Ashton, found that by adopting a progressive attitude to African settlement in the city, it could enlist African resources and energies in self-building and home ownership.

But the process of building housing and services was riven with uncertainty about what Africans residents wanted and could afford, what the sandy soils would mean for the buildings' longevity, how Africans would modify their homes, whether private finance would take an interest in African housing, etc. It also entailed contestation, with both African and European residents, about the location of schemes, the standards of housing and services, and ultimately what the grand scheme of township development should look like. There was no single authority that could easily resolve these issues, nor a clear plan before implementation.

Various contingent and pragmatic solutions, combined with and mutually constitutive of progressive ideas about African urban citizenship, resulted in a more integrated pattern of development, with high rates of home ownership, to which Bulawayo could apply progressive intention *ex post facto*. Early decisions to build in a more spatially integrated way had path dependent effects, as it became cheaper to integrate future development with existing sewerage and road infrastructures, and it also created social preferences and expectations for more integrated townships. The next chapter shows how the secure tenure that home ownership offered also became a norm in Bulawayo, which was difficult to later curtail.

It has been claimed that schemes like Pelandaba were in fact built “begrudgingly” by the Council for the African middle class⁶²⁷, but this was not quite correct. The evidence suggests that it was considered financially expedient to do so, and, as the next two chapters show, politically and morally expedient to do so, as well.

⁶²⁷ E.g. J. Muzondidya, ‘Walking a Tightrope: A Political History of the Coloured Community in Zimbabwe, 1945-1980’, (PhD Diss., University of Cape Town, 2001).

4. Tenurial Security and the Political Imperative to Appease the Middle Class

Whilst industrial employers tended to support the post-war reform of the migrant labour system in the hope that the consistency and productivity of their workforce would increase, the Government and Bulawayo City Council came to recognise broader sociopolitical benefits to the stabilisation of African urban communities. In particular, they recognised the need to provide more security of tenure to the emergent African middle class. This class had long lobbied for secure tenure – preferably on a freehold basis – and more so in Bulawayo than elsewhere in Southern Rhodesia. Their campaign had heated up in the 1940s, when tenure security became “top of the elite African political agenda”.⁶²⁸ Politically astute members of the African middle class, like Jasper Savanhu, president of the Bulawayo African Workers Trade Union, forcefully articulated the need for Africans to have their own homes in order to be efficient contributors to Southern Rhodesia’s development, for the good of both European and African. As West argues, “For the first time in the history of the colony, elite Africans were beginning to attach conditions to their political loyalty.”⁶²⁹

Thus, in addition to the economic rationale for promoting home ownership as a way to relieve the Council of some of the burden of housing costs (discussed in chapter 3), there was also a strong sociopolitical rationale put forward by Government and Council: that tenurial

⁶²⁸ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 110

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111

security would appease the discontented African middle class.⁶³⁰ However, this rationale took on different inflections in the hands of the Council versus the Government, and changed over time. This chapter analyses these changing differences between the way Bulawayo councillors and officials, on the one hand, and Government ministers, on the other, promoted and rationalised tenure rights for middle class Africans in the urban areas, and the battles that these differences provoked. It shows how, in the 1950s, they both advanced *instrumental* sociopolitical rationalisations of tenurial security – that it would have a depoliticising effect on the middle class – though their reasoning differed in subtle ways. From the 1960s, however, Government ministers in the Rhodesia Front increasingly rejected the validity of African rights to the city, and in the ensuing conflicts the Bulawayo Council began to supplement its instrumental reasoning with a more *principled* defence of tenurial security – declaring it an *intrinsic* right. Furthermore, Ashton began to argue that tenurial security was valued by all socioeconomic groups, not just the middle class. Whilst the protracted battles between Government and Council saw both sides making concessions, the latter was able to put up a considerable degree of resistance.

But providing tenure security through long-lease or freehold was not the end of the story in terms of the *actual* sense of security experienced by African home owners, who were subject to numerous regulations and restrictions, which they fiercely contested. Therefore, this chapter supplements the analysis of macro-negotiations around land laws with an analysis of the micro-negotiations around the provisions of lease agreements and policies on eviction.

1949-62: From short lease to freehold title

The municipal councils of Southern Rhodesia agreed at a Native Housing Conference in 1953 that, “refusal to permit Africans to own land in the urban areas would result in a political grievance”.⁶³¹ However, as the conference report noted, there was a lone dissenter:

Here again the main doubts seem to come from Salisbury. All other towns seem to accept the position that the native must be given greater security of tenure and the majority offered no objection to allowing him freehold tenure.⁶³²

⁶³⁰ (also referred to as “the elites”).

⁶³¹ Conference on Native Housing Report Extract (n.d.)/NAZ/S2609-35-2; Vol. 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53

⁶³² *Ibid.*

Although all municipalities (apart from Salisbury) theoretically accepted the principle of greater tenure security for a privileged few, the Bulawayo Council was the first to put words into action in 1952 (as we saw in chapter 3), with the others following its lead only slowly and much less enthusiastically some years later. Although Bulawayo's first scheme of Pumula was a rather *ad hoc* 'austerity scheme' with only a 10-years' lease when it began, the next scheme of Pelandaba was, from its inception, conceived explicitly as a way to nurture a stable African middle class (although realising this vision was not without its setbacks, as we have seen). Ashton rationalised Pelandaba as follows:

Even though it will not become a large scale township, it will provide the much needed social segregation on a voluntary basis that it is Council's policy to foster. It has great potentialities and would provide within Municipal housing an opportunity for the leadership and development of a stable middle class which will be of invaluable value to the whole community.⁶³³

Industrialists were also concerned about giving Africans a sense of security, but as noted above, they rationalised this more in terms of individual responsibility and initiative – enhancing *productivity* – than peace and harmony. For example, in 1953, the President of the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries discussed the “insecurity which the detribalised African experiences in the towns.” He explained that, “if we are to eliminate absenteeism, theft, and all the other conditions that today militate against increased efficiency – if we are to make the African understand the continuity and dignity of labour, we have to ensure that he is decently housed”.⁶³⁴ In any case, in the 1950s, the industrialists and the Government commended Bulawayo Council for introducing long-lease options to the African townships, even if Bulawayo struggled sometimes to get the recognition from Government that it felt it was due. Winning the appreciation of the African “beneficiaries” of long-lease schemes, however, was not as easy, as we shall see below.

The first 10-year leasehold scheme at Pumula was encouraged and commended by the Government for its prevention of social degeneration and potential political agitation. Even the Health Secretary focused on the political dangers over the health dangers. He warned that the squatter encampments in Bulawayo could become “breeding places of vice, crime and disease – in particular the disease of Communism.” He felt that moving and prosecuting the squatters would only lead to “an ugly situation in race relationships,” and was therefore relieved when 10-year leases were introduced to this ‘austerity’ site and services scheme, opining that, “The best way to

⁶³³ Annual Report of the Director, 1954/BCCA

⁶³⁴ Abe Abrahamson in his Presidential Address to the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries, 29 November, 1953/BCCA

stop a man, black or white, from becoming a Communist is to make him a property owner, to give him a stake in the area in which he lives.”⁶³⁵

But the degree of security that constituted “having a stake in the area” was heavily contested. African residents felt that the 10 years offered at Pumula, or even the 30 years offered subsequently at Pelandaba, were not sufficient security. The Advisory Boards had tried in vain in 1952, as Pelandaba was in the early planning stage, to make it a 99-year lease scheme.⁶³⁶ Charlton Ngcebetsha (the publisher and public intellectual mentioned already in chapter 3) articulated the Bulawayo African residents’ general wariness of Council’s promises of secure tenure. He drew on the historical memory of evictions:

Once beaten twice shy. When Bulawayo was smaller than it is now a good number of Africans were allowed to build houses for themselves in the Old Location on a freehold basis. During the time they occupied those houses they sincerely believed, as they had been made to believe, that they would own their houses for keeps. But, the unexpected happened: the Municipality changed its policy. It wanted the ground on which these houses were built....⁶³⁷

In this way, Ngcebetsha poured cold water on the hype around the 30-year lease scheme at Western Commonage no. 6 (Pelandaba), saying, “[T]here is a fly in this beautiful ointment. And this is the fly: the scheme is a LEASEHOLD and not a FREEHOLD”.⁶³⁸ He also pointed out the irony in the way the Council framed tenure security as a privilege, rather than a right:

We consider it a good thing for the Africans to be permitted to buy and own houses within the perimeter of the Municipality. In fact, the Africans, for a number of years in the past, have asked for this privilege. We use the word “privilege” deliberately because we realise that the Africans are not allowed permanently to stay in European towns unless they are of service to the Europeans.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ Extract from Health Secretary’s annual report, 1952 NAZ/S2609/35/2. Native Housing Policy, vol. 1: 1946-53. Note: this association of squalor with the seeds of communism was espoused by churchmen as well. As Reverend Percy Ibbotson, the influential advocate of improved social welfare for urban Africans, wrote to the Reverend Carter in 1950: “The best means of combating communism and subversive activities is the provision of satisfactory housing and living conditions with adequate social and economic standards for all sections of the community...” (Methodist House, 1950, quoted in T. Devitte, ‘The Underdevelopment of Social Welfare Services for Urban Africans in Rhodesia: 1929-1953, with Special Reference to Social Security’, Assa Kwaluseni, 7th Annual Congress (Swaziland, 1976), p. 12)

⁶³⁶ AAB meeting, 22nd July, 1952/BCCA

⁶³⁷ Bulawayo African Townships Residents’ Association (BATRA) Bulletin, August 1953/BCCA/S03 (IB153)

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.* (His emphasis).

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

When Ashton complained about “malicious propaganda” around Pelandaba at the outset, he was no doubt referring to Ngcebetssha, amongst others.⁶⁴⁰

Michael West is correct to point out that Bulawayo’s home ownership schemes were “the most significant breach of the Land Apportionment Act since its promulgation in 1930”, and an “implicit renunciation of the segregationist fiction that Africans were temporary sojourners in the imaginary white city.”⁶⁴¹ However, as the next section shows, there were still numerous restrictions within the leases themselves that undermined the security experienced by the home owner. These restrictions provoked fierce complaints from the residents, and internal negotiations between local councillors, officers and government officials, which in subtle ways redefined the citizenship status of the late colonial African home owner.

Lease negotiations in the 1950s

Home ownership leases were not straightforward documents, but complex processes that brought some hypothetical security but failed to remove many of the conditions that rendered African life in the late colonial city insecure. Successful applicants to a home ownership scheme had to pay a deposit whilst signing an agreement of loan and also an agreement of lease. The lease agreements in Southern Rhodesia were interesting, in that they incorporated all the relevant regulations within them, thus making each scheme’s lease almost *sui generis*,⁶⁴² at least until the Pelandaba lease was standardised across all townships in 1963.⁶⁴³ Since Bulawayo pioneered home ownership, it could not find a precedent within the colony, and so Ashton sought copies of leases from municipalities in Northern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. But the original agreements were modified through protracted negotiation between Ashton, Council committees and Government officials. In the process of negotiating lease conditions, which went on for years, officials and Councillors were forced to reconsider the historical conditionalities of African rights of residence in the urban areas. This section examines two key conditionalities – dealing with employment and liquor offences – that had a bearing on home owners’ sense of security.

African rights to settle in the colony’s urban areas had always been conditional on formal employment (or registered self-employment).⁶⁴⁴ Africans had to obtain permission to reside in the urban areas from the municipal authorities, and these authorities were empowered to remove

⁶⁴⁰ Ashton report to African Admin Committee, 19th June, 1955/BCCA/RS10/3 (TB298)

⁶⁴¹ West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 116

⁶⁴² The Attorney General noted this in his comments to the Urban Affairs Commission, 1958, p. 41/BCCA

⁶⁴³ BCCA/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas

⁶⁴⁴ (This employment condition was briefly dropped when the LAA was amended in 1941, but reinstated in the 1946 Urban Areas Act. (Patel and Adams, *Chirambubayo*, p. 17))

them when they were laid off or resigned, i.e., when they had become “loafers”. Bulawayo’s home ownership schemes were supposed to offer a new status of tenurial security and urban citizenship. But old colonial attitudes died hard, and so there was still a question of whether African home owners’ rights to remain in the town should be conditional on formal employment.

For Bulawayo’s first home ownership scheme at Hyde Park (Pumula), the answer to this question was “yes”, the condition should remain. Therefore, the lease contained a cancellation clause in the event that the tenant became unemployed or did not want to work (pensioners or those retiring due to infirmity were exempted). But for the second home ownership scheme at Western Commonage No. 6 (Pelandaba), Ashton quietly dropped this condition from the lease agreement – an omission that did not go unnoticed. It caught the attention of the Government’s Acting Secretary for Native Affairs who was meant to approve it, and he asked for an explanation.⁶⁴⁵ Ashton explained:

This clause was deliberately left out of the Western Commonage agreement because one of the objects of this scheme was to give the natives security of tenure and so to encourage them to assume responsibility for their own housing.

Evidently, he deemed it insufficient or unpersuasive to simply defend the removal of the employment condition *on principle*, and instead justified it with the fact that Africans would be taking on responsibility. He then continued with his reassurances that removing this employment conditionality was not simply a concession to the leaseholder; the scheme served the Council’s interests as well:

As the scheme is practically self-supporting (the rent is 7/- less than the estimated economic cost) the Council would not be subsidising loafing to any extent, so that, provided the tenant is able to pay his dues there seemed to be no reasonable grounds for interference. In any case, the risk of some tenants turning out to be loafers, in spite of being carefully “vetted” in the first instance, is worth taking in view of the many other advantages of the scheme, so cancellation of the lease would reduce it to very much the same level as the lease of ordinary Municipal accommodation and so would destroy any real security and undermine the very basis of the scheme.⁶⁴⁶

The Council was persuaded by Ashton’s rationale and resolved to leave the clause out. In relaying this resolution to the Native Affairs official, the Town Clerk repeated the phrase, “it would destroy

⁶⁴⁵ Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to Bulawayo Town Clerk, 22nd March, 1954, BCCA/H4/4/1. (Transfer Box 210). Western Commonage Number 6 Housing scheme

⁶⁴⁶ Extract from African Administration Directors’ monthly report, March 1954, in BCCA/H4/4/1. (Transfer Box 210). Western Commonage Number 6 Housing scheme

any real security”.⁶⁴⁷ In this small but significant way, the home owners had earned an important new right to occupy their homes without the condition of employment. But the Council persisted with the policy that Africans’ right to reside in the city should be conditional on their having worked at least *at some point* there. So when a retired African pastor from a rural area wanted to build a house at Pelandaba in 1955, the mayor declined, because he feared it would set a “dangerous precedent” (despite Ashton’s assurance that the pastor was a “desirable type of African” with sufficient assets).⁶⁴⁸

The second key provision that was particularly controversial in the lease agreements was eviction for liquor offences. Liquor offences referred to the illegal brewing and sale of beer and moonshine, and the illegal consumption of ‘European liquor’, which included clear beer and wines. Until the passing of the Native Beer Act of 1952, Africans were not even allowed to consume any alcohol at home. In the existing rental schemes, liquor raids and evictions of illegal squatters by BSAP and municipal police had been a serious historical aggression that Ashton’s Department continued to sanction. Indeed, these continued liquor raids, combined with rent increases and evictions of illegal occupants, made the early ‘50s a difficult time for many residents. Charlton Ngcebetsha railed in his *African Home News* that the authorities were now worse than ever: “Bulawayo thou art indeed heartless and cruel to poor Africans! ... Bulawayo was not like this before,” he protested in 1954.⁶⁴⁹

One of the biggest grievances was the policy of “double punishment” for liquor offences. This meant that a tenant convicted of a liquor offence or other misdemeanour could be convicted in court *and* evicted by the Council. Because liquor brewing and selling was a very important way for many residents to sustain their families under poverty conditions, double punishment was a grave threat to security. The home ownership schemes were therefore another opportunity to provide greater security by removing this clause.

The Hyde Park (Pumula) lease, however, did not remove the cancellation and eviction clause for liquor offences and other misdemeanours. When it came to the 30-year lease for Western Commonage No. 6 (Pelandaba), double punishment became a very controversial issue. The reason it became so controversial was because it was inserted into the lease agreement *after* lessees had verbally agreed it. Before the transfer of property, lessees had to sign the ‘acceptance of loan’ agreement – a contract that *protected the Council*. Yet the lease agreement, which protected

⁶⁴⁷ Town Clerk to Acting Secretary of Native Affairs, 17th August, 1954, in BCCA/H4/4/1. (Transfer Box 210). Western Commonage Number 6 Housing scheme

⁶⁴⁸ Extract from Minutes of African Administration Committee, 12 Jan 1955, in BCCA/TB 310 - Home ownership schemes - Native areas

⁶⁴⁹ *Home News*, 13th November, 1954.

the rights of the lessee, was often withheld whilst negotiations about its provisions were ongoing. When a Government official claimed that “the agreement of lease and repayment of the loan frightens the natives who distrust pieces of paper which they are asked to sign by the Europeans”,⁶⁵⁰ he could not have been more wrong. Lessees were only too keen to sign a lease agreement, if only they were presented with one! And Ashton observed that there was “a class of tenant who prizes his lease agreement to the extent of framing and hanging it.”⁶⁵¹

This was the case for the Western Commonage (Pelandaba) scheme. When new tenants were supposed to sign their lease agreements, they were only given some type-written documents listing conditions of occupancy. Ashton explained that the Government was still considering the lease details. The residents complained to the Native Commissioner: “At the beginning of 1954, we began to buy houses, but when we asked to be issued with the lease of agreement it was said that we would get these soon. We asked repeatedly but all in vain.”⁶⁵² By August of that year, the concerned residents had arranged to meet Ashton under an Indaba Tree (meeting tree). He assured the group of men, women and children that the physical document would be with them in two weeks. After the two weeks elapsed with no sign of the lease agreements, the residents were amazed to read in the press that they would lose their homes, with just three months’ notice, if they were convicted of liquor offences.

All these Press reports run diametrically contrary to the agreement...The documents are type-writer-signed and are in the possession of the residents. To say how cruelly and shaken our confidences are in this Home Ownership Scheme is clear. Some of the residents have made alterations to their original rooms erected by Council, making them four times as big. The disturbance and anxiety caused by this delay in issuing the agreement memorandum of lease and other developments that have taken place are better imagined than said.⁶⁵³

One African resident called it “repugnant to ideas of justice and fair play,” and wrote to the Bulawayo Chronicle:

⁶⁵⁰ Extract from Dr M.H. Webster annual report, 1952, NAZ/s2609/35/2 volume 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53.

⁶⁵¹ BCCA/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas

⁶⁵² Western Commonage No.6 RA to the Native Commissioner, 22nd August, 1954/BCCA/SO 4 (Transfer Box 152) Residents' Association W.A.T

⁶⁵³ Western Commonage No.6 RA to the Native Commissioner, 22nd August, 1954/BCCA/SO 4 (Transfer Box 152) Residents' Association W.A.T [p. 71]

This country, indeed the world, is saddled with criminals and offenders of the darkest character. But nowhere do we find a person serving a prison sentence or paying a fine and also losing his home.⁶⁵⁴

The resident put the blame squarely on Bulawayo City Council for “sowing seeds of unrest, delinquency and racial friction”, and appealed for Government intervention:

We pray that the Government will intervene and revoke this heartless law. In taking up this Western Commonage Scheme no. 6, we renounced our claims and rights to land and houses in the Reserves. We have come to this area as a permanent labour force with no exit from here. We ought, surely, to expect some security at least for 30 years.⁶⁵⁵

Ashton had in fact recommended to the Council that mere possession of beer should not be a concern. Rather, it was the illegal brewing of “concoctions” and the sale of “European liquor” – practices deemed liable to cause “social degeneration” – that were a concern. In any case, however, he argued that administrative action should be a “last resort”, and for other misdemeanours, the powers of the courts should suffice, and the administration should stay out of it.

The Council’s Native Administration Committee took a harder line. They wanted the lease to say that a tenant convicted of any liquor offence *shall* be given notice of termination. But the Town Clerk agreed with Ashton that this was suboptimal, because home ownership should provide a stronger sense of security. Why was he concerned about this stronger sense of security? Again, the reasons were both principled and instrumental: concerned by the pace of industrial growth and consequent housing backlog, the Town Clerk felt that, “Home ownership schemes, if encouraged, could help in a small way to take some of the burden”. The fact that home ownership was still experimental, that interest from residents had been “painfully small”, and that “administrative deterrents might slow it down altogether”, meant that *compromises* had to be made. These citizenship rights were deeply embedded in practical concerns. It was therefore agreed to word the agreement such that Council “may at its discretion” evict a leaseholder convicted of any liquor offences.⁶⁵⁶

Despite this discretionary clause, the Advisory Boards were incensed that double punishment had been retained. The Board adjourned *sine die*, protesting that, “repeated requests, pieces of advice and recommendations regarding double punishment and eviction have been

⁶⁵⁴ ‘Municipal Eviction Law is “Discriminating’, *The Chronicle*, August 31st, 1954

⁶⁵⁵ After condemning Southern Rhodesia’s “ridiculous” restrictive liquor laws more generally the letter concludes with irony: “At our stage of development we look to British people to help us distinguish between justice and injustice”.

⁶⁵⁶ Extract from Council Minutes, 21.4.1954, in BCCA/H4/4/1. (Transfer Box 210). Western Commonage Number 6 Housing scheme

consistently ignored by the Bulawayo City Council since 1942 up to the present day.”⁶⁵⁷ They appealed to the Native Commissioner, who arranged a meeting with the African Administration Committee, and the issue was resolved by offering alternative accommodation for evictees at the Hyde Park Transit Camp.

Meanwhile, Ashton had met with the Chief Native Commissioner who felt that the liquor regulations were “unduly drastic” given the lessees will have “sunk quite a lot of money into the property”.⁶⁵⁸ Ashton decided to use the Native Commissioner’s statements to lobby harder for the removal of the double punishment clause, asserting: “I am afraid I am unable to agree with the terms of this clause”. He expressed concern that those who had signed up for the home ownership scheme had not been forewarned. Persuaded by these arguments, on 17th August, 1955, the African Administration Committee finally resolved to recommend that the clause regarding liquor offences be rescinded, and on 24th August Council voted to delete the clause from the lease. Thus, through protracted negotiation and extensive pressure from RAs and Advisory Boards, another important concession was made to home owners.

The first cohort of Pelandaba lessees had a strong sense of being the vanguard of a new class of propertied citizens, even referring to themselves jokingly as the Western Commonage “pioneer column”, claiming they deserved “some sense of security and wellbeing”.⁶⁵⁹ On this basis, they asked for some more concessions, such as that rent be payable any time of the month, not necessarily on the first day, and that the lease’s reference to “members of the family” include extended family, not just the nuclear family, so as not to “cut grossly across our sense of kinship”.

Whilst these small concessions gradually enhanced the security experienced by home owners, there was still a fundamental question about the validity of long leases for Africans in what was legally classified as a ‘European area’. This thorny legal issue was raised by the Urban Affairs Commission (discussed further below), which consulted the Attorney General in 1957 with respect to the new 99-year lease schemes at New Highfields in Salisbury and Mpopoma in Bulawayo. The AG expressed his doubts about whether the security of tenure for these schemes was “adequate in law” and whether the lessee’s investment was “secure in fact”.⁶⁶⁰ The agreements of lease promised the lessee “ownership” of the house and its improvements, but not the land. However, the laws stated that “immovable improvements” on a leased site belonged to the owner

⁶⁵⁷ ‘Urban African Affairs Commission, Bulawayo’s answers to the questionnaire’, (Sept. 1957), p. 74/Oxford Bodleian.

⁶⁵⁸ E.H. Ashton memorandum to Town Clerk, *Western Commonage No. 6 Scheme: Use of Beer Profits*. 28th October, 1954 /BCCA/ H4/4/1(TB 210) [p. 113.]

⁶⁵⁹ Residents’ Association ‘Pleas for Revision and Alteration of Language in Draft Memorandum to Agreement of Lease relative to sections 4, 8 and 11, 21st June, 1954, BCCA/SO4/Transfer Box 152/Residents’ Association W.A.T., [p. 72]

⁶⁶⁰ Urban Affairs Commission (Plewman Commission) Report, 1958. p. 40/BCCA

of the land (which in the case of New Highfields was the Government; in the case of Mpopoma it was the municipality) and could not be purchased in the manner promised by the very language of the lease. The whole concept of the 99-year lease was a “virtual alienation of the property”, which would contradict the spirit of the Land Apportionment Act. Furthermore, the AG found the lease agreements for these 99-year schemes to be “unusual, to say the least”, for their provisions contradicted the very notion of long-term secure tenure. One section provided for cancellation by the Minister of Local Government *forthwith* in certain events; another entitled the lessee to terminate the lease with just 3 months’ notice. The AG therefore concluded, that these leases could not be said to be *in longum tempus*, yet he predicted that the courts would recognise them anyway.

But since Bulawayo’s 99-year scheme at Mpopoma was on Council-owned land, unlike New Highfields, the Council asked to make its own interpretation of this tricky legal situation. The Town Clerk contradicted the AG’s assessment, saying that he could find nothing in the Land Apportionment Act that would exclude a long lease. Bulawayo, he argued, was offering a true “agreement of lease”, and not a “concealed agreement of sale”.⁶⁶¹ Meanwhile, the Urban Affairs Commission had decided that every opportunity must be provided for Africans to acquire “homes, as distinct from houses”, in order to encourage a “settled and contented middle-class African population” in Southern Rhodesia. The commissioners therefore advised the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity to validate these 99-year leases “with retrospective effect”.⁶⁶²

But a year after their report came out, the legality of the lease agreements remained in doubt.⁶⁶³ Bulawayo’s legal advisors were unclear on the situation. They could not work out what the prohibition on Africans owning immovable property in the European area, under the Land Apportionment Act, actually meant. If they could not “own” the house, were they simply leasing both the land *and* the house? What did that mean in practice? Bulawayo’s Deputy Director of African Administration argued that revealing this fact to African “home owners” would have a huge psychological impact on them. Therefore, the Council’s legal advisors, Coghlan & Welsh, devised an ingenious way to avoid this demoralising revelation: they recommended retaining the words “owning”, “purchasing” and “selling”, “in the interests of the morale of the Africans”, even if they did not *actually* own their homes.

Another precarious feature was the fact that the 99-year leases were not notarially registered. One concerned official wrote to the Town Clerk, “These leases are tantamount to

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 41

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶⁶³ E.g. Coghlan and Walsh Attorneys to the Town Clerk, 18th Nov., 1959/BCCA/TB310 Home ownership schemes - Native areas [Dec 1954-May1962] p. 143-145; Urban African Affairs Commission, p. 48

Title and this department has no record whatsoever of who holds a long lease of Council land.”⁶⁶⁴ The lessee should have “something more concrete than a lease which is floating around from office to office and likely to be mislaid”. But the Town Clerk, annoyed by the persistent fuss this official was making, predicted that Ashton would resist any such proposal, as it would add more costs to the lessee. (He had come to learn that Ashton was always trying to lower costs for the lessee, such as negotiating furiously with the Government to have the leases exempted from stamp duty.) By the mid-1960s, many lessees still hadn’t signed leases from a decade earlier. Pumula had long been upgraded from a 10-year to a 99-year scheme, yet many leases were still not up to date. The Mpopoma leases, which required giving defaulting lessees 3 months’ notice, were being standardised in accordance with the Pelandaba lease, which required only 1 month’s notice.⁶⁶⁵

These vignettes about lease agreements have shown the protracted bureaucratic negotiations through which rights accrued to the home owner. This was not a clear centralised policy; low-level state actors played a subtle but key role. Furthermore, these rights remained precarious. Residents perceived this precarity, and they therefore tried to get their hands on actually signed documents – artefacts that gave some measure of assurance, given the history of municipal betrayal, that their homes were indeed theirs. This demonstrates that merely noting the period of lease does not provide a full picture of the actual insecurities that surrounded this form of “secure” tenure in the colonial context.

Whittling away at the Land Apportionment Act at the end of the “liberal era” in Rhodesian politics

Despite some progressive shifts in attitudes towards African urban citizenship in the 1950s, the Land Apportionment Act remained an obstacle to full African integration into the ‘white city’. Yet there was only so far that the municipality of Bulawayo could go with its promotion of tenurial security – the freehold rights that African residents had so long clamoured for were simply prohibited under the LAA, which was the bedrock of white privilege. In order for the rhetoric of ‘racial partnership’ to mean something substantive, the LAA needed to be whittled away.

But the legislators in the 1950s would not go so far as to allow freehold. As early as 1950, a Native Land Board had discussed the possibility of freehold in the Government-run ‘Native Village Settlements’ of Luveve in Bulawayo and Highfield in Salisbury. But there had been fears

⁶⁶⁴ Knight memo to Deputy Town Clerk, 3rd Feb, 1964/BCCA/H7(PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas. p. 158

⁶⁶⁵ Annual report of the Director, 1965 para 16-21/BCCA

that when the cities inevitably expanded, these native villages would be engulfed, and African freehold would become an obstacle to industrial or European residential expansion. The Land Board had suggested that Government should purchase European land outside the cities along railway lines, which could bring African workers to town. It was reasoned that, “the public, generally, would far rather allow more European land to be taken up away from the cities, rather than have a permanent settlement of Africans as close as the Village Settlements”.⁶⁶⁶ Although one freehold scheme along these lines was established in the early 1950s, in a ‘native purchase area’ far out of Bulawayo at Ntabazinduna, it was not attractive to townspeople. As we saw in chapter 3, a more integrated pattern of township development emerged in Bulawayo, and it was in these integrated townships that residents wanted freehold rights.

In the late 1950s, various commissions, conventions and amendments to the Land Apportionment Act were testaments to Europeans’ realisation that the whole question of racial segregation needed to at least be discussed. This section shows how Ashton took this issue more seriously than most state officials and politicians – whose myopia he criticised – and how he tried to express the need for substantive change through various fora that were, ultimately, ineffective in preventing the rise of the Rhodesia Front, resulting in a shocking reversal of what Ashton had perceived as an inevitable, progressive trend towards ‘multiracialism’.

The Urban Affairs Commission, appointed by the Governor of Southern Rhodesia (Sir Peveril William-Powlett) in 1957, was an important large-scale exercise in finding solutions to the colony’s urban African housing problem.⁶⁶⁷ A comprehensive questionnaire was sent out to municipalities, as well as chambers of industry, sectors of the African urban population, etc., but little or no response was received from these latter groups. Bulawayo responded enthusiastically to the questionnaire with a 168-page response, containing Ashton’s comparatively progressive prescriptions. He proclaimed his support for the rising African middle class, insisting that they “need a different approach for their ‘stability and development’. These people are those with more education, ambition, alertness, wealth or who are self-conscious and articulate... These members of the ‘elite’ have certain understandable and justifiable wishes: it would be right and plain common sense to meet them now.”⁶⁶⁸ Ashton proposed offering them freehold title; allowing widows and single women to own houses; removing the employment conditionality; exemption from restrictive laws and passes; urban courts etc. He emphasised that these were privileges to be

⁶⁶⁶ Extract from Health Secretary’s annual report, 1952. NAZ/S2609/35/2; Vol. 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53 [p. 9]. (The notion of “close” is relative – the village settlement of Luveve is 12 kilometres from the Bulawayo CBD.)

⁶⁶⁷ It is also commonly referred to as the Plewman Commission, as it was headed by Robert Plewman. It included Herbert Chitepo, the first African lawyer in Southern Rhodesia, on the 5-member team.

⁶⁶⁸ Bulawayo’s answers to the Urban Affairs Commission questionnaire, 1957, p. 22/Oxford Bodleian.

earned, not rights to be demanded by all, a view that would change with time and become more accommodating and universalising.

But Ashton's views were comparatively progressive for the time, contrasting spectacularly with those of some other influential figures in Southern Rhodesian municipal politics. Contrast this submission to the Urban Affairs Commission by an outspoken alderman of the Salisbury City Council, Charles Olley:

It may not be wise to attempt to do for the blacks what God himself has not done. An examination of the veldt will show that animals, reptiles and birds keep to themselves. That largely arises out of the fact that animals are also at different stages of evolution. The situation should not be allowed to grow whereby two towns or townships are in close proximity- the one white and the other black. This unfortunate state of affairs has already come about in Salisbury. An overwhelming number of Natives too close to European towns can be the basis of much distress in the event of their being a clash between the two types of people at different stages of evolution.⁶⁶⁹

Olley, who was admittedly one of the most outspokenly segregationist and blatantly racist of all the councillors in the colony, advocated Government intervention to create Native areas far from European residential areas and “provide the necessary transport plus other amenities to keep the blacks out of mischief.”⁶⁷⁰ The Bulawayo Council certainly had its own segregationist councillors at this time, too, such as Jack Pain of the Dominion Party.

As it turned out, the Urban Affairs Commission endorsed the more progressive perspectives put forward by the likes of Ashton, claiming that the evidence they had gathered “demonstrates forcibly” that the land laws were inhibiting “the full evolution of urban life in Southern Rhodesia”⁶⁷¹:

By restricting access to land the chance of creating what is universally regarded as the most conservative element in society – those who own land and property – is being lost and a footloose mass of human beings is coming into existence not because the people themselves are inclined towards that mode of life but because the laws do not allow them to develop otherwise.⁶⁷²

⁶⁶⁹ NAZ S51/7 Urban Affairs Commission, Answers to Questionnaires, 1957: Memorandum from Alderman Chas Olley, Salisbury. In Chitofiri ‘Urban Proterst’, p. 148

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷¹ Urban Affairs Commission Report, 57

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 55

It recommended “throw[ing] off those shackles which prevent urban Africans from becoming normal urban dwellers”, by providing freehold tenure and opportunities to participate in urban local government.⁶⁷³ At around the time of the Commission’s report, Prime Minister Garfield Todd was ousted in a cabinet coup. The dynamics of this coup are contested, but a commonly accepted reason was that his plans to repeal various racially discriminatory laws were deemed by his cabinet members to be too radical for the mainstream European electorate.⁶⁷⁴ Todd’s successor, Edgar Whitehead, largely ignored the commission’s 200-page report. This did not mean the report was inconsequential, for Ashton used it as a way to hold the Government to account, which was a reversal of the dynamics of earlier commissions pre-1949, where the Government was always holding the Bulawayo Council to account.

Ashton felt the Government was completely out of touch with realities on the ground, of which the municipalities had been aware for quite some time. He criticised Prime Minister Whitehead for ignoring the Urban Affairs Commissions findings, and instead clinging to outdated views of urban society. Whitehead, he argued, was still thinking in binary terms, of ‘permanent townspeople’ versus ‘transient migrants’ – a binary that Ashton argued was no longer an accurate reflection of the complex social realities in Bulawayo. In his annual report of 1959, he accused Whitehead of thinking in terms of the “unrealistic equation”: “permanent = indigenous = married; whereas migratory = non-indigenous = single.”⁶⁷⁵ Indeed, based on this simplification, Whitehead had proposed two housing authorities with clear mandates in the African areas: his Government would take responsibility for “permanent” settlers, by building married accommodation for them, whilst the municipalities would continue with managing the “migrant labour force.”⁶⁷⁶ If the municipalities disliked the dual approach he was recommending, Whitehead offered to take *full responsibility* for all African housing.

But the municipalities together, through the Joint Executive of the Local Government Association, resolved in September 1958 to totally reject the policy of dual control, and advocated instead that municipalities take over responsibility for *all* African townships (including the few existing government-run schemes) within their greater municipal areas.⁶⁷⁷ This contrasts starkly with the unwillingness of either local or central government to take responsibility for African housing in the interwar period.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 61

⁶⁷⁴ See e.g. Holderness, *Lost Chance*

⁶⁷⁵ Annual Report of the Director, 1959/BCCA

⁶⁷⁶ PM in House of Assembly, July 1958, quoted in Annual Report of the Director, 1959/BCCA

⁶⁷⁷ Annual Report of the Director, 1959/BCCA. Note that this dualism had never been that pronounced in Bulawayo. The only government-run scheme was Luveve. In Salisbury, on the other hand, the dualism was more pronounced.

The Government's suggestion to take over housing responsibilities, and at the same time its dithering on the important issue of freehold tenure, provoked Ashton to complain about "doubt and confusion" in Government policy, which was stalling progress in Bulawayo. Ashton tried to influence national policy through the Action Group. He wrote to the Prime Minister of the Federation, Sir Roy Welensky, imploring him to bring some substance to the whole rhetoric about racial partnership, which had become hollow, saying:

It is highly likely that propaganda will replace policy... Putting it bluntly, there is a danger that people will be lulled into thinking that African support will be won by simply telling them how much is being done for them rather than by facing and solving the real fundamental issues.⁶⁷⁸

The majority in the Group agreed with Ashton's criticisms of Welensky and Whitehead for their "hectoring and lecturing approach to Africans, their failure to educate the European electorate 'to face the new Africa' and their tardiness in eliminating racial discrimination".⁶⁷⁹ Indeed, the Action Group was painfully aware of its own tardiness, with the chairman acknowledging that, "Full credit must go to Dr. Ashton for bringing this home to members more than any other member."⁶⁸⁰ But the Group's influence was on the wane at the end of the decade.⁶⁸¹ Its 1959 annual report noted that, "Although speakers during the past year have been from Cabinet level on several occasions it seems fair to observe that the Group no longer enjoys the same degree of privilege as in the past."⁶⁸²

In his visit to West Africa in 1959 Ashton made some favourable remarks about the newly independent nations.⁶⁸³ But back home, as race relations deteriorated at the end of the decade with the heavy-handed clampdowns on alleged African political activists in 1959, the Action Group called for some kind of mutual racial consultation on civic security and progress, and gave support to a 'national convention' organised by Sir Charles Cummings and the Capricorn Society in Salisbury in 1960.⁶⁸⁴ This was a non-party assembly of citizens of all races, with cabinet ministers attending as observers.

The National Convention – attended by 72 "Africans", 89 "Europeans", 9 "Asians" and 5 "Coloureds" – presented itself as a happy multiracial "indaba" (meeting). Alison Shutt and Ian

⁶⁷⁸ 13th January, 1958. NAZ/AC3/1/1 Action Group (Correspondence and other papers)

⁶⁷⁹ Hancock, 'Sane and Pragmatic Liberals', pp. 78-79

⁶⁸⁰ NAZ/AC3/11/1 Annual reports [p. 10]

⁶⁸¹ NAZ/AC3/11/1 Annual reports [p. 9]

⁶⁸² NAZ/AC3/11/1/ Action Group annual reports, 1959 p. 7

⁶⁸³ E.H. Ashton, 'Draft: American Visit' and 'Draft: Report on Visit to the United States of America' (n.d.), (personal collection of Hugo Ashton).

⁶⁸⁴ Report of the National Convention, Oct 31- Nov. 5, Salisbury, 1960/BCCA

Hancock argue that this convention was a way for liberal Europeans to be *seen* to be nice and concerned, avoiding deeper structural issues.⁶⁸⁵ The Bulawayo City Council was the most strongly represented of the municipalities, with delegates including Ashton, some advisory board members, the Town Clerk, and an ex-mayor. Most African nationalist leaders shunned the event, but Charles Mzingeli, Ndabaningi Sithole and some others attended. A number of papers were delivered, notably a forceful critique of the Land Apportionment Act written by the African lawyer Herbert Chitepo, in which he asserted that the Act was a source of serious and justifiable African grievance, and described the African townships of the colony as “nothing but enlarged and consolidated back quarters for servants”.⁶⁸⁶ The Convention agreed that the elimination of unfair racial discrimination was urgent, and debated issues such as tenure rights and participation in local government, generally supporting progressive changes. But the Convention turned out to be more symbol than substance, though it was an indication that liberal elements of European society realised that the extremes of segregation were no longer tenable.

Freehold Finally

The Government was still hesitant to actually deliver substantive policies in the form of repealing the Land Apportionment Act. Instead of heeding the Urban Affairs Committee report, a Parliamentary Select Committee report was published, proposing freehold for Africans *outside* municipal areas. Ashton called it a “disappointing document”.⁶⁸⁷ But in a parliamentary debate in 1959, the Government extended the principle of freehold for Africans to any municipality that applied for it. Shortly thereafter, in October, 1959, the African Advisory Boards of Mpopoma, Pelandaba and Pumula approached the Bulawayo Council. The Bulawayo Council applied for it in December, but the enabling legislation (i.e. the requisite amendment to the LAA) had not been actually passed.

Finally, on the 14th April, 1961, an amendment allowed Africans to own land on freehold in the urban areas, by reclassifying the township lands as “African” rather than “European”. The Bulawayo Council “regarded this amendment sympathetically” and immediately converted the rental scheme of Barbour Fields to freehold tenure on the 17th of May, 1961. Ashton called this the most significant event of the year for his Department. It represented the culmination of a long struggle by Africans for freehold title.

⁶⁸⁵ See A. Shutt, *Manners Make a Nation*, p. 142 and I. Hancock, *White Liberals*

⁶⁸⁶ Report of the National Convention, 1960,

⁶⁸⁷ Annual Report of the Director, 1960/BCCA

On the promotion of African freehold rights for Africans, Bulawayo had an ally in government – Minister Abe Abrahamson. Abrahamson was a “Bulawayo boy” who spoke openly about his bias towards the city he called home, and he frequently visited or liaised with the Action Group. When he became the Minister of Labour, Social Welfare and Housing in 1958, Abrahamson became a keen advocate of African freehold rights. He praised the Bulawayo City Council for being “well in advance of other areas in the provision of African housing, and particularly home-ownership schemes”.⁶⁸⁸

Bulawayo was on a more integrationist trajectory than Salisbury, and they had petty disagreements over desegregation policies. For example, Salisbury wanted no more piecemeal amendments to the LAA until a detailed impact study had been carried out and if there was to be desegregation of town centres it wanted the Government to take responsibility, whereas Bulawayo chose to support the amendments to the Act and take responsibility for implementing them.⁶⁸⁹ Whilst the amendments being proposed in 1961 were not of much consequence, they had political significance as “the first categorical rejection of the theory of segregation”.⁶⁹⁰

Another desegregation issue was multiracial swimming baths. Bulawayo begrudgingly supported desegregation, to avoid the whole affair going public worldwide, whilst Salisbury and several other councils vehemently opposed it. Alderman Olley of Salisbury turned on the Bulawayo City Council at an LGA conference for not standing up to the government, and “taking the line of least resistance”, saying, “I think the Bulawayo Council must be packed with U.F.P members.”⁶⁹¹ He went on to boast that one day he would visit Bulawayo and hold a public meeting to air his views about the Bulawayo Council: “And I will bet anything you like I will be cheered for it”. A Bulawayo delegate retorted: “Salisbury ratepayers would swop the Bulawayo Council for Salisbury Council any day.”⁶⁹²

These petty spats and their different housing policies show that Bulawayo and Salisbury had different development visions by the end of the 1950s. As for the European ratepayers of Bulawayo, they were not, in fact, too happy with some of the integrationist measures being taken by their City Council. The support for multiracial baths, the construction of Tshabalala African Township so close to the European suburb of Bellevue (see chapter 3), and the building of African beer gardens in the European suburbs for domestic servants (see chapter 6), meant they, like

⁶⁸⁸ *The Chronicle*, 28 September, 1962

⁶⁸⁹ Local Government Assoc. Annual Conf. 1962. p. 8-10/BCCA

⁶⁹⁰ Annual Report of the Director, 1962/BCCA

⁶⁹¹ (Bulawayo’s mayor assured him that it was not).

⁶⁹² Local Government Assoc. Annual Conf. 1962/BCCA

much of the white electorate, perceived that the legislative bedrock of white privilege was being whittled away.

In strong language in his annual reports, Ashton chastised whites for wishing African grievances would just go away, and implored them to “adjust to, and prepare for, life as it has to be lived in Central Africa...”⁶⁹³ At the same time he criticised African Nationalists, saying it was disappointing that ZAPU “showed little sign of a more constructive approach” than its predecessor the NDP.⁶⁹⁴ With white voters uncomfortable about desegregation and black voters unconvinced by Whitehead’s attempts at wooing them, the Bulawayo Action Group warned that, “The great challenge of the coming year will be the problem of keeping in power a Government of liberal mind and avoiding the certain disaster of a reactionary triumph.”⁶⁹⁵ But disaster came in the December 1962 elections, in the form of 35 seats to the Rhodesia Front, and just 30 to the UFP. Following this shock, the Action Group admitted that, “For the first time in its history the Group has found itself completely diametrically opposed to the policies of the government in power”.⁶⁹⁶

1962-69: The rise of the Rhodesia Front and uncertainty in urban African Affairs

With the coming to power of the Rhodesia Front, the piecemeal whittling away of the LAA was halted. The new Rhodesia Front Government campaigned to maintain or even reinforce racial segregation, but its policy direction on urban African affairs remained confused and uncertain in the 1960s, vaguely based on the concept of “community development” and “self-help”. As Ranger notes, at this point Bulawayo’s relation to the state inverted from the interwar period, as it now “irritated the State because of its too great liberality rather than because it was too reactionary”.⁶⁹⁷

A colleague of Ashton’s recalls that in the early 1960s he “sort of almost despaired, at least for a period ... he really saw no way of things going forward with the RF in control.”⁶⁹⁸ Ashton would later refer to this moment as “an immediate, almost palpable change in atmosphere”, and a “reversal of the liberal trends of the previous governments and for the

⁶⁹³ Annual Report of the Director, 1962/BCCA

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁵ Action Group annual report 1962, p. 19

⁶⁹⁶ Action Group annual report 1962, p. 21

⁶⁹⁷ Ranger, ‘City versus State’, p. 187

⁶⁹⁸ Interview with E. Greenfield.

introduction of a racial policy that would ‘maintain white supremacy for all time.’⁶⁹⁹ It precipitated years of struggle with Rhodesia Front ministers over urban African policy.

Just 6 months after the RF win, Ashton detected “a slowing down of the previous trends towards non-racialism” in Bulawayo.⁷⁰⁰ For example, moves to open the commercial areas of Bulawayo to all races, and to negotiate seats for Africans on the Council, were put on ice. Using its powers under the LAA, the Government was able to prevent further inroads of Africans into European areas and institutions, and reinforced segregation through “petty restrictions” such as the banning of multi-racial sport in schools.⁷⁰¹

This dramatic shift in national politics and the Government’s dithering on its African urban policy orientation created a debilitating climate of uncertainty for the AAD. Ashton’s annual reports reveal an increasing disillusionment. In 1964, he complained that, “Uncertainties about the future still cloud the political scene and delay development.”⁷⁰² He described his Department as positioned between the reactionary European community and the revolutionary urban African community, writing of the whites “riding rough-shod” over the views of Africans on the one hand, and of nationalists adopting an “all or nothing” policy that “rejected negotiation, gradualism and compromise”, on the other. This vision of a gradualist approach towards modernisation was unravelling. By 1965, when the Prime Minister declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, Ashton felt the trends towards multi-racialism since the war were not just slowing, but now went into reverse.⁷⁰³

And yet the Government still had no clear policy on township administration, which Ashton complained about perennially.⁷⁰⁴ Instead, it peddled the idea of ‘community development’, which, as discussed in the next chapter, Ashton dismissed as both a gimmick and a thinly veiled form of apartheid. In this climate of uncertainty, Bulawayo continued to emphasise home ownership. But unemployment was high in the early 1960s, and the economy was static. This meant that:

Home-ownership, by which it was hoped several social and economic problems would be solved, and the people’s needs for higher standards of living would be met, has to

⁶⁹⁹ Ashton, ‘Moral Suasions’. 1978, p. 13

⁷⁰⁰ Annual report of the Director, 1963/BCCA

⁷⁰¹ Ashton, ‘Moral Suasions’. p. 13

⁷⁰² Annual Report of the Director, 1964/BCCA

⁷⁰³ Annual Report of the Director, 1965/BCCA

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

some extent, boomeranged through the depressed economic conditions we are experiencing, and is bearing heavily on many who can no longer afford it.⁷⁰⁵

The Housing Department's tight budgeting was unravelling too, as many tenants went into rent arrears, especially leaseholders, and ended up defaulting, which could lead to evictions. Before long, there was an expanding list of tenants in arrears. Ashton became ruthlessly pragmatic in seeking ways to streamline the eviction process. He noted that the lawyers had "set out the purely legal position with admirable clarity, but what we really require is advice on the practical issue. Eviction orders in Mpopoma alone now number 80 or more a month..."⁷⁰⁶

But the Administration also realised that it would be more sensible to grant moratoria on loan repayments until occupants could find work; and after an eviction order had been issued, some tenants were allowed to stay in their accommodation if they could promptly pay the amounts due. (In many cases lessees weren't actually dwelling in their houses).⁷⁰⁷ So for example, in 1963, thirty-nine occupants of Mpopoma A section, Mpopoma B section, and Mpopoma South, were granted moratoria of 3 to 6 months. In 1965, the Council granted moratoria to 300 households comprising unemployable old and ill men, and widows and divorcees.

As the rural areas began to develop in the early 1960s, the urban influx that had exacerbated unemployment in Bulawayo began to slow, and from the 1st of May, 1964, migrants from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became foreign nationals, thus removing their rights to work in Rhodesia's urban areas. The employment situation improved somewhat after this. But African school-leavers continued to struggle to find work:

The spectacle of thousands of young men and women with their school certificates roaming about in search of employment or turning to mischief as a means of dulling the pain of their apparent rejection is deeply striking.⁷⁰⁸

The Council's Home Industries and Arts & Crafts Centre were meant to absorb their energies. Government took over poor relief (leaving the Council's welfare department to deal with matrimonial issues and other casework) but poor relief only served the absolutely destitute. The Council's grant-in-aid to the African Welfare Society helped, but a considerable number of people were in distress. The impact was witnessed in family life and the occupation of houses: more

⁷⁰⁵ Annual report of the Director, 1963/BCCA

⁷⁰⁶ Ashton to Town Clerk, 16th November, 1964/BCCA/H7(PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas

⁷⁰⁷ Town Clerk to Coghlan and Welsh, 19th Oct., 1964/BCCA/H7 (PP 310; TB 397) - Location home ownership scheme - native areas [p. 206]

⁷⁰⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities for the year ending 30th June, 1968, para. 9 and 10.

grown children had to stay at home and households had to take in lodgers, leading to overcrowding.

Nevertheless, demographically, by the end of the 1960s, the ratio of men to women in Bulawayo had decreased from a high of about 7 to 1 just after the war, to 215:100,⁷⁰⁹ and the ratio of singles to married couples was 1.7:2.⁷¹⁰ In 1959, a fifth of Africans in Bulawayo had been born there; by 1969, it was a third.⁷¹¹ Ashton described this as a “more stable and healthy social situation.” In a comparison of urban labour situations in Southern Africa in 1968, Bulawayo was given favourable mention:

Differences in policy to labour migration and the degree of residential stability expected of its labour force are apparent. In Rhodesia, only in the more progressive African affairs administration of the Bulawayo Municipality, has a definite pattern of urban family organisation begun to emerge with diverse associational roles.⁷¹²

On the 18th March, 1969, Mr C. Hlabangana (MP) became the first African lessee to complete his payments and took full transfer of his house.⁷¹³ The population in general had become more stable in this decade.

1969-77: ‘Black spots in the white areas’: National re-entrenchment of segregation

In 1969, the Rhodesian Parliament repealed the Land Apportionment Act, and replaced it with the Land Tenure Act. The Land Tenure Act severely curtailed African rights to own homes in the urban areas. It meant that the land upon which the African townships were built – classified as ‘African’ since 1961 – reverted back to being ‘European’. It also became more difficult to declare any areas ‘multiracial’; only a 2% variation in racial land divisions could be made. Now that urban areas were declared European again, further provision of freehold tenure for Africans was prohibited, and leasehold was curtailed to a maximum 10 years. However, because numerous schemes were already in existence, their home owners’ rights would not be repudiated. But the

⁷⁰⁹ G. Kay, *Rhodesia: A Human Geography*, (Africana Pub., 1970), p.66

⁷¹⁰ Ashton, ‘Finance and Administration’, National Conference on Homes and Social Planning, 1968.

⁷¹¹ Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 20

⁷¹² E. Wood, ‘The Implications of Migrant Labour for Urban Social Systems in Africa’, *Cahiers d’etude Africains*, 8, 12 (1968), p. 12.

⁷¹³ Annual Report of the Director, 1969/BCCA

procedures for any exemption from the new restrictive laws were tightened up, with more powers vested in the Minister of Local Government and Housing.

Ashton called this “the year of the watershed”.⁷¹⁴ It was the “most comprehensive degree of racial separation that had ever appeared on the Rhodesian statute book”, and a reversion to the original conception of African townships as “blackspots in the white areas, as temporary blotches that hopefully would one day disappear.”⁷¹⁵ He and the Town Clerk were deeply suspicious of these new powers vested in the Minister. They anticipated far-reaching effects on urban African administration.

A Ministry of Internal Affairs memo in 1971 stated in no uncertain terms that “the African is in the European area solely as a worker”, which meant “any policy which will lead him to think that he has any permanent home in the European area” should be disregarded. It argued that an African person advanced best in a “tribal atmosphere where his thoughts and actions are affected in terms of a general need or want.” To deprive the African of the “tribal blanket,” the Ministry argued, was to expose him “to the cold night air of confusion, leading to anarchy and revolution”. An African was considered “a product of natural selection suited to his environment and to continue his success as a human being, his environment should not be tampered with.”⁷¹⁶ This throw-back to the early colonial attitude reveals the emotional detachment of Government authorities from the urban township development scene; it was a shock to the officials and councillors in Bulawayo, who over many years had overseen what appeared to be the establishment of permanent African communities that were part and parcel of the city.

Even the Government’s attitude to rental housing was extremely outdated by Bulawayo’s standards. As noted in chapter 3, the Government stepped in to Salisbury Council’s aid by building a large tied housing scheme called Glen Norah in the 1970s. When something similar was mooted in Bulawayo, it was heavily opposed by the African Advisory Board, on the grounds that tied accommodation heightened the insecurity of tenants (on losing their job, they would subsequently lose their accommodation). Ashton sympathised with their suspicion of what he described as a “double calamity, to which no one should be exposed”.⁷¹⁷ Furthermore, the Boards argued that occupants of tied accommodation would be unlikely to take pride in their homes and gardens. Gargett accused the Government of sticking to the policy of tied accommodation, when it was

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁵ Ashton ‘Moral Suasions’, p. 15

⁷¹⁶ NAZ, S3700/106/17, African Local Government in Townships: Memorandum: Community Development and Local Government in African Townships in the European Areas, by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 27 June, 1971, in Chitofiri, ‘Urban Protest’, p. 154

⁷¹⁷ Annual Report of the Director, 1974/BCCA

“detested” by Africans, and wrong on principle.⁷¹⁸ Ashton called on employers to instead assist their trusted employees to acquire their own homes. The Rhodesia Cement Company did this by financing the building of houses for 13 of its employees with mortgage bonds, which Ashton hailed as a “pioneering breakthrough” and a way to make “a meaningful contribution to African housing and the stability of the African townsman”.⁷¹⁹

As the Government began to enforce the Land Tenure Act – in order to restrict new African housing developments in urban areas, to move them out to the tribal trust lands, and to whittle away tenure rights – Bulawayo’s existing pattern of more integrated township development proved exceedingly difficult to change. The Bulawayo Council found itself defending its integrationist approach from Government attempts to enforce segregation. Bulawayo continued with its policy of converting as many households to home ownership as possible, as requested by residents, even of the lower income schemes, such as Mzilikazi, whose Residents’ Association asked for conversion of their township to home ownership.⁷²⁰ The Council applied for these conversions to the Minister of Local Government and Housing, Bill Irvine, but he asserted that he would only approve home ownership in the outlying townships (parts of Hyde Park and Luveve), to leave space for industrial growth, and that he would only approve it for high-cost housing, so that Building Societies would be enticed to participate.

In order to clear land for the expansion of industry, the Minister proposed forcing lessees to cede their leases to the Council at a fixed property value, converting the leasehold schemes back into rental schemes. Ashton was angry at this misuse of the lease cession clauses, accusing the Minister of repudiating the commitments made to leaseholders that they would be able to cede freely and also acquire a cession. “If he is not prepared to honour these rights, what guarantee is there that he – or his successors – will not repudiate other rights later?” Ashton asked.⁷²¹ He also argued that Africans should benefit from any property value appreciation that might accrue from industrial expansion, in the same way as any other property owners would. Finally, he pointed out that Africans will wonder why industrial expansion has to be westward, at the expense of the African townships. Why could it not be towards the south, south-east or north-east?

⁷¹⁸ Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 53

⁷¹⁹ Annual Report of the Director, 1974/BCCA

⁷²⁰ BCCA/Housing and Amenities Committee minutes, 4th December, 1975.

⁷²¹ Ashton quoted in confidential memo of the Town Clerk to the Housing and Amenities Committee, 5th June, 1974/BCCA/H7c [p 134]

Is it because existing property values are too great or could it also be due to the political strength of these areas? The conclusion will be drawn, rightly or wrongly, that it is not so much a matter of equity and justice as political feebleness.⁷²²

Using these points of objection, Ashton suggested the Council should continue opposing the minister on both moral and political grounds.⁷²³

The Minister came to Bulawayo to discuss his policies. He stated that he would not allow any further leasehold rights in the Bulawayo African Township areas (Mzilikazi, Makokoba, Nguboyenja and Barbour Fields). He wanted a line to be drawn, on one side of which home ownership would be prohibited. This meant that future home ownership would be confined to Luveve and westwards in Hyde Park, far from the city centre and industry. Even the distant township of Pumula would not be allowed to expand home ownership.

The councillors and Ashton were not happy with this.⁷²⁴ Councillor Mrs Castle stated that, “Any deviation from the present Council policy of encouraging Home Ownership would be detrimental to a settled community.” She stressed that the Council owned land in other areas that could be used for industrial development. Councillor Mrs Sharland argued that there would be, “a decline in standards because tenants did not give the same attention to a property as would an owner.” Councillor Hoyle felt that, “it would be a breach of faith if the Council’s policy was altered now”. Alderman Menashe warned that “antagonism would result”. When asked if some of various married rental schemes could be converted to 40-year lease, the minister said he would consider 10 years at most.⁷²⁵

Ashton was offended by the minister’s attitude. He commented after the meeting that he didn’t like his tone, and did not appreciate being instructed what to do, instead of consulted first. He therefore rallied councillors to continue resisting the minister, saying his policies would only lead to ill-feeling and mistrust, since, “Already Africans resent the impression they get that they are not welcome in the cities and are not considered citizens of the towns in which they live.” Ashton felt that, “Home ownership has become a treasured thing in Bulawayo” and this should be defended.⁷²⁶

⁷²² *Ibid.*

⁷²³ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁴ Confidential Report of Meeting with the Minister of Local Government and Housing, the Hon. W.M. Irvine, held in the Committee Room, Municipal Buildings on Monday, 29th April, 1974/BCCA/H7c [p. 139]

⁷²⁵ Confidential Report by the Town Clerk to the Council: ‘Home ownership schemes: African Townships’, 5th June, 1974/BCCA/H7c

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

It was not just exclusive home ownership for the well-to-do that Bulawayo defended. The Council promoted a more egalitarian home ownership policy than the Government. In the 1970s, Minister Irvine decided to restrict home ownership to high-income groups, hoping to thereby entice building societies and private sector investors, and restrict home ownership to houses worth a minimum \$2250 (if construction was supervised by the municipality) and \$3300 (if self-built). He wanted to maintain “standards”, and ensure there was a very clear physical separation of home ownership schemes from low-income rental schemes. He accused Bulawayo of risking slum development by encouraging low-income home ownership.

Ashton inverted the Minister’s fearmongering about “slum development”, saying that restricting poorer people to rental housing would more likely *promote* slum conditions, since people lose the will to maintain their homes when they do not own them. He argued that poorer people are “just as proud of their modest homes as people occupying houses twice the value”, and that they could build perfectly good houses for less than \$2,250, which could then be improved over time until they reached the Minister’s “magic figure”.⁷²⁷

Whilst the minister wanted to dismantle numerically and sociologically important middle sections of the population, by “forcing them either upwards into the higher priced home ownership or downwards into tenancy”, Ashton argued that, “It is just as important to have a stable lower class as it is to have a contented middle class.”⁷²⁸ He therefore defended his policy of offering municipal loans to lower income groups who could not afford to build houses to the value that building societies required. This would spread capital as far as possible and keep costs within the narrow limits that people could afford. Finally, in a letter presented by the Local Government Association to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Local Government on 13th October, 1975, Ashton argued that home ownership rights are “appreciated, understood and valued by a wide range of Africans, not simply by a few of the wealthy and emancipated...It is tragic that our own Minister of housing should ignore widespread experience and force this retrograde step upon Rhodesian local authorities.”⁷²⁹ The mayor, Eugene Gordon, also proclaimed at an LGA conference: “We in Bulawayo pride ourselves that our townships evolved from the grass roots. More than 50 per cent of our African houses are home-ownership

⁷²⁷ Ashton quoted in confidential memo of the Town Clerk to the Housing and Amenities Committee, 5th June, 1974/BCCA/H7c

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁹ Meeting with Minister of Local Govt., 31st Oct., 1975/BCCA/H7c

buildings.⁷³⁰ He asked that the high building society finance standards be dropped, and that medium and low density leasehold be replaced with freehold.⁷³¹

Another spat occurred over confusion about the meaning of “home ownership”. Ashton promised hundreds of Luvave leaseholders in the 1970s that they would be able to get freehold title to their properties after paying off their leases. When the Minister of Local Government and Housing, Bill Irvine, discovered this in 1975, he was irate, since freehold was contrary to Government policy and had not been approved. It turned out that when approval for “home ownership” had been given, Ashton interpreted this as freehold. But the minister only meant leasehold. So they were speaking at cross purposes, and several Bulawayo councillors confessed that they did not understand what was going on, which “greatly concerned” the minister.⁷³²

Nevertheless, the Council insisted that it now had a moral obligation to grant freehold to these Luvave residents as promised. Eventually the Minister “reluctantly conceded” to grant freehold title based on moral obligation and the fact that Ashton had already solicited deposits from the lessees.⁷³³ The Minister was upset at having to acquiesce to this, given his strict policy that freehold would only be granted in very rare cases. Whether or not this situation arose from a deliberate misinterpretation on Ashton’s part, it clearly shows the confusions born out of ever-changing policies on African tenure in the urban areas.

Whilst Ashton diplomatically referred to “good cooperation” with the Minister in his annual report, these spats behind the scenes say otherwise. When I asked a former Bulawayo Councillor what he remembers of this period, he said, “I do remember that the Minister for Local Government was not well thought of in Bulawayo. A Scot if I remember correctly, after one or two committee meetings with him the chairman at the time vented his exasperation at the way things were going.”⁷³⁴

⁷³⁰ Note: This figure of 50% is contradicted by official housing figures presented in Ashton’s annual reports.

⁷³¹ ‘Irvine under fire over townships’, *The Chronicle*, 18 May, 1976, p. 166 [loc gov 3 p. 166]

⁷³² Minister of Local Government and Housing to the Mayor of Bulawayo, 7th November, 1975, in BCCA/H7c, [p. 59]. (Bulawayo’s mayor explained to the minister that since the issue had gone on for years, and councillors had come and gone, they could not be expected to keep abreast with all developments. He furthermore presented a chain of past correspondence on the matter, much of it unanswered by the minister, appearing to vindicate the council’s position.)

⁷³³ Meeting with Minister of Local Govt., 31st Oct., 1975/BCCA/H7c

⁷³⁴ Email correspondence with Ken Moore, 25 Nov. 2018

The final battle: ending racial segregation

In 1975, the Quenet Commission reported on the removal of racial discrimination. Many African organisations refused to give evidence to this conservatively orientated commission, deeming it futile. As it turned out, the commission did suggest some fundamental changes to the Land Tenure Act. But all of these were rejected by the Government.⁷³⁵ Ashton wrote a provocative letter for a delegation to present to the Minister of Housing and to the Prime Minister, in which he finally defended freehold tenure not for instrumental reasons (to satisfy the African middle class), but squarely on the grounds of justice:

Freehold tenure is firmly established in most Western European communities, especially those from which the Rhodesian heritage is drawn... Its denial to Africans is consequently regarded by them as a form of racial discrimination... It is no good saying that in many parts of the world, including Zambia, properties are held on long leasehold and not freehold, and that Africans should therefore be content with leasehold tenure as are millions of other people. The point is this argument does not apply to white Rhodesians – they have freehold and what is good for them is good for black Rhodesians too... It is no good saying that from the practical point of view 99-year or other long lease is as good security as freehold... it is irrelevant, because it is discriminatory.⁷³⁶

It is impossible to know what impact he and others had “from below”. But in August 1976, the Secretary for Local Government and Housing conceded that there should be more freehold opportunities, but only for high-cost/low-density housing (on stands of 400m²), and clearly separate from other lower-cost areas.⁷³⁷ The Bulawayo City Council congratulated him for this.⁷³⁸ Ashton and the mayor went to Salisbury and met the Minister of Local Government and the Prime Minister, Ian Smith, where Smith claimed to be in favour of freehold for Africans, and as though it were a throwaway remark, he instructed the minister to sort it out with the municipalities. Ashton used this affirmation from Smith to gain leverage in negotiations with the Minister thereafter.

A month later, on the 24th September, 1976, Smith conceded majority rule within 2 years. By this point 40% of African families in Bulawayo owned or were in the process of buying their

⁷³⁵ Ashton, ‘Moral Suasions’, p. 17

⁷³⁶ Council Minutes, 1975, vol. 4, p. 14;

⁷³⁷ Housing and Amenities Committee minutes, 12th August, 1976, p. 1226/BCCA

⁷³⁸ ‘Housing Ministry Praised’, *The Chronicle*, 18 Nov., 1976

homes. Ashton reported that, “This has contributed considerably to stabilisation of the population and to engendering a feeling of belonging to, having a loyalty towards and a stake in the city”.⁷³⁹

Finally, in early 1977, the Land Tenure Act was amended. This fundamental change to racial segregation meant a reversion to the pre-1930 (pre-LAA) situation in the rural areas, where land could be acquired and occupied on a non-racial basis, and in the urban areas it did away with all the conditionalities pertaining to African ownership of land in multiracial areas, and allowing municipalities to open up more residential areas to all races. In April, 1978 the minister proposed declaring certain neighbourhoods in Bulawayo non-racial; he preferred to do this in areas on the Western side of town. But the Council objected, saying it only made sense, given the imminence of independence, to declare all residential areas of the city non-racial at the same time.⁷⁴⁰ At this moment, the historic struggle by Africans to enjoy the same legal rights to the city as European citizens, and the internal bureaucratic struggles waged by the likes of Ashton to at least partially advance their cause, was finally coming to an end.

Conclusion

After independence, the *Chronicle* wrote of this period, “While the council accepted the idea of home ownership, the central government was not so easy to convince, and so began a series of battles, the fiercest following UDI, most of which were won by the council, with Dr Ashton being amongst those in the frontline.”⁷⁴¹ This chapter has analysed some of those battles, and how they hinged on different ideas about the place of Africans in the city.

Beginning with a short-lease experiment in a time of crisis, by the end of the 1950s the city’s three main schemes had solidified the Council’s reputation as a ‘progressive’ promoter of tenure security. The micro-details of provisions and restrictions that applied to leaseholders were subject to protracted negotiations, in which ideas about the citizenship status of a home owner were revised in light of both practical and ideological considerations. Nevertheless, despite some loosening of the strict conditions with regards to employment, liquor brewing etc. that applied to renters, the actual experience of home owners remained far from secure – not least because the

⁷³⁹ Director’s Annual report 1977, para 3./BCCA

⁷⁴⁰ Confidential Council report, 5th April, 1978/BCCA

⁷⁴¹ *The Chronicle*, October 26, 1987

very constitutional basis of African rights to own urban property was open to interpretation and subject to change.

Nevertheless, the Bulawayo Council strongly defended tenurial security for instrumental (political) and later principled (rights-based) reasons, against the RF Government's attempt to withdraw these rights and reconceptualise Africans as essentially tribal, not ready or deserving of the citizenship status accorded to Europeans. The ensuing battles between the Minister and Bulawayo Council about who should be allowed to own homes and where, revealed a fundamental disjuncture between their conceptualisations of African urban citizenship.

5. African ‘Participation’ and the Moral Imperative to Nurture ‘Responsible’ Township Residents

The late colonial state was not just concerned with ensuring stability and contentment in the African townships; it also claimed to be equally concerned with *improving* the township inhabitants, by instilling in them a sense of *responsibility* associated with modern citizenship. This attempt at social engineering involved various modes and sites. A commonly studied mode of intervention was organised activities in township home craft clubs, community centres, sports organisations, etc., paternalistically designed to help African townspeople “transition” from tribal to modern life, by instilling in them bourgeois habits and a modern civic identity.⁷⁴² In Bulawayo, it was the African Administration Department’s welfare section, headed by Dr Eric Gargett, that mostly dealt with these programmes, taking over a role formerly carried out by church groups.⁷⁴³

However, another important way to promote individual responsibility was by reworking Africans’ relationship to land and property. This was conceived as turning the ‘tribal’ African into *economic man* – more individualistic, financially responsible and entrepreneurial. For example, the report of the 1953 East Africa Royal Commission (EARC) was dubbed “Adam Smith in East Africa.” It proposed individual land rights and the creation of a disembedded market where

⁷⁴² Jennings, ‘Building better people - modernity and utopia in late colonial Tanganyika’.

⁷⁴³ In Rhodesia, the Government was involved in education⁷⁴³, whilst municipal councils were involved in recreation, sporting activities, trading, and teaching bourgeois domesticity through home-making. White women’s groups were engaged in domestic training for middle class African women (See A. Kaler, ‘Visions of Domesticity in the African Women’s Homecraft Movement in Rhodesia’, *Social Science History*, 23, 3 (1999), pp. 269-309, and K. Law, *Gendering the Settler State: White Women, Race, Liberalism and Empire in Rhodesia, 1950-1980*, (New York, Routledge, 2016).)

“individual actors interact with each other through encounters regulated by contract rather than status or personal relationships”. (The Commission failed to recognise the extent to which such relations already existed.⁷⁴⁴) Sir Ernest Vasey, twice mayor of Nairobi, similarly argued mid-century that sub-economic housing failed to “educate the African in basic economics”.⁷⁴⁵

In 1950s Southern Rhodesia, these ideas were taken to rural society through the Native Land Husbandry Act. As Alexander explains, this Act “called for a significant ideological shift: Africans were no longer to be thought of as communal tribespeople, but as rational individuals operating in an impersonal market in the idealised guise of the yeoman farmer and proletarian family.”⁷⁴⁶ Similarly, Munro points out:

The LHA posited free and equal exchange of property as the key form of social interaction, and personal incentive as the basis of personal responsibility with regard to occupation, employment and use of land. In effect, this vision linked responsible citizenship directly to responsible land use, and responsible land use directly to private property.⁷⁴⁷

This attempt to create responsible citizens through a “new pride of ownership” was closely linked to the goal of social stability discussed in chapter 4. As a Chief Native Commissioner asserted in the mid-50s: it would “ensure a contented and progressive Native” who would “disregard the political sirens of the industrial areas”.⁷⁴⁸

But the NLHA, ironically, restricted the land market in various ways; it was a “vehicle of control rather than a harbinger of rights” and therefore did not give Africans much individual freedom, something which even Prime Minister Todd explicitly criticised.⁷⁴⁹ The NLHA provoked huge opposition from African farmers and the Government began to lose faith in its high modernist approach. It blamed the failures of the rural modernisation project on Africans’ stubborn traditions, and began to reconsider cultural and spiritual connections to land. Thus, “Within the space of a few turbulent years, a new orthodoxy had been entrenched in Government”.⁷⁵⁰ This manifested in the Whitehead Government’s adoption of ‘community development’ as its new policy framework in 1960. Two years later, the Whitehead Government

⁷⁴⁴ E. Hunter, “‘Economic Man in East Africa’: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Moral Economy in Tanzania” in B. Berman, A. Laliberte, and S. Larin (eds), *The Moral Economies of Ethnic and Nationalist Claims* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2016), p. 104.

⁷⁴⁵ Kenya, Labour Department Annual Report, 1949, Nairobi, 1950, 8 [CO544/60] in Harris, ‘From Trusteeship to Development’, p. 316.

⁷⁴⁶ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 46

⁷⁴⁷ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, p. 104

⁷⁴⁸ CNC *Annual Report*, 1954, p.15, in Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, p. 104

⁷⁴⁹ Munro, *The Moral Economy of the State*, p. 106-7

⁷⁵⁰ Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, p. 71

was toppled in an election where the profoundly segregationist Rhodesia Front party also hailed ‘community development’ as the best way forward, and won. Thus, community development quickly lost its legitimacy in the eyes of African nationalists. As Alexander explains, “by underlining the essential difference between the relationship of Africans and Europeans to the land”, community development “entrenched territorial segregation”.⁷⁵¹

In Bulawayo, the Council associated property ownership with individual responsibility in the same way that the NLHA had done, and presented the townships’ high rates of home ownership as a sign of its dedication to creating a responsible African citizenry. The Central Government was in step with Bulawayo’s strategy in the 1950s, but the Rhodesia Front Government of the 1960s and ‘70s withdrew African rights to own property in the urban areas, and therefore had to present alternative modes of African participation in housing.

Another important area in which Africans were expected to ‘participate’ and learn to be responsible, was in urban management. To this end, Bulawayo Council favoured a more integrationist “unitary city” model, with Africans either sitting on the mother council or on a unified, empowered township advisory board. On the contrary, the RF Government favoured a segregationist “two-tier” model, with Africans managing semi-autonomous and fragmented townships. Both sides rationalised their policies in terms of giving Africans more responsibility, yet their visions of urban development were diametrically opposed. This chapter analyses how these disputes about African participation and responsabilisation played out, firstly, in the domain of housing, and secondly, in the domain of urban management.

The moral politics around housing finance

African housing finance was always the subject of highly charged battles to shift responsibility. In the interwar period, as we saw in chapter two, neither the Bulawayo Council, nor the Government, wanted to take responsibility. In this context, Africans had taken responsibility upon themselves, building their own houses, until the Council banned private ownership and wanted Africans to rent “proper” Council houses. Yet, the Council failed in its responsibilities to provide proper rental housing, and when the Jackson Commission of 1930 pointed this out, the mayor hypocritically retorted that Africans should bear some responsibility, saying it was “absurd” that “the native population should never have to bear any proportion of the obligations of citizenship”. But because he did not actually want Africans to settle in the city, he had few options to place the

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*

“obligations of citizenship” on them. The acceptance of permanent settlement and greater state intervention after 1948 changed this dynamic.

As we have seen, the Rhodesian Government came to connect individual property ownership in the 1950s – both in rural and urban areas – to development and modernisation. Lawmakers were still reticent about allowing freehold in the urban areas, however, even after the Urban Affairs Commission went to great lengths to explain the desirability of a “property owning democracy”, emphasising that, “[I]t is only by giving people responsibility that a sense of responsibility can be engendered”.⁷⁵² The industrialists tended also to appreciate the connection between home ownership and a type of moral responsibility that they would value in their employees. When the AAD pioneered home ownership in the early 1950s, it received the high praises of the president of the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries, Abe Abrahamson.⁷⁵³ In his presidential address of 1953, Abrahamson said:

I would commend to the Africans themselves the home ownership scheme instituted by the City of Bulawayo on the Western Commonage [Pelandaba]...It is certainly an advance in the achieving of self-help and responsibility.⁷⁵⁴

Whilst Abrahamson was to become a comparatively progressive Member of Parliament, and the Minister of Labour and Local Government in the later 1950s, he still espoused the typical opinion that subsidised rental schemes gave “no incentive to native labour”.⁷⁵⁵ The blatant contradiction of keeping wages low whilst condemning subsidisation was justified by the claim that Africans were ‘unproductive’. Indeed, the low rates of African worker productivity were a matter of consternation to employers, and for this reason they had supported the termination of the migrant labour system, accepting some of the costs of reproducing a stable labour force in the town that would hopefully become more productive. But they still wanted to pay only the bare minimum for the survival of this workforce. As Boris Gussman explained in his survey of African living conditions in Bulawayo, 1952:

There are three possible ways of determining wage rates. The first gives the man what he is worth, the second gives him what he can obtain by collective bargaining with his employer and the third gives him what he is considered to need in order to maintain health and decency. In Southern Rhodesia the first method has never been attempted,

⁷⁵² Report of the Urban African Affairs Commission, 1958, p. 61

⁷⁵³ The same Abrahamson who later became a minister in Whitehead’s cabinet.

⁷⁵⁴ Abe Abrahamson in his Presidential Address to the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries, 29 November, 1953

⁷⁵⁵ ‘City MP Urges African Home Ownership’, *The Chronicle*, 26 January, 1955. BCCA/TB310.

the second method is out of the question because Trade Union methods are illegal and it is, consequently, the third method that is used.⁷⁵⁶

The National Native Labour Board decided what “maintaining health and decency” required, and African workers had little power to contest this. To be sure, real wages did increase after the war, due to changes in the structure of the capitalist economy – including its “qualitatively new manpower requirements” – as well as greater African militancy in wage bargaining.⁷⁵⁷ But Africans were encouraged to better their lot and take some individual responsibility, not by contesting discriminatory labour laws or engaging in wage bargaining, but by becoming more productive workers. Consider the mayor of Bulawayo’s reasoning on the matter:

The answer to the problem of relieving industrialists and other ratepayers of the burden of rent, must lie in the increasing productivity of the native himself so that, as time goes on, he can take over responsibility for housing himself and his family...⁷⁵⁸

However, in a circular logic, property ownership or non-subsidised rental was hailed both as the means of inculcating individual responsibility, and as the outcome of individual responsibility. In other words, workers were expected to “take some responsibility” by working harder, earning more, and buying houses or paying economic rents. But the “sense of value” that stimulated a productive work ethic was said to *derive from* the experience of already owning property or paying economic rents. As the mayor put it, home ownership would “give the native some idea of the elements of the cost of housing” and in so doing, “help towards this sense of greater responsibility”.⁷⁵⁹

Thus, Africans faced the unsympathetic injunction to bootstrap themselves out of the structural oppression that made their labour so cheap. Anyone who advocated better pay for African labourers instead of moral injunctions about hard work and responsibility, was reminded that, “Uneconomic labour costs would force enterprise to the wall”.⁷⁶⁰ Of course, African political/TU leaders battled to change these racial economic structures, and in a more tentative way, some white liberal groups, including the Bulawayo Action Group, lobbied for the gradual dismantling of some of the racially discriminatory legislation that perpetuated this structural oppression.

⁷⁵⁶ B. Gussman, *African Life in an Urban Area: a Study of the African Population of Bulawayo, part 1* (Federation of African Welfare Societies in Southern Rhodesia, 1948-51), p. 93

⁷⁵⁷ G. Arrighi, ‘Labour supplies in historical perspective: a study of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in Rhodesia’, *The Journal of Development Studies* 6,3 (1970), p. 224

⁷⁵⁸ Minute of his Worship the Mayor (Councillor J.M. McDonald, MP) for the year ended 31st July, 1955, page 2.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁰ ‘City MP Urges African Home Ownership’, *The Chronicle*, 26 January, 1955. BCC/TB310.

An opportunity to learn the “responsibilities of modern life”: home ownership and moral improvement in Bulawayo

This section examines how Bulawayo’s home ownership programme was rationalised as a way to give Africans an ‘opportunity’ to take on some ‘responsibility’ and thereby improve as citizens. As noted, these ideas were circulating around the colonies around mid-century. Ashton was exposed to them when he attended a conference of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs of Southern Africa, in 1953. On his return, he reported enthusiastically on an “outstanding paper” he had heard by the Union’s Secretary for Native Affairs. The official emphasised “the need for the native to become and be treated as an economic person”.⁷⁶¹ This meant breaking from the traditional attitude that housing and services should be sub-economic, through:

- a. Sale of houses from old sub-economic schemes,
- b. Home ownership, either by municipal or private building,
- c. Provision of site and services, i.e. services sites where natives can put up shacks, until such time as they can build proper houses.

The speaker showed that “careful study of Bantu incomes” had proven that they could afford economic housing.⁷⁶²

Ashton often emphasised that home ownership was not just about relieving the municipality of the financial burden of housing, or heeding the wishes of the middle class; it was also about instilling an enterprising spirit in people. For example, he spoke himself at a conference of administrators in South Africa in 1955, arguing that:

It gives them a chance of assuming some of the responsibilities of modern life, of looking after themselves and doing something on their own. It helps to teach some of the facts of housing and an appreciation of costs, and gives an opening to the more active, enthusiastic and progressive to improve their position and better their standards of housing.⁷⁶³

He associated self-building with freedom and self-expression:

⁷⁶¹ E. H. Ashton, ‘Report on IANA second annual conference’ (1953)/BCCA/A13/20/Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs (Transfer Box 479)

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*

⁷⁶³ E.H. Ashton, ‘Urban Native Administration in Southern Rhodesia’, Presentation to the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs Annual Conference (1955), p. 11, NAZ/GEN-1/ASH

A self-building scheme also gives an owner scope for taste and ambition and an opportunity to build what he wants, the way he wants it, and to the limit he can afford.⁷⁶⁴

The operative word ‘ambition’ reveals the sense that freedom is to be an active, *self-improving* experience. Following closely the increase in African home owners’ extensions to their properties in the 1960s, Ashton was excited to see what he regarded as an enterprising spirit emerging:

This indicates a growing interest in real estate and confidence in the continuance and development of private property as a form of saving and investment. This marks a growing acceptance of one of the fundamentals of western economic thought and is a basic departure from traditional attitudes towards land and housing.⁷⁶⁵

(Whilst here he contrasts traditional attitudes with Western ones, elsewhere he argued that even in “traditional” communal tenure systems, Africans always had a sense of their home as their own property, like everyone else.⁷⁶⁶)

When African home owners in Bulawayo began investing quite considerable amounts in home improvements in the 1970s, Ashton regarded this as a “considerable step forward in the exercise of self-expression and independence and a welcome participation in this field”⁷⁶⁷. This development of individual responsibility was also seen to promote urban belonging, social cohesion and a *moral community*. Thus, Ashton opined in his annual report of 1973 that whilst home ownership certainly helped Council to “share” housing costs with residents,

More important still is the feeling of security this is generating and the degree of participation it is encouraging. People are now beginning to feel, literally, “at home” in the urban area and though this does not mean they have severed their rural ties, it does mean that they are not the rootless, irresponsible mass that they are sometimes thought and said to be. This is producing dividends in stability, development of community spirit, and concern with community mores and morals.⁷⁶⁸

This reflects, again, the way in which property ownership was seen to address financial, political and moral imperatives all at once. Since the Bulawayo Council led the way in African home ownership in Rhodesia, throughout the post-war period until independence it was able to take the

⁷⁶⁴ ‘Urban African Affairs Commission, Bulawayo’s answers to the questionnaire’, (1957), p. 29/Oxford Bodleian.

⁷⁶⁵ Annual report of the director, 1967/BCCA

⁷⁶⁶ Ashton, *The Economics of African Housing*.

⁷⁶⁷ Annual Report of the Director, 1973/BCCA

⁷⁶⁸ Annual report of the Director, 1973/BCCA

moral high ground in debates about giving Africans a chance to become individually responsible by participating in their own development.

On the other hand, the segregationist Rhodesia Front Government faced a dilemma in this regard. As we have seen, it was much more hostile to Africans buying houses and land in the ‘white’ towns and cities, and therefore remained extremely ambivalent about the kind of modern urban citizen it sought to promote in the African townships. But with limited capital available for housing, it did see the financial advantage of enlisting the resources of Africans through home ownership. As the Local Government Secretary said in 1969: home ownership would “enlist the human and financial resources of the urban African to play his part in improving his circumstances”.⁷⁶⁹ This moral rationalisation – giving Africans an opportunity to improve their circumstances – was framed in terms of the “self-help” philosophy of ‘community development’. It was somewhat different from the modern individualism that home ownership connoted in Bulawayo. Bulawayo’s Senior Welfare Officer, Dr Eric Gargett, worried that the Government seemed to think that the “self-help” idea would be regarded as a panacea for all housing problems, a way of “getting a quart out of a pint pot”.⁷⁷⁰ Furthermore, the RF Government’s alleged support for African home ownership in the 1960s was disingenuous: as we saw in chapter 4, in 1969 it made drastic legislative moves to curtail Africans’ urban tenure rights.

In the 1970s, the Government determined that only wealthy Africans to whom building societies would loan money could buy property, on leasehold *not* freehold, and on urban peripheries, not close to the CBD and industrial areas. In contrast, the Bulawayo Council still preferred to be heavily involved in “spreading capital” to as many income levels as possible, with strong justifications for allowing as many social strata as possible – not just the elites – to experience the pride and emotional investment that property ownership was said to engender. These fundamentally different underlying development agendas of the Government and Council also shaped their policies on the subsidisation of rental housing and the participation of Africans in urban management, discussed below.

⁷⁶⁹ E. Garmany, ‘Urban African Housing’, paper delivered at the National Conference on Homes and Social Planning, (Salisbury, 1968)

⁷⁷⁰ Gargett, ‘The Welfare of the Urban Community’, paper delivered at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning (1968).

Subsidised rents and the Services Levy: paternalism or pragmatism?

When it came to rental schemes – which comprised the majority of township housing – a protracted dispute arose between the Bulawayo Council and the Government over how rents should be subsidised and paid. This dispute was also framed within a moral discourse about giving Africans some ‘responsibility’. With its policy from the mid-60s of phasing out subsidisation and putting African housing on an “economic footing” in order to entice the private sector into this field, the Government tried to take the moral high ground about giving Africans financial responsibility. It accused Bulawayo, which supported various types of subsidisation – mostly for pragmatic reasons – of “paternalism”. Bulawayo, on the other hand, accused the Government of being “sanctimonious” and ignorant of the complexities of housing economics in Bulawayo.

Subsidisation of municipal African housing and the placement of rent-payment obligations onto employers began with the Urban Areas Act, which introduced a ‘pooled rental system’, whereby a standard rent was charged for both ‘single’ and ‘married’ accommodation. As single housing was much cheaper to construct than married housing, the standard rent for single housing was effectively “supra-economic”, and calculated to offset the losses on expensive married housing, for which the standard rent was “sub-economic”. In terms of the procedure for rent payment: the employer was responsible for paying the rent directly, on behalf of each municipally-housed employee, directly to the municipal council. Thus, rent was like a tax on the employer in respect of each employee, and the standardisation of rents prevented discrimination against married employees. This system balanced the books well at first, but in the 1960s this balance was increasingly difficult to maintain.

Because employers usually paid the rent *directly* to the municipality’s centralised billing system (at township Head offices or the Treasury), the pooled rental system made workers dependent on their employers. However, Bulawayo chose to implement a different system, so that employees could pay their own rent, and thereby retain their homes after employment, without being tied to their employer. For this, it implemented a decentralised and indirect rent payment system, involving every employee receiving a rent card. If the employer chose to pay directly, he would gather the employees’ rent cards and send them with a cheque to the appropriate township administration office. The tenants would then pick up their receipted cards individually. If the employer paid indirectly, he would give each employee cash to go and pay his/her own rent at the township office (just as the self-employed residents had to do). So each township administration

office kept its own record of tenants and rents.⁷⁷¹ Thus, there was still some dependency in that the tenant did not receive their rents in wages, but it was not as extreme as for tied accommodation.

This not only aided the administration in terms of its “special rent” system for higher standard accommodation, but it was alleged to have wider symbolic value, as Ashton explained in his treatise on African administration in 1957. In his typical manner of infusing pedagogical value into everyday routine procedures, he argued that the rent card system would positively engender in the African tenant “some feeling of proprietorship in his house or lodging.” Furthermore, the ritual of submitting the rent cards was said to turn the township office into “a cheerful place of public resort”, ensuring tenants met others in their community and the township staff regularly. This “invaluable” sense of community was believed to ease the Superintendent’s main function of helping “his people” deal with their personal problems.⁷⁷² As we will see, this rent card system was also cited to rebut Government claims that Africans had no awareness of the costs of housing.

But whilst this pooled rental system was an effective way to balance the African revenue account in the 1950s, it began to shift out of balance towards the end of the decade. In the early 1950s, the ratio of single to married accommodation had been as high as 7:1, and many bachelor units were ultra-low cost “coffin-spaces”. The profits from charging £1 rents for the austere bachelor accommodation at Iminyela, Mabutweni and Mshasha had offset the losses on the married schemes of Njube, Mzilikazi and Nguboyenja, which also charged the standardised £1 per unit, yet were about 4 times more expensive to build. But at the end of the 1950s, with the austere and rudimentary accommodation at Mshasha being dismantled and most of Mabutweni being upgraded and converted to married accommodation (see chapter 3), the surplus from single men’s accommodation diminished. This was particularly the case in Bulawayo, because it had prioritised married accommodation more than any other municipality. Thus, until the late 1950s, there were occasional annual surpluses on the African revenue account, but through the 1960s the deficit grew year on year.⁷⁷³

In 1961, the Council proposed raising the rents for several single and married rental schemes slightly above the standardised rent paid by the employer, and to raise the existing “special” rents paid by many tenants in slightly better than standard housing at Nguboyenja, Mzilikazi and Barbour Fields. The City Treasurer tried to force this in, but Ashton, aware of the

⁷⁷¹ In 1950, Bulawayo City Council applied for the Act to be amended to allow Africans to pay their own rent and thereby retain their homes after employment.

⁷⁷² Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 52

⁷⁷³ There was a surplus of £63, 967 in 1955, and a deficit of £189, 353 by 1968. (Ashton, ‘Finance and Administration’, paper delivered at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning, 1968, p. 46).

extreme sensitivity of rent rises, insisted on further negotiation with the African Advisory Boards. The Board members were divided. Almost every scheme was running at a slight loss, i.e. the rents were not sufficient to recoup costs of building and interest. This meant that at *Njube* township the Council was losing £17.6.0d per house per year. One Advisory Board member thought it was a mistake to have ever charged sub-economic rents at Njube, because now tenants would resent any increase.⁷⁷⁴ Another, Mr Mathee, stated that, “while board members understood the economics of housing, it was very difficult to explain it to the average tenant”. In the end, it was decided to leave the matter in abeyance, as the Government proposed imposing a services levy on industrialists to help with the housing deficit.

The Services Levy was introduced in 1961, initially set at 3d per week per male employee earning less than £22 (later R\$44), with female employees exempted. To the Council’s annoyance, it was not consulted when this levy amount was decided between Central Government and the Chambers of Industry and Commerce.⁷⁷⁵ At first, housing officials deemed the levy administratively tedious and cumbersome. It was yet another source of revenue that had to be collected in addition to the rents from employers and special rents from 3,500 tenants. But the services levy soon came to be very much appreciated. It provided a vital source of revenue to balance the African Revenue Account and to subsidise the African bus service.

But in 1963, the Government decided that it wanted to do away with the services levy and pooled rental system, and consolidate rents into African workers’ wage packets.⁷⁷⁶ Employers supported this because they were unhappy about the rising levy costs (in some municipalities other than Bulawayo) and the extra admin involved in paying rents for their employees. Many African employees also supported consolidation, because it would enlarge their wage packets and thereby slightly increase holiday and overtime pay (which would be calculated on the enlarged amount). Another important incentive for employees was that it would end the unpopular practice of tied accommodation that was still so prevalent in areas *other* than Bulawayo. Thus, these national policies were often a response to conditions pertaining in other areas, such as Salisbury, which irked the Bulawayo Council.

In order to justify its new policy, Government officials invoked the trope of ‘individual responsibility’: consolidating rent and levy into wages would encourage Africans to “pay their way” and not be “spoon fed”, they argued. But Bulawayo was annoyed at having foisted upon it policies that were tailored for the conditions prevalent in other cities, notably the capital. The Finance Committee chairman asserted that Bulawayo had already done its part in putting housing

⁷⁷⁴ Western Commonage Board meeting, 20th Feb, 1961, BCCA/A13-48 – Makokoba Tenants’ Association

⁷⁷⁵ Finance Committee minutes, 7th March, 1961/BCCA

⁷⁷⁶ ‘Plan to Peg Services Levy Attacked’, *The Chronicle*, 23 September, 1964.

on an economic footing: “Bulawayo has been in the forefront in promoting home-ownership schemes and about 50 per cent of our married houses are being sold on terms which do not involve any major subsidy”.⁷⁷⁷ His point was that Bulawayo could hardly be blamed for spoon feeding Africans. Bulawayo’s Town Clerk insisted that Government’s wage consolidation policy “stems from some very woolly economic and social thinking”, assuming as it did that lower paid employees could afford economic housing of a sufficient standard, which was unfounded. He told the councillors in a tone of resignation: “Whether these arguments are sound or not is unimportant. What is important is that they are held; even passionately held, in influential quarters, so that there is considerable pressure towards changing the present system.”⁷⁷⁸

The proposed elimination of the pooled rents and services levy systems were hugely problematic for Bulawayo’s AAD, which feared increased administrative costs and an increase in bad debts. But the main problem was that it would require complete reorganisation of the rent structure, which did not correspond at all to the actual standard of properties. For example, a single man in Makokoba would find himself paying £1 a month for his rudimentary dwelling space, whilst his married compatriot would pay the same rent for a whole cottage. Thus, adjustments would need to be made so that tenants paid rents somewhat more commensurate to the standard of accommodation. This abandonment of pooled rents would mean that the built-in subsidisation of married accommodation from single accommodation would be eliminated, and the African revenue account would rely ever more heavily on the services levy. Alternatively, if rents were made “economic” (non-subsidised) then married housing would become unaffordable, unless wage levels were substantially increased, which apparently “no one was prepared to consider”.⁷⁷⁹ Ashton explained Bulawayo’s dilemma thus:

[I]n a large extent we are the victims of our own efforts to improve standards. With possibly the finest ratio of married to single accommodation in Southern Africa, Bulawayo provides the kind of housing conditions that favour stability and decent family life and bears favourably in comparison with any other city in Africa...The old subsidisation of married accommodation dependent upon single housing is dwindling and we are having to rely increasingly on the Services Levy.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁷ Statement by chairman of finance committee, Alderman S.H. Millar, for year ending 30th June, 1963/BCCA/Finance Committee minutes, 1962 vol. 3, p. 11.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁹ E.H. Ashton, ‘Finance and Administration’, National Conference on Homes and Social Planning (1968), p. 46

⁷⁸⁰ Annual report of the Director, 1963/BCCA

In a confidential report, the Town Clerk warned that the proposal “strikes at the whole basis of the Urban Areas Act...It is revolutionary”.⁷⁸¹ It did not augur well for some categories of African tenant and the health of housing finance, and sparked a dispute between Government and the Bulawayo Council that lasted until 1976. In this time, there were hundreds of newspaper articles on this services levy question.

It was particularly the Town Clerk and Ashton who used their clout to rebut the Government’s ideological arguments about making Africans “responsible”. They argued that scrapping the levy would create a lose-lose scenario for everyone: the employer would end up more financially burdened; the municipality would be saddled with bad debts and increased admin costs; and tenants would be opposed to paying higher economic rents for accommodation of varying standards.⁷⁸² Acknowledging that the consolidation of rents and the services levy into wages was a laudable goal that “all should strive for”, the Town Clerk nevertheless insisted that it “cannot be accomplished overnight, or by a dramatic stroke of the pen”.⁷⁸³ Ashton painted a picture of a carefully balanced financial ecosystem vulnerable to disturbance, and defended a role for the state in preserving this balance, against the Government’s attempt to bring free market forces into township housing development:

Some employers have for a long time been urging this move, but though the Council does not oppose the principle of individual responsibility for rent payments, it is strongly opposed to making the poorest group of employee pay a disproportionate amount of rent on minimal accommodation. Economic housing is a laudable objective but it cannot be attained until the general level of wages is greatly increased. Moreover African housing funds are very delicately balanced. Our efforts to modernise and to provide satisfactory accommodation for all classes of urban dwellers demand that this balance should not be disturbed.

By 1965, the Council had managed to convince the Bulawayo Chambers of Industry and Commerce that the pooled rent system and services levy should be retained. Having won them over, the Council and Chambers of Industry and Commerce formed a united front against the Government, threatening that consolidation would lead to “serious results, with thousands of Africans spending their increased wages on other things instead of rent, followed by large-scale evictions.” In addition to this paternalistic argument, Ashton warned that consolidation would lead to rent increases and consequent “alarm and despondency” in the townships which could

⁷⁸¹ Town Clerk’s Confidential report to the Council: ‘Consolidation of Accommodation Allowances’, 30th October, 1961, p. 2. BCCA/Council Minutes, 1961.

⁷⁸² *The Chronicle*, ‘Bulawayo fights scrapping of levy’, 29 June, 1965

⁷⁸³ *The Chronicle*, ‘Opposition in city to plan for payment of rents’, 12 August, 1965

lead to disturbances. The Bulawayo Chamber of Industries president also said that the services levy should not be scrapped until all Africans earned at least £25 a month.⁷⁸⁴ At this point, other municipalities like Salisbury CC also joined in the attack on government.⁷⁸⁵

The municipalities won this particular battle on the services levy front, and Ashton thanked the minister for dropping the proposal and the Chambers of Industry and Commerce for backing the Council in its fight. He praised the principle of “individual responsibility” but continued to defend subsidised housing as a “necessary evil”, one that also existed in advanced industrial countries. He lamented that,

The slogan of economic rents is still being bandied about in official and political circles...The perpetuation of this unrealistic catchword distracts attention and dissipates effort that should be concentrated on solving immediate housing and other administrative problems.⁷⁸⁶

But the war over rent consolidation continued. Ian Smith wanted to make all African housing “economic” to facilitate the entry of private enterprise into the African housing market.⁷⁸⁷ To that end, the Urban Areas Act was amended in 1966 to allow municipalities to charge differential rents that corresponded to the different standards of accommodation. The employer would pay the fixed standard rent and the employee would pay the differential, and would also be means tested.⁷⁸⁸ But it seems this amendment was never fully implemented. The next step was to try once again to consolidate rents into wages. In order to persuade municipal councils of this policy which they had earlier rejected, the Minister for Local Government, Mark Partridge, began preaching with astounding hypocrisy about the need for them to recognise that social change was happening in the African townships, and to stop perpetuating the “paternalistic” practice of subsidising housing. This went on for several years. For example, in 1971, he implored Councils to recognise that African communities were now “stable”, as though this were a novel insight:

[S]urveys had shown there was a very real change in the attitudes and philosophy of the urban African. There was a marked stability in the population, a diminishing contact with tribal lands, a lessening of the social influence of this traditional culture [etc].⁷⁸⁹

He went on that, despite this stability, Africans nevertheless continued to labour under a “subsistence mentality”, which should be broken down through the “progressive phasing out of

⁷⁸⁴ ‘Opposition in city to plan for payment of rents’, *The Chronicle*, 12 August, 1965

⁷⁸⁵ ‘Plan to Peg Services Levy Attacked’, *The Chronicle*, 23 September, 1964.

⁷⁸⁶ Annual Report of the Director, 1966,/BCCA

⁷⁸⁷ ‘Develop a Happy Nation – Smith’, *The Chronicle* 25th May, 1965

⁷⁸⁸ Garmany, Paper delivered at National Conference on Homes and Social Planning, 1968, p. 25

⁷⁸⁹ ‘Partridge plea for Africans: ‘Disparity will not continue indefinitely’’, *The Chronicle*, 25 May 1971

the remaining paternalistic patterns”, namely pooled rents and the services levy.⁷⁹⁰ His main concern was to entice the private finance to move into the field of African housing, since Government and municipalities could not keep up with demand; yet the private sector “cannot be expected to move into this field where subsidisation operates.”⁷⁹¹ Removing subsidisation was therefore a “must”, but it meant wage increases so it could work⁷⁹², given that the average African worker was “not in receipt of what can be termed an urban wage.”⁷⁹³

But the Minister continued to face strong opposition from a united front of Council and Industry in Bulawayo. Whereas the Minister rationalised his policy in terms of the principle of ‘economic housing,’ the councillors, industrialists and Ashton always emphasised how complex the balancing act of housing finance was (they managed to collect revenue of \$3 million per year with only \$100 of bad debts⁷⁹⁴), and how different categories of worker, especially low-wage married workers, would be unfairly affected by consolidation of rents and levy into wages, due to all kinds of rebalancing of rents.⁷⁹⁵ Furthermore, Bulawayo, as usual, had done things differently. It had a lower services levy than Salisbury and the other main towns of Rhodesia (\$1.30 as opposed to \$1.95), and it was the higher levy in other areas which had initially sparked industrialists’ ire and the Government’s political slogan of ending subsidisation. Bulawayo was therefore annoyed that it was affected by policies tailored to other cities’ situations.

This was argued by the Chairman of the Bulawayo Council’s Finance Committee, Jurick Goldwasser, who also happened to be a leading industrialist:

In Bulawayo, there is a strong consensus in industry, commerce and council, that consolidation should not be forced upon us...Salisbury started this hare... If our circumstances are different, let us go our own way. Let Matabeleland decide.

This is where the graphic artefact of the ‘rent card’, mentioned at the beginning of this section, became important. It helped Bulawayo Council to defend its system against “paternalism”. Thus, Goldwasser argued that

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹¹ Mark Partridge address to Local Government Association, 22nd May, 1973/NAZ/Proceedings of the Local Government Association Annual Conference, 1973

⁷⁹² ‘African wages must be improved to allow removal of subsidies – Partridge’, *The Chronicle*, 23 May, 1972

⁷⁹³ Mark Partridge address to Local Government Association, 14th May, 1973 /BCCA/Proceedings of the Local Government Association Annual Conference, 1973, p. 67).

⁷⁹⁴ J. Goldwasser, ‘Rent Allowance and Services Levy’, presentation at LGA Annual Conference (Fort Victoria, 1973)

⁷⁹⁵ ‘Services Levy could force up wages’, *The Chronicle*, 14th April, 1973

There are very few employees who are not acutely aware of the economic facts of life. There is no need to be sanctimonious about this and pretend there is some educational virtue in consolidation.

It was a “flimsy argument” to say that an African would be “more aware of the economic facts of life if he paid his own rent entirely”.⁷⁹⁶ Workers knew their rents were effectively part of the wage packet, and the rent card system in Bulawayo was a “documentary reminder” of this.⁷⁹⁷

In May, 1975, the Government was finally able to push through with the phasing out of the Services Levy by reducing it from \$1,30 to \$0,30 from July 1975, and eliminating it entirely from 1st July, 1976. Municipalities would then need to simultaneously raise rents and service charges to balance the African revenue account. Rents were raised in Bulawayo by 75c from 1st July, 1975, and by \$1,75 from 1st July, 1976. However, low earning employees (less than \$44/month) would still pay lower rent and would be effectively subsidised by higher earners. Therefore, as Ashton pointed out, the whole principle of subsidisation was perpetuated, and furthermore Bulawayo would have to find \$700,000 to balance the African housing account each year.⁷⁹⁸

These tensions between City and Government show how disagreements about practical solutions to housing finance and how to distribute financial liability, were wrapped once again in a moral discourse about making Africans ‘responsible’. In this case, the Government invoked this trope to defend its policy of removing subsidisation of any kind, whilst Bulawayo dismissed its claims as “sanctimonious”. This also shows the consistent resistance to Government policies from Bulawayo, with the Council sometimes even uniting with industry. When it came to giving Africans responsibility in urban management, as the following section demonstrates, again, the Government and Bulawayo Council had very different policies based on different visions of African integration into the city, yet they both tried to rationalise their policies as making Africans “responsible”.

⁷⁹⁶ J. Goldwasser, ‘Rent Allowance and Services Levy’, presentation at LGA Annual Conference (Fort Victoria, 1973);

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ Finance Committee minutes, 12 May 1975, p. 962/BCCA

Conflicting models for African ‘participation’ in urban management

Most British colonial urban authorities adopted some kind of system to give Africans “a say”, and a chance to become apprenticed in, urban management. Reluctant to give them seats on the municipal council, they usually adopted a version of an ‘advisory board’ system, which was designed for educated, middle class community leaders to sit on. The Advisory Board system in Rhodesia had a chequered and generally pitiful history. However, it took on a particular role and significance in Bulawayo. At the same time, Africans were clamouring for direct representation on the City Council. Given that the municipal franchise was always based on owning property in a rateable area, this was always problematic, and Africans only first got the municipal franchise in 1977. However, in the meantime, the Government mooted various policies of fragmenting the townships and making them semi-self-governing. This segregationist vision conflicted with the preferred unified model of governing in Bulawayo. This section analyses the disputes that ensued over these disagreements, and how again they revolved around the rhetorical use of the notion of “responsibility”.

Bulawayo was the first Rhodesian municipality to establish African advisory boards in 1940. The first Board consisted of 4 elected members from the Location, and 2 appointed by councillors. Many early board members were Malawian hotel workers, but they exercised very minimal influence over Council policy. In 1951, according to Government regulations, there were 12 elected members per board, who would hold office for 1 year. In 1954 the second board was established for the Western Commonage; a year later this was replaced by three boards: for Pelandaba (4 seats), Iminyela and Mabutweni (4 seats) and Njube (8 seats), and in 1955 a board was established at Pumula (4 seats).⁷⁹⁹ And so with each new township, a new board was established. All official board meetings were held in the Board Room on top of the African Administration Department’s headquarters. Board rooms were also built in some of the townships.

In the 1950s, township businessmen (shop-owners), artisans, clerks and drivers came to dominate the boards.⁸⁰⁰ The first female board member, Selina Lesabe, joined in 1956.⁸⁰¹ A venerable member of the community, and an employee in the African Administration

⁷⁹⁹ Urban African Affairs Commission, *Bulawayo’s answers to the questionnaire*, (1957), p. 73

⁸⁰⁰ Ndubiwa, ‘African Participation in Housing Management in Rhodesia’

⁸⁰¹ In 1961 Ashton proposed awarding her civic honours for her long-standing contribution to the township community (African admin 1961, pp. 2185 + 2610/BCCA).

Department's Welfare Section (1955-61), Lesabe was a "very active force" in women's clubs in the townships. She was given some civic recognition on retirement.⁸⁰²

The Boards' enjoyed varying degrees of legitimacy in the different African townships in the 1950s, if election turnout is any indication. Wealthier schemes like Barbour Fields and Pelandaba would typically have higher voter turnouts (45%, which was higher than turnout for the City Council elections), whereas the single men's schemes showed barely any interest (0.5%).⁸⁰³ But most board members had some standing in their communities, even if this did not translate into enthusiastic voting.

Although councils in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa were legally obligated to seek advice from boards on a wide range of matters (and boards could make proposals and consider annual estimates of expenditure), the system was generally regarded as unsatisfactory, even by European officials.⁸⁰⁴ Board members often protested at their toothless advisory status. In the rest of Anglophone Africa, due to the influence of the British Government, the boards gained some executive powers in the 1950s, but not in S. Rhodesia or South Africa.

The Bulawayo boards experienced an on-and-off turbulent relationship with the Council, as well as some bitter in-fighting.⁸⁰⁵ Although the members discussed the full range of township affairs, AAB meeting minutes in the 1950s evince the members' frequent frustration at their impotence with respect to key township policy issues, such as double punishment and evictions (see chapter 4). Council often disregarded their advice. For example, in 1952 the members raised the issue of poor road conditions in Makokoba. The Board Chairman (a white councillor) said the City Engineer was short-staffed and it would be a while before tarmacking could be done. Mr S. Juba said this was "unjustifiable" since he had raised the issue 4 years prior. He was asked to withdraw the statement or the meeting would be closed. Mr A. Mazibisa said they were tired of asking for road upgrading and should perhaps drop the issue; but Dick Masunda said that pursuing such issues was what they were there for – persistence was key.⁸⁰⁶

During the 1950s, Ashton tried to give the Boards some more hearing and therefore legitimacy, for which he received praise from the usually critical Charlton Ngcebetsha: the Boards and the AAD had enjoyed "very splendid collaboration", Ngcebetsha gushed in the *Home News* in

⁸⁰² African administration Committee minutes, 3 Oct, 1961/BCCA

⁸⁰³ Answers to Urban Affairs Commission, appendix B

⁸⁰⁴ Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs Annual Conference programme, 1958/BCCA

⁸⁰⁵ Charlton Ngcebetsha particularly liked to pick fights, and was cautioned for defaming other members as well as councillors a few times. (e.g. Town Clerk to Ashton, 19th October, 1953./BCCA/SO 3 (Transfer Box 153))

⁸⁰⁶ BAT Advisory Board meeting minutes, 17th Jan, 1952

1958, “mainly because of the right man at the head of the Department.”⁸⁰⁷ Ashton constantly tinkered with the Board system to give it additional powers.

But Africans and European officials alike recognised the inadequacy of the Advisory Board System. The Rhodesian Government and Bulawayo Council increasingly recognised, in the late 1950s, the need to involve urban Africans more directly in urban management.⁸⁰⁸ There were two ways to do this – one integrationist and one segregationist. The first ‘unitary city’ model meant extending the municipal franchise to African residents and offering them seats on the ‘mother council’; the second two-tier model would retain the (all-European) mother councils and introduce separate semi-autonomous African councils for each township, which would acquire some executive powers but still be subordinate in various respects to the mother council. Bulawayo favoured the first approach, the Government and Salisbury the second.

Both systems raised tricky questions: for the integrated model, how would the Council ward system (whereby European neighbourhoods were grouped into wards, each returning 2 councillors) work in the African townships? Traditionally, only property-owning ratepayers were enfranchised. The strange exclusions of the Land Apportionment Act meant Africans in urban areas could not own property on freehold until the 1960s, and even then it took many years before any sizeable number did so. For the separate development model: how would the autonomous African township authorities coordinate with the mother council? Would they end up in competition? And was it even feasible for townships comprising a few hundred houses and a handful of shops to be financially independent?

Already in the mid-50s, the government considered introducing autonomous councils at Mpopoma and New Highfields, whereby a “class of African property owners” in these schemes would pay rates to ‘native councils’, who would contract services from the European municipality (the two-tier model). This system of “responsible local government” for urban Africans would “not only provide an outlet for the more educated Africans, but should also make the African more self-reliant”.⁸⁰⁹

But the first serious national discussion on how to give Africans more say in the management of their urban affairs came with the 1958 Urban Affairs Commission. The Commission believed that gradual integration into the mother council should be the ultimate goal,

⁸⁰⁷ *Home News*, 1 January 1958, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 186

⁸⁰⁸ Meanwhile, a significant change in local government administration in the rural areas came in 1958, with the establishment of ‘Native Councils’ to whom various responsibilities, including raising funds, were transferred from European officials of the Native Affairs Department. This was hailed as the “ending of a long period of ‘paternalistic’ government.” (Wits Historical Papers/AD1715/27.3.12/Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs monthly bulletin no. 18, Dec 1957 and Jan 1958.)

⁸⁰⁹ *The Chronicle*, 19 February, 1955

but that the time was not yet ripe for *full* representation of all African residents. Rather, African Advisory Boards' decision-making powers should be increased, and members should sit on municipal councils' finance and African administration committees.⁸¹⁰

Ashton wrote a comprehensive account to the Urban Affairs Commission of his ideas about African participation in urban management. He had serious objections to the segregationist two-tier model⁸¹¹

[U]rban Africans are, more and more, becoming part and parcel of the whole urban community, and are much closer to their European fellow citizens, with whom they share the same basic problems of housing, recreation and employment than they are to Africans in the rural areas. All town dwellers have a wide sphere of common interest, and it is not easy to separate the interests of different sections of the community. If the principle of integration is to be accepted, there must be a gradual venture under a single and not dual control – there must be one authority, and that not central government, so that the transition can proceed gradually and smoothly.⁸¹²

This was to be the basis of Council policy – an integrated city under a single mother Council, resisting Government interference. Without going so far as to call for direct representation for Africans at this time (1957), the Bulawayo Council submitted to the Government its plan of delegating more and more powers to the African Advisory Boards on an increasing scale as they gained experience. However, its “prodding” received no response from Government.

Meanwhile, there was pressure “from below” for direct representation. The Mpopoma Leaseholders' Association and Mpopoma Advisory Board collaborated to put pressure on Council. Ashton also reported that he had noticed some talk about these issues amongst the African community, and especially in the *African Home News* and *African Daily News*. He complained to the Town Clerk that the Government had not given due consideration to Africans' desire for direct representation: “The major issue has not been faced. Would it not be a good thing all round to do so?”⁸¹³

⁸¹⁰ Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 175. A distinction was made between the power to execute/implement things, and the power simply to decide. The first required a civil service, but the second merely meant the board's advice would be automatically heeded in certain matters.

⁸¹¹ One of them was that in partly managing their own townships, Africans would be tempted to act corruptly, unless and until they were paid significantly more than at present. But more importantly, he did not like the idea of a fragmented city where the autonomous townships would be more answerable to the Government than the municipality. This was the centralised South African approach which he repudiated.

⁸¹² Answers to the Urban Affairs Commission, Appendix B, p. 9.

⁸¹³ BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. p. 63

Ashton consulted lawyers to ascertain the legality of creating wards out of the African townships⁸¹⁴, whereupon he was advised that this should, theoretically, be possible. His proposal was to give African home owners “ratepayer” status, thus granting them the Municipal franchise in the ordinary way. For rental townships, he proposed creating elected Councils with delegating powers, similar to a system in Kenya.⁸¹⁵ All of this would require new legislation and new financial calculations. The basic problem was that the *Municipal Act* did not apply to the African areas, which fell under the *Land Apportionment Act* and the *Urban Areas Act*. Ashton therefore proposed that the Municipal Act should be amended to enable a new system of African direct representation.

In the meantime, concerned by the growing urgency of the matter, Council resolved on 3rd July, 1960, to delegate various executive powers to the Advisory Boards as an interim measure.⁸¹⁶ The Monckton Commission of 1960 then went further than the Urban Affairs Commission, arguing that limiting the municipal franchise to European ratepayers was inadequate. Africans should be enfranchised and should be able to stand for elected office on urban councils. In 1960, due to the Government’s non-responsiveness on the issue of direct representation, the Council resolved (3rd July) to give the African Advisory Boards various executive functions and powers. The Bulawayo boards were the only ones to work closely with the Council in preparing capital estimates for African administration.⁸¹⁷ In 1961, Ashton convinced Council to let board members elect their own African vice-chairman, instead of a European councillor being appointed.⁸¹⁸ He also suggested the press should be admitted to board meetings.⁸¹⁹

The Whitehead Government introduced a Local Government Bill in that same year, promoting autonomous townships, run by ‘Local Government Boards’. This was not what the Bulawayo Council favoured. The Town Clerk, Eddie White, complained in a confidential report that it would “carve up the Municipality into black and white autonomous areas”; it would “lead to the severing of the Municipal limbs”. He likened this political separation to the bantustans of the Union of South Africa, which, unlike in Bulawayo, were geographically removed from the European towns. Given “the Government’s avowed intention of abrogating the Land Apportionment Act”, White was confounded by this Bill’s promotion of ‘separate development’.

⁸¹⁴ Ashton consulted John Stirling of Coghlan and Welsh, in September, 1960. BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. p. 64

⁸¹⁵ BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. p. 63

⁸¹⁶ Ashton annual report, 1960/BCCA

⁸¹⁷ Passmore, *Local Government Legislation in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 20

⁸¹⁸ African Administration Committee minutes, 27th Feb, 1961/BCCA

⁸¹⁹ African Administration Committee minutes, 8th Nov., 1961/BCCA

The Government was at pains to present the Bill as non-racial, saying it was equally applicable to undeveloped European townships on the urban periphery as well. But the town clerk disputed this: “There is no doubt that it has been designed principally to deal with African townships, despite its non-racial flavour”.⁸²⁰ He went to Salisbury for what turned out to be “a whole day of argument” with Government officials and other municipal representatives. He was shocked by officials’ ignorance of the Bill’s actual contents – none of them had a good overview – and their statements frequently contradicted clauses in the Bill. After some probing, the Town Clerk ascertained that the Bill envisaged almost full autonomy for the townships.

Reporting back to his Council, White described Bulawayo as being in “a battle with the Government”, lamenting that, “this duality will cause no end of harm and trouble...”

It will be a perpetuation of the policy of separation which has given rise to so much bitterness and hatred. It will set up an enclave of people who believe that they have been fobbed off with something inferior; that they do not belong to the town and that they are only of any use to the white man to help him to make money for the economy of his white city. Above all it deprives them of that human factor – “a sense of belonging”. I cannot see it working in an alleged multi-racial society...⁸²¹

This was surprisingly integrationist language for someone who later joined the Rhodesia Front. But we should not interpret his views purely in terms of political ideals, for they were also pragmatic. Whilst the Town Clerk publically expressed his concern that the Bill “evades the vital issue of direct African representation” and “makes a mockery of so-called partnership”⁸²², he also warned in a confidential report that it would require the municipality to relinquish “vast assets” (buildings and services) to the proposed Local Government Boards of each township, and that these boards would be able to specify trading rights and hours in competition with the city, which could be “detrimental to established interests”.⁸²³ It would “unwittingly set up autonomous bodies in competition with the economics of towns as they exist”, which he perceived as a grave danger. Furthermore, the Bulawayo Council was deeply concerned, as always, about threats to its autonomy. White warned that the Bill would usurp the Council’s power over its African townships, which should be resisted, since “past experience” had shown that Government would pay mere lip-service to consulting the Council before interfering in the townships.

⁸²⁰ The TC in a confidential report, 17th October, 1960/BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill

⁸²¹ BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. [p. 131]

⁸²² Town Clerk report of 13th September, 1960 to delegates to the Municipal Association Executive Meeting, 19th September, 1960/ BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. [p. 136]

⁸²³ Confidential report, 17th October, 1960/BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. p. 137

It is interesting how Bulawayo Council officials spoke of the townships in an almost sentimental language of inclusion. The town clerk lamented how the Townships Bill would turn the townships into “enclaves working out their own destiny, security and evolution apart from the main town where they work and have their economic being”, whereas, “Normally one would regard these townships as being part and parcel of Bulawayo, leading eventually into their incorporation into the Municipal area and their representation on the City Council”.⁸²⁴ As in so many areas of African affairs, the capital city took a different tack. The Bulawayo council noted how, “Salisbury, almost all on its own, believes that the Bill can work...but is somewhat horrified at the financial aspects.”⁸²⁵

Salisbury and Bulawayo were always the two dominant voices with most voting power in the Rhodesian Local Government Association (LGA)⁸²⁶, and they often sparred in that forum, with Salisbury begrudging any loss of influence. On the Townships Bill issue, two much smaller local authorities – Marandellas and Fort Victoria – rallied behind Bulawayo, with the Secretary of the Marandellas Town Management Board writing to Eddie White that the Bill “can result only in chaos”. He therefore suggested that Bulawayo, Marandellas, and Fort Victoria should unite behind the back of the LGA, and “renew the attack against the Government policy”.⁸²⁷

But in the end the Bill was passed in 1961, with Bulawayo complaining that everything it had opposed in the Bill was retained, and so in a spirit of resignation, the Town Clerk decided that, “as the Bill is now an Act there is no point in labouring this aspect...What now remains is for the Council to decide what attitude it intends to take towards its implementation”.⁸²⁸ It turned out that the Council’s attitude was obstinate; it never implemented the Bill, but instead continued to pursue its own agenda of direct representation for Africans.

As for the Advisory Boards, they also opposed the Bill. At this point the Boards were dominated by political figures; every member was a nationalist.⁸²⁹ Whilst they sought more executive power, which the Bill would have accorded them, they opposed this policy of splitting the African urban communities off from the parent city. They claimed it entrenched racial segregation, and furthermore they hadn’t been consulted during the drafting of the Bill. This stance differed from Salisbury’s African Advisory Boards. At a conference of all the African

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁶ Also known as the Municipal Association.

⁸²⁷ Marandellas Town Management Board to The Town Clerk, Bulawayo, 4th Feb, 1961. BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. p. 69

⁸²⁸ BCCA/L2/78. Local Government Bill. p. 19.

⁸²⁹ Palley, *The Constitutional History*, p. 631. Some members were also municipal employees, which caused controversy, not only amongst councillors and residents but also within the boards. (BCCA/African Administration Committee minutes, 8th November, 1961, p. 2413).

Advisory Board and Residents' Association members from across the country in 1962, when the Bulawayo delegates proposed a motion to integrate the African townships rather than separate them, they faced strong opposition from Salisbury. Salisbury's AABs were divided, with Harari township favouring integration and New Highfields requesting autonomy.⁸³⁰

Bulawayo's African leaders kept their eyes on the main prize: acquiring seats on the all-European City Council. Bulawayo Councillors had proposed this at a Municipal Association conference in 1961, for which the Mpopoma Advisory Board expressed "deep appreciation."⁸³¹ In 1962, the Advisory Boards decided to send a delegation to the BCC to negotiate direct representation. They were offered 4 seats on the Council (out of a total of 16). To the Council's surprise, the African delegates responded by demanding 20 seats (more than at that time existed) as a fairer representation of the city's demographics. Since the Municipal Act allowed only 24 seats to a Council, acceding to this request would have given a significant majority to Africans. Consequently, the councillors asked the African delegates to moderate their demands, but deadlock ensued.

In November, 1962, the Minister of Local Government and Native Affairs came with his secretary to informally discuss this whole issue with the Bulawayo City Council. He accepted that there could be no uniform policy; every municipality would have to figure out its own plan – whether to pursue integration, or separation/autonomy for the townships. The Bulawayo Council said there was no time for such a long-winded process, and direct representation was a matter of urgency. It set up a panel of inquiry, which devised a way to incorporate the townships into the municipality as *housing areas*, which would be subject to different rating, tariffs and by-laws from the *rateable area* where Europeans lived. The franchise would be based on the concept of *responsible occupancy of prescribed property*, with careful definitions of "occupier" and "immovable property".⁸³²

The newly defined municipal area would be divided into 12 wards returning two councillors each, with the wards delineated according to a weighting of residential property value.⁸³³ This system would have returned 8 seats to Africans. But the Panel's proposals were a non-starter, as the right-wing Rhodesia Front had just come to power in December 1962 on a platform of halting all integrationist policies. The question of direct representation for Africans

⁸³⁰ In any case, to both requests the Government did not respond. (Ndubiwa, 'African Participation in Housing Management', p. 77)

⁸³¹ Council Meeting minutes, 7 February 1962/BCCA

⁸³² Representation in Local Government Area under the Jurisdiction of the City Council of Bulawayo (City of Bulawayo, Report of the Panel of Inquiry, Feb. 1963. Mimeographed), in Passmore, *Local Government Legislation*, p. 8 and Palley, *The Constitutional History*, p. 651

⁸³³ Passmore, *Local Government Legislation in Southern Rhodesia*, pp. 8-9

on the “mother” council was therefore put on ice, and so began a long battle between City and Government over integrated versus separate political development for urban Africans.

Various commissions – such as the Peterson Commission of 1962, and the Lloyd Panel of 1963 – proposed different forms of African participation without actually giving them direct representation.⁸³⁴ And so Bulawayo councillors had no option but to learn from elsewhere how direct representation could work. Therefore, Ashton and the town clerk, medical officer of health and city treasurer went south and visited Benoni⁸³⁵, which was one of the few towns in South Africa that had a separate local authority for Africans – what was called an “urban Bantu Council” – for an area called Daveyton.⁸³⁶ They were impressed by its civic centre, sports stadium and 18-hole golf course, but this did not make them more amenable to the separate development idea. As the town clerk argued, Bulawayo’s geography was *much more integrated* than that of South African cities. In the end, however, their plans for African seats in the Council never materialised as it contradicted the Rhodesia Front’s policies.

With this failure to acquire seats on the Council, as well as failure to prevent another rent increase to offset deficit on the revenue account (see above), all 38 members of Bulawayo’s 6 advisory boards unanimously chose to disband the boards in 1964. As one African businessman told the Chronicle, “The African wants direct representation, and that does not mean in an advisory capacity”.⁸³⁷ At this time, only one of Salisbury’s three boards was functioning. Rhodesia’s advisory board system was in a sorry state. Claire Palley argues that,

Bulawayo, of all Southern Rhodesian municipalities, gave most encouragement to the Boards, consulting them closely on the framing of estimates and accepting Board recommendations on details on the estimates. The failure of the Boards must be explained on political grounds.⁸³⁸

In response to this decision, Ashton displayed his vision for gradual integration, and his conception of the boards as a form of African apprenticeship as much as representation:

To those who believe gradual integration offers the best long term solution to our political problems, this outcome of all earlier negotiations has proved a great disappointment...Time alone will judge its wisdom. But its adoption has for the time

⁸³⁴ E. Gargett, ‘Welfare Services in an African Urban Area’, p. 174-175.

⁸³⁵ As well as Germiston, Pretoria and Johannesburg

⁸³⁶ ‘City Team on SA Visit’ *The Chronicle*, 12 May, 1965 and ‘Delegation returns from SA’, *The Chronicle*, 15 May, 1965.

⁸³⁷ ‘Africans complain they have no voice in local government’, *The Chronicle*, 16th Sep. 1964

⁸³⁸ Palley, *The constitutional history*, p. 670

being put “paid” to orderly African advancement, and to immediate African apprenticeship in the problem of Local Government.⁸³⁹

Meanwhile, the Government kept reviving and shelving the idea of semi-autonomous, self-governing African townships. This was couched within the Rhodesia Front’s broad policy framework of ‘community development’, namely:

plac[ing] responsibility for decision-making in local affairs on the freely chosen representatives of responsible people at the community and local government levels, and to assist people to acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills and resources required to solve, through communal self-help and organisation, as wide a range of local problems as possible in their own order of priority.⁸⁴⁰

The semi-autonomous townships would give an opportunity for urban Africans, whom the Minister of Local Government vividly described as in a state of moral confusion – “uprooted from his traditional social order based on a communal way of life” – to nurture community spirit and take on some responsibility.⁸⁴¹ As noted in the last chapter, Ashton and others suspected that community development was a thinly veiled form of apartheid and a gimmick, arguing that it was “no new arrival” and “unfortunately it has become something of a political philosophy instead of simply a sensible administrative attitude...”⁸⁴² He noticed how it had “so far stultified development rather than promoted it”, and promoted Bulawayo’s administrative philosophy instead:

Here in Bulawayo, within the limits of practical possibility, the Council has done its utmost to run the African Townships not merely as a housing scheme for city labourers, but as a real home and a place where its people can realise the maximum of their human potentiality. It has always been sensitive to the views of the residents themselves, and has encouraged them to come forward with constructive schemes for the improvement of their suburbs.⁸⁴³

The Ministry of Internal Affairs defended community development as non-racial, asserting that it was merely an attempt to apply social scientific knowledge to administrative problems.⁸⁴⁴ It took credit for helping Africans to “help themselves”. Yet the powers being offered to these

⁸³⁹ Annual report of the director, 1964/BCCA

⁸⁴⁰ Prime Minister’s Directive of 1965, paragraph 7, quoted in Minister’s speech to LGA, 26th May, 1975/BCCA/H7c, p. 104

⁸⁴¹ ‘Govt. will encourage local authorities in African townships’, *The Chronicle*, 31 Aug, 1967.

⁸⁴² Annual report of the director, 1963 /BCCA

⁸⁴³ Annual report of the Director, 1964 /BCCA

⁸⁴⁴ Passmore, *Local Government Legislation in Southern Rhodesia*, p. 8

autonomous township councils were extremely circumscribed. Ashton said the Government's proposals "suffer from the same built-in flaw that they are too timid and circumscribed and so fail to catch the imagination and interest of those who could play a significant part in this field."⁸⁴⁵ The Minister justified these circumscribed powers on the basis that, "[T]he African must learn to walk before he can run, and any suggestion of this sort of representation cannot possibly occur until he can prove that he can run his own township."⁸⁴⁶ Each side accused the other of not giving Africans enough responsibility.

Interestingly, several African parliamentarians pushed hard to have this segregationist policy implemented. Mr Josiah Gondo complained of much talk and no action. Mr P. Rubatika argued that, "The Africans found dignity in separate identity" and "would like to see areas like Highfield and Harari ultimately with their own councillors and mayors".⁸⁴⁷ Salisbury City Council was also in favour⁸⁴⁸, and by 1966 it proposed converting Harari – the only Salisbury township with an advisory board – into the country's first autonomous African urban area.⁸⁴⁹ By contrast, a Bulawayo MP and former mayor argued that if the advisory board system worked better in Bulawayo, then Bulawayo should be allowed to retain and enhance it.⁸⁵⁰

As the parliamentary debates became more heated, even the African members who supported separate autonomous townships endured condescending remarks from European RF members, who felt they expected *too much* autonomy. Mr I. Samuriwo (UPP) insisted that, "We want to decide what to do with our own townships", to which Mr D. Divaris (RF, and also a Salisbury Councillor) retorted, "They are not your own townships". Mr B. Ponter (RF) asserted that, "as a race and as a people they have not enjoyed the experience of the art of government at any level". Mr R. James (RF) accused the Bulawayo Council of "irresponsible" behaviour, for having offered council seats to Africans in 1962, which he described as "a time when the Bulawayo council was very liberal, almost Communist".⁸⁵¹

Meanwhile, back in Bulawayo in the mid-60s, Jimmy Ncube, a clerk in the Housing and Amenities Department,⁸⁵² was "working behind the scenes trying to resuscitate the boards".⁸⁵³

⁸⁴⁵ Annual Report of the Director, 1967, para 12/BCCA

⁸⁴⁶ 'Policy on Township Boards outlined', *The Chronicle*, 3 August, 1967

⁸⁴⁷ 'Municipal Bill may be applied to cities – Partridge', *The Chronicle*, 30th August, 1968

⁸⁴⁸ (following a year-long inquiry into the matter and secret talks with the minister ('Council has secret plan', *Chronicle*, 26th October, 1965)).

⁸⁴⁹ 'Self-rule plan for African townships will be put to minister today', *The Chronicle*, 16 March, 1966

⁸⁵⁰ 'Govt. will encourage local authorities in African townships', *The Chronicle*, 31 Aug, 1967. [Local Govt. 2, p. 35]

⁸⁵¹ R. F. James to the House of Parliament 'Gondo pleads: drop advisory board system', *The Chronicle*, 24th August, 1967.

⁸⁵² As the African Administration Department was then called (1963-75).

⁸⁵³ Interview with Jimmy Ncube, Bulawayo, 1st March, 2017

But this took 4 years. In 1967, Ashton noticed that some interest in the advisory boards was rekindled amongst “the older, conservative element in the population”, whom he praised for “risking public odium by standing for election”.⁸⁵⁴ But only in 1968 did the boards finally resurrect. Ashton reported this as, “Perhaps the most important single event of the year”.

When the Boards were resuscitated, they decided to unite as one Board with 20 seats for all of Western Bulawayo – called the Joint Townships Board – and between 1969 and 1974 the Council only over-rode one Board recommendation (on a key rent issue again). Dauda claims that this made Bulawayo “the only urban area that gave boards legitimacy by accepting most of their recommendations.”⁸⁵⁵ The “almost automatic” acceptance of the Joint Board’s proposals gave it *de facto* powers of approval over most everyday administrative policies. Dabengwa believes the Boards were considered legitimate: “They were legitimate. You can’t run away from that. But I think your question should be: were they effective?”⁸⁵⁶ Indeed, many found the Joint Board system still woefully inadequate, including department officials such as Gargett.⁸⁵⁷

In contrast to Bulawayo’s clear rejection of semi-autonomous townships, and choice to empower the Boards instead, Salisbury seemed to sit half-heartedly on the fence. Its advisory board system was all but defunct by the 1970s, according to Chitofiri.⁸⁵⁸ In June, 1971 the first semi-autonomous African local authority was established at St Mary’s township, which was 12 miles south of Salisbury CBD.⁸⁵⁹ By 1972, Minister Partridge proclaimed that he would introduce 10 of these local authorities by the end of the year as part of “community development”. He was now calling them “Township Boards” instead of Local Government Boards.⁸⁶⁰ These boards would focus on social problems and take responsibility for minor local services, but all engineering services would remain outside their remit.⁸⁶¹ But there is evidence that there was disagreement about this policy, not just between Councils and Central Government, but even *within* the Central Government. The Ministry of Internal Affairs did not like the Ministry of Local Government’s whole Township Boards idea. It preferred to establish African Councils under the African Councils Act, which would mean that “tribal leaders” – chiefs and headmen from surrounding areas – would rule in the townships.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁴ Annual report of the Directory, 1967, para. 11/BCCA

⁸⁵⁵ C. Dauda, *Meeting the Requirements of a New Localism: Local Government in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Uganda and Zimbabwe* (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1999), p. 94

⁸⁵⁶ Interview with Dumiso Dabengwa,

⁸⁵⁷ E. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 163.

⁸⁵⁸ Chitofiri, *Urban Protest*, p. 172-3

⁸⁵⁹ Davis, *Race Relations in Rhodesia*, p. 306.

⁸⁶⁰ ‘10 township boards by end of year?’, *The Chronicle*, 16 March, 1972

⁸⁶¹ ‘Africans to have their own local authorities’, *The Chronicle*, March 1972 [Local govt. 1, p. 140]

⁸⁶² Chitofiri, *Urban Protest*, p. 176

Nevertheless, by 1975, Partridge's policy was under way, with Township Boards in Marandellas, St Mary's, Bindura, Norton, Umvukwes, Shabani, Chipinga and Amandas, and proposals to create them in Fort Victoria, Que Que, Umtali and Salisbury's Kambazuma. In Bulawayo, however, they were conspicuously absent. Partridge's successor, Bill Irvine, continued to drive this policy, which was clearly designed not just to encourage African apprenticeship in the art of governance, but also to offload responsibility. As Irvine explained: "At present, any time anything goes wrong in one of the townships, it is the European who is blamed. I believe it is high time that the African should be put in the position of proving whether he can do better..."⁸⁶³

The Bulawayo Council, under the influence of Ashton and the African Advisory Boards, continued to resist the system. Ashton advised the Minister of Local Government that "there was no reason to suppose that the Africans would support the idea of having individual township boards for the different townships" in Bulawayo, especially since it had the country's most effective and unified Joint Townships Advisory Board by this time. He asked the Minister to maintain direct contact with himself and his department (i.e. to bypass the Bulawayo council).

The Joint Townships African Advisory Board rejected the Minister's two-tier approach, preferring a unitary 'one-city' model to a fragmentation of the townships. The minister came to Bulawayo and the Councillors and Boards sat together in the council chamber for the first time ever. They were united in defying the minister.⁸⁶⁴ Thus, forming a united front, Ashton and the Boards claimed to have the backing of the African residents in rejecting separate development. Ashton then asked rhetorically why direct representation on the mother Council was not allowed. But he knew this was "contrary to Government thinking".

Under pressure to adopt the Government's two-tier policy, Ashton argued that it would not work unless there was *one board* for the whole township area (instead of boards for each township), with wider powers than heretofore proposed. Ashton was also loathe to allow undue Government interference in Bulawayo through its township boards policy, warning the Local Government Minister to "accept the bona fides of Council's officials and not insist on bringing its own people into the townships".⁸⁶⁵ The Minister rejected his call to create one board and confer more powers on it. He chastised Bulawayo for not giving Africans governing responsibilities in their own townships, and Bulawayo chastised the Government for not allowing Africans to sit on the mother Council itself – which was the ultimate position of responsibility. As independence became imminent, Bulawayo was the only City Council in 1979 to unequivocally endorse a unitary

⁸⁶³ Minister's speech to Local Government Association, 26th May, 1975. BCCA/H7c [p. 107]

⁸⁶⁴ 'Africans sit with Bulawayo councillors', *The Chronicle*, 13 May, 1974

⁸⁶⁵ Confidential Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities to the Housing and Amenities Committee, 27th June, 1975, BCCA/H7c [p. 110]

model of local government, rather than the two-tier model, by merging its experienced Joint Advisory Board with the Council. Although this unfairly favoured whites, and on this basis was heavily criticised by Sidney Malunga of the Bulawayo Progressive Residents' Association⁸⁶⁶, it was still preferred by the African board members over a two-tier system.

Conclusion:

This chapter examined how the Bulawayo Council and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing rationalised their respective policies on African 'participation' in housing and local government in terms of affording the detribalising African an opportunity to practice and acquire the 'responsibilities' of modern citizenship. The Bulawayo Council was able to present its extensive home ownership programmes as evidence of its enlightened recognition of Africans' need to learn about "economic value" and the "responsibilities of modern life". The comparatively liberal Governments of Todd and Whitehead between 1953 and 1962 gave verbal and material support to Bulawayo's efforts – which mirrored the encouragement of a responsible, property-owning rural citizenry through the Native Land Husbandry Act. However, the segregationist RF Government became hostile to Africans owning property in the urban areas, as it sought to re-establish them as white spaces, in which Africans should reside merely as workers on sufferance. It was therefore ambivalent about the type of responsible citizen it wished to promote in the urban areas, and from the 1970s it was clear that only a privileged wealthy few would be allowed to become propertied citizens.

Meanwhile, in the domain of rental housing, the Government increasingly sought an end to subsidisation of any kind, seeking to place African housing on an economic footing to remove barriers to private finance entering this field. This policy was rationalised as encouraging Africans to fully 'participate' in their housing and thereby become more financially responsible. Bulawayo was accused of being paternalistic, for defending pooled rents and the industrial services levy for pragmatic reasons (administrative efficiency, preventing bad debts, and maintaining the delicate financial equilibrium of its rental schemes). But the Bulawayo Council managed to win over the support of the city's leading industrialists, launching a counter-attack on the Government for being muddled by "woolly economic thinking", ignorant of local economic realities, misguided in its application to Bulawayo of policies that were tailored more to Salisbury's situation, and generally sanctimonious about its claims to responsabilise Africans. Further in its defence, the

⁸⁶⁶ 'City merger plan labelled a sham', *The Chronicle*, 9 Aug, 1979

Bulawayo Council pointed to its unique ‘rent card’ system as proof that its workers were well aware that their rents were taken automatically out of their wage packet, i.e. they were already “acutely aware of the economic facts of life” and did not need to be further educated on the matter.

When it came to proposing models of local government that would enable Africans to participate, Bulawayo favoured either some limited African representation on the ‘Mother Council’, or a united, empowered Advisory Board, in which township leaders would be apprenticed in urban management. The RF Government, on the other hand, proposed a segregationist vision of semi-autonomous townships, in accordance with its ‘community development’ agenda, and claimed that this would give Africans more responsibility. Ashton and the Town Clerk portrayed the Government’s model as a “severing of the municipal limbs”, claiming in sentimental language that, “Normally one would regard these townships as being part and parcel of Bulawayo”. Of course, there were pragmatic reasons for Bulawayo’s preferences, too. If the townships were autonomous the municipality would lose vast assets; furthermore, Ashton found the Boards administratively useful as a way to deflect the demands of the RAs, or alternatively as a way to obstruct authoritarian moves by state officials, by claiming fastidiously that the Boards needed to be consulted first.

These battles about African participation in housing and urban management, show how the powerful moral notion of ‘responsibility’ could be used to rationalise fundamentally different visions of urban development. Bulawayo envisaged a more integrated city with heavy municipal involvement in development. The RF Government envisaged a segregated city with the state retreating from its role in financing housing wherever possible. Their different underlying visions reflected not just deep ideological disagreements but also different pragmatic concerns. In these battles, local state agents held their own, challenging top-down policy directives, as being profoundly detached from local economic and social realities, as well as local visions for the city’s development.

6. Municipal Beer Gardens and the Contradictions of Promoting Drinking for Development

Colonial urban authorities obsessed about Africans drinking alcohol. They were concerned about the type of alcohol they drank, the effects it had on them and their communities, and where they drank it. Beer drinking was integral to most Southern African societies in pre-colonial times. It was therefore inevitable that it would become an integral part of African social life in colonial towns. This was something that British colonial authorities sometimes tried to prohibit in the early days, but in vain, and so they devised ways to control and profit from it. The ubiquitous model for the control and profit of African beer was the 'Durban system', named after the city where it was pioneered.

The Durban system was implemented immediately after the Natal Native Beer Act was passed in 1908, ending a prohibition on African liquor consumption in the urban areas of Natal, which had allowed an illicit trade to flourish. The Act gave municipalities a monopoly on the sale of beer in the areas under their jurisdiction, provided all revenues went to a special 'Native Administration Fund', to be used for welfare provision in the African township areas (schools, hospitals, hostels, etc.). According to Swanson, this system ensured that,

Beer revenues became the key financial support of a more intensive and comprehensive programme of paternalistic administration than ever before, tending with relative efficiency to restrain Africans to barracks and locations.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶⁷ Swanson, 'The Durban System', p. 174

Typically, alcohol was sold and consumed in municipal ‘beer halls’ – cavernous, austere venues where punters drank opaque beer made in a traditional style from sorghum and rapoko, from large plastic mugs. This municipal beer monopoly system was to spread to several colonies to the north, including the Rhodesias, and right up to Uganda and Sudan.⁸⁶⁸

The Bulawayo Council developed the most elaborate infrastructure of beer gardens in the country, if not the continent, turning the conventional municipal beer monopoly system into a sizeable business enterprise for a city of Bulawayo’s size. Bulawayo’s home ownership schemes were funded mostly from loans from municipal ‘beer profits’, as were its African welfare, health, education and recreation programmes. But promoting beer drinking in order to fund township development seemed deeply contradictory. The African Administration Department therefore tried to assimilate beer gardens seamlessly into its township development vision, presenting them as places of respectable, responsible, supervised sociality, in contrast to the “evil” illicit drinking dens that were so often preferred by drinkers (especially the middle classes). This chapter examines how the municipal beer monopoly system was incorporated into the township development strategies of the Bulawayo Council, the contradictions that arose therefrom, and how administrators tried to resolve them.

The early days: alcohol and social control

Beer drinking was integral to pre-colonial Zimbabwean societies, but in the context of 20th century colonial towns, new moral judgements about who should drink, and where, evolved. African residents, European residents, and state officials developed conflicting moral judgements about drinking. The state tried to simultaneously control African drinking patterns and profit from them, whilst the latter exerted their own social controls over one another, on the basis of class, gender and age.

The municipality’s control of liquor in Bulawayo went back to its earliest days. Section 27 of the 1895 Location Regulations⁸⁶⁹ prohibited the consumption of any alcoholic liquor in the Bulawayo Location, *including* the traditional opaque brew referred to by officials as “native beer”⁸⁷⁰. This complete prohibition resulted in rampant illicit brewing and drinking. Brewers were always women, continuing the gendered pre-colonial brewing tradition, many of whom relied heavily on

⁸⁶⁸ Rogerson and Tuck, ‘A Strange Case of Beer’, p. 16

⁸⁶⁹ These were Bulawayo bye-laws

⁸⁷⁰ It was also referred to as “kaffir beer”, and from the 1950s also commonly referred to as “African beer”.

this illicit business to feed themselves and their families in the context of widespread poverty and structural oppression in the urban setting.

Bulawayo's prohibition remained in force, despite Ordinance 13 of 1902 allowing native beer to be brewed and sold in the colony.⁸⁷¹ After a few years, the municipalities of Southern Rhodesia, as in Durban, saw the value of establishing their own breweries to control the extensive drinking in the African community and profit from it themselves. The first municipal brewery in the colony was built in Salisbury, in 1908.⁸⁷² Bulawayo Council built its first brewery in the centre of the Location in 1913 to counter the "evils" of illicit brewing. This turned out to be "an instant success, not only as a valuable source of revenue, but as a means of providing a much needed amenity."⁸⁷³ It was immediately expanded to create the iconic and enormous Main Beer Hall, known as the "Big Bar" or "Big Bhawa". At this time, African women, who were the most competent brewers of traditional African beer, were employed by the Council to brew on a commercial scale.

The Main Beer Hall was the only venue for legal drinking in the African side of Bulawayo for the first half-century of the city's existence. It was oppressive. A township resident described in 1929 how, "...[W]hen you go to the beerhall, you are like prisoners. You must stand in a row like at the Pass office. The Bulawayo treatment is very bad"⁸⁷⁴. The Main Beer Hall facilities were extended with two kiosks in 1940, leased to Africans. Finally, a saloon bar was built in 1951 to provide a more congenial setting for higher class customers. It started off well, but ended up swamped, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, by "rough elements". By this point the Main Beer Hall had 3 bars, the saloon bar, various halls, the 2 kiosks, and an eating house called the Hollywood Café.⁸⁷⁵

African elites were extremely embittered by the discriminatory legal restrictions on the types of alcohol they could consume. They demanded the same drinking rights as Europeans, in accordance with Rhodes' famous dictum: "Equal Rights for All Civilised Men". But they were wont to exclude their less educated brethren from the ranks of the "civilised", and support continued restrictions on them. Thus, as West has cogently argued, there was a strong class

⁸⁷¹ The sale of any other liquor of more than 2.75% alc/vol to Africans – including spirits, wine, cider, hop beer, or any fermented or distilled liquor – was prohibited. The various *ad hoc* laws controlling the sale of liquor to Africans after the 1902 Ordinance were consolidated in the Liquor Act of 1930.

⁸⁷² Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 23

⁸⁷³ Annual Report of the Director, 1957/BCCA

⁸⁷⁴ CID report to Chief Superintendent, 10 June 1929, in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 52

⁸⁷⁵ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 38

dimension to the African struggle for drinking rights in the interwar period – a struggle in which many leading nationalists cut their teeth.⁸⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the Council's brewery failed to keep up with demand in the 1940s. It doubled production between 1941 and 1949, in the context of the massive influx of workers during the industrial boom. But the demand was too great, and illicit brewing of both beer and skokiaan became rampant, fuelling parties of up to 1,000, to which the Special Police 'liquor detachment' responded with armoured vehicles and tear gas.⁸⁷⁷ In 1948, the Mayor announced that a "new and up-to-date brewery" would be erected.⁸⁷⁸ But since extensions to the original plant were not feasible, an entirely separate brewery was built in a malt factory in the industrial areas, in 1949. Production was so much higher there that, in October 1950⁸⁷⁹, the old brewery at the Location was shut down after 37 years in operation.

In the 1950s, whilst municipal beer production massively increased, restrictions on African alcohol consumption were gradually relaxed. With the passing of the Native Beer Act in 1952, Africans were allowed to acquire a permit from the superintendent to purchase municipal beer for consumption in their homes. The Advisory Board Members were deeply divided on this issue.⁸⁸⁰ At one meeting, Mr Mazibisa hailed it as a welcome result for "decent Africans", who had waited years to be able to drink at home instead of the Beer Hall. The Chairman of the Board, a European councillor, thought the law could be abused, but he "could not see why a good respectable African could not have his beer at home". Several others agreed. Mr Ngazimbi, for example, said that it was a chance for Africans to prove that they were not "irresponsible".

Charlton Ngcebetsha, on the other hand, opposed the legislation very strongly, seeing it as a gateway to illicit skokiaan brewing.⁸⁸¹ Mr Tengeletu and Mr Dick Masunda were in Ngcebetsha's camp, worrying that it would lead to trouble and fighting in the townships. Masunda expressed his surprise that the Board endorsed this new law. He argued that there were enough beer gardens for drinking, and introducing home drinking would only encourage illicit brewing. Indeed, the Council had many allies amongst the African middle class, when it came to condemning the underground brewing world.

The restriction on Africans to drinking only 'native beer' lasted until 9th August, 1957, when the Liquor Amendment Act allowed Africans to obtain European beer and wine for the

⁸⁷⁶ West, 'Equal Rights'.

⁸⁷⁷ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 38

⁸⁷⁸ Mayors' Minutes, 1948/BCCA

⁸⁷⁹ Mayors' minutes, 1951/BCCA

⁸⁸⁰ B.A.T Advisory Board meeting, 22nd September, 1952/BCCA

⁸⁸¹ 'Skokiaan' was a vernacular term for moonshine.

first time. The removal of this restriction produced very little immediate change in drinking habits in Bulawayo. After an initial rush to obtain the newly available beers and wines, sales were negligible in the first year and the municipal beer sales were not negatively affected.⁸⁸² A select few Africans could also obtain permits to buy spirits, based on highly exclusive criteria – usually possessing a university degree or being a Member of Parliament.⁸⁸³ Consequently, by the end of the 1950s, there were only about 25 Africans in the whole country who had a permit to buy hard liquor.⁸⁸⁴ These restrictions were abolished in 1961, thus finally ending all racial restrictions on alcohol consumption. According to the Chief Native Commissioner, this delay in extending this right to Africans of all classes was to allow “a widespread responsible leadership to emerge in the drinking of hard spirits which could pass on experience to the masses for whom it was a novelty.”⁸⁸⁵

As we saw in chapter 4, whilst negotiating the lease conditions for Pelandaba in the early-mid ‘50s, Ashton and councillors had argued that European beer (as well as other spirits and “concoctions”) had social degenerative effects. Yet, Ashton came out in strong support of the liberalisation of the liquor law. At the Annual Conference of the Brewers’ Institute of Southern Africa, 1960, he branded the “reactionaries and missionaries” who opposed it as “jeremiahs” with “entirely unfounded” fears of Africans drinking slightly harder stuff.⁸⁸⁶ He also lambasted the European legislators for being ignorant about the social dynamics of African drinking, putting on his anthropologist’s hat to make the case that colonial statutory laws were “superimposed on the indigenous social structure...As a result, they reflect more what the legislators think should be done than what the social situation itself needs”. African communities had always had their own customary liquor laws, he argued, often “similar in scope and content” to those introduced by Europeans. Ashton advocated scientific study of the “social situation” to minimise the “downright harmful” effects of racialized legislation. He acknowledged, however, that drinking was “a field strewn with passionately held principles and prejudices, which often prevent dispassionate study”.

Yet for all his support for liberalisation and slightly softening the regulations for liquor offenders in home ownership schemes (discussed in chapter 4), Ashton continued to demonise illicit brewers and shebeen queens, and tolerated the police raids to flush them out. When there

⁸⁸² Annual Report of the Director, 1958/BCCA For a sense of liberal public opinion: at the National convention held in Salisbury, 1960, 82% of Africans and 68% of Europeans, and all Asians and Coloureds felt that alcoholic spirits should be equally available to people of all races. (Report of the National Convention (1960) p. 37/20.)

⁸⁸³ African Admin Committee, 1st March, 1960, p. 492 /BCCA

⁸⁸⁴ *Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, 17th April, 1959, no. 60 (Salisbury, 1959) col. 3219, in M. West, ‘Equal Rights for all Civilised Men’, p. 395

⁸⁸⁵ Report of the Secretary for Native Affairs and Chief Native Commissioner for the Year Ended 1961 (Salisbury, 1962), p. 5 in West, ‘Equal Rights’, p. 396

⁸⁸⁶ Ashton, ‘Liquor Laws in Central Africa’.

was an upsurge of illicit brewing in 1953-4, and a consequent spate of convictions (100 in that year), the Council evicted many of these unfortunate offenders, sending them to Hyde Park for a rehabilitation period. This was the “double punishment” that was so unpopular in the African community. Ashton reports that the African Advisory Boards “courageously” supported the Council in this controversial purge, but their meeting minutes suggest they did so extremely reluctantly and not for long.⁸⁸⁷ Subsequently, the conviction rate dropped dramatically. The Council surmised that this illicit brewing must be a result of its poor quality beer, and so spent £20,000 to upgrade its brewery.⁸⁸⁸

Profit and social control were significant motives behind the Council’s moral attacks on its illegal competitors in the brewing business. These motives are emphasised in the literature on colonial urban governance. But they were not the only motives behind the Council’s general alcohol-related policies. Recognition of the need to remove racialized liquor laws trumped fears that municipal beer profits might take a hit; and regard for the “social needs” of particular communities meant that some beer gardens were operated at a loss.⁸⁸⁹ And ultimately, in the late colonial period, the whole concept of municipal drinking facilities as spaces for control and profit was entirely re-worked by the Council’s African Administration Department. By developing a system of elaborate beer gardens in every neighbourhood, serving high quality, “*authentic*” African beer (above all other alcoholic and non-alcoholic products), the Council aimed to create places that not only brought in extensive revenue for welfare and housing, and enticed residents away from the “evil” shebeens, but also provided a convivial setting for social upliftment. It was this vision that they tried to sell, and it was not easy.

The late colonial beer gardens: from control to conviviality

In most British colonial cities that adopted the ‘Durban system’, the iconic venue for the sale and consumption of municipal beer was the beer hall. And so it was in Bulawayo until the Second World War. But in the 1950s, Ashton regarded these large, austere places to be of limited social and financial potential, and envisaged smaller, more picturesque beer gardens sprinkled throughout the residential areas. Over the 28 years of his tenure, his vision gradually materialised, and whilst not all beer gardens were very picturesque, they nevertheless became an iconic feature

⁸⁸⁷ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 39

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁹ Finance committee minutes, 9.6.75/BCCA

of the landscape of Bulawayo. These beer gardens created a host of new moral dilemmas, however, which the Council had to navigate in an attempt to assimilate them into its township modernisation project.

It was in the early 1950s that Ashton and the town planning officer hatched the idea to abandon the classic beer hall model, and instead establish a number of smaller beer gardens. The smaller venues were designed to be both more convivial, and more administratively practical, as they would prevent big groups of people congregating in one place and creating a “nuisance”, particularly in European areas where there were facilities catering to domestic servants.⁸⁹⁰ So from the early 1950s, beer gardens began to proliferate, with one or two bars and canteens built in all of the new emerging neighbourhoods. Indeed, Ashton stated in his annual report of 1952 that it was Council’s policy to build recreational facilities and beer gardens *pari passu* with housing schemes. There already existed some small canteens and recreation centres from the 1940s, some of them truly rudimentary, which were replaced with permanent structures, such as the 5 temporary beer canteens built of asbestos in Mzilikazi in 1948, which were in a dilapidated condition when demolished in 1952, to be replaced with a permanent structure.⁸⁹¹

There had also been some “recreation centres” for domestic servants in the European areas. It was actually some European residents from the suburb of Hillside who had taken the initiative in 1946 to suggest to Council that it provide domestic employees with some recreational facilities in the vicinity (playing fields and sports fields) because the Location beer hall at Makokoba was too far away. Council agreed to this in principle. After two years of dithering, the mayor, police and provincial native commissioner noted “the serious extent to which illicit brewing and sale of skokiaan and similar concoctions was taking place” in and around European neighbourhoods like Hillside. So the Council decided to provide, “without delay, canteens at suitable points on the Commonage so that natives employed in outlying suburbs could obtain their reasonable requirements of kaffir beer without having to walk miles to the beer hall in the location.”⁸⁹² A rudimentary canteen and a football pitch were built in Hillside in 1948, another canteen at Gifford’s Grant to the north of the CBD in 1949. In the 1950s, several more “recreation centres” were built in European areas: Greenspan, Khumalo, and Inkunzi in 1950, Northend in 1952, east of Essexvale Road in 1955, and Hillside in 1958. They were also built in the Coloured area of Barham Green and at the Railway Compound in 1956. European residents objected not so much to their existence, as their specific siting. In the late 1950s a huge controversy erupted

⁸⁹⁰ Native Administration Committee, 12th Feb 1952/BCCA

⁸⁹¹ Native Administration Committee, 16th Jan 1952/BCCA

⁸⁹² City of Bulawayo, Report of the Special Committee re: District Native Recreational Centres, Bulawayo, July, 1958/BCCA

over the beer garden in Hillside, with the Council effectively steamrolling over the European residents' objections (see below).

Establishing beer gardens in the African areas was less controversial. In general, the home ownership schemes had fewer beer gardens: Pelandaba had no beer gardens (just a bottle store and the high class *Ikhwezi* cocktail lounge on its border), nor did the smaller higher class neighbourhood of Barbour Fields. However, the large home ownership scheme of Mpopoma had 5 beer gardens, a bar lounge and a bottle store.⁸⁹³ By 1957, there were 24 beer gardens and 6 off-sales premises in the whole city. With the guiding principle of building a beer garden for every 700 to 1000 housing units⁸⁹⁴, the number grew (despite some closures) so that, by the mid-70s, there were 31 beer gardens, 4 “cocktail lounges” and 11 off-sale bottle stores in Bulawayo. A feature of the bottle stores was that customers would drink on public lawns nearby – especially in Pelandaba, Makokoba and Mpopoma. Indeed the Pelandaba Bottle Store acted as a “mini beer garden”.⁸⁹⁵ The Council's brewery also served many off-site customers, including the Army, Police and several rural African Councils in the areas surrounding the city.



Figure 34: Municipal Liquor Store [Source: Housing and Amenities Dept., in Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 116]

⁸⁹³ J. May, *Survey of Urban African Drinking Patterns in the Bulawayo Municipal Townships* (University of Rhodesia, 1970), p. 1-2

⁸⁹⁴ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 224

⁸⁹⁵ M. Ndubiwa, *Urban Community Study* (Bulawayo, Housing and Amenities Department, 1974), p. 79/BCCA

Ashton described beer halls as “depressingly uniform and uniformly depressing”, and advocated “abandoning the Beer Hall in favour of the Beer Garden.” This should include:

extensive areas of maybe several acres or opening on to parks, with plenty of scattered shelter, trees and lawns. Games facilities can cover a wide range, from tsoro or morabaraba boards, deck quoits, jukskei pitches to football fields for scratch games.⁸⁹⁶

Not all beer gardens were as landscaped and picturesque as this description; some were quite austere. But each was “either subtly or markedly” different from the others – in terms of location, design, landscaping, opening hours and sports facilities – and these differences inspired patrons to venture beyond their neighbourhood amenity.⁸⁹⁷ For example, Burombo, Manwele, Mvumila and Petsheya opened early in the day, so they were popular with shift workers and those requiring a *hair of the dog* (“bhabhalazi”). Most beer gardens opened in the morning and closed at dusk (around 6:30), but some stayed open till 10:30pm.



Figure 35: Beer garden scene, Housing and Amenities Department [Source: H. Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens* p. 112]

⁸⁹⁶ E.H. Ashton, ‘Liquor Laws in Central Africa’, paper delivered at the 9th Annual Conference of the Brewers’ Institute of Southern African (Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia, 14-19 August, 1960).

⁸⁹⁷ Ndubiwa, ‘Urban Community Study’ p. 78



Figure 36: Beer garden scene [Source: Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 111]

Greenspan was particularly popular with nurses, staff and patients of Mpilo hospital. The most popular venues for football were Greenspan, Inkunzi, Aisleby and Lone Star, whilst Mashumba and Manwele, located in the green valley of the Bulawayo spruit, were popular in summer months. Inkunzi was popular with industrial workers at the

Cold Storage Commission.⁸⁹⁸ The Big Bhawa was not only the main watering hole for the residents of Makokoba, but also a convenient drop-in place for visitors from/to the rural areas and workers commuting home, as it was located near the Renkini bus terminus. It was estimated to be the largest beer hall/garden complex in southern Africa⁸⁹⁹, with 52, 000 patrons recorded passing through the gates on one busy Saturday in 1970.⁹⁰⁰ In 1972, this beer hall was renamed “MaKhumalo”, a reference to the women who had originally brewed the beer there.⁹⁰¹

The beer gardens were complex social institutions where all kinds of revelry, business, associational activity, theft, and altercation took place. But they were not, generally, places of overt political activity, in contrast to the shebeens. In the 1950s, it was possible to talk politics in the beer gardens, but by the 1970s, under the Smith dictatorship, it was extremely risky to talk politics. Anyone could be an informant.⁹⁰²

Business on the other hand, was conducted all around. It was brisk at the “immensely popular” dry canteens, built into the beer garden complexes, and run by African traders, who sold snacks, cigarettes etc. These canteens often brought children onto the beer garden premises to shop on behalf of their parents, which was a subject of controversy. Business was also conducted by women food traders who were deemed special welfare cases by the Department, and by people

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰⁰ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 26

⁹⁰¹ The name “Khumalo” had long been used by customers, but the Committee felt that it was masculine and therefore “contrary to African tradition” which associated brewing with the woman, so “MaKhumalo” was deemed more appropriate. BCCA/Municipal Liquor Undertaking Committee minutes, 14th July, 1962, p. 1718.

⁹⁰² Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 185

meeting over a beer to discuss deals, and of course by the Municipal Liquor Undertaking itself. Associational activity was primarily burial societies. By 1973, there were 248 burial societies with formally approved constitutions.⁹⁰³



Figure 37: Ikhwezi Club, 1970 [Source: BCCA/Director's Annual Report]

The AAD also established cocktail lounges, mindful of the exclusive preferences of the African middle class. The higher end lounges were located in home ownership neighbourhoods – *Ikhwezi* near Pelandaba, *Mvumila* in Mpopoma, *Luveve* in Luveve, and *Hlanganani* in Tshabalala. These were distinguished by table service and “Western-style” dancing. *Ikhwezi* was the most elite of these locales – “as good as the best bar lounges anywhere in the country” – and men’s evening dress was restricted to jacket, collar and tie, or safari suit with cravat. Most of these venues hired house bands. In 1961, *Ikhwezi* Cocktail Lounge and Happy Valley Hotel bar were opened to multiracial drinking. This was the culmination of a long debate since the mid-50s, when the Government found it embarrassing that international non-European VIPs could not easily be hosted in Southern Rhodesia under the Land Apportionment Act.⁹⁰⁴ But the exclusivity of these venues sometimes made even their privileged patrons feel uneasy, given that they were publicly funded

⁹⁰³ Ndubiwa, ‘Urban Community Study’, p. 80

⁹⁰⁴ ‘Minister defends mixed gatherings and social segregation’, *Rhodesia Herald*, 25 June, 1954/NAZ/s3609/35/2

facilities. For several months in 1962, the Joint African Advisory Board discussed the closed policy of the Ikhwezi Club, and eventually voted to open it to all.⁹⁰⁵ Around this time, too, Africans leased two exclusive venues to compete with municipal facilities: Marisha Cocktail bar in Magwegwe, and Happy Valley Hotel in Nguboyenja. Happy Valley was leased by the prominent citizen, footballer and man-about-town, Jerry Vera, from 1963 until the late 1970s.



Figure 39: A Bar Lounge Facility [Source: Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 117]



Figure 38: Cocktail Lounge [Source: *Annual Report of the Director*, 1964]

⁹⁰⁵ African Administration Committee minutes, 9 April, 1962/BCCA

These lounges had an audience beyond the intended African patrons, because they were also meant to “demonstrate to outside visitors not only the increasing progress and sophistication evident in the urban native population but also the administration’s accommodation and sensitivity to change.”⁹⁰⁶ On the covers of *Masiyepambili* magazine, Council beer ads often depicted upper class lifestyles – such as a set of golf clubs, a young polo player on a pony with his proud father holding a trophy, or a modern radio set. Many ads also featured local football stars or sketches of weightlifters, promoting beer for strength and fitness.

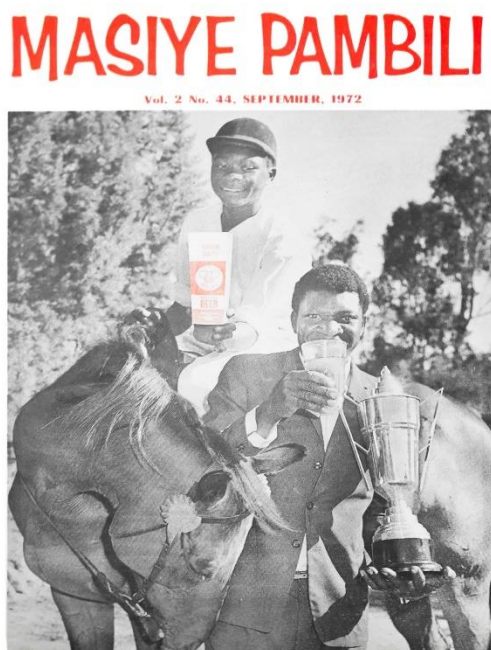


Figure 41: *Masiyepambili*, September 1972

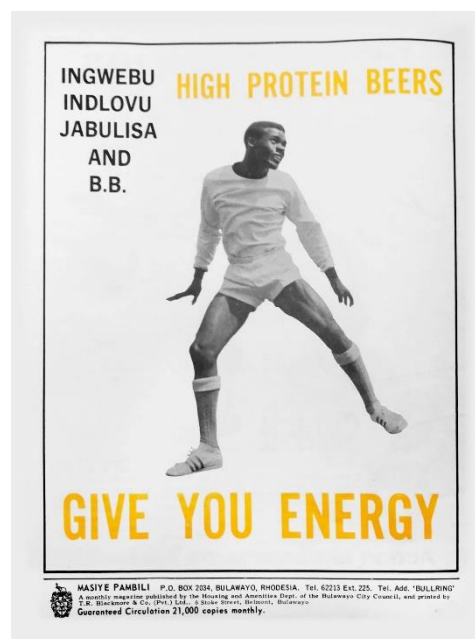


Figure 40: *Masiyepambili*, back cover, May 1970

Bulawayo’s vision with respect to drinking facilities was different to Salisbury’s. Salisbury had a sparser distribution of beer gardens, and more cocktail lounges. It was therefore more polarised, as a report in 1970 suggested: “Whilst Salisbury probably has a larger sophisticated element...it has a much larger unsophisticated population which is inadequately catered for and which is, therefore, to a degree induced to turn to European beer.”⁹⁰⁷ Another report by the same authors found that Bulawayo’s policy was to improve the beer gardens rather than provide more high-class lounges, so as “to meet the growing sophistication of the average working class African”.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁶ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 31

⁹⁰⁷ J. Howard, *Report on tour of liquor undertakings: Salisbury and Gwelo, prepared for the administrative officer, liquor sales and Distribution*. (Bulawayo, housing and amenities department, 1970), p. 4, quoted in Wolcott, 1974, p. 31

⁹⁰⁸ J. Howard, *Report on tour of liquor undertakings: Pretoria, the Reef and Durban, prepared for the administrative officer, liquor sales and Distribution*. (Bulawayo, housing and amenities department, 1970), p. 11, quoted in Wolcott, 1974, p. 31

Indeed, these two approaches reflect the different policies of these two cities with respect to township development in general: Salisbury provided a few elite housing schemes, whilst the majority were housed in undifferentiated low-cost rental schemes. Bulawayo focused on providing for multiple socio-economic strata.

The Municipal Liquor Undertaking: production and profit

The beer monopoly system was a huge financial boon to the cash-strapped African Administration Department. It met the twin desiderata of funding township development without inviting undue Central Government interference. It provided the Department with funds for housing, specifically loans to home owners, and occasional grants to low-cost schemes; health services (subsidised by Govt.); and welfare and recreation. The Welfare sub-department had the broad remit of helping Africans “adjust” to urban life; in practice this mostly involved family case work and counselling, and community-building activities in various clubs, from women’s clubs to numerous youth clubs to pre-school groups. The facilities that beer profits funded included libraries, home craft centres, community centres, an arts and crafts centre at Mzilikazi, a few schools (from the 1960s), and an array of sports facilities, such as football stadia, swimming pools, tennis courts, a golf course, football pitches, gyms, basketball courts, etc.

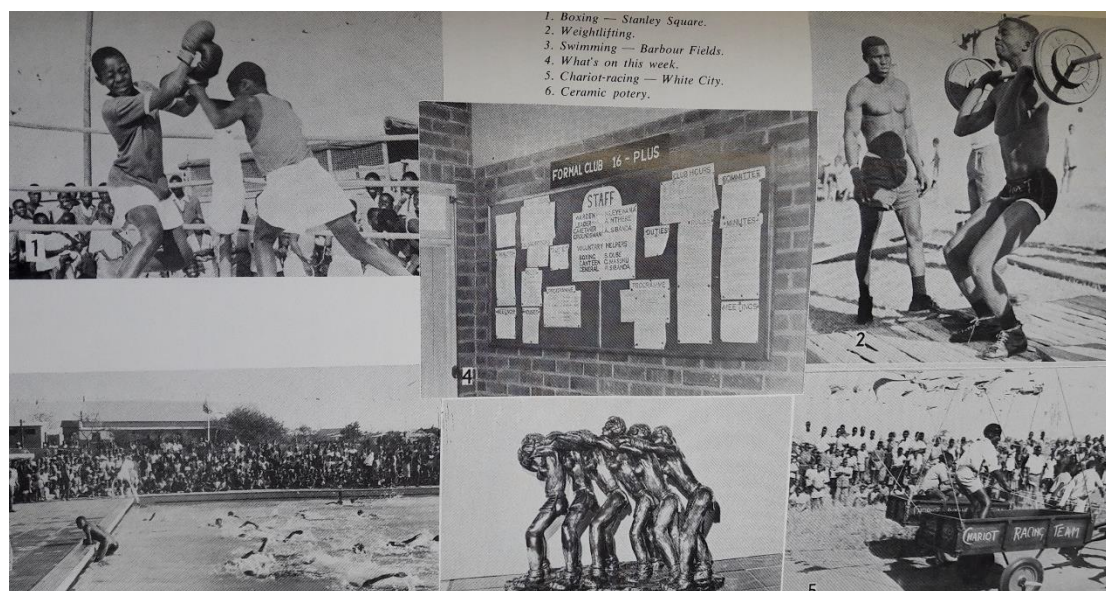


Figure 42: Annual Report displaying township activities: boxing, weightlifting, chariot racing, ceramic pottery and swimming at Barbour Fields [Source: Director's Annual Report, 1967]

As we saw in chapter 3, the AAD found ways to save money through home ownership, experimenting with house designs and materials, re-siting housing schemes closer to town, employing African builders. But Ashton saw that for his ambitious development plans to come to fruition, these cost-saving measures needed to be supplemented with the substantial and regular revenue flow that a ramped up beer monopoly system could provide. Ramping up Bulawayo's beer production and sales involved constant upgrades to the brewery, the services of a highly skilled brewer, and a ruthlessly efficient bureaucracy that sacrificed the job security of its staff. Together, these factors produced one of the highest rates of municipal African beer production in central Africa, and became the focus of the Department's energies.

Beer profits were one of four main funding sources available to Rhodesian municipalities for African housing, namely:

- a) *Loans*: Special funds, such as money lent by the British Government specifically for African housing; or allocations from the Government's general borrowings;
- b) *Loans raised by the Municipality in the open market*.
- c) *Internal Municipal Sources*: the amounts available were limited.
- d) *Profits from Municipal Liquor Undertakings* (also known as 'beer profits'.⁹⁰⁹)

It was only in 1938 that, for the first time, loan money amounting to £5,000 was used.⁹¹⁰ Thus, in the early colonial period, the main sources of funding for African housing were revenue from rents, and some money from beer profits. But Central Government imposed all kinds of restrictions on the use of beer profits.⁹¹¹ The larger municipalities that had managed their own beer halls for years deeply resented these centralised powers. As noted in chapter 2, the Bulawayo Council fiercely contested them, and so when it won a concession in 1945 to spend 50% of its unappropriated beer profits on housing for 3 years, "honour was restored".⁹¹²

Until 1944, rent and beer accounts were not kept separately, so it is impossible to say what proportion was taken from each source. When the Bulawayo Council inveigled the Government to permit it to use beer profits for housing, the rents from such housing went back into the Council's general revenue account, rather than the beer account, which Government

⁹⁰⁹ Ashton, 'The Economics of African Housing', p. 34

⁹¹⁰ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 11

⁹¹¹ Municipalities greatly resented this top-down interference. Up until 1922, Bulawayo's beer profits could only be spent on services; from 1922-42 they were also used for housing. Under the Native Beer Act of 1942, copied from the Union without much thought of adapting it to local conditions, expenditure was once again restricted to services and welfare; housing expenditure was only permissible with special Government authority. The Government also had the power to fix minimum selling prices.

⁹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 12

officials considered “rather immoral”.⁹¹³ There was apparently a suspicion in the African community that the municipalities were not spending their beer profits on African development as required (see final section of this chapter).

In the post-war period, options (a) and (d) were the main sources of funds. But external sources were limited. The Colonial Development Corporation provided £160 million in loans (1945-55) to most British African colonies, but *not* Southern Rhodesia. The Federation was also not a reliable source of loan funds for the municipalities (see chapter 3). The Bulawayo Council was averse to Government interference in its affairs, and was therefore persuaded by Ashton to invest heavily in option (d). Ewen Greenfield recalls that, “Ashton saw that a really well-run outfit could generate huge amounts of money for all sorts of good enterprises in the townships.”⁹¹⁴

In 1951, the new brewing plant was upgraded. To save significantly on costs, the Council decided on Ashton’s recommendation to do the milling and malting itself. For this, a new malting plant and grain store were built.⁹¹⁵ In 1955, the brewery was further expanded. This was claimed to be the reason for a dramatic 31% increase in sales that year, to over 2 million gallons.⁹¹⁶ The brewery had changed significantly from the days when it was operated by African women applying their traditional skills. The Municipality began investing heavily in technical upgrades to the brewery.

These developments gave Bulawayo a distinct advantage over other municipalities in funding home ownership schemes. For example, the Native Housing Conference of 1953 noted:

It was generally agreed that beerhall profits should be made available for housing, but only Bulawayo had substantial profits to this end, rendering the proposal “largely academic” for the other municipalities.⁹¹⁷

It remained the only municipality with substantial beer surplus at the end of the 1950s.⁹¹⁸ In general, where beer profits were used for housing, it was for home ownership loans.⁹¹⁹ Table 2 shows the substantial increase in sales from the early 1950s.

⁹¹³ Extract from Health Secretary’s annual report, 1952. NAZ/S2609/35/2; Vol. 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53 [p. 11].

⁹¹⁴ Greenfield, personal correspondence, 10.12.16

⁹¹⁵ Report of the Director of Native Administration for the Month of August, 1951/BCCA/Council minutes, 1952, p. 341

⁹¹⁶ Annual Report of the Director, 1955/BCCA

⁹¹⁷ Conference on Native Housing, 21 May, 1953. NAZ/S2609/35/2; Vol. 1. Native Housing Policy, 1946-53

⁹¹⁸ Report of the Urban Affairs Commission, 1958/BCCA

⁹¹⁹ However, £100 000 of beer profits were appropriated from the fund for the building of Njube married rental scheme in 1955.

Year	Receipts (£)	Year	Receipts (£)	Year	Receipts (£)	Year	Receipts (£)
1913	737	1925	7,413	1937	6,364	1949	74,251
1914	4,595	1926	6,979	1938	10,229	1950	88,814
1915	6,211	1927	6,517	1939	11,633	1951	150,812
1916	5,504	1928	8,100	1940	20,369	1952	208,926
1917	5,517	1929	6,417	1941	30,682	1953	216,087
1918	4,678	1930	6,655	1942	36,688	1954	173,083
1919	3,947	1931	7,444	1943	43,851	1955	229,586
1920	4,548	1932	6,523	1944	40,663	1956	357,520
1921	5,363	1933	9,274	1945	48,963	1957	431,421
1922	6,617	1934	5,916	1946	48,963	1958	528,412
1923	7,340	1935	9,207	1947	54,987	1959	605,825
1924	7,417	1936	8,558	1948	64,284	1960	698,634

Table 2: Receipts from the sale of beer [Adapted from Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, appendix L]

Table 3 provides a breakdown of annual income, expenditure and surplus in the native beer account, during the rapid expansion in the second half of the 1950s:

	1954/5 ⁹²⁰	1955/6	1956/7	1957/8	1958/9
Income:					
Sale of Native beer	229,586	357,521	431,421	528,412	605,825
Sales of European liquor	-	-	-	140,086	200,581
Other Income:	11,644	13,884	21,854	27,773	45,168
	241,250	371,405	453,275	696,271	851,574
Expenditure:					
Brewing of native beer	65,753	80,536	101,566	132,779	171,374
Purchase of European liquor	-	-	-	92,841	131,740
Distribution and administration expenses:	37,548	57,022	80,221	113,184	150,260
	103,301	137,558	181,787	338,804	453,374
Trading profit for year	137,949	233,847	271,488	357,467	398,200
Contributions:					
REVENUE DEFICITS:					
Health services	10,450	11,389	13,772	18,930	29,888
Welfare and Recreation Services	32,883	38,478	54,354	82,412	115,836
	43,333	49,867	68,126	101,342	145,724
Capital Expenditure⁹²¹:					
Health Services	86	36	3,165	26,849	17,128
Welfare and Recreation Services	8,074	28,975	28,389	31,286	59,324
Brewery and Beer Halls	9,720	34,054	31,026	49,516	94,426
Housing Grant	100,000	-	-	-	-
Total	117,880	63,065	62,580	107,651	170,878
Net transfer to Beer reserve	23,264	120,915	140,782	148,474	81,598
Balance in Beer Reserve (as at 30th June)	£177,349	298,264	439,046	587,520	£669,118

Table 3: Annual native beer accounts. [Source: BCCA/Finance Committee Minutes, 1961. [vol. 1 p. 8] / City Treasurer's Department introductory memorandum to the abstract of accounts for the year ended 30th June, 1959.]

In Council and Committee minutes, as well as Ashton's annual reports, the brewery began to take up a significant amount of space. Indeed, far more than law and order. It became an extensive and important undertaking. By the early 1960s, Bulawayo's brewery was clearly in a league of its

⁹²⁰ Note in the year 1954/5 there were no European liquor sales, because this only became permissible after a law change in 1957.

⁹²¹ Note that these expenditures are just from the beer fund.

own. Table 4 compares beer production levels, staff numbers, and depots/beer outlets of several municipalities in South Africa and the Rhodesias, in 1960. The Chairman of the Technical Committee for Kaffir Beer Research that compiled these statistics, commended Bulawayo for having the best results in the Central African Federation, much to the Council's delight. Particularly noteworthy are the facts that Bulawayo had more sales depots than any other municipality, including Johannesburg, and employed the second highest number of African staff at its beer halls/gardens.

Town	Gallons of Beer	Staff employed				Production per bag in gallons	No. of depots/beer halls	Cost of prod. per gallon	Total African pop.
		Brewery		Beer halls					
		Euro	Non-Euro	Euro	Non-Euro				
Benoni	1,993.3	3	16	4	25	123.2	2	9d-11d	86,906
Durban	5,121.1	7	100	24	173	103.3	10	9d-11d	205,000
Germiston	2,288.8	5	14	9	37	106.2	14	Under 9d.	90,000
Jo'burg	12,883.7	5	100	10	334	90.9	15	“ “	560,408
Pretoria	4,188	4	18	6	84	100	3	“ “	120,000
Springs	2,475.9	4	12	3	14	110.3	3	“ ”	100,213
Welkom	1,349.9	4	9	4	25	133	2	“ “	75,000
Bulawayo	5,736.9	8	58	12	300	125	26	“ “	124,500
Salisbury	3,487	5	43	6	70	101.1	15	9d-11d	125,000
Umtali	671	1	33	2	33	75	2	13-18d	30,000
Que Que	69.9	-	6	-	2	65	1	“ “	5,100
Livingstone (NR)	860.8	3	54	-	-	96	5	13-18d	27,000
Lusaka (NR)	821.8	4	13	7	-	73.6	4	“ “	60,000

Table 4: Comparison of Municipal African Beer Production and Employment [Source: Technical Committee for Kaffir Beer Research/BCCA/African Administration Department Minutes, 2nd Feb, 1960, p.252]

Rivalry and protectionism

It seems to have been particularly important for Bulawayo to compare its liquor undertaking with Salisbury's. Every year, the Council's African Administration Committee and Liquor Undertaking Committee took note of Bulawayo's brewery output compared to Salisbury's. It always produced much higher quantities of African beer, whereas Salisbury achieved higher sales of 'European

liquor' (wines, beers and spirits).⁹²² Incomes in Umtali and Gwelo, the third and fourth largest municipalities, were a sixth and nearly a tenth of Bulawayo's, respectively. But Salisbury's income from the sale of 'European liquor' exceeded its own African beer sales and exceeded Bulawayo's European liquor sales by about 250%. The ratio of African to European liquor sales was therefore much higher in Bulawayo than Salisbury.⁹²³ But Bulawayo took the highest income overall.

As Table 5 shows, these different emphases on African vs European beverages continued in the 1970s. However, Salisbury overtook Bulawayo in overall sales. Bulawayo's African beer became more expensive to produce (\$1,86 per litre compared with \$1,75 in Salisbury⁹²⁴), but it was sold more cheaply (\$5,36 per litre compared with \$6,37 in Salisbury).

	Bulawayo	Salisbury
Opaque beer	93,026,650 litres R\$4,985,290	66,669,547 litres R\$4,247,823
Clear beer	\$1,268,297	\$4,200,990
Wines and Spirits	\$145,458	\$149,140
Aerated waters	\$13,724	\$110,286
Totals	\$6,412,769	\$8,698,229

Table 5: Sales comparison of the Bulawayo and Salisbury Liquor Undertakings [Source: Liquor Undertaking Committee minutes, 20th Feb, 1976, p. 316]

The anthropologist Harry Wolcott noticed this rivalry between the two heavyweight cities whilst conducting his ethnography of Bulawayo's beer gardens in 1970-71:

Contemporary rivalry between the two cities did not appear to be divisive but it did result in a constant tendency for drawing comparisons between them. In the face of Salisbury's obvious lead [in other respects], Bulawayans were quick to call attention to any facet of municipal life in which they equalled or excelled their more favoured twin. Their success in developing a municipal brewing industry equal to Salisbury's provided them with considerable satisfaction in this regard.⁹²⁵

⁹²² For example, in 1960, 1961 and 1962, Bulawayo's annual incomes from African beer alone were £698,634, £734,668 and £737,174 respectively. Salisbury's were less than half of that amount – £348,524; £341,961 and £323,549 (Passmore, *Local Government Legislation in Southern Rhodesia* p. 22).

⁹²³ Approx. 4:1 in Byo and 1:1.3 in Salisbury. These ratios changed each year. I have calculated a rough average to indicate trends.

⁹²⁴ Note that according to the statistics in Table 5, Bulawayo's African beer was cheaper to produce in 1960 than Salisbury's.

⁹²⁵ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 23

It was not just superior production levels that the African Administration Department was proud of, but also the supposedly superior quality of its beer. This was the result of high quality malt production combined with the skill of a highly trained brewer from Poland, called Paul Brettler, who was the chief brewer from the 1950s through the '70s. Ashton saw an inverse correlation between the quality of municipal beer and illicit brewing, as we saw in his analysis of the recrudescence of illicit brewing in 1953 and 1954, which he attributed partly to social and partly to economic factors, but *mainly* to the poor quality of municipal beer.⁹²⁶ He also argued that one of the main reasons why Africans were turning away from African beer towards European beer in other municipalities, was because the African beer was often brewed badly, and in inadequate quantities. He cited Salisbury as an example.⁹²⁷ Indeed, Wolcott observed that, the farther up the hierarchy in the administration department, the stronger the opinion that Bulawayo's beer was superior to Salisbury's. At the very top, he observed that:

The Director unabashedly argued the quality of the beer. "Have you compared our beer with Salisbury's?" he once asked an interested official visitor from the capital city. "I would be ashamed of Salisbury's figures if I were a brewer."⁹²⁸

A former township administrator told me that Ashton would get very concerned when there was a poor brew⁹²⁹, and any allegations of tampering with the beer at beer gardens often resulted in staff dismissals. The Senior Welfare Officer, Gargett, described vividly in the journal *Zambezia* how important the brewing business was to the self-identity of the Housing Department:

In Bulawayo, where senior staff of the city's Housing and Community Services Department meet weekly to plan and review their work, an unremitting climax to their meeting is provided by graphs of liquor consumption, among which African beer sales provide the focus of interest. If they are good, the beer has been good and the customers have been satisfied. 'Euphoria'...has prevailed. People have relaxed, exchanged news and views, conducted business, dissolved tensions built up over the week, listened to music, danced, loved, and fought. Bad beer spells discontent, expressed in immediate strife, or stored grievance.⁹³⁰

The brewery system was not just a subject of rivalry between the cities, but also a source of tension between municipalities and Central Government. Municipalities were extremely defensive of their

⁹²⁶ Ashton, *African Administration*, p. 39

⁹²⁷ There was suspicion that Salisbury's rebranding of its municipal beer – *Rufaro* – in the 1960s was an admission that it needed a serious quality upgrade.

⁹²⁸ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 159

⁹²⁹ Interview with Ewen Greenfield, London, 18 Jan, 2017

⁹³⁰ E. Gargett, 'Drinking for Pleasure – and whose profit?' *Zambezia*, 4, ii (1975-6), p. 115.

rights to retain a monopoly within their jurisdictions, and spend profits as they saw fit, without ministerial interference. Ashton really fought for this autonomy. He complained that,

The Minister regards beer monies as comprising a trust fund which he alone is entitled to administer... I recommend that a strong protest be entered by the Municipal Association against this attitude of the Minister's.⁹³¹

In 1965, the Minister of Local Government, John Gaunt, permitted all local authorities to use their beer profits for low-cost housing schemes. Whereas previously they could only loan the money to homeowners, with grants offered in exceptional circumstances, now grants could be made from beer profits for capital expenditure on low-cost African housing and services (up to a maximum of one third of total profits).⁹³² This allowed Bulawayo to further leverage its superior beer profits for housing development.

However, the Minister also threatened municipal monopolies with legislation to allow competition from private enterprise within the township areas. This again reflected the Government's policy of promoting private sector solutions and a retreat of the state. The councils, especially Bulawayo, put up a spirited resistance. Councillor Jack Pain of Bulawayo asserted that the Local Government Association, of which he was the president, would defend "to the last ditch" municipalities' rights to retain what he called their "benevolent monopolies" on African beer brewing.⁹³³ Indeed, so focused was Bulawayo on this issue, that the Salisbury Council found itself unable to draw attention to other matters, complaining that the LGA was "only interested in propagating Bulawayo's viewpoint" and "flatly refused to forward Salisbury's proposals..."⁹³⁴ There was also a furore when the Central Government introduced excise duty on municipal beer in 1973.⁹³⁵ Such disputes continued after independence, when centralisation increased and Bulawayo's beer was further taxed by Government.

⁹³¹ Ashton's comments on the agenda of the 17th Annual Conference of the Municipal Association: Vic Falls Hotel, 12th-14th May, 1958/BCCA/Minutes of the Council

⁹³² *The Chronicle*, 'Gaunt "frees" beer profits', 14 April 1965

⁹³³ *The Chronicle*, 'Beer: "Last ditch" warning', 6 January 1965.

⁹³⁴ 'Lovatt resigns in protest', *The Chronicle* 26 Nov., 1964

⁹³⁵ Liquor undertaking minutes, 1975 vol. 2/BCCA

Brewery administration

Huge amounts of energy went into ensuring productivity, profit and accountability in the Liquor Undertaking, through a rigidly hierarchical administrative structure. In addition to the Council's Liquor Undertaking Committee, significant proportions of Finance Committee and African Administration Committee minutes were taken up with the Brewery operation. The African Advisory Board (Joint Townships Board) also had its own Liquor Undertaking Committee. These committees considered reports on sales, endless technical upgrades (the brewery premises were so designed as to accommodate frequent extensions, as technology was growing rapidly in this field), and meteorology, as good or bad rains could significantly affect the harvest of rapoko, sorghum and other key ingredients, and this in turn determined whether extra storage silos were required, etc. Bulawayo had to adapt to its climate by experimenting with different drought-resistant strains of sorghum, such as "Red Swazi", which was said to be "one of the few commercial types of sorghum suitable for growing under the very erratic rainfall conditions of Matabeleland..."⁹³⁶

The beer garden bureaucracy grew disproportionately to other Council sub-departments. Until 1951, a single "Brewery Superintendent" oversaw both the manufacture and distribution of the beer. Then the Brewing Director took charge of the brewing side and answered directly to Ashton, whilst a 'Beer Hall Superintendent' was responsible solely for distribution and administration of the various beer halls and canteens, collecting cash, etc.⁹³⁷ In 1961, it became more decentralised, with the appointment of African 'bar managers' in each township.⁹³⁸ A few years later, the 13 African townships were clustered into 6 'liquor-selling areas'. Full-time assistants called Area Controllers were introduced – mostly European – who supervised the African clerks and bar managers. The positions of 'Administrative Officer, Liquor' (AOL) and 'Administrative Assistant, Liquor Undertaking' were introduced in 1968. Head office staff were all European, and bar managers were all African. The first African supervisory staff were only introduced in the mid-70s.⁹³⁹

There was a ruthless approach to accountability. Bar managers, who generally coveted their reasonably well-paid jobs (relative to the low-wage standards for Africans in Rhodesia), reported feeling constantly insecure about the prospect of being held responsible for unavoidable errors at their respective beer gardens. If accounts did not add up, the entire staff of a beer garden were routinely fired on the spot. If sales dropped, they were investigated under presumptions of

⁹³⁶ BCCA/African Admin Committee minutes, 21st Jan, 1961, p. 281

⁹³⁷ Report of the Director of Native Administration for the month of August, 1951/BCCA/Council minutes, 1951-2, p. 337

⁹³⁸ African Administration Committee minutes, 3rd October, 1961, p. 2177/BCCA

⁹³⁹ Ashton, 'A Tale of Three Cities', 1977, p. 15

“manager trouble”. The head office cited internal performance studies to justify this harsh approach, such as one conducted in 1960, which found that when an entire staff was replaced at one suspiciously poorly performing outlet, within 2 months sales increased by 67%.⁹⁴⁰

There was a “staggering” intensity of oversight; the vast sums of money earned were collected, counted and deposited by area controllers.⁹⁴¹ Reports were prepared daily, showing performance at each beer garden. Many of these procedures became symbolic rituals: area controllers’ daily reports dutifully noting “African beer fresh and good”, although the Controllers never actually drank the beer; graphs were regularly presented to the Director, plotting ever-increasing sales, and it became commonplace to make jokes about “how the beer was doing”.⁹⁴²

It was not just the accounts, but also practices and procedures in the beer gardens that were micro-managed for maximum efficiency. Internal studies found, for example, that it took 0.542 minutes to collect, wash, rinse, and stack a beer mug, and that it took 0.24 minutes to serve a half gallon customer, versus 0.28 for a gallon customer. Bar managers often used their own initiative to improve sales, such as lifting the lid off storage containers to let the beer breathe, something they were actually prohibited from doing.⁹⁴³

Buoyed by ever-increasing sales figures entering the millions by the mid-60s, those at the top “exerted a usually infectious enthusiasm and sense of commitment on those as far below them as assistant bar managers and even upwardly mobile bar hands,” holding out the promise that profits could translate into promotions.⁹⁴⁴ However, some of this enthusiasm was tempered by the African Advisory board’s Liquor Undertaking Committee, which included some teetotalers who were not so enthralled by the whole enterprise. In fact, there were several sectors of society that were not as enthralled as the African Administration Department was, including many of its intended customers, and beneficiaries of its beer profits. It was to these customers and beneficiaries that the Department was especially keen to justify the whole enterprise, navigating through difficult moral terrain as it did so.

⁹⁴⁰ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 161

⁹⁴¹ Muchadenyika Masunda remembers an area controller called Tiberius Ngwenya, who was the only one who could handle the complex accounting of the Bulawayo African Township beer garden revenues. He couldn’t take leave because those who would fill in for him were “completely flummoxed” by the accounts. However, being good at maths and able to work out the system quickly, Masunda managed to take over temporarily so Ngwenya could take leave. (interview with Much Masunda, Harare, 24th June.)

⁹⁴² Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 171

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 157

Contradictions in the beer finance system

The beer finance system threatened to undermine the moral integrity of the Council. The very notion of a welfare and housing fund based on liquor profits was regarded by many people to be irresponsible. Far from being a subtle way to raise funds whilst monitoring drinking behaviour, the beer finance system was transparent and therefore open to ridicule, even by state officials. The transparent contradictions in this system led to the politicisation of the act of drinking municipal beer, in Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere where the system operated.

Bulawayo's African Administration had to reconcile its shameless marketing of Council beer with its paternal role of nurturing responsible and respectable citizens. Ashton explained his dilemma thus:

I have tried to steer between the Scylla of driving people to drink through aggressive salesmanship and the Charybdis of starving the social services through hypersensitivity to the questionable source of their finances.⁹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the Council faced criticism from African residents, European residents, the police, doctors, churchmen, sociologists and even Government ministers – interest groups that rejected it on both moral and practical grounds. These criticisms were typically countered with the argument that it was better to have a legal market for African beer, and that the profits therefrom go to the public purse, than to have an underground trade or corporations profiting.⁹⁴⁶ The public use of beer funds, after all, had enabled the “extensive provision of community amenities such as libraries, pre-school centres, school-leaver programmes, youth centres, swimming baths, clubs, parks, community halls and stadia” that Ashton boasted of at the end of his time in office.⁹⁴⁷ But the immoral connotations, and logical contradictions, were hard to shake off.

The immorality of the beer finance system

A number of moral critiques were levelled at the Council for its policy of ever-proliferating beer gardens, along lines of religion, class-respectability, and gender. The Council's deflection of many of these critiques reveals how integral the beer finance system was to the township development programme. Rather than scale down this system, it chose to build alternative venues for the elites,

⁹⁴⁵ Ashton, 'Introduction', in Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. xx

⁹⁴⁶ E. Gargett, 'The welfare of the urban community', *Report of the National Conference* (Rhodesia: Council of Social Services, 1968).

⁹⁴⁷ Annual Report of the Director, 1977, para. 3/BCCA

and improve the beer quality and atmosphere at the gardens, as we have seen. The result was a reversal of the regulation-resistance relationship usually attributed to the colonial urban situation, with many residents imploring the council to introduce more controls and regulations, and the Council resisting.

The most persistent critics were particular religious groups. Black and White churchmen and women, especially of the Apostolic faith, found the drinking behaviour that beer gardens encouraged intrinsically immoral. One such was Charlton Ngcebetsha, the Advisory Board Member, publisher and provocateur who also happened to be a teetotaler, and railed against the socially degenerate behaviour he claimed to witness in beer gardens.

But several of the leaseholders' associations also opposed beer gardens in respect of their violation of respectable bourgeois family values. For example, the Mpopoma Leaseholders' Association resolved that beer halls should only be open from 11am to 7pm:

The decision was reached after taking into consideration the social evils that result in a nation of drunkards. The paramount consideration must be given to the family life that is so necessary as a basis for a Nation with a strong will and character. According to the structure of our society, mother derives satisfaction when and if father will have breakfast and supper whilst still warm. That satisfaction entrenches the marriage.⁹⁴⁸

Then there were complaints about specific immoral aspects. One of these was the influence of beer gardens on youth. Many children had to pass by rowdy beer gardens on their way to school. The Magwegwe Tenants and Leaseholders Association rejected a proposed beer garden in 1972 that would have been sited close to Mhali Primary School. When, in 1973, it came to their notice that a mini beer garden was to be established in the new shopping centre, "under the guise of a bottle store", they rejected this too. It had been approved by Advisory Board Members some years earlier, but the Leaseholders' Association felt it was still too close to the primary school, and insisted that the present facilities (beer garden, bottle store and cocktail lounge) served all their needs. To make their authority in the matter clear, they emphasised that "we remain the legitimate tenants of Magwegwe Township."⁹⁴⁹

Many teenagers entered beer gardens. In this regard, interestingly, it was the residents who often implored officials to be more rigorous in enforcing regulations, whilst European administrators seemed less convinced that enforcement was effective.⁹⁵⁰ Enforcement certainly

⁹⁴⁸ Mpopoma Leaseholders Association meeting, 4.11.74/ BCCA/SO6

⁹⁴⁹ Magwegwe Tenants Association Meeting, 9th Sept, 1973/BCCA/SO21/Magwegwe Tenants' Association, p. 16

⁹⁵⁰ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 221

faced obstacles: firstly, 19 years was the minimum age for drinking European beer, wine and spirits, enshrined in the Liquor Act that applied to all races. The African Beer Act, on the other hand, had an 18-year age restriction. Another issue was verifying patrons' age. Wolcott observed many youths contesting their age with security guards. Since they didn't have IDs, it was impossible to tell their age.⁹⁵¹

Mothers were also allowed to bring their children into the beer gardens, with officials reasoning that it was probably better than leaving them alone at home. In Salisbury, by contrast, the Council took a strong position against pregnant women or mothers with young children entering the beer gardens, claiming they were vulnerable to jostling crowds. Bulawayo's administrators rejected this line of argument, claiming that jostling was less of a problem in Bulawayo, which had "more adequate facilities".⁹⁵² This *laissez-faire* attitude often came across as blasé or indifferent, which irked many African residents, particularly the "respectable, religious and rather puritanical" residents, as Ndubiwa found in his urban study of 1974.⁹⁵³

Another issue was women drinking amongst men. Struggling for status in the racist and structurally oppressive colonial context, particularly in the interwar period when there was little differentiation in housing and amenities, men in the townships often invoked "traditional" drinking norms and codes of respectability to control women's drinking behaviour. West conceptualises this as a "politics of sexual control".⁹⁵⁴ African elite men frequently complained about "joint drinking" of men and women in the municipal beer halls. The Bulawayo Council tried to accommodate these traditional drinking norms in the early days, in order to legitimise the beer hall as a venue. In 1920, it introduced separate drinking hours for men and women to appease the traditionalists. But from 1932, joint drinking was allowed again. Many male patrons were not satisfied with this, claiming that it contravened "tribal custom", and so the Council determined that women must leave the Beer Hall an hour before mid-day closing time.⁹⁵⁵

In the 1940s, a more concerted campaign to end joint drinking enjoyed some success in Salisbury, but not in Bulawayo, where the Council feared it would lose its lower class clientele.⁹⁵⁶ The campaign died down as more elite neighbourhoods and more beer gardens were established in the 1950s, and drinking was allowed in the home from 1952. But it remained an issue. For example, at an Advisory Board Meeting in 1952, Mr Ngazimbi argued that it was an insult to have

⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵² *Ibid.*, 63

⁹⁵³ Ndubiwa, 'Urban Community Study', p. 79

⁹⁵⁴ M. West, 'Liquor and Libido: "Joint Drinking" and the Politics of Sexual Control in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920s-1950s', *Journal of Social History* (1997), p. 651-655

⁹⁵⁵ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 37

⁹⁵⁶ West, 'Liquor and Libido' p. 651-655

old men drinking beer at the same time as women and younger men. He argued that this was never allowed in the days of his forefathers, and as for women, “they mostly make men spend more money, and fights often result.” Other members agreed, but an argument ensued, with Mr Mazibisa and Mr Masunda insisting that there was nothing wrong with women drinking alongside men.⁹⁵⁷ Attitudinal differences with respect to the morality of drinking did not just fall along class and gender lines; there were clearly disagreements even within the middle class/elite circles.

Another criticism was that the Council had misplaced priorities. Many residents asked: why should the first amenity provided in a new township be a beer garden? One resident claimed that the Superintendent was always responsive to issues with poor quality beer, but prevaricated whenever residents raised issues of poor quality roads.⁹⁵⁸ Some people suspected that the government promoted beer drinking to pacify the population.⁹⁵⁹ In the 1970s, the Advisory Boards in general became more critical of the principle of ever-more liquor outlets, unless justified by new housing expansion.⁹⁶⁰ Wolcott spoke to people who felt that “the Government” promoted beer too much, pretending that beer halls were community centres for social upliftment, but their real function was to make people forget their oppression.⁹⁶¹

In fact, even the Minister of Local Government and Housing accused local authorities of selling excessive quantities of beer. This sort of ideological disagreement has been documented by Atkinson in the case of South Africa. She points out how the State Department of Native Affairs had moral qualms about beer profits being used for schools, as it might encourage Africans to drink purely for the purpose of funding their schools. But municipalities often had no such qualms, arguing that the ends justified the means entirely.⁹⁶² Gargett, a bit more tactically, pointed out that the Minister himself was appreciative of the valuable contribution that beer profits made, and so to take the moral high ground was hypocritical.⁹⁶³

But even if the ends did justify the means, there was a general suspicion in the African community that some of the beer profits were being used corruptly, creamed off for expenditure in European areas. This suspicion may have lingered from the interwar period when indeed, the council’s use of beer profits was suspect. Until the late 1940s, Location beer profits and even rents were merged with the European ratepayers’ account. In 1930, the Jackson commission was not satisfied that all beer profits were being spent on “native uses” as prescribed, and they therefore

⁹⁵⁷ AAB meeting, 20th March, 1952/BCCA

⁹⁵⁸ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 33

⁹⁵⁹ American missionary’s observation, quoted in Wolcott, 1974, p. 103

⁹⁶⁰ Ndubiwa, ‘Urban Community Study’, p. 80

⁹⁶¹ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 185

⁹⁶² Atkinson, D. Atkinson, ‘Contradictions of community’ within local government in the 1950s with reference to municipal beer trading’, *New Contree*, 57 (2009), pp. 149-168

⁹⁶³ Gargett, ‘Drinking for Pleasure – and who’s profit?’, p. 115

proposed that Council relinquish responsibility for use of beer money to the Governor-in-Council. The Council was predictably enraged, accusing the Government of also spending revenues from “purely Native sources” on things that were not “purely Native purposes”.⁹⁶⁴ Whilst I haven’t found evidence that beer revenues were misappropriated in Bulawayo after 1949, township gossip suspected otherwise, such that at independence the new housing minister, Edison Zvobgo, confessed his disappointment in finding out that the beer profits were not as great as everyone believed.⁹⁶⁵

Then there was the condemnation of municipal amenities as a symbol of colonial state oppression. This has been documented in several colonies. Chimhete has shown how in Salisbury in the 1960s and ‘70s, in the context of the liberation struggle, African nationalists orchestrated boycotts of municipal beer outlets in Salisbury, valorising shebeens instead as spaces of resistance – symbolically and literally (they were safe havens to plan political actions).⁹⁶⁶ Mpofu mentions the same valorisation of shebeens as sites of resistance in Bulawayo⁹⁶⁷. However, there were also many residents who condemned shebeens. The Magwegwe Leaseholders’ Association, for example, complained to the Council in 1972, that “Shebeen queens are a nuisance to public peace and order and should be stopped soonest”.⁹⁶⁸

I do not have evidence that the beer gardens in Bulawayo were boycotted in the same way as in Salisbury. According to ZAPU leader Dumiso Dabengwa, they were not:

No I don’t think it happened. The only time it happened was during *Zhii*. During those riots, when in frustration people targeted the only thing that you could call government were things like the beer halls and so on, and people wouldn’t make a difference between those establishments belonging to the city council and government. So they became targeted and yet it was government that was under attack.

Wolcott mentions that in the early 1960s, some nationalists sent envoys into the beer gardens to tell people to stop drinking and kicked over their mugs, chasing them out. He claimed that of all the people he spoke to in 1970-1, none abstained for purely political reasons, but he reckoned there were such people, though they would have been underground in any case, given the tense circumstances.⁹⁶⁹ There were, however, occasional armed attacks on beer gardens, but these appear to have been for purposes of stealing cash. The Council archives contain muted reports

⁹⁶⁴ Source unidentified, quoted in Ashton, *African Administration*, p. 37.

⁹⁶⁵ *The Chronicle*, 23rd Nov., 1981

⁹⁶⁶ Chimhete, ‘African Nationalism’.

⁹⁶⁷ B. Mpofu, ‘Articulating Regional and Ethnic Dissent? Bulawayo’s Politicians and their Campaign to Legalise Shebeens: 1980-2012’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40, 3 (2014), p. 485-6.

⁹⁶⁸ Magwegwe Tenants’ Association, 10th May, 1972/ BCCA/SO21

⁹⁶⁹ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 184

of grenade attacks on beer gardens, barely distinguishing such events from the other mundane obstacles that hampered administration on a day-to-day basis.

“Not in my Back Yard”: European Objections to Beer Gardens in their Residential Areas

It was not just African residents who had various moral qualms about beer gardens. Many European residents were paranoid about beer gardens in the vicinity of their neighbourhoods. One particularly inflammatory beer garden policy was put forward in 1957: the Council once again tabled the construction of various “Native Recreational Centres” in European areas to cater to the thousands of African domestic servants there.⁹⁷⁰ Receiving no response from the Government on the matter, the Council went ahead identifying 14 new sites. A Special Committee was convened, arguing that, “It is in the interests of the European – even if at some slight inconvenience – that such centres must be established in proximity to residential areas if they are to be of any value.”⁹⁷¹ Three of the proposed sites were advertised in the Chronicle, eliciting a wave of petitions from the European public.

The complaints ranged from nuisance and danger factors, to depreciation of property values. But at least 10 of the complainants expressed paternalistic concerns about the centres’ impact on the physical, financial and moral health of Africans themselves, e.g. “African women complain that African males spend too much money on beer”; “beer centres attract the less desirable type of African woman”; “beer centres could be a breeding ground for tuberculosis”; “it is undesirable that native children should attend beer centres”; “the recreational side should be emphasised rather than beer”. There were a few submissions wholeheartedly supporting the Council; the Sandwich Club, “comprising a broad cross section of the community” supported the centres, because “this is a small inconvenience compared with the value of having somewhere for Africans to go and enjoy themselves in their spare time”.

Whilst some objectors came to the interviews well-briefed, the Special Committee reported that all of them went away with “a fuller appreciation of the problem”. The plan, as explained to the objectors, was for each centre to be on a 40-acre site, ensuring a buffer between the actual centre and the nearest European residences. The centres would be on 10 acres with 6-foot security fences, and their elaborate landscaping would include:

⁹⁷⁰ City of Bulawayo, Report of the Special Committee re: District Native Recreational Centres, Bulawayo, July, 1958, p. 5/BCCA

⁹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12

1 standard size football field, 1 or 2 tennis courts, a children's play area with swings, slides and other play equipment and paddling pool, 1 standard basketball pitch, various tsooro boards and pitches, and a large open area for outdoor cinema. An area reserved for 75ft x 50ft swimming bath. The beer garden itself would be 2,5 acres, consisting of a single canteen, 3 open shelters, 1 WC block, 1 large store room, a welfare and admin centre, skittle alley, change rooms and WCs for outdoor sports, living accommodation for staff. The whole of the 10-acre site would be laid out in parkland, with large shade trees, big expanses of lawn, etc. The beer garden to be surrounded with a tall hedge.

The Committee did not accept complaints about noise, since Europeans insisted on their servants living close to hand for convenience, and must therefore "in fairness, accept some of the responsibility – even inconvenience" to provide recreation for them. The Committee did concede, however, that the past policy of providing beer canteens and de-emphasising sporting and other facilities must be re-balanced. And it proposed having only "dry" canteens at some centres.

What is interesting is the manner in which this controversial policy was shoehorned in, despite opposition from ratepayers. Behind the scenes, it was Ashton who moulded the Council's stance. Based on the first round of written submissions (55 letters received, including one signed by 4,782 people), he compiled a 15-page report (whose recommendations the Council adopted unconditionally) for the Special Committee to use in subsequent interviews with 50 different groups of objectors over the course of 4 days. Ashton had no truck with prejudiced objectors. From the outset, he stated that, "Most of the letters merely asserted the writer's opinion without putting up a reasoned case". He dismissed many letters as simply "the usual objections", and lamented that "no alternatives were suggested". He then proceeded to dismantle and rebut every objection. Only the constructive advice by those who generally supported the centres was considered.⁹⁷²

The Committee declined to offer a referendum on the issue, arguing that those who vote are likely not to be representative, and would not possess "a clear picture of the problem..." It furthermore argued that Councillors were elected by ratepayers to take "unpopular decisions", and so should "not shelter behind a referendum when a particularly thorny and contentious subject requires solving".⁹⁷³ In the end a recreational centre was controversially established north

⁹⁷² It should be noted, however, that Council had already re-situated some recreation centres due to complaints.

⁹⁷³ City of Bulawayo, Report of the Special Committee re: District Native Recreational Centres, Bulawayo, July, 1958, p. 14/BCCA

of Essexvale Road, which was several hundred metres from the nearest European suburb (but it had to be demolished some years later when a new European suburb was built there.⁹⁷⁴)

The Council's dismissive approach to the complainants clearly irked many in the white community. One objector laid it out in plain words: "Black and White partnership will never be achieved by such methods as the Bulawayo Municipality propose – rather will such methods result in the withdrawal of the Europeans from the Federation."⁹⁷⁵ Certain segregationists capitalised on this discontent and fear of African encroachment to win seats on the Council.⁹⁷⁶ In 1967, the Minister of Local Government and Housing, Mark Partridge, reiterated that African recreational facilities should not be provided in European residential areas: "You have got to be quite hard-headed. The African domestic servant is entering a European area and as such he must accept that he is entering on a basis that it is European and not African."⁹⁷⁷ Thus, even in recreation as much as housing, the Bulawayo Council and the Central Government had differing views on Africans' rights to, and in, the city.

The illogicality of the beer finance system

The Council was dismissive of most moral condemnations of the beer gardens, but found it more difficult to rebuff those who pointed out the sheer *illogicality* of promoting drinking to fund health⁹⁷⁸, welfare and development. Gargett's entire sub-department was funded from beer profits, and he was not afraid to admit the contradiction. For example, he made the following confession in an academic journal:

High sales mean money for housing, health and welfare services: perhaps also more drunkenness, more beaten wives, fewer school fees paid, and a hard day's night for the traumatic surgeon at Mpilo Hospital. Officials (and elected representatives) are faced with an intractable dilemma. The social rewards make the beer-garden seem desirable and possibly inevitable; the social ills that accompany it prompt demands for reform, if not prohibition.⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷⁴ City Engineer memo to Town Clerk, item 10, 'Recreational facilities for Africans', 25th October, 1972, BCCA/A13/3 (box 703), Local Govt. Assoc.

⁹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p 46

⁹⁷⁶ Greenfield interview, London, 18th Jan, 2016

⁹⁷⁷ "'Unwise'" to Provide African Facilities', *The Chronicle*, 3 August, 1967 [Loc Govt. box 2, p. 38]

⁹⁷⁸ There were 7 municipal clinics by the mid-70s, to supplement Mpilo and Luveve Hospitals, run by the Ministry of Health (Ndubiwa, 'Urban Community Study', p. 77)

⁹⁷⁹ Gargett, 'Drinking for Pleasure – and whose profit?', p. 115.

Indeed, doctors at Bulawayo's Mpilo Hospital, which was the largest hospital in Africa when it was built, attributed a significant proportion of patient health problems to alcohol consumption. They claimed that it was often difficult to differentiate between the three main causes – alcohol content, nutrient content or alcohol-fuelled behaviour – and cautioned that their impressions were not based on thorough research. However, it is such impressions, I would argue, that defenders of the beer system had to contend with.

By far the worst problem reported by doctors was severe head injuries and stab wounds from drunken altercations. One fifth of all admissions to Mpilo related to trauma (in the sense of physical injury) – three and a half times more than the second highest cause. Doctors informally estimated about 75% of personal violence was alcohol-related, and described fine summer nights when two to three dozen men came through with head and stab injuries, and paydays when the ward had “blood all over, and drunks lying everywhere”.⁹⁸⁰ Other drink-related injury was caused by accidents with cars and bicycles, carbon monoxide poisoning from in-door fires without proper ventilation, exposure to the elements, etc.

Physicians increasingly saw correlations between malnutrition diseases such as pellagra and scurvy and high consumption levels of African beer (especially when substituted for meals), but the degree of causation was never clear. It seems that the medical wisdom shifted over time, with the practical wisdom of the administrators following behind. A professor of medicine at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Michael Gelfand, confessed in 1966 that, “We used to think that African-brewed beer is rich in vitamins and very nourishing... We never realized that if taken in excess, such as upwards of one gallon a day, the beer might affect the health of the individual.”⁹⁸¹ The Alcoholism Research Unit claimed that the nutritional quality of municipal beers had declined over the years with cheaper ingredients being substituted for sorghum. But Bulawayo disputed this accusation: “We're using a wider variety of products and more expensive products than any other brewery – and our beer costs more to produce than anyone else's”.⁹⁸²

In light of the concerns of medical practitioners, Bulawayo's administrative top brass seemed fairly blasé about alcohol-related health impacts such as drunken violence, disease and malnutrition. For example, in a meeting in 1962, when Ashton and some welfare officers debated an invitation to attend a conference in Salisbury on alcoholism amongst Africans, Ashton stated that he was “not aware that alcoholism was a serious problem at this stage in Bulawayo” and he

⁹⁸⁰ Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 133

⁹⁸¹ M. Gelfand, 'Alcoholism in Contemporary African Society', *Central African Journal of Medicine*, 12,1 (1966), p. 13

⁹⁸² Administrator to Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 135

was “not particularly anxious to attend the conference.”⁹⁸³ In discussion, he and the African Administration committee members felt that although some insights might certainly be gained from the conference, these were not enough to justify the costs.

Of course, the Welfare Department officers were concerned, as the health effects of excessive alcohol consumption directly undermined the domestic harmony and development they sought to promote. Furthermore, there was a very active encouragement of sports and promoting health and fitness. Much Masunda recalls:

There was no excuse for anyone who grows up in Bulawayo not to have an exposure to a variety of sporting disciplines. And one of the main things that came out of all that was that sense of purpose, discipline that was inculcated in us. And we learnt at a very early age to win and lose with grace.⁹⁸⁴

Drinking was not exactly compatible with sporting discipline. But the administrators always argued that drinking would happen in any case, independently of the existence of municipal amenities and aggressive marketing. Unsurprisingly, contemporary social scientists waded in to these debates, for, as Gargett put it, the complexities of the issue “create a deep well for social scientists and reformer alike to fish in.”⁹⁸⁵

The AAD was open to social scientific investigation of its activities. In 1970, a sociologist at the University of Rhodesia was sponsored and aided by the housing department to conduct a survey of drinking patterns in Njube, Mabutweni, Mzilikazi, Pelandaba, Mpopoma, and Barbour Fields.⁹⁸⁶ Her survey gathered extensive quantitative and qualitative data on alcohol consumption patterns and expenditure amongst 692 residents (411 male, 281 female), according to several demographic variables. She discovered, unsurprisingly, distinctive gender differences (overall, 53% of men and 19% of women said that they drank beer⁹⁸⁷), but minor class differences.⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸³ African Administration Committee minutes, 9 April, 1962, p. 714/BCCA

⁹⁸⁴ Interview with M. Masunda.

⁹⁸⁵ E. Gargett, ‘Drinking for Pleasure – and whose profit?’ *Zambezia*, 4, ii (1975-6), p. 116

⁹⁸⁶ Conducted for the University of Rhodesia’s Institute for Social Research; a parallel study was conducted in Highfield African township in Salisbury, of which there was a follow-up in 1973.

⁹⁸⁷ There is reason to suspect that survey respondents’ answers were modified due to social stigma: women could be less likely to admit to the immodest activity of drinking. However, drinking after child-bearing age was much more acceptable. (May, 1970, p. 38-9; Ndubiwa, 1974, p. 78). A parallel survey in Highfields township (Salisbury) found a lower rate of abstention (37% of men and 80% of women), a lower preference for municipal African beer vs European beer, and lower rates of daily or mid-week drinking, than in Bulawayo. However, Highfields township had a higher modal income than the townships surveyed in Bulawayo (J. May and D. Reader, ‘Drinking Patterns in Rhodesia: Highfield African Township, Occ. Paper 5 (Salisbury, Uni Rhodesia, 1971).

⁹⁸⁸ Higher earners and older people were actually slightly heavier drinkers. And of the 4 education levels – 1. no schooling; 2. primary to standard six; 3. secondary to junior certificate; and 4. further education – the third had the lowest rate of drinkers.

Overall, the majority of drinkers preferred African beer (higher income brackets and younger people drank relatively more European beer). Spirits were generally unpopular. African beer was regarded by many as a food. Interestingly, little stigma was attached to being in a state of drunkenness, but the harmful consequences thereof, especially to dependents, was popularly condemned. The study did not overtly indict the Council, but it did conclude that there was “a substantial amount of daily drinking, which increases considerably over weekends”. It implied that beer gardens encouraged undue expenditure on drink.⁹⁸⁹ This was a criticism that had been levelled since at least the Jackson Commission of 1930 – that beer halls led to overspending, and therefore poverty and unhappiness. Again, the standard response of the Department was to downplay its part in encouraging drinking:

Personally I doubt very much if the availability of a wholesome brew at a reasonable price causes people to spend more than they otherwise would. Attendance at shebeens and house parties, where the tariff is high, suggests that other factors predominate.⁹⁹⁰

As for crime, the BSA Police were not unduly concerned by the crime rates compared to cities elsewhere in Africa.⁹⁹¹ However, they were convinced that there was a direct correlation between drinking levels and crime rates. Yet, they did not discourage the beer gardens, as they concurred with Department officials that in their absence, residents would brew and consume the same amounts of alcohol illegally. Their greatest crime concern was gang attacks, and they could not account for the fact that Bulawayo had a higher rate of stabbings than Salisbury. Indeed, Ashton himself was perplexed by this statistic, given that conditions in Bulawayo were less crowded, and that the higher consumption of African beer relative to European beer lessened rates of drunkenness.⁹⁹²

The police in Bulawayo directly addressed these issues to the Administration Department. They recommended limiting draught beer sold for home consumption, adding more lighting, and providing more club and cinema facilities for youth. They were satisfied their recommendations were carefully considered, including doubling down on shebeens: for both renters and home owners, the Council complied with police suggestions to toughen the laws so that after a first offence, the lessee or owner would be evicted.⁹⁹³

⁹⁸⁹ J. May, *Survey of African Drinking Patterns in the Bulawayo Municipal Townships* (Salisbury, Institute for Social Research, UR, 1970), p.25. (Note: the Housing Department’s estimates of average individual alcohol consumption, derived from sales figures, were higher than what May’s informants’ self-reported.)

⁹⁹⁰ Gargett, “The welfare of the urban community”

⁹⁹¹ In Bulawayo in 1969, amongst the African population of around 170,000, there were 571 serious assaults (4 deaths) and 223 group robberies. (Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 129).

⁹⁹² Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 162

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 129

Resolving the moral and practical contradictions

The Council tried to resolve these moral and practical contradictions. It tried to reconcile its promotion of drinking with its moral authority as the nurturer of responsible and respectable township citizens. As with every other aspect of township administration, the beer garden policy reflected not just key practical imperatives like control and finance, but also the particular modernising ethos of Ashton and Gargett. As we have seen, they regarded the townships as spaces of transition – at a stage between tradition and modernity. Accordingly, they regarded the beer gardens as offering both a traditional right to drink, and a place to turn this practice into a respectable, modern form of sociality. Even the common notion amongst urban administrators in southern Africa, that Africans had a right to consume beer because it was part of their tradition⁹⁹⁴, appears to have been reframed. Ashton referred to it more as a universal right, saying, “The provision of a good beer at the right price [is] a part of the provision of the amenities of life”.⁹⁹⁵

As noted in chapter 2, they were self-reflective, and had some misgivings about their roles as directors of social change. These misgivings were certainly heightened in the case of municipal beer policy. Their confident stock responses to criticism of the beer gardens belied their moral qualms and acute awareness of the image problem the lucrative beer business created. Gargett admitted that the beer gardens had “grave implications for the image of local government...”⁹⁹⁶ Thus, when Harry Wolcott proposed his ethnography of the beer gardens, Ashton welcomed the chance to have them “critically and impartially surveyed” by a reputable anthropologist. But he confessed afterwards that the experience of being a research subject for the first time was unsettling: “I have been an anthropologist myself and have turned the searchlight on others. Now the searchlight was turned on me. It was an embarrassing and salutary experience.”⁹⁹⁷ He confessed:

The ambivalence of my position is obvious. How can one maintain a healthy community and a healthy profit at one and the same time? I can almost hear the critical reader

⁹⁹⁴ Atkinson, ‘Contradictions of Community’, p. 157

⁹⁹⁵ Moreover, the Director argued, almost every aspect of African administration is ambivalent – such as whether to spend scarce resources on more low quality housing or less high quality housing. Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. 164

⁹⁹⁶ Gargett, ‘Drinking for Pleasure – and who’s profit?’ p. 115

⁹⁹⁷ Ashton, Introduction, in Wolcott, *The African Beer Gardens*, p. xvii

questioning my morality and even my sanity. And why not? I have often done so myself.⁹⁹⁸

But the beer garden system represented the Department's in-between position, between a rock and a hard place, and indeed Ashton called it the "symbol of our dilemma"; the dilemma being the lack of funds that always forced compromise, in this case a moral compromise. But Ashton was always highly pragmatic, and was not one to wallow in self-doubt. The junior administrators were indoctrinated into the Department's valuation of the whole system. For example, in order to gain an administration certificate⁹⁹⁹, they had to answer questions such as:

1. From time to time influential organizations allege social evils stem from the consumption of African beer and liquor. To what extent is this true and, if so, what are the compensating factors?
2. Discuss the part played by beer in the life of the African population and say to what extent a Municipal Liquor Undertaking can fulfil the needs of African urban communities in this regard.
3. Discuss the trend in Rhodesia and elsewhere of the swing from African beer toward European liquor. What are the causes and what can be done to maintain or increase sales of African beer?¹⁰⁰⁰

Thus, despite the administrators' ambivalence, the drive to expand the liquor undertaking was strong. Much of the literature on the municipal beer system emphasises control and profit motives, and has therefore framed municipal beer hall politics in terms of domination and resistance.¹⁰⁰¹ The seemingly universal colonial depictions of the shebeens and illicit brewing as "evil" can easily be interpreted as a pretext to intervene in civil society and expand municipal control. Certainly, in Bulawayo, fundraising and social control were strong motives. However, this range is too limited. More recently, authors such as Atkinson and Whelan have sought to problematise this dichotomous narrative, and recognise other motives of urban authorities.¹⁰⁰² As

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. xx

⁹⁹⁹ (awarded by the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs in SA, but instructed and examined in Bulawayo by Ashton and one other examiner)

¹⁰⁰⁰ Wolcott, *The African beer gardens*, p. 159

¹⁰⁰¹ See e.g. P. la Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of Liquor in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1988); P. Du Plooy, 'African Reaction to the Beer Halls' in J. Labland and R. Haswell (eds), *Pietermaritzburg 1838-1938: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter and Shooter, 1988); J. Gewald, 'Diluting Drinks and Deepening Discontent: Colonial Liquor Controls and Public Resistance in Windhoek, Namibia', in D. Bryceson (ed.), *Alcohol in Africa: Mixing Business, Pleasure, and Politics* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2002), pp. 117-139.

¹⁰⁰² See e.g. Atkinson, 'Contradictions of community' and 'Complex negotiations in local governance: The municipal beer hall debate in East London, 1956 to 1962', *New Contree*, 55 (2008), pp. 93-113; D. Whelan, 'eMatsheni: The central beer hall as social and municipal infrastructure in twentieth century Pietermaritzburg', *Historia*, 60, 1 (2015), pp. 75-91

Atkinson notes: “[T]he motivations of the City Councils are usually presented very one-dimensionally, thus losing sight of the intense debates and contradictory sentiments which characterised the positions of all the parties,” and, “The normative perspectives of municipal officials have never been explored.”¹⁰⁰³ She finds, in addition to control and profit, that there was often a sincere belief, occasionally well-founded, that shebeening led to suffering and moral decay, and the local authorities therefore felt “morally obliged to intervene.”¹⁰⁰⁴

Atkinson argues that the increased sophistication of beer research and brewing processes from the 1950s, producing high-quality, nutritious beer in “modern, gleaming, hygienic brewing plants” gave officials moral succour when they contrasted the “primitiveness and squalor” of the shebeen queen’s “grubby 44-gallon drum.”¹⁰⁰⁵ A key forum where urban administrators from Southern Africa shared ideas about these processes was the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs (IANA), with whom Ashton had regular correspondence, and whose annual conferences he attended. IANA discussed the technicalities of brewing from crop-growing to distribution tankers, and was the patron of the Technical Committee for Kaffir Beer Research established in 1955 (which compiled the statistics shown in Table 5).

Sophistication and respectability were associated not just with the brewing processes but also, even more importantly, with the settings – shebeens versus municipal amenities. The Bulawayo Council was engaged in a moral contestation to legitimise the municipal amenity and condemn the degenerate shebeen. Unlike in South Africa, where there was some loosening of restrictions on shebeening and home brewing in different cities, in Rhodesia the laws and by-laws remained strict. (Whether Ashton actually believed they were degenerate is a moot point. On his trip across the USA to study race relations, he went to the home of a lecturer to drink an illegal beer in a dry county, and joked that it was like shebeening in Bulawayo.)

In any case, prohibiting the shebeens was not sufficient to legitimise and thereby entice customers to the municipal amenities. The classic colonial beer hall was bleak, and it was only by replacing this model with more congenial beer gardens, that the Council could introduce an aesthetic dimension that would create an air of respectability to entice drinkers, from a range of social classes, away from shebeens. As Ashton argued:

Hitherto there has been a tendency to regard these centres simply as beer drinking places.

But they are much more than this – they are real recreation centres where people can

¹⁰⁰³ D. Atkinson, ‘Contradictions of community’, pp. 150 and 152

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 154. In South Africa, she argues that there were some “glimmerings of universalist and liberal reasoning” in 1950s policies on beer, but from the 1960s, this morphed into more coercive “Verwoerdian social engineering” (*ibid.*, p. 168)

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155

relax, gossip, have small parties, sing and dance. This aspect should be greatly encouraged... More attention should be paid to the appearance of these centres to raise their tone, and encourage the attendance of self-respecting people who at present avoid them.¹⁰⁰⁶

But it is important to note that this moral dichotomy between the respectable municipal amenities and the degenerate shebeens was *not* the same as a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Whilst trying to help people “transition” from tradition to modernity, Ashton valorised both of these states of social evolution. Thus, he placed great emphasis on ‘authentic’ African beer in Bulawayo, and he de-emphasised ‘European liquor’. Furthermore, “tribal” dancing in the beer gardens was also encouraged, with the municipality sponsoring dancing competitions. In Mzilikazi, a tribal dancing arena was built in 1960, and it was found to be more popular than jive, which was on the wane. Ashton said it would “assist in the preservation of a customary art form which was beginning to disappear for lack of encouragement.”¹⁰⁰⁷ A prime example of the attempt to bridge the traditional and the modern can be seen in the way officials agonised over the dance classes to teach at one of the African Girls’ Clubs. They felt that there was, “a definite need to assist the African community to develop a form of dance which would retain the traditional pattern but which could be *wedded to modern conditions*.”¹⁰⁰⁸

As Nugent argues, the experience of consuming alcohol takes meaning from the social context and the spatial setting: “The issue of modernity is germane to both of these dimensions”.¹⁰⁰⁹ In Bulawayo, administrative officials tried to associate the beer gardens and lounges with a respectability deriving from the quality of the beverage and an atmosphere that bridged tradition and modernity, whilst stigmatising the shebeens and their corrupting “concoctions” as zones of vice. In this respect, the Council had some allies in the African middle class and puritanical Christian communities, who were equally condemnatory of the “evil” shebeens. However, these groups tended to condemn the beer gardens too, claiming that the Council’s reliance on beer profits for township development laid the colonial state’s indifference to African welfare bare. The added suspicions about whether these funds were appropriately spent left the Council on shaky moral ground.

Therefore, shebeens remained attractive. Until 1957, when Africans were prohibited from drinking European liquor (even clear beer), the shebeens were especially attractive for the middle

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, appendix C [p.79]

¹⁰⁰⁷ African Admin Committee minutes, 31st January, 1961, p. 233/BCCA

¹⁰⁰⁸ Finance Committee minutes, 5th December, 1961, p. 2662. (My emphasis)/BCCA

¹⁰⁰⁹ P. Nugent, ‘Modernity, Tradition, and Intoxication: Comparative Lessons from South Africa and West Africa’, *Past and Present*, 222, 9 (2014) p. 126

class to imbibe European clear beer, and thereafter they retained that appeal, combined with being a safe space to discuss subversive politics.¹⁰¹⁰ And so, despite the municipality's efforts to entice residents of all classes away from the "underworld", the shebeens continued to do a roaring trade.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how the beer garden system in Bulawayo was devised as a way to address financial, security and improvement imperatives at once. In a context of extreme resource constraint, and with limited involvement from Central Government, the Bulawayo Council focused on the beer monopoly system as an effective way to sponsor the more elaborate projects of home ownership, health, welfare and recreation envisaged by the modernising directors of Administration and Welfare, Ashton and Gargett.

Riven with moral and practical contradictions (such was the nature of the colonial beer hall system), Ashton envisaged a resolution in more congenial, aesthetic beer gardens – attractive to a range of socio-economic strata. Nevertheless, this system created moral anxiety for Head Office staff and employment anxiety for those lower in the liquor undertaking's administrative hierarchy, who were subject to instant dismissal if discrepancies were discovered in their beer outlet's accounts. Contra the tendency to apply simple motives of control and profit in debates about the beer finance system, this chapter found the actors involved to be morally conflicted, forced to make unpalatable choices, in what Atkinson identifies as a "dirty hands" moral conflict faced by colonial administrators.¹⁰¹¹ Similarly, it found many African residents to be in the contradictory position of actually requesting *more* control and regulation from the Council, in order to protect the youth, women and the generally irresponsible from the beer gardens' corrupting influences.

Whilst the beer gardens continued to attract all manner of criticism and objection, including from the very social classes to whom the beer profits were meant to provide loan capital for home ownership, the considerable size of these profits ultimately attested to the success of the municipality's enterprise. As with every other aspect of township development and policy discussed in this thesis, it was the African Administration Department's particular way of melding pragmatic strategies with modernising ideals that produced this controversial but ubiquitous and iconic social amenity of the African townships in late colonial Bulawayo.

¹⁰¹⁰ Mpofu, *ibid.*, p. 484

¹⁰¹¹ Atkinson, 'Contradictions of Community'

7. Conclusion

By 1977, as systems of racial segregation in Rhodesia were finally being dismantled, and Dr Hugh Ashton retired after 28 years at the head of Bulawayo's African Administration Department, the townships of Bulawayo had been transformed from squalid and overcrowded slums to extensive, stratified neighbourhoods with 'modern' amenities, community centres, recreational facilities, beer gardens and bars. To be sure, this turnaround was never enough to house the more than 10-fold increase in population that had taken place in that time, and most African residents still lived under fairly austere conditions, with a sizeable proportion experiencing extreme hardship and precarity, not to mention political repression. Nevertheless, the post-war development that had taken place signified a profound reorientation of the City Council, since the days when councillors hyperbolically protested that allowing African male workers to bring their wives into town would result in "the end of the white race". A new basis of African urban citizenship, albeit of a second class status, had been constructed in these three decades, and this thesis unpacked the contested processes involved.

Whilst Bulawayo's experience fitted within a continental pattern of post-war reform, the city's particular transformation took on several characteristics that distinguished it within Rhodesia and the region – implying a heterogeneity in colonial/Rhodesian urbanism that needs to be better accounted for. I have argued that the comparatively "progressive" approach in Bulawayo, in terms of constructing townships that were much more spatially integrated, socioeconomically stratified, available on leasehold and freehold title, well serviced with welfare and beer garden amenities, and conceived as part of a unitary – rather than segregated and fragmented – municipal government, was shaped by post-war liberal modernist ideas embedded in complex administrative problem-solving practices.

By problematising the notion that the colonial state operated as a unitary, intentional actor in the urban arena, the thesis makes both a methodological and theoretical contribution to the literature on late colonial urbanism. The methodological contribution was to open up the ‘black box’ of the state bureaucracy to enable close examination of how township development was actually envisaged and executed over an extended period of time. By examining the practical and political struggles to *get things done* in Bulawayo – and the actors, ideas, negotiations, experiments and institutional culture/norms that arose therefrom (particularly in the Bulawayo Council’s African Administration Department) – we came to “see like the second city”, rather than seeing like “the state” in aggregate.

With this disaggregated and decentralised perspective on post-war urban development, the thesis poses a theoretical challenge to essentialist notions of ‘colonial modernity’, and a call to nuance overly schematic models of ‘colonial governmentality’. The interesting case of Bulawayo brings to light three main features that such schematic accounts tend to elide: firstly, that authority, influence and decision-making power were not as concentrated in the Central Government as often portrayed; local state actors captured a considerable degree of authority to pursue their own development visions that sometimes profoundly contradicted centralised agendas. Secondly, that the post-war context of resource and knowledge scarcity required considerable experimentation, resourcefulness, and compromise; normative developmental discourses were often employed more as *ex post facto* rationalisations for pragmatic action, than guiding principles for action. Thirdly, that the planning decisions, practices and rationalities introduced at the experimental juncture of the 1950s soon became entrenched, and subject to strong path dependent effects thereafter. The following sections recap how each chapter brought these characteristics of township development to light, concluding with a discussion of how a liberal, anthropologically trained low-level state agent like Ashton could exert such influence, and how this liberal influence shaped the specific colonial legacy in Bulawayo.

The ideological basis of post-war development

The thesis began by discussing some of the general trends of post-war developmental thinking and policy that the historiography of the period has elucidated. This provided a broad context within which to make sense of the reorientation that took place in the Bulawayo City Council. It explained how the Department’s head office staff, particularly Ashton – who was later joined by Dr Eric Gargett at the head of the Welfare Section – were instrumental in introducing an ethos of modernisation to the fledgling institution, and employing academically-trained ‘experts’ on

social change, including many more qualified African staff than was usual in Rhodesia. The concept of ‘modernisation’ (and its attendant concepts of ‘detrribalisation’, ‘stabilisation’, ‘urbanisation’, etc.) was examined in this thesis as a ‘native’s’ or emic category of analysis used by urban colonial state actors both to make sense of social change and to rationalise and defend their (often *ad hoc* and pragmatic) interventions to direct its course. This aligned with Fred Cooper’s eschewal of ‘modernity’ as a useful analytical category and an essential condition; and his preference for analysing it rather as a native’s category, employed as a means of claim-making.¹⁰¹²

What distinguished the new approach to urban administration from the earlier approach, was the general acceptance of permanent African settlement in the city, and the commitment to providing conditions more conducive to settled community life. In other words, it involved new (but still highly gendered) conceptions of African urban citizenship. These conceptions were informed by the idea that the African male workers and their families that needed to be settled, were in a precarious stage of transition from the stable tribal village to the bewildering environment of the modern city. This inspired paternalistic interventions – often deeply resented by the African “beneficiaries” – in numerous domains of everyday life, in order to help these migrants “adjust”. Such ideas about social change and how to manage it (captured in numerous “-isations” like detrribalisation, urbanisation, stabilisation, modernisation) were being propagated by various organisations at the time, with which Ashton and Gargett were regularly in contact, including the Rhodes Livingstone Institute and the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs.

But the urban administrators in Bulawayo did not just adopt these theories in an uncritical fashion. They critiqued and reworked them over time. Ashton also developed his own style of administration – balancing the imperatives of control and upliftment according to more liberal principles (but sometimes also authoritarian ones) than most of his counterparts in other municipalities. This entailed relaxing pass law procedures and home raids, and engaging with residents in a more conciliatory fashion, forging close yet ambivalent friendships with some township leaders. These specific local styles of administration were inflected by two key continuities from the earlier period: resistance to Central Government interference in local affairs, and rivalry with Salisbury. This study went on to show how this radical and ongoing reorientation of the City Council shaped township development for the remaining three decades of white minority rule.

¹⁰¹² See F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005), chapter 5: ‘Modernity’.

Development in practice

Since the African Administration Department's mandate of stabilising, uplifting and paternalistically improving the African population was partly decoupled from direct control and law enforcement (for which the British South Africa Police took most responsibility), its staff were primarily concerned with expanding housing and amenities, providing tenure security, and nurturing 'modern' urban citizens – all with extremely limited resources and initially limited experience.

Chapter 3 examined the AAD's attempts to address the first imperative – to ramp up housing building, with limited capital, in a context of labour stabilisation and an end to the migrant labour system that had relied on the rural subsistence economy bearing the costs of reproducing the industrial labour force. The chapter focused particularly on Bulawayo's distinctive emphasis on 'home ownership' as a means to enlist the resources and energies of African residents (amongst other rationalisations discussed in chapters 4 and 5). It revealed the origins of this home ownership trend to be an emergency squatter camp converted to an unglamorous, self-build, 10-year lease 'austerity scheme' at the beginning of the 1950s, experimentally established in the context of a housing crisis. From here, it traced the shift towards "better-to-do" home ownership schemes and more spatially integrated development, resulting from the need to reduce infrastructural costs and satisfy home buyers' "consumer preferences" to be closer to the industrial areas and CBD.

The need to continually audit and improve upon existing strategies and learn about residents' habits and preferences, and to experiment with house designs to minimise capital costs, never ceased. Meanwhile, well-organised residents' associations and the African Advisory Board members contested their continued structural oppression, actively demanding rights and entitlements as urban citizens, whilst state officials disagreed fundamentally on the living standards that African 'citizens-in-the-making' should be afforded in the city. In the end, Bulawayo achieved a notably socially stratified pattern of township development, at no undue cost to either industrial employers or European ratepayers. This spectacle of progress was presented as the outcome of enlightened, modernising ideals, eliding the *ad hoc*, experimental and compromised nature of the development process. Moreover, the evocation of precolonial Ndebele royalty and political and military figures in the naming of these new, raw and often monotonous schemes gave them a semblance of noble history.

Chapter 4 showed how home ownership was also promoted as a way to appease the discontented and politically active middle class. Secure tenure rights for Africans was always a controversial policy, however, because of the lingering hostility towards African settlement in the

cities, and the racialised land laws designating urban land as “European” for much of the colonial period. Furthermore, not only were African urban land tenure rights subject to change, but innumerable regulations and conditionalities for African urban residence remained in place; therefore, the *de facto* status of home owners remained unstable. And in the harsh economic conditions of the early 1960s, many home owners had no option but to default on their loan repayments, thus facing eviction.

Nevertheless, Bulawayo’s policy of promoting African home ownership continued into the 1960s and 1970s under the Rhodesia Front, whose urban policy framework was at first ambivalent and vague and then unambiguously and aggressively segregationist – reverting to a notion of African townships as undesirable “black spots” in the white towns and cities. Thus, the presence of long-lease and freehold schemes in the proximity of Bulawayo’s expanding industrial areas became an obstacle to the Government’s segregationist vision. Ministers of Local Government trying to dismantle and curb the further growth of these African home owning communities were confronted by a Council that now defended home ownership as a “right”, and not just a privilege, and as a “treasured thing” for high and low income families alike. Numerous battles ensued until the segregationist Land Tenure Act was finally repealed just a few years before independence.

Chapter 5 examined how both Government and Council rationalised their fundamentally opposing policies on African ‘participation’ in housing finance and urban management in terms of a common moral discourse about making Africans “responsible”. In the domain of housing, Bulawayo boasted about giving Africans an opportunity to experience the “responsibilities of modern life” and develop an “enterprising spirit” through its promotion of home ownership, for which it won accolades from a fairly supportive Government in the 1950s. But from the 1960s, the segregationist Rhodesia Front Government was not so amenable to Bulawayo’s project; it became actively hostile to the principle of African home ownership in the ‘European’ urban areas (restricting it to the wealthy, to whom private investors might extend (high interest) loans). Instead, it promoted a different kind of responsabilisation – through the removal of all subsidies in the rental housing sector. For pragmatic reasons, the Bulawayo Council tried to resist the removal of subsidisation schemes. The Government branded the Council “paternalistic”; the Council called the Government “sanctimonious”. Both sides claimed the moral high ground in making Africans responsible, through different means.

When it came to African participation in urban management, the Bulawayo Council preferred to offer Africans either some direct representation on the Mother Council – according to a unitary city model – or else to empower the united African advisory board. The Government

preferred separate, semi-autonomous townships – a two-tier model. Again, both claimed that their policies would make Africans more responsible. These examples show how the same powerful moral discourse about ‘responsibility’ could be used to rationalise entirely divergent policies – Bulawayo’s, based on a vision of a more racially integrated city with heavier municipal involvement in development, and the RF’s, based on a vision of re-establishing the cities as white spaces and diminishing state involvement in the financing of township development.

Chapter 6 analysed the lucrative municipal beer monopoly system and its inherent practical and moral contradictions. Whilst facing searing criticism from numerous sectors of society, this system was vital to the Council’s funding of health, welfare and home ownership in the African townships, and skilful PR was required to integrate this system into the spectacle of modernisation and moral improvement of township communities. Therefore, the conventional austere beer hall system model was drastically revised, leading to a proliferation of more congenial beer gardens with various facilities for wholesome pursuits, and an effort to make the municipal ‘African beer’ higher quality. These spaces were justified as a places of social upliftment more than control, and their revenue-generating potential became something of an obsession of the AAD. These beer gardens epitomised the Department’s way of melding pragmatism with progressivism.

Collectively, the chapters demonstrate the interconnected ways in which the Bulawayo Council addressed the political and moral imperatives of development in a context of scarce material and knowledge resources. Each chapter bears evidence of the decentralised and path dependent ways in which this development unfolded in Bulawayo, and the perpetual conflict that ensued with Central Government authorities. The chapters reveal how, despite the loose reference by most Rhodesian state actors to universal late colonial developmental tropes – detribalisation, stabilisation, responsabilisation and participation – the municipalities and the Government actually envisaged African urban citizenship in profoundly different ways, inspiring them to pursue divergent policies. To this end, local state actors asserted their superior on-the-ground expertise and kept the gate to localised knowledge. These actions reconfigured authority and influence in the Rhodesian State.

Reason, expertise, authority and influence: the legacy of liberal administration in Bulawayo

Whereas Harare after independence continues to be a deeply divided place, dominated by the enormous distance which colonial planning established between Black and White and between the wealthy suburbs of the north and the townships and Chitungwiza south of the city, Bulawayo appears much more coherent. Segregation between races and between rich and poor is less spectacular, and there is more of a gradual transition between the city and its western townships, indicating a history of different interaction and providing other possibilities for contact.¹⁰¹³

To a significant extent, the trajectory of township development in Bulawayo was determined by the ideas and actions of Dr Hugh Ashton, from the moment of post-war reform until the eve of independence. The close observations of departmental activities by the anthropologist Professor Harry Wolcott evince this central role of Ashton: “The personality of the [African Administration] Department was his personality, its conscience was his conscience...The townships had developed largely under his direction...”¹⁰¹⁴ Ashton’s more liberal ideas about African urban citizenship shaped and were shaped by his pragmatic and political strategies for getting things done under the political and economic conditions of an industrial second city. Ashton’s increasing clout enabled him to wield significant influence over the Council, and even sometimes the Central Government.

His guiding vision for African township development in Bulawayo was to ‘modernise’ the built environment and its inhabitants according to a comparatively integrated ‘unitary city’ model, encouraging social stratification and property ownership, with intense municipal management of these processes. Ashton’s Department and the City Council at large marched fairly in step with the ‘liberal’ Governments of the 1950s, despite the latter’s detachment from the complexities of development in Bulawayo. But as the right-wing Government of the 1960s and ‘70s aggressively ‘reversed’ the progressive trends of the 1950s, by reviving the conception of Africans as essentially tribal and of townships as “black spots in the white areas”, the established policies, practices and planning models in Bulawayo increasingly came under pressure. As we have seen, the Bulawayo Chronicle characterised this period as “a series of battles, the fiercest following UDI, most of which were won by the council, with Dr Ashton being amongst those in the frontline.”¹⁰¹⁵

¹⁰¹³ Kaarsholm, ‘Si Ye Pambili?’, p. 228

¹⁰¹⁴ See chapter 2.

¹⁰¹⁵ *The Chronicle*, October 26, 1987 (also cited in chapter 2).

With his espousal of trendy teleological theories – much like his liberal anthropologist contemporaries at the Rhodes Livingstone Institute – Ashton is easy to caricature as an archetypal modernist, beholden to dogmatic conceptions of the inevitability and desirability of ‘detrribalisation’ and ‘urbanisation’. Some scholars have felt called to come to the defence of these anthropologists, notably Hugh MacMillan, who argues that the RLI researchers never were so dogmatically teleological.¹⁰¹⁶ However, as James Ferguson points out:

It is hard to see why it should be controversial to assert that [James Clyde] Mitchell and [Godfrey] Wilson, like other liberals in white colonial society, considered the spread of what both unabashedly called ‘the civilized way of life’ to be both a natural and a desirable development. Since the only alternative that either author could envisage at that time to such a process was a racist and fascist segregationism, one could even say that such a faith was to their credit.¹⁰¹⁷

Indeed, Ashton held on tenaciously to his original 1950s vision of ‘modernising’ the townships, but not without a degree of reflexivity and adaptability, concerned most of all with resisting what he considered the reactionary segregationism of the Rhodesia Front.¹⁰¹⁸ By examining this low-level state actor straddling the social worlds of academic anthropology and the colonial state, this thesis has shown how theories of social change were put to work within the everyday practical and political struggles of colonial administration – both to guide action and to rationalise it *ex post facto*. In these struggles, Ashton called upon his anthropological expertise to claim a richer understanding of African urban society – akin to what George Steinmetz calls ‘ethnographic capital’¹⁰¹⁹ – and tapped into knowledge exchange networks from across the continent, to devise development solutions with no precedent in Rhodesia.

These actions “from below” reoriented the Council’s whole approach to African affairs. Whilst councillors and officers did not always speak with one voice, there was less politics and greater harmony in the Bulawayo Council than in Salisbury. The Council displayed economic and practical self-reliance in township development, in contrast to the earlier days when it had demanded that Government take responsibility for African housing. It also displayed localised expertise and knowledge; whereas previously the Government had relied on its own commissions

¹⁰¹⁶ H. Macmillan, ‘The Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt – Another View’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 19, 4 (1993), pp. 681-712.

¹⁰¹⁷ J. Ferguson, ‘Modernist narratives, conventional wisdoms, and colonial liberalism: reply to a straw man’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20,4 (1994), p. 636.

¹⁰¹⁸ And on the other hand, the too-revolutionary change of African nationalists.

¹⁰¹⁹ G. Steinmetz, ‘The colonial state as a social field: Ethnographic capital and native policy in the German overseas empire before 1914’, *American Sociological Review* 73, 4 (2008), pp. 589-612.

of inquiry to find out about housing conditions that the municipality had failed to acknowledge, the reformed Council – especially its AAD staff but also the town clerk, town planners and city engineers – engaged in extensive auditing, surveying and experimentation that produced superior localised knowledge of African “consumer preferences” with respect to styles of housing and social amenities, political preferences with respect to a unitary versus fragmented city model, economic realities with respect to the viability of rental and home ownership schemes, construction methods on sandy soils, cost-cutting measures in planning and layout, etc. The spectacle of significant development arising therefrom enabled the Council to assert its autonomy in directing the city’s affairs – and to defend “treasured” local traditions like African home ownership, which had ensured the “townships evolved from the grass roots.”¹⁰²⁰

In addition to asserting their expert authority, we have seen how it was necessary for local state actors to establish persuasive developmental visions and regimes of truth with which to rationalise their actions. Thus, in the protracted bureaucratic negotiations over every aspect of township development, truth claims were made about the ability of Africans to “transition” to modernity, and administrative action was rationalised in terms of the stabilisation, participation, and responsabilisation necessary to achieve that goal. For example, ‘frills’ in African house design (such as electrification) were rationalised by Ashton in terms of the desires and aspirations of a modern citizen-in-the-making, in an attempt to counter the efforts of Government officials (and some within the Bulawayo Council’s own ranks) to rationalise African house design in terms of economic multiplier effects and minimum sociologically-determined standards for habitation. Michael Ndubiwa, one of the AAD’s most ambitious and talented administrative assistants, went even further than Ashton in presenting graphic details of the hardships and social indignities suffered by township dwellers under the allegedly ‘sufficient standards of living’ defined by the state.

Tenure security in the 1950s was rationalised in terms of *appeasing*, *responsibilising* and *integrating* African townspeople – especially the burgeoning middle class – into modern urban society. These instrumental modes of reasoning had the effect of presenting home ownership as a privilege more than a right (the irony of which was exposed by the astute Charlton Ngcebetsha). But as we have seen, in the 1960s and ‘70s, Ashton and a comparatively liberal cohort of councillors (notably a series of progressive mayors from the Jewish industrialist community) began to raise more *principled* (not merely instrumental) defences of tenure security – defining it as an intrinsic right, and not just a privilege. This contradicted the Rhodesia Front’s portrayal of

¹⁰²⁰ Mayor of Bulawayo, Eugene Gordon. (See chapter 4).

Africans as essentially tribal, ill-suited to urban life and undeserving of any such ‘privileges’ in the white city – a powerful truth claim used to revoke African tenure rights in the urban areas.

RF local government ministers claimed that the extension of home ownership to low-income groups and in areas close to the CBD and industrial sites created “slums” and stifled industrial expansion, whilst Ashton argued the opposite – that it created a responsible citizenry invested in their homes and communities. The RF’s alternative way to responsabilise residents was to remove subsidisation in rental schemes (whilst branding Bulawayo ‘paternalistic’ for resisting this); whilst Bulawayo rationalised its subsidised rental policy in terms of the maintenance of a delicate equilibrium in the housing accounts for a structurally impoverished urban community.¹⁰²¹

Bulawayo rationalised its schemes for African participation in local government in terms of an integrationist ‘unitary city’ model conducive to a multiracial society, with imagery of Bulawayo as a coherent whole, from which the separation of the African townships would be like the “severing of the municipal limbs”. It condemned the RF Government’s segregationist vision of a fragmented ‘two-tier’ city as a way of “fobbing [Africans] off with something inferior”.¹⁰²² Bulawayo’s strong resistance to the RF’s segregationist vision contrasted with Salisbury City Council’s willing adoption of the two-tier model.

When it came to the controversial policy of building African beer gardens in the vicinity of white neighbourhoods, Ashton steamrolled over “prejudiced” white residents’ complaints by presenting the availability of on-site domestic help as a white privilege, that came with the obligation to tolerate domestic workers recreating in the ‘European’ areas (rather than expecting them to commute to the distant townships for a drink). The RF Government, by contrast, defended its self-described “hard-headed” approach to African domestic life in the European areas, in terms of the paramountcy of white interests.

These examples of competing rationalities of development, embedded in pragmatic and political struggle, wherein low-level state actors acquired significant clout and influence, should provoke us to question overly functionalist accounts of the supposedly top-down process of post-war township development, which imply a unitary, intentional state actor. Whilst at a certain level of generality, such accounts have yielded many insights into general developmental patterns across the continent, they have also served to elide disjunctures within the state, the diversity of

¹⁰²¹ These alternative arguments for ‘responsibilising’ citizens (whilst offloading housing costs onto them) presaged the neoliberal ideology that emerged globally in the later 1970s. However, Bulawayo’s preference for heavy state involvement and the RF’s antipathy to African land ownership in urban areas, meant that neither would fully promote the neoliberal ideology of unregulated market-led development.

¹⁰²² See chapter 5

institutional cultures and practices that emerged in different towns and cities as a result of these disjunctures, and therefore also the heterogeneous legacies bequeathed at independence.

Many administrators continued to work in the Bulawayo City Council long after Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, including Michael Ndubiwa, who became the first Black town clerk in Southern Africa, only retiring in 1999. To some extent, they reoriented the City Council to suit a new, constitutionally non-racial society. But they also carried over their experiences from many years as African Advisory Board Members and officers in the African Administration Department, thus perpetuating many aspects of the colonial Council's governing style and normative models of urban citizenship in the townships – dubbed “high density areas” after independence.

From interviews with some of the people who carried over this legacy, it was evident that they regarded Bulawayo to have its own, distinctive, long-term tradition of comparatively progressive urban administration. Some of this was disseminated to other towns: Much Masunda claims that, “The template which Hugh Ashton and his team set in Bulawayo was then replicated throughout Zimbabwe in the way local authorities were run”, citing several administrators who went on to head Housing and Amenities in Salisbury, Mutare, Kwekwe and Masvingo.¹⁰²³ However, Bulawayo continued to display its particularity and distinctive autonomy¹⁰²⁴, establishing a robust reputation as the most effective local authority in the country.¹⁰²⁵ The tension between this autonomous second city and Central Government, especially with regards to providing housing and services in the high density areas, is an issue that has “remained constant” to this day.¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰²³ Interview with Much Masunda, Harare, 24th June, 2018

¹⁰²⁴ Bulawayo was the only local authority to resist the takeover of water supplies by the parastatal Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) in the early 2000s.

¹⁰²⁵ When council housing awards were introduced in 1988, Bulawayo took the first prize for 3 out of the first 4 years, and there have been numerous references in the post-independence public sphere to its superior reputation. This would make it an important Council to study as a “pocket of effectiveness”. See e.g. the research group at Manchester University: *Investigating 'pockets of effectiveness' in developing countries: a new route to building state capacity for development*, available at <https://www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk/research/groups/politics-governance-management/investigating-pockets-of-effectiveness/> retrieved 20th September, 2018.

¹⁰²⁶ Ranger, ‘City vs State’, p. 163

Limitations

This study has some limitations. Whilst the key actors in this study, notably Hugh Ashton, undoubtedly played a significant role in township development, there were other structural factors, such as the dominant industrial sector as a lobby group, and the particularities of Bulawayo's social demographics, that undoubtedly impacted its African housing policies in ways that were alluded to, but beyond the scope of the study to explore systematically. The influence exerted by industry, and the differences in the types of labour and the connections of workers to the rural hinterlands in Bulawayo and Salisbury, no doubt impacted the types of worker stability sought by both employers and workers, independent of the facilitative role played by the councils.

Secondly, a more systematic analysis of civil society would have shed further light on the ways in which residents influenced municipal policies and practices. Whilst I focused on the archival evidence of African residents impacting administrative decisions and processes through their collective action in residents' associations, advisory boards, and orchestrated rioting, there were obviously other ways in which they shaped housing and administration policy that the archives did not register, requiring further historical inquiry through literary and oral sources outside the archive. Residents no doubt influenced administrators, "timed" the temporal rhythms of the township administration and intervened at strategic moments to secure resources.¹⁰²⁷

Thirdly, women are under-represented in this historical account. This was a result of both the gendered nature of the archives and my inability to locate women who had worked in the AAD. Furthermore, since men dominated the residents' associations and advisory boards, the role of women in organising opposition to Council policies is less well documented.

¹⁰²⁷ See A. Ghertner, 'When is the state? Topology, temporality, and the navigation of everyday state space in Delhi', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 107, 3 (2017), pp. 731-750.

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Appendix A: Rental Housing Development, 1949-1977

As noted in chapter 3, despite Bulawayo's emphasis on home ownership, rental schemes still comprised the majority of housing units until independence. As this overview of rental housing development in this appendix shows, Bulawayo focused on massively expanding the ratio of 'married' to 'single' rental housing. Immediately, the newly established African Administration Department at mid-century began to build married housing schemes, beginning with Barbour Fields in 1949 (described in chapter 3) and then Nguboyenja – a married township built between 1950 and 1952 (with the help of the National Building and Housing Board). Nguboyenja comprised 554 semi-detached houses with 2 rooms, a kitchen and individual aqua privies, built out of 'no-fines' concrete.¹⁰²⁹ They were described by Mayor Newman as composing "an attractive village"¹⁰³⁰ – a heretofore rare epithet for Bulawayo's African housing, and a sign that the Council was starting to regard its own housing estates with a modicum of pride rather than shame and defensiveness.

But it was imperative to address the massive backlog in single men's housing. Since Barbour Fields and Nguboyenja had filled the proclaimed 'Native Urban Areas' on the Bulawayo Commonage, the next large scheme for single men was planned for Hyde Park on the Commonage Boundary, which, as mentioned, Council had earmarked for future development. But immediately, there were obstacles to this segregationist plan. Firstly, the Government disapproved of the remote siting, preferring some development on Bulawayo's massive Western Commonage land first.¹⁰³¹ Secondly, the Bulawayo Council made its own extensive financial considerations, and realised that by re-locating the proposed scheme to the Western Commonage, it would save £600,000, which as the mayor put it, was "too great a price to pay for the ideal of residential segregation".¹⁰³² Therefore, the whole scheme was relocated closer to town and became two adjacent townships – Mabutweni and Iminyela – each accommodating 4800 men, constructed between 1950-52.

Being some distance from the industrial sites and inadequately served by public transport, and with strict celibacy conditions, these schemes were not easy to fill. The mayor, who was also Chairman of the African Advisory Boards, begged the Board Members to give every

¹⁰²⁹ No-fines concrete housing was invented by the George Wimpey company in Britain after World War II for mass social housing. It is concrete with no fine aggregates.

¹⁰³⁰ BCCA/Mayor's Minute, 1952, p. 3

¹⁰³¹ Ashton, *African Administration*, and Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 187

¹⁰³² BCCA/Mayors' minute, 1950, p. 3

encouragement to bachelors in the Old Location to move over to these two new schemes.¹⁰³³ But the members explained that even when employees were officially resident in Mabutweni or Iminyela (with their employers paying their rents), they often snuck back to the old ‘Bulawayo African Townships’ at night.¹⁰³⁴ Moreover, the new townships were not exactly enticing, with four men to a room. Board Member Dick Masunda argued that it should be three at most, as there was no room for bicycle storage or even a table.¹⁰³⁵ The Old Location of Makokoba was even more cramped, but it was at least a home, a community, and a livelihood to many. The AAD soon discovered that housing solutions had to pay at least some regard to ‘consumer preferences’, even if the consumer was generally impoverished and disempowered.

Ashton soon found his plans frustrated. He presented 3 years of building plans from 1951-54 to house 15,000 single men and 4,800 families¹⁰³⁶, but the Finance Committee put a damper on them – only expenditure for the ensuing year could be approved, nothing beyond that. The discrepancy between 4-year physical plans and only 1-year budgeting plans (which could be changed at short notice) posed a serious problem for long-term development, adding to the *ad hoc* nature of housing development.¹⁰³⁷ In 1952 and ‘53, no major rental schemes were initiated as there was a dearth of loan funds from government. (It was in this context of financial stringency that Bulawayo pioneered home ownership, discussed in the next section.) The rental housing backlog was growing again, and the mayor blamed Government for this “tragic situation”.¹⁰³⁸

Restricted to infrastructural development (e.g. street lighting for most townships) and small-scale schemes, the Department engaged in cost-cutting experiments. One of these was employing African construction workers. The Urban Areas Act No. 20 of 1951 (section 69) allowed local authorities to employ African artisans to build houses (under European supervision) at wage rates and conditions different from those specified under the Industrial Conciliation Act, so as to be able to reduce building costs in African areas¹⁰³⁹. The Bulawayo City Council took advantage of this. Having hired African labourers to successfully build a 300-room block, Ashton mocked “the scepticism of many who doubted their capacity to build a three-storey building.” And thereafter, contracts were usually awarded to the cheapest tenderers, who employed African

¹⁰³³ BCCA/African Advisory Board Meeting, 22nd Sept., 1952 [p. 46]

¹⁰³⁴ The Bulawayo African Townships (BAT) was an umbrella term for Makokoba, Mzilikazi, Nguboyenja and Barbour Fields.

¹⁰³⁵ BCCA/African Advisory Board Meeting, 22nd Sept., 1952 [p. 46]

¹⁰³⁶ Involving converting single units to 1,200 married ones.

¹⁰³⁷ See this discussed in Finance Committee minutes, 1960 vol. 1 p. 89

¹⁰³⁸ BCCA/Mayor’s Minute, 1953

¹⁰³⁹ (Urban Affairs Commission report, 1958, p. 47)

labour. But this form of cost-saving was contentious. The Salisbury CC which was more inclined to hire white artisans, adding to its development costs.¹⁰⁴⁰

By 1953, Bulawayo still lagged behind Salisbury in terms of the married to single housing ratio: it had accommodation for 21,000 singles and 3,000 families (and 120 single women), whereas Salisbury had accommodation for 17,912 single men and 4,673 families. This meant Salisbury had a much greater backlog in single housing whereas Bulawayo had a greater backlog in married housing.¹⁰⁴¹

But within a few years, Bulawayo had overtaken the capital in its ratio of married to single housing. This shift began with the 1953 departure of Donald Macintyre, who had epitomised the early colonial opposition to permanent Council housing for Africans. As noted in chapter 3, the construction of the massive Njube housing scheme – the largest in the colony to date – began in 1953. In 1955, Bulawayo’s mayor proclaimed, “[W]e can justifiably point with pride to the fact that over the last five years the Council has provided and planned more housing for Africans than during the whole of its previous existence since 1897”.¹⁰⁴² It had been a low bar to beat, but still this positive attitude was a profound turnaround from the beginning of the decade.¹⁰⁴³ He optimistically predicted that by 1957, the backlog would be fully absorbed and an additional 1,400 dwellings per year thereafter would suffice to house the expanding population – displaying an optimism that proved unfounded.¹⁰⁴⁴

Ashton’s assessment was somewhat more tempered. He drew up daunting estimates of African housing requirements for the next 5 years:¹⁰⁴⁵

	Family Housing	Bachelor Quarters
Shortfall 1951	4,100	8,200
Additional 1951/55	3,300	2,800
Total required 1955	7,400	11,000
Provided 1951/55	1,950	5,400
Shortfall 1955	5,450	5,600
Additional 1955/59	2,000	5,000
Total needed by 1959	7,450	10,600

¹⁰⁴⁰ In 1961, when Salisbury CC awarded a contract to a much higher tenderer who employed only white labour, the Prime Minister criticised them for this, saying it contravened the Industrial Conciliation Act, and threatened the city’s future loans. [‘Contract Row in Council’, Bulawayo Chronicle, 21 Dec, 1960].

¹⁰⁴¹ S2609/35/1/vol.1 Native Housing Policy, 1946-53 [p. 1-2]

¹⁰⁴² BCCA/Mayor’s Minute for the Year Ending 31st July, 1955

¹⁰⁴³ In 1955 Bulawayo spent £470, 000 on African housing, which was more than Salisbury (£430, 000). NAZ/s3602/35/2. Vol. 2. Native Housing Policy [p. 18]

¹⁰⁴⁴ BCCA/Mayor’s Minute for the year ended 31st July, 1955, p. 2

¹⁰⁴⁵ Note that in addition to these municipal housing figures, there was a significant number of “bachelors” (25,300) accommodated in private premises (mostly domestic).

These estimates were based on a conservative growth estimate of 5%. Ashton emphasised, “Our efforts should be concentrated on the creation of married accommodation”, and he claimed that if his programme was achieved, it would shift the ratio of married to single men down to 1 to 2.5 by 1959, which would be “very much better than any Municipality in Rhodesia has yet achieved”, but would still be behind the “more advanced South African towns”.¹⁰⁴⁶ Ashton’s housing proposals would very conservatively cost £2 262 500 (with just minimal service provision). This estimate included 7,400 bachelors accommodated as lodgers, a new system the council was not in favour of but would come to accept. The costs also excluded upgrading of the austere bachelor accommodation at Mshasha, Iminyela and Mabutweni. Thus, Ashton beseeched the Council to accept that “the housing programme envisaged, formidable though it is, is neither extravagant nor complete”. But the Council considered that it was “extremely unlikely that there will be sufficient money to finance the whole of the Director’s proposals”.¹⁰⁴⁷

A windfall came in 1955 with a loan of half a million pounds from the Prime Minister’s UK fund raising efforts. This was spent on a massive home ownership scheme called Mpopoma (discussed in the next section). Whilst Mpopoma preoccupied the Department, no rental schemes were built until 1958, but all townships underwent maintenance work and infrastructural developments to roads, sanitary facilities, shopping and recreational/beer garden amenities. By 1957, Ashton boasted that Bulawayo’s African residents had been accommodated in “better conditions than they have ever known”, with a far healthier married to single ratio, and that the “appalling conditions in the town and Commonage have been virtually eliminated”.¹⁰⁴⁸

This was not, however, how all of the residents viewed it. The rental schemes remained monotonous, and stereotypes about African housing preferences still inhibited innovation. But in 1958, the first “high-density” housing was created, in the form of 300 double-storey 4-roomed terraced units for families in the B.A.T, explicitly to “relieve the monotony of endless bungalows.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Flats were also built above shops for the first time. Ashton remarked that, “The popularity of these flats does not support widely-held assumptions that Africans would not take to multi-double-storey buildings”.¹⁰⁵⁰ This was the beginning of a densification trend that continued in the 1960s as land became scarce.

¹⁰⁴⁶ BCCA/African Administration Department report to His Worship the Mayor and Councillors, 11th March 1955/Council minutes

¹⁰⁴⁷ BCCA/“Siting of future native housing schemes”, report submitted to Council by the Town Clerk’s Department, 1st March 1955, in Council Minutes, 1955, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ashton, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 15

¹⁰⁴⁹ BCCA/Annual report of the Director, 1959.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Annual Report of the Director, 1959, p. 85

Meanwhile, old styles of bachelor accommodation began to be phased out. The austere bachelor township of Mshasha, housing nearly 2000 men, was earmarked for removal. The Department reluctantly built 4-storey “hostels” for single men in the B.A.T to accommodate 1,326 men in total. Ashton opined, “I hope no more hostels of this sort will be built and that in future bachelors will be accommodated as lodgers or in bachelor flats, scattered throughout the townships.”¹⁰⁵¹

In 1959, Ashton pronounced “doubt and confusion” over the country’s urban African administration policy, and for this reason the steady rate of expansion slowed considerably. The official African population housed in municipal schemes in 1959 was 9,498 families (about 45,000 men, women, children), 25,347 single men, and 133 single women, but the *actual* number of dwellers was estimated to be about 15% higher than this. An additional 500 families were estimated to be squatting on Hyde Park Farm.¹⁰⁵² The Railways housed 15,000¹⁰⁵³; other industrialists 6,000; and a further 20,000 were housed by domestic employers.¹⁰⁵⁴

As for the industrial employers in Bulawayo, their role in housing dwindled as the municipality preferred to take charge and administer a more coherent, unified township community. The Railways, however, did continue with its own large-scale schemes. It had always housed its own railway employees since setting up shop in the city in 1897. However, the quality of railway housing had always been variable. During the Second World War, it was totally inadequate, but the wake-up call from a 1945 railway workers’ strike led to considerable improvements in the late colonial period. There were some disagreements in the 1950s between the Bulawayo Council and the Railways over who should be responsible for employee housing – indeed in 1951 the Council refused to house *any* railway employees – but a more coordinated effort was made thereafter, with the Council leasing whole sections of its townships to the Railways.¹⁰⁵⁵

There were also about 25,000 domestic employees in Bulawayo by the mid-1950s. Men outnumbered women 13 to 1 in this sector, though this gender balance shifted in favour of women over time. Domestic worker housing was regulated by the Municipality through licencing and the

¹⁰⁵¹ Annual Report of the Director, 1960, [p. 34]

¹⁰⁵² For comprehensive housing statistics for the year 1959, see appendix A.

¹⁰⁵³ This figure may be inaccurate, as the figure for the following year was 12,500.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Annual Report of the Director, 1960, [p. 34]

¹⁰⁵⁵ The Railways leased 116 acres at a very low rent from the Municipality in the late 1950s, to build a 600-house scheme called Matshobana. It was modelled on the best municipal housing, but fell short in terms of social amenities. In Tshabalala township, the Council offered more than a thousand units to the Railways in the 1960s. (BCCA/Housing and Amenities Director’s Annual Report, 1964 [p.72])

imposition of minimum dwelling standards. In theory, domestic employees' spouses and children were not supposed to live with them, though in practice this was common.

1960s: Slum upgrading and conversions from single to married housing

The increased stability of the labour force meant married housing was much more important than single men's housing. Ashton emphasised the "crying need" for more subeconomic married housing. It was particularly hard for workers earning less than £10 a month to find accommodation. Despite the prioritisation of married schemes (both rental and home ownership) in the 1950s, there were still 5,000 applicants on the married housing waiting list, a backlog that would cost about £3 million to address.¹⁰⁵⁶ Ashton therefore asked the Council in 1960 to accept, in principle and before funding had been considered, the necessity of building housing for a further 10,000 families and 3,000 single men (in two areas on the Commonage called Curti's Farm and Paradise Farm).¹⁰⁵⁷

The Council realised that ordinary Government loans for the plans would not suffice; special funds from overseas would be required – preferably £1 million per year for 5 years. It appears that somewhat arbitrarily revised funding requirements were being periodically put forward with unwarranted optimism. As it turned out, these funds were not forthcoming, and so two cost-saving strategies had to be employed: firstly, converting substantial portions of single men's housing into married housing, and secondly, converting planned rental schemes into home ownership schemes, where the financial burden would fall on the lessee. This second strategy is discussed in the next section on home ownership schemes. A third major development was the "slum upgrading" of Makokoba.

Substandard bachelor's accommodation needed to be demolished or upgraded and converted to married accommodation, which would affect about 7,000 single men. On the first strategy of converting single housing to married housing, Ashton believed that, "This would contribute to the twin desiderata of increasing married accommodation and reducing troublous spots such as Iminyela and Mabutweni."¹⁰⁵⁸ This made sense in light of the fact that single men's townships were emptying anyway, due to both a slowing down of industry and commerce (particularly construction), and a drift of single men to the lodgings offered in home ownership

¹⁰⁵⁶ BCCA/Council Meeting Minutes, 18.10.61, p. 2255

¹⁰⁵⁷ BCCA/Joint Finance and Special African Housing Committee, 29.11.60, p. 3596

¹⁰⁵⁸ BCCA/African Admin Committee meeting, 1961 vol 4 p. 2578

schemes like Mpopoma (see below). In fact the Department estimated that it was actually losing substantial money from single men's units that were lying empty. Part of this drive to reduce single men's schemes involved demolishing the sub-standard, austere single men's houses at Mshasha (103 dormitories housing 2900 men) and the C.M.U (former Royal Air Force Central Maintenance Unit which had housed approx. 500 men).¹⁰⁵⁹

It was, of course, poorer families that were moved to the vacated units at Mabutweni – 1 family to a room formerly occupied by 4 single men. After 572 families had begun to settle in and develop their gardens, Ashton reported that, “the improvement in the general atmosphere of the area has been striking”.¹⁰⁶⁰ By 1963, Mabutweni was fully converted to married accommodation for 1,184 families. Mabutweni's neighbouring “trouble spot” of Iminyela, which was largely tied accommodation – i.e. blocks of units were rented to employees of one company – was converted to individual tenancies, further reducing Bulawayo's already minimal ratio of “tied accommodation” compared to other municipalities in the country.

These conversions as well as incremental building in existing schemes meant that by the mid-60s, Bulawayo had provided a much higher ratio of married (family) housing than the Salisbury Council. As Palley noted at the time, the cities' different policies in this regard meant that Bulawayo had accommodation for 15,967 families and 13,303 single men, whereas Salisbury accommodated 8,109 families and 25,578 single men.¹⁰⁶¹ Ashton reported that Salisbury's townships of Highfield and Harare were under states of emergency due to overcrowding, but luckily Bulawayo was spared.¹⁰⁶²

Meanwhile, another form of improvement to existing schemes that did not cost the municipality, was residents taking their own initiative to extend and improve their houses, with Council encouragement but no guarantee of compensation, proving that it was not just the “home owners” who were beginning to invest considerable time and money in their place of residence. For example, in 1963, tenants of 300 houses at Nguboyenja extended them by one room. Mzilikazi was “ceasing to be a township purely for the lower income group”, evidenced by residents spending between £5 and £200 on improvements to their houses and requesting a domestic electricity supply.¹⁰⁶³

Finally, in the neglected Old Location of Makokoba, the Department undertook “slum upgrading” – which entailed both renovation and redevelopment. The area of Makokoba had

¹⁰⁵⁹ BCCA/African Admin Committee meeting, 1961 vol 4 p. 2578

¹⁰⁶⁰ BCCA/Annual Report of the Director, 1962

¹⁰⁶¹ C.S.R 19-1965, p. 23 in Palley, *The Constitutional History*, p. 649

¹⁰⁶² BCCA/Director's annual report, 1965

¹⁰⁶³ BCCA/Annual report, 1963

been settled by African townspeople since the birth of colonial Bulawayo. It was where the first council housing appeared in 1912, but most of its houses were built in the 1940s. Despite official neglect, since the 1930s the township had been a place of rich political and cultural expression, including jazz, dance and fashion. Many rural women came there to experience the glamour of town life: “It was good to be young and in the swing even if you had to live in crowded Makokoba”, recalled MaNcube, who had left the “quiet life” of her rural home (to her father’s fury) to become one of the “chief dancers” of Makokoba.¹⁰⁶⁴



Figure 43: Jive dancing at Makokoba's Stanley Hall, circa 1940s. [Source: *Bulawayo, Centenary of Development Magazine*, 1994]

The township experienced a demographic shift in the 1950s: originally designed for single men, by 1960 families outnumbered bachelors, and many of the latter lived with unofficial wives, also referred to as ‘sit and get’ girls. Rooms that had once housed 8 men (although official capacity was 4) now often housed 8 women and children. The living conditions were bad. A *Bantu Mirror* reporter described them thus:

¹⁰⁶⁴ Hloniphani Ndlovu interview with MaNcube, New Magwegwe, Feb, 2000, quoted in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 177.

I went around the township in the early hours of the morning and what I saw was appalling. Everywhere from Fourth Street to Eighth Street were bundles of human beings wrapped up in flimsy blankets sleeping outside in the biting weather.¹⁰⁶⁵

The majority of these outsleepers were unemployed youths, but included some families. The Bantu Mirror blamed the overcrowding of Makokoba on the immorality of these single men taking in unofficial wives – reflecting a more general moral judgment of Makokoba at this time, that it was a “den for all runaway girls”.¹⁰⁶⁶

In 1961, the Council renovated 1,041 houses and 9 public lavatories, and in 1962, finally devised a masterplan for the renewal and redevelopment of the whole of Makokoba. By this time, 12,650 people occupied the married housing and 4,800 the single men’s blocks.¹⁰⁶⁷ The masterplan aimed to house just 10,000 registered occupants, and gradually move the remaining 9,000 elsewhere. This policy of urban renewal was pursued “with vigour” over the next few years.¹⁰⁶⁸



Figure 44: Detached Houses in Makokoba [Source: NAZ/undated/courtesy of Paul Hubbard]

¹⁰⁶⁵ Bantu Mirror, 14 May, 1960, quoted in Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 177.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bantu Mirror, 9 July, 1960, quoted in Ranger, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁷ Annual report of the Director of African Administration for the year ended 30th June, 1963: 7

¹⁰⁶⁸ First 64 flats were built to rehouse Municipal employees; then 5 blocks of 24 flats each were built. These blocks were 3 storeys high – the first of their kind in Southern Rhodesia, with individual toilets and water connections replacing ablution blocks.

The aim was to reduce existing densities to 37 dwelling units per hectare, and build upwards at a density of 65 units per hectare. A slow policy of re-accommodating people in other townships, until there would be only one family per room in Makokoba, was discontinued when the Advisory Boards reported the inconvenience that this reshuffling was causing to tenants.¹⁰⁶⁹

As land became scarce in the 1960s, the Council began increasingly to pursue densification in other townships as well. By 1965, Ashton announced that, “We have reached a stage where unoccupied building land within reasonable reach of the City and Industrial areas is becoming very scarce, and to make the best use of the limited space available it has become necessary to build upwards”.¹⁰⁷⁰ Two and three-storey blocks of flats were built at Nguboyenja and the home ownership schemes of Mpopoma and Tshabalala. The Council’s Building Director calculated that two storeys was the most economical:

Table 6: Housing costs in relation to Density. [Source: R. Agnew, Planning Urban Homes, presentation to the Homes and Social Planning Conference, Salisbury, 1968]

Type of House	Cost Factor	Density Factor
Detached	1	1
Two Storey flats	1.3	1.46
Three storey flats	1.9	1.6

Meanwhile, the installation of ‘modern’ home infrastructure like water closets, reticulated sewerage, domestic electricity continued in piecemeal fashion throughout the 1960s. 12,000 houses were connected to electricity by the end of the decade. For some townships such as Nguboyenja, Mabutweni and Iminyela, water closets could not be installed until funds became available in the mid-60s; in the meantime, their existing aqua privies were simply connected to the reticulated sewerage system (in 1960, 61 and 62 respectively) and the effluent discharged into the system. This proved “satisfactory and economical”, reported Ashton. By 1964, only Njube and Pumula remained with the aqua privy system. Mzilikazi had individual toilets, water standpipes and electricity installed in most homes by the late 1960s. The large rental schemes of Njube and Mabutweni had to wait until 1970. The tarring of township roads began in an incremental fashion, beginning in 1967 with the Barbour Fields loop road. Street lighting was greatly expanded across most townships, and the City Engineer designed enormous tower lights in 1967, and they became

¹⁰⁶⁹ Annual Report of the Director, 1963: 7

¹⁰⁷⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities for the year ended 30th June, 1965: 7

a feature of most townships over the years. It was not always the case that the higher-income schemes enjoyed quicker or superior infrastructural upgrades than the lower income schemes.¹⁰⁷¹

1970s: low cost rental and conversions to home ownership

Most municipal rental schemes were full or near capacity by the 1970s, and the Housing Department focussed on the considerable expansion of the existing home ownership schemes. However, with a housing application rate of 150 per month, it was deemed important to continue with some low-cost family rental housing as well.¹⁰⁷²

The historic township of Makokoba continued to undergo redevelopment as planned and initiated in 1962, to accommodate more low-income families. In 1973, Ashton pushed for the updating of the Town Planning Officer's original masterplan and the Council's Town Planning Branch produced a report on 'The Replanning of Makokoba'. The overall population of Makokoba had actually reduced to about 15,000, and only a fifth were single men (in 1944 it was nearly half¹⁰⁷³). The density of family flats (2 and 3 rooms) was on average 9.1, because many poorer families were forced to share some of the 3-roomed flats.¹⁰⁷⁴ Housing Department staff continued to go around with the Advisory Boards to find areas to erect new flats (where the least demolition was required). For example, in one area 20 rooms housing 10 families and 30 single men were demolished and replaced with 48 flats for 48 families.¹⁰⁷⁵

¹⁰⁷¹ For comprehensive housing statistics for the year ending 30th June, 1969, see Appendix A2.

¹⁰⁷² The actual backlog in housing compared favourably to Salisbury. In 1973 Bulawayo's backlog was 5,000, compared to 13,000 in Salisbury, 3,000 in Umtali and 2,000 in Gwelo. (Mark Partridge address to Local Government Association, 14th May, 1973 /BCCA/Proceedings of the Local Government Association Annual Conference, 1973, p. 64).

¹⁰⁷³ Extract from Hansard, 28th November, 1944, p. 24. Motion: Natives in Urban Areas. (BCC/Transfer Box 4: rent, native admin).

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Report: The Replanning of Makokoba* (Town Planning Branch, City Engineer's Department, December 1973), in BCC/N6A-81a/Flats at Makokoba

¹⁰⁷⁵ Extract from Finance Committee Minutes, 10 September, 1973, in BCC/N6A-81a – Flats at Makokoba, [p. 17]



Figure 45: Blocks of flats built in Makokoba, 1970s [Source: Bulawayo: Centenary of Development Magazine, 1994]

Meanwhile, other rental schemes also underwent incremental redevelopment, and several were converted to leasehold schemes. For example, in 1976, Mzilikazi, Nguboyenja and Njube townships were converted to 15, 25 and 30-year lease respectively, after much lobbying by the City Council to the Minister of Local Government and Housing. By the end of the decade, as the country transitioned to independence, Makokoba was the only township which had not been at least partly converted to home ownership.

The only new rental schemes to be constructed in the 1970s were *Sizinda* (448 flats, constructed from 1971-75) and the large-scale township of *Lobengula*. Lobengula was started in 1972 for low-income families. The contract of \$1,200,000 was awarded to John Sisk and Son (Ltd)¹⁰⁷⁶, but the original plan to build single-storey detached terraces had to be scrapped because of soil conditions. It ended up being semi-detached units. Of the first 1,867 applicants for the scheme, 1,492 earned under \$44/month; with just 245 earned between \$44 and \$60, and 130

¹⁰⁷⁶ '\$1200000 contract awarded', Chronicle, 14th Jan, 1972

earned over \$60.¹⁰⁷⁷ In the first year, 1,690 semi-detached family houses were built of concrete blocks and 148 units with goliath brick. The Housing Department continued to experiment with house designs in order to appeal to ‘consumer preferences’. For example, for one extension to Lobengula in 1976, they built 10 experimental core houses “to gauge public reaction to this type of design...” The demonstration houses showed various stages of development from the core house with living/bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom, to the final 3-bedroom house with additional lodger’s room.¹⁰⁷⁸ By the end of the decade there were over 4,000 houses in Lobengula. Putting a positive gloss on this monotonous low-income scheme, Ashton remarked: “A very pleasing aspect of this new Township is the number and quality of gardens that have been developed”.¹⁰⁷⁹

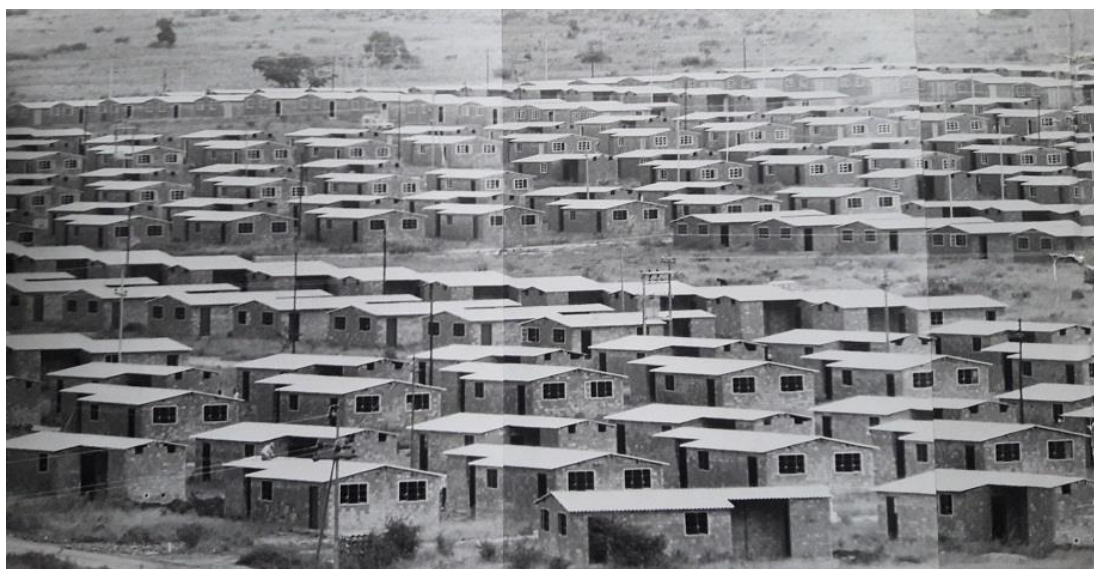


Figure 46: Lobengula Extension: 1976 [Chronicle, 17th March, 1976]

In 1974, the Central Government sponsored a much-publicised scheme in Salisbury called *Glen Norah*, intended mostly as tied accommodation for employers. When a similar scheme was mooted in Bulawayo, it was heavily opposed by the African Advisory Board, because tied accommodation heightened the insecurity of tenants: on losing their job, they would subsequently lose their accommodation. Ashton empathised with their suspicion of what he described as a “double calamity, to which no one should be exposed”.¹⁰⁸⁰ Furthermore, the Boards argued that occupants of tied accommodation would be unlikely to take pride in their homes and gardens. Gargett also accused the Government of sticking to the policy of tied accommodation, when it was “detested”

¹⁰⁷⁷ BCCA/Housing and Amenities minutes, 6th July, 1972, p. 1638-9. In respect of the first group, employers were liable to pay a services levy of \$1,50 per employee per month. The rent charges for such employees were thus \$5,90, supplemented by \$1,50 from the services levy; those earning \$44-\$60 were charged \$7,40/month; and those earning \$60+ were charged \$10,00. The last group received no rent allowance.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Housing and Amenities Committee minutes, 2nd December, 1976, p. 1768

¹⁰⁷⁹ Annual Report of the Director, 1976

¹⁰⁸⁰ BCCA/Annual Report of the Director, 1974

by Africans, and wrong on principle.¹⁰⁸¹ Instead of tied accommodation, Bulawayo encouraged employers to assist trusted employees to acquire their own homes. The Rhodesia Cement Company did this by financing the building of houses for 13 of its employees with mortgage bonds, which Ashton hailed as a “pioneering breakthrough” and a way to make “a meaningful contribution to African housing and the stability of the African townsman”.¹⁰⁸²

This processual analysis of the development of rental townships has shown how much original plans were altered, compromised, and sometimes scrapped, such as the initial one of housing 100,000 Africans on the urban periphery. Ashton introduced a more progressive vision of creating stratified family schemes, and whilst this vision did ultimately materialise, it was considerably altered by short-term budgeting; learning-on-the-job; developing in an integrated way, or building upwards, to save costs; having to overcome stereotypes such as that Africans would not want to live in double storey flats, or that African builders would not have the skills to build them, etc.

¹⁰⁸¹ Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 53

¹⁰⁸² BCCA/Annual Report of the Director, 1974

Appendix B1: Municipal Housing Statistics for the Year 1959¹⁰⁸³

Municipal Housing Statistics as at 30th June, 1959

	Houses	Estimated approved population
Married Accommodation:		
(a) <u>Home ownership schemes</u>		
<i>Mpopoma</i> (4 rooms)	2,580	11,352
<i>Pumula</i> (2-5 rooms)	587	3,000
<i>Pelandaba</i> (2-7 rooms)	331	1,655
(b) <u>Rented Houses:</u>		
<i>Makokoba:</i>		
• Houses (3 rooms)	323	1,615
• Compound Cottages (3 rooms)	58	240
• Sundry accomm. occupied by BMC employees (3 rooms)	18	90
• “ “ “ “ “ (stands)	2	10
• “ “ “ “ “ “ (room + kitchen)	80	Total: 400
• Chalets (semi-detached, 2 rooms)	17	701 85
• Houses originally privately owned	26	130
• Room and kitchen	112	560
• Single rooms	47	235
• Casual ward	18	90
<i>Mzilikazi:</i> (2 rooms – 232)		
(3 rooms – 201)	1,653	8,265
(4 rooms – 1,220)		
<i>Nguboyenja:</i> (3 rooms)	554	2,770

¹⁰⁸³ All statistics sourced from annual reports of the Director of African Administration (1959)/Housing and Amenities (1969)/Housing and Community Services (1977, 1979)

Barbour Fields (4 rooms)	292	1,460
Njube: (360 x 2 rooms; 2,440 x 3 rooms)	2,800	14,000
Total Married:	9,498	45,957
Single Accommodation for Men		
Chabalala Hostels: 3 x 4 storeys (442 in each hostel)	174	1,326
Municipal compound: (205 rooms in blocks)	205	1,100
3 compound hostels: 2 x 3 storeys 1x 4 storeys	114 47	982
Makokoba: (3 rooms in blocks of various sizes)	1,614	5,721
Mshasha: 73 dormitories x 30 29 dormitories x 24 1 dormitory x 20	103	1,906
C.M.U (Old RAF central maintenance unit): 29 huts – large rooms	29	496
Iminyela: (300 x 4-roomed houses)	1,200	4,800
Mabutweni: (300 x 4-roomed houses)	1,200	4,800
Mpopoma: (lodgers)	2,000	3,083
Single Accommodation for Women		
Gertrude Macintyre Hostel: rooms of various sizes	58	133
Total Singles:	6,744	25,347
Total Population (Married and single)		71,304
Estimated Actual Population		82,600
500 families (3000 individuals) were estimated to be squatting at Hyde Park Estate.		

Appendix B2: Municipal Housing Statistics for the year ending 30th June, 1969

Family Accommodation: Home ownership (1969)										
		Number of rooms per dwelling unit					Estimated Population			
Township	Type of Accomm.	1	2	3	4	5 & over	Total Families	Adults	Children	Total
Mpopoma	Houses	-	-	-	2631	-	2631	6900	11900	18800
Mpopoma South	Houses	-	-	-	228	-	228 } 3139			
	Flats	-	-	-	280	-	280			
Tshabalala	Houses	-	-	-	1527	38	1565 } 1597	3520	6080	9600
	Flats	-	-	-	32		32			
Pelandaba	Houses	-	29	235	443	98	805	1760	3040	4800
Magwegwe	Houses	-	-	-	600	-	600	1190	2210	3400
Pumula	Houses	2	171	282	435	106	996	2200	4400	6600
Hyde Park	Kraals	-	-	-	-	-	420	970	2230	3200
Barbour Fields	Houses	-	-	-	292	-	292	660	1140	1800
TOTALS	7429 Units	2	200	617	6468	242	7849	17200	31000	48200

Family Accommodation: Rental (1969)										
		Number of rooms per dwelling unit					Estimated Population			
Township	Type of Accom.	1	2	3	4	5 & over	Total Families	Adult	Children	Total
Makokoba	Houses	71	337	335	2	1	746	2220	2580	4800
	Flats	-	216	164+	2	-	538	1610	1890	3500
Municipal (tied)	Flats	-	24	40+	64+	-	232	470	730	1200
	Houses	4	-	58	-	-	62	130	270	400
	Rooms in Blocks	-	33	15	-	-	48	110	190	300
Mzilikazi	Houses	-	232	234	1185	-	1651	4110	6890	11000
	Flats	-	-	-	328+	3	380	920	1580	2500
Barbour Fields	Flats	-	-	-	108	-	108	250	450	700
Nguboyenja	Houses	-	-	-	557	-	557	1220	2380	3600
	Flats	-	-	-	288+	-	365	760	1340	2100
Njube	Houses	-	360	2440	-	-	2800	6160	10640	16800
Mabutweni	Blocks of 4 rooms w/ 2 kitchens	1188	-	-	-	-	1188	2150	1450	3600
Iminyela	-do-	612	-	-	-	-	612	1240	1560	2800
	Flats	-	-	-	240	-	240	510	890	1400
Magwegwe	Houses	-	2870	-	-	-	2870	5760	8640	14400
Mpopoma	Flats	-	-	-	96	6	102	220	380	600
Tshabalala	Flats	-	-	-	680	-	680 } 811	1800	3100	4900
	Houses				131		131			
TOTALS	12924 units	1875	4072	3286	3681	10	13310	29640	44960	74600
GRAND TOTALS	20353	1877	4272	3803	10149	252	21159	46840	75960	122800

Single Men and Women (1969)							
Township or Hostel Area	Type of Acomm.	Number of rooms per dwelling unit				Total Units	Total
		1 (large)	2	3	4		
Makokoba	Rooms	352	699	-	-	1051	3288
	Flats	-	48	-	-	48	192
	Rooms in blocks	12	-	-	-	12	12
Municipal (tied)	Rooms in blocks	30	-	-	-	30	51
	Rooms in hostels	161	-	-	-	161	954
Burombo Hostels	Rooms	159	-	-	-	159	1326
Sidojiwe Hostels	Rooms	159	-	-	-	159	1326
Gertrude Macintyre Hostel	Rooms	18	-	-	-	18	133 (women)
Iminyela	Blocks of 4 rooms	588	-	-	-	588	2352
Total tenants: 9170							
Lodgers: Home Ownership Schemes							
Mpopoma	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-	4300
Tshabalala	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-	2688
Pelandaba	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-	896
Magwegwe	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-	890
Pumula	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-	396
Total lodgers: 9170							
TOTAL		1479	747	-	-	2226	18804

GRAND TOTAL AUTHORISED POPULATION (MARRIED AND SINGLE)							141600
Estimated actual population							153600

Note: of the approximately 12000 unauthorised residents, some would have been permanent dwellers, whilst others would have been a floating population of wives and children of lodgers in home ownership schemes and other relatives and friends normally resident in the rural areas.

Non-Municipal Housing within Municipal Area:	
Railways (on Railway owned premises):	11400
Industry (Cold Storage Commission – 870 units)	1300
Domestic & commercial	19400
Sundry (Hospitals, Police and Prisons)	4, 000
TOTAL	36,100

Appendix B3: Municipal Housing Statistics for the year ending 30th June, 1977

Family Accommodation: Home ownership (as at 30 th June, 1977)												
		Number of rooms per dwelling unit						Estimated Population				
Township	Type of Accom. (HIGH DENSITY)	1	2	3	4	5	6+	Total Units	Total Families	Adults	Children	Total
Mpopoma	Houses	-	-	-	2385	79	265	2679	3216	6405	11009	17414
Mpopoma South	Houses	-	-	-	166	27	38	231				
	Flats	-	-	-	304	1	1	306				
Tshabalala	Houses	-	-	-	1411	4	31	1446	1446	2884	5678	8762
	Flats	-	-	-	32			32	32	60	160	220
Pelandaba	Houses	-	23	181	433	63	165	865	865	1730	3450	5180
Magwegwe	Houses	-	-	-	1213	4	45	1262	1262	2700	4600	7300
Pumula	Houses	4	135	402	708	84	82	1415	1415	2830	7970	10800
Lobengula	Houses	-	-		97	-	4	101	101	198	326	524
Luveve	Houses	-	155	341	1308	1516	30	3350	3350	6700	13252	19952

Hyde Park	Kraals – variable	-	-	-	-	-	19	19	19	38	32	70
	- Sinyoka						102	102	102	470	830	1300
	- Methodist						109	109	109	340	660	1000
	- St Peters						158	158	158	400	500	900
TOTAL HIGH DENSITY		4	313	924	8007	1778	1049	12075	12073	24755	48667	73422
(LOW DENSITY)												
Pelandaba Extension		-	-	-	-	6	16	22	22	66	66	132
Barbour Fields		-	-	-	194	42	57	293	293	900	1150	2050
Luveve		-	-	-	-	-	39	39	39	78	156	234
Mhlahlandlela		-	-	-	-	38	-	38	38	80	150	230
TOTAL Low Density		-	-	-	194	86	112	392	392	1124	1522	2646
Grand Total Home Ownership		4	313	924	8201	1864	1161	12467	12467	25879	50189	76068

Family Accommodation: Rental (1977)		
	Number of rooms per dwelling unit	Estimated Population

Township	Type of Accom.	1	2	3	4	5	6+	Total Units	Total Families	Adult	Children	Total
Makokoba	Houses	191	626	337	2	1	1	1158	1158	3000	3950	6950
	Flats	-	216	4	204*	-	-	424	514	1650	2550	4200
Municipal (tied)	Flats	-	24	40*	64*	-	-	128	232	560	1190	1750
	Houses	4	-	58	-	-	-	62	62	165	300	465
	Rooms in Blocks	14	35	15	-	-	-	64	64	120	265	385
Mzilikazi	Houses	-	-	467	1184	-	-	1651	1651	4700	7500	12200
	Flats	-	-	-	330*	1	-	331	359	880	1720	2600
Barbour Fields	Flats	-	-	-	324*	-	-	324	342	650	1850	2500
Nguboyenja	Houses	-	-	-	555	-	-	555	555	1350	2550	3900
	Flats	-	-	-	288*	-	-	288	304	665	1435	2100
Njube	Houses	-	360	2440	1	3	-	2804	2804	6173	10756	16929
Mabutweni	Blocks of 4 rooms w/ 2 kitchens	1188	-	-	-	-	-	1188	1188	2113	1460	3573
	Terraces	-	44	-	-	-	-	44	44	100	200	300
Iminyela	Blocks of 4 rooms w/2 kitchens	1195	-	-	-	-	-	1195	-	-	-	-
	Flats	-	-	-	320	-	-	320	1788	3556	6400	9956
	Terraces and Semis	-	263	-	-	-	-	263	-	-	-	-
Lobengula	Houses	-	3836	-	-	-	-	3836	3836	7595	14615	22210
Magwegwe	Houses	-	2872	-	-	-	-	2872	2872	5740	10400	16140
	Staff Houses	-	-	10	2	-	-	12	12	15	7	22
	Flats	-	-	-	384	-	-	384	384	775	1267	2042
Mpopoma	Flats	-	-	-	548	2	-	550	550	1100	1800	2900
Tshabalala	Houses	-	-	-	211	-	-	211	211	416	892	1308
	Flats	-	-	-	680	-	-	680	680	1350	2820	4170
Sizinda	Flats	-	-	-	448	-	-	448	448	896	2244	3140

Luveve	Houses	-	39	6	2	5	-	52	52	104	260	364
	Staff Houses	-	-	8	-	12	-	20	20	40	65	105
Pumula	Houses	-	-	-	6	-	-	6	6	10	70	80
	Staff Houses	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2	4	6	10
TOTAL RENTED		2592	8315	3387	5553	24	1	19872	20128	43727	76572	120299
GRAND TOTAL HOME OWNERSHIP		4	313	924	8201	1864	1161	12467	12467	25879	50189	76068
TOTAL FAMILY ACCOMM		2598	8628	4311	13754	1888	1162	32339	32595	69606	126761	196367

* 2 families per flat in some instances.

Single Accommodation: Rented (1977)										
Township	Type of Acomm.	Number of rooms per dwelling unit				Total Units	Total Persons	Home ownership Lodgers	Total Persons	Total Pop. Municipal Housing
		1	2	3	4					
Makokoba	Rooms	229	391	-	-	620	1631		1631	1631
	Flats	-	48	-	-	48	144		144	144
Municipal (tied)	Rooms in blocks	14	-	-	-	14	32		32	32
	Rooms in hostels	162	-	-	-	162	700		700	700
Burombo Hostels	Rooms	159	-	-	-	159	1611		1611	1611
Sidojiwe Hostels	Rooms	159	-	-	-	159	1219		1219	1219
Gertrude Macintyre Hostel	Rooms	77	-	-	-	77	207 (women)		207	207
Iminyela	Blocks of 4 rooms		-	-	-	-	-		-	-
Barbour Fields	Flats, Bachelor, Luxury			24		24	24		24	24
Sub-totals		800	439	24		1263	5568		5568	5568
Lodgers: Home Ownership Schemes										
Mpopoma	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-		4440	4440	4440
Tshabalala	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-		3146	3146	3146
Pelandaba	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-		1541	1541	1541
Magwegwe	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-		2378	2378	2378
Pumula	Lodgers room	-	-	-	-	-		1295	1295	1295
Luveve	Lodgers rooms	-	-	-	-	-		2276	2276	2276
Hyde Park Estate	Lodgers rooms	-	-	-	-	-		122	122	122

Lobengula	Lodgers rooms	-	-	-	-	-		75	75	75
Iminyela (flats)	Lodgers rooms	-	-	-	-	-		118	118	118
Subtotals		800	439	24	-	1263	5568	15391	20959	20959
Total Home Ownership						12467				76068
Total Rented						19872				120299
Grand Total						33602				217326

Consolidated Housing and Population Statistics as at 30th June, 1977									
Township	Type of Accommodation	Municipal Houses	Municipal Flats	Total	Population (excl. lodgers)	Lodgers	Other Housing Pop.	Total Pop.	Overall
Makokoba	Rented	2475	600	3075	19294			19294	
Mzilikazi	Rented	1651	331	1982	14800			14800	
Nguboyenja	Rented	555	288	843	6000			6000	
Barbour Fields	H.O. + Rented	293	348	641	4574			4574	
Mpopoma	H.O. + Rented	2910	856	3766	20314	4440		24754	
Pelandaba	Home Ownership	887		887	5312	1541		6853	
Njube	Rented	2804		2804	16929			16929	
Mabutweni	Rented	1232		1232	3873			3873	
Iminyela	Rented	1458	320	1778	9956	118		10074	
Lobengula	H.O. + Rented	3937		3937	22734	75		22809	
Magwegwe	H.O. + Rented	4146	384	4530	25504	2378		27882	
Tshabalala	H.O. + Rented	1695	712	2407	14690	3146		17836	
Sizinda	Rented		448	448	3140			3140	
Pumula	H.O. + Rented	1423		1423	10890	1295		12185	
Hyde Park Estate	Home Ownership	388		388	3270	122		3392	
Luveve	H.O. + Rented	3461		3461	20655	2276		22931	
SUB TOTALS		29315	4287	33602	201935	15391		217326	
ADD: Floating pop. In municipal townships							14219	14219*	
Matshobana and Sizinda Railway townships (2200 units)							11000	11000	
Industry: Cold Storage Commission							1300	1300	
Domestic and Commercial							36155	36155	
Sundry (Hospitals, Police, Prisons)							5000	5000	
GRAND TOTAL – Greater BYO							67674	285,000	

*Fluctuates according to various conditions in urban and rural areas.