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# Imagining Change, Imaginary Futures:

## “Conditions of Possibility” in Pre-Independence Southern Rhodesia, 1959–1963

Rory Pilosof and Gary Rivett

*This article invites historians to think more critically about the language, narratives, and tropes historians use to identify, describe, and explain processes of change. By doing so, we raise questions about the possibility of historicizing ideas and experiences of change. The suitability of historians’ descriptive and explanatory tools and frameworks for understanding one of the most important aims of historical scholarship is often very limited. We ponder the extent to which historians’ identification of historical change correlates with how historical actors imagined, experienced, and identified change. Starting from the perspective of the latter enables us to examine how far “change” exists prior to its embedding in the (sometimes conflicting) narratives, discourses, and practices of contemporaries. This article seeks to develop the concepts of “critical junctures” and “discursive thresholds.” While both concepts are used in social science research and literary studies, they have rarely been paired together. We combine them because they help relate the importance of events to change and the discourses surrounding them. As a case study, this article looks at a magazine titled Property and Finance, which was published in Southern Rhodesia (1956–77) and edited by Wilfred Brooks. Brooks’s editorials and political commentary offer an opportunity to consider broad questions of change, imagined futures, and discursive engagements with the political and social developments underway.*

### Introduction: The Problem of “Change”

In 1964, a monthly magazine titled *Property and Finance*, carried an election advert for the ruling Rhodesian Front Party (RF), quoting Ian Smith, the then conservative and right-wing prime minister, as saying: “I would rather fail in my mission and concede defeat than mislead the people of Southern Rhodesia.” The advert proclaimed: “These are brave words from an honest and devoted Rhodesian. He has proved himself to be worthy of your trust and support.” In closing, the reader was enjoined to “UNITE BEHIND THIS MAN” (*Property and Finance* [hereafter *P&F*] September 1964: 13). The inclusion of this election poster, and the magazine’s general support for Smith at this point, contrasted with its earlier political stance, which had been more liberal and eager to promote African political and economic advancement. By 1971, the political and rhetorical position of *Property and Finance* had changed again, sliding even further right and labeling Smith a “sellout” who had derailed “the White Man” in Southern Rhodesia (*P&F* December 1971: 1). Over the course of the 1960s, then, radical changes occurred in the political imagination of Wilfred Brooks, the editor of *Property and Finance*, and his visions for how Southern Rhodesia could be best served by its governors.

40 From the historian's vantage point, we might surmise that the journey taken by  
41 Brooks and *Property and Finance* across the political spectrum was occasioned by  
42 the anticipation of independence after the dissolution of the Central African  
43 Federation (hereafter the Federation), followed by the experiences and interpretations  
44 of the effects of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. This  
45 transformation offers an opportunity to think more critically about the language,  
46 narratives, and tropes historians use to identify, describe, and explain processes of  
47 change. Indeed, the words used earlier to describe the change in Brooks's editorial  
48 positions—"journey," "transition," "transformation"—all, variously, evoke similar,  
49 though subtly differing ideas about the shift (another of those "change" words) in his  
50 political standpoint. A "journey," as a metaphor for a process of change, suggests  
51 an accumulation of experiences connected together to influence an individual's  
52 viewpoint over a period; likewise, "transition," less poetically and more formally,  
53 describes the movement from one state or condition to another; finally, "transfor-  
54 mation" describes a marked change in the nature of a form or appearance. Despite the  
55 differences between these words, they all have two things in common. First, they  
56 describe certain types of change that are identified *ex post facto*. Second, when we  
57 consider that these words also contain, implicitly at least, narrative assumptions about  
58 the direction of change that are broadly teleological. While these words can also  
59 be used to describe stadial, temporary, or cyclical types of change, the overall  
60 narrative direction of representations of change still tend toward the teleological.  
61 Such characterizations of change, and the perspectives from which they are viewed,  
62 are problematic because they continue to privilege the historians' perspective  
63 on past behavior, action, and thought. When "we surmise" that Brooks's altered  
64 political perspective was the result of "independence" that occurred during an "era of  
65 decolonisation," we map microhistorical changes onto macrohistorical transforma-  
66 tions as described by grand historical narratives. Thus, describing the changes in  
67 the political standpoint of Brooks and *Property and Finance* between 1959 and 1963  
68 in such terms begs questions about the suitability of historians' descriptive and  
69 explanatory tools and frameworks for understanding one of the seemingly most  
70 important aims of historical scholarship. We therefore ponder the extent to which  
71 historians' identification of historical change correlates with how historical actors  
72 imagined, experienced, and identified change. Starting from the perspective of the  
73 latter enables us to examine how far "change" exists prior to its embedding in the  
74 (sometimes conflicting) narratives, discourses, and practices of contemporaries.

75 Brooks's editorials and political commentary offer an opportunity to begin to  
76 consider these broad questions. His writings in *Property and Finance* were often  
77 concerned with the implications of the Federation, and eventually, independence, for  
78 the Southern Rhodesian economy. Of course, examining the magazine with a careful  
79 attention to how Brooks's editorial performances framed and interpreted changes in  
80 Southern Rhodesia's fortunes does not make it possible to escape fully from *ex post*  
81 *facto* identifications and explanations of change. However, a lack of sensitivity  
82 to, and awareness of, the language used to describe change, together with the  
83 linear narratives implied by that language can have deleterious effects upon our

84 interpretations of the past. This concern has recently been illuminated by Frederick  
85 Cooper, who has argued for a greater appreciation of the possibilities that historical  
86 actors faced when they experienced so-called macrohistorical change. Thus, when  
87 examining the triumphalism that can accompany historical narratives of African  
88 decolonization and experiences of independence, Cooper suggests that

89       what gets lost in narrating history as the triumph of freedom followed by failure  
90       to use that freedom is a sense of *process*. If we can, from our present-day vantage  
91       point, put ourselves in the position of different historical actors . . . we see  
92       moments of divergent possibilities, or different configurations of power, that  
93       open up and shut down. Just how wide were those possibilities? And how much  
94       did actions taken at any one of many conjunctures narrow trajectories and  
95       alternatives? In thinking about such questions, we can never distance ourselves  
96       entirely from our present, but we can imperfectly look at different people in their  
97       different presents imagining their futures. (Cooper 2008: 169)

98 Cooper aims to demonstrate the “possibilities of studying conjunctures when different  
99 futures were in play” (Cooper 2014: 466). Rather than privilege the macrohistorical  
100 transformation that eventually occurred and was then explained by a grand narrative,  
101 Cooper wants historians to pay closer attention to the microhistory of these moments  
102 and in particular to the uncertainties they engendered for the people who were trying to  
103 interpret their potential significance and act accordingly. This article develops Cooper’s  
104 ideas by looking at how Brooks and *Property and Finance* interpreted and narrated the  
105 changes occurring in Southern Rhodesia from 1959 to 1963.

106     Our central aim is to suggest how historians might analyze the ways in which  
107 historical actors identified, and then engaged with, changes to their immediate contexts.  
108 Our first premise emphasizes the possibility that the events that contemporaries thought  
109 were responsible for change may or *may not* coincide with those that historians later  
110 argued were significant, especially at a macrohistorical level. Our second premise  
111 suggests that contemporaries had little or no sense of how any particular future might  
112 occur or how a certain course of events might turn out. This statement is no doubt  
113 obvious to most scholars, but to take this perspective seriously is to rethink how  
114 historical actors dealt with the events of change they experienced, and this means  
115 paying close attention to the category of the “future.”

### 116 *Critical Junctures and Discursive Thresholds*

117 Our analysis of how Brooks’s editorials identified and responded to change develops  
118 the concepts of “critical junctures” and “discursive thresholds” to investigate the  
119 discourses he deployed to understand, narrate, and act upon the changes that unfolded  
120 around him and how he subsequently envisaged the future. While both concepts are  
121 used in social science research and literary studies, they have rarely been paired

together. We combine them because they help relate the importance of events to change *and* the discourses surrounding them.

“Critical junctures” is a descriptive and analytical concept that delineates pivotal events that cause significant transformations in the structures of an institution. Explanations of transformations within institutions are developed by identifying a moment when the “path” preceding the critical juncture narrows to a point when an increasingly limited set of choices or decisions are available to actors at a particular time. Conventionally, the concept is associated with the interpretive frameworks of “historical institutionalism” (HI) and “path dependency” theory. HI analyzes the development of institutions with an emphasis on their historicity. Path dependency theory posits that the nature and range of choices and decisions that are available to any one actor at any given moment are constrained by certain choices and decisions made in the past. Both HI and path dependency theory are favored by economists, political scientists, and comparative sociologists because they provide tools to analyze macrohistorical and macrosociological transformations, particularly within political and economic institutions. Within the analytical framework of both HI and path dependency theory, “critical junctures” signify moments when the equilibrium of an institution is punctured, allowing for the analysis of change. To some extent, HI and path dependency theory should correspond with the aims of historians. Each are predicated on an appreciation of the importance of history for understanding change. Moreover, “critical junctures” can be useful for describing potentially transformative events and their relative importance compared to other critical moments that did *not* result in change (for overviews see, Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003; Schmidt 2008).

Problems exist with the premises upon which the methods of HI and path dependency are predicated. Both are preoccupied with identifying and explaining the origins of “outcomes of interest.” Explanative models are then posited that offer a logical method for describing how an outcome of interest prevailed. The result is often the creation of highly schematic narratives that are teleological and depend upon the *ex post facto* understanding of outcomes and institutional forms that are presumed to reach a moment of fixity from which the outcomes can be observed. The identification of critical junctures is therefore central to this endeavor because it allows for the discovery of events that transform structures. For historians, then, the concept of “critical junctures” may be problematic because it is closely associated with research practices that rely upon teleologies and ahistorical premises.

And, yet, the analytical usefulness of “critical junctures” for historians becomes apparent when it is orphaned from HI and path dependency theory, and used as a framework for describing how historical actors believed particular events had potentially transformative significance. Indeed, the most recent and fecund approaches suggest that scholars should address the processes that occur within the critical junctures, rather than focus upon the transformations they produce (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). In this formulation, the methods used to examine how people identified and analyzed critical junctures foreground study of the multiple experiences of events and the visions of their possible outcomes, as well as the creation of historical



166 narratives that preceded them. Furthermore, when examining critical junctures on a  
 167 microhistorical level, rather than on the macrohistorical, we can pursue a synchronic  
 168 analysis of languages, discourses, behaviors, and practices that historical actors  
 169 performed and invested in when confronted with change. The usefulness of the  
 170 concept is enhanced once it is paired with the idea of “discursive thresholds.”

171 The term ~~discursive threshold~~ is most commonly associated with Gillian  
 172 Whitlock’s discussions of various forms of life writing (Whitlock 2000: 146). A  
 173 threshold is a point of beginning or entry. When prefaced by discursive, a term is  
 174 created that seeks to identify an occurrence after which a new form of discourse  
 175 comes into the public domain. A discursive threshold is produced when, after a  
 176 certain occurrence, there is a noticeable and palpable change in the discourses  
 177 employed by an actor (be that an individual, group, or institution). Such a threshold  
 178 involves the waning of one discourse (although not necessarily its complete  
 179 disappearance) and the growing acceptance and use of another. New discourses  
 180 may build upon elements that have already been covertly or privately disseminated  
 181 but, once the threshold has been passed, emerge into the public domain to receive  
 182 widespread and popular recognition. As Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith explain,  
 183 local movements or actors often attempt to generate conditions that enable the  
 184 reception and recognition of new stories and discourses. Individuals or groups can  
 185 subsequently engage in narrative acts “of critical self-locating through which they  
 186 assert their cultural difference and right to self-determination, or they may imagine  
 187 leaving the past behind for a new social order or a newly empowered collective  
 188 subjectivity” (Schaffer and Smith 2004: 4).

189 Attempting to identify the exact and specific moment of a discursive shift, such as  
 190 when a certain term or phrasing becomes accepted in public arenas, is often both  
 191 impractical and self-defeating. The new discourse is never entirely new and feeds off  
 192 elements that existed before. What changes is how these new ways of understanding  
 193 gain popular and political currency. As a result, it is important to identify the  
 194 circumstances that enable this shift to take place (Okada 1991: 60). Not only are the  
 195 contexts of dialogs important but so are how interactions are formed and dissemi-  
 196 nated. Finally, discursive thresholds are not free-floating or invisible, waiting for  
 197 historical actors to stumble through them. They are created by particular events—  
 198 critical junctures, responses to those events, and reflections upon their implications  
 199 and significance. The recognition that when a threshold has been crossed is also the  
 200 moment when the process of controlling and delimiting the contours of that threshold  
 201 begin.<sup>1</sup>

202 As a means of looking into the shifting political realities at the end of the  
 203 Federation, and how certain junctures and thresholds resulted in dramatic shifts in  
 204 outlook, discourse, and behavior, our case focuses on how Brooks identified the  
 205 elections of 1962 as a critical juncture, which resulted in dramatic changes in the way  
 206 he understood events around him. To do so, this case study is cognizant of “what  
 207 happened in the context of what could have happened.” This task means

1. For a look into the interrelation of racisms, thresholds, and discourse see Stoler (2002).

208 complementing the “hindsight perspective (useful to identify moments of change)  
209 with a foresight one, which allows reconstructing not only what the consequences of  
210 actual decisions were but also what plausible consequences might have resulted from  
211 other, viable choices” (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007: 355).

212 Finally, we stress that the approach ~~previously~~ outlined and pursued in the text that  
213 follows is not only applicable to African or, more generally, modern history but also  
214 has much wider application. The focus of the following case study just happens  
215 to suit our purposes, and also develops one of our areas of expertise. Close attention  
216 to the languages, tropes, discourses, and practices that surround experiences of  
217 “change,” and historical actors’ identification of those experiences, are transhistori-  
218 cal, transglobal, and transdisciplinary issues. Large-scale historical narratives can  
219 often obscure these experiences. Attention to the microhistories of change provide  
220 insights into how historical agents have attempted to negotiate the uncertainty of their  
221 lives and worlds and assessed the risks and fortunes of imagined futures.

## 222 **Visions of Independence: *Property and Finance* and Wilfred Brooks’s** 223 **Political Imagination**

224 The period after World War II saw many changes take place in Southern Rhodesia.  
225 The colony had initially been formed in 1890, with the arrival of the pioneer column  
226 on the Zimbabwean plateau. While the initial aim of the settlers had been to find  
227 gold deposits, or a “Second Rand,” to rival those in South Africa, these never  
228 materialized. As the colony became more established, however, the small white  
229 population began to grow and various agricultural, manufacturing, and industrial  
230 activities took root. It was only once World War II ended, though, that many of the key  
231 facets of economic growth in the colony ~~took root~~. Manufacturing ~~took hold~~ and urban  
232 areas expanded. Agriculturally, tobacco grew rapidly and soon cemented itself as the  
233 key income earner for the country. This resulted in more white farmers settling in  
234 Southern Rhodesia.

235 The main urban areas, Salisbury and Bulawayo, started to ~~grow rapidly~~ too, both in  
236 terms of infrastructure as well as population, white and African. *Property and Finance*  
237 was started in 1956 by Gerrard Aberman as a monthly periodical that focused on  
238 property sales and financial management issues within Salisbury, the capital of  
239 Southern Rhodesia. Aberman had long been involved in various forms of publishing  
240 and was most notably editor of a travel periodical titled *Holiday and Travel*, which  
241 later became *Africa Calls* and finally *Rhodesia Calls* (Our Rhodesian Heritage 2002).  
242 By June 1957, after only a year in existence, the magazine charted its fast-growing  
243 readership numbers as a member of the South African Audit Bureau of Circulations.  
244 The next year, the magazine proudly claimed it had “THE LARGEST INDIVIDU-  
245 ALLY PAID CIRCULATION OF ANY MONTHLY BUSINESS OR TRADE  
246 JOURNAL IN THE FEDERATION” (emphasis in original) with more than 80  
247 percent prepaid annual subscribers and was read by “most industrialist, managers,

officials and even the Prime Minister of the Federation” (*P&F* March 1958: 7; November 1958: 1). The success of the journal resulted in efforts to develop its scope and coverage. To this effect, Wilfred Brooks was appointed as managing editor in 1959.

Brooks was born in the United Kingdom in 1915 before moving to South Africa. There he had been involved in numerous newspaper and magazine operations in Cape Town and Pretoria. After World War II, Brooks assisted in training demobilized troops in journalism. He returned to South Africa and then moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1948. Once in Rhodesia he settled in Bulawayo and became active in local politics. By 1954 he was chairman of the Hillside (a suburb in Bulawayo) branch of the United Rhodesia Party (URP), chairman of the Hillside Ratepayers Association, secretary of the Umguza (a district in the province of Matabeleland North and close to Bulawayo) branch of the Federal Party (FP), chairman of the Publicity Committee “Boost Bulawayo” campaign, and a member of the Bulawayo Civic and Ratepayers Association (*Bulawayo Chronicle*, September 9, 1954). In 1954 he stood as an URP candidate for Parliament, but was defeated by Independent Labour Party candidate, Jack Keller (*Sunday Mail*, May 5, 1968). In the early 1950s, Brooks became the editor of the *Rhodesian Recorder*, the official organ of the Association of Rhodesian and Nyasaland Industries, which mainly dealt with issues concerning federal industries (Gordon Graham pers. comm., October 13, 2014). As *Property and Finance* grew, it began to devote more space to general business, agriculture and rural issues, and “also national affairs, especially as political developments impinged increasingly on economic and business prospects” (*P&F* December 1967: 2). Brooks wrote all the political and political-economic commentaries from this point until 1969. By 1962, *Property and Finance* had the highest paid circulation of any business periodical in central Africa, as assessed by the Audit Bureau of Circulations of South Africa. As the magazine became more reactionary and right-wing (which will be outlined later), its readership grew. By 1971, it claimed a monthly distribution to 41,000 readers, which increased to 52,000 in 1975 and 71,000 in 1977.<sup>2</sup> By this point the magazine titled itself “The white voice of Rhodesia.” The political pontifications of Brooks in *Property and Finance* connected with local and regional white audiences trying to make sense of the changes occurring in the region. The magazine tapped into white fears of what could happen with the processes of independence, decolonization, and African political advances that were underway. It is important to understand these concerns and fears as they illustrate what the concepts of independence, self-rule, the state, and freedom meant for a range of white protagonists during a highly contested time in the region’s history.

After Brooks’s appointment, each issue contained one extensive, multipage political piece discussing developments and highlights of the previous month, along with general business and property coverage. The fact that *Property and Finance* was a

2. These figures are given on the front page of each edition of the magazine and are claimed to come from the South African Audit Bureau of Circulations.



monthly periodical, rather than a daily newspaper allows us to read more into these political summaries. Brooks, unconstrained by the immediacy of a daily deadline as he would have been with a more conventional newspaper, was afforded more time and space to compose his editorials and arrange his political thoughts. These pieces, then, illustrate the political thinking and standing of *Property and Finance* and Brooks. Excerpts taken from Brooks's editorials will show his discursive changes over time that were often responses to shifts in political contexts and reality. Furthermore, the aim is to show the evolution of the magazine's political positions from 1959 to 1962. This article stresses the background of *Property and Finance* and Brooks, and shows how the magazine evolved, identified, and reacted to political changes, and responded to the critical juncture of 1962.

### **Imagining and Experiencing the Central African Federation, 1959–62**

The idea of a federal amalgamation of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Nyasaland (Malawi), all British colonies, had been raised during the 1930s. World War II postponed the plans, but after the war the idea was resuscitated. The Colonial Office hoped the union would stimulate growth and attract capital investment into agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. Accordingly, the Federation was officially formed on the September 1, 1953, but it would only last just more than 10 years, as it dissolved on December 31, 1963. Initially, the Federation performed well. As international copper prices rose, large profits were made from Northern Rhodesia's expansive copper mines. Yet, the profits from this resource largely benefited Southern Rhodesia's infrastructure development and manufacturing sector. Southern Rhodesia also benefited from cheap migrant labor from both the northern territories. This imbalance raised objections from the small white settler population in Northern Rhodesia, and by the mid-1950s there was little support for the Federation from them. From the outset, the Federation had also been bitterly opposed by the African populations in Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia. In Southern Rhodesia, opposition was tempered during the early years of the Federation and many African representatives ran for federal office; however, West has suggested that Africans were more opposed to the Federation than formally thought (West 2002). By the end of the 1950s, though, opposition was widespread in Southern Rhodesia (Mlambo 2009: 92–93). As Murray (1970: 363) has observed, this opposition was almost across the spectrum due to “[g]rievances of [African] urban residents, the antipathy of peasants against land laws, the anger of the educated Africans over illusory promised benefits of federation, [and] the antipathy of immigrant Africans from Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia to the federal government arising from the political conditions at home.” In short, Hyam and Henshaw saw the Federation as “an extra-ordinary mistake; an aberration of history and a deviation from the inevitable historical trend of decolonisation.” For Cohen (2017), however, the Federation was more than just a mistake. For him it was a bold

329 experiment in political change during the end of empire and constituted one of the  
330 most intricate episodes in decolonization.<sup>3</sup>

331 It is this politics of change and decolonization, and how Brooks understood and  
332 narrated such events, that we are particularly interested in this article. During 1959  
333 and 1960, there was an obvious liberal edge to Brooks's editorial commentaries. The  
334 first prominent example was Brooks's views on the political and economic assess-  
335 ment of the Federation by Sir Ronald Prain. Prain, chairman of the Rhodesian  
336 Selection Trust, was initially very supportive of the Federation, but by the end of the  
337 1950s he was publicly voicing misgivings about the political trajectory of the  
338 Federation (Butler 2007, but cf. Cohen 2008). His main objection was that there  
339 was a desperate need to provide for an African political majority, "in practise and in  
340 theory" (*P&F* December 1959: 10). In December 1959, Brooks agreed with Prain,  
341 stating that "the longer a solution of basic (i.e. racial) problems is delayed, the higher  
342 will be the price exacted by events." This statement outlined Brooks's belief in the  
343 need for African economic and political advancement. He also outlined his con-  
344 ceptions of "liberalism" and "partnership."

345 But let there be no illusion either, among Africans about the meaning of  
346 "partnership." The concept is harsh: it means every man, having been given  
347 the opportunity, can have no legitimate come-back and must stand on his own  
348 feet. It does not mean the politically-easy granting to the African of the means to  
349 spend money, which he cannot afford, on expensive European liquor or on large  
350 numbers of sweepstake tickets; but it does mean the *opportunity*, without paternal  
351 coddling, to earn the higher incomes which can buy not only these and other  
352 commodities but also a wider realisation that the material prosperity does not  
353 come without a payment of a price in effort and in some sacrifice of the personal  
354 liberty of the kraal . . . Opportunity, however, does not only lie in the economic  
355 sphere. One of the most significant passages in Sir Ronald's statement was that  
356 indicating the widely-held fallacy that economic development alone will solve  
357 the national problems . . . to exclude a respectable non-European from, say, an  
358 hotel, is racialism; and the exclusion makes him even more determined to secure  
359 equally racist legislative power, by any means. It is thus for the European to  
360 decide whether it is better to sit near an African in a tearoom or to have unsuitable  
361 (and, probably, embittered) men sitting in a legislature merely because they are  
362 black. (*P&F* December 1959: 10)

363 In 1960 and 1961, Brooks continued to stress the need for economic and political  
364 opportunities for Africans. In July 1960, he noted that the "tolerant good humour, and  
365 resultant paternalism of the [white] born Rhodesian is often remarkable," in terms of  
366 how they have dealt with the "primitive," "tribal African" (*P&F* July 1960: 10).  
367 However, he noted that many Europeans cannot "adjust to the fact that paternal  
368 'giving' is out of date. Today the African demands equal opportunity and intends to  
369 get it" (*ibid*). Brooks emphasized the need to learn from a recent rebellion in the

3. For a more on the Federation see Sherer (2007), Fetter (1983), Wood (1983), and Franklin (1963).

370 Congo, where Congolese soldiers revolted in 1960, killing Belgian settlers across the  
371 county, to avoid similar events happening in Rhodesia (Hughes 2003; Scarnecchia  
372 2011). From Brooks's perspective, educated, urban Africans were given a range of  
373 economic opportunities in the Congo, but were denied any form of political  
374 mobilization. The thought that economic freedoms alone would placate African  
375 nationalism was misplaced and the violence against Europeans paid testament to this  
376 (*P&F* July 1960: 12). Later, in January 1961, he stated "too-hasty transfer of political  
377 power" could be problematic, but the "root cause of the trouble have been the belated  
378 recognition both of the need to provide an outlet for the political aspirations of the  
379 people and of the necessity of training them in the work of government" (*P&F*  
380 January 1961: 8). Ultimately, Brooks drew upon recent experiences of rebellion  
381 elsewhere in Africa to envisage a potential future and a kind of change that might not  
382 be controlled by the white population. In short, he used the experiences of whites in  
383 the Congo to shape an alternative future for whites in Rhodesia and the Federation.  
384 In July 1960, Brooks was aware that the Federation had failed to promote racial  
385 harmony "despite real attempts made to meet African aspirations on the bold basis of  
386 European paternalism." The main inhibition was the "colour bar," which protected  
387 white jobs, wages, and positions of superiority in the workplace and political arena.  
388 He repeated his understanding of opportunity, uttered eight months earlier: "the  
389 concept of equal *opportunity*, far from being 'pro-African' or 'ultra-liberal,' is a harsh  
390 but fair concept: It means that every man has, ultimately, to stand on his own feet and  
391 will have no legitimate comeback if he fails" (*P&F* July 1960: 34). He also noted that  
392 on both sides of the racial divide there were shortcomings in their approach to racial  
393 partnership.

394 It is ironic that, frequently, those who deny that the non-European is incapable of  
395 real advancement are the first to show signs of anxiety at any tampering with the  
396 colour bar. Conversely, the African nationalist overlooks the shortcomings of the  
397 vast number of his own people who are still enveloped in tribal superstition and  
398 whose entire outlook is opposed to the requirements of modern economic  
399 development. (*P&F* July 1960: 34)

400 For Brooks, the Federation sat between extremes of "White nationalism in South  
401 Africa and Black nationalism in north Africa," and therefore provided the perfect  
402 opportunity to forge real and meaningful partnership between the races. Brooks also  
403 stated that, "The more the Governments placate European fears and opinion, the more  
404 African confidence they lose, and *vice versa*. The 'policy of partnership' becomes  
405 somewhat mauled in the process" (*P&F* July 1960: 11).

406 As the Federation continued to face problems, the British government formed the  
407 Monckton Commission to report its legitimacy and future. The report was published  
408 in October 1960 and noted the potential economic benefits that could accrue through  
409 the Federation, but stressed that radical changes were needed if it was to overcome  
410 African concerns and hostility. It recommended that discrimination be eliminated  
411 rapidly and African participation in both the federal and territorial governments be

412 quickly expanded. Crucially, the commission also recommended that the territories  
413 should be given the right to secede from the Federation after a trial period (Hubbard  
414 2011: 280).

415 While many sectors of white society were shocked and alarmed by the Monckton  
416 report, Brooks was effusive in his praise of the commission.

417 Seldom, indeed, has there ever been such a searching, professional review of any  
418 territory's affairs. Bearing all the marks of good faith and none of extremist  
419 theory, it should be read, studied and tested by all with a stake in Central Africa  
420 and not least by those who tend to hold dogmatic views. No undue prescience is  
421 required to forecast that, at the London constitutional conference, the British  
422 Government will exert effective economic pressure on any group, Black or  
423 White, which refuses to accept at least the principles recommended. (*P&F*  
424 October 1960: 11)

425 The end of 1960 also saw negotiations regarding a new constitution for Southern  
426 Rhodesia commence in London. Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were to be  
427 afforded more political autonomy and the Whitehead government hoped to secure  
428 similar developments, which would ultimately lead to full independence. The British,  
429 anxious to disengage from Rhodesia, hoped to convince the Whitehead administra-  
430 tion to accept expansions to the African electorate, with qualified A and B voters  
431 roles, a Bill of Rights for African, and a provision of 15 (out of 65) seats for Africans  
432 in the Southern Rhodesian Parliament (Scarnecchia 2008: 103–4). African nationalist  
433 leaders were present at the meetings, with Joshua Nkomo representing the National  
434 Democratic Party.

435 By the 1961 draft constitution, Britain agreed to abandon its reserve powers and  
436 rights of veto. In turn, the Whitehead government agreed to the 15 parliamentary  
437 seats, based on a complicated franchise that would have delayed majority rule for  
438 several decades at least, the Bill of Rights, and a limited multiracial Constitutional  
439 Council (Meredith 1979: 32). While this constitution offered the African nationalists  
440 some concessions, it essentially guaranteed white rule. To the amazement of many,  
441 and delight of the Whitehead administration, Nkomo accepted the draft constitution  
442 and returned to Southern Rhodesia proclaiming he had achieved an important  
443 breakthrough for African political advancement (Scarnecchia 2008: 104). However,  
444 facing an escalating backlash from within the NDP over his acquiescence, Nkomo  
445 reneged on his acceptance, and the nationalist movements fell into disarray and  
446 violence erupted in black townships. White voters, meanwhile, approved the new  
447 constitution in a referendum on July 26, 1961. While there were sectors within the  
448 white community that felt the 1961 constitution gave too many concessions to the  
449 nationalists, the “yes” vote passed with little threat.<sup>4</sup>

4. As well as the official referendum on the Constitution, the NDP organized its own referendum in which they claimed 467,000 people rejected the Constitution and 600 voted for it. White 2015: 93.

450 In August 1961, Brooks saw this vote as a critical juncture in Rhodesian affairs.  
451 During the campaign, he noted, “[T]he malice showed itself all too clearly at both  
452 ends of the political spectrum—among some extremist Europeans who should have  
453 known better, and simultaneously among African nationalists (advised, encouraged  
454 and almost deified by the intellectual Left, here and abroad).” He went on to state that  
455 there was a need to ensure moderate policies were enacted, which appealed to both  
456 races. However, he was also aware of the class differences that existed in the African  
457 communities and warned:

458 The “15 seats,” broadly, will reflect the opinion of the middle-class African, in  
459 town or country, who has as much a personal stake in the economy as any  
460 European; but they will not reflect the interests, aspirations, suspicions or  
461 resentments of hundreds of thousands still unable to qualify for the vote. Unless  
462 the views of these people are at least known and considered in government, there  
463 will be little racial peace in the country—and therefore little ground for economic  
464 hope. (*P&F* August 1961: 10)

465 But Brooks insisted that the constitution offered real, moderate change that could  
466 diffuse the radical and conservative elements of both sides of the racial divide.

467 Despite recognizing some of the issues that white society was failing to understand  
468 about African politics and resentment, Brooks still viewed African nationalism rather  
469 patronizingly, and in the September 1961 issue of *Property and Finance* stated:

470 Nationalism, particularly African nationalism, is primarily an emotional move-  
471 ment, fed by the colour bar, by White arrogance, and by the corroding resentment  
472 of such attitudes. But today, in some quarters, there is also no little naked envy,  
473 an envy which seeks to win wealth and perquisites by political pressure rather  
474 than by normal economic effort. (*P&F* September 1961: 12. For more on  
475 manners and ways of acting see Shutt [2015](#))

476 Nevertheless, toward the end of 1961, it was clear that Brooks was genuinely  
477 interested in engaging with African politics and ensuring that mutual cooperation  
478 took place that kept economic performance ticking over.

## 479 **The 1962 General Election: A Discursive Threshold**

480 As Patrick Bond has noted, the political outlook of many sectors of white society  
481 were dictated by their economic position. Industrial and financial capitalists wanted  
482 the development of a black middle class to provide a growing domestic market that  
483 would also help reduce social unrest and hold African peasantry and working classes  
484 in check. However, many other whites, particularly urban, small-scale capitalists and  
485 waged workers, were fearful of growing African urban populations, as well as



486 potential rising labor costs due to political concessions and the rise of competition in  
487 the workplace (Bond 1998: 110–1).

488 Brooks and *Property and Finance* shifted toward this second camp during 1962.  
489 The positive messages of African partnership disappeared and the magazine became  
490 much more defensive of white interests and rights. While Brooks changed his  
491 opinions on African politics, he also began to reveal his concerns about foreign  
492 capital and big business. *Property and Finance* became more populist and a staunch  
493 defender of small-scale, particularly urban, capital and white workers in general. To  
494 this end, Brooks was a founding member of the RF, which formed in March 1962.  
495 The RF won the general election in December 1962 and led Rhodesia to the UDI in  
496 1965. This move, according to Arrighi, “was directed as much against large-scale  
497 capitalism as against the Africans. The populist undertones of the UDI campaign  
498 were very noticeable” (Arrighi 1973: 367). The shift of Brooks and his utterances in  
499 *Property and Finance* support such a claim (Henderson 1972: 388).

500 During the course of 1962, the magazine started to include more material that  
501 questioned African motives and actions locally and on the continent. For example, in  
502 March, concerns were raised about African housing, labor supply, and financial  
503 societies in Rhodesia. Additionally, Brooks used *Property and Finance* to dissemi-  
504 nate fear of the growing African population, uncontrollable birth rates and the threats  
505 this population boom posed to the small white state in Rhodesia (*P&F* March 1962;  
506 April 1962). These concerns illustrate how pervasive the “population wars” were in  
507 Southern Rhodesia at the time, as illustrated by Brownell (2011). Brooks also raised  
508 anxieties about African leadership capabilities on the continent (*P&F* March 1962:  
509 20). Events in independent Africa impacted Brooks’s thinking in two main ways.  
510 Firstly, he began to redress his conception of what the African was capable of due to  
511 what Brooks saw as his inability to manage and govern. Secondly, he developed a  
512 growing concern of what “pan-Africanism” was, fearful that it meant the eradication  
513 of white presence in Africa. This was tied into a dim view of British handling of  
514 decolonization, which he believed was weak and poorly executed. Fundamentally  
515 important here were the clear indications from Britain that, were the Federation to  
516 dissolve, independence would be granted to Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, but  
517 not Southern Rhodesia because of the contestations over the voters’ roll, the  
518 constitution, and African political rights. For many white settlers in Southern  
519 Rhodesia, this was both unfair and potentially disastrous for the country’s economy.  
520 They had hoped to secure commitment to dominion status or independence after the  
521 Federation, but as these hopes evaporated, many turned away from the idea of racial  
522 partnership to the more confrontational and populist politics of the RF.

523 In November 1962, just before the December election, *Property and Finance*  
524 published “the white point of view” on the political situation in Southern Rhodesia.  
525 The piece started thus:

526 The evidence is quite overwhelming—

- 527 • That the aim of Pan-Africanism is the complete elimination of White influence in  
528 Africa;

- 520 • That most African nationalist leaders have, as their prime object, the rich pickings  
 521 from the assets abandoned (they hope) by the European;  
 531 • That intellectually, administratively and technically, the African people as a whole  
 532 have been inferior, still are, and are likely to be so for a considerable time to come,  
 533 and that, despite propaganda to the contrary, neither “colonialism” not White  
 534 “exploitation” has produced that inferiority; and  
 535 • That Rhodesia is in the forefront of a political war and must take steps to meet it.  
 536 (*P&F* November 1962: 6–8)

537 Moreover, Brooks felt that African Nationalism was driven by a form of reverse  
 538 racism. As such it was marred by envy, greed, and a “chip-on-shoulder” attitude of  
 539 many nationalists, which was born from a “recognition of intellectual inferiority.”  
 540 Brooks’s language was now extremely racist: “Anyone who knows Africa will  
 541 recognize the problems: the uninhibited birth rate, the superstition, the still-backward  
 542 outlook of the African woman, endemic disease, primitive emotionalism, all come to  
 543 mind” (*P&F* November 1962: 6). Crucially, Brooks felt that he and other white men  
 544 had been keen to work with African political entities; however, events in other parts  
 545 of Africa over the last five years or so had undercut this attitude. Even Tanganyika  
 546 (Tanzania, which gained independence from Britain in 1961), a country “initially”  
 547 regarded as a “model of smooth transfer of power and potentially viable indepen-  
 548 dence,” was recast by Brooks as a failure of decolonization (*P&F* November 1962:  
 549 6). These “concerns” over independent Africa meant that many white Rhodesians  
 550 wanted to avoid making the same “mistakes” in Southern Rhodesia.

551 The November article, titled “The Political Situation in S. Rhodesia: The White  
 552 Point of View,” was so popular that in the subsequent December issue *Property and*  
 553 *Finance* claimed, “Owing to unprecedented public demand, ‘The Political Situation  
 554 in S. Rhodesia: The White Point of View’, which was one of the main articles in last  
 555 month’s issue . . . has been reprinted as a sixpenny broadsheet” (*P&F* November  
 556 1962: 6). In December 1962, the RF won the general election and in the first half of  
 557 1963 the magazine published a great deal of positive commentary on Winston Field,  
 558 the new prime minister, the RF, and the unity of white society. Alongside this  
 559 positivism, the paper burgeoned with fears of African takeover, politically and  
 560 otherwise. At the beginning of 1963, and thereafter the oft-versed trope of the  
 561 “uncontrollable” African birth rate became a standard feature, as were the laments of  
 562 the “burden” this put on white taxpayers providing social services (e.g., Brownell  
 563 2011; *P&F* May 1963).

564 Brooks also raised questions over the role played by big business in the politics of  
 565 the day. *Property and Finance* attacked a number of large corporations, such as  
 566 Lonrho, Anglo American, and the Argus-owned Rhodesian Printing and Publishing  
 567 Company, which published the daily *Rhodesia Herald*. Brooks’s vehement hatred of  
 568 Roland “Tiny” Rowland has been well documented (Cronje et al. 1976). In July  
 569 1960, Brooks had written that it was no secret that “powerful business interests,  
 570 shocked and angry at circumstances leading to the Southern Rhodesia riots last  
 571 month [July 1960], have been exerting pressure on the Government to reassess the

572 political situation” (*P&F* July 1960: 2). By 1963, this pressure had become too much  
 573 for Brooks. In response to the intrusion of big capital into the political jostling at the  
 574 time, Brooks became more defensive of small capitalists and white workers. In  
 575 January, Brooks assured his readers that *Property and Finance* was there to look out  
 576 for the little man, Rhodesians who make Rhodesia tick and live here and deal with the  
 577 “African.”

578 This populist stance, at odds with Brooks’s earlier writings on big business,  
 579 became a mainstay of the magazine. Brooks warned businesses that had been  
 580 involved with African independence leaders: “Powerful companies, who have been  
 581 flirting with the nationalist parties in the north, may well live to regret their  
 582 expediency” (*P&F* January 1963: 2). This jibe was directed at Rowland and Lonrho  
 583 in particular. By late 1963, Brooks felt that

584 Business has swung in support of the ordinary [white] man-in-the-street, whose  
 585 attitudes are quite clear: he has tried to meet Pan-Africanism half-way; he has  
 586 accepted what (in Southern Africa) is a radical constitution; he has gone about his  
 587 daily business, in complete confidence that he as a moral as well as a demon-  
 588 strable case after 40 years or reasonable and pretty fair self-government; and he  
 589 has not the slightest intention of appeasing more, until he sees what happens in  
 590 the African territories to the north of him. (*P&F* December 1963: 45)

591 *Property and Finance* had clearly changed, and the tone and focus of the magazine  
 592 had shifted radically from its earlier stance. However, in June 1963, the magazine  
 593 released a statement on its ownership and policy, which sought to assure readers that  
 594 the magazine was still “liberal” and had not altered. Framed as a response to concerns  
 595 about malicious rumormongering over the magazines ownership and control, the  
 596 statement noted that the magazine was started by Gerard Aberman at the height of the  
 597 property boom in the mid-1950s. By the end of the decade,

598 *Property and Finance* was in the vanguard of what was then considered liberal  
 599 racial thinking: it pressed for the advancement of the African and an end to  
 600 paternalism, in the interests of business and of the country in general. Today,  
 601 however, in the light of events elsewhere in Africa, of the excesses of Pan-  
 602 Africanism, and of the erosion by American and British policy of all that the  
 603 European in Africa has built up by his industry and commerce, *Property and*  
 604 *Finance* has felt compelled increasingly to present the White man’s point of  
 605 view, lest it go by default. For the editors are convinced that unless that point of  
 606 view is vigorously and factually stated hostile elements at home and abroad may  
 607 well succeed in sapping Rhodesians own resolution and this ensure yet another  
 608 debacle in Africa. (*P&F* June 1963: 2)

609 The statement also stressed that *Property and Finance* has never had any political  
 610 affiliation, but it “happens that the Rhodesian Front . . . also regards the White man’s  
 611 cause as important—a cause, incidentally, which this newspaper was promoting

612 before the R.F. assumed power” (*P&F* June 1963: 2). Brooks also supported Ian  
613 Smith and his push for UDI in 1965. However, by the end of the 1960s, Brooks  
614 would attack the RF and Smith for not protecting the white interests enough. He  
615 labeled Smith a “sell-out,” accused him of holding secret talks with British and  
616 nationalist leaders in which he undermined the future prospects of white settlers in  
617 Rhodesia. Brooks resigned from RF and became an active supporter of a number of  
618 radical opposition movements, such as the extremely right-wing Southern African  
619 Solidarity Conference (Ellert 1995: 91; Wood 2012: 634). Smith successfully sued  
620 Brooks in a civil case for defamation, after which Brooks left for South Africa, where  
621 he died in 1984.

## 622 **Brooks’s Background and Political Interactions**

623 Brooks used *Property and Finance* to promote continued white rule and ascendancy.  
624 He envisioned Africans as needing to respond to the freedoms offered by benevolent  
625 white rule and use those to prove their worth and position in society. While framed in  
626 “liberal” language—and used to differentiate Brooks and Southern Rhodesians from  
627 the backward and clearly racist South Africans—Brooks still felt that, from his  
628 perspective in 1960, Rhodesia was experimenting with providing African freedoms  
629 that seemed both highly advanced and experimental. Gains were being made, and  
630 made in controlled and limited ways that suited much of white society.

631 This period, however, has also been portrayed as one where the hope of racial  
632 partnership was crushed and the space between the races widened, mainly due to the  
633 treatment of African political parties and leading nationalist figures. Luise White  
634 rejects the conventional narrative that between 1958 and 1961 white racial attitudes  
635 hardened against African nationalism, which lead to the rise of right-wing politics.  
636 Rather, White shows, ideas of franchise and political involvement, before events in  
637 the Congo (1961) and the end of the Federation, revealed that a broad spectrum of  
638 whites’ “attitudes towards the impossibility of African self-rule were in place well  
639 before” 1958 or 1961 (2015: 71). For her, much of white society was of the belief that  
640 change had to be managed so that it was not so rapid that it might exceed “European  
641 opinion and perhaps African capacities” (ibid.). The realization, finally, that the end  
642 of the Federation would not mean white independence and the threat of African  
643 political control elsewhere on the continent resulted in a shift in discourse, from  
644 promoting black interests to defending white rights/privilege/place. The future  
645 changed from being managed to unknown, and this fear drove changes in political  
646 outlook, discursive responses, and racial attitude. In this sense, we concur with White  
647 that the ideas and means of never letting Africans take over was present throughout  
648 the 1950s, but the events of 1960–62 impacted on how Rhodesians imagined the  
649 possible futures they might now have to entertain.

650 In addition, the RF, which won a very narrow victory at the 1962 elections, was an  
651 unsteady coalition of shifting alliances, amalgamations, and conveniences. The  
652 processes of decolonization and the changes afoot necessitated that people articulated

(and amended) their visions of independence. This often meant finding new ways to express oneself or adopting a standpoint or platform to suit. Brooks claimed the RF represented what always were his beliefs, yet a few years later was able to claim the RF had abandoned white interests. The end of the Federation and the processes of decolonization were awkward and uneven in Rhodesia, as the changes in Brooks's political imagination illustrate. The trajectory from colony to pariah state to nation-state defies attempts to construct simple, coherent narratives.

Brooks's editorials in *Property and Finance* tapped into white fears of what could happen with the processes of decolonization. So far, the case of Brooks has illustrated how he envisaged "the phenomenon of the change itself."<sup>5</sup> In the remainder of this article, we offer a little more information about Brooks's background and political networks and interaction (Clements 1969: 140). The aim is to illuminate the specific political culture in which Brooks lived, the constellation of associates and groups within which he was nestled, and the ideas and expectations he held about the process of decolonization.

Brooks forged numerous political affiliations and networks upon moving to Rhodesia (as outlined previously). Joining and assisting the URP and UFP reflected Brooks's "liberal" standing at the time. The URP was, from 1953, led by Sir Garfield Todd. He succeeded Sir Godfrey Huggins, who had become the premier of Southern Rhodesia in 1933. In July 1953, Huggins became head of interim Federal Government (in charge of the newly formed Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland). While Todd introduced repressive and restrictive legislation that adversely affected many Africans (such as the blanket enforcement out of the Native Land Husbandry Act and the Public Order Act of 1955), he was seen by many white Rhodesians as a staunch liberal who was keen to make improvements for Africans, specifically in terms of health and education (Hancock 1984: 61). Todd promoted ideas of multiracialism and African social, political, and economic advancement, albeit at remarkably slow pace and where Africans were treated as the junior partners (Mlambo 2009: 94). But Todd pushed his agenda too far. In 1958, accused of being "out of step with public opinion" (read: white opinion), he was forced to resign from his position as prime minister as his Cabinet revolted (Loney 1975: 101). Shortly before Todd's resignation, the URP became the UFP. Once out of office, Todd resuscitated the URP and ran against the UFP, now under Edgar Whitehead, in the 1958 elections. The UFP won resoundingly. After this defeat, Todd established the Federation-wide Central Africa Party (CAP), which was multiracial and sought to "overcome the barriers of race and colour" (Todd 1959). The treatment of Todd, and his exile from politics, shows how radical Brooks's writing was at the time, and how the popularity of *Property and Finance* ran against the grain of much contemporary political thought.

Few whites imagined that their world and its future was in any danger in the 1950s (Hancock 1984: 47). However, Brooks was aware that some quick concessions were

5. With regard to African rule in other African countries, see statements on Tanganyika (*P&F* May 1962: 35) and Nyasaland (*P&F* October 1962: 7).



694 necessary to appeal to African political agitation. His commentary on Prain and the  
 695 need for economic and political freedoms for the right kinds of Africans attest to that.  
 696 And he was genuinely involved in liberal politics of the time. Brooks was a keen  
 697 supporter of Garfield Todd. Indeed, Brooks is rumored to have written speeches for  
 698 Todd and was even spoken of as his “private secretary.”<sup>6</sup> As well as running for the AQ6  
 699 URP when it was under Todd’s leadership, Brooks was a member of the CAP.<sup>7</sup>  
 700 According to those who know him, Brooks was very much for African advancement.  
 701 Miles Anthony Pedder, who was by 1955 the Secretary of the URP, and later also  
 702 joined the CAP, said Brooks was “a strong and fair liberal.”<sup>8</sup> He also stated that  
 703 Brooks

704        was a liberal in the proper sense—the small sense . . . of the word—in other  
 705        words of trying to bring about a society where the opportunity was equal for  
 706        people as far as possible. Implicit I think in his interpretation of this was that the  
 707        Africans so given that chance would behave to the sort of high levels that you  
 708        would expect of a person who is himself intelligent enough to be liberal.<sup>9</sup>

709 Brooks, in his early political thought, conforms to Mlambo’s assertion that “post-  
 710 Second World War immigrants from Europe . . . tended to be more liberal in their  
 711 attitudes towards the Africans” (Mlambo 2009: 113). This liberalism, however, has to  
 712 be qualified. As Law (2012: 24) has noted, “[T]hose who belonged to the ranks of  
 713 Rhodesia’s liberals still believed in gradual change and only favoured the co-option  
 714 of ‘educated’ Africans into the existing system.” That said, others have labeled the  
 715 Federation as high point of multiracial partnership, and any genuine attempts at  
 716 forging lasting and evolving multiracial interaction ended with Todd’s removal and  
 717 rise of RF (Blake 1966: 284–345; Holderness 1985; Law 2012: 151; Todd 1966). AQ7  
 718 However, the liberals were a diverse group with a range of ideas about race, gender,  
 719 politics, and class (Hancock 1984: 7). As one of the most notable “liberals” of the  
 720 time, Diana Mitchell, has stated, “[L]iberalism was the only word we could’ve  
 721 applied to ourselves . . . liberalism for me was always a misnomer but it was always a  
 722 shortcut to saying that we didn’t despise blacks” (Law 2012: 176).  
 723 Hancock believed that white society largely underestimated the danger signs of  
 724 African political awakening in the 1950s. He felt “a renewed militancy was evident in  
 725 Black-led politics by 1957–8 which in turn manifested and fostered a growing divide  
 726 between the races.” This widening gap was exacerbated by the “complacency of the  
 727 federal and Southern Rhodesian governments in the mid 1950s, meant the years of  
 728 1953–8 were fateful ones for the concept of racial partnership” (Hancock 1984: 39).  
 729 While this interpretation may have some merit, Clements has shown that between

6. Gordon Steel, “Letter.” Sunday Mail, May 5, 1968; National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), Harvey Grenville Ward, Oral/246; Godwin and Hancock (1996: 64–6).

7. NAZ, Leo Solomon Baron, Oral/239: 37.

8. NAZ, Miles Anthony Pedder, Oral/PE 2: 13.

9. *Ibid.*

730 1958 and 1962 much was done to assist and promote African interests under  
731 Whitehead's stewardship. In fact, he called this time "the great reforming period  
732 in Rhodesian history" (1969: 138). In terms of regulation passed and bills enacted,  
733 more social and economic legislation was passed that directly benefited Africans than  
734 ever before. Issues addressed were education facilities, wages, rent, travel, land, and  
735 housing and amenities in urban areas. Qualified Africans could enter the "higher  
736 grades of the civil service, swimming baths and hostels were allowed to admit  
737 Africans, trade unions could become multi-racial . . . betting and drinking laws were  
738 revised . . . and amendments were made to the Land Apportionment Act and the  
739 Immorality Act was abolished." As Hancock has noted, these changes would have  
740 been revolutionary in 1953, and, at the time, many in Southern Rhodesia felt that they  
741 were part of an extremely progressive political system in Central Africa, especially  
742 when compared to South Africa (1984: 93).

743 The focus on Brooks and *Property and Finance* illustrates the messiness of this  
744 period and the struggles numerous actors had in understanding, documenting, and  
745 narrating the unfolding shifts. What is also clear, besides the uncertainty, is the  
746 arrogance of Brooks and many other whites. Their imagined futures were always  
747 expressed in ways that upheld whites in positions of authority. There were troubles  
748 and agitations to deal with, but there was very little immediate threat to their  
749 superiority and position in society. Even in Brooks's early "liberal" outlook, the onus  
750 was on the African to get himself to the level of whites. Access to citizenship was  
751 never conceptualized as a right in this period, it was always something that the  
752 African majority had to demonstrate that they were worthy of earning. Indeed, the  
753 discourses and ideas of where blacks belonged was always below the European, and  
754 at best in some sort of partnership. Brooks saw the future, even if it included blacks as  
755 partners, as one where whites would be in control. That seemed imminently possible  
756 in the late 1950s and early 1960s. There was little direct threat, and looking forward  
757 there was no reason to doubt this. The provisions given to African advancement and  
758 the changes in the political landscape made "liberal" whites feel like they were  
759 progressive and radical, that they had assisted Africans and cemented their place in  
760 society. However, the sense of security, of being privileged, eroded from 1958 to  
761 1962. As Hancock observed, "The events [over this period] forced all those on the  
762 left of white politics to consider where they stood on the issue of white supremacy,  
763 partnership and African majority rule. Not surprisingly, opinions varied" (Hancock  
764 1984: 79).

765 Over the course of 1962, the politics of Brooks and *Property and Finance* changed  
766 radically. The shifts in regional affairs and the processes of decolonization opened the  
767 space for new discourses to emerge and for new ways of writing/talking about  
768 happenings. Brooks took full advantage and revised his notions of what should  
769 follow the end of the Federation and the role Africans should have in that space.  
770 Many, like Brooks, sought to use their position to defend more actively white  
771 interests rather than promote racial integration. Brooks was keenly focused on white  
772 urban interests, and as his populism developed, became a promoter of the "small  
773 man," which in his thoughts translated into urban white men of small means and

capital. His fears of these urban spaces becoming inundated with Africans, and their inability to keep up “standards,” drove much of his vitriol and paranoia. African political and economic freedoms were one thing, but having to share amenities (schools, hospitals, streets) was quite another. This realization, particularly after Brooks witnessed the way Africans “mismanaged” independent states of Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, drove him further to the right, and away from his earlier, more “liberal” position.

## Conclusion: Change and the Politics of the Future

Change, obviously, occurs on different scales and, depending on the historical interpretation, at different rates. Long-term change, for example, in political systems, cultural structures, social relations, and economic forces may go unnoticed. Our focus on Brooks’s experiences of change as expressed in the editorials of *Property and Finance* therefore required us to make a set of distinctions about the kinds of transformations that affected people and that they sought to understand. We therefore centered our analysis on “eventful” change, which in the case study we presented exclusively referred to the political changes caused by the events that accompanied the processes of decolonization, and the complicated and uncertain (macrohistorical) transition between colonial and postcolonial states. “Eventful” change referred to types of events that Brooks and his like-minded contemporaries could reasonably be expected to have experienced and that provided them with reasons to think that change had occurred or was occurring or would occur in the future. Moreover, we claimed that events alone cannot cause contemporaries to consider their potentially transformative effect; it also occurs when historical actors construct, interpret, and frame events at any given moment, as well as create the past and possible future of any given event. Explanations can then be devised for why people performed certain actions or enunciated particular discourses that may lack logic from a historical perspective but were, to those involved at the time, significant and necessary to pursue. After all, they may have been envisaging a future that either never or only partially came to pass—as was the case with Brooks and *Property and Finance*. Moreover, the categorization of an event or “change” as significant can occur through a variety of interpretative practices. The significance of any number of happenings may not be immediately clear to contemporaries: so far, so obvious. However, and as the case of Brooks’s illustrated, writing about the future—and not just reflections about the past or its analysis—could stimulate thinking about the historical significance of events. The significance or meanings of specific events to narratives of change may undergo recalibrations as new futures are proffered in light of new information, interpretations, and happenings that have to be incorporated into new narrative renderings of experience.

Between 1959 and 1963, *Property and Finance* was one voice among many in Southern Rhodesia. Other publications, politicians, opponents of white minority government, in particular Joshua Nkomo’s National Democratic Party, and the

815 British government, all imagined the change possible futures that independence  
816 would bring to the country. Multiple subjectivities therefore laid claim to interpretive  
817 hegemony over the meaning of events and the course of change, during and after it  
818 occurred. Conflicting or incongruent visions of the future arose. Our case study  
819 focused on one particular person and institution enmeshed in a context that contained  
820 multiple voices about the nature of the change being experienced. The micropolitics  
821 of these conflicting visions and voices were central to how different groups of people  
822 imagined and then mobilized behind particular kinds of futures. More generally,  
823 different groups and institutions had various degrees of access to material, intellectual  
824 social, political, and financial resources ensuring asymmetries in the distribution of  
825 their perspectives, the kinds of publics they could reach, and the influence they had.  
826 The reach of particular imaginings of change and the future can therefore be  
827 delimited to specific publics depending on local power relations. These publics  
828 may to some degree have overlapped and shared characteristics, rhetorics, and  
829 languages. For our purposes, an appreciation of different subjectivities, perspectives  
830 on change, and the publics to which people have access contributed to an under-  
831 standing of the precise contexts in which Brooks experienced, analyzed, and  
832 contested change.

833 Brooks's analysis of the potential futures that independence might bring to  
834 Southern Rhodesia were designed to inform and encourage readers to consider the  
835 consequences of their governors' ability to ensure a smooth, orderly, and beneficial  
836 transition for the country. Until recently, though, the discussion of the "future" as a  
837 category of historical analysis has largely occurred amongst philosophers and  
838 theorists of historiography following the work of Reinhart Koselleck (1985) and  
839 his twin concepts of "spaces of experience" and "horizons of expectation" (see also  
840 Fabian 1983; Hölscher 1999; Jenkins 2002; Lorenz and Bevernage 2013; Raulff  
841 1999). Historians have rarely addressed these issues, yet they can provide great  
842 insights into the political imaginations of historical actors (for exceptions see  
843 Karonen 2009; Rivett 2015). For Koselleck, the negotiation of the relationship  
844 between the past (experience) and the future (expectation) provides historical actors  
845 with the resources to interpret the events they experience and envision the change that  
846 might take place. One obvious point of departure for our analysis would be to focus  
847 on the futures conjured by utopian or dystopian thinking. However, as Michael D.  
848 Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash have recently suggested, most historical  
849 actors do not, at any particular historical moment, imagine futures in the perfectly  
850 planned or unplanned ways that are associated with the creation of utopias or  
851 dystopias. Instead, they insightfully reframe "utopia" and "dystopia" as categories of  
852 practices and thought "through which historically situated actors seek to reimagine  
853 their present and transform it into a plausible future" (2010: 2). In keeping with  
854 Cooper's injunction, these approaches to experiences of temporality can be used to  
855 think about how the past-future nexus might represent a number of possibilities  
856 facing a historical actor at any given moment. With this focus we have been able to

857 provide more nuanced accounts of the discourses and practices that were performed  
858 and produced by individuals at any particular time.

859 All these perspectives open two connected themes that illuminate how historical  
860 actors imagined different, sometimes conflicting futures and its importance for  
861 understanding the practices and discourse through which contemporaries conceptu-  
862 alized and used ideas of change. First, we can consider the “politics of time.”  
863 Periodizations of time involve the historian making ethical, aesthetic, and political  
864 decisions (Bösch 2012). “Time” is not neutral when conceptualized by either the  
865 historian or by a historical actor (Bender and Wellbery 1991; Fabian 1983; Osborne  
866 1995). A “politics of time” informs the creation of periodizations, which often go  
867 unnoticed by scholars (Lorenz and Bevernage 2013: 2). Developing these critiques  
868 beyond scholarly reflexivity, these ideas beg questions about how historical actors  
869 use the future to understand, interpret, and, in the case of *Property and Finance*,  
870 politicize events. Second, we can subsequently discuss the “politics of change,”  
871 which involves paying attention to the language, rhetoric, narratives, and tropes  
872 people have used to create visions of difference between the past and present, and  
873 possible futures. Examining how historical actors described and argued for or against  
874 particular kinds of potential change ensures that we are attuned to how it can become  
875 a weapon used to counteract competing claims upon the direction of change. Thus,  
876 our focus on how contemporaries experienced change, attempted to interpret that  
877 change and, perhaps, mobilize specific visions of that change, can complicate further  
878 grand narratives that continue to predominate within historical scholarship. From our AQ8  
879 approach, alternative narratives may emerge, producing a variety of conflicting  
880 visions of any particular change and their outcomes.

## 881 Epilogue

882 Wilfred Brooks’s editorial performances in *Property and Finance* were characterized  
883 by a series of discursive shifts at moments he interpreted as critical junctures in  
884 Southern Rhodesia’s journey toward independence. In the months and years between  
885 1959 and 1963, the editorials were used to imagine a range of futures that drew upon  
886 recent experiences of change taking place elsewhere in Africa, as European nations  
887 gradually reduced their imperial presence on the continent. As Brooks identified an  
888 increasingly uncertain set of futures for white populations in Southern Rhodesia, the  
889 editorials crossed a number of discursive thresholds, altering how the magazine  
890 interpreted the significance of the events leading ineluctably toward independence. In  
891 the late 1950s, the editorials were pro-gradual change, but later rescinded on these  
892 ideas. The election of 1962 became about protecting white interests, at the expense of  
893 racial collaboration because Africans had shown themselves incapable of self-rule.  
894 By the end of 1963, Ian Smith, once seen as the savior of white rights, was castigated  
895 for not doing enough in this capacity. He blamed the African nationalists for the 1961  
896 fallout as he saw that as a real chance for change, but then lamented events in the



897 Congo, Zambia, and Malawi and began to fear for white futures in Africa. Brooks  
898 adroitly engaged with, and contributed to, a “politics of comparison” to demonstrate  
899 the likely threat posed by majority rule and decolonization to the future of southern  
900 Rhodesia.

901 It is possible that Brooks held different views to those he voiced when he  
902 performed the role of the editor for *Property and Finance*. If he did, he may have  
903 discussed them in front of other, perhaps more delimited publics that were at  
904 some distance from the wider audiences his editorials could reach. Regardless,  
905 each of those moments when *Property and Finance* introduced a different and  
906 increasingly illiberal perspective on independence and its implications indicate  
907 when Brooks considered it possible for him to voice what he had previously  
908 thought unable espouse. On each occasion, *Property and Finance* crossed a  
909 discursive threshold, re-evaluating and reinterpreting the recent past and altering  
910 how recent experiences of change should be understood while seeking to shape  
911 that change.

912 In 1966, Calvin Trillin (141–42) observed that “analyses of what caused Rhodesians  
913 to change depend of what the analysts believe they were like in the first place.” Change,  
914 for Brooks and *Property and Finance*, had several dimensions. It was imagined, but  
915 not in the sense that it was imaginary. Change was projected into the future as a set of  
916 feasible possibilities that were more or less desirable. It was contested, as different  
917 historical actors questioned and challenged each other on what kinds of futures and  
918 their implications were more likely. It was experienced, but not in the sense that it was  
919 empirically noticeable. Change was narrated and interpreted after its perceived  
920 occurrence, with particular events or trends identified as evidence of its emergence.  
921 Taken together—the imagined, the contested, the experienced—all these dimensions  
922 inculcated ideas and attitudes that were crucial for how contemporaries attempted to  
923 negotiate the ambiguities of their worlds. From there, further action was mobilized:  
924 ideas of change became political weapons.

925 This article has, by appreciating that “change” needs critical attention as an  
926 important, but problematic concept, aimed to demonstrate how historical actors  
927 identified and experienced “change” on their own terms. We have suggested that  
928 Brooks’s editorials provide some insights into the specific “conditions of possibility”  
929 through which he envisaged change and that were unique to his particular circum-  
930 stances. There is a set broader question here: To what extent can experiences, ideas,  
931 and narratives of change can be historicized? What assumptions currently exist  
932 within historical scholarship (and in other disciplines) about how change was  
933 envisaged in any time and place? Are there specific cultures of change that inform  
934 the discourses and practices that historical actors perform? And, finally, what  
935 might a history of change look like? One approach to these questions, we  
936 proffer, is to analyze how people imagined change by examining how they  
937 imagined their futures—and then how they speculated upon the trajectories and  
938 paths toward them.

939 **Supplementary Material**

940 To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2019.1>.

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