

Debating threats to authoritarian rule: Inclusion and Discrimination in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia *

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Abstract

British colonial legislative councils were dominated by the alliance between official European administrators and the local European settlers. As a first sign of London's dwindling commitment to colonialism, limited direct African representation and the enfranchisement of some African voters were achieved in the years following the Second World War. Did this (limited) inclusion of Africans influence debates about the interests of the African populations on the still-European dominated legislative floor? We investigate this question using a novel dataset of legislative speech in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia. We empirically study discriminatory attitudes in legislative speech after two reforms: (1) the introduction of direct African representation in 1948 and (2) the use of ethnically-mixed constituencies for some legislative seats in the 1959 and 1962 elections. We find that African representatives brought salience to and opposed the oppressive structures of colonialism. We trace a growing tension in the legislative discourse between European members. Furthermore, our findings suggest that European settlers were more inclined to make economic concessions rather than political ones, although also arguments for economic discrimination persisted. However, we find that Europeans elected from ethnically diverse constituencies tended to exhibit less discriminatory behavior and were more likely to avoid discussions about the political system.

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Introduction

In the years following the Second World War, Africans were for the first time represented in many colonial legislatures that previously had been populated exclusively by European settlers and by representatives of the colonial administrations (Opalo 2019, p. 35). While Europeans continued to dominate these institutions—in what remained autocratic and racist political systems—Africans were conceded some direct representation and were eventually allowed to participate in the elections of some legislators. To what extent did such (limited) inclusion influence the sentiments expressed towards the African populations on the legislative floor? While recent scholarship has investigated both the origins and legacies of colonial legislative institutions (Opalo 2019; Paine 2019a), there is still no systematic research on how institutional changes and the inclusion of (some) African voices influenced how they operated. Moreover, while a wealth of scholarship investigates the consequences of including marginalized groups on both policy outcomes and legislative discourse (Hömann 2019; Mansbridge 1999; Mechkova and Edgell 2023; Wahman, Frantzeskakis, and Yildirim 2021; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Dietrich and Hayes 2023; Jensenius 2015; Schuit and Rogowski 2017), this scholarship has primarily focused on modern-day democratic institutions and it is unclear whether its insights can be extended to the autocratic systems of colonial Africa.

Using a novel dataset of legislative debates in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia since its establishment in 1924, we examine the possible effects of two distinct institutional changes. First, in 1948 Africans were for the first time directly represented in the Legislative Council. We investigate how speechmaking by these African representatives differed from their European counterparts in terms of issue areas and support for African self-determination, how they changed over time, and how the European settlers adapted to the presence of Africans. African representation was among the first formal signals that the alliance between colonial officials from London and European settlers was faltering, and we investigate whether the change correlates with increased tension between the European members. Unlike colonies with large shares of European settlers, the white community in Northern Rhodesia remained sparse, and violent opposition a far less viable alternative, raising questions as to how these elites responded to an existential threat against their minority rule (Paine 2019b). We investigate whether the European settlers attempted to save minority rule by offering economic concessions to the Africans, while maintaining an exclusionary stance on *political* concessions (Przeworski 1991; Treisman 2020).

Second, in the 1959 and 1962 elections some African and European members of the

Legislative Council were elected in ethnically mixed constituencies. The electoral system ensured that some representatives of both groups needed to attract voters from the other group, while other representatives were still elected in ethnically homogeneous constituencies. While the initial African representatives were 'mere tokens' of African empowerment, the electoral changes directly affected the Europeans' prospects for reelection.

Analyzing the rich corpus of legislative debates, we find that the African representatives spoke out against discrimination, and brought attention to issue-areas important to the African population. African members particularly raised constitutional, systemic issues, which were also the same topics for which the Europeans expressed the most discriminatory attitudes. We find evidence that the entry of Africans to the Legislative Council correlates with an increased criticism of the colonial government by European settlers, corroborating that the two breeds of European elites were increasingly at odds. While the European settlers peacefully accepted defeat, they opposed African self-determination to the end. We do, however, find evidence that they were increasingly positive to improve education services for Africans—among the most salient and important welfare schemes to the African population. A similar positive shift is not present in legislative speeches related to systemic issues, such as constitutional matters and electoral rules. Finally, we find that Europeans subject to ethnically mixed constituents were less discriminatory in their speeches compared to members elected by European-only constituents. We do not, however, find any increase in supportiveness by the same Europeans, indicating that these Europeans first and foremost responded to mixed electoral incentives with silence, in addition to a strong selection-effect under the new electoral systems. Africans subject to European voters did not adjust their speechmaking, and remained clear supporters of African self-determination.

Colonial Politics on the Eve of Decolonization

Broadly speaking, the British colonies consisted of three political groups: The European officials, the European settlers, and the local African population. In the colonies, European officials constituted a tiny fraction of individuals enforcing colonial policies from London (for an overview of numbers, see Kirk-Greene [1980](#)). European settlers usually constituted a local upper class, often as large agricultural landowners. These Europeans seized the best land and exploited Africans to labor on their behalf. This system of extraction was mutually beneficial to European officials and European settlers, and their main political disagreement was the distribution of rents (Lee and Paine [2024](#)). Emulat-

ing the British political system, colonial legislative councils were established as forums in which settlers and officials could discuss political issues, although with a much more limited influence than the British Parliament.

Franchise expansions and other forms of increased representation of historically excluded groups are often motivated by elite interests, such as shoring up support against political rivals (Przeworski 2009; Ansell and Samuels 2014) or securing regime survival when faced with a challenge from a powerful out-group group (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). To the extent they are able to, existing elites will attempt to hold on to as much influence as possible (Albertus and Menaldo 2014). History is therefore filled with examples of groups achieving increased nominal representation without gaining *de facto* influence, including contemporary examples such as female parliamentarians in Ghana (Bauer and Darkwah 2022) and Scheduled Castes in India (Jensenius 2015). Without a critical mass of representatives, marginalized groups have slim chances of achieving desired policy changes (Childs and Krook 2009; Thomas 1991). As expected, the European settlers in the British colonial system also used their political powers to keep Africans excluded.

The alignment between European settlers and the European officials was sustained in part by the settlers' reliance the military power of the metropole. After the Second World War, African nationalist sentiments and collective action grew in tandem with a waning excitement for colonialism in London. Across the colonies, Britain started to expand the franchise and introduce a minority of African members in the colonial legislative councils¹ European settlers had to adapt to the increasing threat to minority rule. In places where Europeans made up a sufficiently large portion of the population, like Southern Rhodesia, settlers could effectively resist democratization, often leading to violent wars of independence (Paine 2019b). But in areas with smaller European populations, like Northern Rhodesia, European settlers would face an existential threat to their minority rule, without the means for violent resistance.

To the extent that the settlers were able to foresee the possible end of minority rule, they would face a trade-off between fighting the decline and saving the regime, or cooperating with the Africans in an attempt to minimize their own loss of status and resources. In particular, elites may offer economic or other concessions in an attempt to avoid regime breakdown and subsequent radical redistribution (Przeworski 1991; Treisman 2020). While such strategies are generally perceived to be ineffective, many auto-

¹The first African was admitted in the Legislative Council 1944 in Kenya and The Gambia, 1945 in Uganda, and 1948 in Northern Rhodesia. Elsewhere, like Sierra Leone, African members had been allowed since the mid-19th century.

cratic elites, such as European settlers at the brink of decolonization, may simply not have many viable alternatives.

The representation of Africans was among the first signs of a wavering alliance between the European officials and European settlers. If the newly entrant Africans also challenged the political structures, European settlers would be increasingly pressed at two fronts, changing the dynamic of the legislative debates. This is particularly true in a context where settlers were greatly outnumbered, and Europeans would be more likely to look for negotiated, non-violent solutions to their demise. It is, however, not given that the African representatives were able to challenge the existing elites: The colonial government closely monitored their selection and had several credible threats of repression.

To investigate the settlers' response to an increased threat against their minority rule, we must first establish that their position came under increasing pressure. Specifically, two assumptions must be empirically confirmed. First, the European settlers should be increasingly critical of the colonial government in the period after WW2. Second, the Africans that entered the house should push against the discriminatory structures. As to the first assumption, the period after WW2 correlates with several changes in colonial policies, but most notably efforts to politically empower the African population—the greatest challenge to European minority rule. If we do not see an increased tension, we must question how opposed the settlers really were to the changing sentiments in colonial policies, or at least whether the legislative council really was a forum where such grievances were presented.

Hypothesis 1. *Unofficial European members of the Council became increasingly critical of the government as African representation increased*

The second assumption we may empirically evaluate, is whether the Africans pushed back against discrimination and minority rule. In particular, the African representatives should be clearly supportive of African self-determination, and concerned in particular with issues related to the institutional structure. The Africans' main political strength were their numbers, and electoral rules were central to the empowerment of Africans. If the Africans in the council did *not* push back against discrimination, we must question whether the council actually functioned as a real arena for negotiation. It may, for example, be the case that the African individuals allowed into the chamber were so carefully selected and continuously monitored and repressed, that they were unable to effectively discuss and convey the Africans' grievances.

Hypothesis 2. *African members of the Council supported African empowerment and were particularly vocal on issues related to electoral rules.*

At the same time, we expect African representation to correlate with a moderation in the discriminatory language of Africans by these Europeans, as these white unofficial members positioned themselves for the potential end of minority rule. However, in an attempt to convince the African politicians that minority rule was beneficial for the prosperity of both peoples, Europeans would first and foremost moderate their discriminatory language in relation to issues of economic redistribution such as education. Indeed, promise of development was central propaganda tool by the colonial services in defense of minority rule (Thakkar 2022). Given that the Europeans settlers wanted to save minority rule, a similar moderation should be less apparent for more systemic electoral and constitutional issues.

Hypothesis 3. *African representation correlates with an increase in support for providing welfare concessions to the African population by the Unofficial European members of the council*

Hypothesis 4. *Unofficial European members of the council maintained their discriminatory stances on issues related to electoral and constitutional issues*

Although African quotas in the Legislative Councils ensured some representation, they may not clearly have signaled the approaching end of minority rule. In some British colonies, the electoral system was adapted to also require European MPs to attract African votes. In Northern Rhodesia, London enforced ethnically mixed constituencies in the elections in 1959 and 1962. Such electoral changes are important for two reasons. First, they are far stronger signals of the Africans' increased political power. Second, they also provide far stronger direct incentives for European settlers to change political stances. Textbook voting models assume that politicians are vote-seeking, and if you want substantial representation, you need the threat of losing elections (Downs 1957). In the British colonial system, these MPs would find themselves in a trade-off between their own personal career or fighting to defend the regime. Under colonial rule, Europeans vouching for African self-determination, in an attempt to secure their own re-election, would run the risk of dismantling minority rule altogether. While they might secure re-election in the short term, they would risk losing all political power in the long-term. The same trade-off was faced African MPs: Africans arguing against African self-determination in order to secure short-term electoral gains, would run the risk of losing out on dominating political power in the long-term. It remains an open question how the MPs tackled this trade-off, and we formulate the observable implications into three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5. *Ethnically mixed constituencies made African MPs reduce their expressed support for African interests.*

Hypothesis 6. *Ethnically mixed constituencies made European MPs reduce their expressed discrimination of Africans*

Hypothesis 7. *Ethnically mixed constituencies made European MPs increase their expressed support for African interests.*

Hypotheses 5 through 7 presuppose that members believed voters paid attention to speeches in parliament. Based on the MPs own statements, it appears that the debates were not only covered by the press, but members cared about how they were portrayed. Take the following example by Edward G. Nightingale:

I have seen a newspaper report of Tuesday's debate in which the following statement is made: 'Mr. Nightingale emphasised that he was not bound by any decisions Unofficial Members might make.' That has been interpreted as indicating dissent from the honorable the Senior Member's proposals as to the constitution. When Hansard is published it will be quite obvious what I did say but in the meantime I should like to observe that the object of my remarks was to indicate that, while supporting the honorable Member's proposals, I remained a convinced anti-amalgamationist. ²

Moreover, Livingstone Mail, a newspaper mainly catering to settlers, was founded by Leopold Frank Moore who was an unofficial member of the council between 1926 and 1935. On one occasion, it was suggested that Moore was the only member who did not receive criticism from the paper, which was otherwise preoccupied with the actions of the council members.³ Though Moore denied having made any editorial decisions since entering politics, it is evident from the debates that elected members perceived their every public action to be scrutinized by the press in the exclusive political circles of the territory. Lastly, while the early Northern Rhodesian newspapers were intended for Europeans, one of the first African members, Henry Kasokolo, used an African readership as leverage against a European member in a debate already before any Africans had the right to vote:

Now I want to touch on something else contained in the speech of the honorable Member for Nkana. As far as I can remember the honorable Member

²Page 65 in The Legislative Council Debates Official Report of the Fourth Session of the Eighth Legislative Council Resumed, 6th March,–24th March, 1948

³Pages 78–99 in Report of the Proceedings of the Seventh Session of the Third Legislative Council, 10th February–10th March, 1932

said that there should be two pavements, one for Africans and one for Europeans, in this town. I do not think that would be workable. When that speech appears in the newspaper there will be sharp criticism from Africans because that is segregation.⁴

By testimony of the members' own speeches, we find the expectation that they would adjust their speeches to changes in the voter base justified.

The Colony of Northern Rhodesia

Our empirical analysis centers on the parliamentary debates in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia, the former colonial system in Zambia, between the Council's inception in 1924 and Zambia's independence in 1964.

The colony of Northern Rhodesia was a fundamentally racist and exploitative construct. The territory was initially controlled by The British South Africa Company, establishing mines in the mineral-rich "Copperbelt" areas, until 1924, when direct British colonial rule was established. European settlers established themselves in agriculture, business, and mining profits, exploiting Africans as cheap labor. Africans were actively displaced and put into reserves close to European settlements to serve as labor for European settlers, taking bad jobs with low wages. To further entrench British dominance and protect Europeans from competition, African cash crops were made illegal (Liatto 1989, p. 31).

Racial segregation was a defining feature for everyday life in Northern Rhodesia, from labor relations to culture and lifestyle. Europeans and Africans lived in separate residential areas, with Europeans occupying the best housing and enjoying superior public services such as education and healthcare. Africans would not enter "white" hotels and shops, and unlike Europeans, Africans had to carry identification papers wherever they went (Rotberg 1965, p. 54). Africans were even banned from consuming any European-type alcoholic drinks (Ambler 1990). This massive separation between European and Africans was enforced in an area that, in a census in 1921, counted 3,634 Europeans living in the territory, and (an estimated) 979,704 Africans.⁵

⁴Page 165 in The Legislative Council Debates Official Report of the First Session of the Ninth Legislative Council Resumed, 7th September–16th September, 1949

⁵Census reported on page 7 in "The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1931"

Government structure

The colonial government was governed by a British Governor, an Executive Council, and a Legislative Council. The Legislative Council was styled after the British Westminster model, but the executive was always controlled by the (London-appointed) Governor. Up until 1948, these three institutions consisted exclusively of European descendants. Most of the appointed members in the colonial administration were “officials” from the British colonial service and were not permanent settlers in Northern Rhodesia. For example, the governors often had careers from various colonies and were only temporarily in Northern Rhodesia to serve on behalf of the British government. Others were unofficial members from the settler community but still appointed by the Governor. A third group were European members elected to the Council by the settler community, in a competitive but highly exclusive electoral system. The composition of the Council would expand over time, but the colonial governor maintained the power to nominate a voting majority of the Legislative Council until 1954. The colonial government was designed to serve European interests, and Africans were excluded from meaningful political participation (Rotberg 1965).

In the 1924–1954 period, the Legislative Council consisted of a majority of nominated members and a minority of elected members. The distribution of seats to the different types of members is illustrated in Figure 1. Government portfolios (or ministries) were exclusively given to nominated members. While most of these were officials, some nominated unofficial members had a position as “unofficial member for native interests”. The legislative dynamics were largely characterized by the nominated members defending the the government position while the elected and nominated unofficial members acting as an opposition.

The Governor often served as gatekeeper to stop European settlers from further entrenching minority rule. For instance, when creating the electoral system in 1925, Philip F. Ellis proposed to introduce an explicit colour bar, arguing that

The position of the European settlers in this country is such that they must take an unusual care to protect themselves and must also adopt a parental and protective attitude towards the masses of uncivilised and ignorant natives amongst whom they dwell.⁶

The Governor denied the proposal using his voting majority.

⁶Page 106 in the “Verbatim of the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia, Second Session, First Council, 1925”

The elected members were elected under a majoritarian formula. The franchise was restricted to individuals with sufficient income or wealth and education. We cannot know how many Africans met the requirements for the various elections, other than that it was very low or zero. Thus, in 1926, a total of 835 votes were cast for 5 individuals. The largest constituency, the then-capital Livingstone, had 331 voters. In 1935, the capital had moved to Lusaka, which was closer to the copper-rich Copperbelt and more developed line-of-rail area. Copper was by far the most important economic resource for the colony, and the government finances extremely dependent on international copper prices. By 1941, the total number of votes cast had increased to 5,638, now with Nkana, the biggest city in the Copperbelt, as the largest constituency with 1,390 votes.

Winds of change came to Northern Rhodesia after the Second World War. In 1944, a “Central African Council” between Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia was established to “promote the closest co-ordination of policy and action between the three Territories”⁷. The colonies formally amalgamated into “The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” in 1953. This union was sought by European settlers both as measure to bulwark white dominance in the region against a London that had started to push for increased African representation, but also as a structure that could eventually achieve self-governance (Roberts 2011, p. 22). In other words, many settlers viewed the Federation as the primary strategy to preserve minority rule. It was particularly important in Northern Rhodesia, where, according to the official census,⁸ white European settlers were still outnumbered by Africans 33 to 1 in 1961.

Political parties were formally created in the 1940s. The majority of elected members created the Labour party (LP). LP was formed by Roy Welensky, one of the main proponents of federation, and would later change name into the (United) Federation Party. The Central Africa Party (CAP) were relatively more in favor of Africans’ rights and well-being. The party had affiliations with the “Capricorn Africa society”, a multiracial network working for the betterment of the Africans (Phiri 1991). However, this liberal bloc was mostly under European leadership and included several members with more paternalistic notions of liberalism and African empowerment, and the party was never explicitly in favor of African self-determination (Phiri 1991, p. 67). The party only ever won 3 seats, all in the 11th council. The Dominion party (DP), on the other hand, was a white supremacist party. The party’s branch in Southern Rhodesia would later become the “Rhodesian Front” led by Ian Smith, but the party remained weak in Northern Rhodesia, winning only 1 seat throughout the period. The distribution of seats won by

⁷ “The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1946”, page 4

⁸ The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1962

each party out of the elected seats is illustrated in Figure 2. Many politicians remained independents despite the formation of parties.

From 1937, African interests were represented in the Legislative Council by European so-called “Secretaries for native affairs” as well as “nominated unofficial members to represent native interests”, but incremental progress towards actual representation started in the 1940s. In 1946, the African Representative Council (ARC) was established to advise the Governor on matters directly affecting the African population. It had no political power. The members were elected from among, and by, the delegates at meetings of African Provincial Councils (created in 1943), with the exception of those from the Barotse Province, who were nominated by the Paramount Chief in consultation with the Provincial Commissioner. The first meeting is described as follows in “The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1946” (page 12):

A considerable inequality in the level of education and mental development of its members was naturally revealed at its first meeting, but the meeting left no doubt as to the value of African comment and advice on Native Affairs and indicated the awakening of a political consciousness among the more advanced elements.

The surveillance and control over ARC was obvious. In his opening speech to the Council in 1947, the Governor warned the members of disloyalty from certain types of criticism, and several subjects were later ruled out of order (Rotberg 1965, p. 208). Nevertheless, the ARC was the small seed of an eventually expanding African representation in the territory. From 1948, this council elected two African members to the Legislative Council, elevating Nelson Nalumango and Henry Kaskolo to the first Zambians represented in parliament. These constitutional changes were announced to, and with opposition from, a delegation from the Executive Council in a visit to the Secretary of State in the United Kingdom in 1946.⁹ Writing about these early African members in LCNr, Allen (1981, p. 241) believes their “impact on their twenty European colleagues must have been minimal.”

Other initiatives for the African population were also underway. A development plan in 1947 put focus on fixing the detrimental living-conditions of the African population, although the ambitions of the plan would be watered out over the following years by the European legislators (Roberts 2011). Freedom of speech and assembly improved, and the 1940s saw the creation of African-exclusive newspapers and radio stations. In 1953,

⁹ “The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1946”, page 12

the colonial government proposed changes to the electoral rules that would increase the number of African members from two to four, an announcement that was “vigorously opposed by elected Members of Legislative Council, resulting in the decision of its European Members to withdraw their ‘co-operation’ from the Government, to leave the Governor’s Executive Council, and to resign the two ministerial portfolios held by unofficial Members”.¹⁰ The Government nevertheless went through with the changes.

Few issues exacerbated racial tensions more than the issue of amalgamation (Macola, Gewald, and Hinfelaar 2011). Two forces were at play simultaneously. On the one hand, Africans had seen their political rights increase throughout the 1940s both in formal representative organizations but also in society in general. On the other hand, European settlers pushed for the creation of a superstructure of colonial forces to entrench white dominance. The result was growing tension in the 1950s, with increased African protests and disruptive strikes (Rotberg 1965).

Indeed, one of the key areas of ethnic conflict in Northern Rhodesia revolved around labor relations, particularly in the copper mining sector. The mines became a major site of tension, as African workers began to organize strikes in response to inequities. These labor strikes would eventually evolve not only into economic protests but larger challenges to the racial order (Perrings 1979). A state of emergency was declared in 1956, yet 1957 still saw 101 labor disputes across the country.¹¹ In response, amendments were made to the public order legislation, which increased control on assemblies in public places and gave the Governor power to introduce restrictive regulations also before a state of emergency was declared. The African labor unions would eventually become the dominating independence movement with union leader Kenneth Kaunda as a leading figure.

The African Opposition

African political resistance emerged through the various Federation of Welfare Societies and African Provincial Councils (Mushinge 1993). The Northern Rhodesian African Congress (NRAC) was formed in 1940 by the Barotseland aristocrat Godwin Lewanika, and would become the primary vehicle for African liberation. The party is more known under its later name African National Congress (ANC), and its leader Harry Nkumbula, who was elected party president in 1951. Nkumbula and the ANC initially sought greater representation and reforms within the colonial system, but the party’s goals gradually

¹⁰ “Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1953”, page 2.

¹¹ “The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1957”

shifted towards full independence as British reluctance to implement meaningful change became evident. The ANC particularly opposed the creation of federation, and organized various protests in opposition, earning Nkumbula a two-months imprisonment with hard labor in 1955.

The ANC faced internal divisions. Some members believed that Nkumbula's approach was too moderate and not aggressive enough, which created a growing ideological rift within the party between those who favored gradual reforms and those advocating for more radical action. In 1958, this split came to a head when Secretary General in the ANC Kenneth Kaunda, broke away from Nkumbula's leadership. Kaunda and his supporters felt that Nkumbula had compromised too much with the colonial authorities and was ineffective in pushing for swift independence. Kaunda subsequently formed the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC), as a more radical force for African liberation.

Conflict within the African opposition and between the African opposition and the European settlers came to a head in 1958 when the colonial administration proposed constitutional changes to further integrate the African population into the formal political structures. Most importantly, the proposal suggested creating a two-roll franchise, where qualifications for suffrage would be granted at two distinct levels of income or property and education. The Legislative Council was proposed expanded to 22 seats, all of whom were to be returned by a multi-racial electorate. The proposal went too far for the European settlers, but not far enough for the African opposition. Independent European member John Gaunt, for example, thought it invited anarchy.¹²

The African members of the house opposed the proposed division of franchise, and demanded full suffrage instead, with strong reactions from European members. Responding to speeches by African member Robinson Nabulyato and nominated member for African interests Harry Franklin, MP Harold Watmore urged them to show a greater "objective, logical and dispassionate approach" to the problem, but understand that Africans find this difficult as they have not "throughout their history been subject to Greek philosophy", and that since the territory contains "gradations of civilization which vary from the primitive man to what we call western civilisation", the process of including the African had to be gradual.¹³ Frank Derby, an extreme right-wing independent politician from Livingstone, pointing out that merely 6% of the total landmass was Crown land, claimed that the Europeans were discriminated against in an "apartheid in practice as never be-

¹²Page 249 in the Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the Fifth Session of the Tenth Legislative Council, 1st July - 3rd October 1958

¹³Page 267-268 in the Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the Fifth Session of the Tenth Legislative Council, 1st July - 3rd October 1958

fore envisaged in South Africa”.¹⁴ The Legislative Council debated the amendment over the course of full two weeks, but a two-roll system was eventually adopted.

The more radical ZANC responded to the 1958 electoral changes by boycotting the 1959 elections, discouraging all Africans to take part in a discriminatory system. In response, the ZANC was banned in 1959 by the British authorities and Kaunda himself imprisoned. On page 4 of “The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1959” the situation is described as follows:

The leadership of the Zambia African National Congress, which now contained the more extreme African-nationalist elements, declared on the other hand that Africans should play no part under the new constitution, that their supporters would not register as voters or stand as candidates for election, and that they should seek to dissuade others from taking part in the elections. Evidence mounted of intimidation and victimisation by supporters of the Zambia African National Congress of their fellow Africans who were believed to intend to cast their votes, and the risk of violence and disorder on polling day became serious. On 11th March the Safeguard of Elections and Public Safety Regulations were made by the Governor under the Emergency Powers Ordinance to ensure the peaceful conduct of the election. The Zambia African National Congress was declared unlawful under the Societies Ordinance and fifty-six of its leaders were restricted from being present in their usual areas.

After the crackdown on the ZANC, Kaunda formed the United National Independence Party (UNIP). UNIP quickly gained mass support and became the leading force in the independence movement, at the expense of Nkumbula’s ANC. UNIP’s hardliner stance was also directed at other Africans. Party members would, for example, label Africans who joined the UFP for informants, and they “became targets of verbal and physical attack, including the burning of their houses” (Mushingeh 1993, p 118).

New electoral reforms for the upcoming 1962 elections were presented in 1961, once again with the Federation party strongly opposing its content. The new electoral system was “perhaps the most complicated regulations ever used anywhere” (Rotberg 1965, p. 314). It was a 3-roll system with 15 members in each roll. 15 seats would be elected in single-member districts by the higher franchise. 15 seats would be elected in single-member districts by the lower franchise. The final 15 elected seats would be divided between different systems: 1 seat was reserved for Asian and colored communities. 14

¹⁴Page 292 in the Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the Fifth Session of the Tenth Legislative Council, 1st July - 3rd October 1958

seats would be elected by both franchises in 7 two-member districts, and all candidates had to receive at least 10% of votes from both Europeans and Africans as well as at least 20% of all voters on one of the rolls. To make things more complicated, in 4 constituencies (8 seats), the two seats should return 1 European and 1 African. In 3 constituencies (6 seats), the seats could return any member.¹⁵

Responding to the proposed changes, UFP withdrew their support for the government and their 5 members of government left office. The 3 CAP members took their place and the electoral system was changed. In 1962, the minimum 10% requirement was met in only 2 of the 7 constituencies, leaving 10 seats vacant, allowing the ANC and UNIP to win a voting majority in the Legislative Council. Even though UFP was still the largest party, the combined forces of UNIP and ANC entered government. Universal suffrage and independence in 1964 was inevitable.

Figure 1 illustrates the number of seats for each type of member for each assembly. These are extracted from the verbatim reports of the Legislative Council, which list all members and any portfolio for each session. Within each session, there are fluctuations in these numbers, as replacements are made in the Legislative Council and people leave or enter government. Figure 2 shows the distribution of seats between parties for the subset of seats in the Legislative Council occupied by elected members.

Whether the Europeans were able to foresee the downfall of minority rule is unclear. To the very end, most European members of the Council tried to maintain the institutional structure of minority rule. 14. February 1963, the then African-majority government proposed changing the constitution and introducing universal suffrage. In response, UFP presented an amendment to instead keep “qualitative suffrage”, where wealthy and white voters would have an unproportionate amount of power. Not a single member of UNIP and ANC voted for this amendment, and not a single member of UFP voted for universal suffrage, as shown in the excerpts in Figure 3.

In debates on the political role of the Africans, the European members sometimes reveal their perceptions on timeline for when Africans might take equal part in political power. We can, of course, not know whether they believed these were accurate estimates, or rhetorical warnings meant to critique the pace of changes initiated by the colonial administrators. For example, in 1946, UFP leader Roy Welensky, while proposing amalgamation between Northern and Southern Rhodesia, foresaw that the chamber would have a majority of Africans within the next 22 years. The real number was 16:

I suggest that I have not been unreasonable in my forecast. I say that by 1968,

¹⁵ “The Colonial Office Report on Northern Rhodesia for the year 1962”

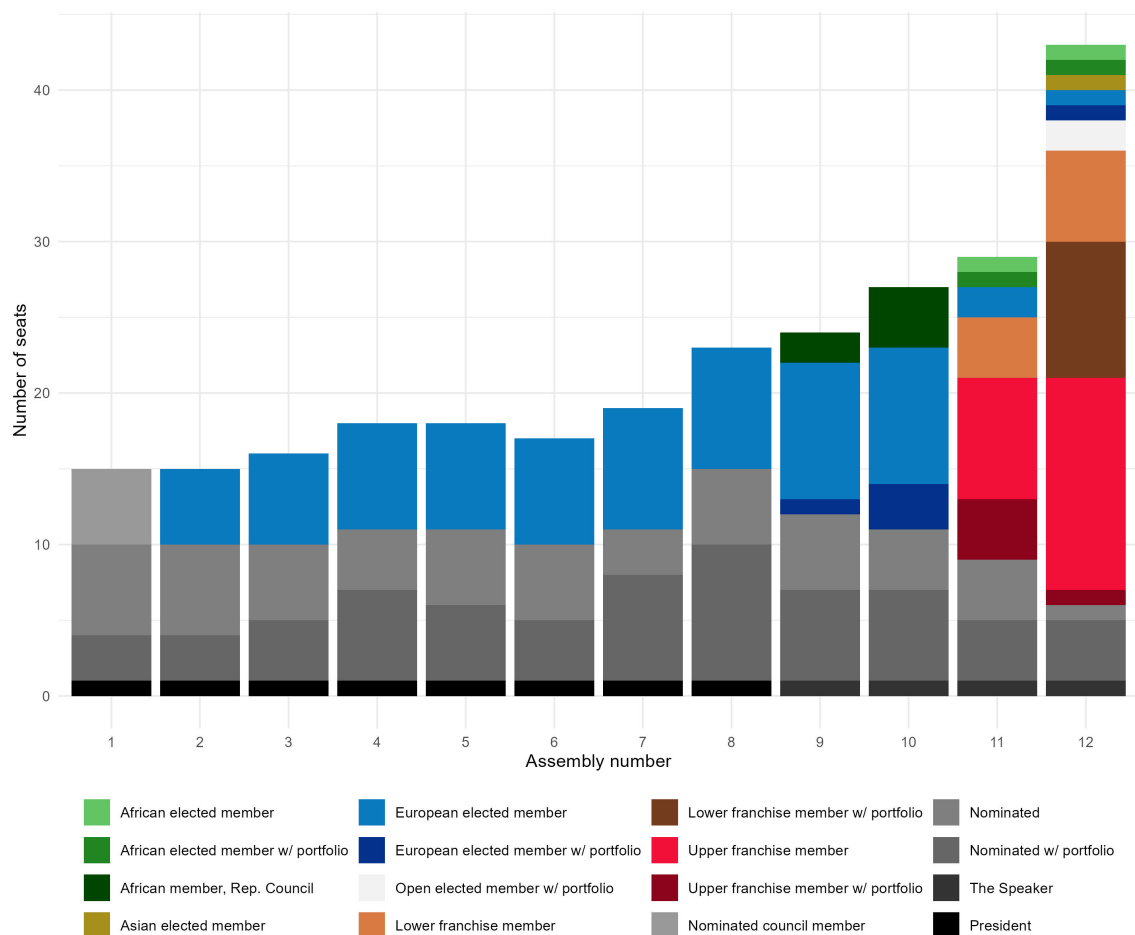


Figure 1: Number of seats for each member type per assembly in the Northern Rhodesia legislative council. The exact number nominated members with government portfolio was not necessarily stable throughout the assemblies before 1954, and members to the Legislative Council often shifts within assemblies as individuals, for various reasons, leave their seat.

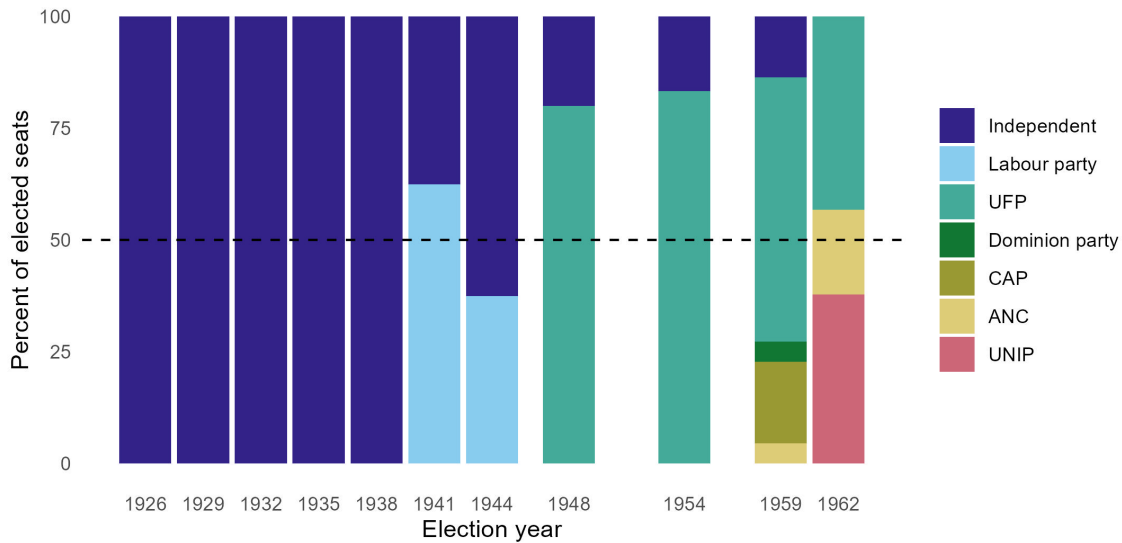


Figure 2: Percent of elected seats won by each party in each election, 1924 - 1968

if the present policy continues, there will be an Elected African majority in this Chamber. That may be the right thing—I don’t know. [...] I don’t think, and I want to stress that as strongly as I can, that the next 15 or 20 years will see the black man ready for our form of government. I think it will be a tragedy if that should happen, and I want that on record. I say that for the next 50 or possibly 100 years the African has an important part to play here, but he has to play that part as a junior partner, and I am prepared to accept him as such. Every African who recognises the complexity of our government must realise that he is not fit to step in as an equal partner. The unfortunate thing, and we see it happening at U.N.O., is that the world is to-day classing democracy merely as a count of heads.¹⁶

Others seems to have had more long-term perspectives, although those might also have been strategies with the aim to shape expectations. For example, during a discussion for a motion on ethnic relations in 1954, UFP member Bill Rendall stated that

Unless every European in this country recognises and co-operatively agrees to the inevitability of this motion, or rather the objective in this motion, they must accept the sure and certain fact-be it delayed for fifty or more years-of European political annihilation, and subsequent economic disaster to them.¹⁷

¹⁶Page 65 in the “Legislative Council Debates. Third Session of the Eighth Council”

¹⁷Page 95 in the “Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the First Session (Resumed) of the Tenth Legislative Council”

Mr. Speaker: The question is “that this Council condemns the constitution of Northern Rhodesia as undemocratic and unacceptable, affirms the right of the people of Northern Rhodesia to the free and unfettered control of the Territory through a Government chosen by the suffrage of all men and women, and calls upon Her Majesty’s Government to secure a new constitution for Northern Rhodesia based on the foregoing principles”, to which has been moved an amendment to leave out all the words after “Council” and substitute therefor, “while aware of the shortcomings of the constitution believes that the Territory needs a respite from constitution-making, but accepts that a constitution based on a qualitative franchise best serves the interests of all the inhabitants of Northern Rhodesia”.

Question, that the words proposed to be left out be left out, *put and Council divided.*

<i>Ayes—(14):</i>	<i>Noes—(21):</i>
Mr. Carlisle.	Mr. Kaunda.
Mr. Steyn.	Mr. Nkumbula.
Mr. Burney.	Mr. Cousins.
Mr. Musumbulwa.	Mr. Kamanga.
Mr. Stanley.	Mr. Kapwepwe.
Mr. Wulff.	Mr. Stubbs.
Mr. Burnside.	Mr. Banda.
Mr. Coates.	Mr. Chembe.
Mr. Lawler.	Mr. Michello.
Mr. Liebenberg.	Mr. Mudenda.
Mr. Macmillan.	Mr. Mwanakatwe.
Mr. Magnus.	Mr. A. Wina.
Mr. Mitchley.	Mr. Zulu.
Mr. Zidana.	Mr. Liso.
	Mr. S. Wina.
	Mr. Chisata.
	Mr. Mbilishi.
	Mr. Milner.
	Mr. Nalilungwe.
	Mr. Nyirenda.
	Mr. Patel.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, that this Council condemns the constitution of Northern Rhodesia as undemocratic and unacceptable, affirms the right of the people of Northern Rhodesia to the free and unfettered control of the Territory through a Government chosen by the suffrage of all men and women, and calls upon Her Majesty’s Government to secure a new constitution for Northern Rhodesia based on the foregoing principles, *put and Council divided.*

Ayes—(21):

Mr. Kaunda.	Mr. A. Wina.
Mr. Nkumbula.	Mr. Zulu.
Mr. Cousins.	Mr. Liso.
Mr. Kamanga.	Mr. S. Wina.
Mr. Kapwepwe.	Mr. Chisata.
Mr. Stubbs.	Mr. Mbilishi.
Mr. Banda.	Mr. Milner.
Mr. Chembe.	Mr. Nalilungwe.
Mr. Michello.	Mr. Nyirenda.
Mr. Mudenda.	Mr. Patel.
Mr. Mwanakatwe.	

Noes—(14):

Mr. Carlisle.	Mr. Wulff.
Mr. Steyn.	Mr. Burnside.
Mr. Burney.	Mr. Coates.
Mr. Musumbulwa.	Mr. Lawler.
Mr. Stanley.	Mr. Liebenberg.

Figure 3: The roll call over whether to introduce universal suffrage or keep “qualitative suffrage”, 14. February 1963. Excerpt from the “Official Verbatim Report of the Debates of the First Session of the Twelfth Legislative Council”

Our big-pencil overview of the coalitions for and against African representation hides the more nuanced stances at the individual level. Several European settlers had sympathy for the African cause, in spite of economic self-interest. Similarly, some Africans were explicitly subordinate and thankful to the European colonizers. William Kazokah, whom had joined the UFP, praised Governor Arthur Benson before the governor’s departure back to England, and expressed that

The Government of Northern Rhodesia came to this country with a mission towards the African people and that mission is being accomplished, and has been accomplished through chiefs. Government officers are here as educators, they are here to guide the African people in the right direction, if I may say

so, as rulers, and that mission has been done and it will continue to be done.¹⁸

Within the overarching story of the African fight for representation and independence, we will investigate the nuances in individual member reactions.

Research design

To study how African representation affected speechmaking in Northern Rhodesia, we rely on the verbatim debate records of the Legislative Council. The archive was digitalized and structured by the authors in cooperation with the National Assembly of Zambia Library. Most unfortunately, we have been unable to find the verbatim of Fifth Legislative Council¹⁹. Various parts of the archive has individual sessions missing. We have no reason to believe that there are any systematic patterns in missingness. For more information on creating the corpus, see Appendix B. Each data point in the data set is a speech held in the Council.

Government criticism, discrimination and topics

Our first dependent variable is the expressed attitudes towards discrimination of Africans in parliamentary speech. We have coded discrimination in the full corpus using semi-supervised natural language processing. Specifically, we have annotated the speeches with 3 features: Whether a speech argued for the discrimination of Africans, whether a speech argued against African discrimination, and finally whether a speech did not comment on ethnic relations at all. For more information on the coding procedure, see Appendix Section C. We have used a similar approach to code a binomial variable indicating the presence of government criticism in speech.

We also append to each speech dummy variables for whether it mentions a specific topic, for a range of topics: Constitutional matters, Federation, Elections, Labor relations, Chiefs and African authorities, education, taxes, and pension. These topics are not mutually exclusive, and a speech can feature any number of topics.

¹⁸ “The Legislative Council Reports. Official Report of the first session of the eleventh legislative council”, page 79.

¹⁹ The archive and copies of it has been stored at different locations, and much effort has gone into tracking down the various parts. Should you have information on where a copy of the Fifth Council, or any other part of the archive might exist, please do not hesitate to contact the authors.

Control variables

To each speech we append information on the person speaking as well as the context. We have information on each members' ethnicity, European or African²⁰ and gender.²¹ We add information on whether the individual at any given time was elected, and if so by what electoral area, or nominated by the Governor. We also add information of any official portfolio the member governed.

Contextual information include the date of the speech and the parliamentary section. We have categorized the sections into 6 categories based on the heading-structure in the original verbatims:

- Housekeeping (e.g. opening, scheduling, standing orders and rules)
- Governor's address
- Reading of bills
- Council
- Council in committee
- Questions

Descriptive analysis: Political issues in the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia

We begin by describing the evolution of Northern Rhodesian politics as represented through speech in the Legislative Council in Northern Rhodesia. We focus in particular on how different members expressed salience of various political topics, pro-discriminatory attitudes, or support for the African community.

Did the African representatives speak out against discrimination, or were they effectively muted by the threat of repression? Figure 4 display the average of discriminatory and supportive speeches by European official members, European unofficial members, and the African members per assembly. The figure clearly shows that the main dividing line in the colonial legislature was ethnic, with Africans clearly speaking out against discrimination, while most European speeches, official or unofficial, involved discrimination. Only a small share of European members' speeches supported the African cause; 1.6% of all speeches in the period. In comparison, 7.1% of their speeches in the period embraced discrimination. Compared to the Africans, the difference between unofficial and official

²⁰A 1-seat quota for "coloured" non-Africans were added in 1959, occupied by Indian-descendant representatives Vallabhbhai Mistry and Kashibhai Patel, and whose electorate mostly consisted of Indian immigrants.

²¹Only three seats were occupied by females throughout the colonial period, and 99.92% of speeches are held by males.

members appears small, and the introduction of Africans did not create any dramatic shift in the general sentiment expressed on the floor.

Within the European group, however, the relative difference is noticeable. Approximately 6% of official members’ speeches include discriminatory content, compared to 8.4% of the unofficial. Expressed discrimination increased from the 7th assembly and onward, and shows sign of diverging after the introduction of African members in the 9th Assembly.

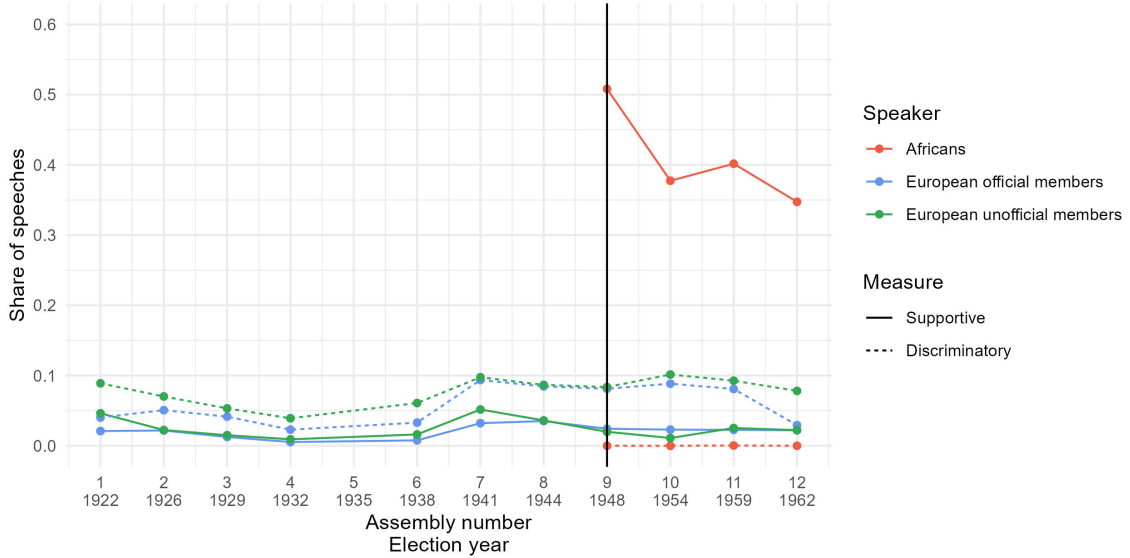


Figure 4: The proportion of discriminatory and supportive speeches by assembly, divided by the ethnicity and membership of the speaking MP. The black vertical line indicates the first assembly with any African represented.

Did the African representatives emphasize other issue areas? In Figure 5, we estimate the predicted probability that a speech will touch upon a specific topics, out of 7 different topics, conditional on the ethnicity of the speaker. We subset the data to the 9—12th councils, when both Africans and Europeans were present, to avoid differences being driven by differences in time-periods.

The African members were particularly busy with *systemic* issues. Their three most salient issues were constitutional, the Federation, and electoral matters. Almost a fourth of all speeches by Africans would bring up constitutional matters. These were issues also central to the European members, particularly the constitution, but less so than the African members.

Several “substantial” policy issues also concerned the Africans, most notably labor-relations, education, and their traditional chiefs and the native authorities. Issues of labor also concerned the European members, and to some extent also the native authorities,

but education was of less important.

African had reasons to be concerned about education, given the stark differences in both quantity and quality of education services for African children compared to European. Perhaps more surprising is the low emphasis European settlers put on education. We might expect European settlers, and their voters, to care at least about European education. Many of the MPs were also preoccupied with skills training of potential African employees, and some also held a more paternalistic ideology where Europeans should bring “civilization” to Africans through education. However, as a share of speeches, these topics were not particularly salient to neither official nor unofficial European members. Europeans, particularly the official members, spoke relatively more about taxes, a topic that was far less present in Africans’ speeches.

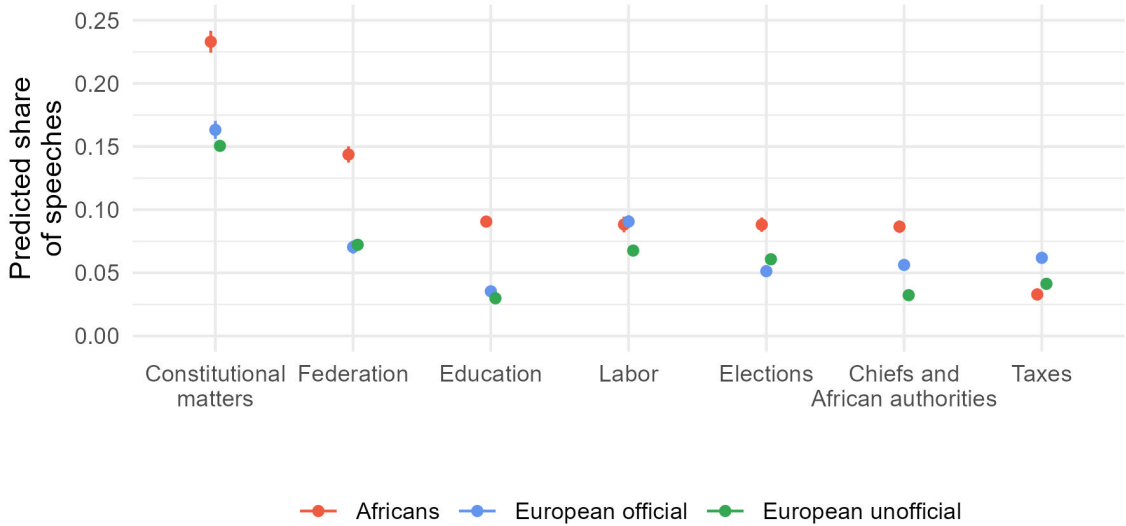


Figure 5: Share of speeches with different topics, broken down by whether the speaker was African, European official, or European unofficial, 9th through 12th assembly.

What topics were particularly associated with Europeans’ discrimination? To investigate this, we subset the data to European members in the 9—12th council and regress whether a speech was discriminatory against the presence of the 7 different topics. We repeat the same process with whether a speech was supportive. In Figure 6, we present the expected change in probability that a speech was discriminatory (red) and supportive (blue) depending on the presence of the various topics. To avoid making the Figure unnecessarily complex, we do not differentiate between official and unofficial members.

Most topics increase the salience of ethnic coexistence altogether. Since a large amount of speeches are apolitical and procedural, the presence of a topic correlates with a speech discussing political issues at all, which also makes it more likely to touch upon interethnic

relations. Therefore, most topics tend to correlate with the presence of both discriminatory and supportive utterances.

In light of this, a most revealing pattern is that the systemic topics, namely constitutional matters and elections, makes it respectively 14 and 13 percentage points more likely that a European speech is more discriminatory, while simultaneously having no discernible correlation with supportiveness. This difference in correlation with the two outcomes differs starkly from, for example, the correlation with a topics such as education, which is strongly correlated with an increase in the probability that a speech includes discriminatory attitudes, by 18 percentage points, but simultaneously correlates strongly with more supportive speeches, with an increase in 9 percentage points. Furthermore, we know from Figure 5 that Europeans often brought up constitutional matters, and only seldom education. We return to temporal patterns in topics and discrimination below.

In short, the descriptive statistics indicate that the representation of Africans mattered for the opinions voiced in the Legislative Council in Northern Rhodesia. Any skepticism towards the capacity of the early African members to speak truth to power notwithstanding, their entrance to the council made ethnic relations into a salient and highly polarizing political issue in the Northern Rhodesian legislature. African members voiced their opposition to discrimination and brought salience to topics important to the African community.

Regressions analyses: Temporal changes

We now turn to regressions models to investigate the temporal changes in sentiments on the floor.

To empirically investigate whether the unofficial European members of the council became increasingly critical of the government as African representation increased, we regress our three dependent variables—discrimination, African support, and government criticism— against the four central periods in the history of the council: The pre-war period, the period during WW2 and until 1948, the period with African representation 1948–1962, and finally the 12th Assembly when the two African parties entered the executive council (still presided by the Governor and his official members). We subset the data to the European Unofficial members, showing how their sentiments changed over time.

In these models, we also control for the speaker’s gender, experience in the council, whether the speaker was the “unofficial member for native interests”, whether the speaker was from a party with members in the executive council, whether the speaker was part

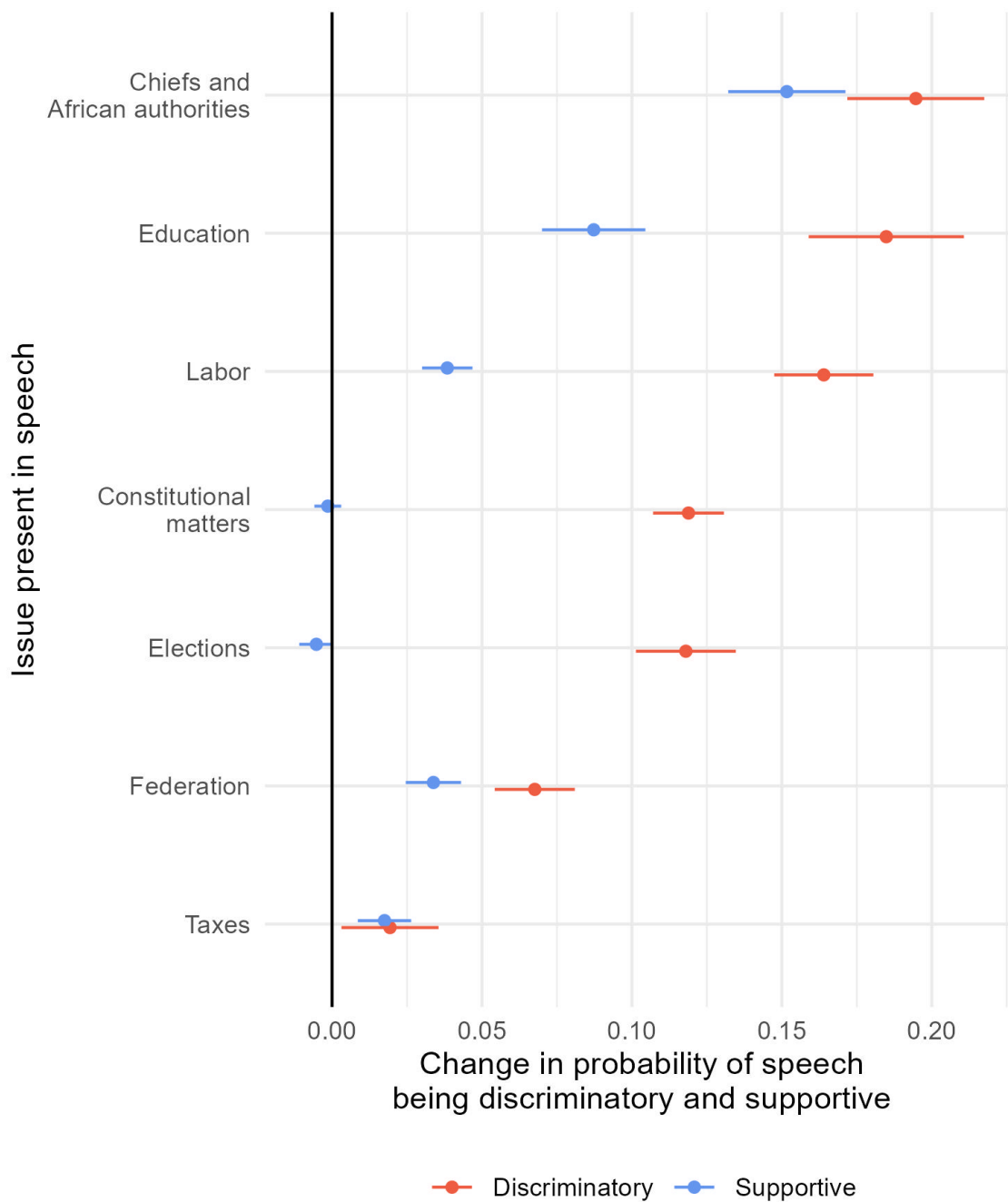


Figure 6: Expected change in probability (X-axis) that a speech by a European descendant is discriminatory (red) or supportive (blue) depending on whether a particular topic (Y-axis) features in the speech.

of the executive council, the debate-section for the speech, and the natural logarithm of the number of words in the speech.

For easier interpretation and comparison, Figure 7 present the results as predicted probabilities conditional on the period in question, with pro-discrimination in blue, African support in red, and government criticism in green. The four periods are aligned along the X-axis, and the vertical lines indicate the 95% confidence interval for the predicted probability. Standard errors clustered by individual and date. For a tabular version of the results, see Appendix Table A.2.

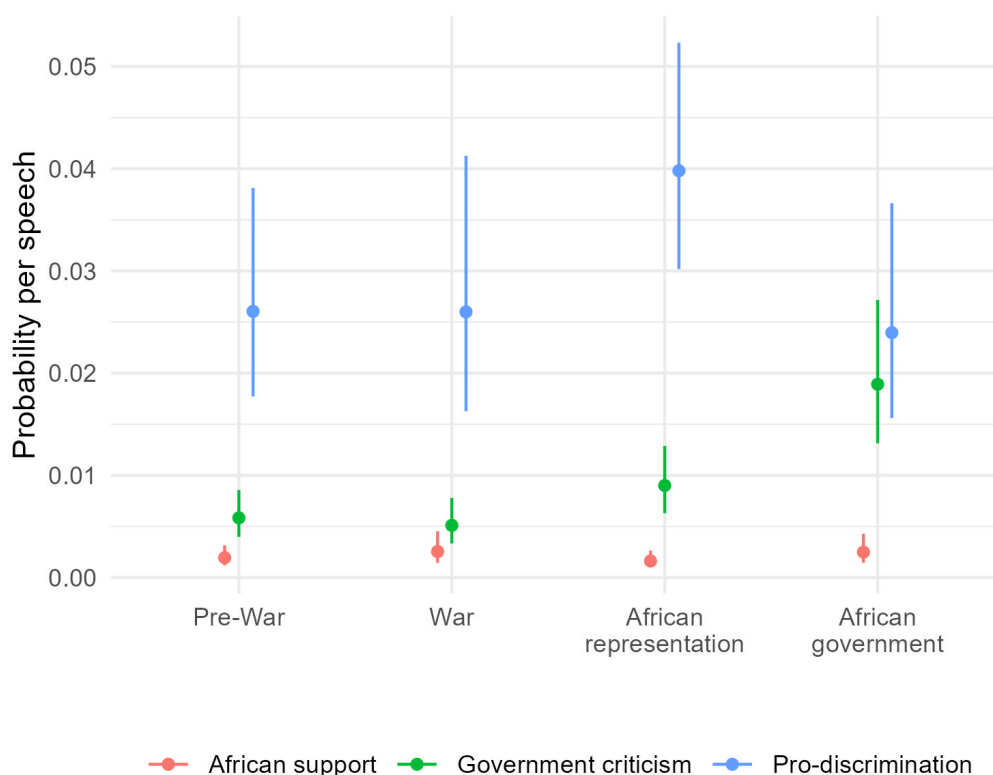


Figure 7: Predicted share of speeches (Y-axis) by unofficial European members of the council to feature discrimination (blue), government criticism (green), and support for Africans (red), across periods (X-axis). Vertical lines indicate 95% confidence intervals for the prediction. Standard errors clustered by individual and date.

Focusing first on government criticism, the results confirm that a schism started to appear between the unofficial members and the government after WW2, and the introduction of African members to the council. Keeping the control variables at their average values, the difference in criticism in the period with African representation from the pre-war period is 0.3 percentage points. While that may sound modest, we emphasize that

most speeches are short, procedural, or in other ways lacking real political content.²² Thus, the average speech in the pre-war period has a modest 0.6% probability of criticizing the government, meaning that 0.3 percentage points is a relative increase of 50%. The increase is much greater once the African government form in 1962, when the probability of a speech criticizing the government increases to 1.9%, a relative change of 217% from the pre-war period. Naturally, differentiating between criticism of Africans versus the colonial officials in these speeches is practically impossible. The rate of criticism in the African representation and African government periods are both statistically significant from the pre-war and war periods, and from each other. We therefore find clear empirical support for hypothesis 1.

The results for discrimination and support are more ambiguous. There is no statistically significant change in the probability of support over the period. There is an increase in discriminatory speeches in the period with African representation, potentially indicating an initial backlash against greater inclusiveness. This increase vanishes during the period with Africans in government, but not below levels of the pre-war or war periods. This ambiguity is to be expected if the unofficial members adapted to increasing pressures partly with economic concessions, and partly with defending the institutions of minority rule, as posited in Hypotheses 3 and 4.

To investigate whether the European unofficial members were more inclined to concede economic redistribution but not political power, we regress our outcome variables African support and discrimination against the interaction between the periods in question, and whether the speech deals with issues of a) education, or b) either constitutional matters, elections, or the federation. We bundle these latter three together in a binomial variable for “systemic”-issues, with the value 1 if any of the three topics features in a speech and 0 otherwise. The models are otherwise similar to above.

We present the results for the support-outcome in Figure 8 and the results for the discrimination-outcome in Figure 9. The figures depict the predicted probability of a speech being either supportive (Figure 8) or discriminatory (Figure 9) conditional on whether education (green), systemic issues (blue) features in the speech, or neither (red). The vertical lines show the 95% confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered by individual and date. The results are available in tabular format in Table A.3 in the appendix.

Indeed, speeches that include education become more likely to express support for Africans after the Africans enter the floor, with more than a doubling in probability for

²²For example, 21% of the speeches have fewer than 10 words.

the pre-war period to the period with African representation. The positive correlation between education and African support becomes even stronger in the final assembly when Africans enter the government.

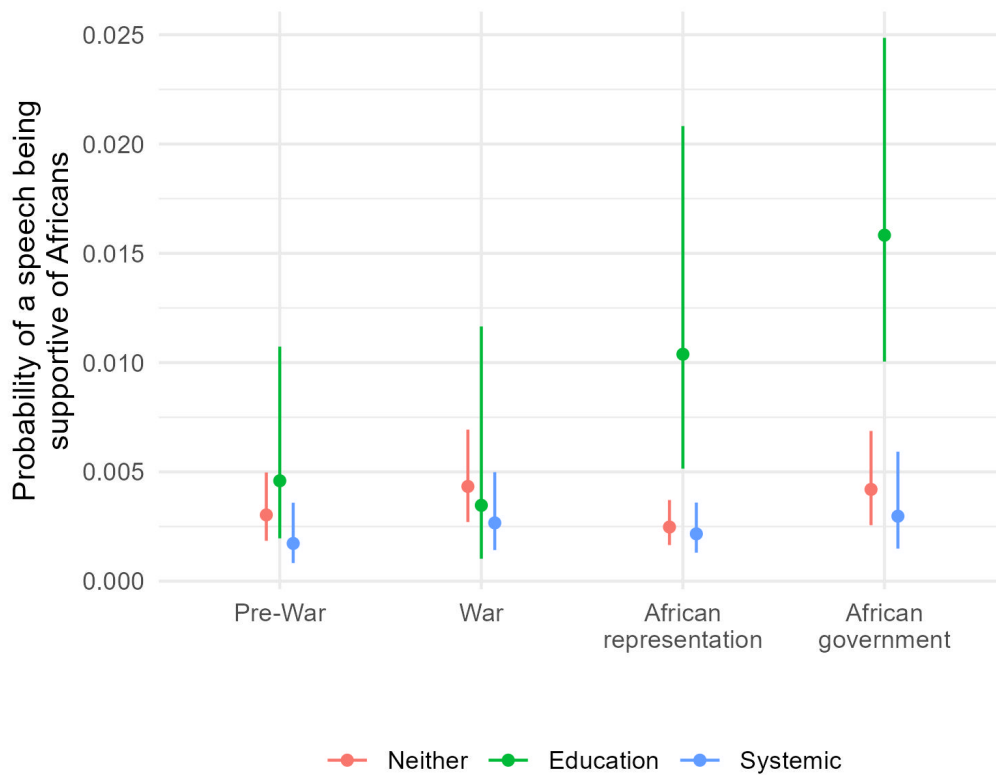


Figure 8: Predicted share of speeches (Y-axis) by unofficial European members of the council that support Africans, conditional on whether the speech contains (blue), and support for Africans (red), across periods (X-axis). Vertical lines indicate 95% confidence intervals for the prediction. Standard errors clustered by individual and date.

However, the pattern is not as clear for the level of discrimination, as both education and systemic issues correlates with more discriminatory attitudes in the period with African representation, as shown in Figure 9. The evidence therefore supports that the European settlers were increasingly willing to give economic concessions, we do not find evidence that their exclusionary attitudes were confined to these more systemic, institutional topics. Instead, the empirical pattern points to a general backlash against African representation, making ethnic relations—and European discrimination—more salient across the board.

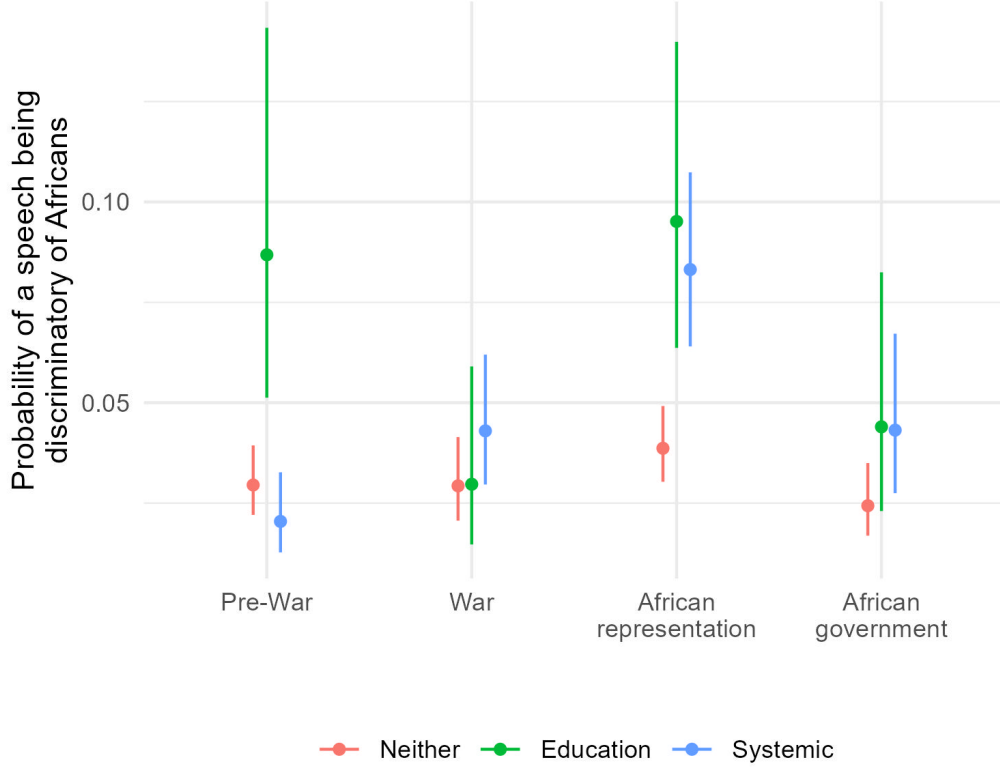


Figure 9: Predicted share of speeches (Y-axis) by unofficial European members of the council to feature discrimination (blue), government criticism (green), and support for Africans (red), across periods (X-axis). Vertical lines indicate 95% confidence intervals for the prediction. Standard errors clustered by individual and date.

Mixed constituencies

To test the impact of the 1959 and 1962 electoral changes, we regress our outcome variables discrimination and support against whether an MP was elected by an ethnically mixed constituency or not. Table 1 summarise the logistic regression models investigating the association between ethnically mixed constituencies and discrimination. Models 1 and 2 subset the data on European members, with discrimination as the outcome variable in Model 1 and support as the outcome variable in Model 2. In Model 3, we make systemic issues into the dependent variable, to investigate whether elected members from mixed constituencies were more likely to avoid these more sensitive topics. Model 4 subset on African MPs, with support as the outcome variable. In all four models, we only include elected members.

The 18 Europeans that at some point were accountable to an ethnically mixed constituencies in 1959 and 1962, were far less discriminatory than the comparable settlers. They were not, however, more supportive of the African cause. They also avoided the

systemic issues: On average, a member elected in a mixed constituency was 8 percentage points less likely to talk about systemic issues, and discriminatory attitudes were 6.4 percentage points less likely to feature in their speeches, compared to Europeans elected in ethnically homogeneous constituencies. Thus, the evidence suggests that the settlers adapted to changing electoral pressures by staying silent, rather than shifting towards support. We therefore find support for Hypothesis 6, but not Hypothesis 7.

The estimates are too uncertain to conclude any association for the 12 Africans exposed to European voters, and so we do not find any clear support for Hypothesis 5.

As mentioned, we cannot differentiate between whether parties strategically put more moderate candidates in these constituencies, or whether the individuals strategically shifted their behavior. Since we know that several seats failed to secure any victory in the 1962 election, we expect selection-processes into the chamber to be important. We cannot quantify this selection bias, but the fact that many seats remained vacant indicates that most members refused or failed to change to a policy-stance that could win them the election, indicating that these electoral incentives were insufficient to change behavior of most politicians, and that long-term regime-concerns overruled short-term reelection incentives.

Table 1: Ethnically mixed electorates and expressed discriminatory attitudes, GLM models

Dependent Variables: Model:	Discriminatory (1)	Supportive (2)	Systemic issues (3)	Supportive (4)
<i>Variables</i>				
Mixed constituency	-1.36** (0.536)	-0.486 (0.571)	-0.766** (0.298)	-0.157 (0.489)
SQRT Days of experience in Council	0.005 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.006)	0.007** (0.003)	-0.027*** (0.007)
Male	-0.896 (0.689)	3.85*** (0.982)	-0.789* (0.435)	
Cabinet member	0.136 (0.117)	-0.001 (0.233)	-0.216** (0.105)	0.624* (0.321)
Opposition	0.045 (0.172)	-0.690** (0.345)	0.027 (0.156)	1.34*** (0.389)
Log Words in speech	1.08*** (0.057)	1.54*** (0.074)	0.549*** (0.044)	2.27*** (0.076)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>				
Date	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constituency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Section	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>				
Observations	41,643	28,120	30,956	7,321
Subset	Europeans	Europeans	Europeans	Africans
Eff. observations	41,643	28,120	30,956	7,321
Degrees of freedom	67	67	67	33
Squared Correlation	0.230	0.160	0.249	0.641
Pseudo R ²	0.307	0.365	0.229	0.598

Clustered (Individual ID & Date) standard-errors in parentheses
*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Discussion

In the British Colonies with sparse European populations, the withdrawal of support from London presented an existential threat to minority rule. In these low-settler colonies, repression and violent resistance was a costly and unrealistic tool to sustain the racist autocratic system. As such, many of these colonies transitioned peacefully to universal suffrage and independence. Yet, while the transitions were peaceful, they were nevertheless consequential to the wealthy elites that had enjoyed the benefits of racist exploitation.

We have utilized a new corpus of the debates in the Legislative Council in Northern Rhodesia to investigate how legislative speech changed as the colonial period was coming to its end. While the transition to independence did indeed happen peacefully, it did not happen willingly. The European settlers became increasingly critical of the colonial Government, as London continued to press for an increasingly inclusive political system. Our empirical evidence indicates that this criticism did not substitute the settlers' favor for discrimination. If anything, the representation of Africans only brought forth explicit support for a discriminatory system.

The Africans that were conceded representation altered the dynamics on the floor by bringing salience to the discriminatory nature of the system, making the ethnic relations between Europeans and Africans one of the most polarizing issues in the council—a situation that was already the reality to most inhabitants of Zambia. The African members spoke out on topics important to the Africans, but most of all they spoke out against the systemic, institutional foundation of exploitation: The Federation, the electoral system, and the constitution.

Facing an increasingly adamant African opposition, and a weakening support from their partners-in-crime the European colonial officials, Europeans did not concede political power. We find no evidence that Europeans became increasingly supportive of Africans when talking about the systemic issues. However, we do find some evidence that Europeans were increasingly willing to concede economic redistribution, and in particular that the unofficial members became more positive to improve African educational services.

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Supporting information

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A Descriptive statistics

Variable	African	European	Asian	Total
Individuals	35	197	2	234
Speeches	9266	92698	55	102019
Discrimination				
Missing	19	809	0	828
Supportive	3480 (37.6%)	1669 (1.8%)	37 (67.3%)	5186 (5.1%)
Discriminatory	1 (0.0%)	6822 (7.4%)	1 (1.8%)	6824 (6.7%)
Council experience				
Mean (SD)	512.4 (477.0)	1130.7 (1076.8)	319.9 (314.8)	1074.6 (1051.9)
Median (Q1, Q3)	372 (108.0, 744.0)	782 (352.0, 1609.0)	132 (107.0, 260.0)	750 (310.0, 1586.0)
Min - Max	1 - 1756	1 - 5325	20 - 896	1 - 5325
Missing	144	587	0	731
Gender				
Mean (SD)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)
Median (Q1, Q3)	1 (1.0, 1.0)	1 (1.0, 1.0)	1 (1.0, 1.0)	1 (1.0, 1.0)
Min - Max	0 - 1	0 - 1	1 - 1	0 - 1
Missing	0	0	0	0
Gov. Criticism	511 (5.5%)	3562 (3.8%)	6 (10.9%)	4079 (4.0%)
Missing	0	53	0	53
Cabinet member	3326 (35.9%)	47916 (51.7%)	0 (0.0%)	51242 (50.2%)
Party				
Governor	247 (2.7%)	42014 (45.3%)	39 (70.9%)	42300 (41.5%)
Federalists	341 (3.7%)	27213 (29.4%)	0 (0.0%)	27554 (27.0%)
Independent	1399 (15.1%)	21652 (23.4%)	0 (0.0%)	23051 (22.6%)
African members	3112 (33.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3112 (3.1%)
UNIP	2444 (26.4%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (29.1%)	2460 (2.4%)
ANC	1326 (14.3%)	398 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1724 (1.7%)
CAP	397 (4.3%)	1254 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1651 (1.6%)
DP	0 (0.0%)	167 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	167 (0.2%)
Native affairs or African interests	0 (0.0%)	4360 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4360 (4.3%)
Section				
Missing	1423	6784	7	8214
Committee	784 (10.0%)	30903 (36.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31687 (33.8%)
Council	1227 (15.6%)	12530 (14.6%)	11 (22.9%)	13768 (14.7%)
Housekeeping	496 (6.3%)	2412 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	2908 (3.1%)
Presidential address	43 (0.5%)	425 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	468 (0.5%)
Question	2299 (29.3%)	17190 (20.0%)	9 (18.8%)	19498 (20.8%)
Reading	2994 (38.2%)	22454 (26.1%)	28 (58.3%)	25476 (27.2%)
N words in speech				
Mean (SD)	134.7 (235.5)	153.6 (403.1)	223.4 (213.1)	152 (390.8)
Median (Q1, Q3)	50 (7.0, 154.0)	45 (13.0, 131.0)	138 (90.5, 341.5)	45 (13.0, 133.0)
Min - Max	2 - 3483	1 - 19023	5 - 1069	1 - 19023
Missing	0	0	0	0
Topic				
Missing	2600	30786	9	33395
Systemic issues	2074 (29.5%)	12462 (19.0%)	21 (44.7%)	14557 (20.1%)
Chiefs and African authorities	608 (8.7%)	2603 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3211 (4.4%)
Constitutional matters	1636 (23.3%)	9604 (14.7%)	18 (38.3%)	11258 (15.5%)
Education	636 (9.1%)	2137 (3.3%)	5 (10.6%)	2778 (3.8%)
Elections	619 (8.8%)	3085 (4.7%)	8 (17.0%)	3712 (5.1%)
Federation	1009 (14.4%)	3537 (5.4%)	11 (23.4%)	4557 (6.3%)
Labor	620 (8.8%)	5427 (8.3%)	6 (12.8%)	6053 (8.3%)
Taxes	231 (3.3%)	4724 (7.2%)	6 (12.8%)	4961 (6.8%)
Member category				
Elected member	9019 (97.3%)	50684 (54.7%)	16 (29.1%)	59719 (58.5%)
Elected or unofficial	9081 (98.0%)	55867 (60.3%)	55 (100.0%)	65003 (63.7%)
Unofficial	62 (0.7%)	5183 (5.6%)	39 (70.9%)	5284 (5.2%)

B Creating the corpus

The varbatim of the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia was digitalized as part of a larger collaboration, which also digitalized the verbatims of the National Assembly of Zambia. The digitalization was done using scanners. When possible, greytone were retained in the resulting pdf-files, so that various noise, such as ink stains, might be filtered away through experimentation in the post-process.

Converting the pdf files to machine readable-text was initially done using Google Vision OCR. The process had some issues, most notably errors in differentiating between multiple columns in multi-column pages, and misreading page-headers into the body-content of the pages. In 2025, Vision GPT technology had made such advancements in OCR-quality that the authors opted to redo the OCR-procedure on LCNr corpus. In addition to an overall better quality, Vision GPT allowed us, among others things, to extract sections, since Vision GPT models are able to retain information such as bold text, necessary to identify section headers. The change in technology is relevant because the training date, described in Appendix section C, were made on the initial OCR-procedure that had more errors. In diagnoses not reported, results are similar when using both corpus, and the improvements from Vision GPT are mostly aesthetic.

Each session lists all members of the council and any government position they might have. These lists have been manually digitalized. We opted for manual digitalization of the list because correct name spelling is crucial for recognizing these names in the corpus afterwards. The full membership lists are provided by the larger research project. The identity of each speaker is recognized through similarity with names in these members list that were members in the respective session.

The gender of each individual is not listed, but can be clearly inferred from names, titles, and information online. The Parliament of Zambia Library provide a list of members 1924-2021, where they have been able to gather images for some of the representatives in the colonial council: <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/10620>. Ethnicity is also not listed, but can easily be identified by the MPs' mandate (e.g. "African members" were african), names, titles, online information, and images from The Parliament of Zambia Library.

C Measuring discrimination in text

The initial training data were coded by 7 different coders. As part of a larger and separate project on measurement bias in large language modelling (LLM), 1 speech was presented

to the coders 4 times in a row, each time compared to a different speech. We made a total of 200 such pairs. Thus, 248 unique speeches were annotated at a minimum of 7 times each and at a maximum 28 times. Intercoder-reliability-measures are available Table A.1.

The training data was sampled based on two criteria. First, to ensure generalizability over time, training data were sampled so that all assemblies were represented with at least one speech. Since the frequency in which the Legislative Council met increased over time, a purely random draw would risk not having any speeches from the early period. Second, prior to all annotation, we used a GPT model to indicate whether a speech commented on ethnic relations at all. We used this initial annotation to ensure that we had a training data that included speeches that did and did not comment on ethnic relations. We do not use this zero-shot GPT annotation any further.²³

Table A.1: Intercoder reliability across measures

Comparison	Discriminatory	Silent	Supportive	Metric
Median Human-Human agreement	0.74	0.85	0.78	Accuracy
Median T5-Human agreement	0.83	0.91	0.77	Accuracy
Median Human-Human agreement	0.88	0.85	0.89	Recall
Median T5-Human agreement	0.81	0.93	0.92	Recall
Median Human-Human agreement	0.90	0.88	0.92	Precision
Median T5-Human agreement	0.93	0.88	0.91	Precision
Median Human-Human agreement	0.87	0.86	0.90	F1
Median T5-Human agreement	0.87	0.91	0.91	F1

We trained a Flan-T5-model²⁴ to infer whether a speech is discriminatory or supportive for the corpus as a whole. We kept all 7/28 different annotations of the same speech in the training data so that the LLM will be more certain when the coders agree, and more uncertain when the coders disagree.²⁵ We provided the T5 model with the ethnicity of the speaker.

After the initial training data, 2889 additional unique speeches were annotated to further reinforce the model. Thus, the final training dataset consist of 3137 unique speeches, and 8055 observations. The median F1-score of our T5-model with each human coder in the initial 248 training observations is .9 for the discriminatory variable and .89 for the supportive variable, which is slightly better than the median human-to-human F1-score.

²³Zero-shot GPT model proved to work well for identifying presence of particular features in text, such as discrimination, but struggled more to correctly identify the salience.

²⁴https://huggingface.co/docs/transformers/model_doc/flan-t5

²⁵The coders sometimes disagreed with themselves when coding the same speech multiple times

D Additional results

Tabular format of results presented in figures

The following three models are the basis for predictions in Figure 7 in the main text.

The following two models are the basis for predictions in Figures 8 and 9 in the main text.

Table A.2: European unofficial members and expressed attitudes, logistic regression models

Dependent Variables: Model:	Gov. Criticism (1)	Discriminatory (2)	Supportive (3)
<i>Variables</i>			
Constant	-13.7*** (0.622)	-6.71*** (0.445)	-22.2*** (0.516)
War	-0.135 (0.191)	-0.002 (0.194)	0.272 (0.233)
African representation	0.437** (0.179)	0.439** (0.206)	-0.181 (0.237)
African government	1.19*** (0.202)	-0.085 (0.208)	0.247 (0.234)
Male	0.185 (0.484)	-0.145 (0.175)	11.4*** (0.099)
Cabinet member	-1.01*** (0.222)	0.109 (0.138)	0.116 (0.110)
Council experience	0.0002*** (3.46×10^{-5})	-3.98×10^{-5} (4.89×10^{-5})	-5.67×10^{-5} (4.35×10^{-5})
Member for native affairs or african interests	0.627** (0.310)	0.578** (0.272)	0.174* (0.098)
Opposition	1.61*** (0.189)	0.029 (0.167)	-0.321* (0.176)
Log Words in speech	1.74*** (0.044)	0.889*** (0.057)	1.36*** (0.059)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>			
Section	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Eff. observations	50,589	50,158	50,158
Degrees of freedom	78	78	78
Squared Correlation	0.361	0.121	0.070
Pseudo R ²	0.485	0.207	0.291

Clustered (Individual ID & Date) standard-errors in parentheses

*Signif. Codes: ***: 0.01, **: 0.05, *: 0.1*

Table A.3: European unofficial members, political topics, and expressed attitudes towards discrimination, logistic regression models

Dependent Variables: Model:		Discriminatory (1)	Supportive (2)
<i>Variables</i>			
Constant		-6.49*** (0.454)	-22.4*** (0.662)
War		-0.004 (0.181)	0.358 (0.238)
African representation		0.283 (0.196)	-0.203 (0.228)
African government		-0.194 (0.216)	0.326 (0.259)
Education		1.15*** (0.266)	0.417 (0.357)
systemic_topics		-0.372* (0.202)	-0.565** (0.251)
Council experience		-5.47×10^{-5} (4.87×10^{-5})	-3.47×10^{-5} (4.83×10^{-5})
Male		-0.287 (0.201)	11.6*** (0.354)
Cabinet member		0.094 (0.142)	0.222* (0.118)
Opposition		0.013 (0.164)	-0.265 (0.180)
Member for native affairs or african interests		0.458** (0.197)	-0.232 (0.179)
Log Words in speech		0.840*** (0.056)	1.32*** (0.069)
War \times Education		-1.13*** (0.393)	-0.640 (0.643)
African representation \times Education		-0.186 (0.336)	1.02** (0.464)
African government \times Education		-0.536 (0.428)	0.922** (0.389)
War \times systemic_topics		0.770*** (0.240)	0.078 (0.258)
African representation \times systemic_topics		1.19*** (0.229)	0.431 (0.280)
African government \times systemic_topics		0.964*** (0.281)	0.219 (0.429)
<i>Fixed-effects</i>			
Section		Yes	Yes
<i>Fit statistics</i>			
Eff. observations	8	34,330	34,330
Degrees of freedom		78	78
Squared Correlation		0.152	0.082
Pseudo R ²		0.231	0.283

Clustered (Individual ID & Date) standard-errors in parentheses