

# Decolonising Barclays Bank DCO? Corporate

## Africanisation in Nigeria 1945 –1969

### *Abstract*

*The reaction of British business to the decolonisation of the Empire has been the focus of much recent research, but few studies have shed light on the continued presence of commercial activities after independence. Barclays Bank DCO in Nigeria began indigenising its staff during decolonisation, but this process was far from complete at independence. African managers at Barclays were supposed to continue British banking traditions, while the post-colonial state hoped to gain more influence on foreign investment through the Nigerianisation of management. By the time the Nigerian civil war effectively ended in 1969 Barclays was only just beginning to come to terms with the ability and ‘character’ of its Nigerian managers while the Nigerian state was moving towards more radical policies to control foreign business. This article aims to highlight the importance of Africanisation programmes for the structure and control of a major British bank trying to adapt first to the end of Empire and then to the post-colonial world.*

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Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Nigerian nationalist and one-time banking entrepreneur, remarked in a speech in 1956 that combating financial monopolies and liberalising credit to Africans “would enable us to enjoy political freedom *pari passu* with economic freedom.” Similarly, a year after independence, Chief Awolowo, the leader of the Yoruba-based Action Group Party, stated that “[foreigners] control the bulk of our financial institutions”.<sup>1</sup> Political decolonisation had not remedied this state of affairs in the eyes of Nigerian politicians, but academic research continued to focus on politics and neglected the economic dimension of decolonisation and nationalism. Apart from a phase of radical ‘neo-imperial’ history in the 1970s and 1980s, which condemned African managers for having been ‘bought-off’ by capitalists, the questions of

economic decolonisation and the role of corporate Africanisation have usually been secondary to other lines of inquiry.

Since the British National Archives opened their files on the end of Empire in the 1980s and 1990s, research has continued to focus more on political and international aspects, for example Robert Robinson and William Roger Louis's 'The Imperialism of Decolonisation' and John Darwin's *Britain and Decolonisation*.<sup>ii</sup> This has also led to the publication of official files in the British Documents of the End of Empire Project. This includes a volume on Nigeria, edited by Martin Lynn, who, in a recent contribution to this journal, highlighted the role of a banking scandal that engulfed Azikiwe in stalling the decolonisation process between 1955 and 1957.<sup>iii</sup> Peter Cain and Antony Hopkins also asserted the importance of financial interests for the history of British imperialism in their contentious book of the same title.<sup>iv</sup> However, with the opening of corporate archives, which occurred somewhat later, a number of studies on imperial business in West Africa have begun to emerge. While these have investigated the relationship between colony and business and the promotion of Africans to management positions, so far little attention has been paid to the role of the UK banks in Nigeria or any other British West African colony.

These business studies fall into two fields: they have either a corporate or a national focus. David Fieldhouse's work on the United Africa Company (UAC), a subsidiary of Unilever, details the rise and fall of this company as an Empire in its own right.<sup>v</sup> Large sections of the book are devoted to metropolitan strategic thinking and its regional industrialisation efforts. While he addresses the question of Africanising or indigenising UAC's local staff Fieldhouse's approach remains firmly rooted in metropolitan thinking. However, this seems problematic, due to the potential for divergence in the thinking and decision-making of central and local management. In the case of Barclays Bank DCO, the focus of this paper, while London Head Office could overrule or even replace local management, day-to-day practices on the ground were frequently inconsistent with London's directives and often subversive of them. Other studies focus on state-business relations within particular colonies, such as Sarah Stockwell's work on the Gold Coast. In line with Nicholas White, who published extensively on British

companies in Malaya, she asserts a fundamental difference between UK firms and the colonial administration during decolonisation, and strongly rejects the argument that foreign business was unprepared for independence.<sup>vi</sup>

This case study of Barclays in Nigeria underscores these findings but goes beyond decolonisation. Moreover, it benefits from a new accession at Barclays Group Archives, which had not previously been available to scholars. For British business, once it became clear that their time horizon was essentially different from that of the colonial administration – because they were not planning to leave West Africa– the necessity arose to collaborate with local elites. What shook British business, including DCO, to the core was not so much political independence, but the failure of the indigenous partners of the imperial transfer of power to maintain effective control over the emergent states. Unhappy with the lack of development, many African states, including Nigeria, turned on the remaining exponents of the former colonial connections, the expatriate companies, demanding economic decolonisation to match political developments. Some work has been conducted on post-independence nationalism and foreign business, for example by Nicholas White on independent Malaysia. However, for Africa the focus is still on the immediate effects of decolonisation on business, as shown in Robert Tignor’s comparative study of Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria. While Egypt is presented as a case of radical nationalisation of foreign assets, beginning with the Suez Canal Company, for Tignor Kenya provides an exponent of a business-friendly approach. He locates Nigeria in the middle of this spectrum, a mixed economy that increasingly blends politics and economics in institutions such as the marketing boards and various development efforts.<sup>vii</sup>

Nigeria is an important case for the overall appreciation of post-colonial business, as it is the largest and potentially wealthiest economy not only in West Africa, but most of sub-Saharan Africa as well – with the exception of South Africa. The discovery of oil in the Niger delta in the late 1950s made it one of the few African countries that witnessed a substantial influx of private capital and investment beyond the long-standing business connections that dated from colonial times. With the coups in 1966 and the civil war that followed, political rule changed hands and forced imperial business to readjust. The resurgent nationalism that became evident

around 1968 opened up a new phase in the treatment of foreign investment, leading to the Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Decrees (NEPDs) of 1972 and 1977. The foremost study of this process is certainly Thomas Biersteker's *Multinationals, the state, and the control of the Nigerian economy*, which presents a systemic view of the relations between the state and indigenous business as well as Lebanese and expatriate companies.<sup>viii</sup>

Like most authors of the time, Biersteker focused on equity ownership of firms as a means to conceptualise control. The problems which occurred during the implementation of the NEPD legislation showed that such a narrow definition failed to encompass the more diverse character of control. Internal organisation and management were more significant than the identity of the firms' owners.<sup>ix</sup> Thus, studies focusing exclusively on changes in equity ownership blank out the important factor of who is running the day-to-day management. In Margaret Ackrill and Leslie Hannah's corporate history of Barclays the authors track the –often-involuntary– changes in equity ownership of local subsidiaries and highlight the related problems of control and fear for Barclays's reputation. While the bank guarded its name and the spread eagle logo carefully, its Nigerian operations continued nevertheless under the name of Barclays Bank of Nigeria for three years after majority ownership had passed to the Nigerian state. However, when the last expatriate left the bank in 1979, London head office removed Barclays's name from the resulting minority-owned bank. In 1989 Barclays divested the last 20 per cent of what was then called the Union Bank of Nigeria for commercial reasons.<sup>x</sup> As this episode underlines, equity ownership, although undeniably significant, has been over-emphasised in the literature and other factors need to be taken into account when analysing control over foreign investment.

The importance of Barclays Bank DCO in overseas business in Nigeria and indeed Africa has not been reflected sufficiently in the academic literature. In the 1960s, Barclays Bank DCO and Lloyds were the two major British overseas banks. In contrast to Lloyds, which had very few interests in Africa, Barclays was a major investor there.<sup>xi</sup> In the 1940s Nigeria was far from being the crown jewel of the DCO Empire. Due to massive investment in the 1950s, the promising economic outlook following the discovery of oil, and the new opportunities created by the state-run marketing boards, Barclays's business in Nigeria became the second most

profitable area within the Bank in the 1960s. This was part and parcel of a strategy preparing the company for independence that began as early as 1952.

This article aims to show how Barclays in Nigeria prepared for independence with two sets of measures: firstly by extending its business and involvement with the local community by opening more branches and extending savings accounts and credit, and secondly by 'indigenising' its staff. This was also referred to as Africanisation or Nigerianisation and became an issue for Barclays and other British firms after 1945. A parallel development took place in the colonial government, but while the government was mostly Nigerianised by 1960, in many British firms only a few Nigerian managers were promoted during the late 1950s and 1960s. The expansion of business encountered obstacles such as high costs and risk, staffing problems and bad lending decisions. After independence, the bank successfully consolidated the rapid changes that had occurred in the 1950s, but problems remained: conflicts between local and expatriate staff and between Nigerian and London-based general management continue to impede operations and decision-making.

Local interests continued to be subordinate to metropolitan corporate concerns, which was the case for many foreign firms in Nigeria. In the aftermath of Empire this was perceived as 'neo-colonialism', as it constituted a continuation of organisational forms closely associated with the imperial system; Barclays was often referred to as the 'Bankers of Empire'.<sup>xii</sup> This poses the question whether a parallel decolonisation of the economy happened and whether the indigenisation of staff is a reasonably good indicator for the extent to which a business can be considered 'decolonised'. This article focuses on the changes within the firm, particularly with regard to the composition of its workforce and management, which occurred in the decade either side of independence, before radical politics changed the commercial landscape in the 1970s. What it maintains is that after independence control remained in British hands but was gradually being eroded; some elements in management would have preferred more Nigerian participation but were unable to prevail in the decision-making process within the bank. As a result the bank was not well positioned for the shift in policy towards foreign business that followed the effective end of the civil war in 1969.

## I

Barclays's growth in Nigeria during the 1950s and 1960s was remarkable and can be regarded as a positive reaction to political and economic change. However, while the bank expanded rapidly in the 1950s, commercially the policy was not a particular success and was indeed marked by many difficulties. It was after independence that Barclays in Nigeria became, at least for a time, really successful. In this section the bank's business, including the stresses and problems of its expansion programme are sketched out before the Nigerianisation process is considered in greater detail.

Barclays Bank DCO had been created in 1925 out of the merger of the National Bank of South Africa and the Anglo-Egyptian and Colonial Bank, the latter of which had business in Nigeria. The Bank of British West Africa (BBWA), its main competitor, however, had been founded as early as 1894 by Alfred Jones of Elder Dempster and counted the colonial government as one of its clients. Despite these disadvantages, Barclays had grown to about equal size by 1945 and both British banks dwarfed their foreign and local competitors, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1: Bank branches in Nigeria, 1952 –1962

YEAR	1952	1954	1962
BBWA	18	27	55
Barclays Bank DCO	10	22	57
British & French Bank (later UBA)	1	2	11
National Bank of Nigeria	9	20	31
Merchants Bank	-	1	failed?
Agbonmagde Bank	3	3	9
African Continental Bank	10	14	21
Nigerian Farmers and Commercial Bank	28	failed	failed
Standard	7	failed	failed
Bank of the North	-	-	5

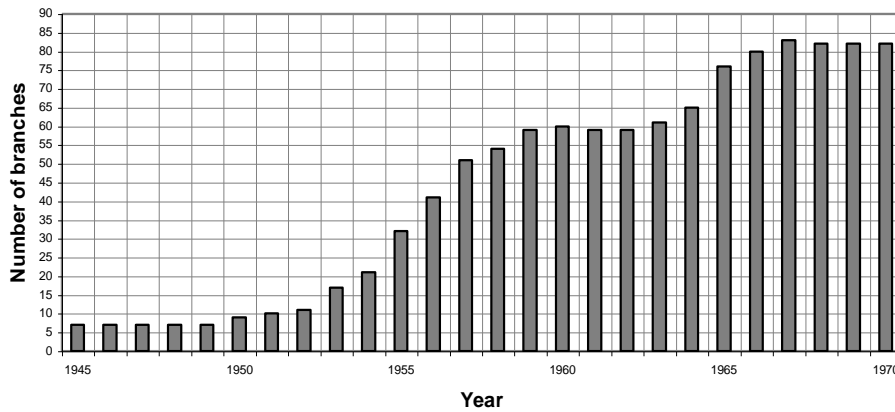
Banque de l'Afrique Occidentale	-	-	2
Berini	-	-	1
Bank of Lagos	-	-	1
Muslim Bank	-	-	1
Bank of America	-	-	1
Chase Manhattan	-	-	1
Co-operative East	-	-	3
Co-operative West	-	-	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>86 (51) *</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>204</b>

\* In brackets offices of the banks surviving the crash of indigenous banking 1952.

**Source:** 1952 and 1962 from: C. V. Brown, *The Nigerian Banking System* (London: George & Allen Unwin Ltd., 1966) pp. 79 – 80; 1954 from “Report on the Banking Position in Nigeria as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1954” Bank of England Archive OV 68/3; Boreham, handwritten note, July 1961, BGA 80/4448.

In 1950 the number of branches indicates that BBWA’s business was slightly greater than Barclays’s, the former having 12 and the latter 9 branches. Nevertheless, due to the fierce competition between the two banks, Barclays overtook the other bank’s 55 branches by two in 1962 and extended this lead in later years. Barclays could only support a branch expansion programme of this size if they extended their services to new customers. With only a few exceptions, in 1950 Barclays’s branches were in expatriate areas where it was unlikely to recruit indigenous customers. Thereafter they opened offices either in the Nigerian parts of the large coastal cities and administrative centres or moved to bigger indigenous commercial towns.

Figure 2: Barclays Branches in Nigeria, 1945 – 1970



**Source:** Barclays Group Archive Wythenshawe, Branch Catalogue. This graph includes branches, sub-branches and agencies.<sup>xiii</sup>

As the graph above shows, the increase in Nigeria was considerable, especially since the country had had the lowest bank branch density of the entire colonial Empire.<sup>xiv</sup> The expansion between 1953 and 1957 put a strain on Barclays’s resources, not only in terms of capital but with regard to personnel and organisation as well. The opening of new branches was to a certain extent funded by the money that Barclays received through savings accounts. These accounts had been on offer for a relatively long period of time, but were hardly significant overall, since the widespread illiteracy amongst the indigenous population and a general reluctance to advertise the bank’s products made the availability of savings accounts a well-kept secret.<sup>xv</sup> Substituting fingerprints for a signature solved the problem of illiterate customers. The success justified the changes at Barclays; by 1960 African savings amounted to £8m out of £15m of total deposits.<sup>xvi</sup>

Barclays could not allow its deposits to remain idle funds, and ‘lending to Africans’ became a key part in the bank’s decolonisation strategy, but it ultimately failed. While it was commercially necessary to lend the funds deposited in savings accounts again, there was a political motivation in prioritising Africans as borrowers. Nationalists and anti-colonialists began rallying against the discrimination of Africans by the expatriate banks. This was not a



new complaint, but, contrary to the trading companies, the bank had been spared in the Accra riots in the Gold Coast in 1948, an event that shook expatriate business throughout West Africa.<sup>xvii</sup> The years between 1950 and 1955 had seen a boom in the opening of indigenous banks, although some of these collapsed after the introduction of new standards in the Banking Ordinance in 1952 (see Figure 1). Only a few survived, amongst them the African Continental Bank (ACB) owned by the nationalist politician Nnamdi Azikiwe, who used the mass collapse of indigenous banking and the ensuing scandal around his bank to condemn publicly the lending practices of the big foreign banks.<sup>xviii</sup> Thus political motives feature strongly in Barclays's growth, particularly with the man who was the main driving force behind much of the expansion programme and change in staffing in the mid-1950s: Jack Cade, a general manager from London Head Office.<sup>xix</sup>

The main reasons for poor lending performance were the low discretionary limits of the African managers and their lack of experience in credit procedures due to the absence of structured training. The following episode regarding a sub-branch in Ibadan, illustrates the situation particularly in the smaller branches:

The African Clerk-in-charge had a discretionary limit of only £25, and only the sketchiest idea of how to deal with the problems of lending to Africans (or anybody else!). [...] The Clerk-in-charge described his advances as "overnight only", and they were of small amounts. No record was kept of advances declined, and reasons. [...] It is quite hopeless to send these Africans out and put them in charge of branches on the present casual system. In due course the Discretionary Limit will have to be raised. Subsequently at the main branch I discussed the advances of this Sub-Branch with Bashorun, who used to be in charge of it. He says the Africans in this district are quite unworthy of credit at all! An African view of Africans!<sup>xx</sup>

Cade ensured that limits were raised and more credit extended. However, by the late 1950s it became increasingly clear that the new lending policy was leading to a sharp rise in bad and

doubtful debts. This was not exclusively a problem that concerned African staff. Even some of the more experienced European managers of big branches had ignored instructions about lending procedures, but problems with them arose because their higher discretionary limits allowed them to extend substantial credit to unreliable traders. Lack of supervision and inexperienced staff, insufficient training and overstretched resources were not the only problems Cade's new policy exposed.<sup>xxi</sup> Bashorun's remarks highlight the lack of understanding of local 'creditworthiness' that even progressive minds such as Cade exhibited. Furthermore, the bank's system of rotating branch management, designed to prevent fraud, turned out to be a further obstacle when it came to recovering advances. Debtors would consider themselves in an alliance with the manager who had accepted their request for a loan, probably because face-to-face relations were prevalent in the Nigerian economy at the time. Therefore, the successor at the respective branch would find it hard to impossible to get the money back.<sup>xxii</sup>

It does not suffice to focus only on the problems of local staff, as the pressure put on the section by Head Office in London was considerable and inconsistent with the commercial strategy. In the words of a London official 'we are paying a heavy price for pushing Lagos Head Office (LHO) into a lending policy which at this time of growth they were not able to control.'<sup>xxiii</sup> Although Cade's policy was certainly progressive, it was not carefully worked out and only poorly translated into action, which led to one of the biggest crises for Barclays in Nigeria, just at the time of independence. In 1959 an 'old friend' of Barclays, the Emir of Kano, alerted a visiting Assistant General Manager to the imminent danger of losing money, as they had lent to the wrong people:

[...] instead of, as I expected, his commenting on our not lending enough money, he said he felt the Banks had lent too much both to the Lebanese and to Nigerian people, and that the Banks would not, in some cases, get their money back.<sup>xxiv</sup>

In July 1960 a Central Board Director reported £1.4m of bad and doubtful debts, a figure that would rise to £2.5m, largely irrecoverable, in 1963 when the investigation was finished. How

much of this was due to African advances is hard to discern. The only existing figures date from 31<sup>st</sup> January 1960, when the total of bad and doubtful debts was believed to be £950,975 out of total advances of £4,933,775. Credit to indigenous businessmen accounted for 43 per cent, but the provision for bad debts on African lending was about 75 per cent of the total provision.<sup>xxv</sup> However, this is no safe indication since the majority of bad debts were discovered later, especially the ones at Kano branch, headed by a British expatriate, where £1m was found to be irrecoverable. In this case the largest single item was nearly £900,000 lent to the London & Kano Trading Co., a British firm that existed at least since the 1920s.<sup>xxvi</sup> Subsequently the British manager of Kano branch was quietly removed and the fact that almost half of the bad and doubtful debts, which, earlier on, had been considered a problem exclusively of African customers, were caused by expatriate collusion was never flagged up.

One of the reasons why Barclays performed so badly was that commercial and political strategies were not clearly articulated. Marketing Boards, established in 1947, introduced officially set prices and made it less attractive for the trading companies to maintain their outlets and produce buying agencies in the hinterland, where they had provided quasi-banking services.<sup>xxvii</sup> The race between the banks to place their branches in key positions of an emerging market was a commercial necessity. Nevertheless, Barclays had to react to political demands of improving and extending banking services at the same time. Moreover, the management had to consider how they could position the company favourably at independence. The London general manager Richard Dyson remarked in 1952:

[...] in view of present political developments I felt it was important that we should, as soon as practicable, open further branches.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Clearly, the company principals had been preparing for independence and reacted to the pressures of decolonisation. This is particularly evident with regard to lending. Cade once remarked that he had to 'kill the legend that we won't lend to Africans', even if that meant

giving credit indiscriminately, without being able to assess the creditworthiness of the individual.

It is suggested that generous lendings are being made to small income people. Such lendings are not what we want, but we do not want this persistent allegation that we won't lend to Africans, and if there is propaganda we must counter it.<sup>xxix</sup>

While Barclays's decision to expand might have been partly commercially motivated, its design, timing and speed were determined by political factors. At the same time Nigerianisation changed the composition of staff, in particular that of the management, which was previously exclusively white. In the end, the expansion could only be supported by a change of focus to a broader customer base. While decolonisation made Barclays's business in Nigeria bigger and more successful than ever before, it also strengthened the bargaining position of Nigerians as customers and members of staff vis-à-vis the bank.

By 1960 the situation had calmed down. To observers sent by the London management the entire 'lending to Africans' affair was hardly understandable in hindsight.

Our business has developed, and continues to develop, satisfactorily but the policy of wholesale lendings to Africans has proved premature and costly. It is not that all lendings to Africans are bad and indeed the Banks have had many African customers, both individual and corporate, with whom satisfactory business has been conducted over a number of years. In fact, so much business was already being done with Africans, particularly through the co-operatives, that it is difficult to understand why it was thought necessary to force the pace, a policy which has resulted in heavy losses.<sup>xxx</sup>

The increase in business due to branch expansion as well as savings and lendings led to intensified recruitment of both British as well as local staff. Barclays, however, still tended to

rely more on British staff, something that, in the light of political developments, became a highly charged issue.

## II

The indigenisation of the colonial administration began after the war and soon accelerated due to the impact of the Accra riots in 1948 and the constitutional development in the 1950s. Throughout the West African colonies Nigerians and Ghanaians were taking over ever more important and high-ranking official posts. Barclays's managers acknowledged that the Nigerianisation of the colonial service would have an impact on British companies at an early stage. In 1948 Donald Carter, the London General Manager (Staff), demanded on a tour to West Africa that the bank should 'give more responsibility to our African staff'. Richard Dyson made it clear in 1952 that 'the speed with which Africanisation is proceeding in the political field is bound to have its repercussions in other spheres including our own.'<sup>xxx</sup>

With both the government and private sector competing for talented African staff, Nigerianisation was problematic. The establishment of Barclays's own training centre in Lagos in 1956 has to be seen in the light of complaints that the best school graduates were entering government service. This was not only due to better salaries and social emoluments but also because it offered further education and opportunities to go to the UK or the United States. J. B. Loynes of the Bank of England remarked on the problems Barclays was facing in 1958

The steady efflux of white officials from the regional administration had caused regional governments to offer attractive terms, including scholarships in the UK, to Africans. This had led to a serious drain on the promising African staff of Barclays DCO, doubtless BWA as well, at a time when the Bank needed to be at full strength to cope with its rapid expansion. The resignation of Africans had forced the Bank to import more European staff involving substantial outlays on housing etc.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Loynes' assessment of the situation highlighted Barclays's self-interest in indigenising. Business itself, not only politics, demanded the employment of more and better qualified Africans since the bank had embarked on a programme of rapid branch expansion. This made it increasingly difficult to find enough staff, African and European alike, a universal problem for expatriate firms in West Africa. However, the rate of indigenisation at Barclays compared unfavourably not only with the civil service but also with the big trading companies. Like the Bank of British West Africa (BBWA) and other banks, they were in general much slower in giving even limited responsibility to their indigenous employees, particularly when compared to the UAC.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

In 1952, at a time when 11.9 per cent of the UAC management in Nigeria was 'ized', Barclays had no African branch manager or sub-manager or even appointed accountant. This comparison is unfortunately limited to 1952, the only year for which there is a detailed list of Barclays's senior staff. At this time Barclays employed 57 Europeans and 174 African clerks in Nigeria.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The Nigerians constituted 22.2 per cent within the group of 'senior' employees, which includes the management, accountants and all A- and B-signatories.<sup>xxxv</sup> None, however, had climbed higher than the lowest rank of senior staff, the B-signatories, of whom about half were Nigerian. Moreover, while the average income of B-signatories was similar, only the expatriates were eligible for allowances, which averaged £242, the minimum being £200 territorial allowance. The average age of the local staff in management grades was 45 years compared with the British average age of 27.<sup>xxxvi</sup> These figures illustrate that Africans had a much lower income than their significantly younger expatriate colleagues, who had fewer years of service with the bank. While the base salary for the same job seemed to be the same, allowances formed an important part of expatriate income and expatriates could expect to get promoted earlier.

Although Barclays lagged behind the UAC with regard to indigenisation, in the early stages of the programme there seems to have been a mutual understanding between their principals about the local staff. In 1951, Julian Crossley, Chairman of DCO, met Frank Samuel from the UAC:

[Frank Samuel] pointed out that their local African staff had not yet progressed far enough to take responsibility, even of a Store manager. He asked how far we had been able to give authority to local Africans, which is not yet very far, although they are quite good at routine duties. Although at a small branch the second man might be an African, we should not at present feel able to leave one in charge, even of a small branch.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

However, this should not obscure the fact that the UAC had sent the company secretary, A. R. I. Mellor, to West Africa to assess its relations there as early as 1948, which uncovered unfair and racial treatment of African employees and numerous other reasons for the firm's unpopularity. On the basis of this report the UAC began to Africanise, restructure its commercial policies and introduce public relations measures.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Of course UAC stores had been amongst the main targets of public outrage in the Accra riots earlier in 1948, which Barclays escaped almost unscathed. While not making a major re-assessment of its operations, 1948 was the year in which the first three Nigerians were considered for a B-Signature. One of the three, G. A. Onagoruwa, wrote a letter to Carter not only comparing better opportunities in other companies but also highlighting the level of discrimination:

It is my own humble opinion that an African whose work is considered good and who possesses the necessary qualifications should after 10 years be able to earn the initial salary of a European in the same employment.<sup>xxxix</sup>

In the late 1950s, when independence was imminent, the situation became more fluid, although the process of Africanisation in senior management was still relatively slow. Robert Mensah was the first Ghanaian to be appointed as a branch manager in 1957, the year of Ghana's independence. He later became Local Director in Ghana and assumed executive responsibilities in this position.<sup>xl</sup> In Nigeria there was no parallel African figure to whom the Bank was willing to give that much responsibility at the time. A number of people were tested

in 'acting' management positions, which meant filling in for a European on leave, or were put in charge of small sub-branches or agencies. Mr. Bashorun, one of the Nigerians suggested for a B-signature in 1948, had been manager of an Ibadan sub-branch before 1958, and in 1960 seven sub-branches and agencies in total were Nigerianised. In 1962 one indigenous manager, Mallam Aba of Funtua, a distant relative to the Emir of Kano, even occupied a bank house, formerly a privilege reserved entirely for expatriates.<sup>xii</sup> Probably more important was the appointment of the first African, E. Inwang, to become a Local Head Office manager in 1961. He began as Assistant Staff Manager but was soon moved on to become the first manager of African staff. However, apart from a few talented young men placed in highly visible positions, indigenisation proceeded more slowly than anticipated even by the European management. General Manager F. A. Boreham had emphasised the importance of a 'more positive approach to Nigerianisation' in 1961 but three years later ten out of eleven branches, which were supposed to have been Nigerianised in the previous two years, were still under European management.<sup>xiii</sup> While the UAC had had Mellor's report in 1948 and the Colonial Office (CO) made it clear in a policy paper in 1953 that they would take charge of Africanisation to ensure they would continue be able to guide its progress, Barclays's policy remained under-articulated and rather haphazard.<sup>xiiii</sup>

For Barclays the problem was twofold; on the one hand the management complained about the low quality of the indigenous staff while at the same time they were drained of their more experienced local staff who went on to better paid jobs, or to training and further education in the UK, which led Barclays to increase the salary minima for more senior African officials in 1961.<sup>xliv</sup>

With the transfer of power practically completed, Barclays entered calmer waters. Staffing problems remained, but the end of new branch openings took the edge off it (see Figure 1). As a visiting manager from London concluded in 1960:



Expansion has been very rapid and, in the main, we believe this has been right as we must now be in a strong position vis-à-vis competitors. We are equally sure that the present time, and the immediate future, must be a period of consolidation.<sup>xlv</sup>

This consolidation programme involved bringing in a new general manager to lead the section, briefed to boost profits, and changing the composition of the local board to reflect a greater Nigerian identity. Apart from the general manager and the three British local directors, three so-called advisory directors, a Hausa, an Igbo and a Yoruba were appointed. The function of the indigenous advisory directors was clearly representative, with the choice of ethnicity serving the purpose of representing the original three regions within the Nigerian federation. While all three of them were chosen for the high esteem in which they were held in the community, none of them had any banking experience, which, it was hoped, would preclude them from attempting to gain any executive powers. Leonard Daldry, the outgoing local director and soon-to-be chairman of the new board, was nevertheless nervous about the possible dangers of such a move:

[They] might confuse the functions of management and directorate and try to usurp the prerogatives of management. [...] The Nigerians [...] seem to get a feeling of compulsion to dominate the meeting, even sometimes to the detriment of common sense, if their numbers are approximately equal to the Europeans.<sup>xlvi</sup>

However, none of the directors apparently ever attempted to influence the bank's operations. The great benefit of the move, according to Barclays, was the positive publicity they received, especially in political circles, in spite of James Robertson's warnings that the appointment of three Nigerians should not 'appear as a mere façade'.<sup>xlvii</sup> DCO's chairman Julian Crossley summed up his impression of the changes as follows:

I think, and hope, that the impression created by this new set-up will be to give it a more businesslike appearance, and to show that we do indeed mean business. It will be regarded as the Bank's response to the changed conditions created by the newly independent State of Nigeria.<sup>xlviii</sup>

The approval was not as unanimous as the bank's managers reported back to London Head Office though, as this remark from a Nigerian senator illustrates:

The trend now is to call every company a Nigerian company. That is, somebody is appointed from the outside, a Nigerian, one foolish man, who is usually given a big salary, so that they can call the company Nigerian. He has nothing to do with the company.<sup>xlix</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the local board did not herald a new Nigerian influence on Barclays, but the change of the management from Daldry to the new General Manager Edward Ambrose did make a major difference to the bank's operations. Profits doubled between 1961 and 1963 to over a million pounds; in comparison the half-year profit in 1959 had been £193,000 which was further reduced by 'administrative costs and other expenses' to a mere £78,000.<sup>1</sup> Deposits and saving had been steadily growing throughout this time, and the change in profit was due to a strict policy of cost cutting. The number of staff – especially non-clerical – diminished, due to the successful introduction of mechanisation after 1952 and a streamlining of procedures. The deployment of 'expensive' expatriate staff was much more closely monitored than before and Nigerianisation, although still far from being impressive, now gained more ground. However, ceilings to the advancement of local managers were still firmly in place:

Though there are a number of good steady Africans in responsible positions, they nearly all seemed to me to lack the spark of real managerial ability; they might run small or medium sized branches adequately but would be unlikely ever to show the self-confidence and initiative needed to build up or expand a business.<sup>li</sup>

Barclays's managers showed little confidence in the ability of their African managers, which in itself might have been the main cause for the rather slow Nigerianisation. In a parallel to the bad debt problem it seemed 'very difficult for a European to assess the character and ability of an African', as Freddy Seebohm from London head office remarked in 1954.<sup>lii</sup> 'Character', an idea derived from the public school tradition, was the main criterion not only of Barclays when recruiting and assessing their employees, but of the British multinational banks most generally, as Geoffrey Jones highlighted in his study of British multinational banking.<sup>liii</sup> Nevertheless, Nigerianisation had removed most of the old ceilings on the advancement of Africans apart from one: large branch management was the last preserve for Europeans. In 1966 the younger expatriate staff voiced their discontent with a company that, in their view, was committed to 'Nigerianise as fast as possible', to Seebohm, by then chairman of DCO, who remarked on this:

The answer to these questions are, on the whole, obvious and the fact is that although 75 per cent of the young men are quite first class, there is an element that ought not to be in the Bank. When these are identified, I feel that we ought to grasp the nettle and get rid of them. There is no place in the future of the bank for anyone who is not (a) loyal, or (b) potentially a large branch manager.<sup>liv</sup>

With Africans taking more and more jobs that used to be reserved for expatriates and the bank's departure from its old policy of guaranteed life-long employment, European staff were under the increased pressure of being rationalised away. This explains the reluctance and, at times, the active obstruction of the indigenisation programme by expatriate staff at Barclays. During decolonisation a similar development occurred in the colonial administration, which led the Colonial Office to comment on a hardening of attitudes against Nigeria appointments and promotions in 1954. By 1956 a compensation scheme for the public service had been introduced, which allowed officials to retire and withdraw gradually when qualified Africans were available. In contrast, the options for redeployment of Barclays's staff were running out

while the bank showed more inclination than before to lay off people. The unavoidable conflict of interest between expatriate and local managers was not as easily resolved as the more successful transfer of power from the colonial state to Nigerian authorities.<sup>lv</sup>

In the 1960s the new state started to handle expatriate quotas regulating the numbers of personnel to come from Britain for work more restrictively and imposed limits to increase the pressure on firms to Nigerianise more rapidly. This made it harder for Barclays to move staff around the globe as freely as before. At the same time the opportunities to repatriate funds to London decreased through regulations in the newly decolonised countries. Neither money nor people – and therefore knowledge – were the flexible assets that they used to be. The end of colonialism led to nationalist economic policies in many less developed countries, attempting to gain more leverage in a world system in which they were relatively powerless. The breakdown of the Bretton Woods system, the weakness and devaluation of the pound, the oil crises of the 1970s and the Latin American debt crisis in 1982 were further factors that led to more restrictions and rendered the internationalist measures for a global economy, introduced after the Second World War, obsolete. For Barclays, the increasing restrictions of movement of personnel and funds went to the heart of its business. Nigerianisation represented a possibility to imbue its Nigerian staff with the spirit and ‘character’ of British banking. However, the slow implementation indicates that the principals were far from content with the outcome and essentially still distrustful along racial lines. On the other hand, Nigerianisation was the central demand of African trade unions and the Nigerian government – hoping to effect greater local control by having Nigerian managers heading foreign firms. Again, employees and politicians were disappointed and lost faith that changes in staff would be sufficient. The failure to implement rapid Nigerianisation successfully raised the question of who, ultimately, controlled Barclays; a conflict that intensified in the late 1960s and ultimately climaxed with the indigenisation programmes of the 1970s. The next section analyses the transition from Nigerianisation to increased legal restrictions of foreign businesses and the changes wrought by the civil war.

### III

In the mid-1960s Nigerians had advanced to take on management positions in Head Office and represented the bank as directors. However, in terms of real and actual control this meant little. Barclays lagged behind its own plans to Nigerianise its branches and Africans who reached the top echelon were moved to purely representative posts or to newly created positions with no power over finances or expatriates. The relatively laissez-faire attitude of the early post-colonial state had not forced Barclays to implement changes on the same scale as in the 1950s.

The second half of the 1960s was a time of upheaval for Nigeria and Barclays was confronted with unpopular choices. The military coup on 15 January 1966 by General Agui-Ironsi removed a number of political figures with whom Barclays had enjoyed close contacts, among them the assassinated Premier of the Western Region, Chief Akintola, and the Sardauna of Sokoto. Several crises in the 1960s preceded the coup. Shortly after the initial coup, Gowon, a Hausa general, overthrew Agui-Ironsi, the Igbo general, in June 1966 and rioting between northerners and southerners ensued until September. In 1967 the eastern region decided to secede from the Federation of Nigeria under the new name Biafra.<sup>lvi</sup>

Barclays's eastern branches were effectively removed from the main operations and put under the official control of John Okwesa, who had been the Igbo director on Barclays's board since 1961, but effectively managed by the senior Nigerian employee, Jibueze. The Nigerian state expected the bank to take a clear and unequivocal stand against Biafra and terminate business there. Barclays, however, was not prepared to give up branches and assets in the east and served both sides. Soon after the army recaptured the east, London Head Office sent an Assistant General Manager to check on staff, branches and records.

The chap in charge was called Jibuwezi who was our most senior African at the time in eastern Nigeria and he became General Manager (as he styled himself) of Barclays in Biafra. Amazingly, they did quite well. They organised themselves literally as a separate bank; they

had all the normal things like cash runs, maintained their records and accounts. Of course the whole thing was really quite artificial, with no proper financial controls in the country.<sup>lvii</sup>

His comment shows that despite the still prevailing condescension towards African employees they were far better qualified and capable of running a bank than the British managers had ever imagined. While the section could not have made any profits, because Nigeria changed its currency and did not accept Biafran money, their deposits had doubled from £14m to £28m, they had kept the branches open during the civil war and had not only kept records meticulously but protected them from the incoming army. Of all foreign business only the banks and the UAC group had continued to operate.<sup>lviii</sup>

During the civil war a marked change occurred in the relation between the state and the banks. While the first Banking Ordinance in 1962 had specified that the liquid assets held overseas must not exceed 7.5 per cent of a bank's total deposits – something that Barclays did not find it hard to comply with – the policy of the Central Bank had changed with the departure of the last British expatriate manager in 1964. In 1968 Barclays became increasingly nervous about the situation in Nigeria. Later that year their fears were partly vindicated with Part 10 of the Companies Act, which decreed that banks and other foreign business had to incorporate locally and make their equity available to the wider public. On 30 March 1969 Barclays Bank DCO (Nigeria) Ltd. went public as Barclays Bank of Nigeria Ltd. – a last minute name change to reflect a greater 'Nigerian' identity.<sup>lix</sup>

Internally, however, William Duncan, general manager in Nigeria since 1963, presented a radical plan for the future of Barclays's Nigerian business. He claimed in his paper that soon indigenous banks would outstrip the 'British' banks, because they appealed to national sentiment. He therefore advised that Barclays should hive off part of the African business and, ideally, forge an agreement with one of the indigenous banks, preferably the National Bank of Nigeria, which would ultimately handle the Nigerian end of the business while Barclays provided the services in the main financial centres outside Nigeria. This was a highly contentious plan and while the nationalisation in Tanzania still haunted the management,

Barclays was disinclined to let go one of their largest most profitable sections.<sup>lx</sup> Moreover, none of the indigenous banks were in a financial position to buy and take over the business and extensive branch network of one of the biggest expatriate banks.

Although Duncan's plan never came to fruition, it highlighted diverging positions within Barclays, an almost generational conflict between the bank's managers. Duncan had set off a debate that was mirrored by an exchange of letters between the former chairman Sir Julian Crossley, who had presided over much of Barclays's expansion in the 1950s and 1960s, and his successor, Freddy Seebohm. Seebohm believed that Barclays could continue to work as they used to with local subsidiaries despite localisation and participation measures. Crossley, however, maintained:

My belief is simply that in making the approach ourselves we are weakening our position and achieving nothing in the process, because mere localisation gives no protection whatever for the future and, indeed, might even invite further action.<sup>lxi</sup>

The old guard was beginning to lose out. A year later, the chairman-designate of Barclays, F. A. Tuke, toured Nigeria and received the advice that if 'the bank took the view that sooner or later we would have to make a deal, all experience in Africa proved that the sooner you make the deal the better the deal will be'.<sup>lxii</sup> Barclays had abandoned its old hard line position in favour of collaborating constructively with the government. In 1970 it was clear to the bank's managers that the old stance was no longer viable. Again Tuke made a very accurate guess at future developments:

The rate at which we sell shares to local interest is difficult to gauge but it seems more than likely that we will be obliged to move towards a 51 per cent or possibly 60 per cent Nigerian shareholding during the next four or five years.<sup>lxiii</sup>

In 1971 the Nigerian government acquired 40 per cent of the bank's stock, which increased to a majority holding of 60 per cent in 1976. This indigenisation policy quickly showed its limits, as it discouraged the inflow of new capital and investment. In the 1980s it was already being partly revised.<sup>lxiv</sup>

## IV

Barclays's situation in Nigeria corresponded to some extent to the changes in the global economy. The non-Western world, by the late 1960s largely decolonised, was becoming more radical. Dependency theorists and historical materialists re-assessed the role of multinational companies and their ability to help developing countries modernise. Old development doctrine seemed to have failed, and political elites that had banked on it were swept away. In Nigeria, furthermore, this coincided with political and ethnic tensions that the new state proved incapable of solving. The outlook of Barclays and other British firms at the end of Empire was changing fundamentally by the end of the 1960s, more so probably than during decolonisation, when general wisdom still proclaimed a future for business in Africa if it only slightly adapted to the new states. During the 1950s the late colonial state in Nigeria took a more active part in the commerce and development of the country through the marketing boards. For the large trading companies such as UAC and others this meant a re-orientation away from their old bulk export-import business to wholesale trading of more sophisticated goods, which, in the medium term proved successful. For the banks, the change was even more beneficial. Both the Bank of British West Africa and Barclays expanded on a massive scale and tapped a formerly underestimated financial resource – African savings. However, the growth in activity did not lead automatically to a growth in profits, at least in the short term. Evidence from Barclays suggests that BBWA suffered from the same bad debt problem in the late 1950s, which illustrated the main shortcoming of British foreign business: assessing its African customers, and, by extension, its African employees and other important stakeholders.

The question of evaluating the trustworthiness and ability of an individual became the central problem of the Barclays's policy of Nigerianisation. Recreating local managers of the required



'character' of a British banker seemed an insurmountable task. However, the very character of British banking was changing with the demise of Sterling as a reserve currency, the creation of the Euro-Dollar markets and the ascendancy of the United States, Germany and Japan as main global investors. Both the bad debt problem and the slow progress of Nigerianisation highlighted the failure to match reality with an ideal that was rapidly losing its guiding functions. The experience of the Biafran civil war proved the British managers' adverse assessment of their African staff wrong, since Africans showed the ability and the endurance to continue the business in the East. The civil war changed the situation in Nigeria in a number of ways: Duncan's 'Plan for the Future' and the controversy it caused probably illustrates this best. Duncan showed faith that locals could manage the Nigerian end of the business profitably, but he underlined the inability of British staff to deflect nationalist criticism and to understand the local market sufficiently. General Managers in London, however, were not prepared to relinquish direct control and retreat to manage their Nigerian branches at arm's length. Nigerianisation represented an incremental change from within the bank, but it did not keep pace with political developments. The patience of the new military government was eroding, and the Companies Act of 1968 was the beginning of a new policy that led to the indigenisation decrees in the 1970s.

Africanisation and the increase of business conducted with local interests were part and parcel of the bank's decolonisation strategy. While they initially seemed to be creating more problems than they solved, adjustments in management and implementation turned DCO's Nigerian section into a success story, at least in terms of financial results, by the mid-1960s. Nevertheless, local managers often faced expatriate resistance when it came to promotions, due to the lack of other opportunities for them within the bank. Moreover, local and metropolitan management faced conflicts over strategies: while London management initially pushed for more progressive policies on Africanisation as well as in the savings and loans business, by the late 1960s the 'progressive' general managers that had been installed in Nigeria – first Ambrose, then Duncan – were moving too fast for London's taste. While progress in indigenisation at Barclays, in line with other companies, remained constant, the civil war and the political

radicalisation that came in its wake undermined the position of foreign business, and DCO and others could not adjust to this. However, the initial success that Barclays experienced in the newly independent state, which afforded the bank a sense of security – however misplaced – can be traced back to the actions during decolonisation. DCO was anything but a bystander to the grand political developments, and this article confirms Sarah Stockwell’s findings on the active part business tried to play during these years. While it is seemingly correct that there was no commonality of interest or cooperation between imperial business and the colonial administration, this was only a logical extension of different perspectives: business was there to stay and found the quickening pace of withdrawal from political control at first unsettling. However, once independence became a certainty, business followed the administrative example in Africanising its labour force and its suggestions to begin working more closely with the nominated elite. Thus the initial conflict was soon superseded by a new orientation more in line with the political progress, but economic developments inevitably trailed behind.

The apparent time lag between political and economic decolonisation underlines the importance of considering post-colonial business and its relation to the newly independent state. The Africanisation of staff is an important indicator of how well adapted the overseas firms were to the changed local conditions. However, ‘economic decolonisation’ is rarely defined clearly, and while David Fieldhouse introduces the term in his preface, where he “loosely” describes it as a process of casting off or limiting the power of foreign merchant capital by the newly sovereign African states.<sup>lxv</sup> There is a sense that economic demands and Africanisation are related, but it is unclear in how far it is more than a convenient catchall for nationalist propaganda. On the other hand his work has the great merit of focusing on internal business processes that are inherently more revealing than studies that take the way companies are represented (by themselves or by outsiders) for granted. To determine the role of British imperial business in Nigeria and West Africa in general it is necessary to approach the subject with a combination of detailed, archivally based studies of the major firms while at the same time overcoming the inherent bias in the sources towards telling a narrative that focuses entirely on the metropolitan story. Moreover, the events of the 1970s, which are Biersteker’s subject,

should not obscure the fact that the indigenisation of staff, partly forced through the state's increasingly restrictive handling of expatriate quotas, had been a deliberate attempt on the part of Barclays to appease public and political opinion. The bank however was too uncomfortable to ultimately entrust the control of the Nigerian section to an African, while the Nigerian state decided to bring foreign business under its control. A focus simply on changes in equity ownership thus overlooks the internal restructuring of imperial business that took place over two decades. More importantly, it does not account for the shortcomings of the NEPDs, in particular for so-called 'fronting': placing a Nigerian as owner and director, who did not insist on having any executive power. Behind this 'Nigerian façade' the business was run by expatriates like before. If the NEPDs are seen as an attempt to enforce Africanisation, avoidance strategies such as 'fronting' are far less surprising, because they had already been used during the Nigerianisation of the boards of directors (see quote on page 17). Analysing ownership, which was only a means to an end, has shown its limits in contributing to the understanding of control and the limited success of the NEPDs. Seeing them as part of a longer running negotiation process between the state and foreign business, in which the Africanisation of staff and management was the main area of contention, forms the basis of a new understanding of the role of decolonisation and nationalism for the expropriation of foreign interests.

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<sup>i</sup> First quotation: N. Azikiwe, Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe (Cambridge, 1961), p. 277. Second quotation: Hansard, House of Representatives, 1961–62 session (29.11.1961), col. 3527, cited in H. Bretton, Power and Stability in Nigeria: the politics of decolonisation (New York, 1962), p. 191, footnote 15.

<sup>ii</sup> R. Robinson and W. R. Louis, 'The Imperialism of Decolonisation', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 22,3 (1994); and J. Darwin, Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World (Basingstoke, 1988).

<sup>iii</sup> M. Lynn, Nigeria. Part 1: Managing political reform 1943 - 1953; Part 2: Moving to independence 1953 - 1960, British documents on the end of empire, Series B, VII (London, 2001); idem, 'The

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Eastern crisis of 1955-57, the Colonial Office and Nigerian decolonisation', Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 30 (2002).

<sup>iv</sup> P. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, British Imperialism II: Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914 - 1990 (London, 1993).

<sup>v</sup> D. K. Fieldhouse, Merchant Capital and Economic Decolonisation: The United Africa Company 1929-1987 (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>vi</sup> S. Stockwell, The business of decolonization: British business strategies in the Gold Coast (Oxford, 2000) N. J. White, 'The Frustrations of Development: British Business and the Late Colonial State in Malaya, 1945-57', Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 28, 1 (1997). For an overview on the field see also White, 'The business and the politics of decolonization: the British experience in the twentieth century', Economic History Review 53, 3 (2000).

<sup>vii</sup> N. J. White, 'The survival, revival and decline of British economic influence in Malaysia, 1957 - 70', Twentieth Century British History, 14,3 (2003) and idem, British business in post-colonial Malaysia, 1957 -70: Neo-colonialism or disengagement? (London, 2004). R. L. Tignor, Capitalism and Nationalism at the End of Empire: State and Business in Decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya, 1945-1963 (Princeton, N.J., 1998). On the fate of Suez Canal Company in particular see the recent article by C. Piquet, 'The Suez Company's concession in Egypt, 1954 -1956: Modern infrastructure and local economic development', Enterprise and Society, 5,1 (2004).

<sup>viii</sup> T. J. Biersteker, Multinationals, the State, and the Control of the Nigerian Economy (Princeton, N. J., 1987).

<sup>ix</sup> Cf. A. D. Chandler, The visible hand: the managerial revolution in American business (Cambridge Mass., 1977).

<sup>x</sup> The equity in the Nigerian branches was not divested in 1986 as stated in Margaret Ackrill and Leslie Hannah's corporate history, but as part of the group's strategy in the late 1980s to reduce or sell minority holdings overseas. Information supplied by Nicholas Webb, Barclays Group Archive. Margaret Ackrill and Leslie Hannah, Barclays. The Business of Banking 1690 -1996 (Cambridge, 2001), esp. pp. 268-326, 290. My paper is based on files from accession 80 (catalogued in 2000), which were not available at the time when the authors researched the corporate history.

<sup>xi</sup> The best overview is G. Jones, British Multinational Banking, 1830 -1990 (New York, 1993).

<sup>xii</sup> Richard Evans, 'Are Barclays's Days of Empire Over?', Euromoney, June (1986), 55.

<sup>xiii</sup> Sub-branches and agencies were not independently managed but under supervision from the main branch. Agencies were the smallest unit and would sometimes only be opened a few times a week.

<sup>xiv</sup> The number of persons per branch was 962,000 after the Second World War, which was the lowest density in the whole Empire. W. T. Newlyn, 'The Colonial Empire', in R. S. Sayers (ed.) Banking in the Commonwealth (Oxford, 1952), p. 450.

<sup>xv</sup> Literacy figures vary. Richard Joly supplies figures for 'around 1950' of 10 -15 per cent for Nigeria as compared to 19 -23 for Ghana. Cf. Planning Education for African Development (Nairobi, 1969), p. 104, table IV-1. Frederick Cooper compares 25 per cent male and 6 per cent female literacy for Nigeria in 1962. For 1970 the figures have risen to 31 and 10 per cent respectively, compared to 43 and 17 respectively for Ghana. See Africa since 1940 : the past of the present (Cambridge, 2002), p. 114, table 2.

<sup>xvi</sup> R. E. Fleming and E. V. Whitcombe, "Nigeria and the Cameroons", 23.7.60, 19, Barclays Group Archives (hereafter BGA) 80/3466 (whole document hereafter "Nigeria and the Cameroons").

<sup>xvii</sup> John Holts and the UAC were particularly hard hit. A. Watson, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast (London, 1948); D. Austin, Politics in Ghana 1946-1960 (London, 1964), pp. 66-77.

<sup>xviii</sup> For the background to this episode see S. Foster-Sutton, Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into allegations reflecting on the Official Conduct of the Premier of, and certain persons holding Ministerial and other Public Offices in, the Eastern Region of Nigeria (London, 1957); C. Uche, 'Banking 'scandal' in a British west African colony: the politics of the African Continental Bank crisis', Financial History Review, 4,1 (1997); Lynn, 'Eastern Crisis'.

<sup>xix</sup> "No Branch: Advances to Africans", 1957, BGA 11/2155 (hereafter "Advances to Africans").

<sup>xx</sup> "Extract from Mr. Cade's notes on his visit to Ibadan, King George V Avenue sub-branch", February 1958, BGA 11/2155.

<sup>xxi</sup> Chibuikwe Uche claims that the Nigerian economy was not developed sufficiently to lend by following the normal criteria, with the result that managers had to flout controls, which inevitably resulted in bad debts. In his opinion political reasons had prompted the management to depart from old standards; the real potential for commercially sound credit had been much smaller. Cf. C. Uche, 'Accounting and Control in Barclays Bank DCO: The Lending to Africans Episode', Accounting, Business and Financial History, 8,3 (1998), 245 and 251. However, the UAC had already extended

merchant credits in the hinterland on a geographically broader scope. As early as 1948 the trading company had lent £500,000 to produce buyers and £1,400,000 to retailers without incurring bad debts comparable to the banks. The BBWA had similar problems with a rising number of irrecoverable advances. UAC figures from W. T. Newlyn and D. C. Rowan, Money and Banking in British Colonial Africa (Oxford, 1954), pp. 138-9.

<sup>xxii</sup> Reg Dines, former General Manager's Assistant in Nigeria, related such an incidence. See "Interview with Reg Dines, Hugh Norris and John Woodcock, 17.8.2001". In a recent study of Ghanaian business Marcel Fafchamps concluded: "Results show that compliance with contractual obligations is mostly motivated by the desire to preserve personalized relationships based on mutual trust." Cf. M. Fafchamps, 'The Enforcement of Commercial Contracts in Ghana', World Development, 24 (1996), 427, 445.

<sup>xxiii</sup> For this assessment also cf. Uche, 'Accounting', 251; quotation: "Nigeria and the Cameroons", 4.

<sup>xxiv</sup> E. Machtig and J. Rodway, "Visit to the Emir of Kano", 12.5.1959, BGA 80/4351.

<sup>xxv</sup> Calculated by C. Uche, 'Accounting and Control in Barclays Bank DCO', 243, 252.

<sup>xxvi</sup> "Nigeria and the Cameroons", 18, and A. W. Wilkinson, "Visit to Northern Nigeria and Lagos", February-March 1963, 2, 4, BGA 29/709; Memorandum to General Managers, 25.4.1960 and 21.10.1960, BGA 11/2044. The London & Kano Trading Co. seemed to have been based in Liverpool in the 1920s, but information is patchy. Cf. Liverpool Records Office, 380 LON, Acc. 2626. In the late 1940s the firm was a member of the still very British and exclusive Chamber of Commerce. Cf. "Minutes of Lagos Chamber of Commerce", 6.10.48, Rhodes House Oxford, John Holts files, Mss Afr. 825s, 232 (ii). This indicates that the company was considered a long-established and reliable trading house.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Cf. G. Williams, 'Marketing with or without Marketing Boards: the Origins of State Marketing Boards in Nigeria', Review of the African Political Economy, 12, 34 (1985); Jan-Georg Deutsch, Educating the middlemen: a political and economic history of statutory cocoa marketing in Nigeria, 1936-1947 (Berlin, 1995).

<sup>xxviii</sup> R. G. Dyson, "Memorandum to the General Managers: Branch Extension – West Africa", 20.11.52, 80/4328.

<sup>xxix</sup> J. F. Cade, "Extract from Mr. Cade's Notes on his Visit to Nigeria", December 1957 – January 1958, 1; idem, "Extract from Mr. Cade's Notes on his Visit to Sapele", January 1958, 1, BGA 11/2155. The quotation is taken from: "Advances to Africans", 1, emphasis in original.

<sup>xxx</sup> R. E. Fleming and E. V. Whitcombe, "Visit to Nigeria and Cameroons", July 1960, 17-18, BGA 80/3466.

<sup>xxxi</sup> R. G. Dyson, "Mr. Dyson's West Africa Tour – 1952", 1, BGA 80/4328 (hereafter "Mr. Dyson's West African Tour").

<sup>xxxii</sup> BWA is short for Bank of West Africa, formerly BBWA, Bank of British West Africa. J. B. Loynes, "Nigeria", 26.2.1958, 1–2, Bank of England Archive (hereafter BoE), OV (overseas series) 68/5.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Stockwell, 'British Business', 145.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Figures for UAC: Milburn, British Business, pp. 79–80. "Mr Dyson's West African Tour – 1952", 36,39.

<sup>xxxv</sup> To hold a B-signature meant that staff could co-sign on important matters in order to release the manager from paper work. Freshly recruited Britons were routinely awarded this power at a very early stage of their career abroad. An A-signature entailed greater signing authority than a B. Cf. Hugh Norris, 'A Little Family History, Part Three – My Own Story, Book Four: 1949 –1984, Overseas Banking', BGA (not catalogued).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Dyson, "List of Senior Staff - Nigeria", BGA 80/4328.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Julian Crossley's diaries, vol. 9, 13.3.1951, 52, BGA 38/209.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Fieldhouse, Merchant Capital, pp. 338 –341.

<sup>xxxix</sup> G. A. Onagoruwa to General Manager (Staff) 1948, BGA 80/5044.

<sup>xl</sup> Stockwell, 'British Business', 145-6.

<sup>xli</sup> "Nigeria and the Cameroons", 6, and C. Fitzherbert to his family, 25.10.1962, BGA 38/993.

<sup>xlii</sup> F. A. Boreham, "Mr. Boreham's visit to Nigeria", 3.7.–19.7.1961, 2, BGA 80/4448 (hereafter "Mr. Boreham's Bisist to Ngeria"); and J. Christy (staff department), "Memorandum to Mr. Dyson", 9.1.1964, BGA 80/4641.

<sup>xliii</sup> Smith, "Memo", 511-512.

<sup>xliiv</sup> "Mr. Boreham's Visit to Nigeria", 2.

<sup>xliiv</sup> "Nigeria and the Cameroons", 19.

<sup>xlivi</sup> L. Daldry to D. Carter, 22.10.1960, emphasis in original, and Central Board Memo "Nigeria – Re-organisation for Control" 22.12.1960, both BGA 80/3614.

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- <sup>xlvii</sup> L. Daldry to J. Crossley, 2.3.1961 and 6.1.1961, BGA 80/3614.
- <sup>xlviii</sup> Memo J. Crossley to A. S. Aiken, No. 115/1960, 22.12.1960, 1, BGA 80/3614.
- <sup>xlix</sup> Senator Nwafor Orizu in 1961, Hansard, Senate, 1961 –1962 session, 30.3.1961, col. 315, cited in: H. L. Bretton, Power and stability in Nigeria: the politics of decolonisation (New York, 1962), p. 191, footnote 12.
- <sup>l</sup> J. Rodway and E. Machtig, “Visit to Nigeria and the Cameroon”, April –June 1959, 11. BGA 80/4351.
- <sup>li</sup> R. G. Dyson, “Visit to Nigeria”, January/February 1964, 3, BGA 80/4641.
- <sup>lii</sup> F. Seebohm, “Diary”, Ghana 31.1.–9.2.1954, no page numbers, BGA 277/1.
- <sup>liii</sup> G. Jones, British Multinational Banks, 1830 –1990 (New York 1993), pp. 169–72, 315–19. Barclays certainly used to informally guarantee life-long employment and created a ‘family’ ethos, a community spirit between its expatriate managers. Geoffrey Jones described this bonding and control mechanism for the whole of British multinational banks, see idem, British Multinational Banks, 169-72.
- <sup>liv</sup> F. Seebohm, “Mr. Seebohm’s Visit to Nigeria”, 16. –24.2.1966, 5, BGA 80/3375.
- <sup>lv</sup> Williamson a. o., “Minutes on Phillipson-Adebo report on Nigerianisation’, 11 –30.4.54, CO554/1001, no. 1 and Lennox-Boyd to Sir J Robertson, 11.7.56, CO554/1008, no. 84, both reproduced as Doc. 267 and 366 in Lynn, Nigeria, Part 2, pp. 97, 328.
- <sup>lvi</sup> Cf. J. de St. Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War (London, 1972); L. Diamond, Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: the Failure of the First Republic (London, 1988).
- <sup>lvii</sup> “Barclays Bank Dominion, Colonial and Overseas: An Account by Eric Comley, of his career with Barclays International, from which he retired some fifteen years ago, and highlighting some of the more interesting experiences that he had during the time.” (Recorded 1995/6 at the request of Barclays Group Archives), 4-5.
- <sup>lviii</sup> Fieldhouse, Merchant Capital, p. 474.
- <sup>lix</sup> The Companies Act of 1969 should be seen in conjunction with the Banking Decree of the same year, cf. O. Teriba, ‘The 1967 –69 Banking Amendments in Nigeria – An Appraisal’, in A Oyejide and A. Soyode (eds.) Commercial Banking in Nigeria (Ibadan, 1986).
- <sup>lx</sup> Memo Nigeria, 24.3.1969, BGA 11/947. Barclays was nationalised in Tanzania in 1969. Compensation was paid below a realistic market price but at a ratio that should later become the basis for negotiations in other nationalisation cases. Ackrill and Hannah, Barclays, 291.
- <sup>lxi</sup> J. Crossley to F. Seebohm, 17.12.1969, BGA 80/5839.
- <sup>lxii</sup> F. A. Tuke, “ Mr. F. A. Tuke’s Visit to Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone”, 23.11. –4.1.1970, 1, BGA 80/4292.
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> F C Beveridge, ‘Taking control of foreign investment: A case study of indigenisation in Nigeria’, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, 40 (1991).
- <sup>lxv</sup> Fieldhouse, Merchant Capital, p. viii.

Figure 1:

YEAR	1952	1954	1962
BBWA	18	27	55
Barclays Bank DCO	10	22	57
British & French Bank (later UBA)	1	2	11
National Bank of Nigeria	9	20	31
Merchants Bank	-	1	failed?
Agbonmagde Bank	3	3	9
African Continental Bank	10	14	21
Nigerian Farmers and Commercial Bank	28	failed	failed
Standard	7	failed	failed
Bank of the North	-	-	5
Banque de l'Afrique Occidentale	-	-	2
Berini	-	-	1
Bank of Lagos	-	-	1
Muslim Bank	-	-	1
Bank of America	-	-	1
Chase Manhattan	-	-	1
Co-operative East	-	-	3
Co-operative West	-	-	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>86 (51) *</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>204</b>

\* In brackets offices of the banks surviving the crash of indigenous banking 1952.

Figure 2:

