Chapter 6: The Zimbabwean Entrepreneur: A Historical Analysis

This section presents the historical and socio-economic impact of colonialism, examining, in detail, the relegation of blacks in entrepreneurship. It explores the rise of Black entrepreneurs as a form of rebellion against white imperialism, highlighting their resilience and contribution to economic independence. The concept of the entrepreneurial university in Zimbabwe is shaped by the historical context of colonialism that has left a deeply entrenched legacy of systemic challenges that hinder black empowerment. Scholars like Nherera (2000) argue that the colonial education system was designed to perpetuate dependency rather than foster self - sufficiency among black Zimbabweans. This historical backdrop complicates the establishment of entrepreneurial universities that can effectively respond to the socio-economic needs of the country. Furthermore, the current educational framework often lacks a practical approach to entrepreneurship, as highlighted by Mauchi *et al.* (2011), who ascertained that traditional teaching methods dominate, limiting students' exposure to real-world entrepreneurial experiences. The disconnect between theory and practice in entrepreneurship education is exacerbated by a lack of qualified educators with practical business experience (Munyoro *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, the entrepreneurial potential of Zimbabwean universities remains underutilised, necessitating a paradigm shift towards more innovative and inclusive educational strategies.

In addressing these challenges, it is essential to recognise the role of entrepreneurship education in fostering a culture of innovation and self-reliance among students. Musindo and Mudavanhu (2006) underscore the fact that, effective entrepreneurship education can enhance employability and empower graduates to create their own opportunities in a struggling economy. However, the current curriculum often fails to engage students actively, leading to a lack of motivation and entrepreneurial spirit (Munyoro *et al.*, 2017). To counteract these issues, universities must adopt a more integrated approach that combines academic learning with practical entrepreneurial experiences. This includes establishing partnerships with local businesses and providing students with hands-on opportunities to develop their ideas (Mwiya, 2014). By transforming the educational

landscape, Zimbabwean universities can become catalysts for economic development, ultimately contributing to the empowerment of black Zimbabweans in a post-colonial context.

The relegation of black entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe can be traced back to historical, legislatives and systemic barriers that have hindered their competitive capacity. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 is a pivotal example, as it institutionalised racial segregation in land ownership, relegating Black individuals to low-skilled labour roles while denying them access to productive resources (Nyamunda, 2020). This historical context has perpetuated economic disparities, limiting the growth of a robust Black entrepreneurial class in Zimbabwe (Munyoro *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, the lack of access to finance and business networks further exacerbates these challenges, as Black entrepreneurs often struggle to secure funding compared to their white counterparts (Munyoro, 2014). The institutional frameworks that are supposed to support entrepreneurship often fail to address these inequities, leading to a cycle of underdevelopment and marginalisation (Munyoro *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, the entrepreneurial landscape remains uneven, with systemic barriers maintaining the status quo of economic exclusion for Black Zimbabweans (Nyamunda, 2020).

In the context of the Global South, the concept of a "Model Entrepreneurial University" can play a crucial role in addressing these disparities. Such institutions can serve as catalysts for change by fostering an inclusive environment that supports Black entrepreneurship through targeted educational programmes and resources (Munyoro *et al.*, 2016). By integrating entrepreneurship education with practical training, these universities can empower aspiring Black entrepreneurs, equipping them with the necessary skills to navigate the complex business landscape (Nyamunda, 2020). Additionally, partnerships with local industries and government can enhance access to funding and mentorship opportunities, thereby bridging the gap between education and practical business application (Munyoro, 2014). This approach not only promotes economic empowerment but also contributes to the broader goal of social equity within the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Zimbabwe (Munyoro *et al.*, 2016). Addressing the relegation of Black entrepreneurs requires an integrated strategy that combines education, policy

reform, and community engagement to create a more equitable entrepreneurial landscape.

The rise of black entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe, historically rooted in the socio-political landscape of Southern Rhodesia, reflects a significant shift in economic agency among marginalised groups. Following independence in 1980, black Zimbabweans began to challenge the economic structures imposed by colonial rule that had systematically excluded them from meaningful participation in the economy (Ndiweni & Verhoeven, 2016). This entrepreneurial resurgence can be viewed as a rebellion against the historical imperatives of white dominance, where many black individuals turned to entrepreneurship as a means of survival and self-determination (Maphosa, 2007). The informal sector has become a vital space for black entrepreneurs, allowing them to navigate economic hardships and create opportunities in the face of systemic barriers (Ndiweni & Verhoeven, 2016). Scholars argue that these entrepreneurial activities are not merely economic endeavours but also acts of resistance against socio-economic injustices (Sanders *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the rise of black entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe symbolises both a reclaiming of economic power and a broader social movement towards equity.

The entrepreneurial landscape in Zimbabwe has evolved significantly, with black entrepreneurs increasingly recognised for their contributions to economic growth and innovation. According to Ndiweni and Verhoeven (2016), the rise of informal entrepreneurship is closely linked to the failures of government policies and the need for economic resilience among marginalised populations. This informal sector has allowed many to escape poverty and unemployment, creating a new narrative around entrepreneurship as a vehicle for empowerment (Mudamburi, 2012). Furthermore, this entrepreneurial spirit is often driven by necessity, as individuals seek to address local challenges and fulfil unmet needs within their communities (Tibaijuka, 2005). The resilience displayed by these entrepreneurs highlights the potential for innovation and economic development in the face of adversity, reinforcing the idea that entrepreneurship can serve as a form of social protest historical injustices (Ndiweni & Verhoeven, 2016). Consequently, the rise of black entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe represents a critical intersection of economic agency and social justice.

In the context of a global South entrepreneurial model, Zimbabwean black entrepreneurs exemplify how local initiatives can flourish despite systemic challenges. The entrepreneurial journey for many is marked by a desire for autonomy and the pursuit of social change, reflecting a broader trend among African entrepreneurs who leverage their unique contexts to drive innovation (Barnard, 2023). This model of entrepreneurship is characterised by a strong community focus, where businesses are often developed to address specific local needs and contribute to social welfare (Ndiweni & Verhoeven, 2016). Moreover, the rise of black entrepreneurs challenges traditional notions of success, emphasising the importance of social impact alongside economic gain (Mudamburi, 2012). As these entrepreneurs navigate the complexities of their environments, they not only contribute to economic growth but also inspire future generations to engage in entrepreneurial activities as a means of empowerment and resistance (Sanders *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the Zimbabwean case serves as a compelling example of how entrepreneurship can be harnessed as a tool for social change in the global South.

The chapter of the book delved into the historical and socio-economic impact of colonialism on black entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe. It examined how colonial policies, such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, relegated black Zimbabweans to low-skilled labour roles, systematically excluding them from meaningful economic participation. The chapter highlighted the resilience and ingenuity of black entrepreneurs, who have historically used entrepreneurship as a form of rebellion against white imperialism and a means of economic survival. The chapter also explored the concept of the entrepreneurial university in Zimbabwe, that has been shaped by the country's colonial legacy. The discussion emphasised the need for a shift in the educational framework to better support entrepreneurship, arguing that the current system, dominated by traditional teaching methods, failed to prepare students for real-world business challenges. The rise of black entrepreneurs was presented as a critical intersection of economic agency and social justice, that symbolised a reclaim of economic power and a broader movement toward equity. The next chapter will build on these themes by examining the role of higher education, particularly the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape. It

will focus on how institutions like the Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) are responding to national policy frameworks to contribute to the country's entrepreneurial ecosystem.