

Rethinking News values and Newsroom Practices in Postcolonial Contexts and the Construction of Subaltern Identities



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Declaration

I Zvenyika Eckson Mugari, declare that this thesis is my own original work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. This work has not been, in substance, submitted previously nor concurrently, in candidature for any degree at any other University.

.....

.....day, 2016

Dedication

To my late father Tozivepi for teaching me to believe in the possibility and plausibility of other truths beyond the media “Truth” and to all who live where media angels fear to tread.

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Abbreviations

BSAC.	British South Africa Company
CDA.	Critical Discourse Analysis
CFU.	Commercial Farmers Union
ESAP.	Economic Structural Programme
FTLRPP.	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
JAG.	Justice for Agriculture
LTA.	Land Tenure Act
MDC.	Movement for Democratic Change
NAZ.	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NLHA	Native Land Husbandry Act
OM.	Operation Murambatsvina
RF.	Rhodesia Front
TTL.	Tribal Trust Land
UDI.	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
ZANU-PF.	Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front
ZFU.	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
ZNLWVA.	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association
ZTFA.	Zimbabwe Tobacco Farmers Association

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Chapter 1. Contextualising the Study

1.1 Introduction

This investigation seeks to apply postcolonial analysis to understanding discursive tropes used by newswriters in representing ordinary people as they come up against life altering impacts of public policies on land use and (re)settlement programme rollouts at three very different historical conjunctures in Zimbabwe's history (1969-1970, 2000-2001 and 2005-2006). Media salience on an issue has long been established as key in shaping and influencing perceptions and in public opinion formation (Lippmann 1921; Macomps, 1972; Baum and Potter 2008). Both national and international opinion from which public policies often flow is largely dependent on the daily versions of reality the press tacitly bring to our attention and equally importantly those versions it excludes. The Land Tenure Act (LTA) of 1969 which entrenched land apartheid in Rhodesia and intensified the expulsion of blacks from fertile lands, designated as European areas, to lands of less agricultural potential led to the displacement of 85000 families in the post Second World War era, most of them taking place in a period of just over a year after the enactment of the Act (LTA). The process, according to Arighi (1966: 46) "was accompanied by large destocking programmes", with the result that entire black communities, the vibrancy of whose economic life and prosperity was dependent on cattle farming, were turned into instant paupers. A comparative postcolonial rereading of the colonial press' coverage of this political process by which the colonial subordination of the black population to the colonising white settlers was imposed and of the news coverage of the Fast-track Land Reform of 2000-2001 – a process ostensibly meant to reverse and correct the historical injustices of the colonial land policies – is expected to shed light on whether and how colonial discourses about subject populations may have been actually changed or perpetuated. Of interest too to this study is the language of news discourses on the mass evictions of urban poor people from towns and peri-urban areas to rural areas under government's Operation Restore Order (Murambatsvina) of 2005. These three historical moments in Zimbabwe are marked with one common factor - the geographical displacement of large numbers of mostly ordinary poor people, both urban and rural. Syvertsen, cited in Carpentier and Hannot (2009: 602) defines ordinary people as "people who are not ...newsworthy for any other reason". The fact that ordinariness is used in this definition as a marker of lack of newsworthiness clearly says something about the ideological and hegemonic nature of a value system that depreciates one social class as not newsworthy.

At independence in 1980 colonialism ended, at least formally, but whether at the material, cultural and symbolic levels, conditions of life that supported colonial complexes in people's minds were dismantled and consigned to history remains contestable. The colonial geography of Zimbabwe, racially determined under settler colonial rule, for example, remained very much intact for the first two decades into independence, a phenomenon McClintock (1992: 88-89) has called partial decolonisation. Mudimbe (1988: 2) called it "the colonising structure" responsible for producing, justifying and perpetuating psychological complexes of black inferiority and the epidermalisation of inferiority among black people (Fanon 1986). The press, according to Tuchman (1978), is largely imbricated in the construction of reality, including colonial realities and any other realities of social inequality. The consciousness of domination and servility to the white master race emanating from the material conditions of colonial subjugation was inculcated into the black mind through agents of socialisation including the press. This study undertakes to establish the way newswork at selected newspaper production sites in a typical postcolonial setting such as Zimbabwe constructs formerly oppressed people.

The meaning of the term "ordinary people" or simply "the people" in the news can never be pinned down with finality. It is always open to various interpretations. As a news category it has been used interchangeably with "the public", "the masses", and "ordinary people", "the silent majority", "peasants" or "the povo". When the term occurs in the news it often refers to a generic class of people homogeneous across geographical, gender and ethnic hierarchies, defined by a lack of access to means of self-definition. They constitute the oppressed masses, the subaltern whose voice it is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to recover because mainstream news platforms afford them no place from which to speak, (Spivak 1985, Baudrillard 1983). The processes by which oppressed masses were brought into subjection whether under empire or in postcolonial settings always entailed the suppression and systematic devaluation of their voices and systems of knowing in history. The colonial encounter did not only rob the colonial subjects of their human dignity but most importantly, through what Edward Said (1993) calls epistemic violence (the suppression of the "colonial other's" ways of knowing), robbed subject populations of their voice. The fact that for the purposes of this study I confine myself to asking questions about how identities of subaltern

groups are constructed in mainstream news should however not be construed to imply that the subaltern always submit and passively participate in their own erasure, that they are not capable of staging epistemic disobedience and subverting the authority of dominating discourses (Certeau 1984; Mignolo 2011). The choice is deliberate and informed by the realization that publicity in the mainstream news has a bearing on the nature and extent of public policy responses on issues.

According to Ania Loomba (1998: 66) “the colonialist production of knowledge was not a simple process. It necessarily included a clash with and a marginalization of the knowledge and belief systems of those who were conquered”. The present investigation seeks to find out the extent to which professional news writing practices facilitated or impeded the project to recover subaltern voices in the domain of news as knowledge production. It seeks to establish whether the dismantling of formal colonial rule in Zimbabwe necessarily marked the end of the epistemic violence perpetrated by dominant news production ideologies of objectivity, truth telling etc. on the former colonial ‘Other’s’ epistemologies, ideologies and ways of knowing. The focus of this study is therefore on how colonial discourses of the “Other” may have or have not mutated into newer myths and practices by which new forms of domination of “the people” “the masses”, more specifically the “poor or peasants”, subalternity were constructed in postcolonial news texts by mainstream journalism

1.2 Historical Context

Colonial conquest was a process of rendering the conquered peoples speechless, so that in colonial Rhodesia the marginalised rural black population could be referred to as the “great silent majority”. The debate over who could legitimately claim to speak on behalf of or represent that silent majority became the leitmotif of the struggle for Zimbabwe since colonial rule and beyond. The white colonial settlers made the claim that they “knew their Africans” and purported to speak on their behalf to the outside world. The council of chiefs, in negotiating for an internal settlement in the 1970s, also claimed that they were the true and legitimate representatives of the interests of “their subjects”, the marginalised largely rural black population. Nationalist leaders on the other hand prosecuted the war of liberation in “the people’s name”, purporting to be the true representatives of the majority oppressed black people of Zimbabwe, (Frederikse 1982: 35, 36, 125). By extension different media, by giving

space to and articulating what amounted to essentially elitist interpretations of the masses' views, could also claim to be giving voice to the voiceless and to speak the marginalised's mind and opinions on the Rhodesian question and later on the national question in Zimbabwe.

In the colonial context the press followed the Maxim gun and the flag as an inevitable validating and legitimating process of colonial domination and occupation. In 1890 Cecil John Rhodes' Pioneer Column hoisted the British flag, the Union Jack at Fort Salisbury on 13 September 1890, the press followed only much later. That press was in every respect an appendage of and largely served the political ambitions of Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC) and more generally British colonial expansion into the interior of the African continent, (Mararike 1993).

Frederikse (1982: 33) characterises that colonial press in the following words:

The regime controlled the mass media. The regime did not control the masses, for the masses had their own media. While the regime's control depended on silencing voices, overtly and crudely, the masses' media relied on giving voice, sharing grievances, covertly and subtly. Blacks found themselves not only disenfranchised, but robbed of any public voice. The controlled communication channels proved irrelevant to blacks, not only because of the message – the reinforcement of white supremacy – but because of the medium itself. The regime's policies for preserving white privilege had bred a largely illiterate rural population, so that even a press acceptable to the majority of blacks would have been largely inaccessible.

Much of the press in early colonial Rhodesia was by default in the service of empire and the consolidation of white rule while promoting the expansion of Rhodes' corporate capitalist interests into the interior of the African sub-continent (Mararike 1993). Colonial texts (news stories included) constructed images of blacks who lived in the occupied territories either as the innocent, cheerful perpetual children needful of white guidance and tutelage or as savages and barbarians posing a serious danger to Christian civilisation and western values and therefore needing to be either tamed and subjugated or altogether annihilated.

The colonial press represented by the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company which, Frederikse (1982: 28) argues: "maintained an increasingly effective monopoly from settlement to independence", was thus largely alienating to the black subject population, this notwithstanding the very brief efflorescence of a liberal leaning press targeting a nascent

African readership and articulating what could pass as critical comment on the colonial establishment while providing a platform for the expression of African nationalist sentiment. Such a press did not last long as it became victim of state censorship or outright closure or banning by the white regime. Some critics however dismiss the African press as elite oriented and whose general aim was to manage growing African resentment of colonial oppression and, as King (1996; 136) suggests with specific reference to *The Central African Examiner*, they served as “a way of ensuring that government remained in civilized hands while keeping the African middle class happy”. This probably explains why, even after attaining reasonable levels of literacy and reading proficiency, blacks took to some European cultural practices such as following the press rather reluctantly. This was so, particularly with the majority rural African population who eked an existence outside the colonial mainstream market economy. This point is largely missed by research literature on the history of the press in colonial Rhodesia which often points to the existence of a press targeting Africans and articulating African nationalist perspectives on issues. Such a press only differed from the mainstream white press in that it articulated interests of an emerging black urban elite class that was well educated in the white man’s ways and therefore agitating for accommodation, for a place in the sun. It is the apparent irrecoverability of subaltern voices by journalistic methods of narrativisation of reality that is of research interest here. Would one ordinarily turn to the news media to understand the mood and mind of the poor even in post-liberation societies like Zimbabwe? How much are journalists in postcolonial mainstream news sites instrumentalised to adopting a more humanizing approach to reporting oppressed people’s issues?

The proposed study seeks to bring into the spotlight the news ideology and commonsensical journalistic practices as they intersect with, challenge or perpetuate the subjugation of subaltern ways of knowing. I need to point out at the outset that the subaltern are not necessarily passive and voiceless and without recourse. Subaltern groups often actively seek out or devise alternative modes of communication to speak back to power sometimes with far reaching implications for social organization and change (Atton 2002; Carpentier and Hannot 2009). This said, however, the focus of this study remains pertinent in that practices and processes of news production in mainstream media often legitimate some policy choices and certain courses of action rather than others in ways that affect life chances in the life world of ordinary people.

1.3 The chequered history of state/press relations in Zimbabwe

There are many similarities between Zimbabwe's polarized media landscape and that of colonial Rhodesia. The government/press relationship mirrored that between the Rhodesia Front government and the independent press of the UDI era. Just like the Smith regime's scorched earth policies had almost succeeded in decimating and stamping out the critical voice of the African press through censorship and closure of all press viewed as critical of government policy, so also the Mugabe regime whittled any source of critical voice against his government's policies by shutting down the only privately owned daily newspaper The Daily News in 2003 and through judicial and extra-judicial forms of intimidation on members of the private press. Where the Smith regime succeeded through manipulation to keep the country's leading newspaper company the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company in tow, the Mugabe regime accomplished the same through acquisition of a controlling stake in the company's share capital. Thus, in both epochs the policy bifurcated the media into pro-government media and media opposed to government. In the post 2000 period these two sets of media organisations defined by their relationship to government have come to be loosely categorized as government or public media on the one hand and private or independent media on the other. The public press or media have over time been characterized as mouthpieces of government, while the private press because of consistently pursuing an editorial line that is very critical of government yet sympathetic to opposition political parties has come to be referred to as the opposition press. In spite of these differences both types of the press do not escape Mukasa (2003) and Saunders's (1999) censure for their neglect of the rural based population of Zimbabwe.

Notwithstanding the elitism and urban centric nature of reporting in the Zimbabwean press in general, it needs to be pointed out, however, that the private press has done much under very difficult circumstances to provide alternative interpretations of the political situation in postcolonial Zimbabwe. This has been the case particularly from the year 2000 as Mukasa points out: Yet in all fairness it must be stated that the new breed of independent journalists in Zimbabwe are blazing a trail towards press freedom. But they are doing so under very heavy and draconian legislation. These courageous journalists have taken more than their fair share of victimization and vilification. (Mukasa 2003: 181)

What remains clear from the above is that marginalized people particularly the rural based subaltern groups tend to be somehow neglected by both the public press and the private press in Zimbabwe and it is precisely for this reason that the present study focuses on how the press

whether private or public report on ordinary people when they get negatively affected by government policy.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

This study make a case for the application of postcolonial theoretical tools of analysis to understand how newswork of professional journalists in mainstream news organisations in contemporary Zimbabwe offer or deny space for subaltern ways of knowing and voice. The study seeks to understand how contemporary journalistic processes and practices of news production, tend to discursively entrench a system of epistemic violence on subaltern knowledges and stabilise unequal power relations between elite groups and socially marginalised people as they respond to forced removal or displacement as a result of government policy.

The question that I pose is an old question albeit with a new focus. It is the same question that Francis Nyamnjoh (2005: 33) asks: “How similar to or different from the colonial state in reality are states and media institutions in post-colonial Africa?” To this question one could add: How dissimilar are news discourses in contemporary Zimbabwe to similar discourses about poor black people produced under colonial rule? The process of decolonisation has witnessed many changes at the structural level in the media as in other political spheres in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980, (Rusike 1990). The former Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company may have, after independence, been renamed Zimpapers (1980) Limited, its ownership structure changed with even its white editors replaced with black editors, but it is the balance between continuity and discontinuity in news constructs of subalternity in Zimbabwe and how that discourse is produced in the newsroom that is of interest in the present study. The question is whether and how structural changes can be argued to really mirror similar changes at the deeper level of news discourse and journalistic ways of knowing. The focus of this study therefore, is to understand how journalism affords access to voice for subaltern groups and how they construct or represent them in news stories in contemporary Zimbabwe. The study seeks to situate the problem of subaltern voice (lessness) in news media in the context of Zimbabwe’s colonial history.

1.5 Objectives

This study seeks to shine some light into the processes by which news media in post-liberation societies negotiate change and continuity between maintaining a largely conservative template for news “that sells” and the democratic potential. The research is essentially about the social reproduction and legitimation of elite interpretations beyond the political transition to post-independence. The object of this investigation is to find out why news of, by and for subaltern classes across gender, ethnicity and other divides, would tend to remain unachievable by professional journalistic standards in postcolonial settings. It seeks to answer the question why adherence to news values in news gathering and processing would tend to reproduce rather than disrupt the existing unequal power relations in society. News media, regardless of whether they were pro-establishment or pro-African nationalist cause, in the context of colonial rule, would understandably be oriented externally towards colonial metropolitan centres of London, Paris, New York etc. as both the colonial government and the nationalist movement leaders competed to put their own case across in order to purchase the consent and goodwill of the mother countries. The study seeks to establish the extent to which that external articulation continues to characterise news offerings of mainstream news organisations well into the post-independence period as neo-colonial governments continue to seek validation of their policies by the former colonial metropole.

The study seeks thus to achieve the following three research objectives:

- to find out how journalists, beyond structural constraints imposed by state and capital, decide what and how to write news stories about the subaltern and how to source such stories.
- to establish the extent to which the news media’s colonial genealogy may be a factor in news discourses about subaltern groups.
- to critically analyse how news discourses about evicted poor people in postcolonial Zimbabwe differ from news discourses about the same under colonial rule.

1.6 Research Questions

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

- What professional considerations influence journalists decisions on when and how to write news stories about ordinary people as well as how to source those stories?

- In what ways do contemporary news discourses and narratives about ordinary people suffering consequences of displacement by government policy continue with or subvert colonial constructions and myths about the poor and subaltern groups in Zimbabwe?
- How open are newsrooms to access by subaltern views and interpretations in post-colonial settings?

1.7 Justification of the Study

Literature on the application of postcolonial theory to the critique of the rhetorical strategies of news construction and potential marginalisation of subaltern voices still remains scanty. Loomba (1998) stresses the importance of extending postcolonial methods of analysis to the study texts produced by news media. She warns that:

non-literary texts such as newspaper stories, government records and reports, memoirs, journals, historical tracts or political writings are also open to an analysis of their rhetorical strategies, their narrative devices. So it is not that literary texts are useful for analyzing colonial discourse, but that the tools we use for their analysis can also be used for understanding the other texts of empire, (Loomba 1998: 81).

Applying postcolonial theory to the study of news texts is pertinent in the present era of media ubiquity. Postcolonial theory cannot and should not be confined to the study of historiographical records about and anthropological writing and imaginative representations of former colonised people, as Willems (2005: 91) argues. Its analytic techniques are just as relevant in the study of news and newswork because “in the current age it is essentially the media who is doing the job formerly belonging to anthropologists. News accounts shape in decisive ways people’s perceptions of the world”.

This study is an attempt to go beyond a simplistic political economy concern with political and market manipulation by giving special emphasis on the study of journalism as a community of practice and interrogating media cultural and sociological imperatives that influence the way media distribute access to voice if, as Carpentier (2008) argues, the media are to have any democratic legitimacy. The study seeks to develop a new theory to account for how media in postcolonial settings have transformed or continued as instruments of marginalisation of ‘minority views’. It poses the same ethical question which “*The Media Professionalism and Ethics Committee Report*” (2002: 5) posed about the democratic pretensions of the media in Zimbabwe, based on the findings of a nationwide enquiry into the

media problem in Zimbabwe. That ethical question arose out of the realisation that the press and the prison, the whip and the prayer book, those most dependable instruments of Europe's civilising mission abroad had come to Zimbabwe and the rest of the world as vehicles of Western intervention and "command", (Zeleza 2006: 21). As such they tended to be hostile to African systems and techniques of knowing which were no part of the white settlers' intervention package.

If journalism and journalists claim today to be champions of freedom, human rights, transparency, accountability and democracy, then it becomes essential to demonstrate the stage, the moment, at which journalism as a mode of communication came to be associated with freedom, human rights and democracy.

The argument here which Rusike (1990) also makes is that the pro-establishment media was too embedded with the colonial system to be able to see colonial violations of the native populations' rights for what they really were –human rights violations and to be able to document them. Thus, of interest is to uncover the mechanisms by which journalism accomplishes at the ideological level what the postcolonial government achieves at the political level through its coercive apparatuses (the police, the army and the law courts) in the keeping of oppressed masses firmly in their place. The study also seeks to apply theoretical frames from subaltern studies to analyse how subalternity is constructed, challenged and institutionalised and become transcendental beyond political transitions between coloniality and postcoloniality, by mainstream media news production.

The study is justified by the need to obtain a fuller and more complete picture of the ideological lineaments of mainstream media offerings by answering questions about change and continuity and ambiguities in media production of silences and exclusions of poor people's voices in post-colonial settings. Studies by many media scholars which have focused on mainstream media in post-colonial Africa have been struck by the uncanny resemblance the media bore to and continuity with colonial institutional arrangements where the press, the church and the prison alike, in the interest of empire, served well colonialism's (de)humanising task of "fashioning the face of a new humanity from that unformed clay of primitive multitudes known as the natives", (Mbembe 2001). The disillusionment that comes with realisation that the liberation movements which took over government at independence have betrayed the emancipatory project acts as the main inspiration for the present enquiry into how at the level of media discourse the lot of the formerly oppressed people has actually changed or remained the same in the postcolonial era (Fanon 1968). It is a project to re-read, from a postcolonial perspective, the news texts' about poor people as they are affected by,

respond, adapt to or resist policies that intrude on or disrupt their lives and as their identity morphs from natives to tribesmen to rural peasants, subsistence farmers or simply the masses. It is in this regard that of seeking to relook at the communication problem using a postcolonial perspective, that the present study represents a departure from previous work on media and the Zimbabwean society. There have been very few studies that adopt a postcolonial studies approach to the media production process and the resultant media discourse and it is in this sense that the present study would not only contribute to specific knowledge on an important aspect of media in Zimbabwe but also to broader conceptual debates in media studies.

1.8 Outline and Structure of Thesis

The study of the postcoloniality of news may be schematically divided into the pre-independence and post-independence historical moments in the newsification of subalternity in Zimbabwe. The first three chapters apart from providing an elaboration of the research problem and its ontological and epistemic justifications, map out the theoretical and methodological loci of the study. Chapters four and five present a critical analysis of how the colonial press discursively reported the forced evictions of indigenous black communities to make way for white settlement under colonial administration. The chapters focus specifically on two case studies: the story of the Tangwena people under Chief Rekayi Tangwena from Gayeresi ranch and the three chiefs Gobo, Ruya and Huchu and their people from Hunyani area in 1969 and 1970 respectively. Stories analysed were drawn from *The Rhodesia Herald* and the Catholic weekly newspaper, *Moto*. These two papers were selected as they were largely regarded as the foremost representative purveyors of polarised opinion on the political situation of the day between the dominant white settler community and African subject population respectively.

Chapters six and seven carry on the same critical analytic gaze on news content about the displacement of white farmers and their black employees in the wake of the postcolonial government's fast track land reform policy from 2000 to 2002 and the forced evictions of the urban poor under a government campaign code named Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. These two chapters consider the critical discourse analysis of the selected stories in light of the taken for granted daily newsroom practices, processes and routines that make the production of such news possible.

Chapter eight, then rounds off this thesis by making some general observations and conclusions on the findings of the study. It then proceeds, on the basis of these conclusions, supported and corroborated by a growing body of extant critical postcolonial scholarship on mainstream media, to give tentative pointers and recommendations as to how news might be done differently in a manner reflective of the long yearned for epistemic emancipation and restoration of the marginalised and subaltern voice.

Chapter 2 Review of Related Literature and Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to situate the problem under investigation in the context of ongoing debates about the value-laden and latent ideological foundations upon which the mediation, coverage and representation of historical circumstances in which domination and subalternity is often extended and perpetuated beyond the end of formal colonialism in former colonies in Africa with a specific focus on Zimbabwe as a case study. The chapter is thus divided into two broad sections. The first section reviews the literature by scholars who have engaged with the issues pertaining to news and news making in light of the transformations of the media in tandem with other macro-societal changes set in motion by the dynamics of decolonisation, deracialisation and democratisation that swept across the continent of Africa from the middle of the 20th century. The most representative moment of this process, famously referred to as “the winds of change” by British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to the Parliament of South Africa on the 3rd of February in 1960, was the attainment of independence by African countries. Studies on the media in Zimbabwe are used as a point of departure but by no means the only literature of interest to this study. There are other substantial works focusing on other parts of Africa and beyond with an important bearing on the subject of investigation which are also discussed here. A critical evaluation of the extant literature on this subject is key in crystalising and circumscribing the knowledge gap on the extent to which news media particularly the press has broken with colonial tradition at the level of discursive practice in how they socially construct and represent subaltern groups.

The second part deals with the theoretical and epistemological concerns of this study. It sets out and outlines the epistemic maps that give perspective to this investigation and by which the exploration of the problem will be guided and explicated. Key concepts to be discussed include postcoloniality, subalternity and news values. To ask questions about the representation of ordinary people in the news, is to challenge the taken-for-granted commonsensical nature of the news’ version of the truth in postcolonial contexts. The tradition of skepticism on the veracity of the news has its roots in decolonial resistance to textual dominance of all forms of colonial texts.

2.2 Literature Review

Given the multidimensional nature of the problem under investigation it is important to underline the fact that although privileged focus will be given to literature on media in postcolonial Africa in general and the media in Zimbabwe in particular, literature that addresses ongoing debates, contradictions and contestations around the subject of colonial/postcolonial theory and its ramifications on the news text's way of narrativising subalternity in Africa will also be discussed. The literature is discussed under three different but interrelated and often overlapping heads: The Media in Zimbabwe; the Hegemonic Nature of News Values; and the Postcolonial Context of News Writing. The literature review is by no means meant to be exhaustive of all scholarly work that has ever been done in the area. Rather, it is just supposed to act as indicative acknowledgement of general debates about the dialogical relationship between media and society. It begins by tracing and discussing the broad outlines of emerging trajectories of research literature on the media in Zimbabwe and other parts of postcolonial Africa over the past three decades. It seeks to locate these in the context of broader concerns about the role of the media in the reproduction of unequal relations of power in society, particularly in societies transitioning from a century of colonialism.

2.2.1 The Media in Zimbabwe

Research studies on different aspects of the media with a specific focus on Zimbabwe as a case, generally fall into two broad categories; those that give an historical overview of the media in the colonial period and those that deal with developments in the post-independence period. A central concern of much of the research in media and communication in the first category (Gale 1962, Mararike 1993, Windrich 1981, Frederikse 1982, King 1996), centre around critiquing colonial government policies and their effects on operations of the media. The aim of Frederikse's (1982) classic work, *None but Ourselves: Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* can be summarised as seeking to bring out the futility of a colonial government's obsession with controlling and manipulating mainstream media for propaganda purposes. This work poignantly documents the disarticulations of the masses' aspirations, yearnings, their hopes and fears and the media's (mis)representations of these. The colonial past of subjugated people would otherwise remain forever lost to present generations if the only available means of its retrieval were by reference to archived newspaper accounts of that past. The news as a form of discursive practice introduced by the colonial enterprise was foremost in the manufacture of colonial hegemony as an instrument for the articulation of

competing versions of the world but strictly from the point of view of power. Any attempts to reconstruct the colonial past from the perspectives of the colonised would be virtually impossible by reference to news archives. One would most likely get one dimensional accounts of history narrated from the point of view of power. This exasperation was behind Frederikse's (1982) choice of the methodology of extended ethnographic interviews to get real witnesses' accounts of the conflict on realising that the Rhodesian regime had deliberately carried out a massive destruction of 'the past' - any primary document that could be used to hold anybody responsible for the crimes of the Rhodesian conflict. Researches by Windrich, and King have tended to continue in the same grain of critical scholarship that tended to overdramatise the victimhood of both the media and journalists to manipulation by holders of political power in colonial Rhodesia with the resultant failure of the media to more effectively capture and truthfully gauge and reflect the temper of the black subject population. The institutional role of the colonial press was to act as a space for articulating commandments from the governing authority (Mbembe 2000). It was strictly a one way street with information originating with power and flowing to colonial subjects who were expected to comply with any announcements, orders and directives from colonial administrators.

In the then Rhodesia, under the Rhodesia Front-led Government post-Unilateral Declaration of Independence of 1965, the government's information department masterminded a sustained propaganda campaign involving the falsification distortion and use of selective silence on actual racial injustices happening on the ground in an attempt as Todd (1982: 87) points out, "to justify the actions of the Rhodesian Government by giving a completely false impression on what was in fact happening within the country". Another important arsenal the Rhodesian Government deployed in its campaign to obtain full control of information was through crushing and silencing any organs of dissent through downright closure of newspapers - the *African Daily News* in August 1964 - and institutionalising press censorship to make the remaining press establishment pliant to government's whims in the battle to win the minds of men. John Parker (1972: 111), who was himself a journalist with the *Rhodesia Herald* in the early days of UDI, makes an important revelation on what sort of news content one expected to read in the *Rhodesia Herald* and its sister papers under the Argus' Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company: "They held out for some years against the very heavy psychological and physical pressures brought to bear against them, but in the end they succumbed. They did not break; they merely stopped fighting". Thus when looking at the

news archive of the time it would be illogical to suspect that it gave a fair treatment of the victims, where a politically contentious subject like that of mass evictions and forced removals of black people from areas that had been declared 'European land', was concerned. It is however still important to understand how such social occurrences were in fact reported in the news.

Analyses by Richard Saunders (1999), James Zaffiro (2001), and Ragnar Waldhal (2004) tend to straddle the two periods, pre and post-independence, and in doing so highlight policy overlaps and continuities between the two periods, showing how "governments and politicians both before and after independence have interfered with the media and its journalists to obtain the sort of reporting they want" (Saunders 1999: 1). Waldahl (2004: 32) makes the critical observation on the difficulty in making a media structure, inherited at independence, serve democratic ends of inclusivity. He states that:

A free Zimbabwe accordingly took over a media structure the main purpose of which had been to protect and prolong white minority rule. Such a structure constituted a most unsuitable foundation for free national media in an independent Zimbabwe.

The solution proposed for addressing this challenge, focused mainly at changing the political economy of the media in the country but was largely silent on 'software' issues of the cultural code in the form of an embedded racial ideology of white supremacy and black inferiority that was running on the media machine inherited from the country's colonial past. The same innocence and unquestioning attitude, which led to the continuation with the use of English as the de-facto language of communication at the major media outlets of the country, also characterised the failure to interrogate the cultural baggage and world-view that that language supported. The inheritors of the colonial state system were content with just replacing white ownership of the media and white editorship with black ownership and editorship but the question about tackling the discursive practices on which colonialism's culture was supported and nourished did not arise.

Much more recent work, (Kupe 2003, Chuma 2005, Mano 2005, Mazango 2005, Mukasa 2002, Ranger 2005, Willems 2005), particularly debates that animated the conferences organised by the University of Westminster's Communication and Media Research Institute

(CAMRI), has applied a political economy analysis and a critical theory perspective to account for media/society relationship as willing or unwilling tools of domination. Journalists are characterised as pawns in a serious power game between politicians and capitalists. What is generally missing in these debates is a critical engagement with whether and how media treatment of oppressed people may or may not have changed in sympathy with political rhetoric about seeking to create an inclusive and egalitarian society by the independence governments.

Mukasa, cited in Chuma (2007: 263) notes that the “Zimbabwean press has historically not been able to tell the full Zimbabwean story by articulating, on a sustained basis, issues that are critical to the majority of the population”, thanks to its alignment with and vulnerability to the influences of the state and capital. The problematic of how media ownership and control patterns structure content and circulation of cultural products and the implications for democracy role of the media has been widely studied (Garnham 1979, Murdoch 1997, Fuchs 2011). While issues of media vulnerability to the structuring power of political economy may be of universal applicability, a postcolonial reading of what transpired in the post-colonial situation may render a certain degree of peculiarity to the way journalism confirms or challenges news frames concerning subaltern realities. There is a serious gap of knowledge on how journalistic agency interacts with news gathering technology guided by the function of received news values (news grammar) in shaping the news (Deuze 2010, Mabweazara 2010). To this argument I would wish to add that there is also a gap of knowledge when it comes to how different postcolonialities structure and constrain discursive worlds journalism inhabits in former colonies. As Mabweazara (2011: 102) notes: more research needs to be done which seeks “to examine closely journalism practice in non-western contexts” focusing on the nexus between a number of factors including socio-political, economic, colonial/postcolonial cultures and journalistic agency.

This study therefore is premised on the assumption that: “News will inevitably provide certain specific representations of reality, even if other distorting (politico-economic) factors were to be held in abeyance” (Lau 2004: 707). The present study takes its cue from Shome and Hegde’s (2002: 251) proposition that “institutionalised knowledge (*and news production as one such knowledge domain*) is always subject to forces of colonialism, nation, geopolitics and history”. It thus cannot just continue with the same subalternising discourses

characteristic of much of the scholarship discussed above which applies universalistic frames of analysis based on studies and observation of media performance mainly in metropolitan centres of the Euro-American zone. Instead, it seeks to be consistent with postcolonial critique which by nature challenges, interrogates and interrupts the ontological and epistemological formulations of establishment discourse forged through structures of colonial modernity. It focuses on how news production in former settler colonies like Zimbabwe inevitably borrows from, continues with or disrupts the colonial archive of discourses, news tropes and imagery of racist imperial power and difference. Its central aim is to question and to unthink the normativity of professional newsification of postcolonial realities. In so far as it asks and probes the subalternisation of beings and their knowledges through the mechanism of news writing, this research belongs to the category of what Shome and Hegde (2002: 264) refer to as “resistant enquiry”.

2.2.2 News Values

The normativity of Western-centric models of journalistic excellence is what is in question in this study. This project is not posing the question about how journalism as it has come to be practiced in former colonies conforms to or deviates from some universalised standard practice. Its aim is not to diagnose and uncover what may be pathological about “African” journalism as a poor replica of its European archetype. The point of this project is to find out the extent to which professional journalism, at its most imitative of its colonial forebears and its Western paragons, may be suited or not to purpose - the emancipatory promise of decolonisation. When discourses about what can and cannot pass as news are held constant and unvarying across time and geography, what chances are there that between colonial and postcolonial periods the pictures of the world may have changed? In Zimbabwe, how far have the press been retooled to serve the democratic ideals of an independent country? At issue here is the fate of an archive of colonial discourses and tropes that were relevant and on which the press drew to legitimise forced removals and geographic displacements of natives from areas declared European land in the late 1960s and early 1970s in – a process which was at the heart of a race based subalternising project. The nature of intercourse, if at all there is, between current news texts and that archive and how that relationship is arbitrated by journalists in Zimbabwean contemporary newsrooms, all in the name of upholding professional news values, is an area that still has to be thoroughly investigated.

I understand news values to be the institutionalisation of practices and routines through which professional journalists produce, circulate and privilege certain forms of consciousness of social reality out of a limitless number of possibilities across space and time. News values first acknowledged by Norwegian scholars, Johan Galtung and Ruge (1965) have been revised and updated by subsequent scholars (Harcup and O'Neil 2001, Cottle 2007) to account for differences in news orientations and technological effects on news production processes. The problem with attributing to news values the selections that are responsible for giving us our daily versions of reality is the shift of responsibility from the journalists themselves to the nature of news thus attributing to nature what is essentially historical. The argument here is that news stories do not get themselves selected, complete with their salience and angling, by dint of some qualities inherent in themselves independently of journalistic agency (Harcup and O'Neil 2001). The cliché that a good journalist is one who has a 'nose for news' uses the metaphor of a hound which picks and follows the scent of a prey until it catches it. In the same way the journalist's job is not to create the news, but to simply go and find it out there, ready-made. Every newspaper in any country would usually make the claim that the news-fare that it disseminates everyday represents a fair and balanced picture of social reality. It is precisely these claims that this study seeks to interrogate in the context of a critical theory of the sociology of news production which according to Willems (2011: 5, 6), argues that:

Events are not newsworthy in themselves but only become 'news' when they are selected for inclusion in news reports... Media texts are then shaped by both the institutional context in which they are embedded as well as the broader social, political, and cultural context of which they are part.

Willems goes on to conclude that different media organisations in Zimbabwe constructed and represented what may be termed ordinary citizens differently depending largely on the dynamics of influence and pressures emanating from forces external and internal to journalism itself. In an investigation focusing on the media reportage of the plight of farm workers at the height of Zimbabwe's fast track land reform in 2000 and 2001 Willems concludes that there was a dearth of the farm worker's voice on what was happening and how it affected him. Instead different media relied on the white commercial farmers, government officials or war veterans leaders as their main sources for the story on the farm occupations. Willems' concern here, which she shares with Couldry (2008), is to underline a failure of the media to make those affected by state decisions recognised in the narratives told by or about them. One possible way to account for this would be to look into residual colonial epistemic

maps through which postcolonial realities continue to be viewed by journalists or what Deuze (2008: 16) has described as “journalism’s ideology” that celebrates among other values, professional autonomy, objectivity, neutrality and credibility. It is this play of force fields and their influence on journalistic work in reproducing and perpetuating discourses of unequal power relations and domination of subaltern groups that will be the focus of this study. In short, the intention is to fully describe the nature of obstacles and how they barricade pathways to centres of hegemonic production and means of self-definition for subalternised populations and their knowledges in ex-colonies.

Post-colonial perspectives and left-leaning philosophical orientations have provided platforms from which to critique the innocence of news peddled by newsrooms in different colonial modernities and locales. Political economy, history and regulatory frameworks may colour and limit the way journalists work from time to time but it is shared news values that produce an overarching epistemic lens through which journalism has come to understand different groups and classes and their positionalities in the world. Rather than taking the view that media institutions were unwilling victims of ideological manipulation by either the market or state actors suffering from what Chuma (2007) describes as, the press’s institutional inability to actively assert its powers of agency against structural constraints, this study departs from the assumption that professional journalism as practised in mainstream newsrooms would uncoerced, tend to operate in the interest of conserving existing hierarchies of power. Deuze (2008: 11) concludes that media tend to be conservative in working generally for the social reproduction of an hierarchical society irrespective of technological change, time and locale. Whether a similar conservatism could be argued to characterise media work in societies transitioning from colonial to free and open societies, and Zimbabwe is a case in point, still needs to be fully researched and documented. A social constructionist perspective of news posits the view that news does not simply reflect reality, rather news actively constitutes that reality.

Schudson (2003) views news production as a complex interplay of social forces competing to exercise power and influence on society, where journalists are the only visible element. He emphasises the need to analyse news production from a sociological stand point. The journalist’s position in the social hierarchy in a way limits what phenomena they will be able to access and report on. The mere fact that most newsrooms are conveniently located in the

capital, close to elite institutions and the seat of power, and that most journalists spend the greater part of their working day within the city's environs, enjoy easy access to captains of industry, securocrats, bureaucrats and politicians and that professionalism enjoins them to seek out authentication and voices from within this social circle stands as the most important biasing factor on the news. How could such reporters cover those who live in poverty? "The plain fact is that newspapers reflect the mood and values of middle class society ... grown tired of the intractable problems of the underclass" (Schudson 2003: 45). This view of news invites us to cultivate and develop an epistemological skepticism with the claims to facticity of the news and of professional journalism's method of knowing, to doubt and question news media's capacity to be the teleological signifier of every possible shade of being transcendental of spacio-temporal differences. The common-sensical claims to truth and taken for granted assumptions about professionalism which often places news beyond questioning may be the very source of the hegemonic power of what is essentially an elite-centric colonisation and subalternisation of ordinary people's life world. Ethnographic studies of media production in the early 1970s, according to Schudson, generally point to professionalism rather than lack of it as the main biasing factor of the news against the poor and powerless in society:

Media bias derives, not from intentional ideological pervasion, but from professional achievement under the constraints of organisational routines and pressures; news organisations and routines produce bias regardless of media ownership or the outlook of individual reporters. The quest for objectivity itself, in this view is a source of distortion (Schudson 2003: 48).

When considering that this critical view of the media as a structured form of knowledge production emanates from studies conducted largely on media operations in the metropolitan centres of imperialist Europe, the situation is much less likely to have been any different in the colonies where journalism was introduced as an appendage of the colonising forces. "News represents who are the authorised knowers and what are their authorised versions of reality" (Schudson 2003: 134). Unfortunately it is not up to the media to decide who the authorised knowers should be. That matter is decided elsewhere in the realm of politics. The challenge is whether it is possible for postcolonial journalism to produce a different 'authorised' version of reality by mere dint of the fact that a country has been declared independent, when journalism today, as yesterday, continues to uphold the same professional creed of being beholden to power and privileging voices of those who are perched up there, in the social hierarchy.

2.2.3 Post-colonial Contexts of News Writing

Post-colonial theory postulates that:

Domination of the poor and marginalised comes about in at least three ways: (1) control over the means of material production, (2) control over the means of knowledge production, (3) control over power that legitimises the relative worth and utility of different epistemologies/knowledges. Those who have social power will legitimise their knowledge and techniques of knowledge generation as superior, (Melkote S. R. 2010: 114).

News values in journalistic knowledge production, as outlined by Galtung and Ruge (1965) and later elaborated by Harcup, provide a grammar or source code for the production of news in the service of power. Applying critical postcolonial scholarship attempts to theorise how local narratives, popular knowledge, cultural meanings, and social arrangements resist, get devalued and subjugated to the dominant epistemes of elite discourse.

Subaltern struggles for voice and agency transcend space and time. Unequal power relations between dominant groups and the subordinated groups have often been more manifest in terms of access or lack thereof to means of self-projection, voice and agency. Different philosophical positions such as feminist studies and post-colonial studies have provided different frameworks from which to historicise the exclusion of subaltern groups along the lines of class, geography, gender and race. Work on postcolonial, oriental and subaltern studies by such scholars as Ranajit Guha (1982), Edward Said (1993), and Gayatri Spivak (1988) has immensely contributed to our understanding of how colonial subjugation of subject populations was rationalised and sustained symbolically. The thrust of that work involved a re-reading of the European literary canons to expose the extent of symbolic and epistemic violence native populations were subjected to in the process of bringing them into colonial subjection. Radical Africanist scholars such as Franz Fanon (1968), Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986), Mahmood Mamdani (1996), Achille Mbembe (2001) among others have concerned themselves in different ways with the complex issue of how coloniality of knowing mutates and still manages to perpetuate its ‘spirit’ beyond the attainment of political independence, making the emancipatory promise of decolonisation ring hollow. In an introduction to his book *Citizens and Subjects*, Mamdani (1996: 4) announces the main aim of his work as that of seeking “to highlight that part of the colonial legacy – the institutional –

which remains more or less intact”. He goes on to bring into the spotlight the bifurcated nature of the colonial and post-colonial state in Africa and how the institution of local administration as one such colonial relic which was and remains instrumental in the containerisation, subjugation and denial of rights for native populations as citizens. It is in this light that the object of the present investigation is to interrogate how in the symbolic realm of the news media, colonial devaluation of formerly oppressed people may be a past which is still very much present in the postcolony. What remains missing in much of this body of knowledge is how news media beyond the usual rhetoric of free speech may in actual fact produce more silences than articulation particularly of those whom colonialism had denied a voice.

Hasty (2005: 8-9), and Fanon (1996) trace the convoluted path that news media particularly the press and radio in Ghana and in Algeria followed from when they were implanted in the country as one of those institutional imports in service of colonial administration. They then outline the history of how those institutions were adopted and adapted and turned against the same colonial administration as instruments of resistance, but the emancipatory role which the press had been infused with by the liberation movements was equally short-lived as soon after independence the subordinating nationalist discourse of national unity and development created new forms of elite domination as Hasty notes with reference to Ghana:

A longer historical gaze at the discursive content and maneuverings of power in the realm of news media dramatically illustrates an enduring dynamic of repressive domination and expressive resistance in the civil institutions of the public sphere. While the liberal scholarship on African political renaissance celebrates the globalising resistance to local forms of tyranny and kleptocracy, news media in (West) Africa emerged as expressive local forces of indigenous resistance against the globalising forces of colonial repression and exploitation. Subsequently appropriated in processes of ‘nation building’, news media as expressive tools of resistance were quickly transformed into the means of discursive domination and control by postcolonial elites, (Hasty 2005: 8-9).

One important similarity across most of colonial Africa on which both Hasty (2005) and Fanon tend to agree is the opportunistic way in which the emerging new African nationalist elite adopt news media for no more noble a goal than so as to discursively position themselves to inherit the authority of the former white masters. That is the tragedy Fanon

probably was pointing to in the pitfalls of national consciousness where the newly emergent national bourgeoisie was content not to change the colonial system including its ways of producing news but only to walk straight into the shoes left behind by the colonial master and to sharpen the tools of domination against the same people in whose name the liberation struggle was prosecuted with the result that by 2005 Hasty (2005: 53) found out that in Ghana the main state-controlled news daily had become more than a mere mouthpiece but functioned: “as the primary tool of symbolic violence through which the state speaks not only on behalf of the people but instead of the people.” It could be added that very often the elite in government and all the other rival elite camps within the locus of the nation state actually compete for control of the press or the radio microphone to speak against the people.

The literature considered above is important in so far as it maps and gives a broad outline on how media as an institution in one African country after another is often inferior, dysfunctional, a pale shadow of what it ought to be. A common thread is a defining aim of establishing in what ways media as institutions in postcolonial Africa measure up to or fall short of the ideals provided for them by metropolitan Europe. The literature adds to rather than lessen the reader’s bewilderment as to why Africa seems to be the cemetery for institutions upon which the great democracies of the West were founded. The ontological assumption behind the approaches to studying the media in Africa is that free media are necessary and good for democracy. The literature makes no connection whatsoever between the media’s role as an instrument of domination in the service of empire and its assumed new role as an instrument of social emancipation in the changed circumstances of a neo-liberal world order. The fact that African journalists and their counterparts in government had the colonial situation as the only schoolroom they were ever been to, to learn both news-craft and statecraft evades this critical scholarship. Not much work apart from Hasty’s concerns itself with how a colonial sub-text might in fact continue to inform and shape news discourse many years after the attainment of formal independence. That news by its very nature would tend to reproduce rather than challenge entrenched asymmetrical power relations along the lines long established under colonialism is a question that does not seem to arise for much of the literature on the media in Africa and, for this knowledge gap to be addressed, a new postcolonial research agenda is adopted for the present research task.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This section outlines and discusses the epistemological choices and preferences for colonial/postcolonial theory and related concepts of subalternity as a lenses through which

questions about news mediation of subaltern realities may be posed and research findings analysed, interpreted and discussed. From any other stand point raising the question about subaltern others in the news would not normally arise. Ontologically, marginalised people have never been subject for news in the first place. They lack newsworthiness as a category of human species. This would not be a problem except that in ex-colonies subalternity is historical, largely race-based and not natural or biological. But postcolonial analysis helps us to stand on its head the journalistic logic which posits that, people are not newsworthy because they are poor, by restating the problem as, people are poor because they are not newsworthy (Mignolo 2000). The interdisciplinarity of postcolonial theory is especially important for this study notwithstanding the fact that history and literature have specifically been largely regarded as its loci of articulation. Its application here in analysing media and communication phenomena is thus in the sense of a migrating/traveling theory.

2.3.1 Conceptualising Postcoloniality

Postcolonial critique's point of departure is to engage with the debates about constraints imposed by colonial history on former colonised people's struggles for emancipation and self-definition. While its approach may have been legitimately criticised as apolitical and denying ex-colonies any history before the colonial encounter and that it tends to concern itself mainly with textual analysis, its contemporary applications have expanded to encompass a wide array of disciplines including historical studies, cultural studies, economics and political practice etc, and scholars like Raka Shome and Radha S. Hedge (2002), Wasserman (2006) and Nyamnjoh (2005) have argued for its application in the study of contemporary communication problems involving discourse, institutional practices and power in former colonies.

The main attraction of postcolonial theory analysis, according to Homi Bhabha as cited in Abrahamsen (2003: 195) is in the fact that it acts as a "salutary reminder of the persistent neo-colonial relations within the 'new' world order and the multinational division of labour". It is the colonial in post-colonial studies that is of interest for the present study precisely because of the way in which the context of 'national independence' also tends to obscure structures of social inequality left behind by colonialism. In the domain of news, any connection of present forms of unequal power relations to continued neo-colonial social

structures is rarely made either by leftist or rightist leaning news orientations for two main reasons.

Firstly, left leaning critique of news representations of conditions in former colonies tends to highlight and put an emphasis on negative stereotyping of, for example, Africa as a place where everything seems to go wrong, a hopeless continent, its people as perpetual children always needful of White guidance, the Muslim world as the fount of international terrorism etc. It challenges journalism to also portray Africa as a continent of hope by focusing its gaze on the good and positive developments also taking place there, to celebrate the attainment of juridical independence and to eulogise nationalist leaders for bringing it about (Ndhlovu-Gatsheni 2012). Ankomah (2000: 16 - 23) makes the point that western media as a system has an in-built mechanism that makes the writing of negative stories about Africa almost inevitable and pleads with African journalists that when reporting events on the continent they have a moral duty to be patriotic to country and continent. Journalists when reporting Africa should be informed by strategic essentialism portending the much vaunted insurrection of subjugated ways of knowing from “beneath required levels of scientificity” (Spivak 1988). In terms of this logic it would be unstrategic for African journalists to harp on weaknesses and failures by Africans, African institutions or African postcolonial governments in reporting Africa. Decolonisation has to be celebrated as a complete success and empire as having been completely rolled back and done away with. A journalism that acknowledges that old colonial structures that produce, reproduce and reinforce unequal relations of power based on race and class differences is viewed as a betrayal of the African cause. A reportage that suggests that the transition from colonialism was anything but a huge success, complete and conclusive, berates and demeans the ‘glorious liberation struggle’ which was gallantly waged to dislodge settler colonialism. Such reportage stands accused of pandering to the same old colonial tropes of white supremacy and black inferiority. Thus, reporting in the interests of the revolutionary cause means leftist reporting, sometimes referred to as development journalism must deliberately embrace strategic blindness to any evidence that would suggest that colonialism did not die.

Secondly, neo-conservative oriented journalism of a Fourth Estate watchdog mould, on the other hand, also barks up the wrong tree by constantly muck-racking the corridors of power, exposing the decadence of the postcolonial order, but like their leftist counterparts never

making the connection between continuing poverty and the colonial structures that produce it. At the end of the day the different journalisms are not at conflict about the pastness of coloniality in Africa.

Nationalist leaders in government would prefer a journalism that represents that they have dismantled colonialism once and for all and that citizens ought to be forever grateful to the nationalist leaders for ensuring , as Mugabe is wont to remind his supporters that, “Zimbabwe shall never be a colony again”, and that it is every black Zimbabwean’s duty to jealously guard ‘our hard won independence and national sovereignty’. Independence and national sovereignty attain a sacred unquestioned status of commonsensical obviousness that just like colonialism’s mission to civilise the savages, tends to mask, mystify and rationalise continuing forms of oppression of the poor, surplus or expendable people, (Thomas 1994: 2). “The first duty of the press”, as Kenyan editor Hilary Ng’weno once argued, “is to encourage greater national unity”, (Odhiambo 1991:24). Thus in an attempt to counter western-centric media distortions of African realities, African development journalism feeds the minds of their hapless audiences with equally distorted and obsolete pictures of the world. But as Odhiambo (1991) rightly points out, somewhere in between these extremities lie ‘other’ African postcolonial realities unknowable by means of news media epistemic lenses and rationalisations - pictures the media are incapable of showing us:

the linkage between the endemic political instability in Third World nations and their poverty; the linkage between poverty and the integration of the global economy; and the linkage between an integrated global economy and the history and perpetuation of empire... colonial structures in government and the economy that remained largely intact at independence 'for stability and continuity (Odhiambo 1991: 26).

The people as real beings who were subjects of colonial rule and have remained in subjection after independence were and are knowable by journalistic means only through proxies, self-elected or imposed from above. There seems to be no way known yet to professional journalism of how to access and report from subaltern perspectives and still call the resultant text news. When nationalist leaders rallied subaltern support for the liberation cause against settler colonial oppression and western imperialism using such slogans as total independence, self-determination and national sovereignty they either did not fully fathom what their independence manifestoes entailed or worse still they knew well in advance “that the idea of total independence was a nationalist fiction” designed mainly to hoodwink the oppressed

masses into exchanging their old masters for new ones, “who in turn often ran the new countries with a callous, exploitative tyranny reminiscent of the departed masters,” (Said 1994: 20). Just as the new ruling elite took their place in government and at the head of every institution colonialism left behind so also their words, their pictures and images of reality sanctioned by them also promptly took the place of the former colonial masters’ words, pictures and images of pretty much the same unchanging, oppressive and unequal world on front pages of newspapers and television and radio broadcast bulletins as ‘the news’. There was pretty little new in the postcolonial news save for the black faces now appearing where you used to see white ones.

The thrust of the present study is not to map epistemic resistances to the ghost of a departed coloniality which indeed may be the legitimate project of a different thesis all together. Mine is to lay bare the very modalities by which postcolonial modernities conceal and hide the very logic by which coloniality may in fact be extended beyond attainment of formal independence in the coloniality/postcoloniality continuum. My concern is with how postcolonial modernity’s news frameworks achieve the newsification of oppressed people in order to render imaginable the possibility for ‘Another News’ paradigm to produce ‘Other newses. It seeks to unravel how proximities and co-locations of whiteness and newsworthiness are concealed and at the same time refracted through news discourse about the subaltern (Goudge 2003). Said (1994: 8) understands the key concepts of empire and colonialism as referring to:

a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire. In our time direct colonialism has ended; imperialism ... lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological economic and social practices.

Given Said’s argument above, this study concerns itself with laying bare those journalistic news production practices by which imperialism subtly perpetuates itself through discourses, subjectivities and racial complexes in common parlance in news discourses about subaltern groups in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about

what happened in the past and what the past was but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps, (Said 1994: 1).

If postcolonial theory concerns itself with arguments about how much the present in former colonies was, of necessity, a product of and influenced by the colonial past and if there is no consensus about the nature of that past, how much more difficult should it be to know with certainty what the present itself is at least after the de-familiarising, refracting process by which the said present is brought home to us through the media. The mediation of the postcolonial present becomes therefore a much more contentious subject for debate. In this discussion I therefore talk about the over-mediated realities of the postcolony. The ‘realities’ that we get spread out across the face of a newspaper every morning, have been mediated by the pasts deemed relevant to the present, by power and by institutionalised and routinised journalistic ways of perceiving that reality, a reality scarcely recognisable to itself. No more can the journalist nor his work, to borrow T.S. Eliot’s conception of the poet or artist’s work, have a “complete meaning alone” (Said 1994: 2). News discourses of the postcolonial present will be only intelligible to its audience to the extent that it is a product of an incestual relationship between current text and the colonial archive. The journalistic fact produced in the postcolony, like its author and reader, bears the mark of its progenitor.

Notwithstanding McIntok’s valid concerns about a tendency within postcolonial theory of oversimplification and overgeneralising potentially varied historical moments of different geopolitical configurations of coloniality/postcoloniality, postcolonial theory insists that the different presences and temporalities can only become intelligible when mapped against a schemata that acknowledges the historicity of the colonial encounter and its structuring effect on contemporary geopolitical hierarchies.

Anti-statist neoliberal corporate media establishment in former colonies would conveniently attribute unending poverty, corruption and economic decay in the ex-colony to ‘bad governance’ or causes other than exploitative capitalist structures left intact at the end of formal colonialism. Willems (2000) underlines this important focus of postcolonial theory critique of the simplistic assumption that the attainment of formal political independence necessarily marks the end of colonialism. She concurs with Loomba (1998: 12) in

underscoring the problematic in conceptions that view postcolonial situations as denoting a break with colonialism:

Indeed, the process of colonialism is not yet finished. Many people living in both once colonised and once colonising countries are still subject to the oppressions put into place by colonialism. They are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem, (Willems 2000: 8)

It is in this context that it becomes pertinent to seek to delineate the zone of continuity and discontinuity in the way news texts narrativise subalternity. The application of a postcolonial theory in this study is justified in at least the promise it gives of exploding the myth of false emancipation that an uncritical and unquestioning acceptance as ‘fact’ that colonialism ends with attainment of political independence brings. Nhlovu-Gatsheni (2012: 74) calls it “one of the most powerful myths of the 20th century, the belief that the end of direct colonial administrations amounted to the decolonisation of the world”. The argument about the extent to which institutional practices of media and journalism obtaining in former colonies represent a continuation with or a rupture from their colonial or western ancestry give a broad context within which findings of this study will be discussed and analysed. Assumptions about what constitutes the national interest or what is in the public interest in societies that are deeply polarised along political, ideological, racial, ethnic and economic fault lines or other bases of privilege founded on a colonial legacy are highly contested:

what was seen as ‘the public’ pertained only to a section of the population, who had access to the media and knew how to articulate their needs. The interest of the other, larger, part of the population was being marginalised because of their silence, (Wasserman 2006: 10).

According to Young (2001: 1-11, 57-69) postcolonial critique is concerned with the history of colonialism “only to the extent that history has determined the configurations and power structures of the present” and as Mbembe (2001) suggests in his work: “In this respect at least, the contention is clear: the African post-colonial apparatus has replicated, internalised and totalised the power structures introduced through colonisation”. Mbembe goes on to challenge a linear conception of postcoloniality which views it from a chronologically sequential periodisation where the postcolony can be understood as an experience that comes after, effaces, annuls and replaces the colonial period that precedes it. Instead he takes the

view that postcolonial experience denotes an interlocking of presents, pasts and futures in a process of continual and mutual inter-determination (Mbembe 2001). Thus, postcolonial critique of contemporary society substitutes a Marxist economic determinism with a different determinism - colonial determinism. Postcolonial theorists share a skepticism in modernity's celebration of victory over and abolishment of the (colonial) past. What animates the postcolonial debate, "is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps" (Said 1993: 1).

It has to be acknowledged that postcolonial theory has had many critics, McClintock (1992), Kavoori (1998) and Dirlik (1999) basing on a conception of postcolonial theory as denoting a point in a sequential history of events and experiences in the former colonies that comes after the end of colonialism. The view of postcolonial theory adopted in this study coincides with Shome's (1998: 206) understanding of it as "not suggesting a 'dubious temporality' that occurs at the expense of addressing power. Power, of course, is still central, but the mapping of colonial power in post-coloniality now requires different and complex forms of theorising".

Thus an approach to the study of communication problems that borrows from and is informed by postcolonial theory is necessarily critical of taken-for-granted assumptions about journalism's capacity to insulate itself from influences of a colonial history. According to Said (1993: 17) the strength of such an approach is in alerting us to the simple fact that, "though for the most part the colonies have won their independence, many of the imperial attitudes underlying colonial conquest continue". It is on this basis that the present study finds it necessary to problematise journalism's attitudes towards marginalised groups and to assess whether and how it has shed an earlier orientation, which Rusike (1990:57) notes as prevalent not only in Zimbabwe but in most of post-colonial Africa, that of privileging metropolitan elite-centric perspectives in its news construction practices.

In this study I take the concept of postcoloniality as embedding rather than negating the discourse of coloniality itself as its progenitor. The postcolonial condition is understandable when looked at against a generous layering of coloniality as its background. In mapping the etymology of the term postcolonial one necessarily comes up against a gamut of similar concepts with which either postcoloniality is compared, contrasted or associated with. And these include Eurocentricity, imperialism, racism, decoloniality, neo-coloniality, anti-

coloniality etc. Shohat and Stam (1994: 2) posit the thesis that by postcolonial discourse they refer not to colonialist discourse after the end of colonialism but rather to left-inflected theoretical writings that attempt to transcend the binarisms of Third World militancy. “Eurocentrism first emerged as a discursive rationale for colonialism, the process by which the European powers reached positions of hegemony in much of the world”. A Eurocentric attitude provides the basis for explaining how *The New York Herald* could in the late 19th century sponsor an expensive expedition led by its journalist Henry Morton Stanley, into the ‘heart of darkness’ to bring back a story not of the African natives and their deeds and events important to them in Africa but to bring back the story about Explorer David Livingston, the European and his accomplishments as he inscribed a European history on the continent. “As an ideological substratum common to colonialist, imperialist, and racist discourse, Eurocentrism is a form of vestigial thinking which permeates and structures contemporary practices and representations even after the formal end of colonialism” (Shohat and Stam 1994:2). This study thus seeks to investigate the underlying thick tapestry of discourse formations and inter-textuality that frame and permeates news texts and practices of news production of postcolonial actualities of former colonial subjects. In the process it seeks to account for the tropes and metaphors and figures of speech, the embedded topoi which either disrupts or perpetuates the Eurocentric notion of the ‘other’ (non-European) and his/her fitness as subject of news (Shohat and Stam 1994:9).

2.3.2 Subalternisation of the Subaltern

The concept of subaltern is closely related to postcolonial theory discussed above. It refers to a condition of subjectivity usually as a result of colonial conquest of indigenous populations and the appropriation of their territory for settlement by a colonising power. In Africa the subalternisation of native peoples of the continent was an inevitable outcome of subordination to colonising people of European stock. Hence subalternity has tended to take on a racial inflection in Africa’s post-colonial encounter in an equation where colonization = peasantisation = subalternisation. In the case of Zimbabwe, for example Arrighi (1996) documents in detail how colonial authority, through a series of judicial orders, legislated the peasantisation and subsequent proletarianisation of the native population in the then Rhodesia. The term subaltern was first coined by the Italian Neo-Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci as a surrogate for the Marxian term proletariat. In his Prison Notebooks, Gramsci introduces the term subaltern as a concept to refer to a condition of subjection in a social hierarchy where:

Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups even when they rebel and rise up only permanent victory breaks their subordination, and that not immediately. In reality even when they appear triumphant, the subaltern groups are merely anxious to defend themselves, (Gramsci 1971: 55).

From this perspective the concept of subalternity transcends and at the same time eschews economic deterministic classificatory terms such as the proletariat or peasantry as if economic relations of production were the only basis for the marginalisation, domination and subordination of some groups of people to ruling others. The term introduces the notion of plurality of forms of subordination whether this is rationalised on a patriarchal, ethnic, racial, economic class, geographic or any other philosophy. And in the case of Zimbabwe the basis of marginality and subordination is often pluri-modal, such that those who are excluded from active participation in mainstream society are often those who occupy the lowest rungs of most of these social hierarchies. One artifact by which subalternity may be produced, maintained and perpetuated across geography and time and about which most scholars are basically agreed on is their assumed incapacity to represent themselves, ‘they have to be represented’ (Marx; Gramsci; Guha; Spivak). This is of particular interest to the present study whose object is the rethinking of the adequacy of a highly conservative regime of news values when it comes to reporting and representing subaltern views, interests and consciousness. The objective of engaging with the representation of subalterinity rests in determining what may be more worthwhile in postcolonial contexts between a struggle aimed at giving voice and agency to the subaltern classes in news spaces or working on annihilating the conditions that subalternise some people in the first place “in an endless process of creating a democratic society” (Coronil 2000: 43).

In the particular case of Zimbabwe and for the purposes of this study, rural peasants unambiguously qualify as the subaltern and it is important to note here that the processes by which their subalternity was brought about is historical and very much linked with the colonial history of the country (Arrighi 1966). This social category has largely remained constant and enduring over time. The term subaltern as used in this study should be understood more specifically to refer to the ordinary poor people. In Zimbabwe this category or species of humanity largely occurs in the rural areas and when they occur in the city they occupy the fringes, marginal areas and eking out an existence on the margins of legality. They are a people marked by a chronic condition of poverty.

Also of interest in Gramsci's conception of subalternity is the near impossibility of the subaltern groups successfully breaking free from their state of subjection due to incapacity to successfully claim agency and to act outside the affirmations by the subordinating system. Their actions even when rebelling against their oppression cannot go beyond a mere yearning for a more humane treatment by their masters. They do not seek for an end to their domination, only a replacement of the known face of oppression with another one that promises to be fair by them. It is important however to note at the outset epistemological limitations of concepts and ideas originating in mainstream western-centric systems of thought no matter their revolutionary promise. Such concepts whose discursive genealogies lie deep in the dominant forms of knowledge clearly guilty of colonising and subalternising other knowledges (for want of a better term) have to be often stretched at the seams to fully subsume under their logic what it may mean to experience subalternity in the context of colonial subjection .

In the colonies particularly in Africa the process of subalternisation always assumes a racial inflection. The subalternisation of the native population was an inescapable inevitability for the colonised peoples as they were brought into colonial subjection, (Mignolo 2000). Thus the term subaltern came to denote people of particular races, the non-European races in the colonies. Eurocentric forms of knowledge and scientific thought and rationality were implicated as portent instruments through which other knowledges both process and content and the beings who inhabited them were objectified suppressed and delegitimated as inferior. In their place were introduced the canons of European epistemes in art, religion, architecture, medicine, the news as the standards against which all else was to be measured and accepted or discarded. In other spheres of knowledge production such as history, literature and religion one can cite instances of cooperation with, cooptation and resistance to the dominant western ways of knowing. Struggles for decolonisation, however feeble, were quite in evidence in the form of protest literature, music and art but the same could not be argued for the domain of news media as a discursive form amenable to the exercise of imperial power over colonised others.

The division of labour implicit in the professional news production process under colonial rule, whether mainstream or alternative, immutably assigned the role of Knowing Subject to the colonial master and the Known Object of news writing to the colonised subject. This

news template which devalues subjectivated people's voices under the guise of newsworthiness results in perpetual subalternisation of certain groups of people and their ways of knowing. This study engages with the question how, beyond the nationalist rhetoric of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, the subalternisation-by-news continues to be produced and reproduced by both radical and conservative media establishments in Zimbabwe. As a point of departure I take a skeptical view of the possibility for a Foucauldian insurrection of subjugated knowledges or an uprising of what Mignolo calls the border gnosis, "the subaltern reason striving to bring to the foreground the force and creativity of knowledges subalternised during a long process of colonisation of the planet", (Mignolo 2000: 13) in the domain of news as institutionalised forms of knowing by which power maintains itself.

Ranajit Guha and other contributors to the Subaltern Studies Group that emerged further elaborated on the meaning of the term subaltern stating that: "Subaltern stands for rank, it refers to the general condition of subordination whether this is expressed in terms of class, race and gender or in any other way". Guha's construction of the social stratification of postcolonial India describes his and the Subaltern Studies group's conception of subalternity as pointing to a buffer social category that mediated between the ordinary people and various elite classes both foreign and local.

Guha's grid cited in (Coronil 2000: 41) represented as follows:

Elite:	1. Dominant foreign groups
	2. Dominant indigenous groups on the all-India level
	3. Dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels
Subaltern	4. The social groups and elements included in this category represent the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the 'elite'.

The last group in the grid above then constitutes the social category of interest in this study whose main thesis is the view that there are no people with subalternity wired into their DNA. There are only ways of treating some people as subaltern. The way journalists produce news in colonial and postcolonial modernities is very much complicit with colonial power in the process by which some people, their knowledges and cultures, become subalternised.

Nobody is unnewsworthy because they are poor and subaltern. Rather, they are poor and subaltern because they have been found unnewsworthy, to borrow Mignolo's (2000) phrase. While subalternity may be experienced in the realm of unequal power relations and access to resources, it was Gayatri Spivak who drew attention to the plane of the production and circulation of ideas and symbolic forms as an important arena at which subordination/subjectification is consummated through lack of agency and voice or what she calls symbolic violence. She posits the thesis that, subalternity is a psychic condition resulting from epistemic violence suffered by subjugated groups through knowledge production practices that devalue their ways of knowing as unscientific, superstitious, and therefore inferior.

In the context of this study the term subaltern shall be used in the context in which the media tends to (mis)represent or construct certain groups of people and their worldviews as subordinate and others as dominant and by focusing on newsmaking practices the study seeks to lay bare the mechanism by which journalism accomplishes this in Zimbabwe. It is in this sense that the researcher finds the term subaltern to be more useful when used to describe a general condition of marginality and subordination beyond that narrowly based on production relations of bourgeoisie/proletariat typical of a capitalist system or coloniser/colonial subject of a colonial system. The study seeks to engage with the concept of subalternity as transcendental of both history and geography by looking at journalism's content and how the production logic of that content necessarily privileges elite representations of subaltern groups and denies them agency. The thrust here is to doubt the grassroots empowerment claims apparent in some mottos of newspapers such as seeking to provide a voice for the voiceless, speaking truth to power, to afflict the comfortable and to comfort the afflicted, everyday news for everyday people, etc.

Does empirical evidence on the ground support an opposite view of the role of the media in former colonies? Media have proved to be the remaining bastions of imperial control at a distance. They have remained firmly embedded with imperial power. For as long as the postcolonial economy has remained an appendage of the capitalist world system and its own internal articulation a perfect mirror and a microcosmic image of the center/periphery asymmetry (Barrett 2008) then news is better defined as a story about what power is doing in the world told from its own stand point. The view that the news provides some sort of space where all social classes enjoy an equal opportunity to have their say and to represent

themselves was dismissed as utopian by Karl Marx in the 18th Brumaire when Marx points out with regards the small holder peasant 'class' in France that, "They cannot represent themselves. They have to be represented" (Marx 1852: 63).

The present study's intention is to unravel continuities and discontinuities between colonial and postcolonial images and news discourses about forced evictees in Zimbabwe. We are talking here about the post-colonised successors of the colonised subject, suffering from a queer condition of orphandom and in search for the return of the Imperial Father.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to the problem being investigated and the discussion of that literature clearly brings into sharp relief the yawning gap of knowledge on the extent to which postcolonial news production processes continue with or may have disrupted a colonial and subalternising discourse. A survey of the literature reveals a Eurocentric orientation of much scholarly investigation on the media in Africa in general and in Zimbabwe as typical case in point. Scholars tend to concern themselves with the extent to which news media in Africa conform to or deviate from some "universalised" standards of how to do journalism. Only very tentatively has scholarship on the Media in Africa pointed to the need for a radical paradigmatic shift and to begin to take a more nuanced approach to situating the media question in Africa in the contexts of Other histories and Other geopolitical hierarchies (Hasty 2005; Mabweazara 2010). The thrust to move the centre as Ngugi (1993) suggests and the readiness to acknowledge the locatedness and pluriversality of other knowledges and loci of their articulation, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) sets out in what he suggests as a new research agenda for scholarship on Africa, calls for new ways of looking at the old problems not only through new theoretical lenses but most importantly through new pairs of eyes with new sensibilities to what it may mean to be on the Other side of the camera lenses, assuming new subject positions from which to come up with alternative questions about the nature of social reality and how it may best be uncovered. Postcolonial theory, as presented and discussed in this chapter, together with concepts adjacent to it such as subalternity and the sociology of news production appear to be suited to the task of seeking, as the present study does, to debunk an approach to news production in and on Africa as if coloniality never happened or where when such a past is acknowledged, it is treated as if that colonial past were successfully quarantined at independence to ever have anything to do with

Africa's present realities. Such a theoretical point of departure, instead of always running compliance tests on African institutions, goes to the core of their relevance in terms of whose interests they were tooled to serve in the first place.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline and discuss the philosophical assumptions about what I understand to be the nature of social reality that news is. I begin by presenting the ontological and epistemological premises upon which are based my selections of methods of data collection and data analysis presented later in the chapter.

3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Orientation of the Study

This section outlines theoretical assumptions about the nature of news as social reality under investigation and the epistemological premises for acquiring valid and scientific knowledge about such phenomena. The nature of news as a proxy of social reality has been and continues to be the subject of intense debate among scholars and three philosophical points of departure have generally been applied in the discussion and critical reflection on such social phenomena as news.

The first ontological position holds that reality, including social reality, has an objective existence independent of and separate from the knowing subject's consciousness about it; that subject can be a researcher or a news gatherer; that these social facts exist in some cause and effect relationship to each other and that there is a way of apprehending these relationships accurately and of objectively measuring their regularity in a way that makes it possible to draw generalisations and make predictions about causal linkages among such phenomena. This tradition, in common parlance, ordinarily referred to as the positivist approach, maintains that reality is subject to knowing by human subjects through the scientific method. It does acknowledge the possibility of other forms of knowledge which can be arrived at by other means, but scientific truth, it is argued under this paradigm, can only be acquired through the rigorous application of the scientific method (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Anything that cannot be studied empirically falls beyond science and is therefore unresearchable and the knowledge of it unscientific. The ontological coat is proverbially cut according to the epistemological cloth available. Method determines the nature of reality that is researchable and what research questions it is possible to ask in the first place. But the point is, there could be more 'reality' to be apprehended than meets the scientific methodological eye.

The other research tradition takes an extreme contrary position, that reality is relative and has no existence outside the knowing subject's mind. It is socially constructed and dependent on the knowing subject and therefore dynamic. The scientific positivist enterprise of searching for the 'Truth' is abandoned as an exercise in futility as there is no single truth valid for all time and universal, rather there are truths of multiple validities in eternal contestation (Saukko 2003). Reality itself is so elusive and fluid to a point that we have to be content with linguistic representations of it. What is available to us are interpretations of the truth and in that regard therefore relative and socially constructed. Given that news itself is a form of knowledge about social reality, obtained using some sort of logic and criteria peculiar to news itself, it follows then that any question about news is not a question about reality out there, which the news purports to represent in some direct sort of way, but a question about a representation of that reality. Thus by asking about news values and newsroom practices in the construction of subaltern identities this study concerns itself with unraveling embedded structures and processes by which news produces a form of knowledge about the world.

The focus is not to seek to bridge the gap between some pristine reality out there and the news' flawed perception of it as if such reality were recoverable in its unmediated form. The legitimate province of this study is simply to lay bare the opacity of news' rendering of postcolonial subalternity, to unravel the underlying discursivity by which colonial/postcolonial subjectivities of formerly colonised people are constructed by news. The present study therefore, eschews the 'either or' position implied in the positivist/constructivist ontological and epistemological debates about what should be the proper subject matter for scientific investigation. Rather the current research's conception of social reality transcends the binary dichotomy of an objective reality out there of one 'Truth' and limitless possibilities of subjective relativism implied in that debate. It is underpinned by a critical realist ontology and acknowledges the separateness of reality from our perceptions of it which are bound to differ depending on the cultural baggage that we as the knowing subjects bring to the task of cognition.

This investigation departs from the assumption that there is no necessary inevitable correspondence between reality and the perception thereof, between the event and the news report of it. It assumes a critical realist approach which, according to Krauss (2005: 762), recognises "that perceptions have a certain plasticity and that there are differences between reality and people's perceptions of reality". That research can by deploying scientific tools of analysis, claim to apprehend an unalloyed, neutral version of reality is itself a form of

ideologically invested obfuscation of reality and its interpretation. Critical realism is particularly suited to the understanding of complexity implicit in the question of how journalism constructs knowledge about or represents events occurring in the world such as forced evictions of black poor people under colonial and postcolonial contexts. It advocates for research approaches that seek to explore phenomena in their natural settings, in the real rather than an artificially contrived abstracted world (Clark A. M. 2008). The data produced in this study concerns news discourses and accounts of, as well as processes by which, such accounts of black subaltern groups in colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe were made possible and these should not be confused with the reality

Given the fact that the data this investigation draws on for analysis is entirely in the form of texts and contexts, the researcher is conscious that text can never be taken as the proxy or index of the reality it unproblematically, and neutrally represents. Rather text and the language of news is also constitutive of the reality it reports on, and as such has its own limitations as there can never be true correspondence or equivalence between the presumed reality and its linguistic or news representation.

Critical realist epistemology holds that there is a real material world but that our knowledge of it is often socially conditioned and subject to challenge and reinterpretation. There are mechanisms governing human affairs that may be unobserved and unobservable, but these are not therefore to be discounted (Porta D. D. and Keating M. 2008: 24).

The news story for content analysis, the interview transcript or the participant observation notes and diaries are all in the form of text (instances of language use) and constitute all the ‘reality’ that is available for the present study to analyse. Given that I as a Zimbabwean citizen, inhabit the same discursive geopolitical hierarchies and spaces produced by the news and in turn productive of the news discourses subject for analysis in this study, I am therefore fully conscious of my situatedness and acknowledge upfront that the findings will of necessity be coloured by my own located subjectivities and their imbrications with the subject matter under investigation. A critical realist approach is thus particularly suited to this study as it is not encumbered by dogmatic adherence to one or other of the narrow ontological and epistemological commitments of the positivist or constructivist approaches. The selection of method is dictated by the nature of the task at hand and the present task is to unravel the nexus of structure and agency in journalism’s construction and reification of subaltern identities in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

This study is essentially a case study of news reports of the social upheavals and the historicity of the subjectivation and peasantisation of ordinary black people in Zimbabwe before and after attainment of independence arising from mass dispossession and displacement through forced removals at different historical junctures in Zimbabwe. On the one hand it seeks to ascertain from news archives the way different newspapers constructed, legitimated, naturalised and objectified the changing circumstances of forcibly evicted black people in the country's history from colonial occupation by Europeans and beyond. Having established media representations, it becomes imperative to seek to understand through direct participant observation the production processes and practices that make possible the continuities/disruptions in the discursive reproduction of black identities at selected news production sites in Zimbabwe.

Through a combination of content analysis and participant observation the study seeks to uncover the discursive, ideological and racial bases for the social reproduction of black subalternity. As such the research employs the mixed methods approach of data collection and analysis in order to gain a multi-dimensional perspective of the problem under investigation. The study employs mainly ethnographic data collection techniques such as unstructured interviews with journalists and editors and participant observation of news production processes at two main news production sites in Zimbabwe; the Zimpapers Harare Branch (publishers of *The Herald*) and Associated Newspapers (publishers of *The Daily News*), also in Harare to obtain a 'native' perspective of the domain of news production as a socio-cultural practice.

Ethnography is preferred because the aim to obtain insider accounts and interpretations of journalistic preferences for story angle selections, and work logic that produce and reproduce discourses of social and geographical hierarchies which stabilise unequal power relations would succeed only when journalism as a social practice is studied in naturalistic settings. Archival research is used to search for and retrieve archived newspapers as well as other historical documents pertaining to the selected accounts of forced removals in the periods from early days of British colonial occupation of Zimbabwe to the 1970s and in 2000 and 2005 after independence. The first plane of analysis focuses on ascertaining the difference, if any, in how the same events were documented in government records and reported in news stories. The second plane of analysis aims at tracing any continuities and disjunctures of colonial objectivation and racialisation of colonised 'Others' through the crucible of race and class based land grabbing followed by forced removals.

3. 2.1. The Extended Case Study Approach

This study takes Porta and Keating's (2008: 226) definition of a case study as:

A research strategy based on the in-depth empirical investigation of one, or a small number, of phenomena in order to explore the configuration of each case, and to elucidate features of a larger class of (similar) phenomena, by developing and evaluating theoretical explanations.

While a case study is often understood to mean a single instance out of a number of similar sets of phenomena sharing a number of similarities and belonging to a generic category, an extended case study such as the one under study may be defined either in terms of the length of time cover being reasonably long or in terms of an extensive geographical area covered or both. Given that the present study straddles a period stretching to as far back as the colonial period of Zimbabwe's history and also covers more than one news production site makes it qualify to be considered as an extended case study. Along the temporal dimension the study focuses on three historical conjunctures when poor, mostly black, people were forcibly removed from their settlements in pursuit of different developmental objectives and socio-political goals. While this study is on how postcolonial contexts provide the discursive framework within which journalism constructs and represents subaltern groups at such times of social upheavals more generally, it also more closely focuses on *The Herald* as the longest surviving newspaper with close links to the government of the day and one other of its many competitors from the privately owned press in existence and publishing contemporaneously during three phases or historical episodes in Zimbabwe during and after colonial rule. To obtain an insider perspective of why and how journalists in newspaper organisations represent and construct subaltern identities the way they do, I selected two newspaper organisations as cases for close study by participant observation methods. The research does not seek to generalise its findings to other newspapers beyond the cases themselves. It seeks instead to develop a full description of the way the newspapers under study covered the events of the mass evictions of poor people in Zimbabwe's history and the journalism cultures and daily routines and organisational practices that inform the ways the papers cover and construct subaltern identities.

3.3 Units of Analysis

This study seeks to generate more than one unit of analysis in an endeavor to search for answers to the research questions posed. Two news organisations as loci of participant

observation constitute one set of units of analysis, while news content obtained by archival research methods constitutes another set of units of analysis. Transcriptions of in-depth interview recordings with journalists at the two newsrooms constitute yet another set of units of analysis. The sampling procedures used to come up with all these different units of analysis are discussed below.

3.3.1 Multiple Purposive Sampling

The major reason for reflecting on, and carefully choosing a sampling procedure, is to minimise the vulnerability to error. The multiple purposive sampling strategy was used in this study. Multiple purposive sampling, according to Teddlie and Yu (2007), is when the researcher uses different sampling strategies in conjunction or in combination to draw samples most suited for qualitative research designs such as the present study and for answering the specific research questions. “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases ... whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton 1990: 169). First, I had to decide on newspaper organisations at which to conduct participant observation, media organisations that would best expose me to various aspects of newsroom culture, journalistic practices responsible for the production of daily news accounts of events and occurrences deemed to be newsworthy by journalists. *The Herald* and *The Daily News* were deemed to be appropriate for this purpose. The next stage of sampling involved the selection and recruitment of informants for in-depth interviews from reporters at each of the newsrooms already selected for ethnographic study. The research subjects for the interviews were purposively selected on the basis of experience and length of service as journalists at high levels of editorial decision making. A total of fourteen participants were selected for interviews, six at *The Daily News* and eight at *The Herald*.

The third level of sampling involved the selection of news accounts of forced removals of Africans from European areas under settler colonial rule in the then Southern Rhodesia, evictions of large numbers of white commercial farmers and their African farm employees during the early phases of the fast track land reform programme in Zimbabwe at the turn of the twenty-first century, and mass evictions of urban slum dwellers undertaken by the Zimbabwe government at the onset of winter in 2005. Since *The Herald* enjoyed the longest uninterrupted record as a daily newspaper with a history that straddled the colonial and postcolonial periods in Zimbabwe and as such happened to be the one daily newspaper which could potentially have covered all three historical episodes in Zimbabwe, articles were

purposively selected from *The Herald* newspaper for comparison with articles from other publications in existence and contemporaneously publishing at any one of the three periods of interest to this study. Articles were chosen for deeper analysis to the extent to which they stood out as best exemplars of information-rich cases with the potential of illuminating the subject under study (Patton 1990).

The articles of interest for this study were defined by their reference to the subject of evictions of poor black people in Zimbabwe. But because absence of news reports or under-reporting of events which signifies media silence on issues was of equal significance for the purposes of this study it was important to divide the selection process into two distinct stages. In the first stage of analysis it was important to consider the sheer volume of editorial content each historical episode generated. At this stage articles and various dimensions of interest such as headlines, pictures and other ways in which editors assign or signify relative importance of a news article are selected for comparative analysis between different newspapers and across different historical epochs. To select those articles for a deeper critical analysis at a discursive level, fewer articles had to be selected judging on the extent to which they represented typical features of similar stories by that publication. For comparative purposes stories from different newspapers were selected for analysis on the basis of equivalence and not number.

3.3.2 Typical Instance Sampling

Typical instance sampling was used in selecting *The Herald* House and the *Daily News* as research sites to conduct participant observation. These two newsrooms met the typical instance sampling criteria used. *The Herald* newsroom was typical of State owned and controlled newspapers in Zimbabwe. Since *The Herald* was considered the flagship newspaper under the Zimpapers stable from its inception up to the time of this study, it was considered that journalism and news production culture at *The Herald* would be most typical of experiences at its sister publications such as *The Sunday Mail*, *The Chronicle*, *The Sunday News*, *The Manica Post* and the two vernacular language titles the *Kwayedza* and *Umtunywa*. It was on this basis that *The Herald* was selected as one of the research sites.

The Herald newspaper's uninterrupted news production through the different historical epochs provided a good basis for a comparative longitudinal analysis of mainstream establishment media treatment of the subaltern and their issues during and after colonial rule.

Stories by other national newspapers in circulation during any one of the chosen three points in the history of Zimbabwe were selected on the basis of their comparability to those published in *The Herald* on the same subject. Thus for stories about forced removals of Africans from European lands in the late 1960s to early 1970s only the Church press in the form of *Umbowo* and *Moto* (both weekly publications) were available sources of stories that presented alternative accounts of forced evictions to those published by *The Herald* as other newspaper publications had been forced out of circulation through government action. I was fully aware of the problem of equivalence between a daily newspaper and weekly publications but this was considered adequate for the purposes of the present study given that those publications provided the only alternative interpretation of that phase in Zimbabwe's history.

In selecting the stories for analysis I was guided by available historical records and documents relating to forced removals obtained from the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ). Such records would provide information on the specific dates when the processes of forced removals of specific communities were initiated and executed. Newspaper issues published around that period would then be perused in search for any article relating to evictions regardless of the section of the paper they appeared in with the exception of advertisements and advertorials.

The process was rather cumbersome and time consuming because it involved having to scan and browse through every story in each issue of the paper. The Newspapers were archived in monthly volumes. In some instances snowball sampling was employed where one newspaper article referred discursively and intertextually to another and that still yet to other stories before it in the same paper or to an earlier story appearing in a different newspaper altogether. In one such case, it was after reading a very short article in the letters to the editor section of *The Herald* of 25 July 1970, running under the headline: "African Faith in Moto" that the researcher got a pointer to an article in an earlier issue of the same paper (11 July 1970) headlined: "Catholic Bishop on 'Men of God' Attack", a rebuttal of a front page story that had been published in *The Herald* of 9 July 1970 under the headline: "Civil Servant Hits at 'Men of God'". This story in turn pointed intertextually to an article that had appeared in the July edition of the *Moto* newspaper. Three other articles linked in one way or the other to these stories were also discovered this way. The articles had escaped my attention because the headlines under which they had been written gave no suggestion or clue whatsoever that they were dealing with the issue of forced removals. This process was repeated with back

issues of participating papers until sampled articles reached data saturation levels for each of the periods of interest to this study.

The selections were based on the exigencies of the structure of the press at the historical point of interest. The period 1969-70 marked the end point of a policy process of land segregation that had started with the establishment of Rhodesia as a British colony in 1890. During that time apart from the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company's newspapers the only other newspaper that could have given an alternative interpretation to that carried in *The Herald* was the church-based publications *Moto* and *Umbowo*, published by the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church respectively. Commenting on the key role that *Moto* played as an alternative source of political commentary on events in the country under Rhodesia Front rule Chennels (1980: 206) states:

Moto, the national weekly, produced from the Gwelo diocese, had become the only paper likely to interpret events from an African perspective ... until its banning in 1974, it demonstrated in issue after issue how the repository of truth about the local situation could be found in the laity and not in the more traditional centres of authority

That *Moto* and *Umbowo* were regarded as African papers and thus carrying African opinion was not in dispute. This especially qualified them as sources of data relevant for this research in that they would probably provide insights on the removals of Africans from a perspective not likely to be shared by *The Herald*.

The early phase of the Fast-track Land Reform Programme of 2000 to 2002 happened at a time when the *Daily News* happened to be still in circulation and presented a credible alternative voice to that of *The Herald* and was its match and equivalent in every respect just as it was also a daily paper which qualified it as a source of comparable stories on the forced evictions, this time involving white farmers, occasioned by the government policy. In 2005, Zimpapers' daily titles once again enjoyed an unassailed monopoly status as the only available daily newspapers after the *Daily News* had been closed down in 2003. Thus I selected *The Standard* as the only paper closest to the closed down *The Daily News* in providing space for alternative interpretations to those presented in *The Herald*. *Moto* and *The Standard* respectively, though weekly newspapers were typical as competitors to *The Herald* in providing alternative views to those published in *The Herald*, and were thus purposively sampled as sources of data for analysis.

3.4 Methods and Techniques of Data Collection

3.4.1 Participant Observation

News production processes as a community of practice in postcolonial contexts and how these challenge, disrupt or reinforce and stabilise subaltern/peasant identities forged under colonial rule can only best be studied through observation of journalistic work in naturalistic settings as they obtain in real newsrooms. Thus for the present study I spent a total of five weeks apiece of ethnographic observation, working with and conducting unstructured interviews with purposively selected informants, reporters and editors at *The Herald* and *The Daily News*. Purposive sampling was used to select and interview 14 key informants in line with generally accepted minima for ethnographic interviews which recommend that 10-20 key informants are all that may be needed to be interviewed to uncover and understand the core issues in any well-defined cultural domain such as journalism (Bernard (2011)).

To obtain relevant data to answer the main research question necessarily entailed close observation of the entire process of news production as well as obtaining journalists' own accounts of the how and why of their journalistic choices, judgments' and actions and their attitudes to different segments and classes of society, particularly the socially, politically and economically marginalised. The process of securing access involved writing to the editors of the respective newspapers seeking permission to conduct participant observation for a stated period of time as well as asking prospective interviewees to sign up informed consent forms. At the study's inception, I had targeted *The Herald* newspaper and the *NewsDay* as suitable sites for the participant observation. This was so due to the fact that at the time of formulation of the research proposal the two newspapers happened to be the only daily papers licensed to operate on the Zimbabwean dailies market. Incidentally while the *Newsday* Editor kept me waiting for written permission to conduct participant observation at the paper, *The Daily News* which had been publishing and had given extensive coverage of Government's Fast Track Land Reform Programme and had temporarily gone out of circulation after being closed down by Government in 2003 had been reissued with an operating license and was back on the market. This presented me with an opportunity to consider replacing the *Newsday* with *The Daily News* given that the latter had a longer history in operation and on that basis presented a better candidate from the privately owned independent press for comparative study against *The Herald*. An application was made to *The Daily News* Editor who promptly gave his consent in writing. All this preliminary work was a requirement before the study could get an ethics clearance by the University Ethics Committee.

Bernard (2011: 258) defines participant observation as a method of research involving “immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualise what you’ve seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly”. This implies spending some reasonable time living in the community that is the target of one’s research and such a stay would need to be long enough up to a point when the researched community have ceased to feel intruded upon and perturbed by the researcher’s presence. It is in light of this that I decided upon a time frame of one and a half months stay at each newspaper organisation as enough time to achieve approximately the same result as Malinowski describes of his own: “I ceased to be a disturbing element in the tribal life which I was to study... In fact as they knew that I would thrust my nose into everything... they finished by regarding me as a part and parcel of their life, a necessary evil or nuisance, mitigated by donations of tobacco” (Bernard 2011: 258). It is important, however, to point out at the outset that, the context of my own participant observation was different in a number of key aspects from Malinowski’s and other prominent anthropological studies.

Traditional anthropological ethnographies almost always involved a total stranger entering and staying with a foreign community. In the present case I considered myself as partly both an insider and an outsider to the journalistic communities I was studying. I could be considered an insider in the sense that I had in the past worked in the newsroom with some of the journalists as colleagues when I worked at *The Herald* and at *The Mirror* as a journalist intern and as a sub-editor after training between 2002 and 2003. In another sense, I might be considered an outsider in the context of this study as I was now rejoining the newsroom particularly at *The Herald* this time around as an academic from the University and was looked upon as a former colleague by some or former lecturer by others, as some of the reporters had studied at the Midlands State University where I was teaching as a lecturer and chairperson in the Department of Media and Society Studies. Thus, the nature of access to the two organisations was generally characterised by amity and friendly respect right from the start. This was useful in terms of the shorter time it took the research subjects to warm up to me and accepting and opening up to me with the assurance that my presence posed no threat whatsoever to them as individuals or as organisations. The respect I was accorded, however

tended to be somewhat over-exaggerated, as it was almost evident that reporters were on guard not to offend me in any way, as some of them might obviously have feared to scupper their own chances and prospects of later on joining the University to further their studies. During my stay at the two papers, I entertained enquiries from no less than seven reporters on opportunities there may be for them to enroll for different degree programmes in the Department on a part-time basis. To minimize effects of this biasing factor, I made sure that I did not spend too much time with just those who had shown to be friendlier than others. I chatted with almost everybody and drew my interview subjects from across the different sections of the newsroom. Most importantly, my entry into the organisations differed in that it eschewed the paternalistic and ethnocentric assumptions and attitudes towards the research subjects which characterised much of the early anthropological studies of the colonial 'Other' by Empire.

Before I set out on the ethnographic tour of the respective newsrooms I made preliminary enquiries and secured assurances from both news organisations about the feasibility of joining the newsrooms as a participant observer on research. During the six weeks stay at each newsroom I made a conscious effort to obtain access to each of the key stages and events in the production process of the newspaper and these include diary meetings, news gathering, writing, editing, sub-editing and design and layout of the newspaper before it went to print. This would enable me to observe as well as ask questions in the normal work context thus avoiding being intrusive. While all effort was taken to mitigate the biasing effect of the unavoidable awareness of my presence by the research subjects I reflexively took into account the situatedness of both myself and the researched and the fact that our co-orientation to each other within the context of the research situation needed to be acknowledged rather than excluded. A case in point was the mere fact of my being an African; I shared this identity with my research subjects meant that a patronizing/paternalistic co-orientation between myself and the research subjects would not arise. In addition, the fact that the researched would not anticipate receiving any gifts or tips from me may have had a bearing on the level of cooperation or lack of it I might have reasonably expected to get in the field. Racial and ethnic prejudices on both sides may also complicate the research situation where some of the research subjects may be different from the researcher racially and ethnically, which was not the case in the present study.

The reason for seeking to obtain research data from at least more than one news organisation as described above was premised on the need to control for the possibility of difference entirely attributable to the ownership structures of the media organisations. Ownership factors would cancel each other out, given the fact that *The Herald* right from colonial times has always been viewed as a pro-establishment paper on which government exercised significant levels of influence and control while *The Daily News* was a privately owned commercial newspaper enjoying relative editorial independence from government.

3.4.2 Ethnographic In-depth Interviews

In –depth interviews were conducted at each of the two newsrooms where I conducted participant observation to obtain journalists’ own understanding of their role in representing the social world and how that might affect the ordinary people. Key informants such as senior reporters and editors at each newsrooms were quickly identified very early into the participant observation periods. These key informants played an important role in smoothening my access to other members of the newsroom I needed to get information from. As I conducted these interviews and recording them, I was acutely aware and reflexive of the relative and constructedness of results obtained. The results would not purport to be objective representations of a piece of reality out there but as Fontana and Frey (2005: 698) point out: “interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results”. The unstructured interviews are presented separately from field notes made based on interactions and the more naturally occurring conversations during the course of the participant observation. These interviews were slightly different in that they were more systematically and consciously done following a clearly laid out interview guide so that they did not always succeed in escaping a degree of artificiality and self-consciousness in the way they were conducted.

3.4.3 Archival Research

Because the time available to the researcher for ethnographic study was limited it becomes difficult to make inferences on the basis of ethnographic data alone about change and continuity over a long time frame such as is referred to in this study – transition from colonial to postcolonial. The ethnographic data would necessarily need to be augmented with data obtained by other means such as archival research to provide a historical context. As

Murchison (2010: 163) argues, in ethnographic studies such as the present study, use can be made of archival “documents to answer questions about how long social and cultural phenomena have been in existence and to build a larger picture that considers historical antecedents and the course of social and cultural change”.

In between participant observation, I also consulted institutional libraries of the newspaper organisations under study in search of historical data and news articles relevant to the subject of forced evictions of mainly Africans from land alienated as European land under colonial rule, farm workers from white owned farms taken over under government sponsored Fast Track Land Reform Programme after the year 2000, and the evictions of urban black poor people whose dwellings were demolished under a government operation to rid towns of ‘illegal structures’ in 2005. I also spent some time at the National Archives of Zimbabwe in search of news articles and archival documents relevant to the research subject but not available at institutional libraries. The research populations from which research data was collected for content analysis can be divided into three main categories: headline news stories on and about peasants/subaltern evictions in the national press focusing on three main historical periods of extensive forced evictions of largely black poor people in Zimbabwe’s history.

From its inception the very process of colonial occupation of Zimbabwe by white settlers involved forced removals and displacements of indigenous black people backed by colonial land policies, from the Order in Council of 1898, the Land Apportionment Act of 1931, the Native Land Husbandry Act and ultimately by the Land Tenure Act of 1969. Land segregation in Southern Rhodesia culminated in the forced evictions of more than 300 000 Africans, (85 000 families) from the agriculturally more productive central regions of the country ear-marked for European settlement, to the inhospitable, semi-arid, tsetse fly infested districts of Sebungwe (now known as Gokwe and Hurungwe) in the Zambezi valley area. Most of these evictions took place in the 1930 -70 period.

The other two notable nationwide evictions occur after independence when government embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, (FTLRP) in 2000-2002 ostensibly to correct historical injustices of colonial land policies. The FTLRP resulted in multidimensional evictions, displacements and resettlements involving different classes of people, thousands of former white landowners, an estimated 350 000 farm workers and thousands of resettled ‘new’ farmers, and when the Zimbabwe Government instituted

Operation ‘Drive out trash’ (Murambatsvina) in 2005 to evict an estimated 650 000 urban poor people by demolishing their ‘illegal dwellings’, (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2008). The seismic transformations of these episodes on the lives of the poor people have been well documented and widely researched (Arrighi 1966, Tibaijuka 2005).

The focus on periods of forced removals is based on the assumption that invariably the most vulnerable members of society in their numbers tend to be mostly negatively affected by such policies and are bound to hold strong views opposed to such policies usually imposed from above to a point of resisting, staging civil disobedience or just passively resigning to their fate. Either way, this creates fertile ground for attracting news coverage from different perspectives. It is such news content that I collected for analysis since “cultural artifacts [and news articles belong to this category] can also be analysed as proxy representations of phenomena to which the ethnographer has limited or indirect access” (Murchison 2010: 164).

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Data gathered through the use of mixed research methods as described above also entails use of mixed methods of data analysis. Hence in this section I outline the different data analysis techniques employed to make sense of the research data.

3.5.1 Quantitative Content Analysis

In this study sampled media texts was coded and numerically analysed to reveal general patterns in terms of recurring myths, tropes and imagery used in representing subaltern black people and structural processes by which they were brought to subjection and domination. A scheme is developed for analysing instances when subaltern groups are given voice in news stories, given agency and the different ways in which they are included, excluded and represented in news stories appearing in newspapers. Of particular interest was to answer the question when and under what circumstances subaltern identities ‘make it’ into the pages of the newspapers under study.

Quantitative content analysis was used to map and analyse journalists’ development and cultivation of mutual dependencies with particular news sources in different locales, in terms of the frequency and quality of communication traffic between them. Qualitative content analysis, using critical discourse analysis, was conducted on a smaller sample of typical news stories specifically on subaltern issues from government-controlled and non-government controlled newspaper publications to measure the range and diversity of news sources,

editorial selections, salience and editorial judgments of what passes as the most important news of the day and the discursive strategies by which news attains and legitimates its status as news beyond contestation.

3.5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

A smaller selection from the main sample of news stories from the selected newspapers will be subjected to detailed textual analysis using critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques. In this research the view of CDA taken shall be consistent with Van Dijk's understanding of it as critical scholarship committed to exposing and problematising "the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination and doing so in the best interests of dominated groups" Van Dijk (2001: 96). In the context of this study, instances of language use in the form of news stories on the printed page are treated as not ideologically innocent or value free, and an application of CDA would help uncover how ideology operates through these texts both to stabilise or subvert hegemonic domination. Van Dijk's concerns about how media in Europe tends to minoritise and exclude certain voices rather than others is relevant to the analysis of news practices and content in colonial Rhodesia for the reason that race as an ideology would most likely tend to structure news production practices in ways that masked unequal power relations.

Thus, in many respects, except when involved in conflicts or problems, minorities tend to be 'denied' by the press. Practices of newsgathering as well as patterns of quotation also show that minorities and their institutions have literally little to say in the press. First of all, especially in Europe, there are virtually no minority journalists, so that the perspective, inside knowledge and experience, prevailing attitudes and necessary sources of journalists tend to be all white, as are also the government agencies, police and other institutions that are the main sources of news in the press. (Van Dijk 1999: 546)

The Rhodesia Herald newsroom of the 1960s and 70s was a whites-only newsroom, while at *Moto* the situation may have been slightly different with a mixture of white and black journalists and news reporters but still with most influential editorial and decision making positions being held by whites. This study partly seeks to uncover how the issue of race intersected with taken-for-granted assumptions about news and news values to produce a particular way of understanding and reporting the issue of forced removals. And then also to examine how this historical process may or may not have had a legacy in how similar removals and poor oppressed people's issues were reported in post-independent Zimbabwe. Deacon et-al (2007: 151, 152) understand the term discourse as referring to language use in

which, “different social categories, practices, and relations are constructed from and in the interests of a particular point of view, a particular conception of social reality”.

CDA as a method of textual analysis would lay bare the strategies deployed by news texts about poor people to conceal their ideological orientations under the cloak of facticity and objectivity. Wodak’s (2001: 2) conception of CDA as aiming to: “investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimised and so on by language use” informs this study’s analysis of colonial/postcolonial news texts and narratives about race based differential access to privilege in the context of forced evictions. Given that in postcolonial contexts race as opposed to class has continued as the major structuring force. Richardson (2007: 6) found it rather “strange that the discursive reproduction of class inequalities remains an under-developed issue for CDA”. It was at that time “yet to analyse the role that newspaper discourse plays in indexing and (re)producing class inequality”. In postcolonial settings, of greater interest is to analyse how the same class inequalities tend to be inflected by race and racism and that is the object of deploying the analytic tools of CDA in the present study.

In applying critical discourse analysis this research draws on Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional analysis which focuses on three levels of analysis. Fairclough (1995) suggests a systematic unraveling of the texture and inter-textuality (form and function) of the text, and its relationship with other texts that it enters into conversation with, the relationship of the text to its context of production and to the broader social practices that shape it and are in turn influenced by it. This involves a close analysis of the linguistic features such as the lexical and syntactical choices and rhetorical and semantic styles deployed in a text not just for the sake of it but with a view to uncover the ideological purposes implicit in them.

The critical discourse analysis approach I deploy in this study goes beyond the limited and narrow engagement with text alone as if texts were produced in a social vacuum. It takes a materialist conception of how text, as an instance of language use, is rooted in and underpinned by a broader social political context anchored in concrete arrangements for the production of our common existence. Thus in making sense of any news text as Greg Philo suggests below, reference is made to prior texts and contexts of production:

In essence, I have suggested that discourse analysis which remains text-based encounters a series of problems specifically in its ability to show: (1) the origins of competing discourses and how they relate to different social interests; (2) the diversity of social accounts compared to what is present (and

absent) in a specific text; (3) the impact of external factors such as professional ideologies on the manner in which the discourses are represented; and (4) what the text actually means to different parts of the audience, (Philo 2007: 185)

Foucault's idea of the relationship between discourse and power also informs my analysis of the news archive on forced removals during and after colonialism in Zimbabwe. His idea that people do not produce discourse but rather that they are products of discourse in as much as in turn they produce discourse and, they take their existence in and through discourse will be central to an understanding of the discursive foundations of the common consciousness of an era. Foucault cited in Downing (2008: 49) says about discourse:

The individual does not possess discourse or make discursive meaning. Rather, discursive formations create subject positions that can – and must – be occupied by speaking individuals, such as that of the doctor who is authorised to diagnose your ailment, while I, as a cultural theorist, am not. ... Medical statements cannot come from anybody. Secondly the discourse of a doctor acquires further legitimacy in issuing from an appropriate location or 'institutional site', such as a clinic, consulting room or hospital.

Applied to the analysis of news then it would mean digging up discursive formations that create subject positions from which speaking individual subjects, that is journalists and their sources, can produce what passes as news. Rather than asking what news is written by journalists in a particular context like that involving a conflict arising from forced removals, it is more appropriate in terms of this Foucauldian approach to ask what journalists and their sources are written by particular news discourses. It is what discourse speaks us more than what discourse we speak that is of importance here. The aim would be to uncover the underlying discourse or ideology that makes certain interpretations of reality more plausible and legitimate than others

Of particular interest in his approach is its focus not just on the said of discourse, but also the unsaid and silences of discourse, as needing equal attention in analysing language and meaning in the service of power. It would be interesting to find out how a whole colonial lexicon or archive upon which it was possible to produce text and utterances about racial power relations gets renegotiated or displaced as the country moves towards racial integration and attainment of independence in Zimbabwe. It would be important to seek answers to questions on what happens to journalism and news production practices when the colonial knowledge archive is modified or replaced and with what traceable consequences on text and discourses in postcolonial settings.

This method of analysing media text is thus particularly suited to the main purposes of this study as it concerns itself with the way media discourses construct a certain section of Zimbabwean population – the rural peasant – who have occupied the lowest rung of the geo-political hierarchies and whose life opportunities have largely remained unchanging over time. It would be interesting to find out how media texts have managed to mask these economic inequalities among different social groups thus rendering domination bearable beyond the end of colonialism.

An equivalent of critical discourse analysis, which Scollon (2001) terms Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA), is also applied to the analysis of various texts in the form of diary entries, transcriptions of observation notes of events witnessed, documents collected and conversations and interview talk recorded with journalists as key informants in the course of the participant observation. Ethnographic observation necessarily produces its own texts in the form of the researcher's transcriptions and interpretations of the experience observed and such texts are also a legitimate object of critical analysis and reflection by similar critical techniques to bring out how contexts and forms of social interaction produce "the histories and habitus" of the social actors' daily routines "which is the ground in which society is produced and reproduced," (Scollon 2001: 140).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In seeking to establish the effect on news content of journalistic agency unalloyed with other extraneous factors like state control, ownership and commercial imperatives I was fully aware that both journalists and target readers of newspapers would necessarily be used as informants for this research and was also cognisant of the ethical issues that arise in research where human beings are involved as subjects. Due care was taken to ensure that informed consent of all those who would participate in this research was obtained prior to their being asked to participate. I also took responsibility that I or anybody I would assign as my research assistant for the purposes of gathering data for this research had obtained necessary training and research expertise commensurate with the ethical standards expected for such research work. I also applied for and obtained ethics clearance from the Human Research Ethics (Non-Medical) Committee of the Wits University before embarking on the research.

I am talking about millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life-from life, from the dance, from wisdom. (Cesaire 1972: 6)

Chapter 4. Newsification of Forced Removals in Colonial Zimbabwe

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Contextualising Media Discourses on Land in Zimbabwe

Although this study isolates for closer analysis news discourses on forced removals of black communities in the then Rhodesia, these were not isolated atypical cases confined to the unique experience of Rhodesia. Many scholars have pointed to a number of similarities and policy convergences in settler colonies of Africa. The general pattern being one where land policies experimented with in one colony were transplanted and applied in another, sometimes with very minimal changes and adaptations to suit new conditions and circumstantial imperatives. In many cases the difference only existed in name. For example the Natives Land Act of 1913 in South Africa resulted in the demarcation of land into racial enclaves which formed the basis of that country's policy of separate development known as apartheid. In Kenya too, the land policy that ignited the Mau Mau revolt had borrowed much from the Rhodesian land policy given that its crafting was based on recommendations of a land commission headed by the same Morris Carter who had headed a similar land commission earlier on in Rhodesia, (Youe 2002). The then Rhodesian government, to give effect to the recommendations of the Morris Carter Commission, had enacted a land policy in 1931, the Land Apportionment Act. Its objective was to demarcate the land into African and European areas. resulting in mass evictions of thousands of Africans from land which had been declared European into areas reserved for them much along similar lines with what had been happening south of the Limpopo, serve for the fact that the authorities in Rhodesia never thought of their policies as the equivalent of apartheid. They liked to think of their policy as a policy of partnership between whites and blacks.

The upshot of these very similar land policies was the transformation of freely living indigenous black people of the sub-region into squatters whose tenancy on the land that they had always regarded as theirs became illegal the moment that land was declared European. Existing literature has dealt adequately and exhaustively with the subject of how land was racially segregated in the then Rhodesia leading to a government operation of mass movement and reorganisation of African agriculture conducted over many decades, (Riddell 1978, Palmer 1977). A subject that has not so fully been investigated is the role that may have been played by ideological institutions such as the media in engineering Africans' 'consent' to this form of racial domination. Furedi (1989: 9) points out:

Squatting or labour tenancy was a creation of white settler colonialism in Africa. In the white settler colonies of Kenya, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa the life of the African population was reorganised around the interests of settlers. As J. K. Rennie argues, labour tenancy was a relation of serfdom which emerged wherever white farmers with limited capital took land from agricultural peoples.

Given the context and history of the land segregationist policies in Southern Africa the use of the term ‘squatter’ to refer to the new status that Africans found themselves in was one of the most important colonial myths in support of white supremacist ideology to give the mistaken notion that Africans were the ones who turned up at the white man’s farm and were now unwilling to leave when in fact the reverse was more consistent with the fact of the late nineteenth century European colonial occupation of African land. Robin Palmer exposes as mistaken, the notion that the Europeans found the land on which they went on to settle, empty and uninhabited by Africans, when he points out that: “In selecting their land they [white settlers] have naturally been guided by the number of natives located thereon, whose knowledge of the productive powers of the soil must necessarily be the best guide”, (Palmer 1977: 94). Riddell (1978: 7) further argues that “Most indigenous Africans were not living in what were later called Reserves when the Europeans arrived in the country, so the majority had to be moved there”. Thus began the myth that Europeans owned the land on which blacks intruded upon and squatted. This conflictual relationship over land between whites and blacks rooted in the colonial history forms the broader political context within which to make sense of news discourses about the resistance and collaboration to forced removals by the Tangwena people and the Hunyani people in Zimbabwe between 1969 and 1970.

Happening as they did in 1970 around the time the Rhodesia Front government enacted a new law, the Land Tenure Act of 1969 to finalise the land division of Rhodesia along racial lines for all time (Riddell 1978), the removals in question were among the last mass removals in more than 6 decades of an unrelenting systematic process of mass dispossession, alienation and disempowerment of black people in Zimbabwe. This however is not to suggest that this form of colonial violence was not met with stiff resistance by individual communities from time to time. The point of the matter however is that news (the first draft of history) about such resistance was sparsely reported on if at all in the mainstream press, evidence of the fact that the press of the time was firmly embedded with the colonial establishment. It was thus unable to witness the colonial events except through the eyes and ears of the white colonial victors. . The Official Report of Parliamentary Debates of the House of Lords of 23 June 1926 succinctly captures the history behind the contestations over ownership of land as

between groups with a vested interest therein of the then Southern Rhodesia namely: the British government, the British South Africa Chartered Company and the ‘natives’ of Southern Rhodesia which we shall not delve into here. Suffice is to say that the House of Lords warmed up to the provisions and suggestions made by the Morris Carter Land Commission in their report to bring finality to the controversies on land ownership in Rhodesia. In the words of one of the Lords, Lord Olivier: (Parliamentary Debates of the House of Lords of 23 June 1926: 543) “This report I have read with very great pleasure and satisfaction because it appears to me to be the most broad-minded and liberal document that I have seen emanate from any official source with regard to Southern Rhodesia on the land question... and, as I have mentioned, it was decided to recommend the principle of absolute segregation and the abrogation of the existing right of natives to purchase land in certain areas.” Although he tended generally to agree with the proposals of the Commission report on the imperative for land segregation in Rhodesia, Lord Olivier found the proposed ratio of land alienation between the two races, white and black, rather startling, where each European would have “a potential interest of thirty-three and a half times as much land as the potential interest of each native” (Ibid: 547).

The Commissioners explain that their view of the future of Southern Rhodesia is that it will be largely, in so far as natives are concerned, a country of small peasant holders whereas, with regard to much of the country in European settlement, it will be a country of large ranches and large estates. I think it is quite conceivable in the future that the development of the country will be such that the best system is to have a large number of large estates and a very large number of small peasant estates administered on different systems, and that those natives who can spare their labour from their own holdings shall be available for labour on the large estates, occupying about two thirds of the colony (ibid: 547).

Lord Buxton, drawing on his past experience as High Commissioner to Southern Rhodesia felt strongly in favour of the Commission’s recommendations that the delimitation of land in Rhodesia between Europeans and natives be finalised once and for all time. He accused those who were critical of some aspects of the Commission’s recommendations, of taking a rather extreme native view. He states that:

I am quite confident that it is in the best interests of Southern Rhodesia, looking to the future, that this question of the delimitation of the native area between the white and black populations should be settled at the very earliest moment before further difficulties arise. If one wanted an argument in favour of that, it is only necessary to look to the Union of South Africa itself, where very unfortunately, in earlier days before the white population became what it is and before the black population was as numerous as it is now, they did not have the opportunity which is given to Southern

Rhodesia, in having a delimitation of the territory of the country between black and white, of avoiding the great number of difficulties, which they are now encountering and also the great amount of friction and ill feeling which naturally arise between the two races (ibid: 154-155).

The establishment and concretisation of colonial rule in the then Rhodesia as in many parts of colonial Africa took form on the reorganisation of geographical spaces and usually always involved displacement of indigenous peoples from their traditional settlements in a process of colonial landscaping as the basis for a policy of racial segregation (Sharp 2009: 57). The colonial landscape then formed the core text through which discourses of white supremacy over colonised 'Others' were made visible, perniciously ever dramatised and therefore naturalised. One needed to look no farther than the different geographical areas the races occupied and they would see writ large the doctrine of white supremacy.

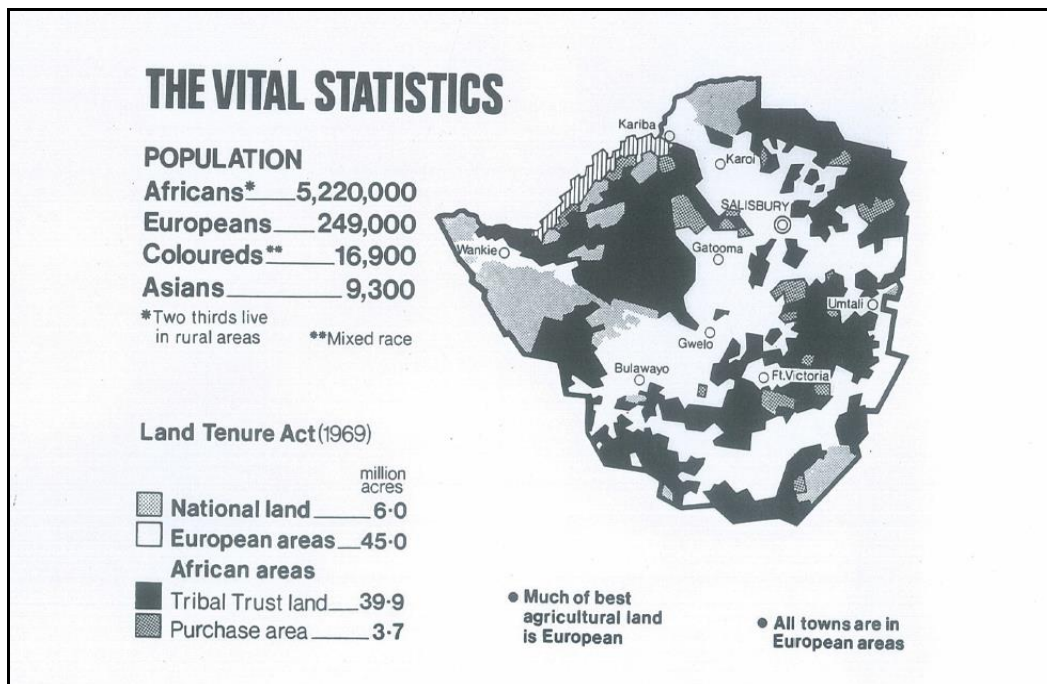


Figure 1. Rhodesia Racial Land Demarcation by 1969. Source: Parker 1972

The subject of forced removals to create two essentially different countries in one is not something that happened only in 1960 or 1970, nor did it just affect two black communities in the then Rhodesia, the Tangwena and the Hunyani people. It was a massive operation carried out by successive colonial governments in Rhodesia and that touched on the lives of most indigenous communities throughout many decades from the founding of Rhodesia. What makes the Tangwena and the Hunyani cases of research interest as pointed out in an

earlier chapter is mainly because of the contemporaneity of the two removals and the different treatment they received in the local media. The other reason is that they come late and at the crowning and intense moment in the history of struggles about land in the then Rhodesia happening as they did after the passing into law of the Land Tenure Act of 1970. The sheer numbers to be affected to put to effect the provisions of the act were staggering and therefore likely to generate conflict and media attention to the issues as Daniels points out:

The country's famous Land Apportionment Act, which has been described for many years as the cornerstone of racial discrimination, will be replaced by the Land Tenure Act – a more vicious and ruthless law. Like its South African counterpart, the Group Areas Act, it will cause the removal of thousands of persons who, because of their race and colour, are considered unfit to occupy the land they now live on. ... Authoritative sources in the Ministry of Internal Affairs which exclusively deals with Blacks tell me that some 15,000 Black families who now live in different parts of the country will have to move. In fact, those who will leave are estimated by other authorities at something like 500,000 Blacks (Daniels 1974: 140).

Rekayi Tangwena and his people's struggle to remain in their ancestral land on Gaeresi Ranch became a symbol of all Africans' resistance to displacement by Rhodesia Front racist policies. He became an icon of the liberation struggle and his persistent refusal to give in to the demands of the colonial regime to move from the land he regarded as sacred and his ancestral home earned him and his case so much worldwide acclaim and publicity. One famous myth built around the Tangwena people was how, after their homes had been demolished by government by day the Tangwena people would come back from their hiding places in the mountains and quickly rebuild temporary shelter by night so that in a very short space of time the village would be up once again the following morning. So widely known was the story of the Tangwena people's struggle among the black population of Zimbabwe that all quickly built temporary shelter and slums that mushroomed on the precincts of cities and towns in the then Rhodesia as well as any illegally built shanty towns became christened zviTangwena meaning temporary illegal structures like those the Tangwena people had built in defiance to their forced removal formal from Gaerezi. Later on he became so involved with the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe that he played a significant role assisting the late Edgar Tekere and Robert Mugabe skip the border into Mozambique and in the recruitment of many young black Zimbabweans to join the armed struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe. Because of this consistent record as a fighter against colonial domination of his people, Chief Rekayi Tangwena got a senatorial appointment in the first majority rule government at the attainment of Zimbabwe's independence.

The three chiefs of the Hunyani people; chief Huchu, Ruya and Gobo, on the other hand, were quite the opposite of Rekayi Tangwena in many respects. Though they and their people were affected by the land laws of the then Rhodesia in ways that were similar in many respects to the Tangwena case, the three chiefs did not demonstrate spine, they capitulated and cooperated with the regime. Similar co-operation and loyalty to white colonialists during the 1896-98 African uprisings against colonial occupation had not helped the cause of Chief Huchu's forbearer, as the area where he and his people lived in Mteo Forest near Umvuma was alienated for European occupation and they could only remain on the land as rent paying or labour tenants to the new owners of the land (Beach 1970). Of the three, only chief Huchu has a record of recalcitrance towards the question of his removal from Hunyani but probably finding himself in the minority of one to two his resistance became ineffective. And because of this, he got the worst bargain for himself and the people who were under him as he ended up being resettled in the tsetse fly infested zone, in Gokwe District, where he was not allowed to take any livestock with him. This was quite unlike his counterparts who managed to extract better deals for their people by being offered resettlement in the Silobela reserve which was much nearer to Hunyani compared to Gokwe where Huchu and his people were resettled. These other two chiefs were also allowed to take with them a limited number of heads of livestock per family. Chief Huchu did put up some form of resistance though he lacked the sophistication of Rekayi Tangwena. He was the last of the three chiefs to concede to being moved from Hunyani and as a result he and his people ended up having to be resettled in a hot semi-arid area below the Charama plateau in Gokwe, more than 300 kilometres away.

I have very vivid memories of how at the age of 10 he and the members of his family as part of the Huchu 'tribe', found ourselves being bundled up together with our few belongings into three Isuzu trucks and driven away on a journey that took a day and a night before we could get to our destination and were offloaded in the middle of the bush with no shelter until adults in the family could put up some huts for us. The only tragedy for us young people when we left Hunyani was the fact that we bid farewell to the taste of cows' milk and were never to eat milk for many years to come. Another lesson we learnt too quickly was that food was also not quite as plentiful in the new area and as a result many men soon vanished from this place and we were left in the care of our mothers. They had retraced their footsteps back to the European farms and mines in and around Hunyani the area we had originally come from, in search of employment to earn an income to supplement the little food that we were able to

eke out of the fields we worked with our hands with no cattle for draught power. For our protein we relied in those early days of our stay in Charama, on game meat which the men-folk hunted and killed for the pot. We never knew that was poaching, for the area being close to Chizarira game reserve teemed with a variety of wild animals particularly the warthog which either had strayed from the game reserve or which had Tangwena-style resisted and evaded being herded into the confines of the game reserve to make way for us.

By way of inducement the white regime had built a fairly beautiful ‘chiefly’ house for the Chief in the new area, a large building of brick under a zinc roof situated close to the main road and fitted with tapped water. However, the chief refused to move into this house in protest and instead built his own huts pretty much similar to those of his ordinary subjects. Chief Huchu like his counterpart, chief Rekayi Tangwena ended up incarcerated for failure to report the presence of ‘terrorists’ in his area in 1975 and got released at independence only to come home to die, because he never lived long after his release from prison. Unlike Tangwena he never got any token of recognition from the independence government for his part in the liberation struggle.

In the following section I present, critically analyse and discuss the different ways the forced removals of the Tangwena and the Hunyani people were constructed by the local press.

4.3 Evictee Resistance and Collaboration under Colonialism

Chief Tangwena and Chief Huchu became symbols of resistance at a time when most chiefs chose to cooperate with the colonial regime, one of the reasons why they should have attracted media attention (Frederikse 1982).



Figure 2. Chief Rekayi Tangwena in his traditional royal garb in protest against forcible removal from Gaeresi Ranch 1969. Source: National Archives of Zimbabwe

Archival evidence shows that Chief Rekayi Tangwena's case enjoyed greater media visibility during the period under review (1969-1970) owing to a number of factors among which include the fact that he obviously benefited from the sympathy, moral support and advice he got from some sections of the white community through his connections with Guy Clutton-Brock. One way in which Tangwena owed it to people like Clutton-Brock to get media attention was through a book he wrote and published under the title: "Rekayi Tangwena – Let Tangwena be". The book gave an account of government's failed attempts to forcibly evict

the Tangwena people from their ancestral home. Thus it can be argued that the linkages with the Nyafaru project, Cold Comfort Farm and the white personalities connected to these Missionary projects were instrumental in generating local and international media interest in the Tangwena story.

There is a precedent to it in the Limehill case in South Africa as Desmond (1972: 24) points out in his book: *The Discarded People* that:

The removal to Limehill was not the first nor the worst of such removals, but it was probably the most widely publicised and the best documented. This was because there were some Whites who were interested in these people and brought their fate to the notice of the public. Otherwise they would have been completely voiceless.”

The Hunyani people on the other hand unlike the Tangwena were far more numerous. The people involved were many times as numerous as the Tangwena. There were three chiefs and their people involved – chiefs Huchu, Gobo and Ruya. Their removal was much around the same time as the Tangwena – around the 1969-70 period. The distances to new areas to which these people were being removed were far greater in comparison to the Tangwena. The difference between the area they were coming from and those to which they were being resettled were sharper. One of the chiefs and his people was actually removed to an area more than 300 km away in the hotter, drier region of the Zambezi valley, in the tsetse fly belt. Not a single story was to be found about the plight of this people either in the state press or in the existing alternative press of which *Moto* was the foremost. The few stories in the *Moto* newspaper which broke the story of the removal of the other two chiefs resettled in the Silobela area were few and far apart.

4.3.1 Press Coverage of the Tangwena Removals

“Chief Tangwena disclosed that the government had tried to bribe him. ‘They say that if I move to Bende I will be paid \$25 a month and will be officially recognised as a chief,’ Chief Tangwena said,” (*Moto* September 1969: 3). Chief Rekayi Tandwena remained faithful to his people and steadfastly resisted all pressure to bow to the colonial regime’s order to leave his ancestral home in the Gaeresi area.

One way in which *The Rhodesia Herald* reportage overall on the Tangwena controversy becomes complicit in perpetuation of a white supremacist ideology becomes patently evident in all the 12 stories on the Tangwena issue published between August 1969 and August 1970. White ownership and interest in Gaeresi Ranch is presented as beyond question but black

claims to the land are presented as nothing more than just that – a mere claim. Another way *The Rhodesia Herald* promotes perceptions of white supremacy and black inferiority in its coverage of the Tangwena story is the way in which the Africans are reported and spoken about rather than being accorded voice in the stories that concern them directly. The speaking subject in these stories is always white. In some stories the African is treated in a manner that is patronising if not condescending. The African even in resisting domination is treated as not capable of acting on his own initiative. The African's humanity is denied him as it is imputed in the story that there must be some white godfather behind it all. The African is only a pawn in a grand political strategy of some white trouble makers or communists. To illustrate this point a good starting point would be a story published in *The Rhodesia Herald* of 1969. In a front page story, (August 27, 1969) *The Rhodesia Herald* dedicates close to three quarters of the page to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Lance Smith who is supposedly giving the last word to clarify the Tangwena story. Below is an excerpt from the story titled as follows:

Eyebrow, underlined: “Minister gives background to Tangwena Issue.

Banner Headline bold typeface: Subversion claim.

Kicker: Communists and fellow travellers' blamed”,

Lead: Much of the activity which had led to the present difficulties with the Tangwena tribe was Communist inspired, and operated by fellow travellers, the Minister of Internal affairs, Mr. Lance Smith, said in Parliament yesterday. The Africans concerned were being ruthlessly exploited by Mr. Guy Clutton-Brock and his associates in an effort to break down the Land Apportionment Act, he said.

Body: In a statement at the start of yesterday's proceedings, the minister said that in recent weeks various statements had appeared in the Press about the Tangwena issue, which was in fact a straightforward matter of a land-owner seeking to remove squatters from his land, blown up into a major issue in the local and overseas Press.

The Tangwena had been used by certain subversive elements to undermine the Government, and the present position was part of a plan to challenge the laws of the land, and in particular the Land Apportionment Act, he said.

The story was attributed to *Iana* news agency as part of its Parliamentary Service. Thus by marking the story *The Rhodesia Herald* hedges against responsibility for the story in spite of the fact that they are still using it and on front page too.

Another technique the paper employs to distance itself from the views contained in the story while still giving it publicity is by putting the phrase “Communists and fellow travellers” in

single quotation marks to indicate that this may not necessarily be a view they share as a paper. But by placing it on the front page the paper still manages to communicate to the reader that the story is the most important story of the day and that it is worthwhile reading it. The fact that the views are being attributed to a government minister, that it was said in parliament and that there were no contrary views expressed against it implies to the reader this is a view shared by the whole of the Rhodesian white Government on the Tangwena issue. The main point the two sentence lead establishes is the fact that the real source of problems in the Tangwena issue lies not with the Tangwena themselves. The Tangwena are victims of ruthless manipulation by a clique of Communists and their sympathisers led by Mr Guy Clutton-Brock. A possible surface reading and interpretation of the Minister's remarks is to suggest that the Minister is shifting blame from the Tangwena People and placing it squarely with fellow white men who are guilty of spreading communist influence (itself a foreign and unAfrican idea) among unsuspecting 'childlike', Africans. In this way the Minister could be argued to be absolving Africans of any wrong doing in the Tangwena saga.

At a deeper and more critical level of interpretation the remarks could be read as understating the capacity or rather placing the capacity of Africans to act on their own initiative in doubt thus denying them of agency in this matter in a process Aime Césaire (1972: 42) calls "thingification" or reduction of the colonised into objects of white action even in defying the government order to remove from Gaeresi Ranch. The Minister frames the issue not as one of black resistance against white government through defying what they regard as an unjust and oppressive legal system based on race but as one pitting the white government against one section of the white community bent on subverting government authority by instigating a spirit of revolt among their otherwise peace-loving and law-abiding African subjects. This shifts the debate away from whether government should proceed with its plan to forcibly remove the Tangwena people or not. That is beside the point according to the Minister who saw it as "a straightforward matter of a land-owner seeking to remove squatters from his land". What only needed to be done was to deal with the communist instigators, by removing or neutralising their influence among the 'impressionable' Africans. This, the government of Ian Smith was to do two years later when in 1971 it stripped Mr Guy Clutton-Brock of his citizenship and deported him as a "threat to public safety" (*The Telegraph* July 3, 2013).

The use of the phrase: “Communists and fellow travellers” has to be read against the background of the Cold War era politics, where Rhodesia’s Ian Smith had declared his UDI government to be the defender of western Christian civilisation against the spread of Communism. All those who did not agree with government policies were either communists or communist sympathisers and therefore enemies of the state (Frederikse 1982).

The interpretive frame being invoked here is one that foregrounds African innocence and naivety. The picture of the African in this instance is consistent with a white racist stereotype of the African as a child-like race, naive and lacking in sophistication and perpetually in need of white guidance of one sort or another. It draws on pre-existing imperialist tropes of colonial Africa as existing in a childhood filial relationship to imperial parenthood of Europe as represented in Cecil John Rhodes’ remarks in support of the Glen Grey Bill in Cape Town in 1894 cited in Ashcroft (2001: 43) that:

As to the question of voting, we say that the natives are in a sense citizens, but not altogether citizens - they are still children. ... Now I say the natives are children. They are just emerging from barbarism. ... To us annexation was an obligation, whereas to the natives it will be a positive relief, for they will be freed from a seething cauldron of barbarian atrocities.

The lenses through which the reality of the struggle of the Tangwena people had to be corrected and adjusted in order to give a perspective that fitted well with existing knowledge and myths about Africans, a mythology upon which was justified the domination of black indigenous people by minority whites, a basis for keeping governmental power in ‘responsible’ white hands for all time. Tangwena had to be boxed to fit into the Minister’s preferred stereotype about the African consistent with that image of an African as the noble savage. The Ministry of Information’s booklet and other historical records portrayed a typical African mind-set, the central theme of which was that the Africans were generally a contented subject population happily accepting their allotted station under the benign rule of the master race (Frederikse 1982: 16). The cause of the misunderstanding between the Tangwena and the government according to the Minister, stemmed not from the Tangwena’s own initiative, rather it was “Communist inspired and operated by fellow travellers... The Africans were being ruthlessly exploited by Mr. Guy Clutton-Brock and his associates”. The racial myth that runs through Mr. Smith’s argument is the view of Africans as a childlike race incapable of rational choice without a lot of hand-holding and guidance by their white masters. Thus the Tangwena defy the landowner’s eviction notice by remaining on the

property because they were “advised”, “counselled” and “incited” to do so by Mr. Keeble, a white farm manager on the adjacent Nyafaru Development Project founded by Mr. Guy Clutton-Brock in 1957. In the Minister’s view, it was white men like Mr. Clutton-Brock and his associate Mr. Keeble who were abusing

these tribesmen as pawns in the main plan, and they have been incited to transgress the law. ... Naturally, there is resistance, but resistance through ignorance, and it is this ignorance that is being used by the infamous machinations of people such as Guy Clutton-Brock and his associates to further their political ambitions (*The Rhodesia Herald* August 27, 1969).

Thus this fairly long article in which the Minister sets the record straight also tends to set the agenda and the reasonable parameters within which future debate on the Tangwena case may unfold. The news story thus achieves two objectives. First, it dismisses Tangwena people’s claim over the land in dispute as frivolous and vexatious as their own occupation of it is described as having taken place at about the same time that white also came to occupy and possess the land. Second, by representing the African as ignorant and therefore prone to manipulation it forecloses their participation in the debate as they are not likely to articulate any rational arguments on the issues. This probably accounts for the reason the paper seeks and publishes Mr. Hanmer, the landowner’s and Mr. Clutton-Brock’s responses to the Minister’s article in its next day’s issue and takes no trouble to seek out and publish Chief Rekayi Tangwena’s view on the matter since he, like a child, can only be spoken about. In this way the voice of the colonised other is silenced or relegated to the margins of what was supposed to be the news rendering of an aspect of colonial reality. This explains why in what appears to be a follow up story titled: “Impossible to cooperate with Tangwena” (*The Rhodesia Herald*, August 28, 1969: 13) which seems to bolster the Minister’s earlier argument, Mr. Hanmer, the landowner, finds no contradiction in terminology when he uses the terms “pegging boy” and “man” to refer to an African employee in:

I was given a ‘pegging boy’ by the department who had a certain amount of agricultural knowledge. He left hurriedly within a month. Another man was sent, but he went quicker and left his blankets behind, which he has never come back to claim. Both these men were intimidated into getting off the property as the locals were not going to be told what to do.

The apparent white paternalism was in this way and in other encounters between whites and blacks so systematically inculcated in the minds of Africans through insistence on a form of address between the two races in a perpetual master-servant relationship where the white man was to be called ‘Baas’ or ‘Mister’ and the African servant was either ‘boy’ if they were male or ‘girl’ if female. Accommodation quarters to house their black servants situated at the back

of every European homestead were called boy's kaya and the man who worked their gardens was 'garden-boy', the house servant was 'house-boy' or 'house-girl' irrespective of the fact that the Africans were adults or not. In both articles attributed to Minister Lance Smith and landowner William Hanmer the white people involved are individuated by being respectfully addressed as 'Mr.' each time they are mentioned in the story, but Africans are denied this individuation (Loomba 1998), and are imagined only as a faceless collectivity, herd as a 'tribe' as in the "Tangwena tribe", "the Makombi tribe" or just "the Tangwena". Or, when they had to be named as individuals in a story, they were never addressed as 'Mr.' so-and-so. It was either simply "Kinga, the Tangwena chief who lived in the adjacent Holdenby Tribal Trust Land" or "one Rekayi Tangwena who had been working for years in many centres of Rhodesia" (*The Rhodesia Herald*, August 27, 1969: 1). The representation of Africans and their land in this and other articles in this newspaper is quite typical of and consistent with what Bill Ashcroft defines as the imperial imaginary of natives and of Africa as in need of European imperial inscription:

The unformedness of colonial space is the geographic metaphor of the savage mind; both consciousness and space form the childlike innocence which is the natural surface of imperial inscription. This process of inscription is not merely metaphoric, because it is in writing itself that place is constructed out of empty space, and it is in the control of representation and the dissemination of this control in literacy and education that the colonial subject is subdued, (Ashcroft 2001: 40).

The news as text of empire was thus naturalising imperial inscriptions on both the land and on the African mind. In the Minister's interpretation which *The Rhodesia Herald* reports matter-of-factly in its later instalments on the Tangwena issue is, "a straightforward matter of a land-owner seeking to remove squatters from his land". That the Tangwena are squatters is made to seem self-evident, therefore there is no need to ask the Tangwena about it. That Mr Hanmer is the farm-owner is also presented as if it were in the nature of things for a white man to be land-owner. These facts are presented as lying outside history, incontestable and therefore natural. In Mr. Smith's words, "there were two reasons why the Tangwena must move. The first was that it was private land in the European area, and squatter occupation was contrary to Land Apportionment policy". The eviction of the Tangwena in this case is being legitimated on the grounds of legality. It is a requirement of the Land Apportionment Act. The nominalisation and externalisation of what was otherwise an outcome of a historical process in "land in the European area" purports that the European has always been there and nothing can be done about it and since the Tangwena are non-European, they automatically become squatters by definition. The reason for their being squatters is to be looked for

nowhere beyond the fact that they are Africans. It is immanent in the colour of their skin to be squatters. It is naturalised, and presented as something blacks are born with in a process of ideological legitimisation through reification and naturalisation of what is otherwise historical. The second reason given as justification for the removal of the Tangwena was that “the cultivation methods being used on land which had extremely steep slopes was causing considerable damage from erosion.” Implicit in this second reason as grounds for their eviction, are African primitive methods of cultivation which cause land degradation, the Tangwena are too primitive and their treatment as such in this case is therefore merited.

Anchoring the page on which the Landowner’s version of the Tangwena’s story appears as the lead story is an article devoted to Guy Clutton-Brock’s response to the Minister’s attack published in an earlier issue of the paper. The article titled, “Clutton-Brock issues challenge to Minister” extends an opportunity for a view opposed to that of the government represented by the Minister in the paper’s way of achieving balance in its reportage on the Tangwena case, a form of balanced reporting that admits of no African opinion on a matter that directly affects them. When the three stories are taken together as expressions of competing views on the Tangwena case, it becomes very clear whose version is being privileged by the paper and which explanation is being subordinated. The Minister by being given the opportunity to speak first enjoys the privilege of setting the agenda and parameters for discussion, framing the important issues to which Hanmer the landowner makes additions and elaborations and Clutton-Brock can only respond to the accusations levelled against him. Another thing that becomes apparent is that the debate is a whites-only affair. No African opinion on the matter is relevant here even the Tangwena themselves. Entrenched racial discrimination becomes all too evident in the news logic that balances white view with opposing white opinion on a subject that affects African interests without the need for seeking an African comment on it. Credibility coincides with whiteness. Africans, unaided with a generous dose of external influence, are in this way represented as an inferior race incapable of generating their own ideas.

These three articles beginning with the Minister’s statement clarifying the Tangwena issue, followed by the landowner’s own elaboration reinforcing government position and Clutton-Brock’s rebuttal and challenge of the Minister’s statement represent *The Rhodesia Herald’s* own way of ‘balanced’ reporting on the Tangwena story in a way that seems to bring finality on the debate in government’s favour. The three articles all coming within two to three days before expiry of the 31st August deadline when the Tangwena were supposed to have

removed from Gaeresi Ranch voluntarily or risk being forcibly evicted from the area, provide the mental maps by which to understand and interpret future government action on the Tangwena people. So, when on September 18, government security forces descend on Gaeresi to demolish Tangwena villages under the cover of darkness at dawn and with members of the press having been embargoed from the area, *The Rhodesia Herald's* largely white readership have been fully psyched-up and softened for this action. Thus, the world had no other picture of events that took place at Tangwena village on the 18th of September 1969 apart from that which *The Rhodesia Herald* presented based on evidence gleaned 30 kilometres away from the site of government operation against the Tangwena people in Gaeresi.

Thus on September 18 when government effected the removal of Tangwena people by force and razed their village huts to the ground under cover of darkness and the protection of a blanket ban on members of the press from accessing the Gaeresi area, neither *The Rhodesia Herald* nor *Moto* news crews dared defy government imposed restriction on access to the area. Instead of fighting to have its crew on the ground to witness first-hand the events of 18 September *The Rhodesia Herald* is content to run a broad-berthed political analysis of the likely problems the proposed Land Tenure Act would cause, not for displaced poor people but for government, as the headline of the story published (September 18, 1969: 11) and attributed to its Political Correspondent, Ian Mills clearly suggests to its readers: "Land Tenure Act will pose major problems for Government". This is the story *The Rhodesia Herald* sees fit to carry on the day that the Tangwena village in Gaeresi was literally burning. The language in this story constructs an image of the colonial authorities as a benign government working against all odds to resolve a land issue arising from 'illegal land occupations' caused by the high "rate at which the African population was increasing". An important intimation from this story is the sheer numbers of Africans facing displacement as and when the provisions of the proposed law came to effect. Commenting on the magnitude of the administrative problems the law would entail for government, the writer states that: "But there is already a serious problem facing the authorities as a result of people occupying land illegally in terms of the Land Apportionment Act." When this story is read in the context of other stories the paper carried on the Tangwena people it is not difficult and unreasonable for the reader to infer that the writer refers to the black communities like the Tangwena by

“people occupying land illegally”. Citing from an annual report by the Director of Lands, Mr. R. R. Jack, the reporter goes on to add:

In his report for last year the Director ... said that during the year 3,000 **illegal occupants** were **rehabilitated** ... Mr. Jack adds that a rough census of those **occupying land illegally** showed that between 10,000 and 12,000 families needed **rehabilitation**, and the problem needed ‘urgent attention’. Taking a conservative estimate of five for an **African** family, Mr. Jack’s disclosures show that at least **50,000 Africans** were liable to be moved, (Ibid, September 18, 1969: 11)(Emphasis mine).

This article in its analysis of the problem removes all doubt as to who the label ‘illegal occupants’ are between whites and blacks in Rhodesia. The writer without needing to explain it, just switches and substitutes ‘illegal occupants’ with African families and Africans in need of rehabilitation and being moved. Through common and regular use the paper impresses upon its reader’s mind the picture of Africans it so refers to, as people who at some point after the land demarcation occasioned by promulgation of the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 willingly and in defiance of the law decide to migrate, occupy and settle on European owned land. These are Africans in breach of the law of the land who would otherwise deserve incarceration but due to the benevolence of the white government conscious of its trusteeship and tutelary role towards its African subjects would opt for rehabilitating the African population than gaoling them. The irony of it however, is that the use of the term rehabilitation of the African is actually an euphemism for the dehumanising act of dispossession of Africans of their land and wealth as which coincidentally was being carried out on the Tangwena people on the very day this story is published. This story masks the white settlers’ massive theft and occupation of African land through processes of colonial subjugation of the African people, so that, between whites and blacks white takeover of land was more deserving of the term ‘illegal land occupation’. But by some inverted logic of colonial racial division of labour whites are land-owners and blacks are squatters by operation of the law, except that the reader is not told how that law came about in the first place and whether it is just or unjust.

The day that followed the demolition of Tangwena village and the forced removal of Chief Rekayi Tangwena, on September 19, 1969 the newspaper reading public in the then Rhodesia and the world was denied the story of how the government actually executed the operation to forcibly remove the Tangwena people from Gaeresi Ranch and how the Tangwena people resisted or submitted to their forced removal. What the world got from *The Rhodesia Herald* (September 19, 1969) was a front page story accompanied with an attention-grabbing

landscape picture showing the Tangwena in a protest march clashing with the police laid out as follows:

Eyebrow:	Police take away self-styled ‘chief’ (bulleted, in italics and underlined)
Main headline:	Tangwena Trouble (Banner large font size)
kicker:	Protest by tribesmen. (in italics)
By-line:	From Brian Charlesworth, Inyanga, Thursday
Lead:	Hundreds of Tangwena tribesmen fled through the mountains east of here when police and Government officers arrived just before dawn to take away their self-styled chief, Rekayi , and a headman, Tsatsi. Several of these tribesmen were put into a police cell at Inyanga this evening, and women into a caged compound. They had been demonstrating outside the office of the District Commissioner, Mr. R. Wyatt, and had demanded that their “chief” be returned to them.
Body:	When two or three of the men who had been held resisted searching, the police used their batons. Dogs were used while moving the people from the DC’s office to the police station. Newspapers who had heard of the impending move and had driven out towards the Tangwena village before dawn today were stopped by police guarding a bridge over the Gaeresi River and told they would need a permit to go any further. The operation, conducted in conditions of extreme security, began an hour before dawn this morning. A convoy of trucks drove through Inyanga to a clearing which had been prepared some days ago... As the two men were being led quietly to a truck, several women, screaming and crying hurled themselves at the district messengers. ...some of the women were kicked and hit and Rekayi’s wife, Matadziseyi, had her dress torn. The rest of the tribe scattered through the mountains some plunging into the Gaeresi River...

The theme the headline seems to suggest to the reader, which the three sentence lead also goes on to reemphasise appears to be that; the Police, with justification, have had to apply minimum force to remove from the Tangwena people one Rekayi Tangwena, who is not the legitimate chief of the Tangwena people but a usurper and sole cause of trouble. Although this action by the police may have triggered a protest march by the Tangwena ‘tribes people’, that also has been quelled and contained by the vigilant Rhodesia Police. The use of nominalisation in the headline, “Tangwena Trouble” elides and conceals the state’s or the Tangwena’s agency in causing the trouble. But by collocating “Tangwena” and “Trouble” in

adjacency the text evokes the imaginary of the Tangwena as somehow blameworthy for visiting the trouble upon themselves. As if to underline this, just below the headline is a landscape photograph showing the Tangwena 'tribesmen' being marched in a single file by the police. The important message the picture conveys is one of the invincibility of the Rhodesian Police represented here by a white police officer restraining a vicious police dog on leash and at the same time giving orders to junior police officers controlling and subduing the protesting crowd. The use of extended euphemism acts at two levels in this story. Either the reporter is masterfully being satirical and in the process succeeds in exposing government hypocrisy in claims of peaceful role of the police in the Tangwena case but at the same time revealing much of the opposite in stating that the operation was carried out under "conditions of extreme security" and that villagers scattered through the mountains "others plunging into the Gaeresi River". It is difficult to imagine conditions of extreme security that are short of those applicable in a war situation, and the sort of conditions and circumstances that would necessitate some people taking the risk of plunging into a river by way of escape.

At another level of interpretation this may be a story that is a product of extreme self-censorship on the part of a paper which is so pliant that it voluntarily does the government's bidding in reporting in a manner that minimised damage to the government's reputation and public image. The caption explaining the picture states:

Police using dogs to move the crowds of the Tangwena tribesmen who gathered outside the Inyanga District Commissioner's office yesterday. They went there to protest at the removal before dawn yesterday of their self-styled 'chief', Rekayi Tangwena, and a headman to the tribe's new lands. The crowd were moved to the police station where they were searched and held. Police used batons when one or two resisted, (*The Rhodesia Herald* September 19, 1969: 1).

The use of such empty signifiers as "used batons" or "using dogs" omitting the detail on how these instruments of violence could be so used is both paradoxical and open to multiple interpretations. One possible reading may be that by using the indeterminate and neutral verb in Police "used" the story deliberately masks and sanitises police brutality on unarmed demonstrating 'tribes people' both men and women. The report is biased in favour of the police and by extension thus in support of government action on this matter. On the other hand the story by employing selective understatement and silence on how the police possibly used dogs to move the crowd and used batons on resisting ones without inflicting bodily pain on those on whom these instruments of terror were used, could alternatively be understood to have been the newspaper's strategy to negotiate and circumvent government censorship but at the same time putting vital information out onto the public domain. Given the restrictive

operating environment in the country at the time the paper had to make difficult choices between reporting something or being prevented to report anything at all.

The later reading appears to be corroborated by the paper's decision to use more graphic details of police brutality as shown in the two additional pictures detailing what the reporter describes as a scuffle yet they clearly show a mixture of defiance, terror and a sense of outrage on the faces of the demonstrating crowd particularly women as the police details push, shove and use their baton sticks on one or two of them. The caption on one of the pictures read: "A scuffle breaks out between a policeman and a woman in the crowd of Tangwena protesting at their self-styled 'chief's' removal to new lands yesterday. The photograph was taken near the District Commissioner's Office at Nyanga." It appears the paper has taken a deliberate decision to let the pictures tell the story with very little commentary. The use of 'self-styled' and the term chief in quotes repeatedly in this and other stories on the Tangwena, by *The Rhodesia Herald* serves to emphasise the illegitimacy of Rekayi Tangwena's claim to the chieftaincy and leadership of his people and by extension his claim to the land from which he and his people are being driven.

The following day in a follow up story on the Tangwena issue, *The Rhodesia Herald* lead with a front-page story headline announcing to the world that the Tangwena versus Government saga had finally been amicably resolved between the two sides in favour of government's position, with the bold two-word headline: "Rekayi Agreement" and to match the previous day's story, this headline too was sandwiched between an eyebrow and a kicker which read: "Tribe promises to move off Gaeresi Ranch" and "Police free 160 men" respectively. This story whose layout is very similar to its predecessor the previous day, also carried a landscape aerial photograph of the scenic 'Holdenby Tribal Trust Land', the future home of the Tangwena according to this story which is largely based on official ministry sources and government press releases. The story makes no pretence at balancing off the largely official and white opinion expressed, with the views of the black people who are the subject of the story. Instead we are told in the story: "White residents here seemed to applaud the Government action. Hoteliers and others I spoke to said the Tangwena people had been spoiling the land, and in any case they had no right to live in a European area". This patently false one dimensional story gets proved for what it is only seven days later, when another story, "Rekayi determined to continue fight", (*The Rhodesia Herald*, September 27, 1969: 1) this time based on a witness from among the Tangwena people themselves refutes the

allegation that the Tangwena had agreed to being moved from Gaeresi Ranch to the new reserve. Instead we learn from the story that in fact Rekayi Tangwena and his people have returned and are rebuilding their destroyed homes and, so ends the government's attempts to forcibly remove the Tangwena in 1969. The fight would resume after the end of the new planting season in July the year that followed.

The Herald's presentation of government second attempt to forcibly evict the Tangwena people from Gaeresi is dressed in legalistic language in a symbolic process that legitimises government position. On July 8, 1970 the paper carried a story on page 3 headlined: "New bid to move the Tangwena". In this headline it does not become apparent whether the new bid itself is justified or not, whether the move itself was on the invitation of the Tangwena people. The nominalisation technique exploited here makes the removal almost inevitable, or unavoidable. The intro further reinforces the inevitability and the legitimacy of the removal by attributing the intended action to Government in the sentence: "The Government is to make another attempt to move the Tangwena tribesmen from the European owned land in Inyanga, which the tribe claims as its ancestral home". This sentence serves to impress it upon the reader's mind who has the claim and who has the fact between the Europeans and the tribesmen. In the phrases; "European owned land" and "which the tribe claims as its ancestral home", European ownership of the land is a fact beyond question because they own the land while the tribesmen's claim to the land is suspect and questionable because it is they who claim. Rekayi Tangwena, their chief representative in this dispute against government is delegitimated by casting aspersions on his claim to the Tangwena chieftaincy. He is dubbed; "the tribe's self-styled chief". The tribesmen's loss of livestock in an earlier government attempt to evict them is just as contestable as their claim to the land of Gaeresi because it is presented as a mere allegation in; "livestock which tribesman allege they lost..." It appears everything from title to land, Rekayi Tangwena's claim to chieftaincy, and tribesmen's claimed loss of livestock amount to unfounded claims and allegations unsupported by facts. The tribesmen are presented as habitual liars not to mention the racial overtones in the labels European and tribesmen. If the pages of *The Rhodesia Herald* were to be taken as a metaphor for Rhodesia of the 1960s and 70s then it could reasonably be argued that racial segregation on its pages had been far more perfected and complete with a stricter enforcement of racial purity than through land segregation. Its front pages in particular and other pages that carried political content had long been quietly declared European area onto which African opinion

could rarely trespass. The efforts at making Rhodesia into what John Parker (1972) in his book calls a “Little White Island” were thus not just backed by law that legitimised the use of force in removing blacks from white areas but it was ostensibly supported by the entire ideological apparatus of the white press of which *The Rhodesia Herald* was looked upon as the flagship. The exclusion of any African opinion no matter how mildly critical of government policy, is itself a marker of the extent to which by 1970 *The Rhodesia Herald* and indeed all Argus publications were willing to apply self-censorship in acquiescence with the Rhodesia Front policies so that its editor by 1968 could be quoted as saying:

The need for a degree of self-imposed press censorship has always been accepted. Rhodesia’s needs come before Government, party, or press. Matters affecting national security or trading against sanctions have always had to be carefully examined to discover whether publication would be harmful to the country’s interests, (Frederikse 1982: 28).

Reporting on forced removals of the Tangwena and the Hunyani people probably was one such instance when a story had a bearing on matters of national security and as such merited careful examination even censoring in the eyes of *The Rhodesia Herald* Editors. That *The Rhodesia Herald* of the late 1960s to 70s had adopted an increasingly sympathetic stance towards the Rhodesian government becomes evident in government extending to them a *carte blanche* franchise to cover and ‘freely’ report on its activities.

Given the virulence and pervasiveness of racial segregation under Rhodesia Front government of Ian Smith in the late 1960s to early 1970s the reportorial stance taken by the *Moto* newspaper was quite radical in the spirit of giving voice to the voiceless and economically and politically marginalised Africans in the land dispute case pitting chief Rekayi Tangwena against the white authorities. In story after story that the paper published it sought the comments and opinions of the Africans on the matter and publicised the African view on the subject. It even gave front page status to such stories clearly demonstrating that the paper was African in its news orientation. In its August 1969 edition it carried a front page story titled: “Chief won’t move. He will defy Govt order” with a picture of the defiant Rekayi Tangwena captioned: “‘*They are trying to throttle us*’, Chief Tagwena (below) said *emphasising his words with a gesture of his hand. ‘We would rather be killed than be forced to move from our land’*”. Even though the story is not given lead story status the use of the picture and its caption gives the story a prominence that almost dwarfs the supposed lead “TWO MEN ON THE MOON” story, (Moto used the style of using caps to indicate lead

story status). The story lead is a quote of the Chief's words; "This land has been our home for countless years, since long before the first white man came. It is sacred to us," Chief Rekayi ('leave alone') Tangwena told his assembled people at a spirited meeting on July 19 which was attended by a *Moto* reporter." The story then goes on to give context, chronicling events leading up to this meeting taking place.

The grassroots news paradigm used by the *Moto* was diametrically different to the top down officialdom characteristic of *The Rhodesia Herald* news. A reporter had to be dispatched to Gaeresi to get the people's version of the story of the government plan to forcibly remove them. A counter-hegemonic discourse of a superior claim to the land, based on precedence of occupation. "this land has been our home ...since long before the first white man came". They were not basing their title to the land on some piece of paper, but on tradition, because the chief argues: "our ancestors have passed it on to us, and the D. O. is not one of them". In addition, the claim of legality of occupation had been upheld by the High Court.

An important way in which *Moto* also debunked the myth of white supremacy was through publishing some of its stories in ChiShona and ISindebele, the first languages of its African readers, four out of twelve (4/12) stories were written in Chishona. In September 1969 *Moto* gave a very focussed attention on the Tangwena issue with three articles including an Editorial comment on the Tangwena's resistance to forced removals from Gaeresi. One such story published on the front page of the *Moto*'s September 1969 issue was in Shona titled; (Tangwena navanhu vake vaita ndamba) "Tangwena and his people Defiant" ran in one column below a mug-shot picture of the chief with a caption "Chief Rekayi Tangwena". In the picture the Chief was wearing his trade-mark hat woven from what looked like the bark of a Musasa or a Baobab tree adorned with sea shells along the bottom band. This appearance alone marks him out as a defiant rebel chief who was non-compliant with *The Standard* dress of those chiefs who cooperated with and were thus recognised by the government. Other chiefs would normally be dressed in identifying regalia of office which included among other things a red robe, a chain with a half-moon shaped badge and a white pith helmet. In all pictures of him Tangwena never appeared wearing the chiefly regalia, a clear sign that his chieftaincy was not recognised by government. This story gave a detailed chronology of events leading up to the fallout between the Tangwena people and the Government. The *Moto* backed up its argument obviously sympathetic to the Tangwena position on the issue with facts and dates. For example, when it reports that; "Madzitateguru aTangwena akagara munzvimbo iyi kubva pasichigare ndokuzoti mugore ra-1905, nzvimbo iyi yakapiwa

kuCompany yavarungu. Muna 1930 kuchitevedzerwa murau weLand Apportionment Act, nzvimbo yekare iyi yakabva yanzi inofanira kugarwa navachena chete. Tangwena navanhu vake akanzi ngavatute vaende.” (Tangwena’s ancestors lived in this area from time immemorial and then in 1905 this area was given to a European company. In 1930, applying the law under the Land Apportionment Act this old place was declared a European area. Tangwena and his people were then ordered to leave).

The term used in Chishona translated here as ‘from time immemorial’ is a signifier of an incontestable title to the land as it is interpreted to mean that the Tangwena were there from when time itself began.

The second story in this issue of *Moto* appears on Page 3 with a picture of two grim faced villages whom *Moto* describes as “two Tangwena elders intently listening to an instruction of Chief Rekayi”. The reader is also informed that the picture was taken during a meeting at the chief’s village. That *Moto* consistently takes sides with the villagers’ position is demonstrated by their consistently referring to the land in question as ‘the land of their ancestors’ as opposed to referring to it as Mr. Hanmer’s farm.

On the same page as this story is an advert of a recently published book on Chief Tangwena written by Guy Clutton-Brock the Ad read: Mr. Guy Clutton-Brock has written a book on Chief Rekayi Tangwena and his people ‘in the interest of truth and also of compassion’. It is entitled ‘Rekayi Tangwena – Let Tangwena be’. The book is an account of the attempt to evict the Tangwena people from their land and mainly reproduces the chief’s own words. Chief Tangwena’s courage has done a great deal for the country. It is now up to us to support him through our interest in his case”. Below this blurb is an order form for those who would want to purchase the book. The book was published by Mambo Press who happened to be the publishers of *Moto* as well.

The fourth article on Tangwena in the same issue was an editorial comment (September 1969: 8) titled “The power of resistance”. In this article *Moto* declares its own stand as a newspaper on the Tangwena land dispute by clearly and unambiguously endorsing the courageous stand taken by Chief Rekayi Tangwena against government’s efforts to forcibly move him and his people from Gaeresi area.

Unlike so many other chiefs and leaders of our people today, Chief Rekayi Tangwena has refused to admit that he is powerless. He has been threatened, intimidated, offered bribes. But in the past four years he has stubbornly protected his people’s right to

their land. Like a noble David he has, in the interests of his tribe, stood up to the Goliath of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and refused to budge, (Moto September 1969: 8).

Moto took a very bold stance in its praise for Tangwena's courageous and principled stand in defence of "his people's right to their land". In this article the editor uses a very evocative imagery drawn from the ancient biblical story of little David who courageously stepped forward to fight the Philistine giant Goliath, to symbolise the most unequal struggle pitting Tangwena and his people referred to in this article as "his tribe" against the unparalleled sophistry and might of the Rhodesia Front government. In the similitude, Chief Rekayi Tangwena is the David and the Goliath is located somewhere in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Using that epic battle *Moto* is also by implication making the prediction that Tangwena will eventually emerge the victor.

On the other hand, the paper's use of the derogatory term 'tribe' to refer to Africans betrays an uncritical racial blindness on the part of those behind this editorial. It is uncritical in the sense that although it would never have occurred to the writer to use the same term when referring to whites it came so natural for him to refer to the Africans as 'tribe'. But this has to be read in the context of an entrenched racist ideology which often reasserted itself in spite of attempts at repressing its manifestation in language. It has to be read against the backdrop of efforts at purging the language of the more blatantly racist terminology evidenced by the disuse and disappearance of such terms as 'natives' to refer to Africans even in government circles. A search on Google Images using the term 'tribe' produced a total of 288 000 000 images all of which presented quant figures of some barely dressed groups of people invariably people of colour drawn from many parts of the southern hemisphere largely showing evidence of not having been touched by 'modernity' images of people caught up in a time warp of an ossified traditional mode of existence. What emerges from an analysis of such pictures gives one unmistakable negative associations and connotations of the meaning and uses of the word tribe to connote inferiority, primitiveness of the African people as compared to whites.

The timing of the forcible removal of the Tangwena is a clear illustration of government intention to keep the story of forced removals of Africans hidden from the glare of the world press. *Moto* had accurately predicted that nothing dramatic would happen to the Tangwena on

August 31 the date by which they were supposed to have moved according to a government proclamation because, the paper argued:

The representatives of the world press will be waiting and it would be too embarrassing for Mr. Smith and his men to have photographs of what could be a minor 'Sharpeville' splashed across the pages of the world's newspapers. But that does not mean that force will not be used to move these families at a later date - when they are no longer 'in the news', (*Moto* September 1969: 8).

Indeed as *Moto* had predicted, the regime's security forces only swooped down on the unsuspecting hapless Tangwena villagers in a dawn raid when the authorities made sure nobody was watching, members of the press had been barred from the area and from talking to the Tangwena people. Press coverage of the removal of the Tangwena people should be understood against a background of a policy of censorship and information blackout. The brutality and savagery of that attack on a defenceless people was thus hidden away from public glare. The world was denied access to that event except to censored and highly sanitised versions of it published by government permission in *The Rhodesia Herald* and its sister papers under the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company. But the Tangwena story still managed to attract reasonable media attention unlike stories about other tribal groups facing similar displacements because of the protracted nature of the dispute and its dramas. It had already gone through the courts. Chief Rekayi Tangwena enjoyed the media gravitas also partly because he managed to lead his people in a sustained resistance campaign against brutal state machinery spanning a period of four years. The Tangwena resisted this first attempt at forcibly removing them from what they regarded as their land by birth-right the November issue of the *Moto* reports, in a front page article titled: "Tangwena may sue Govt for destruction of huts", the return of the Tangwena people to Gaeresi to rebuild their destroyed homes and to cultivate their fields and grow crops in the new rain season. The lead story on this page titled "10-acre average for each African, 175 acres for each European", appears to stoke the flames of African anger against colonial injustices over land and the story flows along the same grain as the Tangwena story. The third story on this page which seems to also aggravate government's view of *Moto* as bent on fighting government is a report of the court trial of its Editor for publishing what government regarded as a subversive statement – a cartoon which depicted "a pair of white hands crushing together small African bodies ... with a caption that read; 'The proposed new constitution will ensure that government will be retained in responsible hands'". This case was to eventually lead to the deportation of Michael Traber in an attempt to remove the man the government thought was

solely behind *Moto*'s negative coverage of government policies in dealing with their Africans.

In 1970 the *Moto*'s attention on the Tangwena case appeared to wane after publication of a bold assertion: "Tangwena will stay", again on front page of its May 1970 edition. But the *Moto* had not altogether abandoned its interest in the land issue and forced removals of African people from their land. Its attention had only shifted to a new and breaking story of the removal of the Hunyani people, another much larger African community facing a similar predicament as the Tangwena people. Their land had also been declared European area.

4.3.2 Reportage on the Hunyani Removals

The Rhodesia Herald's policy on reporting forced removals of the Hunyani people can be summarised as one of deliberate silence or disinformation on the matter. The first ever article to appear in the paper making reference to the issue of the removal of the Hunyani people was published under a headline no reader could have suspected that it dealt with the subject of the removal of the Huchu, Ruya and Gobo chiefdoms from Hunyani 'reserve' – an area that stretches from Mvuma in the east to Lalapanzi in the west and bounded by the Mvuma-Kwekwe road on the northern side and Mvuma-Gweru road on the southern side, the area also known as the Central Estates area. Right from the initial government meetings with the chiefs to negotiate with them the terms of their removal from Hunyani and their relocation to newly opened African reserves, after the land they lived in had been declared European area under the new Land Tenure Act of 1970 through the actual evictions, *The Rhodesia Herald* had remained mum. It probably saw no reason to carry a story about this massive government operation to move close to 15000 Africans to new areas in Gokwe and in Silobela. This was a long drawn out and protracted operation that lasted many months and accompanied with no dramatic scenes as those associated with the removal of the Tangwena people.

The first ever story to be published in *The Rhodesia Herald* on the Hunyani removals appeared, many months after the programme had been in full swing, in its July 9, 1970 edition. The paper (*The Rhodesia Herald*, July 9, 1970) ran a lead story on front page headlined: "Civil Servant hits at 'men of God'". This is the only key story to have ever been written by *The Rhodesia Herald* on the subject. The rest that followed were actually letters to the editor reacting to this story. It is thus worth quoting from it at length since it is the paper's centre piece on the Hunyani removals:

Headline: Civil servant hits at ‘men of God’ (Three deck, Bold and in caps)

By-line: Midlands Representative, Que Que, Wednesday

Lead: The huge task of trying to make changes to improve the African economy is often bedevilled and held back by disruptive elements who appear to be sponsored by the ‘men of God’, the Secretary of Internal Affairs, Mr. Hostes Nicolle, said here today. Addressing the annual meeting of the Nkone Cattle Club – his listeners included the Minister of Information, Mr. P. K. van der Byle, who is a member – Mr. Nicolle said that, “on occasions it seems that Satan’s fork is substituted for the bishop’s crozier”.

Body: “We have a tremendous task and one would think that as we are aiming to improve our indigenous population, particularly in the tribal areas, the first people who would assist us in trying to advance these people would be the men of God – not to be in the opposite camp, sabotaging and causing a lot of disruptions in the schemes we are putting forward,” he said.

In the Que Que area his Ministry was now resettling Africans on virgin land after moving them from an area which for years had been causing innumerable complains because of the damage to the natural resources. These people were cooperating and moving readily.

“When the Government contemplated this move I warned them that I thought we would have to use the security forces. As it happens, we have not had to use them for the people are moving voluntarily.

Sub-head: ‘Appalled’

“But I am appalled to find that a local paper affiliated to these men of God has seen fit to disparage this movement and it purports to depict the new areas in a very poor light indeed by comparing them with the devastated areas from which these people are moving.

In fact it purports to depict the devastated areas as being the land of milk and honey and the area to which they are being moved as something less than the desert,” he said.

These distortions of the truth, said Mr. Nicolle, did not make the task any easier. He was worried about this continual prodding behind the scenes to try to create trouble...

The story carried a mug-shot picture of a grinning Secretary for Internal Affairs, Mr. Hostes Nicolle who must obviously relish the free publicity he is getting while overdramatising his patriotic sentiment in the presence of the Minister of Information Mr. P. K. van der Byl who, the story reports to have been part of Mr. Nicolle's audience. The strongly worded story directed to unspecified 'men of God', turns out to be a thinly veiled attack on the Roman Catholic Church Diocese, publishers of *Moto* for publishing a 'disparaging' story on the removal of the Hunyani people to Silobela.

The story which is an uninterrupted harangue of the 'men of God' by the Secretary for Internal Affairs obfuscates the real motive behind the removal of Africans from Hunyani (to make the area a European area in line with the provisions of the Land Tenure Act) as part of government efforts "to improve our indigenous population, particularly in the tribal areas... trying to advance these people". Worth noting is the paternalistic patronising and condescending use of such language in "improve our indigenous people". The assumption implicit in this statement on the basis of which it is intelligible to *The Rhodesia Herald's* readers is that Africans were inferior to whites and thus it becomes inevitable that on the whites lies the tremendous responsibility to develop the Africans. The other reason why the Africans should be removed from this area and resettled in virgin lands is because they are the implicit cause for "damage to the natural resources" in the area where they have to be moved from. Here the paper appeals to the usual trope of 'primitivism' blaming the nigger for inviting this government action on themselves as if government has now to resort to giving them virgin lands so as for them to again damage and degrade through their primitive methods of farming.

The story is silent on the white government having any other motive than that to bring into effect the provisions of the new Land Tenure Act, in terms of which the former Hunyani reserve had been declared European land. That selective silence has the effect of excluding from debate the racial basis for the government policy of land division between European and African areas. The terms of reference for discussion thus veer off the real issues of the likely disruption this policy was likely to cause on African livelihoods, and the important question of the relatively poorer climatic and agricultural potential of the new areas compared to the area they were leaving behind.

Implicit in "These people were cooperating and moving readily... the people are moving voluntarily" is the idea of African complicity in their own domination by the whites. If any

problems should arise, they are imputed to be the work of instigators from among some sections of the white community and not the “contented Africans” themselves. Africans would put up with anything but for the mischief of some whites like the Catholic bishops, who were continuously, “prodding behind the scenes to try to create trouble”.

Just as in the Tangwena case discussed above, the coverage being given here to the removal of the Hunyani people displaces the real issue of the hardships visited on the Africans affected by the racial policy of land segregation and reinterprets it as an issue of some subversive elements among whites who needed to be dealt with to solve the problem. The repertoires of possible courses of action would thus range from The Minister of Information putting in place measures to either completely silence the Catholic paper for publishing such ‘distortions’ or deport some white editors of the paper, who must be behind the mischief. In fact as it turned out both these solutions were already in the process of being effected as the Moto Editor Fr. Michael Traber and his Deputy Editor, Anthony Schimtz, had been deported earlier in the year and the paper itself was to be eventually banned from publishing in 1974.

The importance of *The Rhodesia Herald’s* story is first of all in the fact that it was not a story directly reporting on the removal itself nor about Africans’ reactions to it. It brings into high relief the slipperiness of ‘truth’, the Moto is accused of depicting “the new areas in a very poor light indeed and the devastated areas from which these people are moving as being the land of milk and honey”. Such depictions Mr. Nicolle argues, are distortions of the ‘truth’ which he and probably the government alone somehow ‘know’ and are best placed to represent. This highlights the contested nature of media representation of reality.

The story provoked a robust debate in which the Catholic Bishop of Gweru Diocese, Rt. Rev. Alois Heane is offered an opportunity to make his own statement responding to this attack in the story published a day after (*The Rhodesia Herald*, July 11, 1970: 2) headlined: “Catholic Bishop on ‘men of God’ attack”. Below are excerpts of some key paragraphs from the Bishop’s response:

Lead:

A Government exercise to resettle Africans in the Que Que area was described today as a ‘political decision’ by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Gwelo, the Rt. Rev. Alois Heane. Replying in a statement to recent comments by the Secretary for Internal Affairs, Mr. Hostes Nicolle, Bishop Heane said that as a result of these comments ‘the operation of moving about 15,000 people from established homes to virgin land some 120 miles away is now bound to receive world-wide attention....

Body:

He asked what Mr. Nicolle meant when he said that the people moved readily and voluntarily. 'They were not given the choice to move or to stay. Most of them agreed to go to the Exchange Block; others decided to go elsewhere. But leave they had to'.

The bishop said three quarters of the people concerned were Roman Catholics. Their greatest concern was whether the Church and the priest would move with them. The Church decided to move with the people to give them the service they desired. ...

The officials in charge of the operation were fully aware of the Church's involvement, and must have heaved a sigh of relief at the co-operation they received, he concluded.

The Church will always be where the people are but to give Christian service, not to play the game of power. This may well be the reason why no security forces were required at Whunyani. We are now meted out the 'gratitude' of the Secretary for Internal Affairs.

Thus by the Bishop's own admission, the Church played a not insignificant role in manufacturing African consent to the condition of colonial domination. So effective were their strategies that colonial administrators needed not use security forces to enforce legalised land grabbing by whites on a national scale. What is apparent here is that the Church was fully aware of its role in the servility and docility with which Africans in Hunyani bore the hardships and privations visited on them by the government policy of racial segregation. The Bishop's criticism of Mr. Nicolle is not on the substance of the policy of removal of Africans from what they regarded as their ancestral land but on his and the Rhodesia Front Government's failure to give due credit to the Church for its role in softening Africans into accepting white domination and hegemony without having to resort to the use of security forces as was the case in the Tangwena case the previous year.

What is worth noting in the Hunyani as in the Tangwena case is that the real debate through the pages of *The Rhodesia Herald* pitted white opinion against white opinion on white attitudes towards blacks; it did not deal directly with, or question the effects of, the government's land policy on Africans, thus in a way legitimising it. The question is whether The Rhodesia Herald reporters found the removals themselves somehow lacking on all points of newsworthiness or it was consistent with what van Dijk (1998) called the ideological square of mitigating or understating the negative effects of our 'white' actions on the other 'blacks'. Out of the question too was African perspective on the matter.

The debate later on spills into a wider white public discussion as readers of *The Rhodesia Herald* pick up and comment on the debate through the paper's letters to the editor section. Three letters contributing to this debate were published on July 20, 23, and 25 under the headlines: "Men of God have helped the African"; "The devils fork" and "African faith in *Moto*", respectively. The articles reveal very interesting insights on the commonly held and widely shared white attitudes, myths and prejudices among the paper's editorial staff and their white readership towards Africans. *The Rhodesia Herald* in all these articles sought no comment from Africans directly affected by the removals nor from any African for that matter. Probably, *The Rhodesia Herald*'s own self-censorship on the Hunyani story can only be explained in terms of a deeply held fear by its white editorial staff, of the African's 'undeveloped' critical faculty which inclines him to take indiscriminately every printed word as gospel truth – a fear perfectly well expressed by one of the paper's readers through a letter to the Editor (*The Rhodesia Herald*, July 25, 1970: 9) titled "African faith in *Moto*" where the writer warns publishers of *Moto* that: "*Moto* has a predominantly African readership. The Bishop should in future give consideration to the fact that the Africans labour under the delusion that these reports ARE complete and accurate in every detail".

So, *The Rhodesia Herald* probably as a measure to guard against its paper straying into African hands and risking misinterpretation and aberrant reading by the African decided not to write at all and pronounce itself on matters of government policy as it affected Africans. *The Rhodesia Herald*'s conduct on the issue of the removals of the Hunyani people was quite characteristic – a near total blackout of news. Such behaviour was consistent with an elite and ethnocentric news doctrine that guided most professional journalistic work then and now. And it could also be explained in terms of deliberate propaganda policy. Way back in 1961 the Board for Natural Resources in a statement, giving evidence to a Government Select Committee on Resettlement of Natives (NAZ. S2625/29) had warned against practices that entrenched settlement of black labourers on European farms on a permanent basis where:

owners of alienated farms allow their native employees a certain acreage of arable land for cultivation and to give them the right to run a number of head of stock. This in effect is turning a part of every farm and ranch into a private native reserve. The object of the practice to provide a permanent, settled labour force.

The Board had then proceeded to advise that:

The so-called 'squatter' problem whether in contravention of the Land Apportionment Act or not is, from the board's point of view, one that can adequately be dealt with by means of propaganda

It would be reasonable to surmise that for *The Rhodesia Herald* to give unsolicited and unnecessary publicity on the hardships suffered by ‘natives’ as a direct consequence of removals from European areas and resettlement in new native reserves would work against the interests of propaganda aimed at resolving the ‘black squatter problem’.

Moto, given its pro-African editorial stance would have naturally been counted on by its African readership to cover developments of interest to and affecting Africans from an African stand point. The removal of the Hunyani people would naturally have been of huge interest to *Moto*, given that the Roman Catholic Church had as a church very visible presence among the Hunyani communities, having established a thriving mission station complete with a clinic and school at Gobo Mission in this area.

Also given that *Moto* had given wide coverage of the Tangwena case recently it stood to reason, now that a similarly ‘tragic’ development had struck home in *Moto*’s own backyard since Hunyani fell under the same Diocese, it was reasonable that *Moto* would train its readership and the world’s attention to the removal of the Hunyani people. Break the story, yes *Moto* did in its February 1970 edition with a front page story titled: “12, 000 people will be moved from Umvuma”. Concealed in this passivised headline is the government’s agency in causing the movement of the people from Umvuma which would have been the case if the headline had been written differently as: “Government to move 12,000 people from Umvuma”. The effect of this syntactic strategy is to shield government from blame for the mass displacements of black people. The technique is further reinforced in the first two sentences of the story:

Lead: Between 12,000 and 15,000 people will have to leave ‘Hunyani Reserve’ by August and will be moved to Silobela, some 130 miles away, the chiefs and headmen of the area were told by Ministry of Internal Affairs officials on December 22.

Body: This is believed to be the biggest resettlement of people that has been taking place in Rhodesia in recent years.

The area to which they move is roughly the same size as the one they presently occupy. But people doubt if there is as much rain in Silobela as they have enjoyed in Hunyani, where they had excellent crops practically every year and where some 200,000 head of cattle have prospered.

The use of the intransitive modal verb “will have leave” and passive form “will be moved” used in the lead paragraph of the story deemphasises the government blame for the impending movement of the people. And in the second sentence government planned action to forcibly removing the Hunyani people is nominalised into “the biggest resettlement of people that has been taking place in Rhodesia in recent years” as if it happens of its own accord spontaneously. The effect is to dehistoricise, naturalise and thus render the impending removal even more inevitable. Even the lexical choice of the word “resettlement” ahead of such alternatives to it as “forced removal”, “displacement” or “eviction” tends to invest the story with the more positive connotations of ‘resettlement’ making the planned government action that much more acceptable. When this story is read against the background of an ever present threat of government censorship then it may be understandable that the paper had to balance between provoking government anger and the need to put out some vital information to its African readership.

Moto followed up this initial story with another in their June 1970 edition announcing the mass movement of the Hunyani people with the title “Gobo people on the move”. Again by putting the victim of government action in the subject position of the sentence the story shifts the responsibility for the action described in the verb and places it on the Gobo people themselves. These two initial stories on the Hunyani removal privilege reporter voice and perspective on the issue and no effort is made to seek out and publicise the affected Africans’ own view of the matter in a process just as marginalising as the government act of forcibly removing them.

This was then followed by a much more radically different story giving extensive coverage of the hardships that resettled people were experiencing in the new areas after what the paper described in the headline of the teaser on the front page announcing the story as “The Forced trek”. The actual story on page 3 had a much more elaborate headline ‘Silobela: everything has disappeared’ with “The forced trek from Gobo” as a kicker. Below are excerpts of some key paragraphs from the story:

Lead:

The three chiefs of Hunyani here, Chief Ruya, Chief Gobo and Chief Huchu are being moved by the Government to other areas. Some 2,000 families are affected. They leave seven schools and a clinic in Hunyani and will have 5 schools in Silobela.

Body: Hunyani area is 47,000 acres; the areas, in Que Que (Silobela) and Gokwe District where people are being moved to are approximately 44,000 acres.

The reason for the movement of all the people is that they are “illegally occupying state land in European Areas,” according to Mr Lance Smith’s statement in Parliament recently. Hunyani was never national land. It was acquired by a previous government many years ago, but the position today is that it is state European land.

The Government has begun to move the people of Chief Gobo and chief Ruya to Silobela to erect granaries prior to their permanent settlement of the land. It is the famous Tangwena story over again but without a Tangwena.

To move all the people from Hunyani the Government played a wooing game. Like it did with chief Tangwena it is said, the Government offered many things to Hunyani chiefs if they agreed to move. They were promised five schools, boreholes, good roads, free transport to the new areas etc.

This human interest story written in the style of a detailed investigative piece is laid out on three quarters of page 3 of the newspaper. It is interspaced with two landscape pictures taken, one depicting a cattle sales market day in Hunyani where people are forced to sale their livestock at very low prices, and another taken in Silobela showing men cooperating to erect their shelter in the new area. The pictures provide the frame against which the reader is expected to interpret the meaning of the story. The importance of this news story is further emphasised by another picture depicting women drawing water at a borehole in Silobela plus a teaser advertising it on front page. Both the teaser and caption of the picture announced as follows:

Teaser headline: The forced trek.

Body: One of our reporters went to Gobo and to Silobela to find out what happens if thousands of people have to leave their homes behind and start afresh at a new place. Read the inside story of the forced trek on page 3.

Picture caption: The Hunyani people resettling in the Silobela area are battling for water. Bore holes are the only source of drinking water for both human and animal needs. But Hunyani Reserve, where these people are being driven from has been a land of milk and honey with ever-flowing rivers and green pastures. It is now declared a white area. The Hunyani people will have to be contented with this semi-arid country.

It was this story which so incensed Mr. Hostes Nicolle that he issued his verbal attack on the ‘Men of God’ published by *The Rhodesia Herald*, referred to above. The use of terms such as “the forced trek from Gobo” and the inter-textual reference to “...the famous Tangwena story over again but without a Tangwena” made a bold indictment of government enforced removals as inhuman and racist. The rhetorical strategy of the story in juxtaposing the stark contrast between Hunyani as the “land of milk and honey” and Silobela as “semi-arid”, from Mr Nicolle’s point of view, amounted to an attempt by the paper to incite the Hunyani people, an otherwise contented people into rebelling against government just like the Tangwena had done before them. This naturally elicited a strongly worded rebuke from him which when coupled with the very recent deportation of the *Moto* Editor Fr. Michael Traber, must have had a spine-breaking effect on the *Moto*’s operations and thus put paid on *Moto* publishing any further story on the Hunyani removals. *Moto* soon appeared to lose its earlier fighting spirit to keep the story of the forced removal of Hunyani people alive on its pages.

Another probable reason why *Moto* could not sustain the momentum on its story of forced removal of the Hunyani people was a sense of betrayal that most readers who wrote letters to *Moto* expressed when they openly eulogised Tangwena in comparison to the other chiefs who appeared to cooperate with government and never put up any form of resistance in the fight for their people’s rights. Some letters which were openly critical of the Hunyani chiefs’ lack of spine included the one published in *Moto*’s July 1970 issue, written in ChiShona and titled: “Tangwena murume wevamwe varume” (Tangwena is a Man among men). In the same issue

Rekayi Tangwena himself is quoted as calling the three chiefs Gobo, Ruya and Huchu, cowards and therefore deserving to be driven from their land, in a story headlined “Vatsungirira kubvisa Rekayi”. In another letter to the Editor written in Shona, and published in the November issue of *Moto* titled: “Vanhu veHunyani reserve” the writer again puts blame on the chiefs for what happened to their people. The writer says:

Panhau yevanhu veHunyani hatingasvori vachena chete ayiwa. Asi zvikuru madzishe. Deno madzishe ose aifunga savarekayi Tangwena munity Rhodesia ingasadai inorugare? Kuna ishe here anotsigirwa nevanhu vake nepamusana peutengesi? (On the issue of the Hunyani people we can’t put the blame entirely on whites alone, No, but also the chiefs are partly to blame. If all chiefs thought like Rekayi Tangwena Rhodesia would be a better country. Is there a chief who gets support from his people for being a sell-out?).

Moto, however, true to its mission as one of the few remaining newspapers for Africans continued to ventilate African opinion on issues that affected its readership one of which was

about land segregation. It was the only paper remaining that kept a sustained coverage of the Tangwena story closing that eventful year with a fitting tribute to Chief Rekayi Tangwena for remaining steadfast on the land issue by carrying the “Tangwena anotizira mumakomo” (Tangwena hides in the mountains) as its lead story with a picture of him looking intently ahead as if at his enemies unflinchingly. The story also carried a supporting picture showing the Tangwena women hiding in the bush.

4.4 Discussion

Critical Discourse Analysis approach enjoins us to consider, apart from institutional and genre strictures imposed on the meanings of the text, the target readership of a text if we are to get a nuanced understanding of some of the choices and limitations imposed on the range of meanings that a producer of text can deploy at the point of text production as well as at the point of its consumption. “The production of texts always has at least one eye on the imagined or target consumer and the kinds of text that they prefer to read”, (Richardson, 2007: 41). With regard to the two newspapers under consideration in this section – *The Rhodesia Herald* and *Moto* it is important to underline the fact that from their inception, they addressed their messages to different audiences and this had a significant if not determining influence on the content they produced and circulated. *The Rhodesia Herald* from its establishment in 1891 as the *Mashonaland Herald and Zambesian Times* had dedicated itself to serving information and communication needs of the white settler community. It sought and publicised different and competing shades of white opinion on issues of the day. When it began its life as a printed newspaper on October 29 1892 it had announced as its aim:

to advance to the fullest of their powers the mining and agricultural interests, to discuss and to criticise moderately, but without fear or favour, the topics of the day or hour, and to promote fellowship and unity among all classes and sections of the white community (Gale 1962: 19).

This editorial charter meant *The Rhodesia Herald* was, in spite of claims to the contrary, by definition an ethnic community newspaper out to serve interests of a geographically dispersed but ethnically defined community. It remained in this mode right up to the attainment of majority rule in 1980. This editorial orientation then broadly marked the outer limits of the discursive framework within which *The Rhodesia Herald's* reporters and editors framed their editorial choices when reporting issues in Rhodesia. It was unambiguously white-interests driven, both in terms of manpower and content. Thus, on the basis of its editorial charter, to expect *The Rhodesia Herald* to have carried content that balanced off white opinion against

African opinion would be to judge the paper unfairly. It was essentially a community newspaper although the white community it aimed to serve was less defined by geography than by race. *Moto* on the other hand, established itself as a platform for the ventilation of African opinion and was thus regarded as a credible source to turn to if one wanted to gauge African opinion on issues of common concern in the then Rhodesia and sets itself as a counterpoint to the hegemonic white interpretations of events in Rhodesia.

4.4.1 Silence Over Peasantisation and Proletarianisation of Africans

The context within which the press operated in the Rhodesia of 1970s should be fully appreciated to understand why and how any newspaper of that time covered issues affecting Africans broadly and in particular the racial demarcation of the land and resulting mass displacement Africans in the aftermath of the passing of the Land Tenure Act of 1969. The African oriented press had been whittled down to a whisper after the closing down of such papers as *The African Daily News* in 1964 and *The Central African Examiner* later. The remaining Church press *Moto* and *Umbowo* were monthly publications and their commitment to raising the African voice on issues could thus easily be drowned in the din of white opinion which enjoyed extensive daily coverage in the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company's daily newspapers, *The Rhodesia Herald* and the *Bulawayo Chronicle*. Official state censorship of the period from the declaration of UDI in 1965 to 1967 had firmly introduced a culture of self-censorship and a pliant press by the 1970s. Criticising in retrospect, what he perceived as docility in the official white press of the Argus Company John Parker states that:

The Rhodesia Press as a whole and individual journalists in particular had done very little to fight for that freedom of the Press about which they so often wrote so movingly in their leading articles. Malcolm Smith did in fact fight – but not for his right to print the news without fear or favour. He fought for the right to print nothing at all, which I suggest was a wrong battle at the wrong time for the wrong cause. He fought like a tiger to keep the blank spaces in his newspaper caused by the censor's scissors, and to avoid filling up the spaces with other news or leave, as other newspapers did, 'token spaces'. But neither he nor any other Rhodesian editor found the courage at any time to print the news the censor had removed, or openly to defy the 'laws' by which the regime steadily eroded the prestige and position of the Press", (Parker 1972: 129).

In behaving this way, the Rhodesian Press can be argued to have stood on its head the logic of Galtung and Ruge's (1965: 64) news values of prominence and proximity to elite nations or elite people as a guarantor of publicity in the news. Their argument that 'the lower the rank of the nation or person, the more negative the news will have to be in order to be reported domestically' would have to be qualified and further modified in light of press coverage of

events at Tangwena village on September 18. 1969, and similar events relating to forced evictions of African ‘natives’ to pave way for colonial takeover and occupation of much of Rhodesia since 1890. Empirical evidence considered here would seem to suggest as more accurate a view consistent with Van Djik’s (1999) analytic tool of the ideological square in which it is partly theorised that the more negative the effects of elite people and elite nations’ actions on social groups, nations and individuals who occupy a lower rung on the social hierarchy, the less likely it is for such an event to make headline news.

Galtung and Ruge’s thesis was mainly focussed on what made it into news rather than on what the news would be silent on. It was based on an analysis of what was actually reported and not on what was left out. It stands to reason then, that where a conflict between the white government and its black subjects over land erupted as happened in the Tangwena case, the white press shied away altogether or toed the Rhodesia Front government line by reporting the ‘official’ position as *The Rhodesia Herald* largely did with respect to the removals of the Tangwena and the Hunyani people in 1969-70. Thus silence on African issues defined *The Rhodesia Herald* editorial policy during most of the UDI period. It limited itself to circulating different shades of white opinion on all key issues of colonial policy in Rhodesia. In all but very few instances *The Rhodesia Herald* used white individuals as sources for their stories thus affording them the opportunity to define and interpret the colonial reality primarily from a white racist perspective. Black forms of knowing were largely suppressed or simply excluded. In all the cases in which *The Rhodesia Herald* reporters found it meet to report on the events related to the forced removals of Africans in the Tangwena and the Hunyani cases cited above African voices were systematically excluded or written out of the news text. Africans were treated as objects and not subjects of news. Although in the 1960s and 70s use of the more overtly racist derogatory terms like ‘native’, ‘kaffir’, ‘boy’ etc. had long been purged out of official use, an entrenched racist ideology still continued to structure the way *The Rhodesia Herald* inscribed subject positions from which whites and blacks could speak differently. An important point to note is how the inferioritisation of blacks was materially produced in social practices of which physical and brutal uprooting of indigenous people, economic marginalisation, racial geo-landscaping and symbolic annihilation and displacement of the ‘native’ subject population formed an important unity. The news text was produced by and productive of the racist system with which it formed a continuum. By under reporting or maintaining silence on the political processes through which Africans were plunged into poverty by the thousands, the press became complicit in the making of white

aristocracy and black peasantry in the then Rhodesia. It becomes possible, by this means, to attribute to race and colour of the skin (nature) what was in effect a product of historical processes.

4,4,2 White Benevolence and African Contentment.

In the story on Mr. Hostes Nicolle's attack on the Roman Catholic published *Moto* for commenting negatively on a government programme to resettle Africans removed from Hunyani (*The Rhodesia Herald* July 11, 1970: 1) Mr. Nicolle makes a very pertinent revelation that: "When the Government contemplated this move I warned them that I thought we would have to use the security forces. As it happens we have not had to use them for the people are moving voluntarily". What is clear from this is the fact that the Government was under no illusion about the fact that the operation it was about to embark upon was unjust in terms of its disruption of a people's established way of life and therefore under normal circumstances that it would be resisted and that it would fail unless backed up by use of force or the threat of it. That the Hunyani people decided upon a course of cooperation with, rather than resistance to government came as a surprise even to government itself. But what is of greater interest is what Mr. Nicolle leaves unsaid in this particular discourse. The question he leaves unanswered is what pacified the Hunyani people and made them cooperate such that Government did not have to resort to using force like it had to do in the Tangwena instance.

The answer to this very pertinent question is in two parts and is provided by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Gwelo, the Rt. Rev. Alois Haene in a rebuttal of Mr. Nicolle's attack on the *Moto* cited above. The article indirectly alludes to the often unacknowledged but critical pacifist role the Church played in the interest of long term stability and acceptance of colonial domination by Africans and in thus inscribing a particular form of colonial subjectivity and culture of submissiveness to colonial domination through evangelisation and other forms of ministration. According to the Bishop the people moved readily and voluntarily because the option to stay was out of the question as the law required that they moved. That the use of security forces did not arise in the case of the Hunyani people can only be attributed to the Church's influence in the area according to Bishop's statement (*The Rhodesia Herald* July 11, 1970: 2).

The Bishop's comments above show that he thought the Church was not being given due credit for pacifying the Hunyani people and therefore making it the easier for colonial authorities to implement racial policies that marginalise Africans and bring them into colonial

subjection without the need to use the gun. The Hunyani people, it appears, take their cue to co-operate or not to from the Church according to the Bishop. And the Church's expressed willingness to move with the people and even went on to express its preparedness to co-operate with government in making the new area more acceptable to Africans by agreeing to a government request to provide a manager for the new school in the new area. Here Mr Nicolle was indirectly being reminded of the broader picture of the Church's role in the grand colonial scheme of things – a role pretty much consistent with the role the Church, represented by the Missionary patriarchs; Robert Moffat and John Moffat, had played in pacifying the 'warlike' Matabele Chiefs, Indunas and their Impis before the advent of Cecil Rhodes' Pioneer Column to establish colonial rule in Zimbabwe in 1890. In criticising Mr. Nicolle's ingratitude towards the Church, the Bishop was making a confession of the Church's propaganda role in civilising and softening the 'natives' for colonial rule. By not focussing on whether it was right or wrong in the first place for government to forcibly remove people on grounds of race the Bishop and by implication the paper he is defending implicates himself as having always fought in the government's corner on this and other racial disputes between the white government and the black population. The sub-plot that runs through insinuations and counter-insinuations in the Nicolle-Haene dispute is the tacit acceptance of a perception of 'natives' as gullible people. Mr Nicolle fears that if Moto continues to write the way it does on this subject it will incite the otherwise peaceable but naive Africans to revolt and resist government's resettlement policies. The Bishop on the other hand, and on his own admission, believes the Church, including *Moto's* propaganda was working wonders on the African psyche in the interest of colonial rule and hegemonic domination of blacks by whites in Rhodesia. The Church through its epistles delivered on the pulpit and through the pages of its own newspaper was constructing and constituting Africans as subjects ready to submit to domination by their white masters (Philo 2007: 176). The only reasonable deduction to be made from the Bishop's story is that the Church was just as much a white establishment as was government as much a centre of power itself not seeking to compete with the state in order to replace it but to co-operate as a partner in domination and in cultivating the 'good native' subject of white rule and domination.

Overall, the mental map that the Bishop's rebuttal of the Secretary for Internal Affairs' attack is one that does not criminalise government action of forcibly removing the Hunyani people from their land but in essence it seeks to represent the Church as a partner with Government rather than its opponent in the civilising mission to 'improve the African'. The

Bishop makes the point that government would not have succeeded with the act of driving the African off fertile land and taking away his livestock with little or no resistance without the Church's pacifying influence among the Africans. Thus, by publishing it *The Rhodesia Herald* does no injury to the sensibilities of its white readership and of government in line with the paper's founding editorial charter to support government and to further the commercial and mining interests of the white community in Rhodesia (Gale 1962). Michel Foucault's concept of the *dispositif* may be applicable here in accounting for the seamless net that seems to link the various discursive and non-discursive spaces and materialisations of discourse aimed at producing different subjectivities among white masters and black servants in Rhodesia.

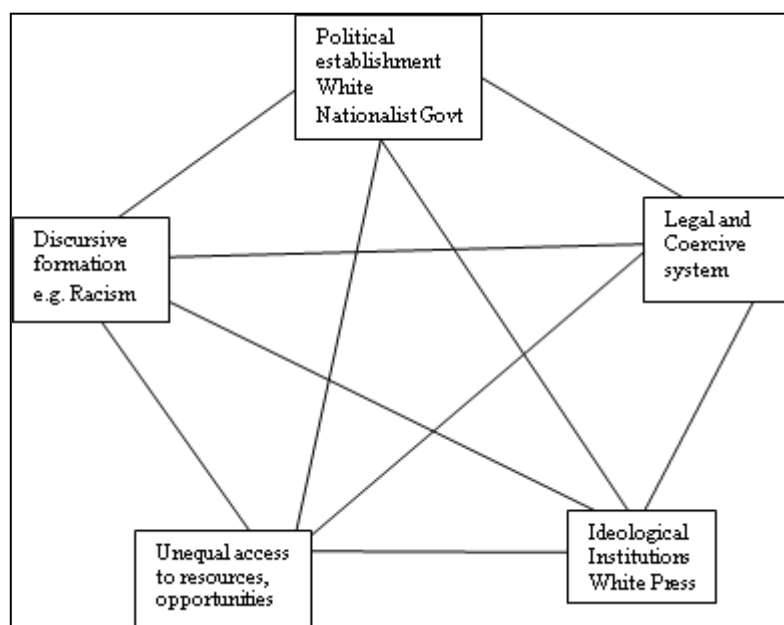


Figure 3. The dispositif of racial domination in colonial Rhodesia

Michel Foucault uses the term *dispositif* to refer to: “a kind of `formation an ensemble of heterogeneous elements whose major function it has been at a given historical point in time to respond to an urgency” (Jager 2001: 41). It describes a mobilising force where different elements are connected for a common cause which must be urgently addressed. In the context of this study the colonial situation in Rhodesia of the late 1960s, the urgency to which the concept of the *dispositif* would probably have applied was the need for entrenching racial domination in perpetuity in the name of “retaining government in responsible hands” against the threat of rising African nationalism, (Moto June 10, 1969). Thus, it is important to note

that Foucault, in his theory of the *dispositif*, is less interested in differentiating between what is discursive or what is non-discursive elements than a *dispositif* as the connecting net bonds together. The concept gets closer to the ordinary meaning of pre-disposition in so far as it means an orientation towards. Since this study delimits itself to a consideration of an aspect of language use in the form news texts, my reference here to the concept of the *dispositif* is confined to the very limited objective of clarifying the non-discursive para-linguistic context within which news about forced removals is produced and the range of epistemic interpretations of colonial and postcolonial hierarchies. As the diagram above illustrates the discursive elements of the colonial *dispositif* do not operate in isolation but that they are located in a network of other elements like the racial geographisation of racial dominance etched on the land itself and other legitimating elements like. For example, promotion of an ideology of white supremacy would fall flat on its face if it was confined to the pages of the colonial press alone. Racial dominance would need to be systematically embedded in every aspect of social life through the governmental arrangements, the legal system, cultural life, etc. The effectivity of the *dispositif*, it would appear was premised on the assumption that all elements in the ensemble were well integrated towards the singular objective of addressing the urgency with no room for internal contradiction. White supremacy and racial privilege would, as Van Dijk says be: “supported or condoned by other group members, sanctioned by the courts, legitimated by laws, enforced by the police, and ideologically sustained and reproduced by the media or textbooks” (Van Dijk 1999).

Thus the attainment of independence, would theoretically mean that a new urgency emerges to replace the old colonial one. Instead of seeking to entrench racial domination, the new urgency would be about decolonisation and deracialisation. This would necessarily entail a transformation of the elements of the old *dispositif* to make it serve the new urgency. The news as part of the discursive elements of the *dispositif* would be expected to reflect this change. Whether and how this was the case in the discursive representation of forced displacement of subaltern groups in the mainstream press is the focus of the remaining sections of this thesis.

4.4.4 The Authentic African as Gullible, Primitive

A point of consensus between colonial and missionary attitudes towards Africans was in their regard of Africans as an inferior race in need of the civilising encounter with European colonialism. Donal Lamont’s defence of rights of indigenous primitive people argues: “Moreover, even though as far as

growth in civilisation is concerned, they may be regarded as ‘children’, they still have, just as minors can have, ‘dominium’ rights of ownership. From this it follows that any violent seizure of territory which was at the time inhabited and cultivated by a native tribe ... constitutes unjust aggression”, (Plangger 1968: 29). Thus the missionary charitable attitude towards the African was premised on no higher moral ground than that of the colonial government whom the Church admonished to always “remember that their power is tutelary, and that they act towards the indigenous people as elder brothers in the human family, they can even perform a great work of charity by so colonising”, (Plangger 1968: 31).

In a pastoral letter Bishop Donal Lamont warned against what he regarded as some of the evils of Western civilisation upon the African that African nationalism ought to be about: “a refusal to be stripped of their ancient character and turned out in mass production, decharacterised and presented to the world as ersatz Europeans “

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on how *The Rhodesia Herald* representing the white press establishment targeting a white readership, and *Moto*, as the leading missionary press targeting an African readerships approached the coverage of the removals of the Tangwena people from Gaeresi Ranch and the Hunyani people from the Central Estates area between 1969 and 1970 in the then Rhodesia. These newspapers and their reportage on these events became part of a larger theatre in which the struggle for control of the hearts and minds of men played themselves out during the colonial era in Zimbabwe. A news text as a genre of writing makes the claim that it constitutes a record of fact about what actually happens in history. In this way it is often far more successful in concealing its ideological vestments than other genres of writing. The above analysis of the two papers’ coverage of the Tangwena and Hunyani issues clearly demonstrate how those stories became a site of struggle where a racist ideology was imposed, challenged and at times subverted through hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discursive practices of narration and newsification of events about the Tangwena and Hunyani people. The Rhodesia Herald’s stories largely reproduced discourses of a white supremacist ideology of the Rhodesia Front Government by legitimising and naturalising white seizure of black owned land and by displacing the narrative of black resistance as inauthentic and white inspired and instigated in a process of thingification which denied the African of his humanity. *Moto* on the other hand subverted this ideology by giving a voice to those in the margins and by privileging a counter-hegemonic perspective on issues and placing the struggles over land in their proper historical perspective. In the next chapter I examine any genealogical traces of a colonial legacy or its disruption in the way media reported mass evictions of both whites and blacks as a result of independent Zimbabwe’s government policy of the fast track land reform in the year 2000 and evictions of urban slum dwellers through a government operation purportedly aimed to restore order in Zimbabwe’s cities.

I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out. (Cesaire 1972: 6)

Chapter 5. Farm Invasions, Peaceful Demonstrations or Land Repossession

5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter I analysed news articles on the forced removals, in late colonial Zimbabwe, of the Tangwena and the Hunyani people. The evictions, characteristic of many similar removals in different parts of Southern, Central and Eastern Africa throughout the colonial period, involved forcibly uprooting and relocating indigenous African communities from areas alienated for European settlement in terms of colonial land policies of spatial segregation based on race. The resultant demographic map of colonial Rhodesia looked like a quilt with large swathes of white farms and estates running across the central high veld with a smattering of black patches along its low lying semi-arid frills. Those evictions were discursively presented in *The Rhodesia Herald* in a way that largely legitimated them. The news treatment of the events privileged white land occupiers over black evictees' perspectives and interpretations of those evictions largely because the journalists who wrote those stories, as John Parker (1972: 66) admits; "As well as being journalists were also settlers". The colonial press' silence on the near genocidal effects of forced evictions on Rhodesia's indigenous population should not be viewed as aberrant but rather as largely typical of what Malcolm X describes as "white and dangerous press" in the service of empire (Harmen 1964).

That process of land theft by white colonial settlers spanning many decades was never imagined as such and professional journalists of the time, as clearly demonstrated in the foregoing chapter, never thought it appropriate to report the process as other than legitimate. The process according to which, "more than 100,000 black Zimbabweans were moved, often forcibly, into reserves and inhospitable and tsetse fly-ridden unassigned areas", to make way for white settlers "in just one decade, 1945-55" was either treated as completely not newsworthy or in those few cases when news reports were made in newspapers the process did not attract such damning epithets as 'land grabs', 'farm invasions' or 'land occupations' or 'land seizures' (Hanlon et-al2011: 36). Those words did not enjoy pride of place in journalistic lingo of the time. That delegitimizing diction had to wait until an appropriate time and context. The purpose of the present chapter is to examine the changed journalistic circumstances and press reconfigurations in which such epithets and invectives become

conscionable in the coverage of the onset of reverse land takeovers of white occupied lands by landless blacks under a black government-sponsored Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in 2000. The press' treatment of resultant forced evictions that this postcolonial government policy occasioned in 2002 will be a subject for analysis in a separate chapter.

5.2 Background to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme

In concluding her book on *Land and Domination in Rhodesia*, Robin Palmer (1977: 246) made the following prognostication:

Land has been and is a major issue of contention. ... A variety of political solutions now appear to be possible, though none of them is inevitable. What can however be affirmed with certainty is that the most acute and difficult question confronting the first African, or African-dominated, Government of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, whatever its ideological hue, will be that of land, bedevilled by its past use as a political and economic weapon by the whites, and by the consequent mythologies to which this has given rise.

The physical geography of Zimbabwe had changed little, two decades after majority rule. The Lancaster House Constitution had dictated the terms of initial transition to independence imposing "substantial limitations and constraints on the legal means and financial resources and political pace of land reform" (Hammer, Raftopoulos and Jensen 2003: 4). At the beginning of 2000 government embarked on an agrarian policy it called the Accelerated land resettlement or the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). What really triggered and precipitated this policy response to what Hammer et-al (2003) referred to as "Zimbabwe's unfinished business", the perennial land question in Zimbabwe, remains highly contested.

One school of thought argues that it was a survival strategy by the ruling ZANU-PF party whose political fortunes and relevance hung in the balance as had been clearly demonstrated in the rejection of a government-sponsored constitution in a referendum held at the end of 1999. Another school of thought maintains that the timing was purely coincidental, as the land issue had always been on ZANU-PF's priority list and any seeming lethargic approach to the issue in the past was due to constitutional constraints that the Lancaster House Constitution had imposed on the independence government. Whatever the case might be, the geographical demarcation of Zimbabwe into European areas and African areas had remained a stubborn relic of the country's colonial history by year 2000. Whites remained where they had always been at the commanding heights of the country's commercial agricultural sector. Africans, whom colonial governments had herded into 'native reserves', largely remained there, and independence had done little to free them from these colonial labour incubators

that turned them out as cheap black labour readily available for employment at white-owned farms, mines and factories.

This system tended to reinforce rather than challenge colonial racist myths and prejudices about white supremacy and affluence and black inferiority and poverty. The difference in fertility between white-owned commercial farms and the native reserves also reinforced the myth that whites were hard working and industrious and that blacks were generally lazy and could only be made to labour by necessity or force. The racial difference also seems to come out when one compares the sheer volume of news coverage the resultant displacement of white farmers generated across the media divide – oh! “What a protest” it all amounted to (Hanlon et-al 2013: 209). *The Daily News* in particular sounded the most shrill in its outcry, condemnation and invectives against what it was wont to describe as; ‘the violent and chaotic seizures of white farms’ from 2000.

Palmer’s (1977: 58) comment: “the native reserves which were created in Rhodesia at the turn of the century are important precisely because they have survived – with a good deal of amendment but recognizably in the same pattern – down to the present,” is very pertinent in light of the resilience of land structures, settler colonialism left in place in Zimbabwe until 2000 as in other parts of Southern Africa many decades after formal attainment of independence. What started off as native reserves in 1894 after the sacking of the Ndebele kingdom in north west Zimbabwe and was extended to the rest of the country in 1896 after the Ndebele and Shona uprisings were put down due to superior fire power of the invading hordes of the white Pioneer Column became known as Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) in 1962. By 1970, the division of the land into European and African areas had been completed and firmly entrenched in the then Rhodesia through use of a combination of force, duplicity and then enforced by legal instruments. At the attainment of Independence, the TTLs were christened Communal Areas or simply rural areas. And, from that time on in official usage the derogatory Tribal Trust Lands was never to be used again in independent Zimbabwe. This change in name was not matched with any meaningful change in policy or structural transformation of the two in one geographical structure of the land as Zimbabwe remained in true essence two countries, two economies and two nations in one with the black economy and nation subservient to the white economy and country. What independence managed to achieve for most Africans was to mask a colonial structure under a toponymic veneer of new signifiers and names overlaying the same colonial system of signifieds and referents. Just as Rhodesia became known as Zimbabwe, Salisbury became Harare, former locations or

African townships of Harare, Sakubva, Mutapa, Makokoba and Rimuka became known as the 'western suburbs' or simply 'high density suburbs'. The new names were not harbingers of meaningful alterations at the structural level at which the racial indignities continued to be experienced by black Africans. The native reserve from when it was introduced served as a hatchery and incubator for cheap black labour. As such the native reserve was never meant to be a place productive enough to provide for food self-sufficiency for the African population in these areas. In his novel *Waiting for the Rain*, Charles Mungoshi described Manyene Tribal Trust Land in the following terms:

The sudden transition from the rolling ranches of Hampshire Estates, with their tall dry grass and the fertile soil under that grass, in to the scorched nothing-between-here-and-the-horizon white lands of Manyene Tribal Trust Land, with the inevitable tattered scarecrow waving a silent dirge in an empty field, makes a funeral intrusion into the bus (Mungoshi 1975: 39).

The evocative associations of death, desolateness and despair cannot be mistaken in this description of Manyene TTL as a place to which Africans were destined to return to when their labour was no longer needed by their European employer in the city, on the mine or on the white owned agriculturally fertile rolling ranches of Hampshire Estates. This system had become so naturalised by Africans that any serious attempts at changing the status quo could not be imagined as anything but aberrant. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the independence government had demonstrated on numerous occasions its intolerance of any form of spontaneous self-settlement by the poor landless blacks on white commercial farms. Any such action was viewed as illegal squatting and was dealt with accordingly in terms of the law. What happened in Zimbabwe during the first two decades of independence tended to confirm Loomba's (1998: 129) assertion that:

The race relations that are put into place during colonialism survive long after many of the economic structures underlying them have changed. ... the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past.

At the International Donors Conference held in Harare in 1998 President Robert Mugabe had warned of impending conflict over any further delay in speeding up a managed and organised land resettlement programme:

We must move forward speedily and vigorously otherwise they will resettle themselves in a manner they deem appropriate. Such anarchy will not be helpful to anyone. We therefore trust that the government's efforts for orderly resettlement will receive the necessary donor support (Seery 2010: 6).

Unfortunately Mugabe's warning was not heeded much by Western government representatives present at this conference as can be inferred from the less than expected support given in response. Two years down the line things turned out pretty much along the lines predicted and foreseen at the Donors Conference and the rest was history.

5.3 Zimbabwe's Shifting Mediascapes

In as far as the press is concerned Zimbabwe Printing and Publishing Company (Zimpapers 1980 Ltd) had remained the dominant player throughout the first two decades of independence. This was particularly the case in the dailies market where *The Herald* and *The Chronicle* had enjoyed a duopoly until July 31, 1999 when *The Daily News* was then launched as a private daily newspaper. *The Herald*, Zimpapers' flagship publication though now under a new ownership structure, after government buyout of the South African based Argus company's controlling stake, had the longest uninterrupted tradition as a daily newspaper. It straddles the colonial and postcolonial landscape as a colossus. That change in the political economy of Zimbabwe's leading newspaper publishing company did not represent a rapturous departure from the structural relationship that subjected the news production process to external influences from the economic class which until 2000 had remained predominantly white and the new political class which unlike its colonial predecessor had now become almost exclusively black. Once the black liberation movement assumed governmental power it had eased itself into the shoes of its colonial predecessor and pursued a policy of reconciliation with its erstwhile enemies. In essence, the independence government did not stop at just trying to reconcile the warring blacks to their former white oppressors. It went further than that. It literally gave a new lease of life to the colonial exploitative and extractive institutional infrastructure which it maintained in place to the continued benefit of the retreating British imperial interest. A Tony Namate cartoon strip published in *The Daily News* aptly captures the pervasiveness of the colonial culture, the reproduction of dominance and servitude beyond temporalities and space in postcolonial Zimbabwe:

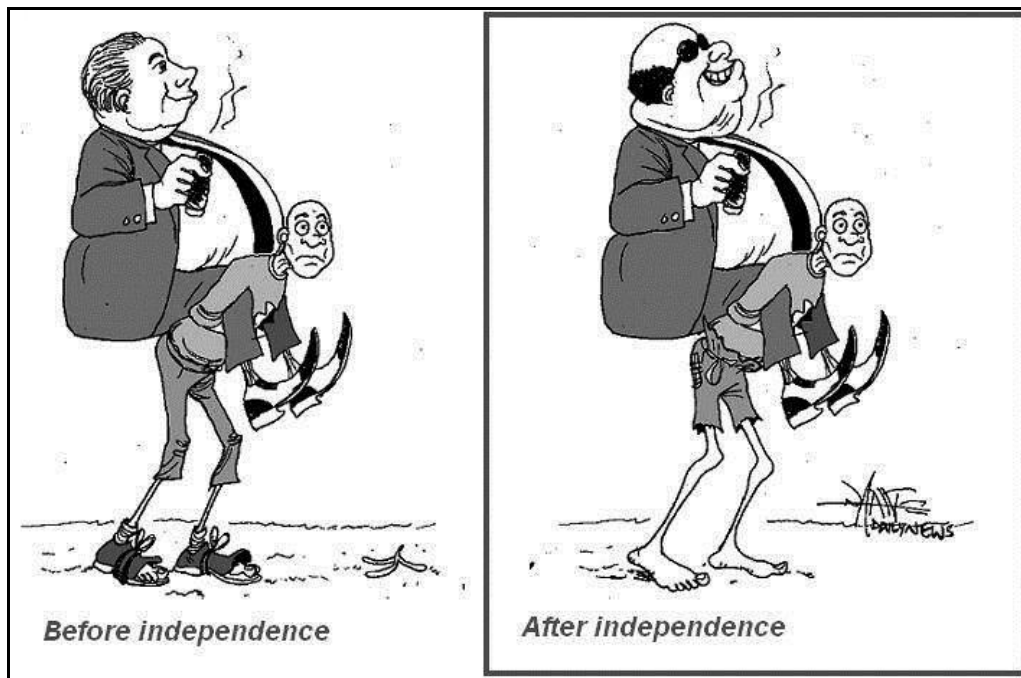


Figure 4 Cartoon by Tony Namate. Source: *The Daily News* 2014

The powers that ride the subaltern may have changed with the attainment of independence but that change was only nominal. The burden of exploitation and poverty continued to weigh just as heavily on the subaltern's shoulders after independence as it had done before then. The new political elite was only different in its colour but the system and the structural relationship with the subject class remained the same. This is not to suggest that the meaning of the cartoon could be fixed once and for all time. That its value as a sign would be polysemic and meaning slippery is almost inevitable. A possible colonial nostalgia could also be read off the figures of the cartoon. The oppression of the dominated figure appears actually worse off after independence as portrayed by the bare-footed, skimpily dressed figure which seems to suggest that white rule was by comparison more benign. The media in representing this postcolonial condition found themselves just as unfree to do as they chose as their colonial predecessors. The causes for their unfreedom was to be found in their colonial DNA although some of it had a universal resonance. The illustration on the outer cover of Richard Saunders' book *Dancing Out of Tune* (1999) shows a figure bestride the keyboard of a journalist's typewriter performing what appears to be arrhythmic dance moves. The cause of this can only be attributed to puppet strings that pull the figure in different directions. That figure vividly captures the postcoloniality of media in Zimbabwe. When journalists report they do not do so freely in response to the dictates of the tunes and rhythm of the events

themselves. Rather they do so constrained by those forces that pull the strings from afar. Just like Karl Marx once said of history, journalists in postcolonial settings may write their own news but they do not write it just as they please under conditions chosen by themselves but under discursive circumstances and practices shaped and constrained by the colonial archive they draw on (Manning 2001).

The newspaper's morgue thus stands as an epistemic monument to memorialise the newsified version of Zimbabwe's colonial past and presents to historians and researchers the second best seam of the first draft of postcolonial Zimbabwe's history after the Zimbabwe National Museum. With more than a century of publishing in a market with little competition *The Herald* easily enjoyed a hegemonic status as the newspaper of record throughout the greater part of its life as a newspaper in Zimbabwe. Competition coming from rival weekly newspaper publications and monthly magazines only offered a very feeble challenge to *The Herald's* status as the primary definer of the socio-political realities in Zimbabwe. In fact, *The Herald* did not only provide the lead in news publication throughout the country's recorded history but in the early years of independence it also provided the much needed training for freshmen usually joining the newsroom with no background training whatsoever in news writing through its on-the-job-training cadetship programme. The newspaper had continued in this role even beyond the time when the first journalism training college was established at the Harare Mass Communication Institute and later at other private colleges and universities. So critical was *The Herald's* internal on-the-job-training programme that one of the very few veteran journalists remaining in Zimbabwe in an interview for this research quipped that: "there was a commonly held view among seasoned journalists in this country that if a journalist hasn't been through *The Herald* then they ain't going anywhere at all" (Interview with Mr. Bill Saidi at *The Herald* 13/12/13). *The Herald* tradition of news gathering and reporting has been so pervasive in Zimbabwe that there is no escaping its influence.

By the turn of the century, a culture of journalism servility to government authority and direction had entrenched itself at *The Herald*. It is therefore instructive when Bornwell Chakaodza, the then Editor of *The Herald* at the start of farm invasions by ex-freedom fighters, is cited as having opined that: "In any given situation, crisis or conflict, the idea is not to tell the truth, but... to reflect the issue in such a way that the majority interests are guaranteed," (Saunders 1999: 50). The reality in Zimbabwe irrespective of who may be affected was to be represented in line with the editors' definition of majority interests. Even

that too had to be interpreted in terms of ‘majority interests’ (read ZANU-PF interests). Editorial autonomy at almost all newspapers under the Zimpapers stable was increasingly getting eroded and undermined by government interference. This was increasingly becoming evident through the mechanism of editorial appointments, rewards, promotions and sanctions to whip editors into toeing the government line on issues. Geoffrey Nyarota and his deputy at *The Chronicle* had been silenced by being promoted into positions in which their critical reporting was silenced. In 2000, the then Editor of *The Herald* was relieved of his duties on August 31, 2000 for criticising land invasions in an editorial comment. The Editor who came after him, Ray Mungoshi, could only serve as Editor for *The Herald* for seven months before being fired together with Funny Mushava, Editor of *The Sunday Mail* coming as it did hot on the heels of the dismissal of Tommy Sithole Managing Director of Zimpapers by the newly appointed Minister of Information and Publicity: their crime, defying the Minister’s directives on editorial decisions at their papers. In an exclusive interview with the US Embassy’s Charge D’Affairs, Mungoshi made the revelation that the Minister was literally running the paper, through directives on what stories to carry on the front page and how to write them. The situation had degenerated to a point where the Minister would bypass and under-cut *The Herald*’s editorial oversight by directly planting stories in the paper outside the Editor’s knowledge as revealed in an American Embassy Cable published on Wikileaks:

Information minister Jonathan Moyo called Mungoshi on an almost daily basis, usually at about 0600 in the morning. Mungoshi said that these calls often lasted 30 to 45 minutes, and were often angry diatribes about “*The Herald’s*” lack of support for the government. Moyo also used these phone calls to tell Mungoshi what the next day’s editorial should be, or what story he wanted to see on the first page. Mungoshi also told us that Minister Moyo would send ready-to-print stories to the paper and expect to see them published without question or alterations.... Mungoshi says that he became accustomed to finding stories in the newspaper that he had never before seen or approved. Minister Moyo went directly to Sub-Editors and production staff to have stories placed in the paper after Mungoshi had approved an edition and “put it to bed (American Embassy, Harare, March 30, 2001).

The cumulative impact of developments like these involving editorial interference and harassment and intimidation and the sacking of senior staff at Zimpapers was to break the spine of Editors and send an unmistakable sign that editorial sovereignty was henceforth not tolerated at *The Herald*, and that Editors only served at the Minister’s pleasure. That the Minister of Information had usurped the powers of the Editors at Zimpapers and had installed himself as the de-facto Editor of *The Herald* was corroborated by many reporters interviewed for this research at *The Herald* who pointed out many occasions when some members of the

Editorial team would wake up the following morning to find their paper carrying stories they would never have discussed in the previous diary meeting.

Some stories, especially the politically controversial ones just find their way straight onto the pages of the paper without ever having been discussed at diary meetings. Sometimes you are just called by the Editor and assigned to work on a story, you are specifically told who to interview for the story and when you phone such commentators you often get the impression that the answers will have been well rehearsed beforehand. It will be so well choreographed because all the sources will speak as if they had sat in a meeting before and agreed on what to say (Interview with *The Herald* Reporter 06/01/15).

That lack of editorial independence from government influence had become so naturalised can also be inferred from The President’s remarks in a speech at the burial of Nathan Shamhuyarira, Independent Zimbabwe’s first Minister of Information. In that speech the President castigated Minister Jonathan Moyo for abusing “our papers” by using them to fuel factional fighting in the ruling party ZANU-PF arguing that: “all the men that we had, who were leading the newspapers, were fired and replaced by those from the MDC” (New Zimbabwe.com June 6, 2014). Thus in analysing *The Herald* story of the FTLRP below, there is a limit on how much of that story can be attributed to journalistic agency, given the extent of the Minister’s direct influence on content through directives and through his power to appoint high level decision makers at the newspaper. Thus, in my analysis I will be under no illusion that the story could possibly have been a window to the reality it reported on, rather the story actively constructed that reality. The intention therefore, is not to hold *The Herald* story to some truth test because such a truth is forever irretrievable and inaccessible except through the discursive prism of its construction (Macdonald 2003). The same is also true with *The Daily News* story. Its motto “Telling it like it is” will not be taken as a guarantor of the fact that its story shall be treated as “truer” than that of *The Herald*.

5.4 The Daily News and a Counter-hegemonic News Agenda

When *The Daily News* started in 1999 not an insignificant number of its staffers had spent the formative years of their career at one of Zimpaper’s newspapers. In fact the entire editorial leadership of the paper had cut their journalistic teeth at one or other of the government controlled Zimpapers (1980) Limited’s newspapers or Ziana as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Zimpapers as Alma-matter for most journalists in Zimbabwe. Source: Saunders 1999

Name	Position at <i>The Daily News</i> from 1999	Past position(s) held at Zimpapers
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Wilf Mbanga	Founding Executive and Managing Director ANZ	Editor in Chief, Community Newspapers Group; Founding Editor, <i>Ziana</i> (1981-1983)
Geoffrey Nyarota	Editor-in-Chief	Editor <i>The Financial Gazette</i> (1990-1991), Editor <i>The Chronicle</i> (1983-1989) Editor <i>The Manica Post</i> (1982-1983)
William Saidi	Deputy Editor	Zimpapers Group Features and Group Foreign Editor (1984-1990) Editor <i>The Sunday News</i> (1982-1984)
Davison Maruziva	Assistant Editor	Reporter, <i>The Chronicle</i> (1983-1989)
John Gambanga	News Editor	Editor <i>The Manica Post</i> (1992), Features Editor <i>The Herald</i> (1987-1992)

An important legacy of *The Herald* on other national newspapers including *The Daily News* is in guaranteeing a pro-elite and anti-poor slant in the news content through usage of English as the de-facto language of news and the capital city, Harare, as the most convenient site to report from on account of its proximity to the seat of governmental power. What is even more important is that *The Herald* also provides a vital symbolic link with Zimbabwe's colonial past, discursively seeking to transcend but also providing at the same time: "what Mudimbe has called the colonial library—the grand narratives, tribal tropes, distorted images, and "natural" histories that forged "the foundations of discourse about Africa" (1988, xi) and that, as Mbembe (2001) so vividly demonstrates, remain firmly entrenched in the postcolony? (Apter 2007: 1). This is not to suggest however that the colonial library was a sole and unilateral imposition from above. It was co-produced at the intersection or confluence of contestations between the dominating colonial ideological impositions and the tension between cooperation and resistance by dominated subaltern groups. And the newsroom represented a perfect example of that conjuncture in Zimbabwe post 2000. Thus in an environment where *The Herald* as the leading daily newspaper in Zimbabwe had become a mouthpiece of the ruling party, *The Daily News* saw as its mission to write and publicise the alternative story to provide a counterpoint to the government mouthpiece's version. Thus in a political conflictual situation like that which the farm invasions presented, *The Daily News* naturally found itself aligning with those opposed to the government's position on the issue.

5.4.1 News Values and Newsroom Practices at *The Daily News*

The Daily News' role as a source of alternative interpretations on the prevailing social, economic and political reality in Zimbabwe was cut out for it by the evolving competition for political authority between the ruling ZANU-PF and the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a political party that brought together a coalition of the labour

movement, the student union and other activist civic organisations increasingly disillusioned by government's adoption and implementation of neoliberal economic austerity measures under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the 1990s decade (CITE RELEVANT SOURCES)

The news production process at the re-launched *Daily News* is in many ways similar to and a continuation with the tradition of the paper before it was closed down by government for failing to comply with a legal provision requiring it to register under the new media law, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act of 2002. A typical day starts off with a Diary Meeting chaired either by the Editor-in-Chief himself or his deputy or by the News Editor, in instances when the two top men are busy. The meeting is attended by all reporters and some members of the sub-editors desk. The meeting starts off with a review of the days' paper. Any errors and mistakes are noted and discussed with suggestions given of how such mistakes could have been avoided in the first place. The lead story is particularly analysed and compared with news headlines the rival papers chose to lead with. During such discussions Editors have often expressed satisfaction with the performance of the team especially when the story they decided to lead with happened to be close to or similar to that the rival publications would have also chosen as the most important story of the day.

During the period of my stay at the paper it was evident that the paper benchmarked its own performance on that of *The Herald*. The other daily papers were generally viewed as inferior and therefore the ones seeking to follow *The Daily News* as their model. In one such meeting the issue of the other daily independent newspaper leading with the same news headline word for word became so regular that it could no longer be attributed to sheer coincidence. The Editor had to raise this matter in the diary meeting and he immediately launched an investigation to find out if there was a mole who was leaking *The Daily News* headlines to their competitor and new measures were taken to plug any such leakages. Instances when the paper breaks an exclusive story were also hailed as a mark of high performance and exclusive sources were highly sought after and aggressively pursued because, as the Editors often impressed it upon their charges, exclusive headline stories sell the paper. As a way of instilling a sense of collective responsibility for the paper, sub-editors were required as a matter of policy, after layout has been approved by the proof readers, to display on the notice board every completed page as it was expected to appear in the next morning's edition of the paper. It was then everyone's duty to scrutinise the page and point out any mistakes for

correction if they noted any before the paper went to print. This mode of operation inculcated a strong sense of working as a team at *The Daily News*.

5.4.2 Fast Track Land Reform Programme Timeline

Year 2000, February 16. War veterans commence farm invasions in protest against the ‘no’ vote in a constitutional referendum

March 1. War veterans invade a total of 27 White-owned Farms countrywide

3. Police issue an ultimatum ordering War veterans to end farm siege

4. War Vets defy order to vacate farms

18. High court rules farm invasions by war veterans illegal and grants CFU relief by ordering War vets to leave occupied farms within 24 hours

20. War veterans defy court order to vacate commercial farms

April 3. Police Officer shot dead, a Marondera white commercial farmer, Ian Kay attacked and injured at his farm by war veterans

6. Parliament passes constitutional amendment bill to empower government to acquire land without paying compensation.

13. Government orders war veterans to leave farms

15. A Macheke white commercial farmer Stephens shot dead becoming the first white farmer to die in clashes with farm invaders.

18. A Nyamandlovu white commercial farmer Mr Martin Olds shot dead

Year 2002, May 9. Government issues a 90 day notice of eviction to over 2000 white commercial farmers whose land had been designated for resettlement of landless blacks.

August 9. More than 1600 white commercial farmers leave their farms in compliance with government notice of eviction.

The invasion of white owned farms under an intensified government land reform programme codenamed Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) beginning March 2000 was greeted with a sense of outrage and consternation in both local sections of the press and international press. There was almost unanimity in condemnation of government takeover of land belonging to white farmers for redistribution to landless black Zimbabweans. *The Daily News* was one paper that kept the land issue firmly on its agenda for three years running from 2000. In this section I make close reference to a few typical newspaper articles for analysis and discussion. A point that immediately strikes one as worth noting is the relatively large volume and prominence given to the seizures of white owned land by war veterans for resettlement of landless blacks compared to land seizures of blacks' ancestral lands by white settlers during colonial rule, considered in the last chapter. One thing that becomes evident is that takeover of land and forced eviction of incumbents becomes more newsworthy when blacks are perpetrators and whites victims. Even the pro-state press could not ignore the story of farm invasions and occupation of white farms as it had done in cases where Africans were the victims.

5.4.3 *The Daily News* and 'Telling It Like It Is'

When the farm invasions started in March 2000 *The Daily News* coverage of the phenomenon was not very different from that of *The Herald*. At first the objective was just to give publicity to what the paper deemed a very significant political unfolding. The story had all the necessary ingredients that recommended it to any journalist with a nose for news.

News Headlines:

Opposition political parties condemn farm invasions; (March 1, 2000: 3)

CFU says invaders have taken over 40 commercial farms (March 2, 2000: 2)

Farm invasions worry EU (March 2, 2000: 3)

War vets ordered off farms (March 3, 2000: 1)

Farmers to meet war vets (March 3, 2000: 6)

War vets defy State orders to vacate farms (March 6, 2000: 1)

Hunzvi to tour invaded farms (March 7, 2000: 2)

Mugabe urged to stop invasions (March 15, 2000: 1)

Business Leaders' Forum condemns farm invasions (March 16, 2000: 2)

The farm invasion story was rarely off the front page of *The Daily News* during the first month of its inception. The reportage of the story at *The Daily News*, moved from a focus on alarm bell ringing where news reports were concerned with setting the terms of the discourse and indications of the scale of the event. It ran headlines such as: "CFU says invaders have taken over 40 commercial farms" (March 2, 2000: 2), delegitimising the farm invasions as illegal, chaotic and violent. And, as it becomes increasingly clear that war veterans enjoyed government's tacit support and were not going to back down, the paper's focus shifted to a concern with exposing government complicity in the action and finally to underscoring the effects on the economy and on the white evicted farmers as well as their black employees.

The Daily News' motto: "Telling it like it is" made the claim that the news stories it put out were a mirror image of what was actually happening in society. It gave assurances that those readers who wanted to get an unbiased account of reality would be sure to get such untainted accounts of the daily occurrences in Zimbabwe from its news pages. This motto made sense in a context where the Zimbabwean public was increasingly getting disillusioned by what was perceived as heavily biased reports from state media such as the Zimbabwe national broadcaster and *The Herald*. It was to this readership that the newly established newspaper organisation; the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), publishers of *The Daily News* sought to appeal to. In their published editorial charter, (*The Daily News*, March 31, 2000) the newspaper group had described itself as an independent newspaper organisation that had set for itself very lofty standards of professional and ethical reporting. They had announced that *The Daily News* as their flagship newspaper would pursue an editorial line that would be:

independent of any political, commercial, or sectional obligations or commitments, and will not represent the interests of any one section of the population at the expense of another. They would strive to ensure there is no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, ethnic group, sexual orientation or any physical attribute. Reports shall be fair, balanced and accurate, and diversity of opinion shall be encouraged.

On the face of it, the statement that the paper would not discriminate disarms any reader and turns off any ground for scepticism. But as it turns out, such statements of faith when coupled with an unquestioning application of the professional journalism creed in news selection and news gathering would necessarily produce a bias of its own often in favour of the powerful elite and against the poor in society. Racial blindness and indifference to how one's race

determines access to privilege and opportunity, a place where poverty puts on a black face and affluence a white one in a place where the “universal” hierarchy of credibility of news sources takes a racial inflection then for a paper to declare that it will not discriminate on the basis of race and ethnicity is tantamount to practicing the most insidious form of discrimination. Such a paper cannot claim to occupy higher moral ground than a paper which under colonial rule unabashedly discriminated affordances to voice on grounds of race. The fact that in a postcolonial context, where some blacks have joined the ranks of the affluent and therefore access to the news is no consolation for the majority of blacks who have remained in poverty and therefore excluded from privileged access express themselves in the news, the reasons and basis for excluding subaltern views in the news may be different but the effect remains the same. News, by nature, is not about what has been said or what has happened but about who has said what, and editors of the two papers concur on this point as aptly illustrated in interviews with the editors below:

As newspapers, we are in business so we look at stories that sell. Prominent politicians on either side sell. For example, if Obama says your president must go, there is a difference between Obama and someone from the street saying your president must go, so the seller there will be Obama not the that president must go. The issue is not important. So if Biti says whatever he says because Biti is an authority in that area has been finance minister he is MDC secretary general and so on. So he has authority. But if one of your students comes here and says Mugabe must go it's not a story, same views exactly, (Interview with Stanely Gama, Editor of *The Daily News* 27/01/2014).

Asked whether one would be justified to charge *The Herald* as an elitist paper carrying stories written from the point of view of the powerful in society the Editor of *The Herald* made the admission that:

Just like any other paper we can't escape the universal news values. They are universal, you look at the prominence of the person, the prominence of the event, the proximity, the unusualness, human interest aspect, the currency of the event. but we can't escape just like any other publication I am sure someone would be willing to read about Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai than about some peasant in Muzarabani unless there is something bizarre pertaining to that peasant something unusual or something of human interest. So we can't escape from universal news values. In that respect we are guilty. Also as a newspaper we are in the market to sell news and the audience, the people who buy, want to read about prominent people those are the people who interest them, (Interview with Ceaser Zvayi, Editor of *The Herald* 20/01/2014).

The unequal distribution of discursial power that limits the opportunities for subaltern groups to participate in naming the world they live in is so commonsensical and taken for granted at both *The Daily News* and *The Herald* that it becomes naturalised and unchallenged. And,

according to Fairclough (2010:43) such institutionalised ways of knowledge production become ideological, naturalised and “most opaque and may come to be seen as the norms of the institution itself”. The views expressed by the editors of the two papers above are not in any way unique. Jennifer Hasty in a study of newsroom cultures of Ghanaian newspapers discovered a very similar pattern when she remarked that: “journalists with the state press recognise official news when it is pronounced by officially qualified sources in specifically qualifying contexts. Without the official qualification, the truth is simply not newsworthy”, (Hasty 2005: 52). In postcolonial settings what this often translates to is a continual subordination of subaltern black perspectives to those of their erstwhile white masters as became the apparent case of the way *The Daily News* covered the FTLRP in the early 2000s.

Thus the Editors of the two newspapers make no apologies for the obvious elite bias in their news offerings. Reporters at *The Daily News* generally structure their news gathering activities guided by a tacit acceptance as a universal truism, that news by and about prominent people sells. Economic imperatives play a critical role in the selection of news and news sources at *The Daily News*. They were also critical even in making choices about their location as a paper and the language in which to write. The capital Harare accounts for three quarters of the paper’s daily copy sells and 90% of its advertising revenue according to the paper’s editor. But how that triple proximity to its main audience market, to its advertising market and to its ‘credible’ therefore elite news sources translated to the production of news content as a cultural product whose ethos was also proximate to that of the elite section of the population was generally lost to the practitioners. The news stories selected for close analysis below clearly demonstrate this inbuilt incapacity to reflect reality from subaltern stand points.

Headline: CFU says invaders have taken over 40 commercial farms (March 2, 2000: 2)

By-line: Staff Reporter

Lead: The Commercial Farmers’ Union (CFU) says at least 40 farms belonging to its members have so far been invaded by war veterans throughout the country.

Excerpts from the body of the story: A spokesman for the CFU said: “We cannot give exact figures, but the information we have is that between 40 to 50 farms have been invaded. The figures are still coming in.” ...

As the invasions continued, some commercial farmers said they now feared for their lives. A farmer whose farm just outside Harare was invaded yesterday said he was surprised the police were watching the

ex-combatants engage in illegal activity. “As whites, we now fear for our lives,” he said. “It is surprising that the police are not taking any action. This is lawlessness.” ...

Wayne Bvudzijena, the police spokesman, would not comment on the invasions. “It’s something I cannot comment on,” he said.

Augustine Chihuri, the police commissioner, has said the invasions are beyond the police while Chen Chimutengwende, the Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications has also said there is no solution to the problem at the moment.

Chenjerai Hunzvi, the chairman of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association has been touring farms, encouraging the ex-combatants to remain on the farms. The war veterans have been invading farms in the past few weeks, saying they are bitter the draft constitution, allowing the government to grab land without paying compensation, had been rejected.

The picture accompanying this story clearly shows who is the subject and object of the camera gaze. The camera shot captures “women”, from the front, as they, “rush to seize pieces of land on arrival at Sam Levy’s Lilfordia Estate”. The cameraman is obviously standing on Sam Levy’s farm for him to picture the women approaching the farm and thus is making the camera narrate the invasion of Lilfordia Estate as it would have been seen by the farm owner thus advantaging the farm owner’s perspective of the event being recorded.

If one used Hall’s hierarchy of primary and secondary definition then schematically one would have the CFU the organisation representing white farmers and some individual white farmers themselves occupying the apex of the inverted pyramid, followed by government authorities and at the bottom the war veterans who have not been directly afforded an opportunity to give their own side of the story but are only referred to indirectly as the perpetrators. As the diagram below clearly illustrates, the actual landless rural subaltern are conspicuous by their absence on the primary definition power hierarchy. They fall outside of journalistic standards for credible sources for a news story. Such an inverted pyramid of definitional power in reporting the farm invasion story at *The Daily News*, with few exceptions, would generically look something close to the illustration below:

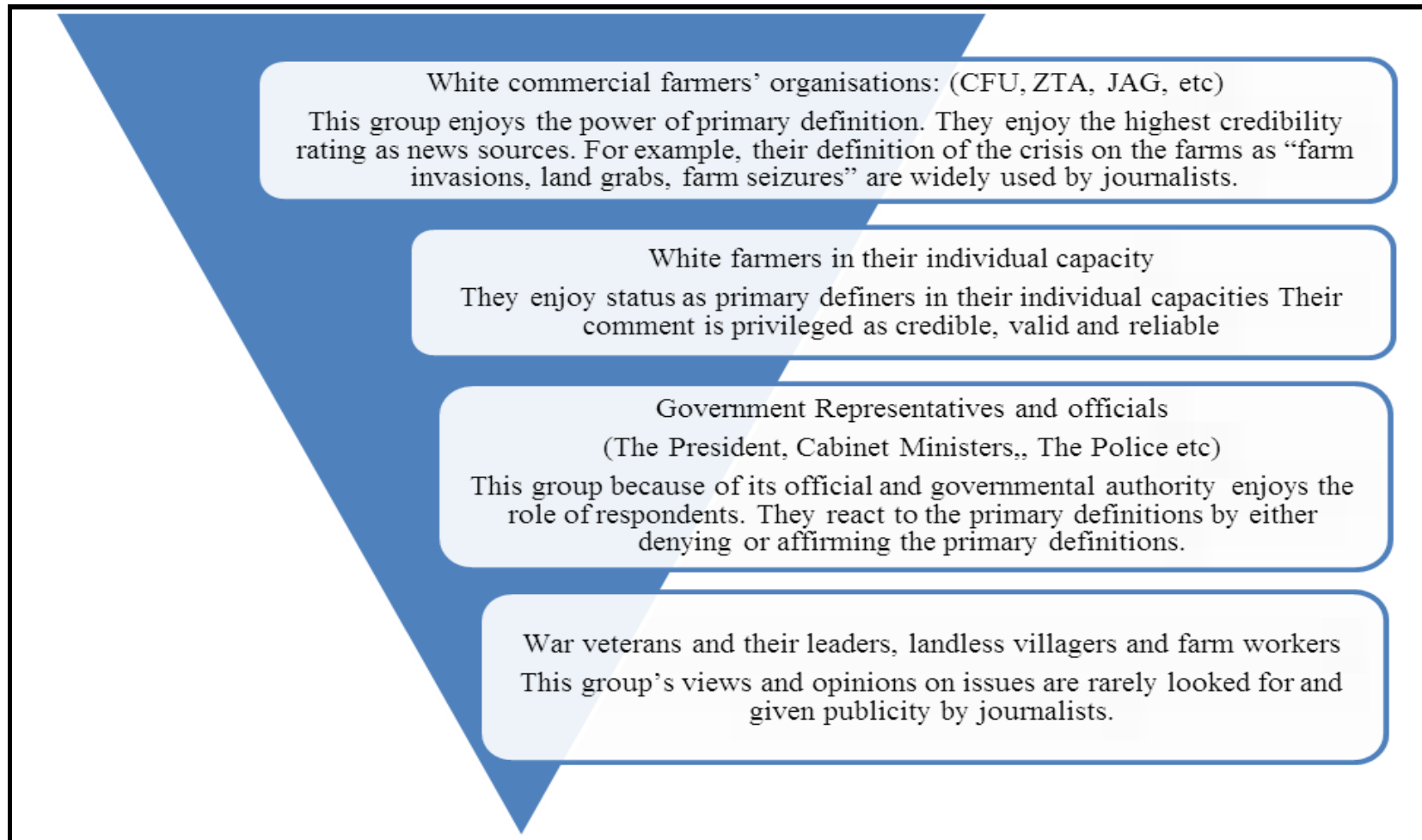


Figure 5. The power hierarchy to name in a typical Farm invasion story at *The Daily News*.

Although journalists at *The Daily News* wanted to think of themselves as always speaking on behalf of the underdog and think of their paper as the voice of the voiceless, in reporting the FTLRP, that commitment became narrowly defined to mean actively avoiding to be another government mouthpiece after *The Herald* and all Zimpapers publications. The paper therefore found itself most of the times they reported on the land conflict privileging white commercial farmers' voices on the issue and marginalising the real underdogs in this conflict, the farm workers and rural based landless blacks in whose name the programme was purportedly being implemented. Thus in essence *The Daily News*' claim of independence from external influence masked the paper's own ethnocentric biases in the way it reported the land conflict between whites and blacks. The way *The Daily News* reported incidents of violence and killings on the farms in April 2000 demonstrates this point:

Story 1.(April 5, 2000: 1)

Headline:	Policeman dies in farm violence
By-line:	Artwell Manyemba
Lead:	A police officer was shot dead yesterday at Chipesa Farm where on the previous day, farmer Ian Kay was severely beaten in violence that threatens to overwhelm the Marondera farming community.
Body:	Police withheld the name of the deceased officer saying her relatives had still not been informed. Kay's neighbour, Rodney Steel, said marauding war veterans have unleashed a reign of terror in the area. They speared to death four cattle and devoured the meat in a display of thuggery, he said. Police have been slow to react to the widespread anarchy, he said. ...

Atop this story announcing the death of a police officer as a result of violent eruption at Chipesa Farm is a mug-shot picture showing the upper torso of farmer Kay lying on the ground face up, showing a blood spattered almost lifeless face from the severe beating at the hands of the invading war veterans. An accompanying caption announces: "Ian Kay, a Marondera farmer who was brutally assaulted by people suspected to be ex-combatants at his Chipesa farm on Monday. Kay is said to have angered the ex-fighters when he failed to meet a deadline to reconstruct shacks belonging the farm invaders that he had earlier destroyed."



Figure 6. Front Page of *The Daily News* on 5 April 2000. Source: *The Daily News Library*

The layout plan of the story clearly gives secondary status to the death of the police officer by over-dramatising the suffering of the white farmers. The story headline would suggest the picture of the deceased police officer would have been the most appropriate to use with this story, but editors chose the white farmer's face as the more appropriate. Probably the dead body of the police officer was not photogenic enough and did not present as good a picture opportunity as that of a butchered white man's face.

But at another level of analysis it is reasonable to argue on the basis of news value of proximity to prominent people that the death of the police officer on its own would not have attracted as much audience interest on its own merit.

But its newsworthiness got enhanced if somehow it could be reported in relation to the broader effects similar acts of violence had on prominent elite people like farmer Ian Kay. As an event, the death of the police officer only makes news because of its nearness to what befell the white commercial farmer, Mr. Ian Kay. Even as a lead it could not stand without leaning on the more important though less recent violence meted out on Ian Kay, the white farmer. That the police officer's death is comparatively of less news interest to the reporter than the disruptive effects of the eruption of violence on the white farming community is made more evident in the second paragraph of the story where the police officer's death is given short shrift in just one line before being abandoned in favour of refocusing the story on effects of violence on white farmers. The terminology used by the white source, Rodney Steel, to describe the actions of war veterans on their farms borders on racial slur. He invokes the imagery and symbolism of wild animals when he uses such words and phrases as "marauding", unleashing "a reign of terror"; "devoured the meat"; "display of thuggery"; and "widespread anarchy" with reference to the war veterans.

In 2000, however, reportage on the fast track land reform programme was a little more nuanced and not just one dimensional in support of and sympathetic to the white farmers and against Mugabe's land policies. Although on the whole stories condemning the land invasions easily formed the bulk of *The Daily News*' reportage on the FTLRP, during the early phase of the programme attempts were made to balance the stories by giving fair opportunities for comment from both sides of the conflict. In this way *The Daily News* strove to present a balanced view of the land conflict, giving expression to all contesting parties on the issue: government, white farmers, and war veterans leaders. Stories like the one sourced from the UK based Guardian and published in *The Daily News* (Monday 24 April 2000: 12) though condemnatory of Mugabe's land reform programme as racist inspired, also castigates the British government as blameworthy for what was happening in Zimbabwe. The feature story which occupied the centre-spread of the paper on pages 12 and 13 is cited below:

Headline:	Britain not well placed to lecture Mugabe
Kicker underlined:	‘Like Jack Straw and William Hague, Mugabe is using racism as a cheap – and not very effective means – of winning votes.’
Pull-quote centred:	The recent land seizures mirror the thefts which first enabled the whites to control so much of Zimbabwe’s economy. In the 1890s, Cecil John Rhodes and the settlers he led first cheated, and then forcibly dispossessed the Shona and Ndebele.
Lead:	The British establishment is poorly qualified to lecture President Mugabe about racism. The government’s condemnation of the murders of two commercial farmers contrast oddly with the blandishments with which it greeted Russian President Vladimir Putin, the killer of thousands of Chechens.
Body:	Just as it revealed that Zimbabwe’s white refugees are welcome for “reasons of ancestry” to settle in Britain permanently, it announced that it would expel 3000 Kosovan Albanians. While the newspapers devoted hundreds of column centimetres to the horrible killings of the two farmers, they scarcely mentioned the equally horrible killing of a black foreman who worked for one of them. The dispute between London and Harare is a dispute between racists. Like Jack Straw and William Hague, Mugabe is using racism as a cheap – and not very effective – means of winning votes The recent land seizures mirror the thefts which first enabled the whites to control so much of Zimbabwe’s economy. In the 1890s, Cecil John Rhodes and the settlers he led first cheated, and then forcibly dispossessed the Shona and Ndebele. The whites stole their land, their cattle and, through taxation, their labour. When they rebelled against those impositions, the blacks were cruelly suppressed and their leaders were hanged. From 1930 onwards, blacks were forbidden to own land outside the barren and crowded “reserves”. Today though the laws have changed, the distribution of land has scarcely altered. Zimbabwe’s 4500 white farmers occupy 70 percent of the best land, while some seven million blacks still inhabit the old reserves.

5.4.4 Readers Write Back

The “Letters to the Editor” page provides a point of interface between the readers and the editors of the paper. It also acts as a feedback loop which gives editors a clue as to which stories their readers followed. From time to time each published letter was some form of comment on a story carried in an earlier edition of the paper, as it inter-textually referred back to an issue the paper would have published before. In this regard the letters page provided the connective tissue between new developments and earlier aspects of a developing story like that one on farm invasions. The letter titled: “There can never be a peaceful invasion”, published on March 16, 2000, illustrates this point. This letter would make little sense unless read against a background of an earlier front-page story published in the same paper on March 3, 2000, headlined: “War vets ordered off farms”. In that story President Robert Mugabe had been quoted as having said: “No, we are not going to put a stop to the invasions which are demonstrations, peaceful demonstrations and lawful demonstrations by the ex-combatants”. By pointing out the contradiction in terms in “peaceful invasion” the letter writer casts a fresh light on the whole issue of trying to represent farm invasions as a peaceful demonstration and thus carries the debate forward.

On April 13, 2000 *The Daily News* published two letters on the same page which clearly demonstrate the paper’s policy of encouraging lively and open debate on issues of common interest by giving publicity to views clearly divergent to the paper’s own in that way providing an ideal public sphere and true market place of ideas at least on its Letters to the Editor pages. The two letters of more or less equal length occupy eye-catching positions on the letters page of April 13, 2000. One straddles the top middle section of the page, flanked by short one columnar letters on both sides. The other anchors the page and runs across 5 out of the six column page. The top article which obviously is the lead letter is marked out by a double-deck headline with the largest font size and in bold. This layout technique also gives a clue as to the paper’s preferred point of view on the land reform issue between the two stridently divergent opinions being articulated in the two letters cited below:

Letter 1.

Headline:	Ex-combatants should avoid being manipulated
Body:	MAY I through your popular paper, congratulate first Dzinashé Machingura and Webster Gwauya for coming out in the open as war veterans to show that not all war veterans are in the same league with the likes of Chenjerai “Hitler” Hunzvi and ex-dissident Andrew Ndlovu who perpetrate violence.

Machingura and Gwauya are true heroes who know what they fought for and they need the support of all war veterans and peace loving Zimbabweans. The liberation war was fought to remove the unjust system that prevailed then and it was not fought for a particular race. All the people of Zimbabwe contributed in one way or another to that liberation war.

Ask the ex-combatants who were at the front (not in Poland) and they will relate what role villagers played in the war. Ask the role that other races, including whites, played, in the war. Those of our former guerrillas who operated in urban areas will agree with me that some whites and Indians assisted in one way or another. They cannot now be held to ransom to keep one party in power, when it is crystal clear that change is required. Machingura and Gwauya should ask their former comrades to open their eyes to reality and see that the bush war ended 20 years ago and war against corruption and mismanagement of the economy.

My second congratulations go to Cain Nkala and the ex-combatants in Matebeleland for taking an avenue of negotiating with the white farmers on the land issue. This is a sign of maturity. Keep up your efforts. After all, the whites did not refuse to share the land with landless Zimbabweans.

Our black brothers, our leaders gave each other a number of farms that were meant for the resettlement of the landless. The best idea is to start by repossessing all those farms instead of interrupting production on farms that bring us foreign currency. After all, most of the farms that were given to our big black brothers are not producing anything. Nkala and his colleagues should not allow themselves to be used by politicians for their own selfish ends. The ex-combatants in Matebeleland should be reminded of the 1980s when they were hunted day and night by the Gukurahundi brigade. Today the same people who wanted you dead want you to cause violence and fight the whites.

Signed: Thebula, Bezel Bridge.

Letter 2.

Headline: Blacks can be successful commercial farmers

Body: I will be glad if you publish this letter although I believe it's your policy not to publish letters written in support of land redistribution and sharing which, for reasons best known to you, you call, "land grabbing". That term would best apply to the way the land was taken by settlers a long time ago.

If your car is stolen and then it takes you months to find it and when you find it should you be called a car grabber? Of course the thief will have reregistered the car using fake documents to make it legally his.

The situation here is you know where your bread is buttered. If Judas could sell Jesus for three pence what could millions do to those who

are campaigning for land to remain in the hands of a few whites while the majority blacks eat grass?

Those who are familiar with the rural set-up know the pathetic situation which exist in these areas. People are crammed on unproductive, stony and sandy soil. Yet some of you want this situation to remain forever.

Why should we be condemned to unending suffering? Is it because of the colour of our skin? While planned redistribution of land would be the most ideal approach, it is also a fact that those who hold most of the land would not want to share it through peaceful means.

It is not true that blacks cannot be successful farmers but, what is true is that they have no access to resources such as credit facilities and inputs. After all, who does the donkey work on the farms? Experience is the best teacher. The good farmers of today have come a long way. They were not born good farmers. Let's share the land.

Signed: Martin Chikowore, Chinhoyi

Editor's Response: *The Daily News* is not at all against land redistribution. All we ask is that the exercise be carried out in a transparent manner for the benefit of all deserving cases. – Editor.

Through its opinion pages and letters from readers pages *The Daily News* proved much more accommodative of differing points of view on the FTLRP.



Figure 7 A typical Letters to the Editor Page of *The Daily News* April 13, 2000.
Source: *The Daily News* Library

Most letters pages were organised along the general pattern shown above, with letters expressing very varied opinions on the land issue. This seemingly liberal perspective actually belied the paper's more critical stance against the manner the government implemented the land resettlement programme. This pattern was probably the paper's attempt at more faithfully reflecting and simulating the inchoate opinions of a society increasingly getting divided and polarised along political party lines. The object of the first letter is to highlight

the lack of a broad consensus and unanimity among war veterans generally on the subject of land invasion.

There are some highly respectable war veterans out there, whose more impeccable war credentials place them in good stead to challenge the likes of the leader of the ZNLWA Chenjerai “Hitler” Hunzvi.

The Matabeleland war veterans under Cain Nkala, are said to be taking a different, more ‘mature’ approach, that of negotiating with the white farmer. This letter deliberately seeks to tribalise the issue of land seizures by representing that there was difference of opinion between the Shonas and the Ndebeles. It rehashes the very emotive and divisive Gukurahundi atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the Shonas against the Ndebeles in the mid-1980s. The uncritical deployment of tribal identity markers such as ‘Shonas’, and ‘Ndebeles’ was itself problematic as such ethnic categorisations were themselves colonial inventions remotely related to social relations on the ground. Phrases like “liberation war was fought to remove the evil system then” “the bush war ended 20 years ago” are deliberately very imprecise terms that conceal the centrality of colonialism’s very unjust land segregation policies as at the core of the unnamed “evil system”. “The bush war” invokes notions of barbarism and cowardice on the part of those who waged the armed struggle against settler colonialism as opposed to heroism and courage often associated with such terms as “liberation struggle” or “Chimurenga” which are used to celebrate the guerrilla war that brought independence as a glorious struggle. The letter also deploys rhetorical strategies of inclusivity to recruit the reader in defence of retaining the existing land ownership patterns. Instead of viewing the white farmer as the enemy the focus should be on warring “against corruption and mismanagement of the economy”, a shorthand for pointing an accusatory finger at the black political elite now in government. The blame is shifted from the white farmer whose productive farm “brings us foreign currency”.

Letter 2 on the other hand, discursively deconstructs the paper’s use of terms like “land grabbing” to refer to the on-going war veterans and landless villagers led land redistribution exercise. The letter also explodes the taken for granted assumptions that blacks cannot be successful farmers and whites are by nature successful at farming commercially. It locates the genesis of the current land dispute between white farmers and the former freedom fighters in the historical dispossessions and mass evictions of Africans from their ancestral lands by the

BSAC's pioneer column beginning in 1890. In the salutation paragraph the writer pleads with the Editor to publish his letter in spite of its opinion which was contrary to the paper's own view on the land issue. In making that explicit plea for publication of his letter the writer gives a clue about the editorial decisions and selections and how these possibly colour the reality being reported in line with the paper's ideological leanings and inclinations.

5.5 *The Herald* and Equivocation on the Land Issue.

Thus, in 2000 it was not uncommon to encounter story headlines clearly critical of some of the excesses of the campaign by war veterans to occupy white commercial farms. Such headlines included the following: (7 April 2000) "Zimbabwe makes UK liable for farm seizures"(4 May 2000) "Conditions set for end to invasions"; (20 August 2000) "Over 240 000 farm workers stand to lose jobs"; (19 September 2000) "Farmers sue Government over land acquisition"; (7 November 2000) "Legality of land reform challenged"; (22 December 2000) "Court gives State until July to stop land acquisitions"; *The Herald* clearly prevaricated on the desirability and legitimacy of the land reform programme in the form that it took in early 2000. Just as there appeared to be no coherent policy in government over the land issue at this early stage of the fast track land reform so also *The Herald*. This is quite evident in the paper's use of such phrases as: "farm seizures" and "land invasions" terms which the paper clearly stopped using as the land acquisition programme continued to unfold in a manner that increasingly indicated its irrevocability. At first *The Herald* far from presenting a coherent and consistently pro-government story on the fast track land reform programme, most of its news representations of the FTLRP events tended to betray a largely ambivalent and sceptical view of the political development. It mostly took a middle of the road approach which produced stories rather ambivalent and inconclusive on the whole subject of the fast track land reform. In fact a comparison of its headlines on the unfolding land saga differed little from those of its rival *The Daily News* in the early phases. The diction was not different. For example, war veterans' actions were described as 'raids', 'land invasions', 'farm seizures' land grabs etc., terms that by their use denoted the illegality of the land acquisition programme. In those early stages of the FTLRP *The Herald*'s editorial was clearly more sympathetic towards white farmers' cause and against war veterans' actions as disruptive, chaotic and invasive on an otherwise key sector in Zimbabwe's economy. This was in spite of the President on several occasions having signalled his endorsement of what the war veterans were doing on commercial farms.

At this particular point in time the newspaper strove to give a balanced account of political events in the country, affording a fair opportunity to competing shades of elite opinion on the subject of land takeovers. War veterans' views were juxtaposed and counter-balanced with those of the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) the representative body of mainly white commercial farmers. President Robert Mugabe's views of condoning war veterans' action were contrasted with those of some of his cabinet ministers in government and members of his party who seemed to contradict his. On March 3, 2000, the paper led with the story headlined: "War vets ordered to move off farms" attributed to the Minister of Home Affairs, Dumiso Dabengwa. As if to play out the contradictory attitudes and policy inconsistencies within ZANU-PF and in government, that story was laid out on the same page with an insert story written in bold typeface and attributed to the President introducing a competing interpretation of war veterans' actions on commercial farms, decriminalising them as a mere protest demo. The story's headline announced: "Invasions protest against 'no' vote: President". The vacillation between approval and disapproval of farm occupations by war veterans and land hungry villagers continued to play itself out on the pages of *The Herald* throughout the first and second months of the FTLRP programme. The paper just like its rival *The Daily News* seemed to orchestrate the divergence of opinion within the ruling ZANU-PF on the form and content of government driven land acquisition policy. The fault-line of disagreement took an intra-party conflict inflexion with the former ZAPU elements (Dumiso Dabengwa Joseph Msika and John Nkomo) in the recently reconfigured ZANU-PF, calling for the halting of the seizures of white owned commercial farms and the reigning in of errant war veterans by issuing out pronouncements and proclamations ordering war vets to leave occupied farms. The ZANU element led by President Mugabe and leader of the war veterans association Dr. Chenjerai Hunzvi threw their weight behind the ongoing land occupations.

This ambivalence and policy ambiguity within ZANU-PF manifested themselves through *The Herald's* headline stories on the FTLRPP for the greater part of its early phase in 2000 and 2001. Pairs of stories like "War vets ordered to move off farms" with an insert story, "Invasions protest against 'no' vote: President" (*The Herald*, March 3, 2000: 1) and "Government orders war veterans to leave farms" (*The Herald* April 14, 2000: 1), "President won't order war vets off farms" (April 17, 2000). highlight lack of policy coherence and the paradoxes and contradictions in government's approach to implementing FTLRP programme in the early stages.

Headline:	War vets ordered to move off farms
By-line:	Herald Reporters
Lead:	War veterans have been ordered to move out of white-owned commercial farms by today or face unspecified police action, but the war veterans said the invasions were likely to continue.
Body:	The Minister of Home Affairs, Cde Dumiso Dabengwa, told reporters yesterday that the war veterans could be whipped into line unless they immediately withdrew from the farms. War veterans' association chairman Dr Chenjerai Hunzvi, however told a separate Press conference held simultaneously with Cde Dabengwa's in a different part of town that the "spontaneous" farm invasions, which had attracted hundreds of landless villagers and farm labourers, were likely to continue.

The passivisation construct in both the main headline of the story and the lead conceals or at least downplays the importance of the agent in ordering the evacuation of war veterans from farms. This has the effect of placing the authority of the ordering agent and the inevitability of its action beyond questioning. This threat of ejection from occupied farms is juxtaposed with war veterans' expressed commitment to continue with the farm invasions. The fact that the paper uses the word invasions not in quotation marks here and in many of its early descriptions of war veterans' actions on white-owned farms and also given that the story is not attributed any specific reporter but to "Herald Reporters" clearly demonstrates that the paper's editorial leadership was unambiguous about the illegality of "spontaneous" farm occupations by war veterans. The story counterpoises Home Affairs Minister Dumiso Dabengwa's statement with that of war veterans leader Chenjerai Hunzvi.

The Herald story at this stage is very clear about the owners and who invaders are between whites and ex-freedom fighters on the commercial farms. That the paper was very sceptical about the spontaneity of the farm invasions and that its editors felt that the invasions were anything but orderly and successful is made evident by their placing such descriptors as "spontaneous", "the orderly farm invasions", and "successful", in quotation marks. In this story, typical of *The Herald's* elite-centric reporting, the reporters are satisfied to balance off the views of government officials against those of organised interests of war veterans and white commercial farmers represented by Home Affairs Minister Dumiso Dabengwa, war veterans leader Dr Chenjerai Hunzvi and CFU president, Tim Henwood respectively. The paper bases its construction and interpretation of the complex 'reality' of the FTLRP on what

they consider to be the most credible representatives of three key protagonists (sources) in the unfolding conflict situation on farms.

Through this process of selective affordances of voice the evolving land redistribution exercise can only be imagined along the normative prism of a liberal world order where government's remit is to enforce law and order, protect human rights including right to private property and to be a neutral arbiter between the competing interests of war veterans bent on forcibly extracting a fair share of Zimbabwe's most fertile land against white commercial farmers' ownership claims.

Insert story headline: Invasions protest against 'no' vote: President

By-line: Herald Reporter

Intro: The government will not stop war veterans from invading white-owned commercial farms because they are demonstrating peacefully for equitable redistribution of land, President Mugabe said in Harare yesterday.

Body: He said the invasions were a peaceful demonstration against the rejection of the draft constitution, which would have given the government the right to acquire land for resettlement without paying compensation.

"They are just demonstrating the greatest disappointment that there was this 'no' vote which negated the clause in the (draft) constitution that was going to give government power to acquire land without hindrance, he told journalists at state house yesterday. He said the invasions were a demonstration of the "greatest desire and demand on the part of the people for more land".

"The ex-combatants feel it much more because they sacrificed their lives for us to get back our land... and sovereign dignity."

Through the layout technique of embedding a separate story as an insert in the general outline of another story, the editors cue their readers to consider the second story as presenting or reporting on an issue closely related to the main story and that the two ought to be read together. The insert will be capturing a sub-plot to either amplify, clarify the themes dealt with in the main story, or to challenge or question the main story's propositions. In this particular case the insert story headline presents the president's view of the issue reported in the main story. In the first paragraph the story appears to contradict and subvert the claim made in the headline of the main story. Instead of affirming a position stated at a press

conference by his minister, President Mugabe in this insert asserts a contrary position that government would not stop war veterans from invading white-owned commercial farms.

Unlike the view expressed by the commercial farmers and shared with the Minister of Home affairs which condemned the war veterans led farm invasions as a breach of law, President Mugabe's sentiments seem to condone and even abate that action as legitimate and in that way signals to the police to back-off and not to interfere with war veterans who were exercising their democratic right to protest as long as they did so peacefully. Implied in the sub-plot was that the war-veterans' protest action would be allowed to go on for as long as they met the government's criterion for a 'peaceful demonstration'. That the reporter in this story is satisfied to present the President's views on the issue without asking any questions illustrates the ideological operation by which elite views are presented as the only valid accounts of reality. For example, the President's tolerance of ex-combatants' democratic right to peacefully organise and protest against the 'no' vote, which itself was an outcome of a democratic process seems to be a contradiction in terms, but the reporter is content to just report what the President said.

It is important to note that at this stage the campaign to occupy white owned commercial farms is represented as only a 'peaceful demonstration' meant to protest against whites for instigating the rejection of the draft constitution in the referendum. The impression created was that farm invasions were token and ephemeral and would end as soon as government had taken sufficient steps to correct what the 'no' vote had wronged. In the two stories above, as in many headline stories that followed during the first two months since the outbreak of farm invasions *The Herald* was consistent in presenting to its readers versions of the material reality on the farms as seen through the eyes of commercial farmers, war veterans or government ministers. Perspectives that were conspicuous by their absence at this early stage of *The Herald's* coverage of the FTLRP programme were those of affected farm workers and of the ordinary rural Zimbabweans in whose name the farm invasions were purportedly being effected. Their voice on the land reform was irretrievably lost as an artefact of news writing processes and news sourcing practices which favoured elite views at the expense of those of the subaltern groups.

In fact as the table below indicates, when the farm invasions erupted and as the journalists attempted to cover the story, there were no premeditated obvious consensus positions from which the different reporters at *The Herald* covered the developing story in the first month of

its occurrence. But that farm invasions would pan out for the long haul as they eventually did was generally not anticipated in *The Herald* newsroom, nor among war veterans themselves, nor in some government quarters with the exception probably of President Mugabe himself and top leadership of the war veterans. The headline story cited below demonstrates this policy uncertainty:

Headline: War veterans vow not to leave farms

By-line: Ray Mungoshi

Lead: War veterans yesterday set themselves on a collision course with the police when they vowed not to leave white-owned commercial farms they occupied last month.

Body: Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association Secretary General, Cde Cosmos Gonesse, said the former freedom fighters would not bow to the Government's demand despite its threat to kick them out of the farms.

"We are not moving out of the farms but rather we will sit out the 30 days it will take the Government to gazette the amendment on land, said Cde Gonesse in an interview.

Our intention is not to chase out white farmers but to make a statement that our patience has run out. We are not going anywhere until we get the land for the people.

The war veterans' stance flies in the face of the Minister of Home Affairs Cde Dumiso Dabengwa who on Thursday gave them an ultimatum to retreat from the farms by yesterday or face unspecified consequences. ...

The minister who admitted in an interview that the authorities did not move fast enough to stop the invasions, said he would now move cautiously. "I think we will sit down with their leaders first because they too now realise that these (the invasions) have become disorderly. We cannot allow this to continue spreading."

What comes out very clearly from this and other subsequent newspaper reports on the farm invasions by war veterans is that war veterans were on white-owned commercial farms for purposes other than repossession of land from white farmers. Their ultimate goal as Gonesse intimates in this story was to "get the land for the people". Implied by "the people" is probably all landless blacks the majority of whom had been pushed into reserves during colonial rule. It is in the interests of the generality of black Zimbabweans that Gonesse and his fellow comrades were ostensibly invading white owned farms. The fact that the reporter does not take Gonesse to task to explain and specify exactly who he was referring to by "the people" shows how taken for granted and common-sensical it often is for journalists to base their own assumptions of reality on what the elites say and then proceed to reproduce that as

the only valid knowledge about reality. The context in which Gonese can make the claim that the actions of his organisation enjoyed a popular mandate becomes all the more questionable when considered in light of the fact that the invasions were triggered by the democratic rejection of the draft constitution in which a clause seeking to expedite the equitable redistribution of land had been enshrined. The so called people for whom war veterans are invading white farms are never given an opportunity in this story to speak.

In March 2000, of the 26 stories dealing directly with the subject of farm invasions 17 of them tended to cast the farm invasions and their perpetrators in negative light either expressing the writer's general sense of apprehension at the spontaneous and therefore anarchic nature of the phenomenon. Only nine stories were clearly in support of the farm occupations by war veterans. The cartoon strip by Innocent Mpofo of March 8, 2000 palpably reveals the scepticism with which the editorial staff at *The Herald* regarded the farm invasions led by war veterans. The cartoon depicted a police officer ordering a group of war veterans, one of whom was brandishing a hoe, to "invade the constitution and amend it instead!" By publishing a cartoon whose message was so unambiguously critical of the continuing farm invasions by war veterans, it is a clear that *The Herald* enjoyed a modicum of editorial independence from government during this early stage of the crisis on the farms or simply that *The Herald's* Editorial leadership was itself very sceptical of the merits of the war veterans led farm invasions.



Figure 8. *The Herald* Leader Page March 8, 2000, cartoon showing conflict between the Police and war veterans. Source: *The Herald* Archive

The editorial sovereignty at *The Herald* becomes even more evident when one takes into account that this cartoon was published three days after President Mugabe's utterances published in the same paper on March 3 and 4 expressing tacit support for the farm invasions and clearly reversing Home Affairs Minister Dumiso Dabengwa's order to the war veterans to evacuate white-owned farms. By publishing the cartoon the editorial staff at *The Herald* showed that they were sympathetic with the view that war veterans' actions were illegal and in violation of the country's constitution and that until such a time when the constitution had been amended they should end their invasions of white-owned commercial farms.

Given the fact that government pronouncements and directives ever to be given to war veterans to end their siege of white-owned commercial farms came from the Home Affairs Minister Dumiso Dabengwa and Acting President (Vice President) Joseph Msika was not lost to the observing public who might have interpreted this as a sign of a policy rift between former ZAPU members and the rest of the now reconstituted ZANU-PF. This probably partly explains why it became necessary for the former Zipra carders to explain their stance and give assurances of where they stood on the land issue in a story published by *The Herald* (April 25, 2000: 6) under the headline: "We support Zanu (PF) on land issue – former Zipra members". There were in those early phases of the FTLRP, clear "divisions within Zanu-PF as to the way forward on land reform, between those favouring an orderly legal process, and those urging a "revolutionary" political solution to the problem" (HRW 2002).

Table 2. Headline Stories on Farm Invasions, March 2000.

Negative portrayal:	Positive Portrayal:
FTLRP programme as ill-timed, violent and chaotic invasions of white-owned farms by government sponsored war veterans.	FTLRP programme as spontaneous ex-combatants led peaceful and popular demonstrations to protest delays in the resettlement of land hungry blacks.
War vets raid 27 farms countrywide 2/3/2000	
War vets ordered to move off farms 3/3/2000	Invasions protest against 'no' vote: President 3/3/2000
War veterans vow not to leave farms 4/3/2000	President castigates opponents of land redistribution exercise 4/3/2000
Tobacco worth \$75 million lost 8/3/2000	War veterans can remain of farms, says President 11/3/2000
CFU's record on land reform speaks for itself: Henwood 8/3/2000	'Not much crop disrupted by farm occupations 14/3/2000
Calls for war vets to end farm invasions grow louder 9/3/2000	Villagers support farm invasions 17/3/2000
Mixed feelings over continuing farm invasions by ex-combatants 13/3/2000	Zanu (PF) will adhere to court ruling 20/3/2000

War veterans, villagers occupy 8 farms in Gwanda, Mash East 13/3/2000	Farm invasions a protest against land distribution imbalances, says Nkomo 27/3/2000
CFU seeks court order declaring farm occupations illegal 14/3/2000	Land reform is crucial to Zimbabwe's future 31/3/2000
Britain to help private sector implement resettlement projects 17/3/2000	Arms seized as Hunzvi leads Nkayi farm invasion 31/3/2000
High Court orders war vets off commercial farms 18/3/2000	
War vets defy court order to leave commercial farms 20/3/2000	
'Farm invasions impact negatively on economy' 21/3/2000	
Farm invasions threatening plantation workers' jobs 22/3/2000	
ZRP seeks court order on farms 24/3/2000	
War vets continue to invade farms 24/3/2000	
Farm invasions worry church organisations 28/3/2000	

5.5.1 Farm Invasions or Peaceful Demonstrations

The first month of farm invasions comes to an end with no solution to the impasse between war veterans and white commercial farmers. Farmers' appeals for protection seem to go unanswered. The police are either complicit or have proved virtually powerless to evict war veterans from farms and restore law and order. Attempts by white commercial farmers, organisation (the Commercial Farmers Union) to mount a campaign to link decline in productivity on the farms to the disruptions caused by farm invasions fail to elicit any significant sympathy from government. Opinions of Harare city residents appeared to favour an end in farm invasions as illustrated in *The Herald's* (March 8, 9, 13, 2000: 1) front page stories: "As war veterans continue to invade farms ... Tobacco worth \$75 million lost"; "Calls for war vets to end farm invasions grow louder" and "Mixed feelings over continuing farm invasions by ex-combatants". The fact that most urban residents had long become disillusioned with ZANU-PF policies and had jumped ship and begun to put faith in the opposition MDC was not so evident at that early stage of the formation of a credible movement for opposition politics. This only dawned on *The Herald* reporters much later and the paper avoided the practice of basing their stories on street vox-pops altogether as a political reporter at *The Herald* pointed out in an interview (Herald House, Harare 21/12/13)

Normally they say it's those big people who make news not ordinary people. Rarely do we go onto the streets to hear what the ordinary people say, but opinion leaders like the Jonathan Moyos, Makumbes, Eldred Masunungures or some university lecturer. The challenge is that if you decide to do a vox-pop and you're writing for *The Herald*, if you go on the streets and ask people 'what do you say about the constitution or this other development?', the views you are likely to get especially from Harare are anti-policy, I mean editorial policy. So you rarely get anything which you can come here and write. Harare being Harare, it's an MDC dominated thing, so you may collect it but you won't use it.

On the other hand, the President and those in rural areas appeared more sympathetic to the war veterans' cause as evidenced by *The Herald's* (March 11, 13, 14, 17, 2000) stories: "War veterans can remain on farms, says President"; "War veterans, villagers occupy 8 farms in Gwanda, Mash East"; "Not much crop disrupted by farm occupations"; and "Villagers support farm invasions". Such story headlines, clearly demonstrates how polarising and divisive the farm invasions issue was increasingly becoming in Zimbabwe. Tensions continued to escalate between commercial farmers and the war veterans as Zimbabwe entered the second month with no respite in farm invasions. All along war veterans' actions were construed in *The Herald's* reportage, as altruistic and solely driven by a selfless desire to capture some excess land from whites for redistribution to land hungry Zimbabweans. It had also been explained as the inevitable though unfortunate blow-back in response to the rejection of the government sponsored draft constitution blamed on white commercial farmers and their black farm workers. No attempts had been made to explore the relationship between war veterans' organisation and the ruling ZANU-PF party or the possibility of farm invasions serving as a Trojan horse in ZANU-PF's political campaign to win the impending parliamentary elections. The only substantial clue *The Herald* gave of farm invasions' role and connection with ZANU-PF party politics and campaign strategy for the forth coming parliamentary elections was in a front page story, "War vets threaten war if Zanu (PF) loses election" (March 16, 2000: 1). The story is cited below for closer analysis:

Headline: War vets threaten war if Zanu (PF) loses election

By-line: Herald Reporter

Lead: War veterans will "go back to the bush" if the opposition wins next month's parliamentary elections and tries to obstruct their efforts to repossess land, a leader of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association said yesterday.

Body: ZNLWVA national secretary for projects Andrew Ndlovu told reporters in Harare that people who obstruct the former combatants from 'repossessing' land, so as to win the economic struggle, are declaring war and inviting a civil war in the country.

This therefore means that all those who try to obstruct us from winning our economic struggle would simply be declaring another war with us because this country was brought about by

Should the party fail us we would rather go for military government for a period of five years to set things straight," Cde Ndlovu said in a statement.

Zanu (PF) is a liberation party name, meaning we are still a patriotic front with the ... and those of our enemies whom we gave amnesty

are the ones insulting us and causing instability within the country. Their ignorance of war is no defence because when the war starts (MDC president Mr Tsvangisono) Tsvangirai is bound to suffer. ...

Cde Ndlovu said the war veterans were not invading farms but “repossessing them”. Moving onto farms, as we are doing now, is not a mistake, because, initially, when we went to join the struggle, our intention was to liberate Zimbabwean land through conventional warfare.

This story sheds some light on a very significant aspect of the farm invasions by situating them in the prevailing political conundrum between the ruling ZANU-PF and the opposition party, MDC. One important fact that this story establishes is the close link between the Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association and ZANU-PF. In fact the main source Cde Andrew Ndlovu speaking on behalf of his organisation falls short of admitting that his organisation was an organ of the ruling party ZANU-PF and that in invading the white-owned farms they would be doing their party’s bidding, and thus acting in the interests of the party. Ndlovu also drops another very important hint on the true nature and essence of the war veterans led campaign on white-owned commercial farms by stating that they “were not invading farms but ‘repossessing them’”. This represents a clear departure from earlier media constructions of the farm invasions as a mere peaceful demonstration which was bound to be called off as soon as the twin objectives of protesting the ‘no’ vote as well as the urgent need for government to put in place constitutional measures for a speedy land redistribution exercise had been sufficiently communicated. All along an impression had been created that the presence of war veterans on commercial farms would be temporary. But Ndlovu intimates a much more radically different understanding of the nature and purpose of war veterans’ presence at white-owned commercial farms – repossession. The contradictions and the struggle over land were clearly manifest on front pages of newspapers as the figure below shows. Editors must have had serious challenges in making decisions about which story to give greater prominence between the President’s commentary on the situation on the farms or the killing of the Macheke white farmer. To resolve that difficult choice the newspaper decided to use both stories on front page. Simply ignoring the story altogether would mean losing the initiative to the newspaper’s competitor The Daily News, on the one hand. On the other, running the story on the fatal shooting of the white farmer in Macheke would run counter to the narrative of war veterans engaged in peaceful demonstrations on white-owned farms. Here was evidence to the contrary. The challenge had to be resolved discursively through passivisation in the headline that elided the agent of the shooting.

The thin mask of peaceful demonstration quickly peeled off and was irreparably damaged when the shots were fired which killed the first white farmer to die in clashes with the farm invaders on 3 April 2000 at his farm in Macheke followed a few days later by another white farmer also killed at his farm in Nyamandlovu. Those killings got such publicity, that the Human Rights Watch reported that, “overt attacks on white farmers attracted greater international and national publicity than those on black Zimbabweans”.



Figure 9. Front Pages of *The Herald* reporting the killing of white farmers in clashes with war veterans since the FTLRP was started: *The Herald* Archives

It is important to note that the farm invasions story remained the single most important story in the media for a very long time. From when it started in February 2000 it continued to occupy front page status in the main news outlets in Zimbabwe. Other newsworthy events would erupt from time to time such as election campaigns but they only grabbed media attention for very limited stretches of time and then faded into oblivion, but the FTLRP story differently imagined by different news organisation in Zimbabwe remained the alma mater for much of Zimbabwean media coverage of events that happened concurrently and subsequent to it such as political contestations between the ruling party and the main opposition party, the famines, economic crisis etc. Election campaigns were lost and won on the basis of how they related to the land issue. Political party manifestoes were structured around the land issue. Famine, economic decline and any social and political condition in Zimbabwe had to be re-imagined through the lenses of the fast track land reform. Economic sanctions and travel restrictions imposed on the country were explained away as punishment being visited on Zimbabweans for having dared to tackle historical imbalances in land ownership between blacks and whites through the fast track land reform programme.

The number of people who were victims of it, who were evicted and displaced because of land occupations cannot fully account for the media attention it attracted. The largest group statistically, to suffer displacement as a result of farm occupations by war veterans was that of black farm workers whose own fates were largely intertwined with those of their employers. That story was late in coming and when it did, it never commanded the same media attention that the plight of white farm owners mustered. In fact an analysis of the story headlines goes on to illustrate how the farm workers as a group became even more marginalised by being written about. In either case they were just being used as fodder in the bruising fight over ownership of land between white farmers and war veterans. These self-appointed spokespersons only highlighted the farm workers' plight in a way that furthered their own interests. The story when written from the war vets' stand-point, it often highlighted how farm workers were being abused by their employers in order to legitimise their own invasion of white-owned farms. Stories like "Farmers accused of abusing workers" (*The Herald* April 2000: 1) and "Abused! Farm workers are threatened: Vote Zanu (PF) and you are out of here" (*The Herald* April 25, 2000: 9) through sourcing practices of the reporters privileged war veterans' perspectives of the impact of farm occupations on farm workers.

When the story was written from the farm-owners point of view its point of emphasis was on how farm invasions by war veterans were disrupting productivity on the farm and resulting in loss of farm workers' jobs. *The Herald* (March 2000) story "Farm invasions threatening plantation workers' jobs" is typical of such constructions. In those instances when farm workers' organisational spokespersons' views were sought they were invariably framed in support of either the white farmers or the war veterans' position on the issue under discussion and never on their own terms. The other group to be seriously marginalised by the media narratives on the FTLRP were those whom the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia had euphemistically called "the silent majority" (Frederikse 1982), the rural folk. The FTLRP was reported in both the privately owned press and the state controlled press with no reference to systematically decongesting rural areas to restore their productivity. Although war veterans and government officials were wont to represent the FTLRP as a third Chimurenga being waged in the name of and for the ultimate benefit of those who had been dispossessed as a result of the oppressive colonial land policies, ordinary rural folk's comment on the programme and how it affected them was never actively sought nor given expression through the newspaper reports serve for one story headlined: "Villagers support farm invasions", published by *The Herald* (Chris Chivinge, March 17, 2000: 1). The story took the format of a vox-pop. The story is based on the views of seven named villagers who were interviewed by the reporter in different parts of Mudzi district. The extent to which the views of these seven villagers could be generalisable to all villagers in Zimbabwe is often brought to question and challenged. But if views are expressed by some expert in the field, or if they have an official stamp of authority according to journalistic logic they become valid knowledge. An even more important point that this story makes clear is the fact that the FTLRP was politically engineered from above and that it largely excluded the grassroots villagers. In doing the FTLRP story the reporters for some unknown reason suffered a serious amnesia. It did not occur to them to link this story to earlier attempts of "spontaneous action by villagers of the Svosve people. The FTLRP was being reported as though it was unrelated to similar grassroots struggles in the past.

In the story the reporter states that:

Most villagers threw their weight behind the ongoing farm invasions by war veterans, and said they would join in the land self-redistribution programmes if they had more details on its modalities. 'We have nothing against the war veterans. Given the

frustration we have over inadequate land we might have done the same,' said a man at Gosha village in Murewa (*The Herald* March 17, 2000: 1).

It is clear from the villagers' statement above that villagers perceived the land invasions as "invasions by war veterans, and that they had been excluded by the modalities of how the programme was being implemented. According to this story villagers were certainly not part of the programme as actors much less as beneficiaries and yet it was them who were most historically justified to lay a claim on white owned farmland in Zimbabwe. It is against this background that Sithole, Campbell, Doré and Kozanayi (2003: 84) rightly contend that:

in the later invasions, we see a gradual replacement of genuine peasants by 'manufactured' peasants comprising state and party-financed militias (unemployed youths, war veterans, displaced farm workers and party supporters) in order to promote systematic invasions throughout the country. The peaceful and spontaneous peasant invasions were transformed into violent and systematic "drive in and set up camp" invasions. Thus media and other reports labelled these later invasions as "the war veterans' invasions" rather than as peasant invasions.

Thus from the argument above it could be concluded that the FTLRP was in its design and implementation, a land reform programme instituted ostensibly for the benefit of landless villagers but without them. And, *The Herald's* reportage largely sought to represent the programme as enjoying a broad based legitimacy as a people's programme for self-empowerment.

5.5.2 Letters to the Editor and Diversity of Opinion on the Land Issue

The Letters to the Editor section of *The Herald* carried a very robust and nuanced debate on the land issue in the early days of the war veterans led land occupations. The letters succeeded to place the land issue in its proper historical context. For example, *The Herald* of March 6, 2000 published two letters on its letters page which took diametrically opposite views of the farm invasions issue. One letter ran under the headline: "War veterans are digging the ground they are standing on". It registered strong disapproval of the reasons given to justify the farm invasions by war veterans whom the writer characterise as selfish and self-centred, "the war veterans' reason for invading white owned farms is to retaliate for the 'no' vote". Clearly to cite the 'no' vote as the reason for land invasions was not only a weak justification but a subversion of the democratic process which the government professed to uphold by subjecting the draft constitution to a referendum in the first place. Similar sentiments were voiced in another letter to the Editor published on March 8 2000.

Letter Headline: Isn't Hunzvi going against bail conditions?

Body: Editor – I must admit to being confused. I understood that the 'freedom fighters' went to war to fight for democracy and one man one vote, among other things. How they say the latest farm invasions are being undertaken in response to the 'NO' vote in the recent referendum, held under a one man one vote system and lauded as being free and fair democratic process. I now read that they are promising to go to war if Zanu (PF) loses the election. ...

Signed off: Confused. Avondale, Harare

The second letter published on the same page and side by side with the earlier mentioned letter was headlined: "Invasion of farms a challenge to put property rights into perspective". Thus it appears as if the paper's more open and generous accommodation for diverse vies and opinions on the land question in the Letters to the Editor section made up for any limitations in the news section of the paper. It was mainly in the letters section that questions about the legal basis of the current owners of land in Zimbabwe were raised a connection made between the current crisis with the colonial historical processes by which Africans ended up being dispossessed and impoverished. As the writer of this letter points out, by crying foul about the behaviour of war veterans, white farmers were actually "hiding the fact that those farms are stolen property which should be returned to its rightful owners ... all farms owned by white farmers were not justly acquired" *The Herald* March 6, 2000). In another letter to the Editor published in the March 8 edition of *The Herald* a similar connection is made between the current structure of land ownership and the landlessness among Africans.

Headline of letter: Farm invasions are about delayed justice

Body: Editor – What is called farm invasions in Zimbabwe today is basically delayed justice. When black Africans of the 1890s were dispossessed of their land nobody cried injustice, no invasions were claimed. The real invaders then used fire-power and pieces of British legal papers to justify the occupation of the black man's land. We went to Chimurenga war to fight, not for street names and poverty but to recover land stolen from our forefathers. ...

Signed off: Chitumba Jiti. Harare.

Both Chitumba Jiti and T. Thomas above raise issues about the land invasions by war veterans which are somehow not raised in the main sections of the paper – that land reform should be about restorative justice. It is clear that the editorial somehow let the "public",

through the letters pages, raise and debate those uncomfortable questions they found it difficult to ask their sources themselves.

But this lively debate on the land reform issue does not last long at *The Herald* as the Minister of Information and Publicity Professor Jonathan Moyo consolidates his grip on all state controlled media through policies and direct editorial interventions at *The Herald*. Thus as the farm invasions enter the second month and tensions continue to rise between war veterans and white farmers *The Herald's* coverage increasingly becomes one sided, in support of the farm occupations by war veterans and doing damage control as *The Daily News* took the offensive in voicing concern and giving space to white farmers and civil society voices critical of the government's softly-softly approach in dealing with farm invaders.

5.6 Discussion:

5.6.1 Manufactured Silences

The press by representing the FTLRP as a conflict between mostly white commercial farmers and veterans of the liberation struggle over ownership of land in Zimbabwe succeeded in muffling other stories about economic hardships that continued to be the unhappy lot of most rural based black population in independent Zimbabwe. It steered attention away from issues of land restitution for those communities who had directly suffered loss of their land through racial land policies in colonial Zimbabwe. The story was told at the price of killing the story of unrequited pleas for justice by those who continued to suffer in the iron cages of rural poverty. The whole issue of land segregation got also dehistoricized in the telling of the story of farm invasions by war veterans. There is no doubt that some ordinary blacks did benefit from the land resettlement under FTLRP but it has to be underlined that the basis and criteria of selecting beneficiaries were completely different from those which had been promised during the liberation struggle as a solution to the land question in Zimbabwe. By just focussing on the takeover of land from the whites without relating it to the story of land dispossession in the first place in the initial land grab by whites tends to legitimate and naturalise the Tribal Trust Land as the home of the African. Tribal Trust Lands, formerly referred to as native reserves and more recently renamed communal areas, were an important component in the colonial system for drawing Africans into the colonial economy as a source of cheap labour.

Cheap labour was as much a necessary component of the Rhodesia colonial economy as it was for King Leopold II's Congo. The difference lay only in how that cheap labour was secured and obtained from the Africans in the respective colonies. Where the white overloads used the '*chicotte*' in the Congo and the taking of African women and children hostage to force African men into accepting portage and into the equatorial rain forest to harvest rubber (Hochschild 1998), Africans were forcibly driven and containerised into the 'native reserve' as a way of forcing their men to "volunteer" their labour on the European mines and estates at slave wages in colonial Rhodesia. Thus any land reforms that left the native reserve system intact in Zimbabwe would not be any different from reforms that sought to humanise and mitigate the brutality of the internal slave system in colonial Congo without abolishing the use of *chicotte*. The *chicotte* was an instrument of colonial violence used to civilise the savage race as well extract free labour from the lazy African in Leopold's Congo of the late nineteenth century. But thanks to the campaign of the Congo Reform Association against the system, the *chicotte* was removed though without restoring the stolen land back to the indigenous people of the Congo. In the Zimbabwean case the land was repossessed without undoing the native reserve – that factory for the production of an endless supply of cheap black labour. The news reportage simply made no connection between the need for repossession of land from commercial white farmers with the need to reform or reverse the native reserve system as an instrument of colonial domination. The independence government still has to confront the embarrassing reality that it has continued with the same system of mass producing Africans who are half humans and half beasts of burden without thinking through the question of on whose behalf do they want to continue producing these quant but profitable creatures. Fanon's prophetic characterisation of the national bourgeoisie that takes over government at independence is vindicated in the Zimbabwean case where, "far from embodying in concrete form the needs of the people in what touches bread, land and the restoration of the country to the sacred hands of the people" the nationalist leadership proves too eager and content to put into its own hands the same unfair privileges "which are a legacy of the colonial period." (Fanon 1963: 122, 133).

The stories generally failed to make the connection between the competing rights of white farmers over their land and the current status of blacks as landless and poor. The inbuilt structural racism in land ownership patterns was an 'absence' in the media discourses and debates about land reform. By inscribing the white commercial farmer as the victim of

Mugabe's brutal and violent seizure of land, and by representing the whole process of land acquisition as lawless and chaotic the news coverage further legitimised the old order without questioning the equally brutal process of colonial conquest by which it had come about in the first place. Eventualisation in news stories on the FTLRP resulted in the exclusion of the broad historical context without which it is not possible for a reader unfamiliar with the Zimbabwean colonial history to fully understand the nature and cause of the conflict. The hard news story style of presentation concentrates on reporting what happened or did not happen, who was involved and probably the effects of the event on the protagonists in the conflict and all of this narrated, cross-checked and validated from the standpoint of power. The Newspaper is no museum or monument for commemorating and celebrating the vanquished. One cannot look up-to recorded news in search for statuary and other reminders of the unjust treatment of those on whose sweat and blood post-colonial civilisation was founded. This is notwithstanding the fact that "the world we live in" as Hochschild (1998: 294) aptly reminds us, "is shaped far less by what we celebrate and mythologise than by the painful events we try to forget". The true victims of the FTLRP (Africans dispossessed and displaced in the colonial land theft by white colonists and their descendants) still remain invisible in both *The Daily News*' and *The Herald*'s narratives of the fast track land reform.

The two newspapers' approaches to covering the FTLRP differed in the propaganda purposes they served. While it is Waldahl's (2004) contention that pro-government press like *The Herald* unlike their pro-opposition counterparts, represented the FTLRP as a struggle meant to benefit landless black people in rural areas, I contend that both papers largely missed on making this connection as they rather engaged in a war of words over whether the FTLRP was a violation of human rights or not. In both papers landless peasants' voice is conspicuous by its absence. Both papers suffer from what Schudson (2011) considers to be professional journalism's original sin that of reliance on official sources and professionalism which tends to produce its own biases against the marginalised groups in society and tends to privilege a statist version of reality. *The Daily News* orchestrated the white farmer's stoicism in the face of a resurgent savagery perpetrated by unruly war veterans condoned and egged on by a demented African president turned dictator by over-dramatising the moral, legal and ethical repugnancy of the programme, while *The Herald*'s representation of the programme on the other hand, consisted mainly in marshalling facts and evidence to the contrary and mounting a refutation of all criticism and charges of wrong doing on the part of government. The story which neither of these papers ventured to run in a sustained manner was one which made a

connection between what was going on with the legitimate quest for social justice and redress of past colonial racial injustices. The story that was not told is that the FTLRP in its current trajectory was at risk of replacing one set of land robbers with another except that the latter's skin colour was of a darker hue, that it was in danger of missing a great opportunity for requiting the majority of rural Zimbabweans made poor and subservient to the white colonists by theft of their land. The only images that loom large in the FTLRP story in both papers are those of the individual white commercial farmers as victims, Mugabe, 'Hitler' Hunzvi and his "marauding hordes" of war veterans as perpetrators.

5.6.2 Journalistic Silencing

Journalistic silencing occurs where information outage is sustained on an event or issue usually affecting or of interest to the poor or subaltern. It happens as an artefact of established professional practice and routines of news production itself. This form of silence is far more difficult to expunge due to the fact that it results not from journalism gone wrong but rather when there is strict but uncritical adherence to the creed of the journalistic profession, where editorial choices about what to report or not are informed by a universalistic set of ethnocentric news values. Events that affect elite people (of which white rich middle-class owners of large commercial farms and estates in Zimbabwe form a core), what elite people do and their views and opinions on issues would more easily pass the news credibility test than events that affect ordinary people, what they do and say. The news, like other "conventional, published sources" as texts of power, is not the most suitable place to look for stories about powerless people (Hochschild 1998: 104). Thus as Hall Argues, content analysis alone fails where the main mode of racial prejudice takes the form of silence, where no content is produced in the first place about the subject race's realities. If the preferred and most effective mode of aiding forgetfulness and silencing is not documenting in the first place, then a methodology would need to be developed that not only focuses on the manifest content of the media but one that also attends to:

what people could *not* say about race. It was the silences that told us something; it was what wasn't there. It was what was invisible, what couldn't be put into frame, what was apparently unsayable that we needed to attend to. ... You can count lexical items if they're there; but you need a different approach if you really want, as it were, to read a society and its culture symptomatically (Hall 2009: 15).

The implications of Hall's argument above would entail going beyond considerations of the actual stories published on the FTLRP by the two newspapers and looking at the larger context within which certain stories are possible and not others. The peculiarities of the FTLRP stories can begin to make more sense when looked at against and in contradistinction

to how similar land grabs were reported in an earlier epoch that of colonialism as presented in the previous chapter. The fact that white theft of land from blacks as an inevitable process of colonial occupation of Zimbabwe by whites did not attract as much media attention as land repossession by blacks from whites discursively reproduces racial difference probably in a more subtle way.

5.6.2 Silencing by News Noise

Some versions of reality systemically get drowned in the din of other competing news versions. In this regard news is comparable to any other commodities sold on the open market where through repetition some news out-compete other news and soon establishes itself as the only news in town. This form of silencing happens where some news stories or versions of them due to infrequent publicity simply fade away from conscious memory as was the case with the displacement and forced evictions of Africans from their ancestral lands discussed in the preceding chapter.

5.6.3 Context of News Production

The news pieces discussed here would make little sense if considered outside of their historical contexts of production. The decade starting from the year 2000 is marked by very intense political contestations for hegemonic control of the country between ZANU-PF and newly established opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). During the first two decades of independence ZANU-PF had enjoyed an almost unassailed dominance in the political arena of Zimbabwe. But, the MDC's formation towards the end of 1999 posed the first real threat to ZANU-PF's monopoly hold on political power in Zimbabwe. Competition for political office by both parties was largely fought around the long standing and unresolved land question dating back to the racially skewed land ownership structures that remained largely unchanged many years after the end of white colonial rule in Zimbabwe (Scoones, Marongwe, Mavedzenge, Mahenene, Muriombarimba and Sukume 2010). It can reasonably be argued that the discourse on repossession of land by landless black Zimbabweans remained top of ZANU-PF political campaign agenda for the parliamentary elections of 2000, presidential elections of 2002 and subsequent harmonised elections of 2005, 2008 and 2013. The MDC on the other hand foregrounded a discourse on the human rights, rule of law and good governance deficit as the most urgent issues. During this period civil society including the media became riven and polarised along these political contestations between the two dominant political formations.

All media organisations in which the government held a controlling stake became patently partisan in favour of ZANU-PF and they shed any pretence at being just pro-government in reporting political developments of the time and *The Herald* was most typical in this regard, guaranteeing ZANU-PF a ready conduit for wider national dissemination of its perspective and interpretation of the political situation in the country including on the unfolding developments on the FTLRP. It ensured that “ZANU-PF’s policies were not only widely discussed, they were also praised. Political events were constantly presented from a ZANU-PF point of view” (Waldahl 2004: 129).

Most privately owned media organisations or the so called independent press on the other hand, reported in a manner largely sympathetic to the political cause of the opposition MDC party and *The Daily News* became increasingly viewed as the chief critic of ZANU-PF’s political programmes and policies as enunciated through the pages of *The Herald* while providing space for the MDC political formation (Waldahl 2004). The upshot of the media polarisation was the mystification of the FTLRP. It became difficult to ascertain the reality on the ground from media reports on the issue. It was such scepticism about media representations of the FTLRP that inspired ethnographic studies particularly by Scoones et-al 2010, and Hanlon, Manjengwa and Smart (2013) which were intent on going beyond the media myths and stereotypes by exposing themselves to empirical evidence on the ground in selected specific case studies. Scoones et-al (2010: 1) clearly specify the object of their work as one in which they sought to look “at the realities behind the headlines, and ... try to tackle some of the oft-repeated myths about Zimbabwe’s land reform with a hard look at empirical data”. While their work gives valuable alternative insights and understandings of the FTLRP to those that could be gleaned from media reports, it does not address the question of how those media myths were created, legitimated and made possible in the first place. This is the gap that the present work seeks to address by focussing on how a process of inter-media agenda setting between international and local news outlets and a blind application of an ethnocentric news value system (Conboy, Lugo-Ocando and Eldridge 2014) works to project African realities in line with pre-existing tropes of Africa as the place of darkness always being prevented from descending into barbarism and anarchy by a remnant of white colonialists’ descendants still on the continent.

5.6.4 News and the Truth Claim

The reason why society places such importance on the news is because of its truth claims. News is often regarded as an accurate reflection of what actually is happening out there. One reason why this is the case is because of the claims news makes about itself. It disavows its own discursive signature on that reality by purporting as Bird (2010: 5) argues “to be (and is often received as) an accurate reflection of reality”. History is replete with cases where publicity in the press or lack thereof had direct ramifications on public policy locally and internationally. For example, publicity of the Soweto uprising and the brutal murder of Steve Biko by the press precipitated the imposition of sanctions on Apartheid South Africa by the international community in the 1970s (Brown 2010).

Hochschild, book: *King Leopold II's Ghost* is a detailed account of how E.D. Morel's media publicity crusade against atrocities in King Leopold II's Congo drew the world's attention to the inhuman treatment of natives in the Congo under Leopold's imperial rule in a manner that lead to a reform of the system. What is worth noting and instructive as Hochschild (1998) points out is that similar if not worse treatment of natives was common practice and quite widespread in colonial Africa of the period. That no international outrage was ever voiced against the British's treatment of her colonial subjects in her imperial rule in Africa and elsewhere in the world is testimony to the benignity of her system. Germany's acts of genocide against the Herero and the Nama people of Namibia did not elicit any response from the civilised world at the point of their commission because the world's news media took no notice of them. Closer to home in 2014, serious political consequences followed a sustained and unrelenting media battering of the political image of Zimbabwe's former Vice President Joyce Mujuru and all those viewed as aligned to her within ZANU-PF.

The Daily News's expose of human rights violations on white owned farms, as government sponsored invited a raft of restrictive media laws and policies from the ZANU-PF government in response, which contributed to a large extent to the closure of that newspaper and other publications seen as ‘too’ critical of ZANU-PF government policy. The same media glare on the FTLRP in Zimbabwe is not unrelated to the international community's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe in the form of declared and undeclared sanctions imposed on the country by western nations post 2000. Given that “media, especially news media, do have enormous power to shape the reality experienced by readers and viewers”, it is of material importance to want to know “what stories that people in any given society are being offered as tools to make meaning?” (Bird 2010: 7 and 8)

That the pattern that news media produced on the African continent should elicit policy responses from Europe is no new phenomenon. It has a history that dates back to the era of David Livingston and Henry Morton Stanley's travelogues of the mid to late 19th century. Their news stories about the parts of Africa they travelled contributed significantly in shaping Europe's knowledge and attitudes towards Africa and its aboriginal peoples. The nature of Stanley's journalistic assignment to Africa in many ways acts as a template for doing journalism in Africa. The story he was sent to get which his newspaper would be interested to read back home was not a story about the dramas and vicissitudes of so many savages who peopled the uncharted jungles of Africa's interior. It was a story about the whereabouts and health of the Scottish doctor and explorer gone missing. It was a story about the white man in Africa addressed to an European audience. This raises the question: who do journalists in postcolonial Africa write for and about? Who were *The Daily News* and *The Herald* reporters writing for when they covered the FTLRP the way they did? Could it be that they targeted their local readership or a foreign audience with sufficient power to react and change the reality as reported consistent with Fanon's (1967: 8) dictum that "what matters is not to know the world but to change it". The wish to grab and retain a western European readership's attention has ever been a prized goal for any newspaper in Africa before and after attainment of independence because of the perceived capacity of the West to translate their media based knowledge to action vis-a-vis Africa's reality. This reduces African journalism to the role of placard waving. Just like placards, African newspapers by design do not address a local readership. Their primary addressee is always the distant western Other. An Other who wields sufficient political and economic power to not only read and know the reality conveyed on the placards but also act to change it. Thus for different and often competing purposes *The Daily News* and *The Herald* hoisted aloft placards often with contradicting messages about the prevailing situation on white commercial farms during the FTLRP. Cognisant that imperial centres in Europe had the power to change reality in their African colonies, successive white settler governments in colonial Rhodesia had taken a direct interest in nurturing a captive press that would put out "safe" news.

Since life changing policies have been known to emanate from elsewhere both before and after independence, journalism in Africa then as now has always been an exercise in placard waving never truly meant for local awareness building, informing and educating the citizens but oriented to external Others addressing them as its primary audience the powers in the world who have the capacity to alter the fates of the local for ill or for good. This probably

partly explains Zimbabwean news media's continued obsession with the use of English as the vehicle of news - a colossal relic of a systematic devaluation of the black subject's language and humanity under British colonial rule.

Given this close correlation between news media and policy and given that news is not a natural occurrence but a "cultural construction that draws on narrative conventions and routine practices" (Bird 2010: 5), the present work seeks to establish by analysing selected specimens of news stories from the two newspapers just how democratically representative were journalists' selection of the voices that spoke in those stories.

Thus, when the land occupations or *Jambanja* broke out in 2000, the media covered that process in a manner that further fractured society than in ways that sought to mend bridges. The media became polarised as well as polarising in the manner in which they reported that high profile land conflict in Zimbabwe. The conflict which pitted commercial white farmers on one side and war veterans on the other with farm workers and landless rural peasants suffering collateral damage. Farm workers and some landless rural peasants were the most powerless in the conflict. They were the subaltern whose interests counted for little in the ensuing struggle to claim legitimate space on the newly redrawn geographical landscapes as much as the story of their systemic exclusion was not fully articulated in Zimbabwe's mediascapes to command any meaningful policy attention. In terms of existing news values farm occupations or seizures met the criteria for selection and inclusion as news to the extent that those occurrences affected either white farmers or the war veterans and not as they affected farm workers and even much less so as they affected rural peasants. Media silence on legitimate claims for land restitution clearly appeared to work in the interests of both the government and the white farmers facing eviction. Stephen Ndlovu makes this important observation in a feature story published by *The Sunday Mail* (March 12, 2000) that: "History had shown that throughout the world, all natives that had lost their land to colonialists had either been 'compensated' or given back. This had not happened in Zimbabwe". And the news is more about what happened than what did not. Land redistribution therefore was not being pursued as a justice issue. And the story that the media had not been telling or was rather actively suppressing was how the fast track land reform would include/exclude the peasants who were the victims of land seizures by whites under colonial rule. Their losses were to remain unrequited even under the new FTLRP.

5.6.5 Reporting Land Reform as if Colonialism did not Happen

If volume and prominence of media content alone were an accurate measure of salience then no other event or issue could equal the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in remaining on top of news agendas of the two newspapers considered in this investigation for the three years running from February 2000 to August 2002. The reason for this could not be fully explained in terms of Galtung and Ruge's list of news values. Farmers as a class of people would not normally count as prominent people. The Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, which spearheaded the farm invasions cannot be regarded as such an elite organisation to warrant the news attention its activities attracted. The reason cannot be fully supplied by the fact that the issue had the ingredients of a racial conflict, pitting blacks (war veterans and villagers) against whites (white commercial farmers). As shown in the previous chapter, an equivalent racial dispute over land ownership between blacks and whites in colonial Rhodesia failed to generate any significant and sustained media interest as the FTLRP did. If scope and potential impact in terms of numbers of people affected is considered then land grabs by white settlers in the then Rhodesia were themselves not insignificant by comparison to the FTLRP.

The only plausible account for the apparent disparity in the media's coverage of these similar events can be inferred from the genealogical link between postcolonial media and their colonial progenitors. Basing on a cursory look through the pages of *The Rhodesia Herald* before the 1970s, one could be justified to define the news according to *The Rhodesia Herald* as, the white man's story in Africa, about and by him. My analysis of the news coverage of the FTLRP in this section demonstrates our media's definition of news more than 30 years after attainment of independence has changed but little. What makes the FTLRP story perhaps such a big story for both papers may be partly because it concerns the white farmer and his interests. The only difference is that, that story is no longer being physically written by white journalists as in the past, but in any event, the perspective remains the white man's, at least in some of *The Herald's* stories and most of *The Daily News's*. This pattern of under reporting situations and cases where blacks are the victims and excessively over-dramatising the story when the victim tends to be white has a very long history to it. It was not through the efforts of journalists that atrocities of genocidal proportions against the indigenous black populations of King Leopold II's Congo Free State were brought light. If anything the celebrated travelogues by journalist Henry Morton Stanley helped in covering up those crimes against humanity in the Congo (Hochschild, 1998). The press in colonial Africa was

an appendage of and too cosily embedded with imperial white power to concern itself with the plight of colonised Africans. Derrick Nault's article: "What signify these Dark races to Us?: Progress, Dehumanisation, and Black Concentration Camps in Early Twentieth Century Southern Africa brings out most forcefully the differential silences on any negative impacts of colonial policies as they affected whites and blacks. He state that in an effort to shine light on how the first concentration camps ever to be devised as part of a military strategy and used by the British against the Boers in the South African Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902):

Emily Hobhouse, the humanitarian campaigner who almost singlehandedly shamed the British government into tackling the appalling conditions found in the Boer concentration camps, learned from clergymen and others of "sad tales of the sickness and mortality" in the black "refugee" camps, but no one – including her – took up the cause of African prisoners. Photographs of emaciated white children and shocking reports outraged the international community and resulted in improvements in camp conditions for Boer prisoners by late 1901, but the humanitarian crisis in the black concentration camps raged on, hidden from public view, (Nault 2013: 9).

News media have, in colonial and postcolonial contexts, most certainly in the case of Zimbabwe's FTLRP, been accessory in keeping negative effects on blacks "hidden from public view". It was not through a feat of journalistic accomplishment that the world came to know about how the Herero and the Nama of Namibia were nearly exterminated in concentration camps in Germany ruled South West Africa in the early 1900s. That crime would have remained under wraps had it not been for the investigative zeal and sense of justice that compelled O'Rielly, a lawyer by profession, to dig up and expose every detail of Kaiser Germany's secret plan to annihilate the lower races in its South West African colony (Olusoga and Erichsen 2010). It was not by reading the newspapers that John Pilger (2006: 197) learnt about what he called apartheid South Africa's "rural concentration camp" into which "some 3.5 million black South Africans were forced, but thanks to the fearless efforts of a Catholic Priest Cosmas Desmond whose book *The Discarded People* helped expose apartheid South Africa's most heinous crime against its black population.

5.6.6 Censorship by Professional Journalism

Journalists are often the first to protest and cry foul when other centres of power particularly government impose any form of restrictions on their right to free expression and right to knowledge and information however justified that might be (Hasty 2010). But this form of censorship is less virulent and dangerous than that brand of censorship that is wired into journalism's own DNA. Those barricades and inhibitors to information that journalism's mode of work imposes has the same effect as that of burning books. The only difference is that journalism's way is far more complete in its destruction and concealment of truth.

Certainly the journalistic imperative to cooperate with elites contributes to an overall tendency of newspapers to represent the perspectives and interests of authority, particularly economic and political authority sometimes to a point of making ‘reality’ stranger than fiction (Hasty 2010: 138). What was the independence government going to do with the ‘reserves of cheap labour’ that the British colonial administration had so painstakingly established over many decades in Rhodesia? In spite of all the nationalist rhetoric of the ZANU-PF government, policy on the ground skirted the issue of dismantling the labour reserves from which the modern postcolonial capitalist economy continued to draw. The news media from the left or from the right also shied away from relating the native reserves question to the ongoing land reform process. Although in principle racial discrimination was abolished in 1980 with the attainment of independence, the structures that supported continuation with racial inequality remained geographically inscribed in Zimbabwe. Africans remained far removed from the levers of power. They continued to be treated condescendingly as a “subject race” to be spoken for in news spaces or altogether excluded (Schoor 1958: 14). Journalists in postcolonial settings scarcely think of their profession as inherently designed to favour one race over another in news reporting. The taken for granted assumptions about what makes the news are as Stuart Hall warned:

One of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society Journalists speak of “the news” as if events select themselves. Further, they speak as if which is the “most significant” news story, and which “news angles” are most salient are divinely inspired. We appear to be dealing, then, with a “deep structure” whose function as a selective device is un-transparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it (Hall 1973: 181).

This argument reinforces Foucault’s view that people including journalists do not produce discourse, rather what is more the case is that discourse produces speaking positions for journalists so that by extension it can reasonably be argued that the farm invasions news/discourse shaped the journalists way of thinking and writing about.

5.6.7 Diversity of News Interpretive Frameworks.

There was very limited diversity in interpretive frameworks availed to the reader by the two newspapers on account mainly of the news gathering and sourcing practices at the two media organisations. Adherence to the same set of news values, news sourcing practices that position official representatives of elites and elite organisations at the top of a hierarchy of credibility lead to very limited range of interpretive frames being made available in the news. (Manning 2001). “Are journalists elites or subaltern?” Jennifer Hasty once posed this

rhetorical question in light of her ethnographic studies of Ghanaian newsrooms in 1995. This question is very material in light of the importance of one's locus of articulation in the epistemic view of material realities journalists report on. Her answer to that question was:

As highly literate discursive producers with privileged access to the political field, they may seem to be elites. However, most journalists are poorly paid and lack the social and intellectual capital of local elites, which tends to subordinate them in everyday interactions with representatives of power (Hasty 2010: 143).

In reporting FTLRP journalist from *The Daily News* differed from those of at *The Herald* only in terms of which elite segment of Zimbabwean society they chose to align themselves with and which one they chose to vilify and demonise. The reporting oversimplified an otherwise complex and variegated problem reducing it to an either black or white binary issue. In the period soon after Jonathan Moyo's appointment to head the Ministry of Information and Publicity the media became deeply divided and polarised into patriotic press and a sell-out press. Their reporting demonstrated their lack of capacity to challenge the elite perspectives that were dumped down on them by their favoured elite segments. The reporting became so committed to a point of becoming some brand of activist journalism or what Terrence Ranger termed patriotic or hate journalism with no capacity for self-introspection. "It prevents any self-reflection" (Ranger 2005: 15).

5.6.8 Decolonial Liminality

Land reform without addressing the modernity/coloniality binary introduces a new and more dangerous form of colonialism in search of its own undoing or antithesis. It is colonial envy seeking to access the benefits of decoloniality without subjecting itself to the means thereof (Mignolo 2000). News reporting on the land reform project that is essentially indifferent to whether colonial land occupation ever happened is itself part of the colonial continuity. The situation in Zimbabwe during the height of the FTLRP exemplifies what happens when new signifiers name the same old concepts and referents. This can only have the effect of masking and mystifying unchanging patterns of domination and unequal relations of power on the ground. In postcolonial environments, a blind and unconscious application of ethnocentric news values tends to produce news content that reinforces the same division of labour between whites and blacks, along the lines of a master race and a servant race as it has always done between coloniser and colonised in the past. This unfortunately often happens as it often

does against the best intentions of well-meaning African journalists and Editors. On reading through the many news reports on the FTLRP published in both newspapers, one soon learns of many white farmers by name as they are referred to for comment sometimes in their individual capacity, but not so about the war veterans and the nameless, faceless hordes of landless villagers.

5.7 Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the different versions *The Daily News* and *The Herald* gave on the fast track land reform programme presented in this chapter is not premised on the assumption that either of the two papers told the truth on the conflict. The aim was to demonstrate the constructedness of mediated reality no matter who is doing the construction. This does not however, signal denial of the existence of material reality but simply to suggest that such a reality will always remain slippery, contestable and difficult to access “since our only access to it is through the constructionist prism of discourse” (Macdonald 2003: 17).

The eventalisation of the farm invasions largely masked the colonial rootedness of Zimbabwe’s land problem. The story was reported by both newspapers as if colonialism never happened in Zimbabwe and because of this tendency in journalism, colonialism’s silent majority also remained silent in this story in spite of the claim on both sides of the conflicting parties to act in their name. While *The Daily News* changed little in its pro-white farmer stance throughout the early phase of the FTLRP, *The Herald* morphed from incredulity to a clear, unambiguous and unequivocal pro-farm occupations stance. After consideration of the newsification of the FTLRP in both newspapers discussed above one cannot but come to the same pessimistic conclusion that Mignolo (2011: 161) arrives at that “the epistemic colonial and imperial differences did not end with decolonisation in Asia and Africa”. The next chapter looks at how forced evictions of both white farmers and their farm workers were reported in the two newspapers.

Chapter 6 White Evictions and Black Displacements

6.1 Introduction

In any conflict situation news coverage of events and the developments of the conflict tends to accentuate how news as language use is always ideologically implicated in hegemonic struggles between competing elite centres of power. The analysis in the preceding section of this study showed how difficult it was to pin down with some objective exactitude the true essence of the presence of war veterans at white owned farms. The truth kept shifting as reported between the two different newspapers under study as well as internally within the same newspaper over time. The non-discursive aspects and materialisations on the farms verbalised and non-verbalised in news reports form an important continuum and contribute to the totality of meaning of news texts. “The manifest discourse therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say: and this ‘not-said’ is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said” (Foucault 1972: 25). Thus in the study of news reports that which constitutes the news’ absences and how those absences get produced is just as much part of the productive process of the overall discourse as the manifest text. In a project that is committed to discover how the news construct images of subaltern groups, there is need to go beyond a concern with linguistic engagement with published reports of the news. Of greater importance is the unsaid of the news which cannot be analysed and understood by lexical and semantic means. In the present chapter I turn my analytic gaze on the newspapers’ reporting of the evictions of white farmers and their black employees. These events were subsequent to the compulsory acquisition and redistribution of white farms most of which had already been occupied by ex-liberation fighters and landless villagers.

Critical to understanding the nature of the farm eviction story is the question of who the newspapers were possibly writing for when they set out to cover the story. To what extent was the content of newspapers under study geared to prioritising sensibilities and interests of the majority black poor, the so called masses, (Willems 2011: 320) as their primary audiences is the question. The unfortunate pattern of economic demographics which characterises western societies as described by Richardson also tended to pattern Zimbabwe’s demographics in the early 2000s. Blacks were “significantly overrepresented in the impoverished and ill-educated social strata” (Richardson 2007: 80), a strata which it would

not be economically prudent for any newspaper that is run as a business entity to invest in trying to attract. The racially determined economic relations in Zimbabwe represented that “complex amalgam of economic and racial factors” operating to anchor Zimbabwe of 2002, firmly to its colonial past (Loomba 1998: 129). Spatial and geographic planning in post-independence Zimbabwe during the first two decades of independence had skirted the issue of redistributing economic resources including land to those who needed it most, the rural black population. “The primary focus of resettlement”, according to Alexander (2003: 89) “shifted to the deeply unpopular policy of communal area reorganisation, i.e. land-use planning within the former reserves”. This means that land-hungry peasants in rural areas as a category of people were largely missed by the first resettlement phase. They were also largely missed by the fast track land resettlement exercise in the post 2000 period as media reports analysed in the previous chapter seem to indicate. Villagers simply did not know when where and how the ‘farm invasions’ were being effected much less how they could participate (*The Herald* March 17, 2000).

The unchanging landscapes and land ownership patterns appeared to be reinforced and reflected at the level of discourse. Colonial myths about Africans as primitive and ineffective peasant farmers in contrast to images of successful white commercial farmers, of blacks who sought to reclaim their lost lands as squatters discursively supported the status quo in land ownership structures. If government policy had over the 1980s and 90s, consistently discouraged as impractical a bottom-up land resettlement exercise driven by popular demands for restitution of the lost lands based on colonial evictions (Alexander 2003), then after 2000 it can be argued that the discourse of land restitution was dead and buried and in its place a new discourse of land redistribution emerged using participation in the war of liberation and political affiliation to the ruling ZANU-PF party as its new criteria of legitimization.

6.2 Socio-economic Context

The sanguinary view that newspapers ought to be democratic and representative of all fractions of the nation’s population often misses the simple fact that as business entities, newspaper organisations ultimately make decisions and choices about their product based on a consideration of the bottom line. Throughout the colonial period Zimbabwe’s native population, particularly those confined to the native reserves, largely existed outside the media and communication loop. Mainstream colonial press establishment with the exception of few missionary newspapers like *Umbowo* and *Moto*, did not ordinarily address its content to them as audiences. That one or so of such newspapers wound up in the hands of few

literate Africans would not make the difference in terms of the nature of content and its intended addressees. Thus, before attainment of independence in 1980, the primary addressees of *The Herald*'s news content who also turned out to be the primary definers of its news were largely white middle class. The decolonial impulse of deracialisation ensured that by 2000 the exclusive class of rich white middle class men, had been forced to accommodate in its ranks a reasonable number of the new black bourgeoisie class largely fashioned in its own image in terms of sensibilities and cultural orientation. So although, as Hanlon et-al rightly point out: "racial discrimination in land ownership ended just before independence, the new government did not move to change the inherited system of a few very large commercial farms and most farmers densely packed in what were simply renamed from 'Tribal Trust Lands' to 'communal areas' (Hanlon 2013: 27).

In terms of the new constitution white privilege had ended hence forward it was going to be equal opportunity for all but nothing in the new constitution suggested that ill-gotten wealth already in white hands would be equitably redistributed between the races. If anything ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1980 enjoined the new independent state of Zimbabwe to non-discriminatory respect of human rights which further entrenched the economic status quo which favoured whites as owners of property. Thus when war veterans with tacit or implicit government support invaded white land in 2000 under government's Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), critics working with some sections of the private press were on the look-out for evidence of government complicity in what according to them, amounted to a violation of white farmers' property rights. On the other hand, government owned and controlled press was out to present evidence to the contrary. Thus in covering FTLRP, the press engaged in a divisive and polarising propaganda war. In the early phase of the FTLRP as shown in the preceding chapter, *The Daily News*'s story represented the war veterans campaign as aggressive, chaotic, lawless and violent and the entire programme as a violation of white farmers' rights with impunity and white farmers as victims. *The Herald*'s story, on the other hand, consistently portrayed war veterans as law abiding and engaged in organised peaceful nationwide demonstrations and any violence on their part as reasonable response to extreme provocation by the white farmers. When the FTLRP enters the eviction phase, as the analysis in the present chapter seeks to demonstrate, the tables had turned. After passing the Land Acquisition Amendment Act and other legislative measures that retroactively legitimated the farm occupations by war veterans and other landless Zimbabweans the government could 'legally' compulsorily acquire land and

evict white farmers from their farms. By that change white farmers became fugitives of the law, creating new challenges for the way newspapers reported the changed circumstances on the farms. This chapter focuses on how newspapers represented the different groups affected by the development which in reality amounted to the government being content to replace the white landed bourgeoisie with a black one without changing the colonial infrastructure that kept majority blacks cacooned in rural poverty. How did the newspapers report the story of the government's monumental failure to use the opportunity presented by FTLRP to tackle the single most enduring feature of racial spatial segregation? Many independent assessments of the FTLRP pointed out that the programme's impact on rural decongestion had been very negligible, (Zimbabwe Institute 2004; The Utete Report 2003).

6.3 *The Daily News* and Inter-media Agenda Setting

In 2002 the story of forced evictions of white farmers became a story written abroad for a global audience but also reproduced and read in Zimbabwe. At least 29 articles published in *The Daily News* in August 2002 were on or referred to the FTLRP. These included news stories political feature stories, opinion pieces, editorial comments, and letters to the editor. A total of six articles were written directly by some of the affected white farmers themselves nine came from *Reuters* London one from the *Washington Times* and seven were letters to the editor written from the diaspora in the geographic north, Canada, Sweden USA, UK (a strong pro-white farmer lobby based abroad). Only four articles are credited to Daily News reporters with the remaining four being letters from *The Daily News* ' local African readership or from known members of the opposition MDC party. The table below is an analysis of *The Daily News* stories on Farm occupations and eviction of white farmers in August 2002.

Table 3. Story, writer and place of writing cross-tabulation

Date	Type of article	Page	Headline	Author	Race	Country/Town
03/08	Letter to the Editor	5	Farming not a mere way of life but an arduous business	Ndagumbuka Amai Nababa	African - child of a former farm worker	Chinhoyi Zimbabwe
08/08	News	2	Farmers divided over exit packages	Takaitei Bote,	African - Daily News Reporter	Harare Zimbabwe
08/08	News	30	Evicted farmers gather for the final farewell	Reuters	Local Correspondent	London
08/08	News	30	Farmers vow to fight Mugabe	Chris Chinaka	African – Local Reuters Correspondent	London
09/08	Letter to the Editor	7	Gullible CFU now paying for its ostrich mentality	Charles Frrizel	White	UK
10/08	News	15	Evicted settlers accuse Mugabe of using them	Daily News Correspondent	African	Masvingo Zimbabwe
10/09	News	15	Wildlife artist hounded off farm	Chris Chinaka	African – Local Reuters Correspondent	London
12/08	News	15	Government vows to punish farmers who defy eviction	Reuters		London
12/08	News	15	Key dates in the land reform saga	Reuters		London
13/08	Leader Analysis	6	World media misrepresenting facts about the real tragedy unfolding on the farms	Cathy Buckle	White Ex-farmer	Zimbabwe
17/08	Letter to the Editor	5	US must stand up for white farmers regardless of race	Jim Politano	White	Washington
17/08	Letter to the Editor	5	Hounded out of a farm for supporting MDC	Kerry Kay	White	Ex-farmer, Bulawayo
17/08	Leader Analysis	4	The Baas is dead, long live the fellow citizen	Fr Oscar Wemtar SJ	White	Catholic Priest and author of “Breaking the Silence”, Harare
21/08	News Feature	19	The death of a dream: a white farmer’s story	Larry Norton	White Ex-farmer	Zimbabwe

21/08	News	17	US labels eviction of farmers senseless act	Reuters		London
21/08	News Feature	20-21	Mugabe runs out of ideas and money as famine spreads	Delan Walsh in Chadereka Zambezi Valley	White Ex-farmer	Zimbabwe
22/08	Letter to the Editor	7	Whole world is watching disgustedly the racist-based theft of farms	M. W. Leahy	White	Ottawa, Canada
23/08	Opinion	11	Farm evictions – a sad chapter in the country’s history	Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu	African	Zimbabwe
23/08	News	32	Harare accuses US, UK of racism	Reuters		London
24/08	Letter to the Editor	5	Racist seizure of white farms similar to Nazi dispossession of Jews	Claes Gylling Malmo	White	Sweden
24/08	Letter to the Editor	5	Heroes’ day preacher misquoted Bible on God supporting land grab	Thabang Nare	African	Bulawayo
24/08	News	26	Blair urged to snub Mugabe	Reuters		London
24/08	News	26	Illegal land seizures set to worsen food crisis, Gasela Warns	Collin Chiwanza	African – Daily News Reporter	Zimbabwe
26/08	News	14	Grace Mugabe grabs choice piece of land	Adrian Blomfield, Washington Times/Zwnwes.com		USA/ Online
26/08	News	35	Straw blames Mugabe for impending mass starvation	Reuters		London
28/08	Letter to the Editor	7	Mugabe’s guts over land issue commendable	Erica		USA
28/08	Letter to the Editor	7	Distribute land only to those with a farming background	Rachel		USA
28/08	Letter to the Editor	7	Whites are equally Zimbabwean	Rudo	African	Masvingo, Zimbabwe
28/08	Letter to the Editor	7	No to ruthless, unfair seizure of farmland!	Kesharibabu		UK
31/08	News	16-17	Chidyausiku admits fast track land reform in Zimbabwe chaotic	Court Reporter	African - Daily News Reporter	Zimbabwe
31/08	News Feature	16-17	The time has come for each and every Zimbabwean to stand up and be counted	Roy Bennet	White - Ex-farmer, MDC MP	Chimanimani, Zimbabwe

The table above shows that *The Daily News* somehow gave wider publicity to the affected white farmers' accounts of the developments on commercial farms and very little space for alternative accounts. The white farmers' accounts were in that process made to assume the status of 'truth' through repetition and exclusion of alternative interpretations. The sourcing of those news stories was also heavily skewed in favour of white farmers and spokespersons in commercial farmers' organisations such as the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU), the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA) and Justice for Agriculture (JAG). The imminent threat to civilisation, the barbarism and savagery of the farm takeovers by landless villagers was recursively lexicalised in the stories with the use of such phrases as: "marauding war vets", "thugs on the rampage", "mayhem", "chaotic land seizures", "violent land grab". Such language invokes and tends to emphasise the breakdown of the rule of law and disorderly nature of the land redistribution programme if it may be called that at all. It characterises those spearheading it as irrational, primitive and savage and the white farmers as presenting the last line of defence for what Ian Smith, the last Prime Minister of Rhodesia once called western Christian civilisation.

An article published in the letters to the editor section of *The Daily News* (August 3, 2002) attributed to one African child of a former farm worker demonstrates African complicity in what Mbembe (2001) described as co-construction of colonial subjectivities. The farm worker expresses gratitude to the white farmer whom he regards as his benefactor and is therefore opposed to the government-sponsored takeover of the white man's farm mainly on the grounds that such action destroyed viable workplaces for many black farm workers who depended on the white farmer for their livelihood. It reads like the white farmer came with land from somewhere and because of his magnanimity created employment for Africans who must have been desperately in need of employment. The article, a letter to the Editor, is cited below for close analysis:

The Daily News Saturday, August 3, 2002)

Headline: Farming not a mere way of life but an arduous business"

Body: I am writing this letter so that I can make few very relevant points. I was born on a commercial farm and I was educated at a local farm school. My father was a tractor driver.

The farmer helped my father to educate my two sisters and myself. We completed secondary school and all achieved good results. ... This farmer paid for my entire education. I have sent him letters to

keep him and his family aware of my movements and progress in life. I am now a 35 year old successful farm manager.

My point is – this farmer helped me and others to achieve our goals. His farm was a very well-run organisation that employed some 126 permanent workers and their families. My heart cries out for him and his family and all the workers who were so well looked after. My father and mother who are now old and have retired, were evicted and treated like animals ... while these racist blacks destroyed a well-run unit. Who will feed Zimbabwe? I can tell you one thing – it won't be the five million pseudo-war veterans and their squatters..

Signed off: Ndagumbuka Amai nababa, Chinhoyi.”

The white farmer in this story is obviously being used metonymically to refer to all white farmers in general as benevolent and the same is arguably true for the farm workers and their children and the mutually beneficial relationship between them. Implicit in the rhetorical question: “Who will feed Zimbabwe?” are deep seated assumptions about who between whites and blacks is naturally a better farmer in Zimbabwe. Left alone blacks, (pseudo-war veterans and squatters) cannot farm. Farming becomes a race thing. To be white is to be a commercial farmer. The employer–employee role relationship between white commercial farmers and black farm workers occurs so naturally, matter-of-factly to the writer of this letter. The writer is conscious of his debt of gratitude to the white farmer for his benevolence. The imprint of an ideology of white supremacy and black inferiority is so indelibly inscribed so that it becomes natural that an African like him cannot aspire for more than just to become a better skilled employee than his forbearers, “my father was a tractor driver... I am a successful farm manager”. To do what war veterans are doing, to usurp the white man's role, that of becoming farm owners themselves and employers is to go against nature in the reasoning of the writer of this letter and by extension in the reasoning of the editors who published the article. Farm invasions are unacceptable in the world of this writer precisely because it destabilises a system of shared meanings and beliefs that structured the colonial world order. The implied inversion of roles which were the bedrock of a colonial and neo-colonial order is the crux of the crisis threatening to bring to an end the world order the writer had ever known and had come to accept as natural. The real Rhodesia, which John Parker had described as “Little white island” had now come unstuck.

Larry Norton aptly captures the prevailing sense of loss among white farmers whose land was being seized by war veterans in his feature article: “The death of a dream: a white farmer’s story” published in *The Daily News* (August 21, 2002).

- Headline:** The death of a dream: a white farmer’s story
- Lead:** I sit in a storage shed in Harare, surrounded by the chaotic elements of our life and home and our piles of possessions, and try to reflect on the past few days. On Thursday 8 August 2002, we evacuated our farm – Dahwye – in Mvurwi, abandoning the home in which three generations of our family had lived for almost half of a century.
- Body:** After two years of mayhem we could not stay on. The government sponsored land invasions had begun in March 2000, shortly before our 14-month-old son, Oscar, died from cancer. We were unable to spend his last days on the farm because of the trouble. He died in an apartment in Harare surrounded by refugee farmers from Macheke 75km to the east of the capital, where in April that year David Stevens, a supporter of the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was the first white farmer to be killed. Since that time we have lived through the unparalleled destruction of a country and economy, under the corrupt and dictatorial rule of President Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party. Our farm has been a microcosm of a battlefield. My mother and father came north from South Africa in the 1950s. They worked as managers on various farms and borrowed money to purchase Dahwye in 1957. They nearly went broke, and for a time my father lived in a tent made from fertiliser bags until he opened up a tobacco farm in virgin bush. It was in an area described as *Terra Incognita*, but he made enough money there to pay off the loan. We returned to Dahwye in the mid-1960s. I was born in 1963. ...

reader: “On Thursday, 8 August 2002, we evacuated our farm – Dahweye – in Mvurwi, abandoning the home in which three generations of our family had lived for almost half a century”. The long stretch of time referred to in “three generations” and “half a century” used in one sentence has the rhetorical effect of underlining and emphasising the writer’s legitimate entitlement to the place which passage of time alone seems to bestow. The theme of entitlement is further strengthened and almost placed on a plane beyond challenge when the writer invokes the right of first discovery as the basis of that entitlement when he goes on to narrate the unparalleled hardships his parents had gone through to acquire and transform what was essentially empty “virgin bush” into the modern farm that it had become at the point when it was taken away from them. He says: “It was in an area described on the map as *Terra Incognita*...”. If Larry’s story is representative and microcosmic, as he claims it is, of the situation with regards how white farmers got the farms from which Mugabe government was now evicting them then indeed theirs is a situation crying out for justice.

But history is replete with ethnocentric discursive constructions claiming emptiness of spaces as a convenient excuse to justify colonial occupation of territories already inhabited by indigenous peoples. If by *terra incognita* is meant unknown then there is the question ‘to whom or by whom and according to whose map? That a place is not known to one or to those that one chooses to associate with may not be adequate proof that such a place is virgin and unclaimed. This only makes sense where African inferiority is a given. What can be inferred from the tone of this article is the fact that Dahweye would without the civilising presence of its white owner almost inevitably regress to its pre-modern bush state under black stewardship. Norton’s white paternalist attitude towards Africans was widely held among the white farming community in Zimbabwe and easily resonated with views attributed to Eddie Cross by Hanlon et-al (2013: 9) ten years later:

Eddie Cross, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) MP and policy coordinator general, said in April 2011 that white farms had been ‘invaded and occupied by this rag tag collection of people’ who are just ‘squatters’ and that ‘the majority of these farms have become largely defunct, their homesteads and farm buildings derelict and their arable lands have returned to bush.

Thus when Captain Cook first landed on the shores of Australia in 1770 and when Henry Morton Stanley, the American journalist and explorer first arrived in the Congo in 1877, they both declared that they had discovered vast empty expanses, *Terra Nullius*, still in their virgin wild states and therefore in need of the West’s civilising influence. This was in spite of the fact that there were aboriginal races who had lived in these so-called new found lands for

many centuries before. In a report he sent to his paper *The New York Herald* Stanley is famously quoted to have described the parts of Africa he had passed through as:

one wide enormous blank ... an absence which is also a region of imagination and desire, a tabula rasa on which imperialism can fulfil its mission. It is at the same time the uninscribed, a land of fabulous possibility, and a land of the barbarous and sub-human. The unformedness of colonial space is the geographic metaphor of the savage mind; both consciousness and space form the childlike innocence which is the natural surface of imperial inscription. This process of inscription is not merely metaphoric, because it is in writing itself that place is constructed out of empty space, and it is in the control of representation and the dissemination of this control in literacy and education that the colonial subject is subdued, (Ashcroft 2001: 40).

Larry Norton's own reminiscence about his lost farm in this article betrays an uncanny similarity of attitude with that of old empire towards both the land and the indigenous people who have always lived on it.

But much more importantly than the gaps and questions that this and other news constructions of reality on the land issue in Zimbabwe, is in what is not discursively represented about it, what news discourse leaves unsaid or their silences (Willems 2012). The unsaid of news often provides the blank canvas against which that which is explicitly stated may make sense. Larry's story and many such stories that alleged unjust government sponsored theft of white-owned farms by war veterans make so much sense against an absence or media silence on the massive scandal of white seizure of the same land from blacks when it happened over a period of half a century of settler colonial rule in Zimbabwe. If indeed white settlers had expropriated by force or guile, Zimbabwe's most fertile land from blacks we would have read it in the news, so the argument goes. Such is the power of news media, "because", as Bird (2010: 2) argues: "it purports to describe reality, news is clearly a crucial force in representing and shaping public culture". What often passes as policy responses to social reality are in actual fact responses to published media versions of that reality. Examples of real policy options in direct response to the feature news story "The death of a dream" above might include, among other things, suggestions about fair compensation for Larry and his farmer friends for the loss of their farms or reinstatement back onto their farms. Public policies less likely to be made in response to the version of reality painted by the same story, would be policies that seek to address farm workers' needs, rights and entitlements if any appear apparent at all. Least likely even would be policies about any Africans who may have been displaced or prejudiced somehow when that farm was established in the first place so many decades back.

Larry Norton's narrative of suffering and brutality that haunted them from their farm in Mvurwi is also important in so far as it claims to be representative of every white farmer's experience during this time. Other farmers paid the supreme price and this article makes a rather interesting revelation in an intertextual reference to the story that made news headlines in the local as well as international press announcing the murder of David Stevens, the first white farmer to be killed at his Macheke farm. Larry writes: "David Stevens, a supporter of the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was the first white farmer to be killed". A closer look at this sentence string raises the question whether Mr. Stevens was killed for his being a farmer and white or for his political activism as a supporter of MDC, in politically instigated violence. If indeed his political affiliation was partly responsible for his being targeted by those who killed him, then the story becomes different and the press' reports of his death and the purported reasons can be argued to have been very misleading at least in so far as this very material fact of his political affiliation the very tense political atmosphere prevailing in the country, the number of deaths, abductions and political intimidation of many MDC supporters during the time had been conveniently de-emphasised, entirely ignored or under-played in favour of his identity as a white farmer as the sole cause of his liquidation.

The nominal phrase: "The government sponsored land invasions" in the clause "The government sponsored land invasions had begun in March 2000" at the beginning of this article is only possible and makes sense where certain assumptions are held as given and these are that the land so invaded belongs to the white farmers who currently live on it as of right; that their title to it is not in question; that the government is culpable for the crime of land invasions. It is interesting to note the different inflections of meaning the same basic process of a government sponsored land acquisition from white commercial farmers to resettle landless blacks acquired through editorial choice of lexical items and language usage as in:

Table 4. Language of legitimation and delegitimation

<i>The Herald</i>	<i>Daily News</i>
Government sponsored land repossessions	Government backed land invasions
Government sponsored land reform	Invasions of white owned farms
Farm occupations	Land seizures

Land acquisitions	Land grabs
New Farmers	Farm invaders

The intended meaning would be different in each of the four modifications above but in each case the government's responsibility for wrong doing is greatly diminished in *The Herald*, if anything it is actually legitimated. *The Daily News'* choice of diction, on the other hand, is unambiguous in its criminalisation of government action on the farms.

6.3.1 Whiteness as a News Value

In the following stories published by *The Daily News* the single most defining news values were whiteness of news actors or proximity to whites and consonance to existing notions of white ownership of land and property rights.

(*The Daily News* Thursday, August 8, 2002)

- Headline:** Farmers divided over exit packages
- By-line:** Takaitei Bote
- Lead:** Cracks showed within the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) membership yesterday over whether or not farmers should challenge a new labour statutory instrument, which some farmers say is unfair.
- Body:** Speaking during the CFU's 59th annual congress held in Harare yesterday, some of the farmers said statutory instrument 6 (SI 6) promulgated this year for farm workers affected by the compulsory acquisition of commercial farms should be resisted in courts because the terminal benefits suggested were too high and farmers could not afford the packages. This is not the first time that the CFU leadership and farmers have clashed over how to deal with issues related to the land reform programme.

The stance of appeasement adopted by the CFU, which does not want to appear confrontational by taking the government to court, has been rejected by some farmers who have decided to form a new pressure group, Justice for Agriculture (JAG).....

Farmer after farmer called on the ALB to consider challenging SI 6 because it gave rise to some bogus trade unions which were inciting workers to force their employers to pay packages even in cases where the farmer had not been issued Section 8 orders. The Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) is alleged to be instigating farm workers to force employers to pay them redundancy packages. The ZFTU is alleged to have extorted more than \$3 billion meant for farm workers' exit packages from commercial farmers issued with eviction notices in the past four weeks.

(*The Daily News*, Thursday, August 8, 2002: 30) Atop this story is a landscape picture of white commercial farmers posing for a farewell photograph at Mutorashanga Country Club.

- Headline:** Evicted farmers gather for the final farewell

Caption: A Group of Zimbabwean commercial farmers have their photograph taken at the Mutorashanga Country Club on Tuesday. This is the last time many of them will see each other as they prepare to vacate their farms prior to a deadline set by President Mugabe's government. Mugabe ordered nearly 3000 white farmers to stop all production in June and gave them until tomorrow to vacate their farms to make way for landless peasants.

Lead: MUTORASHANGA – White farmers gathered on Tuesday for what could be final farewells across Zimbabwe as many prepared to pack their bags to comply with a government deadline to quit their land.

Body: President Mugabe ordered about 3000 white farmers to stop all production in June and gave them until 10 August to vacate their farms and homes to make way for landless blacks. On Tuesday, 60 farmers in Mutorashanga, 100km north-east of Harare, huddled for a group picture at the local social club and in some cases said their last goodbyes. ... Reuters

(*The Daily News* Thursday, August 8, 2002: 30)

Headline: Farmers vow to fight Mugabe

By-line: Chris Chinaka

Lead: A NEW organisation of embattled white Zimbabwean farmers vowed on Tuesday to fight land seizures more aggressively through the courts - but a top lawyer said President Mugabe would ignore them even if they won.

Body: Nearly 3000 white farmers, two thirds of the country's total have been served notices to get off their land this weekend, the first major group to face eviction. ... Reuters

(*The Daily News* Friday 9, 2002: 10)

Headline: Farmers paying heavy price for old sins

Body: Mugabe has a magical spell. It bewilders his fellow African leaders into acquiescent stooges, and much of the west into embarrassed inaction every time. It is this: "My people were wronged by colonialism." Who perpetrated this great wrong? According to Zimbabwe's president, it is the tiny and shrinking band of white commercial farmers, that's who. Hence the Third Chimurenga, or war for land.

(*The Daily News* , Saturday 10, 2002: 15),

Headline: Wildlife Artist hounded off farm. 'Norton battled tears as he tries to explain what the farm, nestled close to the Great Dyke, meant to him, his wife and their three children'

By-line: Chris Chinaka

Lead:

Mvurwi – Larry Norton has shown the best and the worst parts of his life on the Zimbabwean farm he called home until yesterday. Reuters

Farmers vow to fight Mugabe

By Eric Chibwe

A NEW organisation of evicted white Zimbabwean farmers vowed on Thursday to fight land seizures more aggressively through the courts – but a top lawyer said President Mugabe would ignore them even if they won.

Nearly 5,000 white farmers, two-thirds of the country's total, have been served notices to get off their land this weekend, the first major group to face evictions.

Some say they will go, others say they will defy the land acquisition and evictions orders, and the leader of the new Justice for Agriculture (JAG) group said they should all carry on fighting through the courts.

"We must continue fighting. We are challenging the orders through the courts because we have a very strong case that this whole process is unjust and destructive," chairman David Connolly a spokesman organised by his fledgling group.

Connolly said JAG was formed in the last few weeks to assert the legal rights of Zimbabwe's commercial farmers because other organisations were in fruitless talks with the government.

These included the long-established Commercial Farmers Union and the Zimbabwe Joint Settlement Initiative, set up for farmers who offered voluntarily to give parts of their land.

"I must not be apologetic about our rights," Connolly said.

"There is a very good chance we will get justice. We want justice, peace and freedom to produce food for the people of Zimbabwe."

Zimbabwe, once the breadbasket of Southern Africa, is now facing serious food shortages, largely due to the disruption of commercial agriculture.

Mugabe, who ruled since the former Rhodesia gained independence from Britain in 1980, says the land plan will right the wrongs of colonialism.

The critics say the plan was designed to win votes in next elections and, once it passed his critics.

One of the civic rights leaders and opposition figures invited to JAG's meeting said the courts would not be quick help.

Eric Mwanangwa, a top black lawyer, urged the farmers to keep fighting, saying they had a strong legal and moral case which had to be recorded for posterity. He said that he said Mugabe's government would not accept any court orders against its land seizure policy.

"I don't have any confidence that any result against the government is going to be obeyed," he said.

Mugabe forced Zimbabwe's top judge, who was white, to retire nearly last year, saying his rulings against the government's land seizure policy were aimed to serve his kind and his.

Mugabe, 78, has declared that he would never allow the law to be used to defend his drive for land.

A GROUP of Zimbabwean commercial farmers have their photograph taken at the Mutoraehanga Country Club on Sunday. This is the last time of them will see each other as they prepare to vacate their farms prior to a deadline set by President Mugabe's government. Mugabe ordered 3,000 white farmers to stop all production in June and gave them until tomorrow to vacate their farms to make way for landless people.

Evicted farmers gather for the final farewell

MUTORAEHANGA – White farmers gathered on Thursday for what would be their final farewell across Zimbabwe as they prepared to pack their bags to comply with a government deadline to quit their land.

President Mugabe ordered about 3,000 white farmers to stop all production in June and gave them until 18 August to vacate their farms and homes to make way for landless blacks.

On Thursday, 40 farmers in Mutoraehanga, 100km north-west of Harare, lined up for a group picture at the local school club and to some cases said their last goodbye.

A lucky farmer, who declined to be identified, said over 90 percent of the group were leaving, and that the majority would seek a new start in neighbouring countries or overseas.

"The mood around here is generally depressed. Most of us want to stay in Africa. I want to stay, but my government doesn't want me because of my colour," he said.

There are neighbouring countries around us which have been very responsive and are actually asking us to come. They are opening their door to us."

Mugabe says his "fast track" land resettlement programme is aimed at converting white-owned land into state-owned land in the hands of minority whites.

Another farmer said while he had not been issued with an evictions notice, he did not see much of a future in Zimbabwe.

"The economics of the whole country is collapsing. It's not viable to farm in this country and I think that is going to be the basis of my decision," he said.

"A lot of farmers – if they do leave Zimbabwe – will come come back, and the expertise of growers, those that is going to be lost to the country is frightening."

Kevin Drummond said he was leaving for New Zealand within a week to take up a job as a technician, leaving behind a farm that has churned out 500 tonnes of wheat, 200 tonnes of tobacco, 40 tonnes of sorghum and 500 tonnes of maize a year.

"The reality is I now haven't got a place to farm and my business is basically unable to function any more. I've made my application to the government and made my objections but nobody has listened to it going," Drummond said.

Other farmers briefly pulled off the main Mutoraehanga road and the driver said that he was leaving his employer's services from his property.

Critics say the land reform will leave some 300,000 rural workers unemployed.

"A lot of these things have been said on 20, 30, 40 years ago are going to get their (land) back. They're basically from one farmer said."

Farmers have been ordered to pay their workers under penalties.

The government says it has encouraged new investors to replace some of the farmers. Facing its political and economic crisis 10 years of independence, it is the southern African that includes Robert, Z. Leach, President and his three.

Once a breadbasket, the now mostly food and raw materials people have and the invasion of white farms has started its steep decline.

HI-JACK UPDATE

A community service team.

Motorist assaulted during hijacking

A motorist last week was seriously assaulted and robbed of his car by a gang of violent hijackers. He was followed into his driveway by the gang who then proceeded to pull him out, strip him of his clothes, beat him up and then drove him in their hurry to escape with the car.

The vehicle was later recovered as it had an anti-rap device.

This is an unforgivable crime against an innocent motorist and we would do well to take note. If your car is fitted with such a device, it is worth recording the attack and subsequently being assaulted. You are going to get the car back anyway but surely one's instinct dictates how you will react. That is why we must discuss these circumstances within the family and agree on how we deal with hijackers. If we are aware at all times and get someone of anything, we must NOT go straight to a Police Station or somewhere very public. It is a fact that if we resist in any way, we will be injured and – in some cases left for dead. READINESS is your ONLY PROTECTION.

Anti Hi-Jack Trust, Harare.
Further info sought or call centre
has been created in Harare.
Contact: 091-000000
Contact: 091-000000
1-800-0000000000000000

Teachers say 20 percent rise an insult

From Brian Hargreaves

THE Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZimTSA) and the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZU) have rejected the 20 percent cost of living adjustment awarded to civil servants by the government.

The teachers' association said the increment fell well below the inflation rate pegged at over 100 percent.

Shadrach Chimpen, PTUZU's president, said his organisation unreservedly rejected the proposal.

He said: "The government is not serious on a sliding scale and realistic transport and housing allowances."

Nigel Dzimare, ZimTSA's provincial executive officer, said the percentage did not meet their demands.

"What happened is that we negotiated with the government for 10 percent cost of living adjustment," he said.

"Then after consultation, the government officials informed Agents, which means Agents, the Public Service Association and the Zimbabwe Teachers' Association, that we had been awarded only 20 percent."

"The 20 percent therefore short of our minimum requirements, particularly in that the inflation is running over 100 percent."

Figure 11 Close to a full page dedicated to memorialising forced evictions of white farmers. Source: *The Daily News*

The Daily News story which it told consistently throughout the latter period from 2002 onwards was a story of the tragedy of the forced eviction of white farmers told from the standpoint of the evicted white farmers themselves as is clearly evident in the stories cited above. The story literally remained a top story in Zimbabwe's press for close to three years. It became a taken-for-granted feature of the press's news agenda. This agenda for *The Daily News* became a news agenda dictated to it by global news agencies like Reuters. If it was not on front page or the news sections – which was in fact the case most of the time, it was on the

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letters page or opinion and analysis pages of the papers. How it retained its newsworthiness cannot be fully accounted for in terms of a materialist realist operation of news values alone where the news event itself or the personalities involved have these characteristics inherent in themselves which then recommend them to the professionally trained eye of the journalist as newsworthy (Badnerak and Caple 2015). Such an assumption would expose the news value theory of newsworthiness of events and people as ethnocentric when applied in explaining how the eviction of white farmers was adjudged as newsworthy and the displacement of farm workers was not so newsworthy. The displacement of farm workers as an event shared most of the same features with that of the eviction of white farmers from commercial farms. What it lacked in terms of reference to elite people it more than made up in terms of the numbers of those affected. If news values were immanent in the events themselves, then the story of forced displacement of farm workers would have generated an equivalent number of news stories like the eviction of white farmers from the farms. A deeper analysis of the eviction story in this study would tend to support Badnarek and Caple's (2015) thesis that the news values were discursively produced in the process of news writing itself, that they became newsworthy as events in the way they were discursively written and laid out in the newspaper. The editors' selection of such events as fit to print was the cause rather than the effect of the events' newsworthiness. This analysis would tend to recommend a rethinking or revision of Galtung and Ruge's original list of news values to include reference to white people as a marker of newsworthiness in the coverage of events in postcolonial settings.

Another possible explanation may be looked for in theories that attempt to explain the transcendence of racism beyond the end of formal colonialism such as postcolonial theory. That racial inequality would tend to structure as well as inflect much of the activities of such ideological institutions as the press had been aptly predicted by Bishop Donal Lamont in protesting the dispossession and displacement of thousands of Africans as a result of an apartheid system of government in Rhodesia in the 1970s when he warned that:

Were there to be an African government in this country—and indeed that seems inevitable, and very soon—and if the present laws which have been enacted and applied to create and preserve privilege—if these were retained and applied in reverse against the European, what a protest there would be! (Hanlon et-al 2013: 209).

The amount of media gravitas and outcry the farm invasions story occasioned goes beyond available journalistic explanations about news values. Indeed when the volume and regularity of stories on the eviction of white farmers in the press were to be compared with the manner

in which the evictions of thousands of Africans from their ancestral lands in colonial Rhodesia were covered, then the racial basis of the differential access to media as tools of self-definition becomes all too evident. The eviction of blacks from their homes when fertile land on which they had lived and raised their families was taken away from them and parcelled out to white settlers under colonial rule was clearly not a big story. But as the white man's eviction is treated with difference it is given loud visibility as the stories analysed in this section demonstrate. The difference in media treatment of such apparently similar events – evictions and dispossession of thousands of black families in colonial times and evictions of 3000 white farmers by a black government – is often explained away in terms of journalistic application of news judgements based on the prominence of the event and deviation from the norm or unusualness. If such an argument were to be followed to its logical conclusion then it would appear that when policies disadvantage Africans, then the press sees nothing unusual in that but when whites are similarly disadvantaged it is so unusual that it becomes news. A crude equivalence with the journalistic adage: “when a dog bites a man that is not news but when a man bites a dog, then that is news”. Thus, the significant thing here is in the press finding the evictions of white farmers such a big story. It is less in why and how the evictions were effected but in journalists' finding it to be newsworthy.

Cathy Buckle's own analysis of the way the farm evictions story had been covered over the period from March 2000 to 2002 brings out the racial biases in the manner the stories were obsessed with the white farmers' plight to the total exclusion of highlighting how their black farm labourers would be affected.



Figure 12. A typical Leader Page of The Daily News. Source: *The Daily News* Library

Buckle's article published in *The Daily News* (Tuesday, August 13, 2002: 6) as an opinion piece on its Leader Page. The leader page of a newspaper typically expresses the senior Editors' opinion on what they consider to be the most important issue of the time. In this particular case of *The Daily News* ' Leader Page followed a familiar template layout with three different articles that tended to act as a pointer to the most important issue of the day and the paper's position on it:

The three articles, the cartoon across the top middle section of the page, the Editorial Comment boxed in a column running down the left margin of the page from top to bottom and the opinion piece strategically placed on the attention grabbing space immediately below the cartoon from the middle to the bottom of the page usually formed The Daily News Leader Page. This section of the newspaper is usually dedicated to regular contributors often outsiders and not part of the paper's Editorial team. Cathy Buckle who happened to be one of the white former commercial farmers affected by the government's land acquisition policies

had become one such regular contributor on *The Daily News* Leader Page. Below is an extract from one of her articles:

- Headline:** World media misrepresenting facts about the real tragedy unfolding on the farms.
- By-line:** Cathy Buckle
- Pull-quote:** The closing down of the majority of Zimbabwe's commercial farms continues to be reported as if it was simply a racial issue and a correction of a colonial imbalance. Report after report talks of 3000 white farmers being evicted from their properties, but say nothing about 300000 black farm workers also being dispossessed of their homes, jobs and livelihoods.
- Lead:** Zimbabwe has once again caught the world's attention with the eviction of 2900 commercial farmers from their properties. But after 29 months of information, what shocking coverage they are giving to this massive human tragedy. News services all over the world continue to misrepresent the facts and I wonder if they know what an enormous disservice they are doing to both Zimbabwe and their worldwide audiences.
- Body:** The closing down of the majority of Zimbabwe's commercial farms continues to be reported as if it was simply a racial issue and a correction of a colonial imbalance.
- Report after report talks of 3000 white farmers being evicted from their properties, but say nothing about 300000 black farm workers also being dispossessed of their homes, jobs and livelihoods.
- Film footage shows white farmers loading their furniture and agricultural equipment onto huge trucks, but never give a glimpse of how the farm workers leave.
- The cameras do not show the pictures of black men, women and children walking off those farms with their few meagre belongings loaded onto wheelbarrows, in boxes and enamel basins on their heads or tied onto bicycles.
- The world's best reporters and political commentators say nothing about where all these people are going to go or how they will survive in a collapsing economy.
- They do not point out that these people, too, know nothing but farming. .
- Over half a million black Zimbabweans are also being dispossessed of their homes and yet the world chooses to focus on 3000 white farmers.....

The cartoon and the editorial comment provided relevant context that reinforces the subject matter being discussed in the article by Cathy Buckle above. The cartoon a satirical commentary on the ruinous effects of Mugabe's land reform programme shows Mugabe

driving a tractor marked “Agriculture”. The tractor was drawing a trailer marked “Economy” filled with worthless Zimbabwe dollar bills. Mugabe appears to be determinedly driving the “agriculture tractor” towards the brink clearly marked “Dead end”. And as he does so the agriculture tractor is spewing dark toxic fumes that seem to choke the economy trailer it is drawing. This cartoon seems to make a statement that Mugabe’s agrarian reform policies were irresponsible and were bound to plunge both the agricultural sector and the country’s economy with it into the abyss. The only wise course of action for him to take was to stop or even begin to reverse the agricultural reform policies represented in this particular cartoon by the tractor.

The editorial comment under the headline: “After Heroes speeches it’s back to the chaos” draws readers’ attention to “the chaos” that now characterises the Zimbabwean economic life. The use of the definite article “the” in a way marks the chaos as one with which the reader will already be familiar. The agrarian reform policies have been described as chaotic by most critics of the policy and in reporting about it in many of its news reports the phrase “chaotic land reform” was an epithet *The Daily News* was wont to use.

Cathy Buckle’s article thus picks up and continues this general theme of criticism against Mugabe’s land reform policies. The overall aim of this article it appears is to establish new moral grounds on the basis of which to discredit the fast track land reform programme. At the surface level of analysis, Cathy Buckle seems to be merely stating that the press had overstated the white farmers’ case in the ongoing farm evictions story and had been totally oblivious of the plight black farm workers as victims of these displacements. Being a white farmer herself who had also lost a farm under the same exercise, Buckle demonstrates a high sense of magnanimity and empathy to write the way she has done in this article. Her sense of duty and civic obligation towards fellow men makes her rise above considerations of racial difference and mere self-pity to take responsibility to speak for and on behalf of those whom society and the media had decided to treat as second class citizens or less than human. She pronounces the media guilty of “misrepresenting facts about the real tragedy unfolding on the farms” by concentrating on how the farm evictions were affecting “3000 white farmers and saying nothing about 300000 black farm workers ... in the past 29 months”.

A content analysis of news headlines of *The Daily News* during this period clearly supports Buckle’s conclusions about the racial bias in the news coverage of the fast track land redistribution and the farm evictions it occasioned. “Report after report, as Buckle says,

showed “white farmers loading their furniture and agricultural equipment onto huge trucks, but never a glimpse of how the farm workers leave”. The story Buckle tells here is one about the story the press never told, never reported on the farm evictions issue. Buckle is merely pointing out the obvious when she says: “film footage never showed the farm worker... the cameras never showed the pictures of black men, women and children walking off those farms with their few meagre belongings. ...the world’s best reporters... said nothing about ... farm workers”. What Cathy Buckle probably did not know is that our best reporters did not report on the tragic consequences of the FTLRP on black farm workers due to lack of professionalism or to malice in the journalistic establishment in Zimbabwe. Mainstream professional journalism anywhere in the world was by nature wired to turn a blind eye or to look away when actions of power tend to hurt the powerless. What she does not tell us in her own report is how this is at all possible and why in a newspaper run by an almost entirely black editorial team and in a self-respecting black country which has been independent for more than two decades. At another level of analysis this story may be betraying white paternalism towards blacks. The story might be also suggesting to fellow white men that the black men’s welfare is a white man’s burden.

The focus of this study is to find out how it is possible for the media to so under-represent facts about the reality of the eviction story as Buckle seems to allege in this article, especially when blacks happen to be the victims. First the division of labour on the farm happens along racial lines. The farm owner is white while the farm worker is black. The white farmer is obviously rich while his black farm worker is poor, evidenced by film footage of the white evictee loading his furniture and agricultural equipment onto “huge trucks” while his black farm worker makes off on foot for an unknown destination with “meagre belongings” on his head. According to Cathy Buckle the media’s ethnocentric obsession with narrating the farm eviction from a white angle tends to crowd out the real tragedy of the farm eviction story from the stand point of the black farm worker. To what extent are interpretive frames applied by *The Daily News* in picturing the issues around the farm eviction story continuous with a colonial archive? How are alternative ways of knowing the farm eviction story trivialised, excluded, suppressed and repressed in *The Daily News* story on farm evictions? One of the techniques at work here as in the land conflict story earlier in colonial Zimbabwe, is the use of a race-based hierarchy of credibility as news sources. Whites in Zimbabwe and abroad, including white farmers themselves, enjoy wide access as news sources on *The Daily News*. For example, Mr. Larry Norton, Mr Roy Bennet, Delan Walsh, Cathy Buckle, David Mills

and Charles Frizzel are among some of the former white farmers given access to write and define the problem of farm evictions from their own stand point. Their view of the nature of the problem is further reinforced by comments and views from white elite organisations such as the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union (ZCFU) and the Zimbabwe Tobacco Farmers Association (ZTFA), whose views and opinions on the ongoing farm evictions are sought after and given wide publicity by the newspaper in story after story on farm occupations and evictions of white farmers since March 2000. This is not to suggest that what these stories reported about the land issue was untrue, except to say that it could not have been ideologically innocent.

At another level of division of labour in the production of news as forms of knowledge in the service of power, *The Daily News* of the period 2000 to 2002 presents a unique case of the global north providing the lenses through which to “know” and make sense of southern realities such as the land reform programme in Zimbabwe. Thirteen of the major stories on the farm evictions were sourced from Reuters, the UK based Observer, the UK Guardian, the Washington Times and these articles play a key role in setting the agenda as well as providing the framework within which journalists and reporters at *The Daily News* go on to imagine local realities of the land reform programme in a manner that privileged certain interpretations of those events and not others. The agenda setting architecture for the newsification of Zimbabwe’s fast track land reform programme at *The Daily News* could be conceptualised as forming an hierarchical continuum with Reuters and other western news agencies occupying the apex, followed by the local white farming community and a global network of sympathisers who dominated the reader commentary and opinion sections of the newspaper. At the bottom rung of this knowledge production edifice were the newspapers’ own reporters whose important role was mainly in gate keeping, through news selection and extractive, mining of raw facts for processing in the production chain of news as knowledge on the land reform programme in Zimbabwe.

The white perspective on and narrativisation of the fast track land reform programme as becomes increasingly evident through the pages of *The Daily News* is founded on certain common sense assumptions about who the owners of the land were in Zimbabwe between whites and blacks, about when history began in Zimbabwe and those assumptions are simply that history begins with colonial inscriptions and racial geographisation of the land. In story

after story whites are presented as the owners of the farms where the role and identity of blacks is cut out for them as either farm workers or squatters. Whites are the farm owners and blacks are the landless peasants, squatters, or land grabbers. In one story carried in *The Daily News* but attributed to Reuters, Key dates in the land reform saga” for instance only begin after 2000. The story which shares the same page with another story on farm evictions illustrated with two landscape pictures of distraught white farmers reminiscing about the past or pondering an uncertain future is cited below for further discussion:

Headline:	Key dates in the land reform saga
Lead:	Nearly 3000 white farmers were ordered to abandon their farms by midnight last Thursday and make way for landless blacks or risk jail under President Robert Mugabe’s controversial land reforms. Here are key dates in the evolution of the thorny land question.
Body:	2000 January-February – Zimbabweans reject in a referendum a draft constitution that Mugabe critics say would have entrenched him in power. Thousands of independence war veterans, backed by the government, invade hundreds of white owned farms, saying the land was illegally seized during British colonial rule. 10 March – A private poll – which Mugabe’s government dismissed as “rubbish” – says that few Zimbabweans back Mugabe’s land seizures while 74 percent blame Mugabe’s government for failing to resolve the issue. 19 April – The High Court convicts war veterans leader Chenjerai Hunzvi of contempt for inciting farm invasions after they had been declared illegal.

The story goes on to chronicle events leading up to the present farm evictions involving 3000 white farmers. But what is pertinent in this article is the choice the writer makes in citing the year 2000 as marking the start of land conflict in Zimbabwe. Such historicisation deliberately ignores and writes the liberation struggle out of the story of land conflict in Zimbabwe. It writes off as insignificant the structural violence. To report that: “Thousands of independence war veterans, backed by the government, invade hundreds of white owned farms, saying the land was illegally seized during British colonial rule” is to dismiss the claim that the land that is now the subject of dispute was indeed seized by the current white owners from blacks in the first place as just another contestable claim and to establish as fact that war veterans were farm invaders and whites, owners of the farms.

6.4 Villains and Victims, Beneficiaries and Benefactors of FTLRP

It is important to note here, that if government resettlement policy on the ground reinforced rather than challenge colonial white supremacist discourses categorising farmers as commercial or subsistence farmers solely on the basis of skin colour in the early days of independence, then mainstream media would scarcely be expected to debunk those myths.

Crucially, the responsible ministries did not challenge the beliefs and practices which had informed Rhodesian 'technical development', the set of modernising policies which had long shaped interventions in African farming, and which reached their height in the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951. The colonial myth of African farmers as traditional, subsistence-oriented and inefficient, in contrast to the 'commercial white farmers, was left largely intact in the early 1980s. ... Land redistribution was rapidly construed as a technical exercise, and one in which the goal of productivity came to hold a central place (Alexander 2003: 84).

Thus by 2000 when government intensifies its resettlement drive still based on the same logic as in the 1980s, the news stories on the agrarian reform then would expectedly borrow from and elaborate or seek to debunk age-old colonial myths about the whites' ability to farm and African laziness as justification for continuation with a land ownership pattern established under colonial rule. *The Daily News* took it as its mission to articulate white opinion, defend white farmer entitlement over the commercial farmland. One thing that is evident in many of the news stories on the FTLRP developments on the farms is that white farmers are represented as the legitimate owners of the land from which they are being unjustly driven away, and that they are commercial farmers, while Africans taking over those farms are represented as marauding mobs, farm invaders, squatters, new farmers or some such appellation connoting denial of the African as a farmer.

The success of resettlement would lie in its ability to produce marketed surpluses. To achieve this, officials stressed the need for bureaucratic control over settler selection and careful land-use planning. In this vision, there was little room for popular participation or the historically informed claims to restitution that had animated the liberation war. By far the most dominant resettlement model followed the pattern of the NLHA (Alexander 2003: 85, Marongwe 2003: 156).

But even this model had not been applied in the strict sense in the early models of resettlement based on the willing-buyer willing-seller nor was it used as the basis for resettlement under the FTLRP. A serious flaw that characterised all resettlement programmes implemented by government since independence is that they largely skirted addressing restitution of rights to lost ancestral lands for most Africans who were forcibly removed by white settler governments of Rhodesia. Although grievance over lost land was the rallying point around which guerrillas mobilised popular support for the war of liberation, the

independence government never committed itself to tackling the land imbalances as a justice issue. It had been hoped that an African nationalist government would commit itself to a speedy redress of the racially skewed entitlements to land between blacks and whites on attainment of independence as a matter of priority (Palmer 1977). But, as Marongwe (2003: 156) rightly points out, “that did not happen” particularly in the early phases of resettlement programmes of the 1980s based on a willing-buyer willing-seller principle enshrined in the Lancaster House agreement of 1979. That land reform process was not only blind to claims for land restitution by Africans but it also did not pay due attention to the structural violence that Africans had continued to suffer in the ‘Tribal Trust Lands’ to which they had been banished by the colonial regime.

The TTL as a system continued to generate what it had always been intended to; a steady stream of cheap black labour flowing into the modern economic sector escaping from poverty, malnutrition and starvation among blacks after independence as much as they had done before, under colonial rule. Around 2000 the problem of population density and congestion in some rural areas such as Mhandamabwe, Chiundura, Chachacha to name just a few had reached crisis proportions. The resulting land degradation from population pressure was becoming all too evident, but media discourses on the FTLRP, across the media divide, did not construct that programme as in any way related to the actual existing problem of seeking to decongest these rural areas. What we are not told in the FTLRP story is how the new resettlement programme could possibly relate to the liberation movement’s aspirations for the dismantling of a pillar of the colonial economy and the fount of black man’s sense of inferiority to the white man – the native reserve. The economic value of the native reserve, now communal area, to the colonial system was in so far as it contributed to breaking the black man’s spirit, his pride and self confidence in his humanity. Confinement to native reserves was an instrument through which white settlers subjugated and pacified the subject races in many parts of colonial Africa.

The success of the colonial project hinged on the realisation that “the corollary of deliberately fostered African inferiority is the perpetuation of white superiority” (Austin 1975: 35). It was the principal instrument in the process of what Fanon (1967: 4) calls “the epidermalisation of this inferiority” complex. There is something uncanny about how discourse makes the whole difference between what can be accepted, legitimated and that which can be considered with revulsion and there is a history to it. Torture and extermination camps implemented in German South West Africa from the close of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth

century against the native population of that country were labelled concentration camps and were on that basis condemned as more inhumane than similar structures used for similar purposes against British South Africa's own indigenous population much earlier probably because the latter went under the appellation of 'refugee camps' not 'death camps' which they were. The native reserve was only slightly more humane, in at least its claimed paternalist purposes, than the concentration camps in Germany-owned South West Africa (now Namibia) of the early 1900s or the Nazi gas chambers at Auschwitz (Olusoga and Erichsen 2010). The native reserve was an inexhaustible and inexpensive source of cheap labour, without which the often celebrated rise of Rhodesia's commercial farming sector to the status of being regarded as "the bread basket" of Southern Africa would not have been possible. As Austin (1975: 35) points out:

The African majority has been placed in an economically weak position from which it is virtually impossible to recover unless fundamental changes are made. It has been cut off from the economic power which goes with land ownership. The minority pursues this policy ... because of a direct desire to ensure a mass of semi-skilled labour.

It never seemed to occur to the news reporters of the FTLRP that the white owned commercial farm, the target of the war veterans' invasion had a very close affinity with the native reserve (now communal area) to a point of one being the corollary of the other. It was so, at least, to the architects of colonialism who realised early enough that you would not have the one without the other. There was no better way to smoke Africans out of their complacency into willingly joining queues of job hunters in the European sector than confining them to native reservations. It did not occur to the news workers that in its discursive architecture the FTLRP needed to appear as structurally designed as a means to undo the racial dehumanisation visited on indigenous people by being confined in the native reserves renamed communal areas at independence. Lost to them was the fact that the black farm worker now being evicted from the commercial farms was the same rural tribesman turned migrant labourer from the TTL because of the same problem of landlessness which the FTLRP was ostensibly meant to address. But due to the manner in which FTLRP was implemented and reported in the press, many thousands of former farm workers wound up having been offloaded back to the TTLs, worsening an already bad situation of population pressure on the limited land available in the rural areas.

Journalistic blindness to the structural link between rural areas as the foundry of the country's largely semi-skilled black labour in factories, mines and commercial farms and estates

probably explains the almost ideologically innocent and unproblematic way *The Herald* (August 21, 2002: 1) could use a photograph with its headline story – “Farmers’ defiance” – on evicted white farmers, showing a farm worker, wife and children seemingly happy after having received gratuity from the white employer who has been evicted from his farm. The caption explained the picture in the following words:

Farm worker for 24 years, Mr Misheck Karuru, says he has received his gratuity and is ready to leave Turner Farm, just outside Harare along Mazowe Road, for his rural home in Mount Darwin. Some farm workers claim that they will have nowhere to go when their employers, the white commercial farmers whose properties have been designated for resettlement, leave.



Figure 13. An example of how the plight of the farm workers caught up in the milieu of land occupations was seldom narrated in newspapers.
Source: *The Herald Archives*

The expression “ready to leave ... for his rural home” implies someone who has gladly embraced his fate as if he has always looked forward to such a happy moment when he would

be relieved from the harsh and oppressive work at the farm and leave for what he and many black Zimbabweans now call 'home'. The intended rhetorical effect was probably to orchestrate the white farmers' defiance by contrasting it with the compliance and readiness to cooperate demonstrated by the farm worker. If he has been away from his rural 'home' for 24 years, working at a commercial farm, the reader can only speculate at what sorts of comforts await to attend his homecoming.

Colonial culture had firmly impressed it upon the African mind that his home was in the reserves not in towns or farms where he worked, and it seems *The Herald*, instead of challenging this reinforces it as the natural order of things. The picture and caption in fact raise more serious questions than they help to answer. They conceal more information than they reveal. Why do Mr Karuru and fellow workers on the farm not resist this uninvited displacement? Are they happy and glad that their employment has had to end this way? In fact, what different purposes does this rural home serve now in postcolonial Zimbabwe than those it served from when it was designated as such under colonial rule – a place to return to for those whom the white economy no longer needed – a place for the 'discarded' people as Desmond (1971) would call them? The reporter at *The Herald* fails to apprehend the paradox in representing a farm worker happily looking forward to going 'home' from where some villagers are so desperate to escape that they found it necessary to accompany war veterans on the march to invade white-owned farms. Thus in this particular story the "Farmers' defiance" to leave the farms is being contrasted with Mr Karuru the black farm worker's readiness to comply with the outcome of a government eviction notice served on his employer. The calculated effect probably was to justify government's high handed approach in dealing with non-complying white farmers. But what would have been the difference if the caption had read: "...Mr Karuru reluctantly prepares to go back to his rural 'home' in the semi-arid 'native reserve' in Mount Darwin where he had come from 24 years ago...."? A caption like that would obviously rehash the present government's betrayal of the liberation promise to end the dehumanising effects of life in the former native reserves, a life that had pushed many blacks like Mr. Karuru into accepting servitude to their white masters on commercial farms.

Ignoring the fate of many thousands of black farm labourers and the interests of many more thousands of Africans whom colonialism had dispossessed and banished to reservations meant for vanquished natives and who still remained imprisoned in these Rhodesian gulags does little to rationalise and legitimate the FTLRP programme and place it on a firm moral

ground. If FTLRP was meant to reverse colonial imbalances in land ownership patterns, then the native reserve, that stark reminder and symbol of colonial dispossession and humiliation of Africa's indigenous population would surely need to be addressed by such a programme. But such a discourse fell outside of professional journalism's remit. Journalists were content to report events as discreet occurrences unrelated to other events dispersed across space and time.

This weakness which characterised *The Herald*'s reporting on the fast track land reform programme probably accounts for what passed as *The Herald*'s very feeble apology for what the paper itself saw as a senseless, unjustified chaotic land grabbing exercise by war veterans. The paper failed to place the events in their proper historical context where the process of land dispossession and impoverishment of Africans was the cornerstone of the racial division of labour that had inscribed as a fact of life the roles of employer to whites and employee to blacks as the basis for their insertion into a capitalist modernity. The discursive and non-discursive materialisations that had reified white supremacy as "the symbol of capital" and black inferiority as "that of labour" had remained unchallenged (Fanon 1967: 101). Affluence took the colour of whiteness while poverty and the condition of employment/unemployment almost always the black apparition.

This is perfectly captured in one of Zex Manatsa's songs: "Hona vakaita musangano mapostori ekwaMarange pamusana pokuda kuziva akatipenda nependi nhema yaive-e mugaba mugaba rourombo" (Look, they called a meeting the members of the Marange Apostolic sect to find out who had painted us with the black paint that was in the tin of poverty). The permanence of this colonial symbolism becomes all too evident in the discursive constructions of the FTLRP by both *The Herald* and *The Daily News* newspapers. One continues to witness the use of labels "white commercial farmers" or simply "farmers" with reference to whites whether on the land or off the land as opposed to "farm workers", "farm invaders", "land grabbers", "squatters" "new farmers" or "peasant farmers" in the two papers, signifiers which depend for their sense making on an archive of discursive constructions of the colonial difference between white masters and black servants. No reader of *The Herald* or *The Daily News* would ever misconstrue the label "farm worker" or "new farmer" as also including white employees at a farm or white farmers recently embarked on farming. The signifier "farmer" when unalloyed with a qualifier almost always referred to a white person and connoted success at farming. *The Herald*, however should be given the

credit for reporting in a more sustained manner on the plight of the largely black farm workers in the FTLRP saga. Stories such as:

“White farmers’ hypocrisy: Workers some of the poorly paid, neglected” (August 16, 2002: Opinion page);
“New rule on farm workers’ benefits” (August 20, 2002: 1 Headline story);
“Farmers’ defiance” (August 21, 2002: 1 Headline story);
“Farm workers benefit from resettlement programme” (August 28, 2002, Opinion page) were some of the stories that kept the plight of the farm worker in the spot light.

were some of the stories that kept the plight of the farm worker in the spot light.

Those stories that reported on the white farmer generally cast him as an unrepentant racist and violator of the rule of the same law from which he expected to gain protection. John Nkomo, Joseph Msika and President Mugabe all at different stages issue stern warnings on defiant farmers for resisting a lawfully issued government order to vacate their farms. Another departure in *The Herald*’s reporting on the farm occupation story is evidenced by the paper’s increased focus on the newly resettled farmer. Where in the past the paper had almost exclusively relied on white farmers’ organisations, the ZCFU, and ZTFA for expert comment on farming, now there is a marked shift to rely instead on leaders of the black farmers’ organisation the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU), for comment on farming issues.

By August 2002 *The Herald* had completely changed both in tone and outlook. At this stage *The Herald* also begins to draw on a counter-hegemonic archive of discourses of black resistance against settler colonial domination, when it coins the term Third Chimurenga as a code name for the radical land repossession led by veterans of the guerrilla war that brought independence to Zimbabwe. The term Chimurenga which means revolutionary struggle was first used to denote the first widespread resistance and uprisings (1896-7) staged by Africans against colonial occupation by the British South Africa Company (BSAC). The Letters Pages began to carry increasingly one-sided opinion articles seldom in open disagreement with the government’s official position on the land reform question. The robust public sphere that its Letters Page used to offer had seriously been whittled and toned down. Instead of serving as the ideal space allowing different shades of opinion to freely clash it became re-feudalised by fewer voices of selected pro-establishment columnists whose role was to manufacture and publicise politically correct opinion particularly on the land issue. Space which used to be dedicated to letters from readers was drastically reduced to accommodate a standard four letters per day reserving the rest of the page instead to carrying long opinion and analysis

articles from selected establishment columnists and intelligentsia. In no other section of the paper than the Letters Page did the gatekeeper's hand and manufactured nature of public opinion become more apparent at *The Herald*. Some of the letters exhibited clear signs of having been authored in the newsroom itself by junior reporters as admitted by one informant in an interview:

It is not an uncommon practice for interns to be ordered to write letters to the editor as part of their normal assignments before they knock off, when no such letters have been received from readers. At other times the sub-editor assigned to layout the letters page finds themselves with the unenviable task of having to author one or rewrite a short letter if they find not enough letters in the letters basket to fill up the page (Interview with a Sub-Editor at *The Herald* 23/12/13).

This strategy of dedicating the opinion pages to selected regular commentators as well as restricting the chances for authentic unmanaged expressions of opinion by members of the public external to the newsroom, through the editorialised Letters Page, further entrenched the manufacture of reality in the hands of the newspapers' editors with the result of putting the task of production of versions of reality that much more firmly under control. These strategies complemented by carefully guided selective sourcing practices had the effect of subordinating if not altogether silencing alternative regimes of truth and sense making of subordinated groups (Manning 2001). Careful selection, rewriting and republication of opinion pieces originally published in the foreign press became common practice at *The Herald* sometimes without even acknowledging the paper's own changes to the original document. The propaganda purposes of this practice was almost always to give the impression that the land resettlement programme enjoyed wider acceptance even beyond the borders of Zimbabwe. George Monbiot's article originally published in the Guardian under the heading: "Our Racist Demonology" and republished in *The Herald*'s opinion page, presents a typical case as shown below:

Headline:	Land reform not brutal
By-line:	George Monbiot
Lead:	The most evil man on earth after Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, is Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe. That at least is the view of most of the Western world's press.
Body:	His assault on white-owned farms has been cited by the Daily Telegraph as the principal cause of the current famine. Now the paper maintains, he using "food aid as a political weapon". To suggest that the land seizures are largely responsible for the nation's hunger is sheer mischief. Though the 4500 white farmers out there own two-thirds of the best arable land, many of them grow tobacco not food.

Seventy percent of the nation's maize – its primary staple crop – is grown by black peasant farmers eking a living from the marginal lands they were relegated by the whites. The seizure of the white farms is being portrayed as both brutal and illegal. But it is only one small scene in the tragedy now playing all over the world.

Every year, some tens of millions of peasant farmers are forced to leave their land, with devastating consequences for food security. For them there are no tear stained descriptions of a last visit to the graves of their children. If they are mentioned at all, they are dismissed by most of the Press as the unavoidable casualties of development. ... These are dark-skinned people being expelled by whites, rather than whites being expelled by black people. They are as such assuming their rightful place as invisible obstacles to the rich world's projects. Mugabe is a monster because he has usurped the natural order. Throughout the coverage of Zimbabwe there is an undercurrent of racism and of regret that Britain ever let Rhodesia go.

The Herald's story though wholly attributed to George Monbiot is a modification of the original version published in *The Guardian* on August 13, 2002. Monbiot's original article gave a far more balanced and nuanced analysis of Zimbabwe's farm evictions and of Mugabe's policies in general. His criticism of Mugabe though it pales into insignificance when considered against his upbraiding of the big powers and their media, was just as scathing. In the second paragraph of the original story – which *The Herald* omitted – Monbiot had written as follows:

Yesterday Mugabe insisted that 2,900 white farmers will have to leave their land. He claims to be redistributing their property to landless peasants, but many of the farms he has seized have been handed instead to army officers and party loyalists. Twelve white farmers have been killed and many others beaten. He stole the elections in March through ballot rigging and the intimidation of his political rivals. ... As a candidate for the post of World's Third Most Evil Man, he appears to possess all the right credentials. ... There is no doubt that Mugabe is a ruthless man, or that his policies are contributing to the further impoverishment of the Zimbabweans. ... The seizure of the white farms is both brutal and illegal. ... (Monbiot, *Guardian*, 13 August 2002).

But these sections critical of Mugabe were conveniently edited out to ensure a clear white-washed, sanitised and one-sided positive commentary on Mugabe's policies on land redistribution as anything but bad. The recasting of the headline from "Our Racist Demonology" to *The Herald*'s "Land reform not brutal", is even much more misleading. When this is added to the unacknowledged surgery in some parts of the original it gives the impression that George Monbiot condones Mugabe's land reform programme, and that he absolves him of any wrong doing that the author is totally on Mugabe's side on this issue of eviction of white farmers from their land. Monbiot's is made to appear and sound like a member of Mugabe's party apparatchik. The paper appears to be saying lo-and-behold here is

one British citizen who endorses Mugabe's land policies. If *The Herald* Editors had acknowledged their own input into the story by indicating in the credit line or by-line then at least it would not have been that misleading to the reader who may not have had access to the original article. *The Herald*'s action here represents a different kind of role relationship between the local and the global media. While some local newspapers – and *The Daily News* above provides a good example – would readily surrender their initiative to set the news agenda and to define the news situation to the global media giants from the west, *The Herald* through this story presents a break with tradition. Notwithstanding the ethical issues, through 'voicing over' Monbiot's story *The Herald* asserted its own epistemic imprint by adopting, reinterpreting and adapting the Guardian story to give it an inflection in accordance with its own purposes.

Overall, for the paper to write on white farmers' evictions from farms, the way it did at this stage, should be understood in a context where the paper availed the only space the nationalist leadership in government had, to offer a rebuttal to a growing shrill condemnation of Mugabe's land reform policies by the international media and in some sections of the local private press. It represents a sort of decolonial usurpation of a form of knowledge production and turning it against imperial power, a form of doing journalism against the Holy Grail.

A sea change had happened in *The Herald*'s general thrust in reporting the land reform issue. Expressions like "land seizures", "farm invasions", "raids of white-owned commercial farms" have disappeared. In their place we now have "land acquisitions" "newly resettled farmers", or "farm occupations". The tables have completely turned against the commercial farmers with court orders of eviction being issued against white commercial farmers instead of against farm invaders and squatters of yesteryear. It is the white farmer who gets represented as in breach of the law not war veterans. The change in *The Herald*'s reportorial stance on the land issue does not only extend the debate on the interface between structural constraints and journalistic agency but also complicates it with the role of the discursive unconscious in shaping the news agenda. *The Herald*'s main weakness in its reporting of the farm occupations story stemmed from the same original sin where it is not journalistically possible to represent the "silent majority's" views on the land issue. The press was and has largely remained an institution of power. From when it started during colonial times its practices and its language de-authorised African epistemes. Through such practices the African was constructed as un-representable by journalistic means. Africans were not entitled to hold views of their own. They only existed as types not as individuals. Thus when Cecil John

Rhodes wanted to dig for gold in the land across the Limpopo it was sufficient for him to secure an agreement with one man, the chief among Africans whose views were taken as representative of those of the people. It was sufficient for the world to know what the European had to say or write about what was happening in the making of the then Rhodesia. It was standard practice to imagine the white man as writer and the black man as the written, the white man as the knower and the African the known, the white man's language as the language of news. To borrow Chakrabarty's turn of phrase it could be argued that at *The Herald* the coloniality of news coverage of events on white-owned commercial farms produced their work in relative ignorance of black farm workers and landless blacks' ways of knowing and this did not seem to affect the quality of the news. "This is a gesture, however that we cannot return. We cannot even afford an equality or symmetry of ignorance" (Mignolo 2000: 204). This fact partly explains how and why even while supporting the black government's policy on land as *The Herald* did it could not afford to do the news in total ignorance of what was happening to the white farmer. It was ignorance no newspaper could afford. This fact alone accounts for the comparatively large volume of the stories on farm occupations and eviction of white farmers in the press. A whole new lexicon emerged around ways of naming what was going on the farms depending on the discursive orientation of the newspaper. Farmers were no longer just farmers. They were either white commercial farmers or simply commercial farmers if they were white, new farmers or newly resettled farmers, if they were black. The processes itself of transferring land from former white farm owners was land acquisition, FTLRP or farm occupations in *The Herald's* reporting. In *The Daily News* the new owners were land invaders or land grabbers and the process itself was referred to as farm invasions, land seizures etc.



Figure 14. *The Herald* consistently refers to the new African owners of the commercial farms as “the new farmers”, “newly resettled farmers” or “new settlers”. Source: *The Herald Archives*

majority. After independence a new breed of chiefs had installed itself as the spokespersons of the silent majority and the media does not in any way act differently towards them under the independence rule. The headline story; “New farmers upbeat” (*The Herald*, August 26, 2002: 1) is representative of the same news logic which operated to produce the white settler colonial government propaganda based on official perspectives of Africans’ acceptance of the government’s policies. In the present case the land reform programme is officially constructed as enjoying popular support from all landless blacks who stood to benefit most from the government’s resettlement programme. Government officials’ views and comments are fore-grounded:

Headline: New farmers upbeat

Kicker:	Most A2 beneficiaries start tilling land, buying inputs
By-line:	Herald Reporters
Lead:	Hundreds of newly resettled commercial farmers have started tilling their land and buying inputs in preparation for this year's farming season.
Body:	Most Model A2 farmers who got land in commercial farming areas are busy tilling their land just before the onset of the rains in October. Ministry of lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement officials in various provinces throughout the country confirmed that thousands of model A2 beneficiaries had accepted Government's offer for land and were now preparing for the coming season. "We are working hard to prepare the land", said Mr Alois Chidzimi. A tractor driver at a farm in Mazowe. "I used to doubt that we blacks can do it. It's amazing that a number of black commercial farmers are keen to farm on a large scale."

If decolonisation was about fighting the system and not just against personalities and the colour of their skin, then the land resettlement model represented in the story above where former commercial land holders are replaced by black commercial land holders represents no huge departure from the colonial model. Such a system would continue to leave majority blacks excluded from playing a meaningful part in the mainstream economic production of the country. Its viability as a model of organising agricultural production would continue to rest on the guaranteed existence of a reservoir of cheap black labour – former tribal trust lands now communal areas. The success of black commercial farmers "keen to farm on a large scale" would pivot on a steady supply of cheap black labour just like their white predecessors. In this news report, a commercial farm worker, Mr. Alois Chimidzi who is a tractor driver, is represented as embracing and accepting his new black employers. He used "to doubt that we blacks can do it". The use of 'we' here rhetorically indicates the speaker's acceptance and endorsement of the land reform programme of which he feels a part by racial affinity to the new owners of the farms for whom he now works. Nothing is said in the story about any material change that the programme would bring to Chimidzi and other farm workers' conditions of work.

6.5 Discussion

6.5.1 Re-imagining News Values as if This Colony Will Never Be a Country Again

"Zimbabwe will never be a colony again", is a slogan President Mugabe is wont to use at his party's political meetings but the irony of it is difficult to miss when one considers how colonial difference has continued to be entrenched in the structure of land ownership and its

coverage in the local press even beyond the famed FTLRP. President Mugabe's critics have often derisively restated an inverted form of this slogan, "This colony will never be a country again" and the poignancy of this counter assertion and the implied false decolonisation is one which critical scholarship on failed decolonisation or colonial re-subordination thesis are seriously beginning to explore (Pilger 2006, Saul 2008). It is ironic in the sense of false sense of self assurance that it seems to convey about triumphal defeat of every vestige of colonial domination in Zimbabwe in a context where evidence abounds of a continuation with the same system of blaxploitation all around. Such nationalist discourses often work into the hands of the very imperial domination that it purports to counter in so far as it is disarming of the decolonial impulses that brought about flag independence. To garner political support from the masses, nationalist leaders often represent their political achievements in dismantling colonial rule as total and their victory against empire as nothing less than complete. The fact of the compromises and concessions made to the 'enemy' in negotiating a settlement to the protracted war for independence is often not publicly acknowledged. Thus to state that Zimbabwe will never be a colony again is to assume that colonialism had ended and that its vestiges were completely put an end to, but the land reform programme starting 2000 was proof of colonial continuities in the postcolonial era.

The farm invasions story unmasked the fact that in Zimbabwe, in spite of all the political rhetoric to the contrary, the colonial structures and the subjectivities they engendered had remained largely unchanged. The binary categories created during the period of settler colonialism of master and servant relationships between whites and blacks, citizens and subjects, settlers and natives. These subject positions were implied in various discursive and non-discursive materialisations in the social and economic formations in Zimbabwe. The nationalist government's approach at social transformation was piecemeal and at most superficial. The economic and political fundamentals of a colonial state had largely remained intact. This fact explains why representations of blacks as farm invaders and whites as farm owners were possible in both newspapers' FTLRP stories. It would not have been thinkable to talk about blacks as farm invaders if land ownership had not remained racialised. This failed transition by the postcolonial state to change the economic and social materialisations responsible for locking blacks and whites into different but mutually reinforcing subjectivities partly explains journalism's uncritical reproduction of colonial binaries in reporting the FTLRP story, because as Mamdani (2012: 4) maintains:

Settlers and natives go together: there can be no settler without a native, and vice versa. Either the two are reproduced together, or the two are abolished together. What produces them as political identities is a form of the state that distinguishes settlers from natives in law. To reform this state was the political challenge after independence.

Although Zimbabwe adopted a new constitution which abolished racial discrimination at independence, the unequal socio-economic structure remained intact. The Zimbabwe's independence government invested much of its effort in the early part of the country's independence history to changing all the signifiers of black inferiority and white supremacy but doing virtually nothing to change the signifieds. Examples include those listed in the table below:

Table 5. Colonial terminology and their postcolonial equivalents

Colonial term	Postcolonial equivalent
Native Reserves/Tribal Trust Lands	Communal areas
Boys kaya	Workers' quarters
House boy/girl, Garden boy/girl	Domestic worker
African locations	Western suburbs/high density suburbs

The change of linguistic terms without material change in the circumstances of former colonial subjects created disparities between the postcolonial reality and its conceptual and discursive representation in the news.

6.5.2 Sketching out the Langue of Postcolonial News Parole

In Saussurian terms, the many news texts presented and discussed above as instances of language use are of little significance except only if they help one to uncover the underlying system of rules and conventions that make such language usage intelligible and socially meaningful. Of interest therefore should not just be the 'what' of news stories produced but the 'how'. Of greater value for the present study therefore are questions of the nature of news grammar or what Saussure refers to as the langue on which journalists draw in constructing the particular types of news stories on the FTLRP. Once the internal structure of such a news grammar can be fully described it becomes more meaningful to make the underlying langue the object of any transformation if we aim for a different kind of news content in a postcolonial setting.

The choice of language and location in geographical space from which to publish the news has fundamental implications on the question of access to the news both as reader and as news source. *The Herald* has always published from the capital, Harare, from when it was established 1892. *The Daily News* too and indeed all main national newspapers have opted to operate from Harare and to write in English. The paradox of the Zimbabwean press's continued attachment to English is the more difficult to account for given the widely held assumption about history and of news as the first draft of history. Mueke, (cited in Martin 2003: 200) defines history as writing "which celebrates the achievements of the powerful, using the language of the powerful". In light of this assumption it is difficult to account for *The Herald*'s continued preference for the use of English if as a paper it is committed to celebrating the achievements of the ruling black government on the issue of land reform. But the discursive implications of journalism's fascination with English as the language of communication might be far much more complex than that. At a subjective level it means the indigenous people of Zimbabwe cannot speak through Zimbabwe's press except through translation. The continued use of English, however justified, in a way reinforces and tends to reproduce the same colonial practices whose ultimate consequence is the further entrenchment of a subjugated subjectivity in the indigenous language community. Thus the content of what is reported in the news and how it is reported can be viewed as indices of certain subjectivities, collective and individual which are themselves the products of prior discursive and non-discursive practices and social materialisations in which the speaking subjects are enmeshed (Jager, Maier 2009). Because discourses have power over the consciousness of collectivities, it becomes materially important to analyse who has access and how that access to instruments of voice articulation gets distributed and exercised in society. Journalism, as a form of institutionalised knowledge production practice, purports to distribute access to voice equitably among members of society without discrimination based on race class or gender. Journalistic discourse therefore becomes a particularly important candidate for this form of analysis in that it often conceals its constructedness under the guise of a commitment to fairness, balance and factuality. When journalists are asked about the newspapers' seeming preference for the capital city and English, they tend to rationalise such choices in a way that would almost suggest that these were some of the natural givens of newspaper organisations as business entities, that newspaper organisations can only survive if they were operated on the same business logic as bakeries or shoe manufacturing factories. The Editors of the two papers concurred on this view when asked to explain their papers' choices of English as the language of their news and Harare as their operational base:

Newspapers are in business. Because we are in business we look at stories which sell. Prominent people sell. This is commercial, purely commercial, We have deliberately chosen to operate from Harare because everything happens in Harare. For example, in terms of sales three quarters of our newspaper sales is in Harare. 90 percent of our adverts come from Harare. We have small offices in Bulawayo, Masvingo and Mutare. If you look at Gweru in terms of adverts, not a single advert comes from Gweru, one or two here and there. There is no business. Decision makers are in Harare for companies based in Gweru. If you look at Zim Alloys in Gweru the owners are in Harare I know them. If you go to Gweru to Zim Alloys and say hey let's do business, they tell you to go to Harare. Take *The Chronicle* based in Bulawayo, for example, it is a financial disaster, and has not closed down because it is being subsidised. In terms of language, again it's a question of economics, because we do market research. *Kwayedza* has not made a cent. Unless if you are working with a donor or so. ... (Interview with *The Daily News Editor* in Harare, 27 January 2014).

(Interview with *The Herald Editor* in Harare, January 20, 2014): I agree the issue of language is the legacy of colonialism. Because there is nothing that should stop us from publishing *The Herald* in Shona and Ndebele. The Indians do it, the Chinese do it. Even our neighbours the Tswanas do it. That's the ideal and we should be able to do it. There we have no excuse. We should be able to speak to our people in their language. Yes we have three official languages but English is put in front as the language of business. There is need for rethink on the way we do business, the White Zimbabwean should be able to speak Shona the same way I am able to speak English. That's the ideal situation.

The Daily News Editor's comments above underline the importance of the social strata any paper perceives to be its dominant readership in shaping editorial decisions and choices of the language to use to communicate. Newspapers are produced with those who are able to buy in mind. It is important to note that both editors concede that as professional journalists they do not just write the news as they like but operate under structural constraints imposed on them by funders and the colonial legacy (MacQuail 2013, Manning 2001, and Richardson 2007). This has implications for the repertoire of interpretive frames that the news stories will make available on the object reported on.

6.5.3 Postcoloniality of the News Episteme

News values define for the journalist both what is knowable (ontology) and how knowledge of the news may best be obtained. News values over the years (Lipman 1922, Galtung and Ruge 1965) have been understood to specify those properties that inhere in material reality in various degrees and quantities and render some happenings more newsworthy than others. Ontologically they had an objective existence in some events and certain social actors and personalities but not others. Events were thus perceived to behave more like clouds that float in the sky. Some are rain bearing and others are simply not. Just as geographers and meteorologists had learned to classify cloud formations as rain bearing nimbostratus and cumulonimbus and non-rain bearing cirrus clouds so also journalists have mastered the art

and science of distinguishing between newsworthy and un-newsworthy events. The news values bearing events were to be determinable scientifically by journalistic ways of knowing. From this perspective it was arguably due to no fault of the journalist that some events and some personalities attracted news coverage to themselves while others did not. A logical outcome of the application of this reasoning was evident not only in the comments made by journalists interviewed for this study where the universality of news values was acknowledged as the factor which ultimately determined what gets reported as news. What journalists are least likely to acknowledge is how their own journalistic treatment often discursively invest originally un-newsworthy occurrences with the newsworthiness that renders such happenings newsworthy when they would otherwise not have been newsworthy. The idea of news values had been founded on a philosophical assumption that saw news events as existing out there. This is a view which latter scholarship on news values (Hall 1978; Versterman 1995) critiqued arguing to the contrary that: “news is not out there, journalists do not report news, they produce news. They construct it. They reconstruct ‘a’ reality” (Harcup and O’Neil 2010: 265).

A good example to illustrate this point is the story about white farmers in Mutorashanga gathered at the local country club to have their last photograph together taken before they evacuate the area in compliance with a government order of eviction. This ritualisation and memorialisation of a few white farmers’ departure from their farms only adds pathos to the ongoing farm evictions. The use of the picture semiotically brings currency and some drama to an otherwise uneventful event. Thus to extend the cloud metaphor, just as meteorologists sometimes practise cloud seeding to induce some clouds to become rain bearing and to cause rain to fall in some places, so also journalists through the way they write about an occurrence can in that process cause an un-newsworthy event to become newsworthy in the eyes of their readers. This fact is borne out by the fact that it would be unthinkable, near impossible to have a single day when journalists fail to publish papers for lack of newsworthy events. Indeed that would be the most newsworthy story ever to be written by journalists.

6.5.6 Interlocking Hierarchies of Newsworthiness

In postcolonial Zimbabwe newsworthiness often defines itself along intersecting hierarchies of race gender and geography. Along the racial plane whiteness and maleness confers inert newsworthiness properties while blackness and femaleness are markers of absence or lack of newsworthiness and credibility as news source. For blackness to attract news attention it

would need to be accompanied by other qualifications like presence of rarity, unusualness, nearness to other news magnets or a high negativity.

On the geographical plane, newsworthiness plots itself in a descending order of concentration from all areas formerly designated European areas, that is, commercial farms, cities and towns, to African areas, of which former TTLs represent the furthest removed from newsworthiness. The eviction story analysed in this section tends to lend credence to this general pattern, so that where news theory proposes the a-racial news values of prominence, eliteness or proximity, it would be more enlightening to think of them in terms of whiteness or proximity to white people or to white geographical sites. Even the geographical location of main national newspapers in Zimbabwe confirms this assertion. The country's three main national daily newspapers; *The Herald*, *The Daily News* and the *NewsDay*, have their newsrooms strategically located in Harare, within 'earshot' distances from those geographical zones and personalities of high concentration as far as news values were concerned. In postcolonial Zimbabwe, Harare is the seat of government and bastion of white capital and therefore enjoys the highest concentration of news values as a site, with the highest potential for newsworthy happenings. The diagram below illustrates how the strategic location of three of Zimbabwe's largest national newspaper organisations in Harare places them within reach of sites and individuals deemed, according to this logic, to be newsmakers and elite centres of power.

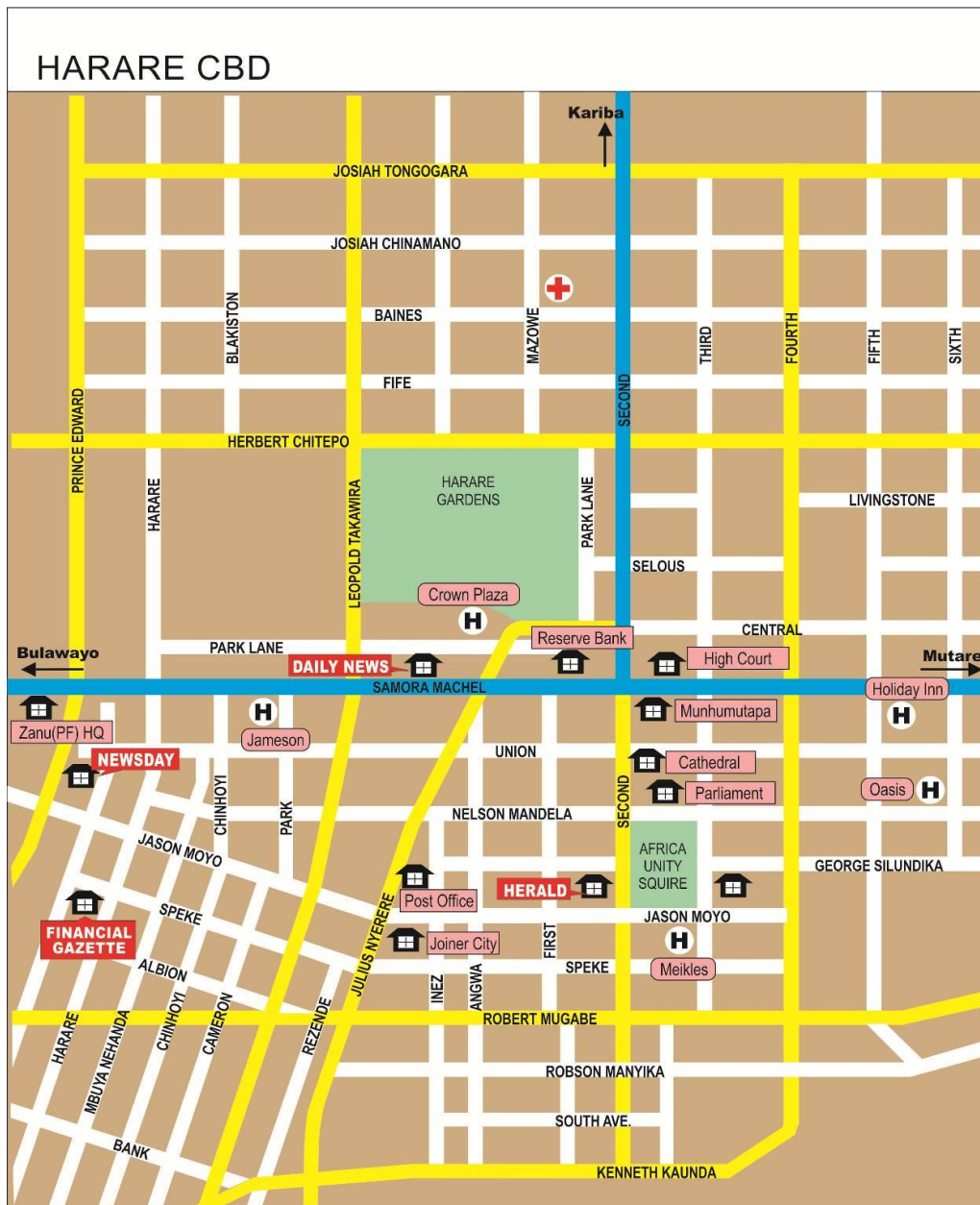


Figure 15. Harare Central Business District. Source Google Maps

The Herald House which houses the newsroom for *The Herald* was the most strategically located in a 6-storey building on corner George Silundika Avenue and Nelson Mandela Street overlooking centres of political, cultural and economic power such as the Parliament of Zimbabwe, the Anglican Church Cathedral, Old Mutual Centre, and Meikles Hotel respectively just across the Africa Unity Square formerly Cecil Square. Zimbabwe's High Court and Supreme Court lie just a few blocks down Nelson Mandela Drive. The other two privately owned national newspapers are equally strategically located close to their key sources of news, the HQs of Zimbabwe's main political parties ZANU-PF and MDC, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, Harare Central Police Station, Harare Magistrate's Court etc.

The city thus becomes the centre from which all geographical areas of the country may be journalistically imagined as proximate or remote depending on how they can be easily accessed from the city centre. Thus when journalists from *The Herald* or from *The Daily News* think of proximity as a news value they think in terms of nearness to the capital city. All commercial farms can be easily reached by road or rail and are therefore imagined as proximate. But, most communal areas, on the other hand, fall outside the main road and railway networks and are often imagined as remote and therefore less newsworthy. Thus newsworthiness becomes a racial and gender issue by the mere fact that the 'remote' communal areas are exclusively occupied by black people, mostly women and children.

The presentation and analysis of news content on the eviction of white farmers and journalistic practices responsible for its production may appear to be consistent with such a materialist realist view of news values as described above. However such an application of news values analysis tends to conceal the discursive nature of news production by attributing to nature a category that is both historical and ideological. A more nuanced approach to understanding the working of news values in the production of news as knowledge, which the present research supports is the constructivist approach (Cotter 2010, Bednarek and Caple 2015, and Meissner 2015) which attributes an active role to the journalist in the processes by which some happenings end up having the properties which we call news values. This view argues that events in themselves are not born imbued with newsworthiness, but have this quality largely thrust upon them in the process of their newsification by professional journalists. From the news diary meeting where editors point out to junior reporters what stories were worth chasing, which news sources to contact and whose opinions and voices are critical for a given news gathering assignment through the actual writing of the story, the semantic and lexical choices, the journalists actively anticipate what their readership would deem as newsworthy and thus produce their news to meet those expectations. Bednarek and Caple's (2015) argument that newsworthiness of an event or personality is more in the writing than in the nature of such an occurrence or actor provides a much more valid basis for explaining how both *The Daily News* and *The Herald* found the eviction of individual white farmers more newsworthy than the resultant displacement of thousands of farm workers. More stories were written on the effects on white farmers and their views and responses to farm evictions than were written on the plight of farm workers. Even much less newsworthy was how eviction of white farmers affected or did not affect the prospects and opportunities

for landless villagers in rural areas. This obviously exposes the limitations in the explanatory power of the thesis that news values are intrinsic to news events as, according to Harcup and O'Neill (2001) cited in Bednarek and Capel (2015: 3), it fails to account for the selection of some – the eviction of white farmers – stories as newsworthy ahead of “other potential stories containing similar elements’ or potential news stories *which* remained unnoticed or rejected”. The discourse analysis applied to the news stories analysed in this study thus finds consonance with Bednarek and Caple’s (2015: 6) conception of news values as “the ‘newsworthy’ aspects of actors, happenings and issues as constructed through discourse”.

6.6 Conclusion

The story that neither *The Herald* nor *The Daily News* found to be worthy reporting was that of how throughout the FTLRP the government, in spite of its rhetoric about championing black empowerment and economic emancipation, missed the opportunity to dismantle the colonial barricades that kept the majority black population in their place – the former native, fit servants of their white masters whether in the rural areas or in the employ of white farmers always existing at the leisure and pleasure of the whites. Their powerlessness was in their lack of organisational capacity to represent and articulate their own interests in available democratic spaces. The selected newspaper articles analysed above clearly demonstrated the symbolic annihilation and erasure of the subaltern farm workers’ voices in the newsification of the farm eviction story. What this analysis establishes is the fact that in postcolonial contexts the legacy of colonial conceptions of whiteness as conferring natural newsworthiness to events continues to sway news selection and reporting processes in favour of events in which white farmers are the news actors and in publicising their views as credible news sources. *The Daily News*’ reportage largely tended to over-report those instances where the white farmers were the victims of an irrational and chaotic government policy based on negativity and eliteness (read whiteness) as key news values and under-report effects of the same events on farm workers and on landless villagers. *The Herald* on the other hand was on the defensive but still over-representing white farmers as the violators rather than the violated but in doing so it too under-reported or altogether overlooked the story of the implications of the farm evictions on farm workers and landless villagers. *The Herald*’s reporting was thus locked in a reaction mode probably to counterbalance *The Daily News*’ story. In the next chapter *The Herald*’s reactive role in news production is further

examined in the context of its reporting on another government initiated programme involving the demolition and forced removal of urban slum dwellers.

Chapter 7. Operation Restore (Colonial) Order

7.1 Introduction

The last three chapters dealt with how the Fast Track Land Reform Programme was carried out in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s as if colonialism never happened in the country's history. I analysed newspaper narratives of the evictions of especially poor black farm workers and the echoing silences on the plight of the majority rural population who were the victims of colonial dispossession in the whole process of the FTLRP. Their voice was conspicuous by its absence. It was simply left out. A connection was not made between the establishment of native reserves as one of colonialism's main devices in the devaluation of the indigenous black population's ways of life and consciousness (Arrighi 1966). Rural poverty was deliberately socially engineered as an instrument to smoke Africans out of their comfort zones and into accepting the status of migrant labourers in the burgeoning mainstream (read European) economy. A reasonable fraction of that total migrant labour force had found refuge on white-owned commercial farms where for years they had lived off meagre wages earned through selling their labour to their white masters. Some former farm workers now evictees as a result of the FTLRP managed to find their way back to their rural 'homes' to re-establish their livelihoods as peasant farmers. Some analysts put the estimate at "about 200 000 farm workers who were displaced" due to the unplanned nature of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (Mazingi and Kamidza 2010: 377). Part of this population of former farm workers, particularly those of foreign origin were left with no option but to join the ranks of the urban unemployed and hordes of informal traders who now poisoned the urban environs. A majority of them simply did not have the wherewithal to acquire proper urban housing or to access proper rented accommodation. This increased demand for urban housing coupled with a deepening economic decline led to a marked rise in the phenomenon of urban slums and informalisation of the economy. To arrest the threat to urban stability government launched a massive campaign to deal with this phenomenon on May 19, 2005. The vision of towns and cities as nodes of power and exclusive spaces of elite domination had to be re-inscribed by force (Potts 2012). 'Operation Murambatsvina' had long structured and symbolically demolished subaltern ways of knowing from the newspapers pages of *The Herald* as evidence analysed and discussed in the preceding chapters seem to illustrate. In the present chapter I extend the same analysis to the way the newspaper and its foremost

competitor, *The Standard*, covered the events of ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ in the period May to July 2005.

7.2 Historical Antecedents of Operation Murambatsvina

The idea of maintaining a dual society with people belonging in the two sections of the country kept separate and following separate paths of development was not an original one to the nationalist of ZANU-PF of the early 2000s. In fact, it had been the hall-mark of the Rhodesian society as early as the 1930s. During that time it had been envisaged that such a policy based on racial difference between whites and blacks was to be enforced by force. The Prime Minister of Rhodesia, then Sir. Godfrey Huggins’ government had sought to put in place policies that would ensure that as far as possible Africans would be kept away from European areas. Protection of white economic interests from competition by a burgeoning black population in European areas particularly in urban areas was given as the main reason for pursuing this policy of separate development, which in reality was shorthand for racial apartheid. Thus the unchecked growth of a “detrified urban black population” was generally viewed as a threat to white interests and prosperity. Huggins as Prime Minister in 1938 is cited in Rifkind as having summed up the rationale for a policy of separate development in Rhodesia in the following words:

The European in this country can be likened to an island of white in a sea of black, with the artisan and the tradesman forming the shores and the professional classes the highlands in the centre. Is the native to be allowed to erode away the shores and gradually attack the highlands? To permit this would mean that the leaven of civilisation would be removed from the country, and the black man would inevitably revert to a barbarism worse than ever before (Rifkind 1968: 58).

Moffat before him and many white colonial administrators of that time were generally agreed on this policy of territorial segregation between the races in colonial Rhodesia. An influx of Africans in towns and cities was a general cause of apprehension and had to be kept in check through measures both legislative and otherwise to control, regulate and limit the flow of Africans into urban areas.

Given this historical background it was thus paradoxical that a government led by celebrated liberation fighters of Mugabe’s standing could have possibly conceived and implemented a policy so reminiscent of that dark colonial past against which they had galvanised the popular support of oppressed masses for the liberation cause. It has remained enigmatic to date for analysts to find so much resonance between what the type of city the Zimbabwean

government sought to achieve by implementing Operation Murambatsvina and the city in the colonial governments' imaginary. The UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe's report points out this contradictoriness and irony in the nationalist government retaining most of the colonial legal framework which had been used against them in the past:

The institutional framework of governance in post-colonial Zimbabwe retained structures, laws and an 'elite' attitude and culture used during colonial times despite the liberation from minority rule in 1980. The nationalist elite seemed to have perpetuated the colonial mentality of high standards for a few at the expense of the majority. In the end, while the liberation struggle was against the 'white settlers' and the economic and political power they monopolized, the Government was not able to reverse the unequal and exploitative nature of colonial capitalism itself (Tibaijuka 2005: 16).

Many reports based on independent investigations carried out on Murambatsvina concur that the ruthlessness with which the programme to rid towns of people whose presence in towns and cities had been declared illegal under Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order would make any racist colonialist of the past century turn green with envy, (International Crisis Group 2005; Solidarity Peace Trust 2005, 2010). Driving people, mainly poor African urban residents out of town as an idea was premised on taken for granted colonial assumptions that the African's home is in the rural areas, and that his stay in town is therefore temporary. As a migrant labourer, he was supposed to be always mindful of the fact that one day he would return to his rural 'home'. The rural area was the source of his identity as an African. Only white people could call town home. On attainment of independence the former colonised and marginalised black majority had been led to believe that the new government would pursue social policies meant to undo the marginalisation and dehumanisation they had suffered under segregation. So, most of those affected had a rude awakening when they found themselves declared illegal residents and their shelter which they had built at times with the tacit encouragement by the same politicians, demolished as illegal settlements or structures. They were disillusioned to find that:

in 2005 the urban identity issues in such moves were turned on their heads and against the urban populace when the government found it convenient to assert that rural-urban linkages were universal for 'proper' Zimbabweans and thus those displaced by Operation Murambatsvina could all return 'home' to rural areas, if they had to. Again there were continuities with the colonial past and the various policies which had forced urban Africans to maintain their rural link in order to neutralise both their political and economic claims on white space and the cities (Potts 2012: 33).

Operation Murambatsvina was one clear instance of the colonial past surviving in the postcolonial present. Instead of rethinking the city as a more inclusive space the political class that took over government demonstrated a lack of imagination beyond the straight colonial jacket they had inherited and actively sought to repair and maintain. They were just content with replacing the white masters as the managers of the old oppressive order which they were now as committed to defend just as vigorously as they had fought and criticised its outcomes in the struggle for liberation. If at the level of geographical spaces Operation Murambatsvina represents an attempt to re-inscribe a colonial reordering of the population but this time along class and ethnic lines, it is my thesis that a similar colonial legacy may have continued to structure the way the press as institutions of power represented events around Operation Murambatsvina.

Due to the event-based reporting nature of much journalism practice in Zimbabwe, very few of the stories on Operation Murambatsvina ever attempted to draw a link between the on-going government blitz to drive poor black people out of towns and cities to similar practices of the racist white regimes against black people under colonial rule. Only Ray Matikinye's story published in the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper attempted to relate what was happening to similar events in Zimbabwe's colonial past in a story titled: "Chief Tangwena turning in his grave". In his analysis the reporter drew parallels between the current forced evictions of urban slum dwellers to those of the Tangwena people in the late 1960s when he states that:

Trudging along the main highway in search of alternative homes, they portrayed scenes reminiscent of villagers evicted by the colonial regime from Gayeresi Ranch under the Land Tenure Act of 1965. But this time there was no famed traditional chief like Rekayi Tangwena to lead them in resisting state sponsored removals (*Zimbabwe Independent* May 2005).

What made Operation Murambatsvina uniquely different and extreme in its violence is the fact that those displaced by this state sponsored displacement were not relocated by the same government. There was no planned programme or specified and designated geographical spaces the government offered as an alternative. After the demolition of their homes displaced people were just expected to go away, to vanish or risk being incarcerated. Comparatively, the colonial regime's forced evictions of communities such as the Huchu people from the Central Estates area and the Tangwena discussed earlier in this study were far much more benign in that the evicted were always displaced in a way that preserved their community ties undisrupted and they were always relocated to a specified geographical space

albeit of a more inhospitable kind the type that Chabal (2009: 153) describes as: “the forcible displacement of people to regions of a country that are unsuited to agriculture, where they sink into poverty, despair and hunger”. But this would happen as a slow and long drawn-out process. Under Operation Murambatsvina, on the other hand, the negative effects were immediate, drastic and unmitigated. Operation Murambatsvina was not a resettlement programme, as was made clear on a number of occasions in official statements by police officers in charge of conducting the operation. Police Officer Commanding Harare Province Senior Assistant Commissioner Edmore Veterai was quoted as saying: “The purpose of the clean-up was not to resettle people but to wipe out vice on the streets” (*The Herald*, May 25, 2005: 1). So generally those affected by the operation had to be classified under the general category of law breakers and common criminals justifying their treatment as such by the law enforcement agents.

7.3 Criminalisation and Thingification of the Urban Poor

The Herald's coverage of the of Operation Restore Order alternatively code named Operation Murambatsvina from its inception was clearly oriented to justifying and manufacturing consent for the police eviction of poor people from towns and cities as war on crime. Some of the paper's early headlines on the subject clearly demonstrate the paper's ideological orientation as one of setting the broad parameters and interpretive frameworks through which its readers were expected to make sense of the on-going campaign in terms of regular policing. For example, the following headlines:

“Blitz targets tuck shops, shacks” with bullets that announced police victory over urban crime. “Owners given 3-month ultimatum; More criminals, dealers arrested” (*The Herald*, May 24, 2005)

“Police demolish tuck shops, flea market stalls in Harare” (*The Herald*, May 25, 2005).

“Rise in criminal activities necessitated the clampdown” (*The Herald*, May 27, 2005)

“Criminal activities decline in Harare” (*The Herald* May 27, 2005)

The Herald's front page story of 24 May 2005 was key in setting the tone for the papers reportage on subsequent events associated with the government-sponsored operation to clean-up the cityscapes codenamed Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order and therefore deserves fuller attention and a closer analysis and is set out below:

(*The Herald*, May 24, 2005:1, 2)

Headline:	Blitz targets tuck shops, shacks
Kicker:	Owners given 3-month ultimatum; More criminals, dealers arrested
Caption:	Property owners in Harare have been given three months' notice to destroy illegal structures such as shacks and tuck shops. Here are some of the structures in Mbare which are to be demolished. (Aerial picture of Mbare before the demolitions)
By-line:	Herald Reporters
Lead:	The clean-up campaign in Harare has moved into residential areas where property owners with shacks and illegal extensions as well as tuck shop operators have been given a three-month ultimatum to demolish or legalise structures on their properties.
Body:	The move came as police arrested 72 more people in Harare, 654 in Mashonaland West, 518 in Masvingo and 10 in Mashonaland East provinces under the operation to rid urban centres of crime and other illegal activities. In Harare, they confiscated 1200 litres of diesel, 1070 litres of petrol and various quantities of several basic commodities worth billions of dollars, as they intensified their clampdown on criminals, illegal dealers, touts, flea market operators and general lawlessness in the capital city on Sunday. The 72 arrested in Harare brought the number of those rounded up in the capital to 9725 under a swoop code-named "Operation Restore Order" which was recently launched to clean up the city. Several street people were also rounded up and some of them were yesterday taken to a farm on the outskirts of Mabvuku.

The headline accurately describes the police operation as "a blitz" to capture the scope and scale of its devastation and the seriousness of its effects on those targeted. It is indeed a blitzkrieg. The target of the police offensive is tuck shops and shacks we are told in the headline. So people, their owners, are not necessarily the direct target of the police operation. They are only indirectly affected. They suffer collateral damage. To minimise and understate the social consequences of the blitzkrieg and its discriminatory dimensions against the urban poor, these social dimensions are only introduced by way of a kicker with two bullet points; "Owners given 3-month ultimatum; More criminals, dealers arrested". The concept "criminals" is introduced as a damage control mechanism to manufacture acceptance of the police operation as ultimately beneficial to society since those who suffer under it are 'criminals' after all. The list of offenders and their offences which included among other things: touting, engaging in informal trading/dealing, operating flea markets, panning for gold, vending and just being unemployed and loitering on the streets, clearly show that poverty was the common factor in all the crimes. Such an inordinately large number of those

arrested in Harare alone (9725) is stated mater-of-factly by the reporters who do not find it warranting their wonderment. That fact did not raise any suspicion among the journalists covering the story to seek out the comment of those accused.

But this story is probably one example that fits a lazy journalist's story which could have been written without the reporter ever leaving the newsroom. All the reporter needed to do was telephone various police provincial headquarters and ask for statistical reports of those they rounded up and the nature of charges preferred against them and present this as the news. Such an assumption is strongly supported by the way the story is sourced. The officialdom in this story is striking though not exceptional. The table below shows the story's sources who spoke in their official capacities:

Table 6. Officialdom and news sourcing at *The Herald*

Source	Position and institution represented
Oliver Mandipaka, Superintendent	Police spokesperson
Nomutsa Chideya, Town Clerk	Harare Town clerk
Paul Nyathi, Police Assistant Inspector	Mashonaland West Provincial police spokesperson
Darlington Mathuthu Police Inspector	Mashonaland East Provincial police spokesperson
Patson Nyabadza Police Inspector	Masvingo police spokesperson

The blitzkrieg on urban slum dwellers was only matched with its equivalent in the avalanche of news disinformation that *The Herald* championed. With *The Herald* as the only national daily paper in circulation after the closure of *The Daily News* in 2003, a campaign of disinformation and misinformation was mounted on the brutal violations of poor people's rights under Operation Murambatsvina. As evidenced in the way the above story and many others after it were sourced the demolitions of poor people's shelter as illegal was itself symbolic of the even more ruthless and brutal annihilation and silencing of the same poor people's views and opinions in *The Herald's* stories about their circumstances. Through news sourcing practices *The Herald* symbolically demolished subaltern voices on Murambatsvina.

7.4 Nationalists and Colonial Nostalgia



Figure 16. 1. Salisbury, the exclusive colonial city



2. Harare: before OM



Figure 17. 3. Vendor's Market demolished



4. Evictees rendered homeless

In a headline story published on 28 May 2005 under the headline: “President backs clean-up”, The Herald as has become its standard practice draws out President Mugabe’s view on this controversial and highly sensitive issue and his comments as indicate in the cited story below are marshalled in a story whose aim is to communicate that the clean-up campaign enjoyed support and legitimacy at the highest level. The OM here masks what in essence represented a nostalgic yearning for a return to the colonial logic of urban planning and housing as a government effort to restore order and sanity in Zimbabwean cities and towns. The national bourgeois is afflicted with a sudden realisation that their interests as a class were all along co-terminus with those of the white settler colonialist master class whom they had now replaced in power, and that they would be better served by the same discriminatory

institutional framework on the basis of whose criticism they had mobilised grassroots support to dislodge colonial rule.

They were now committed to reviving it and where it had been dismantled, to see to it that it was repaired and restored. It has arrived at that stage when the new ruling caste realises as Frantz Fanon (1963: 142) aptly points out, that decolonisation should never have meant anything “more than the takeover unchanged the legacy of the economy, the thought and the institutions left by the colonialists”. *The Herald's* newswork on this and other issues in which the dominated classes were caught up represents the most apt exemplification of the legacy of colonialism was fraudulently continued with beyond attainment of political independence.

For their part, as the inheriting class they would spare no effort in arresting the momentum towards national transformation they had promised during the struggle for liberation. It redefines its national vocation as one of simply ensuring that “the unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period” (Fanon 1963: 122) are securely transferred into their (native) hands. So now that they have replaced or rather joined the whites in the leafy suburbs of Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru or Mutare they become victims of the same siege mentality and fear that if left unchecked the mass rural/urban drift posed an unusual threat to their newly acquired comforts. The cleanliness and exclusiveness which settler governments had maintained by edict and coercion, the independence government now sought to restore by coercive means. In *The Herald* story of May 28, 2005 below, President Mugabe gives his nod to the coercive means being employed by government's uniformed forces to drive mostly poor people from urban areas without providing them with alternative shelter in the midst of the cold season. Below are excerpts from the story.

(*The Herald* May 28, 2005):

- Headline:** President backs clean-up
- By-line:** Herald Reporters
- Lead:** President Mugabe yesterday threw his weight behind the ongoing clean-up campaign as police razed to the ground Harare's biggest **illegal settlement** – Tongogara Park at White Cliff Farm along the Harare-Bulawayo road.
- Body:** Cde Mugabe who was addressing the 162 ZANU-PF Central Committee extraordinary session in Harare, said Government was fully behind the clean-up campaigns by the police aimed at restoring the status of the cities and towns. President Mugabe said the Government had to act in **cleaning up the mess** in towns and cities in order to restore their old fame of cleanliness and safety.

‘Our cities and towns had deteriorated to levels that were a real cause for concern. Apart from the failing reticulation systems and broken roads and streets, our cities and towns, including Harare, the capital, had become **havens for illicit and criminal practices** and activities which just could not be allowed to go on,’ he said.

‘Those who have wrongly suffered damage (of their properties) action will be taken to remedy what will have been damaged. From the **mess** should emerge new businesses, new traders, new practices and a whole new and salubrious urban environment.

That is our wish and vision. Our tourists and visitors first look at our capitals and towns. Capitals, cities and towns are what shape the impressions of a country,’ he said.

Police in Harare have embarked on a campaign to clean up the city by destroying such **illegal structures** as homes, tuck shops and flea markets. The **illegal settlement** near Snake Park was demolished amid minor resistance from disgruntled settlers. When *The Herald* visited White Cliff Farm yesterday morning, some unruly youths had gathered and attempted to resist the move but riot police reacted swiftly and calmed the situation.

This story served to clear any lingering doubts on whether the operation was just an act of police overzealousness or whether it was fully sanctioned by the state. The focus of the story’s emphasis is on the desirability of the move to clear the mess in towns and cities without explaining how the mess had come about in the first place. The President has thrown his weight behind the clean-up campaign, we are told. The newsworthiness lies in the timing of the President pronouncing himself on the matter. His remarks came at a time it would have been least expected, coming as it did at a time when Harare’s biggest ‘illegal’ settlement was being razed to the ground by the police. It could not have been more ironic that President Mugabe could give a nod to the demolition of a settlement as illegal, whose very name “Tongogara Park” invoked the revolutionary ethos, and would have suggested that it enjoyed the President’s and the ruling ZANU-PF party sympathy as a black empowerment project. Structurally this story foregrounds what the President said and not the police demolition of so called illegal settlements, the sheer numbers of those affected by such action or how owners of such demolished properties were affected as the source of the story’s newsworthiness. In the rest of the story the reporter sustains the play of irony and ambiguity through exposing and juxtaposing statements with contradicting evidence. Here is a president whose government’s inaction against ‘illegal’ farm occupations only a few years back now unleashes the full force of his state machinery to evict those urban dwellers whose action was in many ways similar to that of newly resettled farmers serve that they had chosen to settle themselves in towns.

The President's remark that "the Government had to act in cleaning up the mess in towns and cities in order to restore their old fame of cleanliness and safety" is equally liable to being interpreted as betraying nostalgia for the restoration of the lost lustre of cities and towns in colonial Rhodesia. Difficult questions could have been asked of the President to clarify which "old fame of cleanliness" he had in mind, which he wanted restored. Could it be that he meant restoring the cities to their pre-independence status of cleanliness? But with the journalist type at *The Herald*, when the President speaks then theirs is to write with no questions asked. It would also be difficult to imagine how restoration of cleanliness and order would be accomplished without resorting to the same control mechanisms and institutional arrangements by which that cleanliness had been maintained by the settler governments. Under the racial segregationist management of geographical space, urban centres were white spaces and Africans were confined to rural areas as the places where they belonged. Under such arrangements black's stay in town was only temporary and closely monitored and regulated. The logic of Operation Murambatsvina was different only in that instead of using racial difference as the basis for segregation it used class. The poor had no place in towns and cities. Only the professional class in formal employment had the right of citizenship in towns and cities.

The operation to rid cities of poor people "was based on the assumption that those pushed out of the urban areas could 'return' to homes in the rural areas" (Raftopoulos 2009: 221). The idea that the evicted town dwellers would return to their rural homes represents a return to the colonial order which had defined urban areas as exclusively white areas and TTLs as black spaces. The restoration sought under this programme was the restoration of the old order and the benefits it would guarantee for the new black ruling elite. By representing the urban poor who lived in backyard shacks, who owned and operated the tuck-shops as well as engaged in informal trade as the 'mess' that needed to be gotten rid of, the story rhetorically justifies the dehumanising treatment victims of Operation Murambatsvina suffered. Portrayal of people as other than human, as refuse or garbage rationalises their treatment as such. Even this clearly exclusory eviction of poor people from towns is spoken of as in the general interest of the nation as a whole through the repetitive use of the inclusive possessive 'our' in "That is **our** wish and vision. **Our** tourists and visitors first look at **our** capitals and towns" (emphasis mine). The implied reader is one who shares the same wish and vision as the President on the issues under discussion in the story. He/she supposedly shares the same concern with the President about taking the necessary steps to ensure that the country makes the right

impression on ‘our tourists’ even if such action may mean police razing to the ground some people’s shelter and forcibly driving a section of the urban population out of ‘our towns and cities’. Ironically in seeking to restore order in towns the political elite is conveniently silent about the type of order they seek to restore – a colonial capitalist order.

As a government mouthpiece, *The Herald*’s story is typical in privileging government official line on national issues such as Operation Murambatsvina, and the structuring of the above story is representative of *The Herald*’s style of presentation of news with a hierarchical pyramid of credibility of attribution beginning with comments made by the President as the most significant followed by those of his cabinet ministers most directly concerned in the issue being reported in a descending order to the most junior police officer, with comments by eye witnesses and ordinary victims coming right towards the tail-end of the story just to give confirmatory evidence as shown in the table below:

Table 7. The hierarchy and protocol of news sourcing at *The Herald*

Source	Ordering in story
President Mugabe	Extensively quoted at the beginning of the story
Minister of Local Government Ignatius Chombo	Indirectly reported handing over newly built Siyaso Industrial Complex for use by informal traders
Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Sithembiso Nyoni	Quoted directly reassuring the affected informal traders.
Harare Metropolitan Governor David Karimanzira	Indirectly mentioned as encouraging informal traders to access government loans for their businesses
Chairperson of Harare Commission, Sekesai Makwavarara	Mentioned as witnessing the occasion
Minister of Mines Amos Midzi	Mentioned as witnessing the occasion
Police spokesperson, Superintendent Oliver Mandipaka	Quoted directly warning as well as urging compliance with police orders
One of the affected residents at Tongogara Park	Quoted but largely described as complying with police order to participate in demolishing his own ‘illegal structure’.

The President’s tacit endorsement of the clean-up campaign seemed to have the effect of emboldening *The Herald* reporters in their near-celebratory coverage of police triumphal march to rid cities and towns of ‘criminal elements’. Two days later the paper publishes three different stories on the subject. One of the three stories published on front page is cited below for closer analysis:

(*The Herald*, May 30, 2005)

Headline: Police storm Mbare

Bullets: **Illegal structures** ripped down; Demolition continues today

By-line: Nelson Chenga

Lead: A dark cloud of doom and gloom hung over Harare's oldest suburb, Mbare, yesterday as police demolished some **illegal structures** in their clean-up swoop dubbed Operation Murambatsvina (No Tolerance to **Filth**).

Body: It was a hive of activity as shack dwellers – mainly in Mbare's Jo'burg Lines section – ripped down structures, jam-packed their bags and headed for various destinations. Police said the operation in Mbare would be intensified today.

Mbare – the country's most densely populated urban settlement – has been a notorious **criminal hideout** for decades. Police last week recovered 30 tonnes of sugar worth \$300 million, 8000 liters of diesel and 13500 litres of petrol at an **illegal warehouse**.

This comes at a time when the former **illegal settlements** of Tongogara Park in White Cliff Farm, Hatcliffe Extension, Nyadzonya, Chimoio and New Park near Mt Hampden in Good Hope now resemble the aftermath of a devastating earthquake.

Officer Commanding Harare Police Senior Assistant Commissioner Edmore Veterai yesterday vowed to clean up all the **illegal settlements** around Harare and its satellite towns of Chitungwiza, Ruwa, Epworth and Norton. He urged residents to pull down any **prohibited structures** on their properties, adding the clean-up campaign was at full throttle in Mbare and other suburbs. ...

Hundreds of distraught people still adjusting to the situation were busy going through the debris picking up their belongings and organising transport yesterday. Still in shock and grim-faced, others were milling around their former homes that were now just heaps of rubble.

"I have no idea where to go and I have been told that they (police) don't want to see me here again," said one settler at Tongogara Park, moving about a thriving garden of cabbages and carrots.

Yesterday, police patrolled all the settlements around Harare which were razed to the ground last week to ensure **the illegal former occupants** moved out as required. (emphasis mine)...

This story was also accompanied by a large landscape close-up photograph showing the evicted shack dwellers loading their household furniture and goods on to a lorry to an unknown destination according to the caption. They stand with their backs to their former illegal shelters in the background now reduced to heaps of rubble. The style of reporting in the above story is reminiscent of *The Rhodesia Herald's* reporting of the aftermath of the demolition of the Tangwena villages and the forcible eviction of the Tangwena people in 1969. The reportorial intention cannot be easily pinned down as one serving the propaganda

purposes in favour of government's position on the issue of Operation Murambatsvina. The headline and the lead paragraph emphasise the doom, gloom and devastation and destruction caused police action of storming and swooping on words that have strong associations of violence and aggression. Although the story draws on and unproblematically uses such as labels illegal former occupants to refer to those being evicted by police and such negative terms as illegal structures to refer to the buildings being demolished by police, the reporter is ambivalence on whether he believes this to be right becomes evident by his description of the victims as "distraught people still adjusting to the situation were busy going through the debris picking up their belongings and organising transport yesterday. Still in shock and grim-faced, others were milling around their former homes that were now just heaps of rubble" and the demolished 'illegal settlements' of "Tongogara Park in White Cliff Farm, Hatcliffe Extension, Nyadzonya, Chimoio and New Park near Mt Hampden in Good Hope now *resembling* the aftermath of a devastating earthquake". Such language may have been meant to elicit sympathy for the victims of police demolitions or alternatively to portray the police as invincible.

In this and other stories on the clean-up campaign *The Herald* introduced and consistently used negative labelling as a strategy to invite the reader to share in its and condemnation of urban poor people, their informal businesses and their shelter as illegal and therefore deserving of government's action of demolishing their dwellings and driving them out of the city. The picture one gets from reading *The Herald* story on Operation Murambatsvina is that those being evicted have invited the wrath of the police upon themselves and deserve whatever is happening to themselves because their presence in the city is illegal, their dwelling structures were built in defiance of law and are therefore illegal and their business, that of informal trading is also illegal. The suburbs they live in have become havens of crime. They are represented as the filth hence the need for the clean-up campaign. Such language delegitimises and criminalises the poverty of the poor and justifies our (police's) 'inhuman' actions carried out on them, such arbitrary arrest and rounding them up for police interrogation, or demolishing their houses. These ones do not even deserve the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. Suspicion is enough grounds for treating them as guilty of crimes until they can prove themselves otherwise. Those found to be out of formal employment are either guilty of engaging in illegal dealing, and trade, or if they are women, guilty of loitering for purposes of prostitution.

7.5 Maggotisation of the Poor

As a way of justifying their brutal treatment of the urban poor people, dominant elites often begin by discursively constructing the target victims as somehow deserving such treatment by use of language that demeans them and classifies them as other than human. *The Herald* story below is one such example of delegitimation of the poor's presence in cities and towns:

(*The Herald*, June 16, 2005)

Headline:	'Government not punishing people'
Byline:	Herald Reporter
Lead:	The Government is not punishing people under the ongoing Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order but is merely restoring sanity in the country, Police Commissioner Cde Augustine Chihuri said yesterday.
Body:	Cde Chihuri said the exercise was restoring sanity in major cities and that the joint operation with other Government departments and local authorities would be sustained. This would clean the country of the "crawling mass of maggots bent on destroying the economy and also to spruce up the images of our cities" "Under Operation Murambatsvina, the Government is re-inventing things properly and it is not true that it is punishing the people. And I would like also to thank the people, especially those who were affected, for not going wild during the exercise, he said. ...

Whenever power wants to assuage itself and others about the legitimacy of its own actions and (ab)uses of the subjects under its domination it chooses to represent the targets of its violations in demeaning terms, terms that construct the dominated 'Other' as other than human. In this classic example the Police Commissioner represents the urban poor as "crawling maggots bent on destroying the economy". The consequences of such utterances were the brutal destruction of the poor people's shelter leaving them exposed to the elements in middle of the cold winter season. This behaviour has its many parallels in the history of postcolonial Africa. The genocide in Rwanda was preceded by the governing Hutus comparing Tutsis with cockroaches on their RTN radio station. Most recently the Zulu king's irresponsible utterances comparing foreign black immigrants in South Africa as lice and ants sparked xenophobic attacks and black violence on fellow blacks.

7.6 Symbolic Demolitions of Subaltern Voices on Demolitions

In the absence of any other daily newspaper by a different publisher from Zimpapers, the Zimbabwe newspaper reading public was left with very few sources of alternative interpretations of political realities and economic and social dimensions of the unfolding clean-up campaign. The Standard, a privately owned weekly newspaper under the Alpha Media Holdings stable offered the only meaningful alternative story to that of *The Herald* on Operation Murambatsvina. There were other independent newspapers publishing this time such as *The Mirror*, the *Zimbabwe Independent*, and the *Financial Gazette* but they together mounted a very feeble challenge to *The Herald*'s hegemony. Although *The Daily Mirror* had announced that it would follow a middle of the road editorial policy its reportage on issues was generally viewed as more sympathetic to the ruling ZANU-PF party ideology so that its angle on any story was not significantly different from the line that *The Herald* would take. The other two weekly papers were business weeklies meant as fitting reading for business elites. That left *The Standard* to fill the void as far as news and commentary on general political issues was concerned. Its stories were therefore expected to articulate the only alternative views on Murambatsvina available to the reader. The Zimbabwean society was highly polarised along political lines throughout most of the first decade of the 21st century and the media played an instrumental role in fanning political differences through the way they reported on issues including such contentious developments as Operation Murambatsvina. Given this background it would be rather simplistic to believe that there was any newspaper one could turn to get the "true" story on such an emotive and politically charged subject as the forced evictions of urban poor people. Thus the comparative analysis of the two papers' coverage of the clean-up campaign in cities and towns is not driven by an attempt to establish which story was truer, rather its object is to explicate the divergences and to possibly seek out the reasons for these differences and how these may throw light on any underlying deeper structural determinants on how journalism continues to serve or under-serve the interests of emancipation and the decolonial project.

From when it was broken through to the point when these were halted after the damning report of the UN Special Envoy Report on Human Settlements, Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tbaijuka in mid-July The Standard, just like *The Herald* kept the Operation Murambatsvina story on top of its news agenda and for much of the time it continued to dominate the front page. In this section I analyse some of *The Standard*'s stories on the issue. *The Standard* as a weekly tabloid newspaper differed from *The Herald* in that compiling its stories over a longer period

of time gave its reporters ample time to conduct in-depth research and thus introduce deeper analysis than could be possible under the tight reporting schedule for a daily paper. A cursory look at *The Standard's* headline stories on Operation Murambatsvina shows that the paper took a stand in support and defence of the victims of the operation's claims and rights against the state as can be deduced from the headlines listed below:

"Angry Residents beat up police" 23 May 2005
 "Government condemned" 29 May 2005
 "Stayaway" 5 June 2005
 "Child killed in clean-up" 12 June 2005
 "Clean-up splits Zanu PF" 19 June 2005
 "Clean-up forces 300 000 pupils out of school" 26 June 2005
 "UN envoy 'upset'" 3 July 2005
 "Chombo, Mohadi clash" 10 July 2005
 "Councils face huge lawsuits" 17 July 2005
 "UN orders halt to demolitions" 24 July 2005

From when the story broke out, *The Standard* consistently led with a story on Operation Murambatsvina on its front page except only in its end of July edition. In each of these story headlines Government is represented as the aggressor and those affected by the demolitions as innocent victims. *The Standard's* story should be read in the context of an attempt to explode *The Herald's* myths and debunk its version as lies which *The Standard* reporters will have read during the preceding week. Thus where *The Herald* has published stories celebrating police success and representing the police force as invincible, *The Standard* pricks a hole to deflate that confidence by publishing such stories as "Angry residents beat up police" and "Government condemned". While on the surface the headlines might suggest a grassroots-up approach to stories at *The Standard*, a closer analysis of the actual stories proves to the contrary. Its style of reporting does not represent a serious departure from the same dominant elite-centric paradigm that structures news reporting at *The Herald*. Below are excerpts from selected stories to illustrate this point.

(*The Standard* 23 May 2005)

Headline:	Angry residents beat up police
Byline:	Foster Dongozi
Lead:	Frustrated residents of Chitungwiza rose up on Friday, after enduring days of brutality and intimidation and fought running battles with police officers who were demolishing tuck-shops and confiscating goods from vendors.
Body:	Police and residents, as well as children were engaged in running battles, resulting in the stoning of a ZUPCO bus and a supermarket in the area.

MDC president, Morgan Tsvangirai, lashed out at the government, saying the ongoing clampdown in urban areas to flush out alleged illegal foreign currency dealers, flea-market and tuck shop operators was a government sponsored exercise to punish urban dwellers for voting for the MDC in 31 March general elections. The police blitz was also unleashed on other MDC strong-holds of Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru.

Other areas that were also targeted include Harare's Kuwadzana Extension, Highfield and Epworth. Unconfirmed reports said some police details may have sustained injuries when they faced a barrage of missiles from the defiant residents of St Marys's.

Job Sikhala, the Member of Parliament for the area, confirmed the skirmishes in the volatile constituency but was quick to distance himself from the violence.

"*Kwakagwiwa hondo inohlisa muSt Mary's.*" (There was a fierce fighting in St Mary's). Sikhala said: "It was not something that was organised. It was the people's combined eruptive anger."

Police spokesperson, Superintendent Oliver Mandipaka, was said to be "busy" according to a person who answered his cell phone when *The Standard* sought his comment. ...

The headline of this story immediately marks the story as one dedicated to give the subaltern a voice. The headline promises a story that is a clear departure from *The Herald's* pro-government line of reporting. Instead of representing the affected residents as powerless victims of the police clean-up campaign it actually gives agency to the urban poor people who are represented as capable of offering some resistance and standing up to police brutality. The lead of the story however tells of something rather different. Instead of the said member of the police force who was beaten up the reader is then told that residents rose and "fought running battles with the police". Such a statement does not at all suggest the residents actually beat up the police. What the headline succeeds in achieving is an over-romanticisation of the dominated groups' capability to resist their subjugation. It would have been more consistent with what the story goes on to report if the headline had announced instead that: "Angry residents stone bus, supermarket" because this is what is actually reported in the story. This was one favoured interpretation with *The Standard* as it is further developed in subsequent stories on Murambatsvina. For example in a story the paper published on May 29, 2005 headlined "Terror of 'black boots' in Glen View" affected residents of Glenview and Budiriro suburbs are reported to have staged some acts of resistance and one of the affected residents is quoted as saying: "We rose and we are proud. We said no to police brutality and we said no to colonial type oppression". In this regard it can be argued that *The Standard* to a reasonable extent managed to report some dimensions

of Operation Murambatsvina from the standpoint of the people affected and in that regard to bring to the fore dimensions of the clean-up campaign which would otherwise have been lost to the newspaper reading public.

But in keeping with accepted journalistic standards, the story after describing residents' frustration, seeks an elite figure's voice to comment, define and interpret the event. It goes on to quote Morgan Tsvangirai, president of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). As the story develops an MDC member of parliament for the area affected, Mr Job Sikhala, is also given an opportunity to comment. As a way of balancing the one-sided comments sourced from the opposition party, the reporter then goes on to explain that efforts to get comment from the police spokesperson Superintendent Oliver Mandipaka were unsuccessful. This is important for the story as a rhetorical device to increase the credibility of the story. The reader is supposed to accept this familiar excuse for journalists' failure to write balanced stories through one sided information sourcing. It is not enough to state that a particular source's phone went unanswered, or "so and so could not be reached for comment".

The way this story and many other stories published in the private press presents issues attest to a deeply fractured society along political party lines. The independent press is generally viewed as sympathetic to the political opposition in their reporting as the above story seems to show. So the privately owned press differed from state controlled press like *The Herald* not in principle, but only in the elites it uses as sources. They sourced their stories with a different elite group, the counter-elite. The voice of the subaltern seemed to slip through the newsnet of *The Standard* just as it did in *The Herald*. Government officials also made it difficult for privately owned newspapers to balance opposition party views with those of members of the ruling party, a majority of who controlled the state bureaucracy. In its lead story: "Government condemned", published on May 29, 2005 *The Standard* continues to provide space to opposition party leaders and leaders of elite institutions in civil society to pronounce themselves on the government operation. Views of ordinary citizens continue to suffer erasure in the private press as in the state controlled press. They tend to be spoken of or simply shown as exhibits to bolster existing debates and contestations among elites competing for political office. The demolition of urban poor people's houses is important to *The Standard* and that section of elites it favours not in themselves and how they affect the evicted people, but only in so far as they can be marshalled as further evidence that the ruling elite is unfit to govern.

To underline the salience of the stories on Operation Murambatsvina *The Standard* dedicated the entire comment and views page to analysing and commenting on the clean-up exercise. In the editorial comment the newspaper's editors draw parallels between the ongoing government exercise to drive 'excess people out of towns to rural areas with colonial policies which were meant to regulate and control the flow of blacks into towns. According to the Editors as they point out in the editorial comment:

There could not be any poignant reminder of how the colonial administration sought to protect big business, (read white interests) while emptying the townships of excess workforce, and how ironically the 'people's government' is slavishly re-enacting the same policies (*The Standard*, May 29, 2005: 8).

The opinion piece titled: "Freedonia's inimitable reign of terror" just below the editorial comment was even more forthright in its satirical comparison of government policy of forced evictions of the urban poor with colonial policies. Below are some excerpts from the story:

(*The Standard* May 29, 2005)

Headline: Freedonia's inimitable reign of terror

By-line: Dumisani Mpofu

Lead: There was fear and confusion in Freedonia. The security agencies were all over the streets and there was great gnashing of teeth and wailing. Menacing security agents, some on horseback policed the streets. It was as if there had been a military take-over and law enforcement agencies were on high alert.

Body: Freedonia's quiet old man said he had not seen such a thing since the 1950s and 1960s when the colonials were in the habit of driving indigenous people out of the city centres or raiding the locations – areas where the indigenous people were confined to in the urban areas.

Tears welling up in his eyes (we suspected it was the anger that memories of such events triggered) the old man said he saw no difference between what was happening in Freedonia and what the colonials used to. He broke the silence: "Wherever the colonials are, they must be enjoying what is happening. I tell you there were times when we were not allowed in the city, just as they are doing to the Kombis. In the locations, they raided whole areas demanding to know who had passes to stay because everyone who had no 'legitimate business' was supposed to be in the reserves (reserves of excess workforce). Most of you who are young must watch *Cry Freedom*".

The stinging satire used in this article was far much more effectively in bringing out what the issues were in the oppressive way Operation Murambatsvina was implemented by government. The continuities with the colonial order were brought home and lampooned in

this satire about a country whose very name ‘Freedonia’ epitomised freedom. To a large extent *The Standard* and its sister papers in the independent press could be relied on to challenge the dominant discourses on Operation Murambatsvina carried in *The Herald* and other state controlled news publications such as *The Sunday Mail*, *The Chronicle* and *The Sunday News*. Authentic subaltern voices were almost always subordinated to other vested interests through elite sourcing of news. *The Standard*’s main sources on the clean-up campaign were largely drawn from the coalition of political opposition forces within civil society and in the main opposition political party MDC who manipulated the discourse in support of their general political cause of dislodging ZANU-PF from power. *The Standard*’s front page story titled: “Stayaway” (June 5, 2005) is a clear example of the manipulation of the Murambatsvina tragedy for political mileage by a coalition of opposition party leaders and those within civil society who backed them. Below are some excerpts from that story:

(*The Standard*, June 5, 2005)

Headline:	Satyaway
Kicker:	MDC, civic bodies call for mass action
Byline:	Foster Dongozi
Lead:	Opposition political parties, civic organisations and labour unions have called for a potentially crippling mass stayaway this week in protest against the government’s ongoing crackdown against its citizens, <i>The Standard</i> can reveal.
Body:	The mass stayaway is scheduled for Thursday and Friday this week. The stayaway will see people not going to work, while protests have reportedly been plotted throughout the country, <i>The Standard</i> understands. Sources close to the planned mass action told <i>The Standard</i> that the showdown was being organised by a coalition comprising the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), Crisis Coalition, Zimbabwe National Students’ Union (Zinasu) and several other bodies opposed to the government’s conduct in the clean-up campaign and crippling transport crisis.

This story in which only the leaders of the MDC, NCA and ZCTU, Morgan Tsvangirai, Lovemore Madhuku and Lovemore Matombo respectively are cited directly is a poignant example of how the most vulnerable members of society are muted by the press no matter how well-meaning and well-intentioned that press might be. Here are elite leaders rallying their constituents to engage in the only form of mass action known to themselves; stayaway. The call for mass action is directed to those in formal employment while the beneficiaries of

such action are somehow expected to be those in the informal sector and the unemployed who have no work to stay away from. The call to stayaway would be misdirected if it was meant for those targeted by police brutality, because they would not have anything to stay away from. They have been already staying away anywhere, due to lack of employment. They are also least likely to be members of the organisations organising the mass action in their name. Part of their vulnerability consists in lack of organisational strength. They have no representative body of their own through which to articulate their peculiar interests. According to this story, their interests are somehow represented as coterminous with and coincidental to the broad goals of the political programme to remove the ZANU-PF government from power. The plight of the evicted urban poor is used only as another case to justify causes that these elite organisations had been pushing for all along. The evicted poor people's presence in a story supposedly about them is limited to appearing in the picture showcasing the rubble of demolished houses. The goal of evacuating poor people from elite geographical spaces such as urban centres is consummated and ironically mirrored in the symbolic eviction and exclusion of their voices in news stories like this one. The caption describes the picture as follows: "Peter Chisvo, his wife Susan and their baby, contemplate their predicament after their house in the background, in Harare's Mbare suburb, was demolished on Friday. The family is one of hundreds of thousands left homeless in the wake of the government's controversial crackdown on illegal settlements". Their devastation is probably so complete that they are left with no words for it but to contemplate.

7.7 Discussion

7.7.1 Operation Murambatsvina as Retribalisation

The government narrative of Operation Murambatsvina which *The Herald* emphasised and re-emphasised in its stories covering the operation in many ways mirrored the way *The Rhodesia Herald* had covered forced evictions of the Tangwena people from their ancestral lands in the Gayeresi area in Nyanga and the Huchu people from the Central Estates near Mvuma, to make way for European occupation in the 1969-70 period. The voices of the victims of the removals in both instances were marginalised and repressed. The language in most of *The Herald* stories "did not adequately narrate the story of the victims, ... and neither was there adequate analysis of the consequences of government's actions", (Nyamanhindi 2008: 121). The pictures of operation Murambatsvina as seen and understood by the subaltern groups would have been irretrievably lost if one had to rely entirely on *The Herald's* account

of the operation. *The Herald* story as an example of the so called first draft of history was largely a construction of that historical event from the perspectives of the governing elite in society not because of any aberration in the way journalism was being done at the newspaper. Their story more than met the basic demands of any professionally written piece of journalistic reporting of news events. It cannot be faulted on the basis of any amateurish violations of the revered canons and codes of professional journalistic practice. Its weakness, if any, was in its adherence to a very narrowly defined professional journalism which enjoins the reporter to source his news reports from highly credible sources. As long as professional journalism teaches that the more the reporters seek out highly credible sources to validate their reports the higher the credibility rating of the story then *The Herald's* news reports on Operation Murambatsvina more than passed this test. But the overall outcome of the operation of such journalistic logic is, to borrow Mignolo's (2000: 204) turn of phrase, *The Herald* reporters producing "their work in relative ignorance of" subaltern ways of knowing "and this did not seem to affect the quality of their journalistic work". The upshot of all this is that the subaltern subject could not speak journalistically on Operation Murambatsvina, he was rendered mute in the process of news reporting. With *The Herald* and other state-controlled media unabashedly producing patently pro-government versions on the issues of the day the news reading public was often pushed into accepting whatever the 'independent press' published as the valid "truth". Newspapers such as *The Standard* were viewed as the state media's binary opposites. If the state media were adjudged as bad and the news they carried as propaganda and therefore false, the 'independent' press was good and its news offerings therefore was generally accepted as the 'truth'. This often led to the fallacy of accepting unquestioningly what the papers such as *The Standard* reported as synonymous with reality itself. This masked the fact that any news whether by state controlled media or by so called independent press constructed the reality they reported on. So, mainstream media whether state or privately owned was by definition just not the place to find the truth as seen by the marginalised in society. This fact tends to fly in the face of rationalisations of the image of the independent press, often enjoying purchase in scholarly literature, as the free market place of ideas giving diverse and competing ideas an equal chance of expression. The analysis in this section gives little reason for such optimism particularly where marginalised dominated groups' interests and ways of knowing are concerned. Similar processes of delegitimation of subaltern interpretations and legitimization of competing interests of different elite sections of society were at work in the news constructions of subaltern experiences of their evictions under Operation Murambatsvina in the two papers.

Operation Murambatsvina stands out as a classic example of how the colonial past had continued to survive in the postcolonial present. Although now under a black government, the majority indigenous population who lived on the margins continued as before to be expunged from the mainstream platforms of self-expression and to be criminalised and thingified to justify their treatment as other than human. They were referred to as criminals, filth, dirt or crawling maggots in the press in much the same way their ancestors were referred to as primitive and a danger to civilised society in colonial times to justify their eviction and confinement away from the city to the tribal trust lands. The similarity in attitudes towards the poor between the Zimbabwe government under Mugabe's ZANU-PF and Rhodesian government under Godfrey Huggins was uncanny as Potts points out:

After 1980, despite the removal of influx controls which dramatically altered the nature of urbanisation, periodic government sweeps of people considered 'undesirable' in the cities occurred. These included homeless people and, sometimes, women who were deemed, on the flimsiest pretexts, to be undesirable because they were alone in public spaces (Bourdillon 1991). The literature on these sweeps often draws the parallels between these government actions and the controls of the colonial past. The far more dramatic action against urban residents across the entire country of Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, which directly affected hundreds of thousands, attempted to force urban-rural migration too. Again, the associated literature frequently discussed the sad irony of the continuities between the campaign and the old colonial restrictions on urban residence. (Potts 2012: 23)

The similarity was also to be found in how *The Herald* became a willing ideological tool in the hands of the governing elites in postcolonial as in colonial times to discursively constructing the victims in a way that legitimised government actions against them.

7.7.2 Inheriting and Preserving the Jewel of Africa

Kwame Nkrumah's call to seek first the political kingdom met with huge political purchase among many African nationalist leaders who waged armed struggles to end colonial rule on the African continent (Ake 2000). When ZANU-PF won the democratic mandate to govern Zimbabwe at Independence in 1980 the nation was euphoric and ecstatic with anticipation for the realisation of socio economic transformation of the state to become more inclusive of the interests of formerly marginalised majority indigenous people of Zimbabwe. But from the very beginning those who took over government as a political class found themselves faced with a completely different set of objectives which set them on a collision course with their erstwhile comrades. Having inherited the political kingdom the nationalist leaders saw the securing and preservation of their inheritance – the unfair privileges and advantages enjoyed exclusively by white colonial settlers – as their first vocation. This tendency to negate the

popular aspirations on the strength of whose promise the political class had been catapulted to power is well captured in Claude Ake's analysis of the authoritarian tendencies of postcolonial governments in Africa:

Independence changed the composition of the managers of the state but not the character of the state, which remained much as it was in the colonial era. ... It presented itself often as an apparatus of violence, its base in social forces remained extremely narrow and it relied for compliance unduly on coercion rather than authority. With few exceptions, the elite who came to power decided to inherit and exploit the colonial system to their own benefit rather than transforming it democratically as had been expected. This alienated them from the masses whom they now had to contain with force (Ake 2000: 36).

The idea of preserving colonial privilege partly accounts for the state's early colonisation of *The Herald* newspaper as an institution of power and now under Operation Murambatsvina exclusive occupation and colonisation of the city by the political elite as nodes of power. That logic possibly explains the lethargic transformation of *The Herald* from an elite medium for use by the minority ruling elite to a truly popular paper that spoke the language of the people and carried their views and opinions. While the majority of previously marginalised Africans had construed inheriting the political kingdom and the coming of Uhuru as signifying a reversal of the oppressive colonial system, the political leadership understood attainment of independence as not marking the start of a return to a lost glorious pre-colonial past because such past if it existed was no longer accessible in its virgin state. The only legacy that was available and thus 'worth' of preserving at least in the nationalist leader's mind was the colonial legacy. Hence Mugabe's call to restore 'order' in the cities using the same coercive measures reminiscent of those used by the colonial regime he replaced. By instituting Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order, Mugabe may have done so in the true spirit of heeding an elder African statesman's advice to preserve intact what he had inherited at independence. At independence in 1980: the former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere congratulated the newly elected Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, saying "you have inherited a jewel in Africa, you must preserve it". But some critics question Nyerere's judgement as very problematic. If Zimbabwe was a jewel of Africa at independence in 1980 whose jewel was it for? Implied in Nyerere's judgement is the assertion that colonialism must have been good for Zimbabwe. What would 'preserving it' mean for the new government? Was this an injunction to not hurriedly dismantle colonial structures which had doomed majority Africans to penury? Kanyenze cited in Mazingi and Kamidzi (2010: 326) went on to argue that:

If Zimbabwe was a jewel of Africa then it must have been a flawed one indeed. The inherited economy had been moulded on a philosophy of white supremacy that resulted in the evolution of a relatively well-developed and modern formal sector, which co-existed with an underdeveloped and backward rural economy, the home to 70% of the black population. Thus the “jewel” was the enclave part of the economy, which was developed on the basis of ruthless dispossession of indigenous sources of livelihood.

To the above argument may be added the view that the press was an important gem in that jewel Mugabe inherited on 18 April 1980 and preservation of the whole necessarily entailed preservation of the press in its colonial form and function, in the service of the new political class against the interests of the same people whose support was instrumental in catapulting into power. The naivety that had led the oppressed class under colonial rule to repose their confidence in the black educated class to lead the struggle for their emancipation had been aptly capture and immortalised in the character of old Chege in Ngugi’s *The River Between*, who had thought that to fight the white man it was necessary to send his son Wayiyaki to the Mission School to learn the white man’s ways so that they would use that knowledge to fight and defeat the white man and work for the good of their people. The disillusionment of the oppressed majority in Ngugi’s fictional world had its real life equivalent in independent Zimbabwe when the former colonised saw those they had entrusted with leadership betraying the liberation cause, abandon the war time rhetoric of radicalised change and embracing a ‘new civilised’ pragmatism to preserve the colonial institutional arrangements that would serve the interests that their newly assumed roles thrust upon them at independence. This is the more generous view of the political elite that took over government at independence in Africa.

A more pessimistic view, which evidence marshalled in this study appears to support, is the thesis that the nationalist leaders’ seeming volte-face was not betrayal of some egalitarian ethos that they once espoused during the liberation struggle, but rather that their actions were consistent with intentions they had always secretly harboured, to take the white man’s place in the management of our common affairs. For the black political class that inherits government at independence Fanon (1967: 4) had warned us in *Black Skin, White Masks*, “there is only one destiny. And it is white”. What then goes on to compound the problem for the emancipation project is news media’s unquestioning acceptance of a culture and ideology of news production that privileges elite interpretations ahead of those of the subaltern groups in society. In Zimbabwe’s case and in particular with reference to how Zimbabwe’s clean-up campaign was covered in the press the victims of those demolitions and forced evictions were caught in a bind with the partisan polarised media holed up in their respective elite camps

fighting a war of words at the expense of serving as purveyors of the views of those who were directly caught in the unfortunate situation of losing homes and livelihoods.

7.7.3 Systemic Exclusion of Subaltern Definitions of Reality

Given the fact that unlike during colonial times *The Herald* at the time this study save for only one staffer is run by black editors and journalists throughout one would have hoped that there now exists greater cultural, physical, racial and geographical congruency and proximity between reporters at *The Herald* and the urban black poor people most of whom the Operation Restore Order targeted. If race alone were the factor behind exclusion of ordinary African victims' voices on forced evictions in colonial Rhodesia then there would have been very significant presence of subaltern views in stories on forced eviction under Operation Murambatsvina. The dominance of officialdom in *The Herald*'s coverage of Operation Murambatsvina tends to be in line with Zvi Reich's (2015) findings in a recent study on why ordinary citizens still rarely serve as news sources in spite of the technological promise for greater participation by ordinary people in the production of news. He concludes that:

findings suggest that not every human agent who opens his or her mouth and contributes a sound bite is treated by journalists as a full-fledged news source. To paraphrase Sigal (1986), news is not simply "what someone says has happened" but is what someone with minimal authority, status, institutional affiliation, expertise, and regular contact says. In other words, journalists are still not in the business of information but in the business of institutionally certified information. Therefore, equipped and motivated as they may be, citizen sources don't count as full-blown news sources. While regular sources represent ongoing relationships (Blumler & Gurevich, 1981), citizens represent one-time transactions of information, lacking not only mutual rapport with journalists but also a track record of reliability. This has severe epistemic ramifications because the more regular sources receive not only privileged access to news coverage but also the status of "primary definers" (Hall et al., 1978) of social reality (Reich 2015: 789).

Thus, the domain of news production in postcolonial settings follows a logic that transcends transitions from colonial to postcolonial or from one regime to another. News, by design, in every epoch has tended to embed itself with power and becomes the most definitive text of power. It is better suited to a concern with power reporting rather than to reporting truth to power. This affinity between mainstream news and centres of power becomes more evident when one maps the locations of Zimbabwe's main national papers on the geopolitical map of the country. It is not by accident but by design that all three main newspaper organisations operate and ply their trade from Harare, the country's capital as illustrated in the diagrams below:

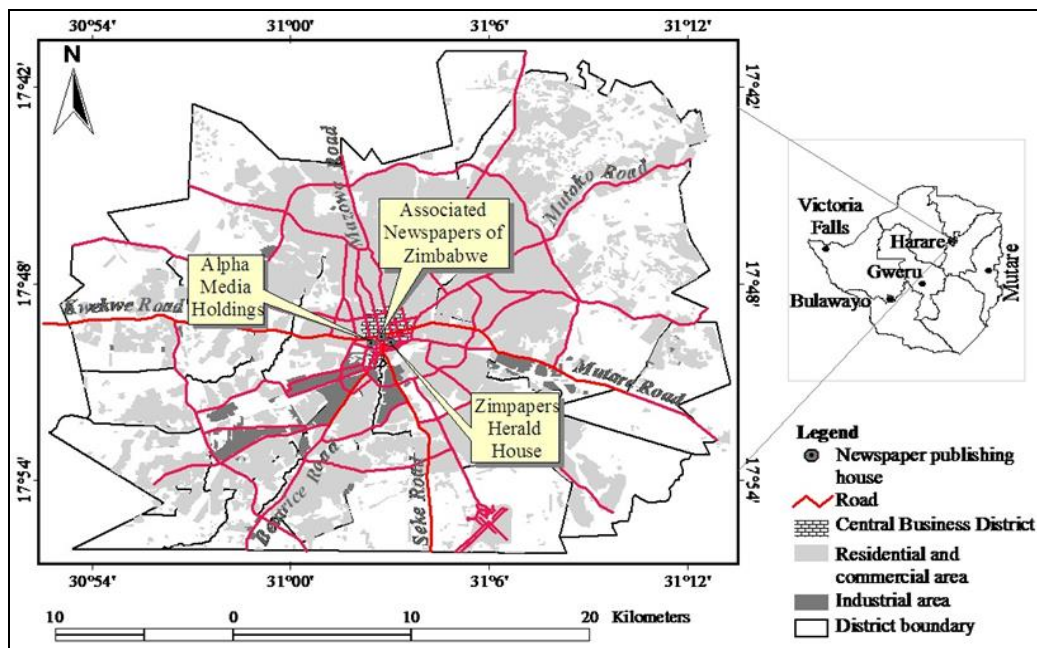


Figure 18. Map of Zimbabwe showing the locations of three leading newspaper houses in Harare CBD



Figure 19. Aerial view of Harare showing symbolic proximity between Newspapers and elite centres of political, economic, and cultural power

The Herald House in particular representing the pliant Fourth Estate of the realm as the diagram above clearly shows was from the very beginning sited closest to the heartbeat of governmental power. Its six storey building overlooks Africa Unity Square, former Cecil Square (retains its Union Jack special design). Directly opposite can be seen Barclays Bank's Hurudza House and the Old Mutual Centre, symbols of the core of Zimbabwe's financial capital with its roots deep in the colonial history of the country. The Parliament Building which stands adjacent to the Anglican Cathedral Church is along the left flank of the Square. Meikles Hotel, the symbol of Zimbabwe's tourism and hospitality industry stands aloft to the south of the Square. Radiating from this centre in different directions are other institutions of state power such as the Munhumutapa Building a few blocks down Nelson Mandela Avenue which houses the offices of the President and the Ministry of Information, the Supreme Court, the Reserve Bank. *The Herald* and the other national newspapers in Harare spread out their newsnets daily to rake in a sufficient haul of news at the least cost to the newspaper organisations.

The content of the newspapers on a topical issue like Operation Murambatsvina presented above bears testimony to the fact that the diet of news that the Zimbabwean citizen is fed is sourced from no farther than the corridors of power with the stamp of authority of those who occupy these buildings. In white-ruled colonial Rhodesia the occupants of these corridors of power were exclusively white and the opinions and views which *The Herald* carried were therefore largely white views on issues of the day. After independence *The Herald* continued to carry views of the new occupants of these houses of power who were now of cause black. Thus while the difference between the new black elite and their white predecessors in attitudes towards subjects of their (mis)rule was only skin deep there was at least no change in *The Herald's* news orientation towards power holders. Frantz Fanon had long predicted the cultural asphyxiation and political unchanging in newly independent states in Africa:

At the very moment when the native intellectual is anxiously trying to create a cultural work he fails to realise that he is utilising techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country. He contents himself with stamping these instruments with a hall-mark which he wishes to be national, but which is strangely reminiscent of exoticism (Fanon 1963: 180).

In many respects Fanons' comment above was prescient the elite who took over the running of our common affairs in this country together with their journalist intellectuals did not have the courage to alter a thing to make the media work for their own people. They would not be expected to work differently by dint of their location relative to power as the map above

clearly shows. This is less a government thing than it is a journalism thing to locate itself close to other centres of power. Any privately owned national newspaper that ever decides to set itself up in post-independent Zimbabwe must of necessity locate its operational offices in the capital. This physical proximity then goes on to replicate itself in the domain of news content. *The Herald* continued to be just as alienated from the masses as ever and the way it covered Operation Murambatsvina is an example of this. If *The Rhodesia Herald* was guilty of thingifying Africans to justify their forced mass evictions by whites in colonial Rhodesia, *The Herald* of the postcolonial era was no less guilty of doing the same on largely African descendants of the colonised with the only difference being that this time around, it was the thingification of blacks by fellow blacks.

A good part of the psychical complexes that Africans evince in our relationship to ourselves, to one another, and to the rest of the world, ever since the end of slavery is easily traceable to the ideational structures fostered under slavery and reinforced by colonialism. (Taiwo 2015: 57).

On a point of comparison the annihilation of subaltern voices has largely remained the defining feature of the images of the dominated others in the news. These others may be defined by the colour of their skin as under settler colonialism or by a nexus of class, gender and ethnicity in post-independence Zimbabwe. If under colonialism the news imposed a total blackout of information on how forced evictions and resultant displacements affected whole communities of indigenous peoples, a blanket information embargo was no longer possible but the media was nearly as effective in denying the world information on how under the black nationalist government the same colonial logic continued to inform the spatial displacement and ideological erasure of mostly black poor people's voices from elite spaces geographically and ideationally in the news.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the resilience of the colonial legacy of many news production processes and how they continue to discursively reproduce the inequalities of power that structured the relations of the governed to those who govern them. In reporting Operation Murambatsvina the usual excuses that journalism uses to justify selective coverage sourcing practices and exclusions such as, for example, the news value of proximity have often come unstuck and exploded as a myth. The urban poor people whose homes and shelter were demolished as illegal structures inhabited the same equi-proximate physical and geographical

spaces with the elites, to the newsroom and to the city as an elite centre, but their voices were marginalised in the discursive constructions of the realities of Murambatsvina. A simplistic and dichotomous categorisation of news media in Zimbabwe as “state-bad” and “private-good” also proved untenable. Evidence seemed to show strong similarity in elite orientation by location, choice of language and information sourcing practices of the press in Zimbabwe. *The Standard’s* story did not necessarily give a better, more accurate reflection of events under Operation Murambatsvina, only a different construction. There was no ideologically neutral venue from which to report on the events of Operation Murambatsvina. The genealogy of practices both in government and in the press is easily traceable to a common colonial ancestry.

Chapter 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a critical reflection of the overall findings of this study in terms of how they respond to the initial questions posed and their contribution to meeting the objectives that the study had set out to achieve. From the outset, the primary focus of this study was to find out whether and how the colonial past might continue to survive in the postcolonial present through the discursive practices of news production. The study was guided by three objectives set out in Chapter 1, The research sought to:

- establish how journalists beyond structural constraints imposed by state and capital decide what and how to write news stories about the subaltern and how to source such stories.
- establish the extent to which the news media's colonial genealogy may be a factor in news discursive construction of subaltern identities.
- critically analyse how mainstream news discursively "evicted" and "evacuated" subaltern voices from postcolonial Zimbabwe's newscapes in ways that mirrored the colonial news archive on marginalised colonised subjects.

The basic question that I kept intently in focus as I set out to collect evidence and materials for analysis drew its inspiration from the rhetorical question Nyamnjoh (2005: 33) poses: "How similar to or different from the colonial state in reality are states and media institutions in post-colonial Africa?" It was a question about the colonality of news discourse about the marginalised in contemporary Africa that Nyamnjoh asked and that was still crying out for answers with respect to postcolonial Zimbabwean mediascapes as a case in point. Through a multisited ethnographic engagement with the texts and participant observation of journalists at work for periods of one month apiece at two purposively selected leading national newspaper organisations in Zimbabwe, the researcher gathered rich descriptive evidence generally indicative of a stable and conservative newsroom culture which structured journalism's treatment of subaltern perspectives on issues in post-independence Zimbabwe in ways that reproduced and reinforced existing power hierarchies along race, class and gender lines. The national newspapers continued to use English as the language of communication. They continued to operate from the capital city, Harare, in close proximity to the commanding heights of the nation's cultural, economic and political elite power. This study's findings support the conclusion that mainstream media in Zimbabwe, as in many African

countries, continue to be associated with a minority elite “and for this reason they enjoy minimal legitimacy among citizenries” (Willems 2011: 50). But in spite of this being the case, media research on the continent, including the present study, by focusing on mainstream news and journalists who produce it, seems to be caught up in the same vicious circle of over-valuing elite discourses the media circulate. This study, by focusing on the mainstream press and drawing all of its evidence from professional journalists and their elitist news offerings is also guilty of participating in the symbolic annihilation of subaltern ways of knowing.

If there is one thing that this study has achieved it is to present rich empirical evidence drawn across a long stretch of Zimbabwe’s media time-line as well as from diverse news production sites which has tended to support a long established thesis that all news are texts produced in the service of power and are therefore ideological. This study therefore locates itself methodologically and theoretically at the nexus of long established traditions of critical constructivist approaches to the study of news, looked at through postcolonial lenses. Such media scholarship generally avers that mainstream news media, be they commercially owned or regime controlled, tend to construct versions of our life worlds from standpoints of dominant forces in society defined by race, class, or genders and that they tend to work in the interests of those in power (Glasgow University Media Group 1980; Traber 1985; McCallum 2010; Hasty 2010; Atton 20.; Nyamnjoh 2011; and Wasserman 2011). One thing in common about the above cloud of scholars is that their work, dating to as far back as Michael Traber’s experiment with doing news from the grassroots at the height of the censorship in colonial Rhodesia from the mid-1960s to the 1970s when he got deported for roughing up the regime’s feathers the wrong way with his pioneering radical editorial content at the *Moto*, through the work of the Glasgow University Media Group’s critical analysis of news content of the British mainstream media establishment on strikes and Northern Ireland; McCallum’s ethnographic investigation of indigenous people’s understanding of the news coverage of crime and violence in Indigenous Australian communities to Hasty’s ethnography of news in postcolonial Ghana, was that; mainstream news under-serves those in the margins defined by race, class, gender or ethnicity. The news throughout Zimbabwe’s truncated history has proved to be other than what it claims – a disinterested proxy for reality. To the extent that it denies its discursive nature and affects an air of facticity (Bird 2010), news is far much more successful in its ideological purposes, than other genres that announce their fictionality upfront. News is indeed, stranger than fiction. The many news texts that were analysed and discussed in the preceding sections of this study across historical and political transitions

from colonial to postcolonial Zimbabwe were invariably located with power hierarchies they discursively constructed socially and geo-politically. In each of the cases studied the subaltern voice was irretrievably lost in news representations of the plight of marginalised groups of people in the face of forced evictions. And this was not because of ineptitude on the part of news workers but a result of the application of accepted journalistic standards of practice of verification, application of universal, professionally accepted news values in news selection, news gathering and news sourcing practices. Forced removals of the Tangwena people from Gayerezi in 1969, the Huchu people from Hunyani in 1970 were reported from a government perspective by *The Rhodesia Herald*. Competing interpretations of the events which the *Moto* reported were articulations largely of a European counter-elite with a smattering, of course, of the affected Africans. In the post-independence era *The Herald*, true to its type, again gave a government perspective of events in the much publicised Fast Track Land Reform Programme which started in March 2000 resulting in the mass evictions of white farmers and their black employees. *The Daily News* on the other hand gave an account that was overly sympathetic to the white commercial farmer's plight and the subaltern former farm worker's point of view was marginalised in the stories. In 2005, those forcibly removed from urban areas under the government implemented campaign code named Operation Murambatsvina were denied voice in the many stories done by *The Herald* and by the privately owned weekly paper *The Standard* on the issues.

8.2 The Coloniality of the News Episteme

The Press came to Zimbabwe as part of the colonial state's imposition of an uncontested monopoly in the exercise of epistemic violence over the occupied territory it named Rhodesia. So news from the mainstream press, since the early years of colonial occupation in the then Rhodesia, was itself an occupying discourse in the service of empire (Gale 1962). Postcolonial analytic lenses applied here expose how the colonised's ways of knowing and sharing that knowledge were inferioritised, displaced and replaced by professional news making as a discourse in a way that mirrored the spatial displacements of indigenous peoples to geographical margins through forced evictions. The study found a striking similarity between the symbolic annihilation and thingification of the Tangwena people and the Huchu people in *The Rhodesia Herald* under colonial rule and the marginalisation of the voices of displaced former farm workers during the Fast Track Land reform Programme in 2000 and evictees under Operation Murambatsvina in *The Herald*. The evidence presented and discussed in the preceding chapters of this study suggests that *The Herald* as an institution

has largely maintained rather than change a colonial news culture in postcolonial Zimbabwe. This has been largely achieved due to the way news production masks its ideological nature first and foremost to the journalists themselves and to the users as reflections of reality. Journalists often rationalised their editorial choices and news selections as well as news sourcing practices as inevitable outcomes of the application of “universal” news values. The liquidation of the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust, which had acted as a buffer to protect the newspaper from undue influence by government elites prior to its demise in 2001, resulted in the entrenchment of the colonial tradition of state interference at *The Herald*. The way African nationalist leaders used *The Herald* to suppress alternative views and interpretations of the way their policies affected marginalised groups (evicted ex-farm workers post-2000 and displaced shack dwellers in 2005) was reminiscent of the way the same newspaper was abused by the white settler government under colonial rule. Zimbabwe government leaders’ use of the press they controlled, in particular *The Herald*, as discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, exhibited an attitude which lends some credit to a critical scepticism about their commitment to the liberation ideals which they were wont to cite as their watch-word and slogan during the liberation struggle first intimated by Fanon in the chapter on “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness” in *The Wretched of the Earth*, a book that almost became the bible for the liberation movements in Africa from the 1960s and as Mbeki and Ake also point out more recently:

Nationalism in Africa has always paraded itself as a movement of the people fighting for their liberation. The reality is, in fact, rather different. African nationalism was a movement of the small, Westernised black elite that emerged under colonialism. Its fight was always for inclusion in the colonial system so that it, too, could benefit from the spoils of colonialism (Mbeki 2009: 6).

With few exceptions, the elite who came to power decided to inherit and exploit the colonial system to their own benefit rather than transforming it democratically as had been expected. This alienated them from the masses whom they now had to contain with force (Ake 2000: 36)

In fact, evidence discussed in this study suggests that to argue as did Wasserman and De Beer (2009: 430) that: “Journalism in Africa often displays an uneasy relationship between its colonial heritage and post-colonial appropriation” would be an understatement. What is consistent with the facts is rather that news at *The Herald* changed very little with the attainment of political independence. Evidence based on the cases considered in this study support the conclusion that the press in postcolonial Zimbabwe did much to discursively manufacture acceptance of neo-colonial structures of domination by the subaltern groups. This the media achieved mainly by producing silence over the need to take an audit of the

nationalist government in bringing the much yearned for democratic transformation promised during the liberation struggle. This was all too evident in the silence over consideration of restitution as the basis for a fair and just basis for a Fast Track Land Redistribution Programme. None of the newspapers studied broached the question of linking land reform with detribalisation and democratisation. That the TTLs were the centre-piece and kernel of colonial subjugation of the indigenous black population and that it was the linchpin of native administration escaped the memory of the nationalist political elite now in power. The press played a not insignificant role in aiding and abetting this amnesia in the national imaginary. The conflict over land was now recast as a struggle between veterans of the liberation struggle and white commercial farmers. Debates on the legitimacy of taking away land from whites without compensating them took precedence. The history of African dispossession and rights to the same land was simply written out of the story on land.

What underlines the institutional irrelevance of the press to the democratic aspirations is their uncritical blindness to which colonial structures such as the tribal organisation continues to produce colonial subjectivities across generations of indigenous people of Zimbabwe. The absences and one dimensional views of the realities reported on, realities such as forced evictions and displacement of marginalised groups following state sponsored programmes like the Fast Track Land Reform Programme and Operation Murambatsvina, were not accidents of a journalism gone wrong. This content outcome was according to the journalists themselves the inevitable result of the application of what they defined as universal news values and normal newsroom routines requiring verification of facts with credible sources (read elite sources). Such news values were generally understood by the journalists as inhering in some events and occurrences just after the fashion of rain bearing clouds.

8.3 Re-mooring of Subalternity

The idea of the subaltern like coloniality also does not end with the attainment of independence as was clearly demonstrated in news constructions of the same in the press post-2000 in Zimbabwe. The news only reconstitutes subaltern identities and subjectivities on new bases other than along the old categories of race and ethnicity. In the postcolonial state subalternity is defined by lack of access to voice, lack of mobility along different axes of power and lack of agency. It is no longer solely and simplistically defined by skin colour as during the colonial period.

the subaltern would not be subaltern, since the condition of subalternity is that of not having any access to institutionalised structures of language and power—including structures of capital and culture, (Shome and Hegde 2002: 181).

Thus throughout history subalternity has been an artefact of symbolic annihilation, through denial of speech. Professionally produced news like the holy writ of old reified the historicity of the very process by which the marginalised were silenced and denied voice. The attitudes of different sections of the press towards the political power establishment from colonial through post-independence period in Zimbabwe oscillated between the priestly and the prophetic roles. In playing the priestly role the press largely assumes a legitimating function for the hegemonic order. It may even take a mildly critical stance on government policy but always in a manner that accepts that power as legitimate and inevitable.

In Chapter 4 above, in reporting the forced evictions of the Tangwena people and the Hunyani people between 1969 and 1970 the white press represented by *The Rhodesia Herald* largely assumed the priestly role, while the Church press led by *Moto* newspaper's reportage on the same events was upbraiding, rebuking prophetic style, but also accepting the political establishment as God ordained. The metaphor of priest and prophet would best describe the different roles that pro-state press like *The Herald* and press critical of the state represented by *Moto* in the pre-independence period and *The Daily News* and *The Standard* during the post-independence period played. While the priesthood in biblical times served to legitimate the hegemonic order best symbolised in the relationship between Moses and Aaron, the prophets on the other hand were the forerunners of mechanisms that challenged and spoke truth to power as exemplified by Prophet Nathaniel to King David and Prophet Daniel to the king of Babylon. Sorcerers on the other hand, the prototypes and forerunners of the subaltern fell completely outside of the power block, they represented the subjugated knowledges under the Judaic system. When in a graveside speech at Nathan Shamhuyarira's funeral President Mugabe described *The Herald* and other news publications under the Zimpapers stable as "our paper" he betrayed a long standing tradition of the cosy relationship between *The Herald* and the political power establishment.

8.4 The Coloniality of News Values and Professional Journalism Practice

Nyamnjoh's (2012) critique of the resilience of a colonial legacy in education in postcolonial Africa is also relevant here. Mainstream journalism has tended to be very conservative in the way it constructs and communicates news as knowledge about changing African realities.

The evidence provided by this study seems to suggest that *The Herald* has hardly broken with colonial tradition of alienating those it reported on. It has remained in its role as an appendage of the dominant power elite.

In all these instances, and in particular in relation to the media, this duality is expressed by 'participation and alienation'. Local communities under colonialism found themselves unable to participate in the media that ostensibly reported on matters of concern to them; they were alienated from the methods of production as well as from the nature of the reporting. They were not involved in the media, either as creators of stories or as actors within them. Instead there was the colonizing journalist, described by David Spurr as 'placed either above or at the centre of things, yet apart from them' (Spurr, 1993: 16). Spurr argues that the power relations inherent in this relationship between observer and observed are grounded by standard narrative practices in journalism that, by adopting these perspectives, 'obviate the demand for concrete, practical action on the part of its audience' (Atton 2002: 113).

In the two case studies considered in this study, professional journalism fitted well the colonising journalist as described above. Its unquestioning acceptance of a western standard on what constitutes news and criteria for determining who is authorised to speak as source has continued to reproduce colonial difference in Zimbabwe many decades after attainment of independence. Ewart, Cokley and Coats (2004) in a study of Australian news sourcing practices found out that little work had been done to change traditional news sourcing practices of journalists in Australia. That elite sources should be preferred as news sources is often treated as an inevitable given in the practice of professional journalism anywhere in the world. But in Zimbabwe, even that practice, is often practised in violation of basic journalism ethical requirement for balance and fairness because of partisanship and extreme polarisation. Conventions of best practice in mainstream journalism in Zimbabwe, enjoins reporters "to report *on*, to speak *at*, **to speak down to**, to speak *past*, but hardly ever to speak *with* people (particularly those on the margins)". Reporters trail big people not in order to ask hard questions about their public responsibilities and conduct but to curry favour with their respective official sources. They door-step them as they leave their offices, at the airport as they fly out or into the country, or way-lay them at for-elite-only clubs like the Quill Club in Harare. In the routine of news gathering reporters do not stray into the market place or stay long enough with the street vendors "so as to create a relationship that brings out the issues with the necessary nuances and contradictions" (Nyamnjoh: 8). With a press like that the prospects for another Operation Murambatsvina remain palpable and it would still take a UN Commission of Inquiry to bring out the genocidal impacts of such policies on the lives of the poor.

To ameliorate the deficiencies inherent in mainstream media's elitism and urbancentricity as this study has established, the only hope lies in multiplying the channels of communication in the hope that this would create an opportunity for a diversity of opinions and views to be articulated. But there is a limit to the extent to which this may be a feasible option considering imperatives and constraints imposed by the market.

8.5 Towards an Alternative to Professional Journalism

The present study, on a close analysis of journalistic news writing practices of the selected cases as well as basing on the content analysis of selected stories, arrives at conclusions not far different from those that Atton and Wickenden (2005) arrived at in their own study in which they sought to establish whether really there existed meaningful differences in news sourcing practices between mainstream media and so-called alternative media. The difference consisted only in the elites that they preferred to source from but their sources were just as elite as those whom mainstream news organisations relied on. The alternative media did not escape the same imperatives which news deadlines and newsroom routines imposed on news production whose effect remains rendering the subaltern groups speechless on matters affecting them. The object of this study has been the bringing into question the normativity of professional news production processes and practices in postcolonial settings and their suitability in the service the emancipatory promise of decolonisation. Whether under colonialism or its aftermath, irrespective of the colour of the skin of who is doing the reporting, the system of news values structure the news outcomes in ways that continue to lock the voices of those who inhabit the margins out.

8.6 What Journalists Need to Un-learn

Journalism is one of those institutional transplants that colonialism introduced and was generally designed to work for the colonial project as an institution. It introduced discursive practices and traditions. The old journalism that colonialism bequeathed to Africa actually stands in the way of reform and innovation. While new media technologies present an opportunity for devising a more dialogic journalism that is ecologically sound for the former marginalised groups, and scope for agentive interactions between journalists and the grassroots communities, the hierarchised professional journalism in modern newsrooms in Harare, has been content to adapt the new communication technologies to the preservation of an epistemically exclusive way of news as knowledge production in the service of power. Professional journalism would evidently need to unlearn much of what it regards as the

canons of good journalism if it is to make itself relevant to the communication needs of those whom colonial structures have rendered and continue to render speechless.

African Journalism lacks both the power of self-definition and the power to shape the universals that are deaf-and-dumb to the particularities of journalism in and on Africa. Because journalism has tended to be treated as an attribute of so-called 'modern' societies or of 'superior' others, it is only proper, so the reasoning goes, that African Journalism and the societies it serves, are taught the principles and professional practices by those who 'know' what it means to be civilised and to be relevant to civilisation" (Nymnjoh Interview 11)

Nyamnjoh's comment above is borne out by many examples of stories cited and discussed in this study. The press was under colonial rule and in the postcolonial order indeed deaf-and-dumb to the concerns of the poor, those who inhabit marginality whom I refer to in this study as the subaltern. Journalism practice in postcolonial Zimbabwe lacks originality and authenticity; mainstream media are poor imitations and shadows of their colonial pasts completely out of touch with the realities and worlds inhabited by the majority African population. They have perfected the art of mimicry as they chant the loudest about the need to conform to universalist notions of what constitutes the news even where the outcome is continued exclusion and alienation of the vast majority of the national population.

Recent studies on Zimbabwean news production practices (Mano 2005; Moyo, D 2007). have noted political polarisation as a defining feature in news production processes including determining how journalists deploy new media technologies in ways that continue with rather than challenge a universalistic news sourcing practice that privileges elitist world views largely unconnected to lived experiences of those on the margins. Mabweazara's ethnography of news production conducted between 2008 and 2010 concludes that:

The increase in the reliance on the Internet as a source of news and story ideas by journalists has had implications on news access and sourcing patterns. From observations and interviews it seemed clear that the Internet (and other ICTs) promoted the sourcing of stories from elite sections of society with access and the means to contribute content to the Internet. This scenario - coupled with the growing impact of online newspapers in 'setting the agenda' of news coverage - promotes an elite news culture, particularly in terms of political news. (Mabweazara 2010: 176)

The elitist top-down tendency in mainstream media negates the media's normative role as a space for open rational deliberation of citizens on issues of the day. Its democratising function is seriously impaired due to its exclusion of mass participation. The advent of new communication technologies unfortunately placed in the hands of professional journalists cosily embedded with and debauched by the power elite would tend to entrench a culture of national communication that is as Deuze (2010: 455) argues: "anything but transparent,

interactive or participatory”. The practice of journalism in the postcolony has continued on the old colonial paradigm, oblivious of calls by Africa’s own leading lights (Nyamnjoh, 2005; Kareithi, 2005, and Wasserman....) on the role of the media in postcolonial Africa, for a paradigm shift. Kareithi (2005: 14) urges African press to:

show the greatest departure from Western traditions in the criteria used when selecting and evaluating news and other public information, and in the range and diversity of interests given voice in such news and public information. This approach calls for a departure from the kind of news values common in the Western tradition which routinely privilege economic, political and intellectual elites.

Evidence presented and discussed in the preceding chapters based on analysis of news content as well as observation of newsroom practices in the selected newspaper organisations does not give reason for optimism that Kareithi’s call above will be heeded any time soon. Media construction of subaltern subjectivities continue unabated except that the bases may have changed from strictly racial to include class and gender, but the resultant exclusion, erasure and silencing is just as total as during the colonial era. In Fanon’s characterisation of the national bourgeoisie class as the inheriting class of all privilege left behind by colonists he was not so perceptive on how subordination and subalternity would be reproduced beyond colonial exploitation of blacks by whites. “The production of subalternity in such nations”, as Shome and Hegde (2002: 178) point out:

cannot be coded merely as a matter of racial or national difference. The subaltern produced by such manoeuvres of nation states with global capital is not always caught between the “west” and the “rest,” or between nation and colonialism. Rather, the condition of subalternity in such situations is often constituted through, and located within, the contradictions produced by alliances (partial or otherwise) or collisions, or both, between sections of the national and the global.

And it can be added that internally within the postcolonial nation state, subalternity is produced at the interstices of collusion and collision, complicity and contradiction between the press and the political elite class. At its core, subalternity is characterised by voicelessness and lack of agency. The subaltern cannot speak, particularly so through the press, and this was consistently proved to be the case in the case studies examined in this study.

8.7 Pathways for Possible Further Research

In light of this study’s findings which expose how mainstream press in Zimbabwe has, over the years, continued with the colonial practices of undervaluing, subjugating and subalternising the masses’ ways of knowing as the inferior ‘Other’ of its own self-knowing, it becomes anachronistic for media scholars studying postcolonial communication settings, to invest in scientific study of a mode of communication irrelevant to the majority of the

population's means of information and communication. While the present study was concerned with bringing postcolonial analysis to bear on the hegemonic nature of news content and the newsroom cultural practices responsible for generating such content and how these may still bear some resemblance with their colonial progenitors, it left the question of how the subaltern received and responded to the caricatured media images of themselves. Do they willingly and passively accept media imposed definitions and interpretations of reality or if not, what recourse do the socially, economically and politically marginalised have against such media imposed meanings and sense of their lived subordination? These very important questions were not addressed by this study and constitute a legitimate trajectory for future study. A research agenda that trains its scholarly attention exclusively on the ideological nature of mainstream press and its offerings, as the present study has done, while it may have its own merits, it becomes tainted and complicit, in a way, in re-emphasising and entrenching the same colonial condescension towards former colonial subjects and their knowledges as non-news and therefore unworthy of scholarly attention in postcolonial settings.

The question that this study makes ever so pertinent is a question which Nyamnjoh (2011: 24) posed then. when he opined: "how do people on the margins come by information? How do they communicate with one another and with others over and above those margins"? This is a question that seeks to redirect scholarly efforts and attention to the terra-incognita of mainstream journalism. Instead of continuing to pay unmerited scholarly attention to mainstream news spaces that speak across and in spite of the dominated majority. future communication research in postcolonial Africa may also need to refocus itself on those other forms of information exchange and communication processes and spaces which may make no pretences at a 'news' status and yet continue to animate the lives of the vast majority of Africans as they did during colonial times (Frederikse 1982). It would be more productive for future research to heed the urgent call to refocus attention on what Wasserman (2011 :) calls popular media. other scholars elsewhere prefer the term alternative media (Atton Downing, Couldry).

Using Zimbabwe as their case study, Leijendekker and Mutsvairo (2014) and Moyo (2015) have already started to chart tentative research pathways away from the mainstream media and into the uncharted terrain of alternative communicative ecologies and popular communication practices that are emerging everywhere in the wake of and enabled by new and social media technologies such as the mobile phone and the internet. Such studies are beginning to

ask different questions about media realities of the subaltern. Such research marks a scholarly attention shift away from the dominant research occupation with mainstream media and what it does or does not do for citizens. Studies that shift attention to the new question of the possibilities of challenging, resisting and subverting existing hegemonic power relations between the governed and the elite ruling class through use of other journalisms such as citizen journalism and through other media platforms such as social media carry the promise of epistemic egalitarianism, inclusivity and greater democratic participation of those in the margins in the enterprise of self definition.

8.8 Conclusion

A great deal of critical scholarly light has been shone on the processes of intellectual and scientific knowledge production by which Western knowledge systems have tended to subordinate, provincialise and treat non-Western ways of knowing as the inferior other of Euro-centred epistemologies, (Willems 2014; Grosfoguel 2011; Mignolo 2000). This study has extended this critical tradition by applying similar analytic lenses on a different domain of knowledge production, the production of news as knowledge and has clearly demonstrated how certain voices the voices of the subaltern, are systematically marginalised through an application of taken for granted assumptions about intrinsic newsworthiness of some events, actors and places rather than others. This study had set off in search of an answer to the question Nyamnjoh (2005: 33) posed rhetorically “How similar to or different from the colonial state in reality are states and media institutions in post-colonial Africa?” and this research comes to the conclusion concerning Zimbabwe’s press that our mainstream news media, specifically the press, remain bastions of a lingering colonial discourse. In a critical reflection on the state of the press in postcolonial Africa, Nyamnjoh (2005) cautions us to abstain from premature celebrations of discontinuities while ignoring the continuities with our colonial past. Nothing short of a paradigm shift in the uncritical, self-unconscious way mainstream journalism tends to ply its trade can bring about any meaningful change to the colonial residues that stubbornly continue to colour news constructions of subalternity in Zimbabwe’s postcolonial present. Going forward, the only grounds for optimism lie on the subaltern’s capacity for subversive use of the dominant discourse emanating from mainstream news discourses and their resourcefulness to engage in acts of epistemic resistance and practices of discursive self-emancipation through generation and dissemination of own counter narratives and ‘Other’ news.

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