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Peasant demonstrators, violent invaders. Representations of land in the Zimbabwean press

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Abstract:

The tense political environment of the late 1990s, in which the Zimbabwean government was confronted with a more vocal civil society and a new political party, set the stage for the introduction of a new private newspaper The Daily News which for the first time posed a serious challenge to the long-standing monopoly of the government-controlled daily newspaper The Herald. This paper compares and analyses how these two daily newspapers have represented the land reform program and the land occupations in Zimbabwe which gained momentum in early 2000. It argues that media representations of the land question came to parallel the polarized political environment, thereby missing chances for a serious and more subtle debate on the land issue in the media.

Key words:

Southern Africa, Zimbabwe, land reform, media, representation, discourse analysis

1. Introduction

In February 2000, Zimbabweans rejected a referendum on a draft for a new constitution which included a controversial clause that would allow the government to compulsorily acquire land from large-scale commercial farmers without paying for the land itself but only for improvements made on the land.¹ Subsequent to this rejection, numerous commercial farms were occupied. Although there had been previous waves of occupations on large-scale commercial farms, those taking place in early 2000 were much more widespread and better organized.² Despite the rejection of the referendum, a constitutional amendment on compulsory acquisition of land by the government was pushed through Parliament in April 2000. The state-supported daily newspaper *The Herald* described this event as follows:

Zimbabwe yesterday took a giant leap towards correcting the historical imbalances in land ownership when Parliament passed a Bill which gives Government the power to compulsorily acquire land for resettlement without paying compensation. (...)

The MPs [who voted in favor of the law], who included Vice-Presidents Muzenda and Msika immediately broke into the liberation war song "Zimbabwe Ndeyeropa" [*Zimbabwe was brought about through sacrifice and blood*] soon after the Bill was passed as British High Commission officials trooped out of the Speaker's Gallery. (...)

Some MPs could not contain their joy and swayed to the rhythm of the song, while others clapped and banged benches in ecstasy.³

The Herald constructed the amendment as an historical occasion concluding the 'struggle for land' in Zimbabwe which had started during the first uprising against the British in the late

nineteenth century [‘First Chimurenga’] and had continued during the liberation war in the 1970s [‘Second Chimurenga’]. It described the amendment as a means to overcome past impediments to land reform, giving rise to a ‘Third Chimurenga’, thereby suggesting that legal restrictions had been the main reason for the previously limited extent of resettlement.

Mocking similar ‘celebrations’ in Parliament later in the year, cartoonist Tony Namate commented as follows in a cartoon that was published in the private newspaper *The Daily News*:



Reprinted with permission from Tony Namate. First printed in *The Daily News*, 25 July 2000.

The cartoon showed celebrating MPs dancing to the tune of ‘ZANU ndeyeropa’ which means ‘ZANU, Zimbabwe’s ruling party, was brought about through sacrifice and blood’ in Zimbabwe’s major local language Shona. However, Namate used a literal translation ‘ZANU is bloody’, hereby anticipating the violence that would be a likely accompaniment of the party’s strategies to remain in power.

This example serves to show how the state and private media in different ways interpreted new developments concerning the land issue as they took place in 2000. Reports on land came to occupy a central place in the local and international media which increasingly led to concern among government representatives. In the run-up to the June 2000 parliamentary elections, *The Herald* quoted President Mugabe as criticizing media reportage of violence related to the farm occupations: “Those whites who died were shown like small gods on BBC, CNN and other foreign news agencies but no black was shown. Were there no blacks who died?”⁴

The same paper also cited the secretary of the Women’s League of the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) Thenjiwe Lesabe as defending the importance of land: “Why do you think we called ourselves children of the soil during the 1950s and 1960s? It is now really sad to see our own black journalists joining foreigners in saying land is not important. It shows they are confused and echoing foreign ideas”.⁵

The Herald, which declared its full support to the ruling party ZANU-PF in an editorial, joined in government criticism of local and international media reports:⁶

Instead of sponsoring commercial farmers' resistance to land redistribution the Western media and their governments should encourage the immediate surrender of some of the farms.⁷

The land reclamations are not Communist-oriented or a disrespect for the rule of law as what the Western-inspired media contends.⁸

The deaths of a policeman and two farmers and the injuries to some war veterans and farmers are regrettable developments, which should not have been allowed to happen. There was, however, nothing like the chaos that many Press reports inside and outside the country were suggesting. (...)

The truth is that, contrary to sensational reports and wishful doom-prophecies, things are NOT falling apart. The centre is compact and holding strongly.⁹

It blamed the Western media and local private media for exaggerating accounts of violence.

At the same time, ZANU-PF interestingly drew upon representations of the land question, as they appeared in the electronic or print media, in its parliamentary election campaign advertisements. A few days before the June 2000 parliamentary elections, the private newspaper *The Daily News* carried a ZANU-PF advert which included a still image of a CNN news program that had shown white farmers signing donation cheques to ZANU-PF's main contestant in the elections, the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).¹⁰ The last sentence of the advertisement read: "You have seen who his masters are. Vote wisely. Zimbabwe will never be a colony again". Through this extract, ZANU-PF aimed to communicate that the opposition party MDC was dominated by white farmer interests and that voting for them would be a compromise to Zimbabwean autonomy. Whereas on many occasions government representatives criticized the media for being 'biased' towards whites and foreigners, the ruling party did not hesitate to recognize the 'truth' of the same representations if they could be used to justify ZANU-PF's main election campaign issues: radical land reform and national sovereignty.

As the March 2002 presidential elections approached, the government increasingly began to use the state-funded media in its attempts to win the hearts and minds of Zimbabweans for its 'fast-track land reform' program which was officially announced after the 2000 parliamentary elections. A variety of jingles and video clips including 'Chave Chimurenga' [*it is now war*] and 'Rambai Makashinga' [*continue to persevere*] were repeatedly broadcast on state television and radio to convey positive messages about farming life. These examples demonstrate how media *representations* of the land question became increasingly important and contested in the Zimbabwean public sphere.

This article discusses the way in which two Zimbabwean daily newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, represented issues of land in the period between the rejection of the referendum in February 2000 and the parliamentary elections in June 2000. Three main themes are presented: representations of the land reform and resettlement program, portrayals of farmers and farm workers and reporting on the causes of the farm occupations.

2. Selection and silence: news as a construction of reality

As Fowler (1991) explains, all news is socially constructed. The events that a certain newspaper reports do not reflect the significance of those events but rather reveal the selection criteria of a newspaper. Newspapers decide which events they regard as important enough to report. A large number of events are not even referred to. Events are not newsworthy in themselves but only become 'news' when they are selected for inclusion in news reports. News is not simply that which happens but that which is regarded and presented by the media as newsworthy. As Foucault (1978, p. 27) has pointed out, silence is very much part of any discourse:

Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies.

Applying this to news production, Van Dijk (1991, p. 114) argues that the analysis of the ‘unsaid’ is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in text. By choice, information is both excluded and included.

In the study of media discourses, headlines are particularly interesting. Brookes (1995) asserts that readers often tend to focus on the headlines of articles rather than on the contents. Headlines serve as summaries of news articles and emphasize what the journalist considers to be the most important or most remarkable points of an article. Headlines also include the issues that reporters wish their readers to remember. Headlines often appear to be only partial summaries of the news text. Since headlines are usually read more frequently than the articles themselves, they are a powerful way to convey a particular ideological view. Headlines activate and reproduce the knowledge readers already have on the subject and may as a result also reconfirm readers’ prejudices.

The choice of vocabulary also constructs particular ideological representations of events. Apart from their descriptive function, words express views and attitudes. The selection of specific words rather than others has clear ideological implications because it often reveals the underlying beliefs of journalists about actors and events.

Another point of interest is how actors are grammatically structured. The roles or subject positions which grammar constructs for the participants have ideological meanings. Participants can be grammatically constructed either as direct agents of processes such as violence and repression or as affected participants, frequently as victims.

This article deals with the nature of reporting on land in *The Daily News* and *The Herald*, the selection of headlines in the two newspapers, the stories that were included and those that were omitted, their choice of vocabulary and their attribution of roles to various agents.

3. The Zimbabwean press in context of a changing society

At independence in 1980, the new government undertook a restructuring of the print media. The dominant national newspaper chain was still controlled by its South African parent, the Argus Media Group. In order to transfer control into the hands of Zimbabweans, the government created the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) in January 1981 (Saunders, 1999). The ZMMT was to take control of Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Limited (Zimpapers) and the national news agency, Zimbabwe Inter-African News Agency (ZIANA). Zimpapers publishes two daily newspapers *The Herald* and *The Chronicle*, and four weeklies: *Sunday Mail*, *Sunday News*, *Manica Post*, and *Kwayedza*. In 1986, the ZMMT obtained 51% of the shares in Zimpapers (Ronning & Kupe, 2000).

In the first decade after independence, Zimpapers pursued a policy of advocacy on behalf of the development needs of a primarily rural population. Its papers often promoted the goals and achievements of the government. Although it became clear by the mid-1980s that the government could not achieve certain objectives, the state-controlled press and national radio and television continued to emphasize the achievements of the government and did not admit shortcomings or failures.

ZMMT was to act independently of the government and was not to be answerable to politicians, features intended to be achieved through supervision by an independent board of trustees. In practice, however, the government—through the Ministry of Information and

directly through its Minister—frequently interfered and thereby undermined ZMMT’s autonomy (Saunders, 1999). Direct political interference in Zimpapers continued into the 1990s. Several editors and journalists were dismissed and others often threatened. Increasingly, the public media were seen as representing solely the views of the government.

In the early 1990s, several new publications appeared, and Zimbabwe’s media environment seemed to become more tolerant. The decreasing popularity of Zimpapers’ publications enabled other private newspapers to emerge in the media market. In the 1990s, the established independent newspaper *The Financial Gazette* and other new weekly private publications such as *The Zimbabwe Independent* (1996), *The Standard* (1997) and *The Zimbabwe Mirror* (1997) increasingly became critical of the government. They played an important role in exposing corruption, government mismanagement and the deepening economic and social crisis in Zimbabwe.

Obviously, such outspokenness has also made the private media a target for the government. In order to attempt to silence the independent press, the government has used a range of measures including making death threats to and mounting assaults on reporters, charging editors and reporters with criminal defamation, and repeatedly suing newspapers for civil defamation, claiming large sums in damages. The regulatory environment for media that the government inherited from the pre-independence era, and never modified, proved to be extremely useful in this respect. Draconian laws that served to restrict the media—such as the Privileges, Immunities and Powers of Parliament Act (1971), the Official Secrets Act (1970), the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (1960) and the principle of criminal defamation—enabled the government to apply old legislation to suit new political ends (Saunders, 1999).

Government attacks on the private press increased in 1999 as Zimbabwe was faced with growing political and economic pressures. The structural adjustment program which was implemented in the early 1990s had led to the abolition of food subsidies, a sharp increase in unemployment and a decline in the provision of social services such as education and health care. In this climate of rapidly rising poverty, the government was faced with growing economic demands from members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA). This association was set up in 1992 by the War Veterans Act in order to improve the welfare of ex-combatants and their dependants. Despite promises to uplift their lives, war veterans became increasingly disillusioned and therefore began to put stronger pressure on the government.

In 1997, the government finally succumbed to war veterans’ demands when it announced to offer them pensions although these had not been included in the government budget. The unbudgeted spending on war veteran pensions, coupled with a decision in 1998 to intervene in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and resultant decrease of donor funds, and the rapid devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar as a result of declining investor confidence led to a strong decline of the economy. Civil society became increasingly vocal under these circumstances. In order to address the rising political and economic problems in the country, the labor union movement united in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) resolved to support the formation of a new political party. This led to the establishment of the Movement for Democratic Change in September 1999.

In this volatile environment, the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) established—with both local and foreign investment—two new daily newspapers: Harare-based *The Daily News* and Bulawayo-based *The Dispatch*, plus a chain of other local newspapers. *The Daily News* began publication in March 1999 and became particularly popular in the period leading up to the 2000 parliamentary elections when it managed to triple its average sales from 35,000 to 90,000.¹¹ According to its editor, the circulation of *The Herald* in the same period dropped from around 90,000 to little more than 60,000 a day.¹² A

survey conducted by the Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (ZARF) showed, however, that *The Herald* still dominated the market in terms of average readership with 713,000 daily readers whereas *The Daily News* was on average read by 424,000 people.¹³ Because of its rapidly rising popularity and critical reporting, the government increasingly came to target the newspaper. In two separate incidents, *The Daily News*' offices (April 2000) and printing press (January 2001) were bombed and in both cases the government was the primary suspect. Furthermore, journalists, reporters and the editor of the newspaper were arrested and harassed on numerous occasions.

After the 2000 parliamentary elections, Jonathan Moyo was appointed as the Minister of Information and Publicity in the President's Office which drastically came to change Zimbabwe's media landscape. Around the time of the presidential elections in March 2002, the government introduced new legislation which had important implications for both local and international media. The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) banned the publication or communication of statements offensive to the Zimbabwean state or to the President, or those which endanger public order, regardless of whether the information is true or false. In addition, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) called for registration and accreditation of all foreign correspondents, local journalists, media houses and news agencies with a Media and Information Commission. *The Daily News* decided not to register as a media house but to challenge the constitutionality of AIPPA in the Supreme Court. In September 2003, the Court ruled that *The Daily News* would have to comply with AIPPA and the newspaper was advised to register with the Media and Information Commission. The commission denied registration and this forced *The Daily News* to stop publication of its paper.

4. Representations of the land reform and resettlement program

The pace of Zimbabwe's land reform program has generally been criticized as having been too slow. Potts (2000) argues that this point is often made with reference to the fact that the government announced in 1982 that it was planning to resettle 162,000 households in only five years and the government signally failed to achieve this target. The target figure, however, was never realistic but was used mainly for political reasons. Potts argues the later target set by the government of 15,000 families to be resettled each year was far more realistic, although it too was not fully reached. Potts emphasizes that the number of households so far resettled can no longer be discarded as an irrelevance. She estimates that by 1996 a total of 908,000 people had benefited from the resettlement program. In stressing its positive contribution to poverty reduction, Kinsey (1999) argues that the land reform program has so far generally been a success.

Despite government's achievements in the initial period after independence, Zimbabwe's land distribution remains very unequal. There is widespread consensus that the land question needs to be seriously addressed, although arguments differ as to the manner of doing so. The following section discusses the reasons advanced by *The Herald* and *The Daily News* to explain the slow pace of land reform. In addition, it treats the arguments used by both papers either to support or reject the land reform program.

(a) Reasons for the slow pace of resettlement

One of the explanations for the slow pace of resettlement offered by *The Herald* was the strict regulations concerning land redistribution imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution for the first 10 years after independence:

At independence, the blacks believed there would be an equitable redistribution of land sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, the cease-fire document [the Lancaster House Agreement] prescribed what the Chimurenga had proscribed. Whatever resettlement took place was at a snail's pace. (...) The "willing buyer-willing seller" policy is in itself a "joint" dislocation as far as the people of Zimbabwe are concerned. Zimbabweans need the land yesterday.¹⁴

In addition, *The Herald* stressed that the British government did not release all the funds meant for land reform. Many articles argued that the British government should be reminded of the obligations made at the Lancaster House Conference. Britain, *The Herald* argued, should be held fully responsible to fund the land redistribution program:

And today as he listens to the invective - as well as promises of aid money for land reform "after the elections" - coming in a noisy stream from London, he wonders what happened to the previous pledges of money for resettlement made at Lancaster when the talk got bogged down over land. (...) Only a trickle of the promised funding from the talks in 1979 was released by the British. The result was that over the years the Government only managed to get 3.5 million hectares and settled 71,000 families from a target of 162,000.¹⁵

The British Labor government was blamed in particular for withholding funds for land reform:

It is, however, expected that the major problem could come from members of the Labor Government, who do not fully understand the issues discussed under the Lancaster House agreement.¹⁶

Another reason mentioned was pressure by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for the Zimbabwean government not to pursue radical land reform. One editorial in *The Herald* reported the contents of the UNDP Human Development Report. It stated:

The report released by the United Nations Development Programme in Harare yesterday says the Government's failure to redress the land issue was a direct result of the failure to negotiate favorable clauses on land redistribution at Lancaster House, failure by the Government to nationalize land immediately after the end of the 10-year moratorium due to International Monetary Fund and World Bank pressure and loss of enthusiasm for land reform by politicians and the bureaucratic elite.¹⁷

The editorial, however, did not deal further with the first and last points. Instead, it emphasized primarily the pressure the government encountered from the international financial institutions. In a later article on the constitutional amendment, *The Herald* nearly copied the Lancaster House agreement and World Bank/IMF arguments but the paper did not mention anything about loss of enthusiasm for land reform by politicians.¹⁸

After the Land Acquisition Act was passed in 1992, the government could compulsorily acquire land. Farmers, however, could still contest designation of their farms in the courts. *The Herald* blamed the slow pace of resettlement on the fact that many farmers legally contested the acquisition of their farms and resisted handing them over to the government:

The resettlement program has not moved at the desired speed largely because of farmers who had contested the designation and the subsequent intention to acquire the farms. Of the initial 841 farms that had been designated, 520 had been contested, leaving 321 uncontested.¹⁹

The Daily News noted one of the main reasons for the slow pace of resettlement was the fact that numbers of the farms acquired were not made available for resettlement but were lying idle. In various *Daily News* editorials, the paper wondered why in early 2000 vacant state land was not occupied instead of productive farms:

How many hectares of land have been acquired by the government but are now lying idle or have been leased to a class of political parasites? ²⁰

Why are the farms that are lying idle, or already belong to the government for resettlement, not being taken over by the “veterans” or being resettled? Why are only productive farms the target of invasion? ²¹

The newspaper also blamed limited resettlement on corruption and pointed out that farms had been handed out to government officials and ZANU-PF members instead of peasant farmers. *The Daily News* reported that Zimbabwe Union of Democrats president Margaret Dongo published a list with more than 270 state farms that originally were meant for resettlement of peasant farmers but that had been allocated to government officials, ZANU-PF members and other prominent people who often had minimal farming experience.²² The paper also carried a large number of articles on the occupation of ‘unproductive farms’ belonging to prominent black Zimbabweans in commercial farming resettlement schemes.²³

The Herald, on the other hand, defended parceling out of farms to government officials by arguing that they were also entitled to farms:

Even if every minister had acquired a farm, the total hectarage would still be an insignificant proportion of the five million hectares earmarked for land resettlement out of the 12 million hectares in the hands of whites.²⁴

(...) [M]ost of the land acquired for resettlement during the past twenty years has ended up in the hands of the politicians, an accusation that is not entirely true. Yes, there is some truth that some land has ended up in the hands of the politicians but that revelation cannot be allowed to grind the process to acquire more land to resettle people to a halt. That argument is a lame excuse by people who have the land but do not want to give away any of it. But let us face it, even if the politicians have taken some of the land and are utilising it, what is wrong with that? What is wrong with having black politicians who own black farms? ²⁵

In summary, it can be concluded that *The Herald* attempted to focus more on external reasons for the slow pace of land reform whereas *The Daily News* tended to stress the faults of the government.

(b) *Arguments against and in support of land reform*

While reporting on the need for land reform in the context of the new developments in early 2000, the Zimbabwean press clearly took very different positions. Whereas *The Herald* emphasized the necessity to redistribute land, *The Daily News* focused on the negative consequences of the farm occupations for the economy. *The Daily News* ran numerous articles in which various groups—including the international community, opposition parties, human rights organizations, labor unions, the business community, and farm worker representatives—expressed their disapproval of farm occupations, although they generally declared support for the principle of land reform provided it were conducted in a transparent manner.²⁶ *The Herald* carried articles in which other actors—such as foreign governments, churches, labor unions, and most importantly both ruling and opposition parties from neighboring countries—declared their support for land reform.²⁷ However, while supporting transparent and orderly land reform, some actors were reported to be concerned about the farm occupations. Whereas the content of these types of articles in both papers did not always differ significantly, headlines clearly contrasted. *The Daily News* headlines would state that certain actors condemned *land ‘invasions’*, whereas headlines in *The Herald* would argue that

certain actors supported *land reform*. In such cases, therefore, headlines served to make clear ideological statements about the attitude of the newspapers towards the events unfolding.

The Daily News expressed strong reservations that land reform, particularly because of the way in which it was being carried out by the government, might have a severely damaging impact on the economy:

The present concept of land invasion and settling multitudes of people on productive farmland, many, if not all, of whom will not have the necessary resources to make the land productive has to be a recipe for disaster. The farms which are being invaded are the farms that feed the nation and earn foreign currency.²⁸

We are no longer a nation that can survive without commercial farming. Commercial farming is a necessity today in order to feed the people. Commercial farming provides a major source of the nation's foreign exchange.²⁹

The paper consistently portrayed commercial farmers as an indispensable part of the economy. *The Daily News* carried a large number of articles—quoting mainly representatives from the business community, financial sector and farmers' unions—on the actual and anticipated negative effects of occupations on the economy.³⁰ Articles highlighted that occupations stopped farmers from planting wheat and vegetables and would therefore lead to shortages. Reduced export earnings from tobacco were also cited as further negatively impacting on business in general. The paper reported that the performance of stock exchanges and investor confidence in both Zimbabwe and the Southern African region were likely to be adversely affected. Agro-chemical companies were also said to be affected because few farmers were buying fertilizers as a result of uncertainties. Finally, there were reported to be adverse consequences for farm workers, who were said to be deserting their jobs due to the occupations, not being properly paid or being retrenched.

The Herald covered the issue with significantly fewer articles.³¹ It did report that farm occupations were threatening farm workers' jobs, damaging investor confidence and hurting agricultural production but the paper tended to focus solely on the disruption of agriculture and did not include the general effects on the economy. The newspaper also argued that land reform would have positive effects. The production potential of communal farmers could be fully utilized if they would be able to move to more fertile areas. To further illustrate the crucial importance of land reform, *The Herald* frequently published pictures which were supposed to prove the marginalized position of communal farmers.³²

Particularly in its editorials, the newspaper reported that land reform could improve food security.³³ *The Herald* argued that commercial farmers had in recent years increasingly shifted their production from food crops such as maize to export crops such as horticulture and flowers, thereby negatively affecting food security. *The Herald* pointed out that a large part of food was now being produced by communal farmers. If land would be distributed to these farmers, the newspaper concluded, food production would increase because communal farmers tended to focus on food crops.

Although it remains to be seen whether communal farmers will continue to be interested in growing food crops after resettlement, *The Herald* made numerous attempts to break down colonially rooted stereotypes of 'unproductive peasants'. In order to reduce fears of lower agricultural production as a result of land reform, *The Herald* stressed the productivity of communal and resettlement farmers:

The acquisition of fertile land from the large-scale commercial farming sector for resettling peasant farmers will not result in a slump in agricultural production, as the farmers have proved

their potential on small and marginal land. The bulk of the major crops, such as maize, cotton, groundnuts, burley tobacco and paprika comes from the communal and resettlement farmers.³⁴

Persistent claims that Zimbabwe will not be able to feed itself if communal farmers are settled on commercial farms have no foundation at all. Our small farmers have convincingly answered their critics by consistently producing on their small and poor pieces of land the bulk of the country's maize and cotton.³⁵

The resettled farmers, who were given land during the first phase of the land reform programme, have contributed immensely to the country's agricultural production, in spite of a host of problems, such as absence of infrastructure, escalating costs of inputs and high interest rates.³⁶

Photographs of communal and resettlement farmers "showing off with their bumper harvest" served to deliver further evidence for the productivity of small-scale commercial farmers.³⁷

The Daily News, in contrast, did not have a lot of confidence in land reform. Although the paper was particularly concerned about the way in which it was being carried out by the government, it still failed to seriously consider and debate the option of land reform itself. Echoing the emphasis of the opposition party MDC on solving the economic crisis as first priority, *The Daily News* attempted to downplay the importance of land reform to Zimbabweans:

There is a need to understand and appreciate that our attention is being diverted from the real issue and threat confronting Zimbabwe. We are being drawn into debates on the land issue and the rule of anarchy, when the most serious and pressing problem that we should be debating and concentrating on is the rapidly declining state of the economy, and how will the economy be restored to a more viable level.³⁸

The paper also published the results of a survey that concluded that land was not the most pressing issue among Zimbabweans.³⁹ According to the survey, priorities were rather rising prices of commodities, unemployment, the fall of the Zimbabwean dollar, and poverty and corruption.

Often quoting politicians, *The Herald* thus focused on the historical necessity to correct land imbalances in order to solve the issue once and for all.

Zimbabwe's prime agricultural land is occupied by about 4 500 large-scale commercial farmers, while millions of poor peasants remain crammed on marginal land in communal areas. (...)

Given this scenario, it becomes unreasonable for anyone or any institution to attack the Government for embarking on such a noble and just cause. Land reform is a key issue for any Government that is serious about poverty reduction and sustaining rural livelihoods in Zimbabwe has to address.⁴⁰

In attempts to justify the land reform exercise, frequently quoting politicians, *The Herald* failed to critically assess the chaotic ways in which it was being carried out. *The Daily News*, on the other hand, was very concerned about the negative effects of the land occupations and often cited economists expressing concern about the future of Zimbabwe. However, as a result, the paper did not engage in a more profound debate on land reform and failed to recognize the need for land amongst Zimbabweans.

5. Agents and victims: representations of farmers and farm workers

After independence, white commercial farmers were influential neither in the ruling party nor in Parliament. They took little active interest in participating in national politics. Rutherford (2001) argues that white commercial farms in Zimbabwe have been organized on the basis of the principle of 'domestic government'. Both the colonial and the independent government

were not extremely concerned with the plight of farm workers but saw them as the responsibility of the farmer. Farmers did not have problems with limited government intervention as it allowed them to fully control their farms and farm workers. Whereas they did not have positions in government, commercial farmers obviously had political power because of their strong economic position (von Blanckenburg, 1994). In areas such as agricultural price policy, for example, the government has listened to their representative organization, the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU). With the establishment of the MDC, however, farmers have become more active in political activities. White farmers were widely regarded as funding the MDC and also held positions in the party. Farm workers have been closely associated with the farmers for whom they worked. As in the liberation war, simply working for whites was sufficient for one to be considered a supporter of the opposition—and thus an enemy.

On February 12-13, 2000, the Zimbabwean government held a referendum on the draft constitution proposed by the government-sponsored Constitutional Commission. Voters rejected the proposed constitution. *The Herald* blamed the rejection on “the massive turnout of whites.”⁴¹ The state media explained the rejection of the constitution as motivated by the clause that would allow the government to compulsorily acquire land without compensation for the land. Obviously, whites could never really have had a significant impact on the final results since they only constitute a small percentage of Zimbabwe's population. But with the establishment of the MDC, whites did come to play a more public role in political activities and some held positions in the party. This was quickly taken up by ZANU-PF and the state media who portrayed the MDC as a party ‘funded by white farmers’ and dominated by ‘Rhodesian interests’.

As a consequence of their increasing presence in party politics, farmers frequently became the target of violence. *The Daily News* paid significantly more attention to violence associated with farm occupations whereas *The Herald* generally described the farm occupations as peaceful. According to *The Daily News*, farmers were assaulted, harassed, held hostage, abducted, taken for ‘re-education’ sessions and intimidated.⁴² The paper described it as follows: “Police offered no comfort as they watched helpless, mainly middle-aged whites struggling to brace themselves in the face of angry mobs of men, women and children chanting war slogans and nationalistic songs”.⁴³ In a number of occasions, *The Daily News* illustrated its reports with dramatic pictures of assaulted farmers and affected farm widows.⁴⁴

Both newspapers covered the murder of five white farmers although agency was attributed to different actors.⁴⁵ In its coverage of the killings, *The Daily News* portrayed the farmers as passive victims of violent war veterans. *The Herald* reported them as provoking war veterans thus attributing a more active role to the white farmers. For example, in the case of the murder of David Stevens, *The Herald* emphasized the story of the police spokesman:

Chief Sup Bvudzijena said events leading to his death started around 6 am on Saturday when he [Stevens] armed himself with a gun and instructed his workers to arm themselves as well. They allegedly attacked and injured 14 of 35 war veterans, who have been occupying the farm since February using spears, hoes, sticks and stones, according to war veterans at the farm. (...) When word of the attack filtered through to other war veterans occupying neighbouring farms, they went to the farm to retaliate.⁴⁶

The Daily News gave more prevalence to the story of the farmers' union vice president who denied that Stevens was armed and stated that the farmer and his farm workers had resisted the war veterans' encroachment earlier that day.

Another example is the murder of the farmer Alan Dunn. In covering this incident, *The Herald* paid far more attention to the fact that white farmers assaulted two farm workers rather than to the causes of the actual death of Dunn. It thus ascribed agency to the farmers whereas farm workers were in this case portrayed as victims.

Generally, farm workers were represented in the government-sponsored media as being oppressed by their bosses. *The Herald* reported how farmers were mobilizing their workers to become MDC supporters. The paper expressed concern that farm workers were forced by their 'paymasters' to vote for the MDC.⁴⁷ Farmers were reported to threaten their workers that they would become unemployed if they would vote for ZANU-PF since the government would then take their farms.

Zimbabwe's farm workers, normally treated with contempt by their "baases", suddenly have new importance thrust on them as potential voters for the Movement for Democratic Change as the farmers desperately try to keep up the status quo on land in place. Vote for ZANU-PF and you are out, they are threatened by the farmers, who hope to keep their stranglehold on vast tracts of fertile, idle land with a possible change in government.⁴⁸

The state media portrayed farm workers as victims of white farmers' capitalist exploitation. *The Herald* described how farmers were abusing farm workers by offering them low wages and providing them with poor accommodation. These arguments were supported by pictures showing a farm compound, hardworking farm workers and employees waiting for their salaries.⁴⁹

Representations in the private press differed. *The Daily News* was concerned farm workers would be displaced if land would be redistributed:

There are 500 000 farm workers who stand to lose not only the source of their incomes and ability to support their families, but where they will live when the farmland is redistributed. The average family unit is larger than four, and if we use this as the average, that is a population of 2 million people who will be destabilised and disadvantaged economically, as a direct result of the farm invasions. The average farm employs and houses more workers than the area of the farm that will be resettled with people when the farm is redistributed. Who will pay the workers on the farms where the farmer has been forced to leave the farm? That is already a problem.⁵⁰

Whereas *The Herald* blamed farmers for coercing farm workers to vote MDC, *The Daily News* instead reported that ZANU-PF was forcing farm workers to attend rallies.⁵¹ The paper associated these meetings with all-night rallies ('pungwes') as they were held during the liberation war in order to mobilize support for the guerrilla fighters:

(...) pro-government militias, propagandists and hired thugs have intensified their assaults of political opponents and waverers at all night rallies and liberation war-style kangaroo courts set up at invaded commercial farms, growth points and in remote villages. The new wave has cowed thousands into submission and forced some to flee to towns and cities for safety and security.⁵²

The Daily News portrayed farm workers as victims of violence perpetrated by war veterans.⁵³ War veterans and ZANU-PF supporters were reported to beat up, threaten and intimidate farm workers, sometimes because they were refusing to join them in their farm occupations. Houses of farm workers were burnt down and property was taken. Many farm workers were reported to have fled into towns. *The Daily News* often illustrated its reports with pictures of assaulted farm workers.⁵⁴

Although the newspaper did acknowledge the problems facing farm workers, they were generally not given the chance to present their own views on the situation. In all cases but one, farm workers were represented by spokespersons from farm workers unions or by the

farmers. This further strengthened their positions as dependent victims and the newspaper hereby failed to recognize farm workers as autonomous individuals.

Whereas *The Herald* did not acknowledge the possibility of farm workers to vote for a political party of their choice or to escape from an exploitative situation, *The Daily News* failed to recognize their ability to speak for themselves. Furthermore, the private newspaper did not critically assess the often marginalized position of farm workers on commercial farms before the farm occupations. By expressing their concern over farm workers' position after the land occupations, they did not question the difficulties farm workers had experienced before such as often racist and paternalistic attitudes of farmers towards their farm workers. *The Herald*, on the other hand, solely seemed to focus on the structural situation of farm workers before the occupations. They did not express their concern over large-scale displacements of farm workers as a result of more recent developments.

6. Spontaneous or organised? Reporting on the causes of the farm occupations

Farm occupations have been part of Zimbabwe's pre- and post-independence history (Alexander, 1994; Moyo, 2000, 2001; Chitiyo, 2000; Marongwe, 2001). Various land tenure categories have been occupied: white-owned, state-owned and communal land. Immediately after independence, occupation of abandoned commercial farms and vacant state land often resulted into formal resettlement of communities. From the mid-1980s onwards, landless peasants also began to occupy and use land that belonged to politicians and the black elite. Reiterating colonial discourses, these people were labeled as 'squatters' by the government. In this period, the government often quickly responded to occupations, forcibly removing people from the areas they were occupying with assistance of the police and army.

In 1997 and 1998, more high profile occupation began to occur, generally on farms which had been identified for compulsory acquisition shortly before. Farms were mostly occupied with the explicit aim of redistributing land from white farmers to landless villagers and war veterans. In some cases, people were evicted from the land and the government tried to convince them to wait for proper resettlement.

After the rejection of the referendum, a large number of commercial farms were occupied. With parliamentary elections in June 2000 and presidential elections in 2002 coming up, the government decided not to ban these occupations. Despite the far more widespread nature of land occupations in early 2000, the government did not react with mass evictions but instead tacitly tolerated the events. Although it is difficult to say *to what extent* the occupations were instigated and organized, there is no doubt that the ruling party ZANU-PF, the Zimbabwe National Army, the police and the Central Intelligence Organisation did play a significant role in the occupations.

But it must be noted that occupations differed enormously from region to region. Moyo (2001) argues that apart from the high profile, centrally controlled occupations, there were various other more locally driven occupations in which a variety of actors participated. He identifies occupations in which members of the ZNWVLA took a leading role, those that were started by community members or traditional leaders and were later formalized by war veterans, those ran by communities with specific grievances against particular farmers and some directed by urban groups.

Zimbabwean newspapers gave widely diverging reasons for the causes of the farm occupations. *The Daily News* generally held the view that occupations were sponsored by the government. The following descriptions of the events seemed typical for the newspaper:

The ruling party is using land as its main campaign tool for the parliamentary elections and the recent farm invasions by the former fighters have been viewed as government orchestrated.⁵⁵

War veterans, with government support, invaded white-owned commercial farms alleging that white farmers had influenced blacks, to reject the government-sponsored draft constitution in last month's referendum.⁵⁶

Political analysts say the invasions are part of a strategy to intimidate voters and cut financial support from farmers to the MDC, which gives Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF party the strongest challenge to its 20-year hold on power.⁵⁷

The Daily News carried articles in which farmers were quoted as saying that the war veterans were ferried in government vehicles to their farms, that war veterans introduced themselves as ZANU-PF members and they were issued with arms from the government armory.⁵⁸ The paper reported that in some instances farm occupations were even incited or encouraged by ZANU-PF officials.⁵⁹

The Daily News stressed that occupations were not spontaneous but well organized. Invaders arrived on buses and lorries and were supplied with food.⁶⁰ In another article, *The Daily News* reported that villagers were being force-marched onto the commercial areas to seize land by a war veterans' leader.⁶¹ However the paper did not portray these villagers as passive victims but reported that they dismissed the exercise "as part of cheap politicking by ZANU-PF". *The Daily News* represented villagers as active agents resisting ZANU-PF's tactics to garner more votes.

By contrast, *The Herald* portrayed the farm occupations as spontaneous demonstrations caused by disappointment over the rejection of the draft constitution. It carried several articles with headlines suggesting that occupations were a protest against the 'no' vote and dismissed ideas that the occupations were part of ZANU-PF's election campaign.⁶²

Land-hungry war veterans poured onto at least 30 commercial farms countrywide last month in a massive show of displeasure over the rejection of draft Constitution and to exert pressure on the Government to speed up the resettlement programme.⁶³

Stung by the rejection of the draft constitution in a referendum early this month, the war veterans have gone on a countrywide invasion of commercial farms.⁶⁴

The Herald vigorously dismissed the view that the occupations were sponsored by the ruling party. It quoted ZANU-PF officials and villagers stating that the invasions should not be regarded as a ZANU-PF election campaign.⁶⁵

The allegation that ZANU-PF is sponsoring the ongoing farm seizure is baseless. Freedom fighters (veterans of the liberation war) do not need to be taught by anyone the need for land. They went to war for land and unless they and the masses of Zimbabwe got back the land, we can not seriously think we are independent.⁶⁶

The different positions the two newspapers held also became apparent in their choice of vocabulary. In describing the occupiers of commercial farms, both papers used quite neutral terms such as war veterans, ex-combatants and former freedom fighters. Initially, *The Daily News* also described them as 'so-called war veterans' or 'people claiming to be war veterans', thereby questioning the status of the occupiers. However, in a later stage of the occupations *The Daily News* became more explicit and usually described the occupiers as 'war veterans and ZANU-PF supporters', 'pro-government invaders' or 'war veterans and ZANU-PF

youth', thereby implying that farm occupations were not genuine demonstrations by war veterans but government-orchestrated. The paper also added negative adjectives to the nouns describing occupiers such as rowdy, marauding, defiant, screaming, swearing, incensed and self-styled, thereby reinforcing their violent identity. *The Herald* was more likely to describe occupiers as 'war veterans and other landless peasants' or 'former combatants and land-hungry villagers', thereby reinforcing the idea that land occupations were clear protests against land imbalances.

By representing the farm occupations as spontaneous demonstrations, *The Herald* sought to cover up the crucial role which the state undoubtedly played in supporting the occupations. *The Daily News*, on the other hand, mainly portrayed the events as dominated by party politics and therefore did not acknowledge that e.g. communal farmers and farm workers with a true desire for land often joined the occupations as they hoped to be able to secure access to land in this way. By downplaying the role of other actors in the occupations, *The Daily News* created the impression that land was not a priority amongst Zimbabweans and that the occupations were just being used by the ruling party to win votes in the forthcoming elections.

7. Conclusions: the past, the present and the future

With clearly separate agendas, two Zimbabwean daily newspapers, the government-controlled *The Herald* and the privately-funded *The Daily News*, have drawn upon different means to represent issues of land. Through use of specific vocabulary, pictures, choice of particular headlines, omission or inclusion of information and attribution of agency to certain actors, they produced a construction of the events in Zimbabwe that served to satisfy their interests in an increasingly polarized political environment. In this tense climate, both papers became easily associated with diverging political opinions.

The Herald clearly attempted to provide a positive image of ZANU-PF's main campaign issue: its radical land reform programme. Being a relatively young newspaper and run on a commercial basis, *The Daily News* took advantage of the void created by *The Herald* which merely tended to focus on the past achievements and future promises of the government. With the increasing recognition of civil society and the labor movement, there was clearly a market for a second *daily* newspaper that would address the failures of past government policies and would provide alternative views on issues. These considerations might have induced *The Daily News* to be more sympathetic towards the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change whose main priority was economic recovery and creation of employment in Zimbabwe. MDC's neo-liberal and market-based land policy echoed donor calls for transparency, poverty reduction, the rule of law and macro-economic stabilization.

In its representations of the land occupations and the land question in general, *The Herald* frequently drew upon anti-colonial discourses in which the past often played a dominant role. Colonialism had led to serious land imbalances which had insufficiently been redressed after independence. White commercial farmers continued to occupy the most fertile grounds in Zimbabwe and the time had now come to solve the land issue once and forever. Spontaneous demonstrations of land-hungry peasants on farms had proven that there was a real need for land amongst Zimbabweans. However, in drawing extensively upon the past, *The Herald* neglected to critically assess how the present land occupations would affect the land reform exercise. By ignoring or downplaying the more negative aspects of the occupations such as the violence, the newspaper failed to speculate on how the future of Zimbabwe would look like under 'fast track land reform'.

The Daily News, on the other hand, was very much concerned with the present, thereby missing its chance to reflect upon the past. Focusing on the negative economic effects

of what the paper described as 'land invasions', it failed to get into a serious debate on land reform. By discrediting the land occupations as party politics, the newspaper ignored that there certainly is a clear desire for land amongst Zimbabweans.

Readers of the two papers were confronted with very different positions which clearly made dialogue or compromise more difficult. By supporting the side of commercial farmers and farm workers on the one hand, and war veterans and ZANU-PF supporters on the other hand, newspapers reinforced stereotypes of the 'good' and the 'evil'. In portraying the agenda of certain stakeholders as credible and others as illegitimate, both newspapers ignored that 'the other side' might also have a valid point to make and failed to take up a more subtle position towards the land question. Concerning the further course of events in Zimbabwe, this polarisation of attitudes might lead to more divisions on the issue within society whereas a lively public dialogue could potentially contribute to a final solution.

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Notes

¹ Civil society played an important role in initiating the debate on a new Zimbabwean constitution (see Dorman, 2003). In 1997, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was established, a coalition consisting of NGOs, community associations, church groups and trade unions. The NCA advocated for changes to the constitution and organized a nation-wide consultation exercise in order to elicit views from Zimbabweans. In response to the activities of the NCA, the government launched its own Constitutional Commission in March 1999 which presented a draft of a new proposed constitution in November 1999. Zimbabweans rejected this draft in a national referendum that was held in February 2000.

² There had been sporadic and brief occupations of commercial farms in the country since independence, but these began to intensify in 1997 and 1998 with 15 major land occupations. The first mass occupations began in Nyamandlovu in Matabeleland, where 800 families occupied a white owned farm. This incident was followed by similar occupations in the Svosve area of Mashonaland East, Nyamazura in Manicaland and the Nemanva occupations in Masvingo province. Land belonging to or being leased by the state to prominent black political leaders was also occupied.

³ Parliament passes Bill, *The Herald*, April 7, 2000.

⁴ President launches election tour, *The Herald*, June 9, 2000.

⁵ Land can never be used as political gimmick: Lesabe, *The Herald*, June 21, 2000.

⁶ Media madness now gripping Zimbabwe is not Press freedom, Editor (Bornwell Chakaodza), *The Herald*, May 4, 2000. See also MMPZ (2000), *Election 2000: The Media War*, p. 13.

⁷ Co-operation from all stakeholders needed in resolving the land issue, Dr Sylvester Maunganidze, *The Herald*, May 16, 2000.

⁸ Land unjustly acquired cannot be freely transferred, Tapiwa Ndoro, *The Herald*, May 17, 2000.

⁹ Things not falling apart in Zimbabwe, Editor (Bornwell Chakaodza), *The Herald*, April 21, 2000.

¹⁰ *The Daily News*, June 24, 2000.

¹¹ Personal communication, *The Daily News* Advertisement Manager, September 2001.

¹² Chakaodza tells Herald secrets, *The Daily News*, May 21, 2001.

¹³ As part of a survey carried out for the Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation (ZARF), 5000 adults in communal, resettlement, commercial farming, mining and urban high- and low-density areas were interviewed on their reading behavior between February 3, 2000 and June 13, 2000. The results were published in the Zimbabwe All Media & Products Survey (ZAMPS) 2000, Volume Three.

¹⁴ Land question: the sins of history are catching up, Lisborn Webster Mandizvidza, *The Herald*, April 6, 2000.

¹⁵ Peasant farmers still condemned to native reserves, Features Writer, *The Herald*, June 21, 2000.

¹⁶ Delegation leaves for UK for talks on land, *The Herald*, April 25, 2000.

¹⁷ Land ownership structure criticised, *The Herald*, April 1, 2000.

¹⁸ State gazettes land reform amendment, *The Herald*, April 10, 2000.

¹⁹ Notice to acquire 804 farms issued, *The Herald*, June 2, 2000.

²⁰ Invasion of commercial farms is a negation of the liberation struggle, Chimusoro Mutimbanyoka, *The Daily News*, March 9, 2000.

²¹ Government using land issue to divert attention from economic crisis, David Mills, *The Daily News*, March 16, 2000.

²² 270 farms go to VIPs, *The Daily News*, March 28, 2000.

²³ *The Daily News*: Minister gives up Marula Farm (March 15, 2000), Kezi villagers re-occupy Marula Block (March 23, 2000), Villagers call for probe into allocation of land to VIPs (March 24, 2000), Hand over Marula Block to the landless, urges MP (April 5, 2000), Communal farmers threaten to invade farms in Gweru (March 7, 2000).

²⁴ Needy to be resettled on some leased farms, *The Herald*, April 6, 2000.

²⁵ Land issue: misunderstood and abused by colonisers, *The Herald*, May 26, 2000.

²⁶ *The Daily News*: Opposition political parties condemn farm invasions (March 1, 2000), Farm invasions worry EU (March 2, 2000), Rights group urges MPs to reject Land Acquisition Bill (March 14, 2000), Mugabe urged to stop invasions (March 15, 2000), Business Leaders' Forum condemns farm invasions (March 16, 2000), Zara condones farm invasions (March 16, 2000), Tsvangirai lashes at government over farm invasions (March 27, 2000), Avoid primitive solutions to land issue: US (March 27, 2000), Labour body calls for transparent land distribution, end to invasions (March 29, 2000), Patrick Kombayi attacks Mugabe over invasions (March 31, 2000), Norway criticises invasions (April 5, 2000), EU supports calls for rule of law, end of invasions in Zimbabwe (April 11, 2000), Order ex-fighters off farms, ZimRights tells Mugabe (April 12, 2000), Ex-Zipra cadres attack invaders (April 18, 2000), Bank warns on invasions (May 31, 2000), Mbeki does not back illegal farm invasions (June 12, 2000).

²⁷ *The Herald*: German delegation implores State to intensify land reform process (March 10, 2000), Villagers support farm invasions (March 17, 2000), Over 50pc of S. Africans support ex-combatants' occupation of farms (April 5, 2000), Anglican Church backs land reform programme (April 13, 2000), We support Zanu (PF) on land issue-former ZIPRA members (April 25, 2000), Methodist Church welcomes land talks (May 2, 2000), ZCTU calls for speedy land redistribution (May 2, 2000), Zanu (PF) candidate stresses need for land (May 15, 2000), Lesotho supports land reform (May 23, 2000), Communal farmers support farm invasions (May 27, 2000), SA demonstrators support Zimbabwe war vets (May 27, 2000), Zambia backs land reform programme (June 9, 2000), Sanyati chiefs throw their weight behind land redistribution (June 12, 2000), Swaziland in full support of land redistribution (June 16, 2000), Ex-Zambian minister backs land reform (June 21, 2000).

²⁸ Government using land issue to divert attention from economic crisis, David Mills, *The Daily News*, March 16, 2000.

²⁹ Government side-stepping real issues, David Mills, *The Daily News*, April 18, 2000.

³⁰ *The Daily News*: Ex-fighters raid minister's farm (March 8, 2000), ZTA statement riles farmers (March 16, 2000), Fuel crisis, farm invasions affect ZSE performance (March 22, 2000), Tobacco sales start slowly - Few farmers book space to sell crop at auction floors owing to recent farm invasions (April 17, 2000), Workers go unpaid as farm invasions paralyse operations (April 19, 2000), Invasions cost farm workers jobs (April 26, 2000), Zimbabwe may face shortages of wheat (May 2, 2000), Decision on land will ruin economy, says Longworth (May 3, 2000), FAO warns of impending food crisis in Zimbabwe (May 4, 2000), Farm invasions have destroyed economy (May 4, 2000), Farm invasions: huge wheat imports expected (May 5, 2000), Matabeleland farmers accuse minister of fanning violence (May 15, 2000), Farm invasions: food shortages loom - 'Disruptions by war vets have prevented farmers from planting the winter wheat crop and vegetables' (May 23, 2000), Farmers owe banks \$25 billion (May 25, 2000), Farm invasions, forex shortage cause huge fall in fertiliser sales (May 30, 2000), Bank calls for land plan (May 30, 2000), 'Farm debt won't be honoured' (May 31, 2000), Land invasions will affect region (May 31, 2000), Act leaves farm workers homeless, jobless, says union (June 5, 2000), War vets, ZANU-PF supporters disrupting winter cropping (June 6, 2000), CFU predicts \$1bn losses, shortages in beef sector (June 6, 2000), Land crisis likely to dent regional foreign investment (June 13, 2000), Farm invasions sting beekeepers (June 20, 2000), Invasions likely to cause 10% decline in economy (June 21, 2000), IT firms feel pinch of farm invasions (June 23, 2000), Farm invasions, fixed forex rate threaten tobacco industry (June 23, 2000), Investors eye Zimbabwe's land reform after poll (June 29, 2000).

³¹ *The Herald*: Tobacco worth \$75 million lost (March 8, 2000), Farm invasions, Cyclone Eline affect \$75m worth of tobacco crop: CFU (March 10, 2000), 'Farm invasions impact negatively on economy' (March 21, 2000), 'Farm invasions threatening plantation workers' jobs' (March 22, 2000), Tobacco auction floors open today amid uncertainty (April 20, 2000), Farmers: Boycott of tobacco auctions is unreasonable (April 26, 2000), Farmers to lose crops and livestock worth \$4,2 billion (May 24, 2000).

³² Captions *The Herald*: The shortage of land continues to haunt the landless majority of blacks after British settlers took the fertile land and established successful farms countrywide, a situation which war veterans want rectified immediately (April 18, 2000). Despite the attainment of political independence by most countries, the land question remains unresolved (June 7, 2000). Most communal farmers resemble this dry parched land in Makonde, Mashonaland West. Because farmers do not have tractors, they use their oxen for draught power (June 21, 2000).

³³ *The Herald*: UNDP report shows urgent need to redistribute land, Editor (Bornwell Chakaodza) (April 3, 2000), Land ownership structure criticised (April 1, 2000), Urgent land redistribution vital for food security, Editor (Bornwell Chakaodza) (April 14, 2000).

³⁴ Peasant farmers prove potential on marginal land, *The Herald*, June 15, 2000.

³⁵ Urgent land redistribution vital for food security, Editor (Bornwell Chakaodza), *The Herald*, April 24, 2000.

³⁶ Land reform is crucial to Zimbabwe's future, *The Herald*, March 31, 2000.

³⁷ Captions *The Herald*: Communal farmers have the potential to produce more if allocated enough arable land. Here, a number of tractor trailers loaded with cotton bales wait for their turn to deliver cotton at Sanyati Cotton Depot on Tuesday (June 8, 2000). Despite the devastating effect of Cyclone Eline, which hit Masvingo Province last February, the Makamure family, from the recently introduced Marova Resettlement Scheme in Gutu, expected a bumper harvest at least 50 tonnes of maize this season (June 12, 2000). Flashback... The Mapanzure family of Masvingo show off their sorghum crop which is drought-resistant. Black farmers can produce much more if they are resettled on arable land (June 21, 2000).

³⁸ Government side-stepping real issues, David Mills, *The Daily News*, April 18, 2000.

³⁹ 'Land is not the most pressing issue among Zimbabweans', *The Daily News*, March 13, 2000.

⁴⁰ Land reform is crucial to Zimbabwe's future, *The Herald*, March 31, 2000.

⁴¹ Beitbridge whites show sudden interest in polls, *The Herald*, February 14, 2000.

⁴² *The Daily News*: War veterans holding Mvurwi family hostage (April 6, 2000), Elderly couple attacked on farm (April 12, 2000), Marauding war vets send white farmers packing (April 17, 2000), Farm manager taken hostage (April 24, 2000), Raffingora farmer harassed (May 24, 2000), Threatened farmer files charges against ZANU-PF (June 5, 2000), War veterans assault farmer; harass workers (June 16, 2000), War vets besiege Macheke farmer (June 23, 2000).

⁴³ White farmers abandon homes as invasions intensify, *The Daily News*, October 4, 2000.

⁴⁴ Captions *The Daily News*: Violence... Iain 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 to the farm invaders that he had earlier destroyed (April 5, 2000). Zimbabwean farmer Ian Hardy is given emergency treatment by medical staff at the Borradaile Hospital in Marondera, 70km east of Harare, yesterday (April 17, 2000). Maria Stevens, of Swedish and Spanish descent, with her two-year-old twin boys Warren (centre) and Sebastian during an interview yesterday. Stevens' husband Dave, a commercial farmer, was abducted and then murdered by war veterans, who shot him twice at point blank range on Saturday. Five other farmers from the same Virginia farming area were abducted and severely beaten when they went to find and rescue Stevens. Over 1 000 mainly white owned farms have been illegally invaded by war veterans and villagers (April 18, 2000). Sherry Dunn is comforted by neighbours after her husband was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at the Avenues Clinic in Harare on Sunday. Dunn died early on Monday from injuries sustained when he was brutally beaten-up by people, suspected to be war veterans, who visited his Beatrice farm on Sunday night (May 10, 2000).

⁴⁵ *The Daily News*: Campaign turns bloody - Two members of the MDC torched to death in Buhera as political violence turns nasty (April 17, 2000), Another white farmer killed (April 19, 2000), Beatrice farmer beaten to death (May 9, 2000), Fourth farmer dies after attack (May 16, 2000), Trelawney farmer shot dead (June 2, 2000). *The Herald*: White Macheke commercial farmer shot dead (April 17, 2000), Nyamandlovu farmer dies in shootout with war veterans (April 19, 2000), Beatrice farmer murdered - Black workers assaulted in retaliatory attack (May 9, 2000), Farmer and robber die after shootout (June 2, 2000).

⁴⁶ White Macheke commercial farmer shot dead, *The Herald*, April 17, 2000.

⁴⁷ Farmers accused of abusing workers, *The Herald*, April 3, 2000.

⁴⁸ Abused! Farm workers are threatened: Vote ZANU-PF and you are out of here. *The Herald*, April 25, 2000.

⁴⁹ Captions *The Herald*: Toiling for a pitiful wage... These farm workers, regarded as subhuman and treated accordingly, work on a tobacco crop at a farm outside Harare (April 25, 2000). Neglected... An aerial view of typical farm compound. Farm workers' living conditions have not improved. Now farmers are promising them better lives after voting for the MDC (April 25, 2000). Former employees of Utopia Farm near Goromonzi have been camping on the farm since Tuesday last week to press management to pay them their salaries for the last 14 months. Here the women prepare their lunch yesterday (June 15, 2000).

⁵⁰ Government side-stepping real issues, David Mills, *The Daily News*, April 18, 2000.

⁵¹ Farm workers forced to attend ZANU-PF rallies, *The Daily News*, May 25, 2000.

⁵² Farmers, teacher in alleged ZANU-PF hit list, *The Daily News*, May 18, 2000.

⁵³ *The Daily News*: Union slams ex-fighters for assaulting workers (March 28, 2000), Mugabe threatens violence (March 29, 2000), Hunzvi leads farm invasion with television crew in tow (March 30, 2000), Ex-combatants assault farm workers: Union (March 31, 2000), War vets burn down farm workers' houses in Arcturus (April 21, 2000), New reign of terror erupts on farms (April 26, 2000), War veterans continuing assaults on farm workers (May 2, 2000), Intimidation, violence on farm workers continue (May 4, 2000), Farm worker killed in Shurugwi (May 30, 2000), War veterans assault farmer; harass workers (June 16, 2000), War vets impound farm employees' identity cards (June 20, 2000).

⁵⁴ Captions *The Daily News*: Anarchy prevails... Farai Sandikonda sustained a broken arm and a deep cut to his head when he was attacked on Monday evening by about 27 alleged ZANU-PF supporters on Chidikamwedzi Farm in the Mvurwi district, 150km north of Harare. Sandikonda works as a game guard on the farm. He was stoned by his attackers as he tried to protect the farm manager's house which was badly damaged in the attack (April 6, 2000). Violence continues... A severely beaten and burned Farai Mutenengingwa, wife of a supervisor on Dean Farm 120kms south-east of Harare, is driven to hospital in the back of farmer Craig White's truck yesterday. Mutenenginwa and several other workers were assaulted by farm invaders and labourers from different farms loyal to the ruling ZANU-PF party (April 25, 2000).

⁵⁵ Zvobgo says ZANU-PF is law-abiding, *The Daily News*, March 20, 2000.

⁵⁶ Ex-fighters defy High Court order, *The Daily News*, March 20, 2000.

⁵⁷ Cabinet to discuss land crisis, election, *The Daily News*, May 2, 2000.

⁵⁸ *The Daily News*: Ex-fighters defy High Court order (March 2, 2000), Farmers, workers join hands against invaders (March 23, 2000), Farmers accuse State of arming war vets (April 18, 2000), Danida vehicles used in farm invasions? (April 19, 2000).

⁵⁹ *The Daily News*: Free-for-all at farms invaded in Masvingo (April 4, 2000), Matabeleland farmers accuse minister of fanning violence (May 15, 2000).

⁶⁰ *The Daily News*: War veterans threaten to fight over land (February 21, 2000), CFU says invaders have taken over 40 commercial farms (March 2, 2000).

⁶¹ Muzenda does not regret farmers' death, *The Daily News*, April 25, 2000.

⁶² *The Herald*: Invasions protest against 'no' vote: President (March 3, 2000), Farm invasions a protest against land distribution imbalances, says Nkomo (March 27, 2000), Land not being used as campaign tool: Svosve villagers (May 18, 2000), Land can never be used as political gimmick: Lesabe (June 21, 2000).

⁶³ War veterans vow not to leave farms, *The Herald*, March 4, 2000.

⁶⁴ War veterans invade farms countrywide, *The Herald*, February 29, 2000.

⁶⁵ *The Herald*: Land not being used as campaign tool: Svosve villagers (May 18, 2000), Land can never be used as political gimmick: Lesabe, (June 21, 2000).

⁶⁶ Co-operation from all stakeholders needed in resolving the land issue, Dr Sylvester Maunganidze, *The Herald*, May 16, 2000.