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DECLARATION

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I, Washington Mushore, declare that Media Construction Of Reality: A Critical Analysis Of The Reportage Of Land Reform In Shona And English Zimbabwean Newspapers: The Case Of Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News And The Daily Mirror, 2000 – 2008 is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

____________________________                        ___________________________
(MR W MUSHORE)                                                                DATE
SUMMARY

The study critically explored the language of reportage of the Zimbabwe Land Reform programme as presented in selected Shona and English newspapers in Zimbabwe. The study focused on Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror. The objective was to find out whether or not the verbal and visual languages used in reporting the Land Reform programme left readers more knowledgeable about the programme, and then adopt a critical attitude towards the Land Reform exercise. The study used qualitative textual analysis to unpack the language frames used in representing Land Reform in the selected newspapers. Some relevant critical voices from readers were also enlisted in order to support or complicate interpretations of how Land Reform was portrayed in the selected stories.

Kwayedza and The Herald unequivocally supported the Land Reform. This official stance was contested in Chapter Four in which The Daily News adopted an ideological position opposed to both the idea of the Land Reform and the confiscatory way the land was repossessed. The Daily News’ extremely negative criticism of the Land Reform was challenged and then modified in The Daily Mirror. The Daily Mirror criticised both the government’s extremely supportive view of the Land Reform. The Daily Mirror also openly criticised The Daily News for refusing to acknowledge the historical inevitability and necessity of the Land Reform. The Daily Mirror advanced a perspective that suggested that Land Reform programme should benefit the masses more than the elites. It was argued that in contexts of political change such as that of Zimbabwe, newspapers take a stance and support particular ideological interests.
KEY TERMS
Framing
Land Reform
Shona
English
Newspapers
Kwayedza
The Herald
The Daily News
The Daily Mirror
Zimbabwe
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Thank you all.
DEDICATION

This work is particularly dedicated to Tsitsi, Cathrine Tatenda, Mitchel, Tadiwanashe Washington, George Tinashe, Courtney Ruvarashe, Kuzivakwashe and Kupakwashe.
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CHAPTER 1
RETHINKING THE LANGUAGE OF REPORTAGE ON THE LAND REFORM PROGRAMME IN THE ZIMBABWEAN PRESS

News stories must be accurate, properly attributed, balanced and fair, objective, brief and focused, and well written (Mencher, 1997:33).

1.0 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

Newspapers play an important role in producing and publicly disseminating information and commentary about contemporary affairs of general public interest and importance (Schudson, 2008: 12-13). If the general public is to make sound political choices, the media in general, and newspapers in particular should provide them with fair and full information regarding an issue, such as the Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe, which is a very controversial matter. As Kuypers (2002: 1) underscores, ‘Controversial issues are, by their essential nature, unsolvable to everyone’s satisfaction. Such issues are open to discussion – debatable, questionable – and generally in dispute by contending groups. Controversial issues are [therefore] news and for news [people] look to the press’. Whether Zimbabwean citizens or citizens from other nations see Zimbabwe Land Reform programme as an ‘evil’ or ‘necessary evil’ depends greatly on the languages that a newspaper or newspapers in Zimbabwe and even abroad use when describing the programme. Put differently, whether citizens concur with the statement made by His Excellency, The President of Zimbabwe, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe that, ‘The land is the economy and the economy is the land’ (Mugabe, 2001) or not depend largely on the newspapers’ conception of the land issue. Land in Africa has been one of the roots of insurgency. Woddis (1960:1) points out that:

The history of Africa’s relations with the West has been a history of robbery – robbery of African manpower, its mineral and agricultural resources, and its land. Even though direct slavery no longer exists, labour, resources and land remain the three dynamic issues over which the struggle for the future of Africa is being fought out. The form of the struggle, it is true, is a political fight for national independence; but the abolition of foreign control of labour, resources and land is the substance for which this independence is being sought.
It is crystal clear from the quotation above that almost all revolutions which were experienced across Africa were, among other things, centred on Africans or the Native people, wanting to repossess from the West / Settlers / Colonisers, the land they had been robbed of or that had been taken away from them either by force or trickery. Africans were supposed to be in full control of their wealth or economy or country or nation, amongst other things, in order for them to be regarded as the true owners of the land. The racial group or class which owns the means of production in a country – land in this case – determines how a country will run or develop. Marx and Engels in Althusser (1971) once said that, ‘the class which owns the means of production determines the compass of an epoch … [and their] … ideas became the ruling ideas’. When Africans were deprived of their land; they were pushed to the so called ‘Native Area[s]’ (Woddis, 1960:3). These Native Areas (or reserves) had ‘poor soils, usually the poorer types of granite – sand known technically as Class III land; while the European Area contained nearly all the areas of fertile soil in the colony (Brown, 1959:5). Other characteristics of these ‘Native Purchase Areas’, supposedly suitable regions of Southern Rhodesia for developing an African ‘middle class of farmers’ included being situated in hot, malaria infested areas, where great illness and suffering was caused among the people settling there, due to lack of clinics and hospitals within easy reach. Other reserves were so cursed with land so broken and rocky that agriculture was impossible over most of the area (ibid, 23). On the other hand, the colonisers or Europeans who were a minority owned vast pieces of land. Brown (1959:24) who was a former Land Development Officer in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) once said that, ‘There is a surfeit of land in the European area; and many European farmers can and do make a handsome living off their thousands of acres by improving and developing only a few of them’.

Woddis (1960:5) highlighted that when these Reserves were set up; Africans were told that this move was meant to ‘protect African lands from further encroachment by Europeans’. When lands were taken away from Africans and set aside as ‘Crown lands’, again Africans were informed that this was a measure to stop the ‘uncontrolled’ taken over of land by Europeans; hence, the Government would control the take – over. In the end, Africans understood that each measure for their ‘protection’ was a coded diction that always meant the further taking of their land. Joshua Nkomo who was the president of the banned Southern Rhodesia African National Congress at its formation in 1957, drew attention, for example to the Southern Rhodesia Land Apportionment Acts of 1931 and 1941, ‘ostensibly passed for the protection of what land had
been left under African control’ but in reality were used ‘for the purpose of dispersing and impoverishing the African population and retaining political and economic power in the hands of the settlers’ (Nkomo, 1959: 59). This notion of dispersing Africans off their land and the wholesale taking of land by Europeans so as to gain political and economic power through its ownership was used by the Zimbabwe government to justify the Land Reform exercise since some top government officials believed that the ‘land is the economy and the economy is the land’ (Mugabe, 2001).

One can be tempted to ask the question: Why did this land – robbery occurred, maintained and even extended, and what have been its consequences for the African people? According to Woddis (1960: 7) two of the reasons for this act of robbery were to take the land because of the minerals it contained and the crops that could be grown. The above mentioned two reasons for this act of land robbery revealed that land is not only limited to agriculture but encompasses mining activities as well. An examination of European land utilisation in Southern Rhodesia, for instance, according to Woddis (1960: 8), showed that only a very small proportion of the land reserved for Europeans was, in fact, been used by them. In 1957 only 1,100,000 acres of the 48,000,000 acres occupied by the white settlers were under cultivation (Brown, 1959: 24). The actual total area reserved for Europeans in 1957 was about 52,000,000 acres, but of this 52,000,000 about 4,000,000 acres were set aside as game reserves (Woddis, ibid). The reason for this extensive taking of land in so much of Africa was two fold:

To prevent the African peasant from becoming a competitor to the European farmer or plantation owner; and to impoverish the African peasantry to such an extent that the majority of the adult males would be compelled to work for the Europeans, in the mines or on the farms [and this would ensure] the enrichment of the Europeans [and] the deliberate impoverishment of the Africans (Woddis 1960: 8).

The quotation above underscored the invaluable point that before the coming of the Europeans, ‘all’ the Native inhabitants of Africa were economically self – sufficient. The breaking down of this self – sufficiency, the destruction of African subsistence agriculture, became a central aim of imperialist policy, pursued since the beginning of the twentieth century. A stable African peasantry, able to exist independently of European farms and mines, was the last thing imperialism allowed. Mphahlele (1959:319) succinctly put it when he asked the question that ‘if
a stable peasantry were to be consciously established, how many [Africans] would come to work for 3s.6d a day in the mines?’ Securing African labour for European enterprises proved to be a difficult task and a strategy to force Africans off their lands was therefore supposed to be developed. A triple attack was launched, the three prongs consisting of land control, forced labour and taxation (Woddis, ibid: 11).

The violent taking over of African land was mirrored in the language full of negative stereotypes about Africans in their media that white settlers authorised as acceptable discursive displacement of the native. White settler and controlled media began to use language or verbal and pictorial frames which portrayed Africans as backward and inefficient as farmers so as to prevent competition in agriculture. In other words; most Africans were socialised into thinking that Europeans were more superior to them when it comes to tilling the land. Europeans feared that ‘increased production by Africans would not only threaten their markets, but would diminish the flow of labour from the Reserves (Woddis, 1960: 10). Ironically, although the media used language that portrayed Europeans as superior to Africans when it comes to farming, in reality it was the Africans who made up the bulk of the labour who guaranteed the success of white commercial agriculture. Also, not all European settlers were inefficient farmers (Lessing 1972).

Even with the best land in their possession white settlers had to be constantly subsidised and aided by their successive governments, and ‘protected’ against African competition by the introduction of various restrictions or limitations on African agriculture. The introduction of various discriminatory measures were in favour of the European farmer (Woddis, ibid: 8). Since railways were built, Woddis (ibid) further highlights that it was expected that Europeans would take good care to ensure that the lands they possessed included those portions adjoining the rail routes. Access to main roads and markets was guaranteed for the European farmer to take advantages of the opportunities opened by the colonisation of Rhodesia. As with transport facilities and prices; it was the European settler who was favoured. The Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs publication states that, ‘while the European producer received 40s. Per bag of maize for the 1957 harvest, the African producer got only 27s’ (Brown 1959:22-3). Despite the advantages provided for Europeans, Brown (ibid: 24) said that in Southern Rhodesia ‘no great examination [was] needed to see that European agriculture in Southern Rhodesia … [was] … the most inefficient in the world’.
The background above is important to this study in that it aids to an understanding of the continued ideological struggles waged in the language of reporting the Land Reform as presented in some selected stories from The Herald and Kwayedza, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror, during 2000 – 2008, which is the primary concern of this present analysis. With the above detailed background of colonial injustices in mind, this study advances the argument that after the year 2000, Zimbabwe experienced a shift in its geo – politics on land ownership between whites and blacks, and as shall also be demonstrated in the study, amongst black people themselves. The nationalist new rulers under the leadership of the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front [ZANU (PF)] deliberately embarked on a controversial Land Reform programme. This programme was driven by the ex – combatants and it received open political blessings from the government of Zimbabwe. One of the main aims of Land Reform programme was to re – possess some of the land owned by some white commercial farmers for the dual purposes of resettling the landless people [allocating residential stands] and for agricultural purposes. The pioneers of this land repossession or ‘farm invasions’ as it was then described were the people of Svosve clan.

The political assumptions among the African peasants were that if land was robbed, as indicated by Woddis (ibid) it goes without saying then that when the black Zimbabwean people who had been robbed of their land finally came to realise the robber, and the robbed land; the native people economically liberated themselves by invading white controlled land. The metaphor of ‘robbery’ of the land extended to the different ways that the land was talked about, described and justified in white discourses. African people also evolved a grammar of describing the robbed land and these linguistic contestations over naming the processing of Land Reform are more intensely manifest in the national media written in Shona and English between the year 2000 and 2008. This study concerns itself with analysing critically, the language of naming the Land Reform programme in The Herald, Kwayedza, The Daily News and the The Daily Mirror. These newspapers, by and large, reflected the different interests and linguistically rhetorical strategies of describing the struggles over land. Some Zimbabweans, especially those aligned to ZANU (PF), saw this exercise as a necessary evil while other Zimbabweans who were either sympathetic with the white commercial farmers or were just filled with some resentment towards the land redistribution policy embarked by ZANU (PF) saw this exercise as an evil. Those who were opposed to this policy of land redistribution were mainly from the Movement for
Democratic Change (MDC) that had become the main opposition party in 1999. Whether by design, convergence of mutual economic interests or coincidence, the MDC found itself enjoying favourable coverage and reportage of their views mostly in the *The Daily News* and to some extent in *The Daily Mirror*. It goes without saying that the government owned newspapers, namely, *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* consistently toed the official line when it came to reporting the Land Reform. Thus, the resultant partisan radical shifts in the way newspapers used language when reporting on the ‘controversial’ land redistribution policy during the period 2000 to 2008 are a function of the forces in the Zimbabwean society struggling to control and monopolize the discursive space centred on linguistic/political contestations to either affirm or reject the idea of a Zimbabwe Land Reform and the methods used to take back the land.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In a society such as Zimbabwe, undergoing rapid socio–economic and political changes, journalists are expected to be objective in their presentation of news. In order for journalists to be objective in their reporting Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) state that their first obligation should be the truthful presentation of news and their first loyalty should be to the citizens. Secondly, journalists should have a discipline of verifying facts first before publishing them and they must maintain an independent judgment, critical stance on the news they cover and ultimately serve as an independent monitor of power. Thirdly, the media or reporters must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise and they must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.

The problem identified in this study is that Zimbabwean news written in Shona and the English Languages are polarized in their reportage of the Land Reform (Chari 2008). Newspapers have adopted methods originated by European settlers in Africa who used negative stereotyped languages during the colonial period when reporting on Africans and their relationship to their natural resources. These negative stereotyped languages are used in the newspapers whose stories are analysed in this study ‘as a potential tool to control, dominate and shape African minds in ways deemed useful to the economic interests of the colonial capitalism’ (Vambe, 2001: 3), and the emergent black elites. There is unwarranted misrepresentation of ordinary Africans’ lives, culture, history and aspirations to own land and turn it into productive uses in the government – owned newspapers, *The Herald* and *Kwayedza*. Stories in the government – owned
newspapers do not criticise corruption in the distribution of land; the newspapers’ understanding of land is limited to farming only and that precludes the importance of land for mining. *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* do not feature stories that anticipate contradictions among the newly black owners and also the newspapers do not suggest a broad approach that would make the Land Reform self – sustaining. On the other hand, in spirit and intention, the language used in the stories used in *The Daily News* reveals an extremist, ideological position that reveals a total rejection, first, of the idea of giving land to black people, and second, to the appropriatory process followed by the ZANU (PF) government.

Thus, while *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* romanticise the Land Reform, *The Daily News* is manifestly reactionary in its opposition of the Land Reform. The problem of polarising the reportage is not entirely interrogated in *The Daily Mirror*, a newspaper that both acknowledges the importance of the Land Reform as well as criticises government and the private sector’s political bickering on the issue of land. The middle of the road approach adopted by *The Daily Mirror* does not introduce a holistic approach to dealing with the issue of Land Reform. The paper does not amplify on the strategies that can be taken in order to render the Land Reform acceptable to all Zimbabweans. In one newspaper, a reader would find the land redistribution exercise either being elevated as right or wrong only. Journalists were not providing readers with objective information regarding the Land Reform programme. Newspaper reports on Land Reform also had the quandary of plotting or framing struggle as linear process contained in three stages; the struggle for land at occupation, the liberation war of the 1970s and the Third Chimurenga of 2000. Contradictions in the aspirations of land amongst Africans within these periods are glossed over and the future directions for making land productive after the physical repossession from the year 2000 are not discussed at all. These ideological positions referenced through the linguistic stalemate that was generated by the newspapers’ reportage of the Land Reform are political; they reflect the conflicting vested interests of those who own, and edit the newspapers for public consumption.

Thus, the study argues that during the period under review, newspaper journalists used frames, which first, failed to take into account the historical context of the land issue in Zimbabwe. Secondly, news reports regarding Land Reform were too generalised, that is, newspapers used
languages which were too closed and did not open the issue to debate by the ordinary people in whose name the papers were defending the language of reporting land in their papers.

1.2 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this study is to critically explore the language through which the Land Reform Programme is reported in Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror newspapers and then interrogate the ideologies underlying the philosophies of the newspapers.

1.2.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- Investigate whether or not newspaper reports on the land struggle in the period 2000 – 2008 confirm to the statement derived from Robert Mugabe’s book titled Inside The Third Chimurenga (2001) that “Land is the economy and the economy is land”.
- Critically explore the language through Land Reform is reported by exploring how newspapers’ reportorial practices take into account the historical background of Land Reform in Zimbabwe.
- Examine the frames or language of reportage used in representing Land Reform in Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror, that is, to investigate if the language of reportage of Land Reform by the above four mentioned newspapers is objective or adhere to or uphold the standards of good journalism.
- Compare and contrast the different perceptions and ways of narrating the land in the newspapers in a manner that can suggest the philosophies informing the newspapers’ reportage of the Land Reform in Zimbabwe.

1.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In examining the relationship of newspaper reports to people understanding of the Land Reform programme, this study asks and answers rather broad based questions about newspaper influences on public debates.

- In what terms is Land Reform discussed by the newspapers, and do these terms limit options for discussion in the public sphere?
Does the language of reportage of Land Reform in the newspapers reveal objectivity or encourage readers to view the Land Reform critically, in certain preferred ways?

Why are there huge conceptual differences in the ways in which the newspapers frame the Land Reform in their stories?

Guided by the newspapers, how do the public/readers perceive Zimbabwe Land Reform?

1.3 JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

A number of research studies have been conducted in Zimbabwe regarding the coverage of the controversial Land Reform. Land Reform has been considered a controversial issue in the sense that the Zimbabwean citizenry as well as citizens of other nations failed to come up with the same understanding of ‘what’ land reform entails and how it could be successfully implemented in a way acceptable to all the stakeholders. Some citizens see Land Reform as a ‘necessary evil’ and others see it as an abuse of human rights. Moreover, others limit their definition of land to agriculture and others include mining in their definition of Land Reform. Still others view the Land Reform exercise as a root to improving the standards of living of the citizens of Zimbabwe, especially, the black majority. This latter point is underpinned by Mugabe in his 2001 book titled *Inside The Third Chimurenga*. The book focuses on, among other things, the land issue. The book sees land as the means to prosperity of Zimbabweans. Mugabe (2001: 41) emphasises this point when he says that ‘What our land produces; the rewards which our sweat and toil bring must surely belong to this country [Zimbabwe], to our people. These are products, which must go towards the gross domestic and national product of this economy and country’. On the other hand Mlambo and Raftopoulos’ (2009) book, titled *Becoming Zimbabwe: a history from pre – colonial period to 2008* merely summarises the historical and structural factors that led to the collapse of Zimbabwe, politically and economically. The language of how the Land Reform is discussed in the essays is not evaluated so as to enlighten the reader on the attitudes of the authors to the Land Reform itself.

The land issue has also been sung about in popular music. Thomas Mapfumo, a renowned musician in Zimbabwe, composed a song in 2006 on the album *Chimurenga Rebel* or *Manhungetunge*, which commented on the land redistribution policy the government of Zimbabwe embarked on in the year 2000. He (Thomas Mapfumo) viewed land redistribution
exercise as an activity with disastrous consequences such as hunger or poverty. For instance, he says that, *Marima nzara ... kudzinga vanorima* (You have sowed hunger by chasing away white farmers who are able to do farming). In other words, Mapfumo’s language of reporting or covering Third Chimurenga criminalises Africans for taking back the land owned by white farmers. Thus, theoretically speaking even the most popular views can be reactionary and work against the interests of those in whose name the views purport to represent. Therefore there is need to search for other alternative cultural sites such as the newspapers to explore how they depict the Land Reform in their own framed stories.

While the land issue have been covered or talked about in the media such as literary works/novels and popular music there have not been an extensive study which critically looked on how newspapers in Zimbabwe such as *The Herald*, *The Daily News*, *The Daily Mirror* (which packaged their news in English language) and *Kwayedza* (which packaged its news in Shona language) framed Land Reform. There is need to ascertain whether or not the fact of reporting the Land Reform in Shona or English language has a direct bearing on the views that the papers project to the reading public.

This study is also motivated by the desire to adopt a comparative approach that evaluates how four selected newspapers in Zimbabwe have framed Third Chimurenga. This reason is important because while in post independence Zimbabwe it is the black people – whether government or independent – who own newspapers, there is no guarantee of convergence of views on the necessity of the Land Reform. This point bids one to delve into a study that seeks to unravel the reasons for such potential differences.

Critics such as Chari have adopted quantitative approaches in analysing how newspapers report the Land Reform. While this approach obviously generates information about the number of stories that newspapers covered over a determined period, there is no vigorous search for those accounts which Chari correctly identifies as polarities in the reporting of the Land Reform programme. My own study is based on textual analysis of the actual language of reporting the Land Reform. The approach is best suited to my overall aim which is to explore the extent to which language is not only a spiritual window through which to perceive people’s values. The study argues that language is a battlefield where ideas relating to the construction of discourses that affirm or reject the Land Reform are revealed.
In Zimbabwe, comparative studies of newspapers’ reportage of Land Reform have tended to emphasise those papers writing in English. On the other hand, some critics have also only analysed the reportage of Land Reform in indigenous languages such as Ndebele and Shona. The impression created in these studies is that language (verbal and visual) alone can determine the content of the stories. While it is true that language’s inherent metaphorical dimension can suggest meanings of Land Reform initially unintended by the author of a story, it is acceptable to consider the view that those who own and fund these papers forces their understanding of Land Reform to a readership that is at different stages of ‘political’ literacy. *The Herald, The Daily News, The Daily Mirror* and *Kwayedza* have been chosen mainly due to their different ideological positions emanating from their different ownership patterns. Moreover, *Kwayedza*, though State owned like *The Herald*, has been included in the analysis because there is no guarantee that the views it represents in Shona necessarily agree point for point with the views that *The Herald* espouses. No study has explored the theoretical possibilities of offering newspapers from the same stable with the view to ascertain the degrees of ideological affinities, discontinuity and inconsistencies, even when the papers belong to a single owner and funder or the same stable. Furthermore no one has revealed that journalists writing stories on Land Reform in *The Herald, Kwayedza, The Daily News* and *The Daily Mirror* have different levels of linguistic competencies, a fact that might even reveal differences in conceptualising the Land Reform, not only in one paper but also in a single issue of one newspaper. These potential differences must be amplified to avoid essentialising the reportage of land in each of the newspapers analysed in this study. The significance of these different ownership or ideological positions is that when these newspapers are presented with a same or original utterance from a politician the way they cover this utterance will be biased towards the ideological leanings of its owners. This politicises the contexts in which stories on Land Reform are received by readers and either influence readers to sleepily consume what is presented to them, or in other contexts may even provoke readers to re-signify the original intended meanings resulting in undermining of intended meanings and the production of alternative meanings.

Lastly, this study focuses on the period between 2000 and 2008. The referendum of 2000 in which ZANU (PF) was defeated by opposition party (MDC was barely one year having been formed in 1999) signaled that the ruling party’s hegemony in politics and in its written narrative on Land Reform could be contested. The win for MDC indicated a sway of votes from ZANU
(PF) and registered the shifting allegiance of the people towards MDC. The Operation Murambatsvina of 2005 revealed that the ruling class could no longer enforce their authority through a nationalist narrative through *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* alone, the same ruling class adopted hard politics of a physical war of attrition. This revealed the waning hegemony of the hold of ZANU (PF) previously exercised through *The Herald, Kwayedza* or consent/coercive politics. The 2008 presidential elections in which ZANU (PF) lost to MDC sealed the fate of an official narrative. Between the year 2000 and 2005, *The Daily News* and *The Daily Mirror* were formed. The bombing of *The Daily News* newspaper in 2004 and also the folding up of *The Daily Mirror* the same year revealed that political stakes had become high and only newspapers that supported government projects could survive. The continued existence of *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* gave the government uncontested space to try to re – assert its narrative to what the rulers believed was a captive audience without options of reading the Land Reform from any other source inside Zimbabwe except from *The Herald* and *Kwayedza*.

**1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Although various academics and singers/musicians have devoted their time writing books or literary works on land in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular and composing songs commenting on land in Zimbabwe, none of these academics or singers’ works has attempted to look critically on newspaper stories on land in Zimbabwe. However, other scholars have decided to focus on the reportorial practices of the public and private press in Zimbabwe with regards to Operation Murambatsvina. These scholars include Chari, Mahoso and Nyamanhindi in Vambe (2008). Their studies are vital in this study in that they portrayed the ideological positions of the public and the private newspapers as reflected on the frames or languages used in representing Operation Murambatsvina.

What follows are brief discussions of literature regarding the land issue in Zimbabwe which has been written in books and novels/literary works or sang through the medium of popular music which are vital to this study. This will be followed immediately with a review of literature relating to the role of media in society in informing readers or citizens about the Land Reform. The literature reviews above have revealed some gaps and these gaps have necessitated further research on language, media and land in Zimbabwe.
1.4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE LAND ISSUE

Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009) edited articles that viewed the highly unequal distribution of arable land bequeathed or handed down by British colonialism. The essays correctly suggest that these inequalities left some commercial white settler farmers in control of a hugely disproportionate share of land. These articles are important in this study in that they indicate that in Zimbabwe the two wars of liberation which were fought (First Chimurenga and Second Chimurenga) prior to the so called Third Chimurenga, were centred on the issue of land. As Mugabe (2001:36) says:

The main basis of our fight with settlers, a fight which began at the very onset of colonialism, had been the national question of land. It informed Zimbabwe’s entire politics, generated a solid support base for the armed struggle with all its attendant hazards, and spurred our fighters on, right up to the bitter end. Land, Land, was the cry ... it was also the cry and plea in Church. Apart from being the basis of our liberation struggle, its loss was the basis of African poverty and indigence in this country. To this day, alienation remains casually linked to the poverty and backwardness of our people. Equally, to this day, its allocation is largely as shaped by the same forces and decrees.

The quotation above furthermore makes four fundamental contributions to this study. The first contribution is that the question of land did not start in the year 2000 as some people and newspaper journalists would like to think or seem to think, but during colonialism. This means that when the media are reporting about the land issue in Zimbabwe they should inform readers that this Third Chimurenga is a continuation of the first two Zvimurengas (liberation wars/struggles) which were fought before ‘political’ independence was gained in 1980. The second contribution made by Mugabe (ibid) is that land was forcefully taken by colonisers. Africans or Zimbabweans in particular were not given any compensation – suggesting that their land was taken away from them freely. The third contribution made by Mugabe (2001) to this study is that the deprivation or loss of land was and is the cause of the extreme poverty levels seen in Africans and Zimbabweans today. And lastly, but not least, the issue of inequitable distribution of land, as Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009) indicate, was an accumulation of gunpowder which made this Third Chimurenga possible. While the language of Mugabe’s book decidedly supports the Land Reform and even highlights some of the problems that the Land
Reform is bound to face, there is no follow up on action regarding how to evolve a long term solution to the problems he raises.

On the other hand, Woddis (1960) made some essential contributions to this study regarding the origins of revolts in Africa. He cited that land was the major source of revolt in Africa. That land was taken by force or by trickery as cited by Mugabe is further emphasised by Woddis (1960:1) who states that:

Both during and since the great scramble for Africa by the Western imperialist powers at the end of the nineteenth century, land-grabbing, has been the central aim. By direct seizure, conquest, pressure on chiefs, trickery, swindling, the repudiation of pledges and promises, by every means open to them, the representatives of the European powers took land.

The citation above therefore made it clear that land in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular was grabbed. To grab is synonymous with seizure. It is hence crystal clear that no compensation was given to Africans after loosing their land. The linguistic indices indicating that land was grabbed from Africans support the Zimbabwe government’s own vocabulary, which emphasised the invasive nature of colonialism on African land. On the other hand, Woddis, wording of how the land was ‘grabbed’ from Africans questions and complicates the grand-stading attitude of newspapers in Zimbabwe that suggest that the colonisation of African land was a painless process. This loss or robbery of African land consequently led to African impoverishment. For in the words of Mugabe (2001:41) ‘Land is the economy and the economy is land’. Moreover, the reason for the wholesale taking of land in so much of Africa was two – fold. Woddis (1960: 8) further says that the seizure of land was meant:

To prevent the African peasant from becoming a competitor to the European farmer or plantation owner; and to impoverish the African peasantry to such an extent that the majority of adult males would be compelled to work for the Europeans, in the mines or on the farms. Thus not only the enrichment of the Europeans but the deliberate impoverishment of the Africans became a cornerstone of official policy.

Woddis (ibid) contribution is therefore vital in this study in that he put forth the idea that Africans engage in farming activities even better than the settlers hence the fear by settlers to leave out Africans with pieces of land that would enable them (Africans) to compete with them.
(whites) in the market. This is contrary to the media or newspaper reports or to the language of reportage used by some media organisations regarding Third Chimurenga that Africans could and still can not do farming better than Europeans. Woddis (ibid) furthermore made another important contribution to this study by pointing out that ‘Land and its ownership is … a touchstone for the African Movement’. This means that African land became the property of the settlers. Woddis (ibid) went further to highlighting that, ‘It was, in fact, in protest against the seizure of land, that the African National Congress was formed in South Africa in 1912’. Mugabe (2001) reiterated the point or contribution made by Woddis (ibid) when he said that:

The goal and struggle for self-determination and sovereignty which you [the mass] supported, even at great personal peril for some of you [the mass] included, in fact rested and depended on our sovereign right, access, control and use of those resources which God in [H]is infinite generosity gave us [the people of Zimbabwe]

In a nutshell, Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009) as well as Mugabe (2001) and Woddis (1960) are crucial in this study in that they outlined the historical background to the land issue in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. This information is vital in that whenever journalists write about land in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular they should bring this historical background in context. This historical background as the study argues will make journalists aware or mindful of the frames or language of reportage to use in order to capture all the details regarding land issue in Zimbabwe which is dubbed Third Chimurenga. The language in which Mugabe and Woddis narrate the necessity of the Land Reform openly suggests that language and naming are political terrains of struggle. Language is not freed of the values it contains as is suggested in neoliberal talk.

1.4.2 LAND IN POPULAR MUSIC IN ZIMBABWE

Popular music, which emerged from popular experiences of the marginalised black people under colonial rule, became a form of resistance against the ideology of the dominant classes in the hegemonic struggle. Music after independence took stock of society’s achievements and failures (Chari 2003:118) and in the year 2000 to date, music has also become a potent tool used by musicians to either legitimise the land redistribution programme or vilify it. Pongweni (1982:1) sees music or songs as ‘the barometer of the mood of … people: in times of tribulation it is exhortatory, defiant, supplicatory and educative; in victory, celebratory and imbued with caution and vigilance’. Thomas Mapfumo sang a song titled Kuyaura kweasina musha (Distress of the
dispossessed). In this song Mapfumo talks about the displacement of the people of Zimbabwe from their land by the white settlers during colonialism. He said that this displacement caused Zimbabweans to live distressful lives and the only solution out of this poverty or distress was through the spilling of blood by Zimbabweans. This implies taking back the land that has been disposed from them during colonialism by war or force. The same singer in 2006 sang a song titled *Marima nzara* (You have created hunger). In this song the singer sees the taking away of some of the land owned by white commercial farmers as the beginning of poverty in Zimbabwe. The singer used language which portrayed white commercial farmers as the only people or race that has been chosen by God to look after other races and, that included Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular. Mapfumo’s ideological inconsistence is significant to this study because it bears witness to the fact that a single newspaper, and indeed, a single issue of that newspaper can reveal fractured and conflicting voices in the reportage of Land Reform. Such a possibility is anticipated by my present study which argues that language is a slippery terrain and as such there is no guarantee that the meanings that readers of the stories that support or reject the Land Reform will follow the cue from the journalists. Readers such as me can generate alternative meanings from a close reading of stories on Land Reform that had been predisposed to popularise certain entrenched viewpoints. Readers can subvert preferred meanings in stories from the newspapers in ways not anticipated by journalists.

### 1.4.3 LAND IN NEWSPAPERS IN ZIMBABWE

With regards to the coverage of Land Reform in newspapers, very few studies have been conducted in order to evaluate how newspapers in Zimbabwe have been reporting about the Land Reform. Willem (2004) and Chari (2010) have looked at how *The Daily News, The Herald, The Chronicle* and *The Zimbabwe Standard* newspapers represented Land Reform and farm occupations in Zimbabwe. Both authors stated that newspapers were polarised in their depiction of Land Reform. This view is hardly new in any different set of newspapers anywhere in the world. What the authors fail to unearth are the reasons for this polarisation. Typical of critics who depend only on the political economy approach, Willem and Chari have found the political differences within political parties as generating a linguistic vocabulary that the two critics believe the journalists have imbibed uncritically. Be that as it may, the critics do not pay attention to the levels of journalistic training of the authors of newspaper stories, a fact that
would have revealed that journalists do not command language uniformly. The struggle to transform knowledge about the issue of the debates on Land Reform into the struggle to acquire requisite linguistic competencies of telling or narrating the stories with appropriately critical/imaginative vocabulary that form the essence of language as an unstable sign system has been underestimated.

On the other hand, when it comes to the role of journalism in a democratic society, Borchers (2002) highlighted that it is through the media that people learn about the world. To learn about the world implies getting informed about events and issues of the day, month or year. Borchers (ibid: 103) says that, ‘ideally, the news informs [people] of events that are important to [them] and helps [them] make decisions about important societal matters’. This implies that newspapers in Zimbabwe are expected to be objective in their coverage of the Land Reform if they are to inform Zimbabwean citizens and citizens of other nations about the true meaning of Land Reform.

Borchers (2002) was, however, quick to point out that although society expect to get informed through the media, the media is nevertheless unable to perform its informational role to the full. Instead ‘people continue to know very little about [their] world’ (Borchers, ibid: 103). Bennett cited by Borchers (2002) provides an explanation on the reason why people are unable to know much about events and issues affecting their decisions and life. He says that, ‘The news [people] are given is not fit for a democracy; it is superficial, narrow, stereotypical, propaganda – laden, of little explanatory value, and not geared for critical debate or citizen action’ (Bennett in Borchers 2002)

Failure again to give news that is fit for democracy is due to the fact that ‘news is a product that is marketed like toothpaste and laundry detergent and sold to the public and this will make this news to be manufactured in such a way that will attract the largest audience’ (Bennett, ibid). This is very problematic for attraction is not similar to informing. Attraction is only concerned with quantity, that is, the number of people who are attracted by the news as opposed to quality of the news, that is, the informational value that will be derived by readers after getting in contact with that news. Bennett’s observation was further underscored by Patterson (1994:7) who argued that, ‘Although journalists often view the news as a ‘mirror held up to society’, the news is actually a
‘highly selective account of events’. News is a construct; it is a version of reality shaped in significant part by journalistic norms and conventions’.

Ultimately, the important contribution made by Patterson (ibid) in this study is that readers should always be wary/cautious or suspicious about the news they get from newspapers. In Zimbabwe, for instance, readers have become ‘polarised’. They lack this understanding that news is a construction of reality and that the news they will be getting from these newspapers is always not close to reality or a mirror of that reality. The news reports are much more generalised so as to attract a greater number of readers. Woo cited by Eksterowick and Roberts (2000: 21) says in his critic of public journalism that:

> We are in a democracy, and there is only one way to get a democracy on its feet…and that is by keeping the public informed about what is going on. There is not a crime, there is not a dodge, there is not a trick, there is not a swindle, [and] there is not a vice which does not live by secrecy. Get these things out in the open, describe them, attack them, ridicule them in the press, and sooner or later public opinion will sweep them away.

This therefore means that in a democracy the media is supposed to expose every detail of an issue in order to help readers make sound decisions regarding the issue at the end of the day. In Zimbabwe the issue of land distribution policy was a very controversial one and as such people always looked at the media to give them a sound and factual background to the issue. As Kuypers (2002: 1) underscores, ‘Controversial issues are, by their essential nature, unsolvable to everyone’s satisfaction. Such issues are open to discussion –debatable, questionable-and generally in dispute by contending groups. Controversial issues are [therefore] news and for news [people] look to the press’.

What is noteworthy in the excerpt above is that in a democracy newspapers should act as public spheres. Journalists should present news which is written from all possible views so that when the readers targeted read the news they will be able to get all sides of the story and ultimately be able to deduce from the data provided the information that they think best explain the situation on hand. This calls for the use of news frames which are capable of portraying all sides of the story or issue on hand as suggested by Mencher (1997:33). He said that news stories must be accurate, properly attributed, balanced and fair, objective, brief and focused, and well written.
His contribution to my study is that in the reportage of a controversial issue, like the land issue in Zimbabwe, reporters must always try to write stories with all sides in a controversy given. This can be described as objective reporting. The need to be objective when reporting on issues is also underpinned by Stuart (2010:26) who says that:

Under objectivity, journalists adopt the pose of scientist and vow to eliminate their own beliefs and values as guides in ascertaining what was said and done. Supposedly avoiding all subjective judgment and analysis the journalist strives to become a rigorously impartial, expert collector of information. More than just ending formal political alliances and external control, the objective press must eliminate any organizing philosophies or social commitments from influencing the news. In this fashion, the rarified ethic of objectivity seeks a high degree of differentiation from the polity, economy, and, as some have charged, from the general value commitments of the society.

The input made by Stuart (ibid) in this study regarding the role of the press in society is its language that enjoins newspapers or journalists to be objective. Their products (news reports) need to be less biased and instead have more facts. Journalists should refuse to openly interpret, and should also keep a distance from all authorities if they are to elevate balance in the news stories they give to the readers. On the subject of objectivity in news reporting Cohen (1992:156) went further in saying that:

A reporter is expected to be ‘objective’ in his or her account of the facts. Ordinarily, this demand amounts to the demand that journalists keep their own personal biases, emotions, interpretations, and other “subjective” factors out of the news. On this conception, the job of the journalist is to “report the facts” not to create them.

Unlike Stuart (ibid) who sees journalists as people who should not openly interpret, Sanders (2003:43 – 44) said that journalists should act as interpreters. Now people can only interpret what is already there. Interpretation implies the existence of something. Interpretation involves disclosure. Thus in a democracy or in the reportage of any issue journalists should thrive to use language which ‘[interpret reality], disclosing its truth, and telling stories. Interpretation is also an activity to which [journalist] bring premises, prejudices in the sense of prejudgments’. Sanders (2003:42) also make an important input in this study when he adds that:
The idea of objectivity namely the view that news reporting should seek impartiality and even handedness in its reporting ...doesn’t mean just getting two sides to a story nor does it require ‘absolute’ neutrality on every issue or detachment from democratic principles. It is a practice aimed at removing the distorting effect of prejudice from whatever source, ensuring that full and fair accounts are given of events.

In summary, Sanders (ibid: 41) said that in order to provide readers with information which is truthful, the language used by journalists must be accurate, objective and unbiased, that is, the language used must thrive to getting both sides of the story.

Bell (1991b: 212) also focused on news reports and he said that the language used in covering an issue can result in miscommunication. Miscommunication usually comes as a result of misrepresentation, misunderstanding, inaccuracy, distortion and misreporting. Bell (ibid) went on to add that although the media are means of communication; the stories that are produced are however not neutral. In other words, language is not neutral. Schudson in Bell (ibid) says that, ‘The news story is controlled by news values. It is not a neutral vehicle, nor is news production a neutral process, despite the journalist’s century – old creed of objectivity’. Richardson (2007:10) in addition brought to light the idea that the language journalists’ use is very critical, for it is through the language used, that people grant meaning to their actions, by the same token, it is through people’s use of language that they can attempt to remove meaning from their actions. In other words, the point that Richardson (2007:13) wanted to make was that:

Journalism has social effects: through its power to shape issue agendas and public discourse, it can reinforce beliefs; it can shape people’s opinions not only of the world but also of their place and role in the world; or, if not shape your opinions on a particular matter, it can at the very least influence what you have opinions on; in sum’ it can help shape social reality by shaping our views of social reality. For these reasons, and many more, the language of the news media needs to be taken very seriously

Richardson (ibid) further revealed that language is a medium of power that can be used to sediment inequalities of power and legitimate iniquitous social relations. He says that:

There is still a prevailing assumption that language is ‘clear’ and acts as a neutral window on the world, and that the objects and structures of a language exist as a kind of an apolitical structure,
like numbers do for mathematics. Such a view meshes quite well with prevailing assumptions about journalism: that is neutral and factual. These assumptions need to be contested because they can be quite dangerous (Richardson, 2007: 13).

That the language used, so are the frames, are not neutral and therefore need to be contested is a very valuable contribution made by Richardson (ibid) in this study. Philo in Stuart (2010:408) looked at the hegemonic nature of the language of reportage and he says that:

What is being written constitutes a ‘dominant cultural order’, which imposes ‘taken for granted’ knowledge of social structures [hegemonic viewpoint]. This carries with it the stamp of legitimacy – it appears coterminous with what is ‘natural’, ‘inevitable’, taken for granted about the social order’… the language and visual images [journalists] uses will be organized within this taken for granted knowledge.

What is of significance in Philo’s (ibid) passage above is that the language and visuals (frames) that journalists use have several effects on the readers. In the process some readers will fall in the naïve / immature / shallow readings of the story frames used by the journalists concerned. The reason for this will be that the readers will have seen the message as directly relating to what they see as normal, natural, and as ‘taken for granted’. In other words, these are the readers who are polarised to an extent that they are always pro – the news produced however inaccurate.

Philo made another important contribution to this study when he indicated that readers also take a ‘negotiated’ position when reading the language of reportage of an issue or event. Readers’ interpretations of a story or stories contain a mixture of ‘adaptive and oppositional’ elements. Readers might appear to accept the frames used or the hegemonic viewpoint at a general level, but seek particular exceptions in terms of their own beliefs or behaviour. The third contribution, which is very vital in this study, and which this study seeks to advance, is that readers can take a completely oppositional code. Readers, after encountering with a report in a newspaper, can decode the message / language contained in that report in a ‘globally contrary way’. The message is re – totalised within an alternative frame of reference. As Hall (1980:136) writes, ‘this is the case of the viewer who listens to a debate on the need to limit wages but ‘reads’ every mention of the ‘national’s interests’ as ‘class interest’. The reasons for this are two fold: First Kuypers (2002:19) says that ‘the media could not be intentionally ignoring responsible norms of objectivity…the media may attempt some objectivity but still frame in such a manner that
prevents readers from making a “balanced assessment” of a particular event’. Secondly Philo in Stuart (2010:409) says that:

[The three positions above] encouraged the belief that the language of news texts (visual and verbal) was polysemic- that it could have a variety of meanings to different groups. So readers of the same news could be seeing and hearing it differently. What they saw and heard would be defined by their own class, gender or ethnicity. The assumption was that people would thus be ‘closed off’ from the intended meanings.

The conclusion that can therefore be made is that meanings are created in the encounter between the reader and the text or frame used by the journalists and that each new encounter could potentially create a new meaning or a different frame from the one used by the journalist. This new frame could be as a result of the omissions, words, quotes or sources used in the report by journalists who might be taken as otherwise by some readers.

1.4.4 REPORTORIAL PRACTICES OF NEWSPAPERS IN ZIMBABWE

There are other scholars who have looked on how newspapers in Zimbabwe cover issues, especially those ones which are very controversial like Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe – which was carried out by the government of Zimbabwe in March of 2005. These scholars include Chari, Mahoso and Nyamanhindi in Vambe (2008). Although the focus of these scholars was on Operation Murambatsvina and not Land Reform, these scholars made some important contribution to this study by providing the general picture of the reportorial tendencies of the public and private media in Zimbabwe, especially when they report on issues which seem to be very controversial like Land Reform or Operation Murambatsvina, in their case.

Chari in Vambe (ibid: 105) looked at the ideological motivations that inform the representations of Murambatsvina in the two weeklies: The Sunday Mail and The Standard. He argued that ‘representation of Operation Murambatsvina mirrored the polarised political environment…’ Chari’s work is therefore vital in my study in that it demonstrates that the two newspapers were selective in their coverage of Operation Murambatsvina (p.117). He says that ‘The Standard was interested in covering the oppression and the negative aspects of the clean – up operation, while the Sunday Mail tended to sanitise it’.
In addition to the above Chari (ibid: 117) says that:

Coverage of the two newspapers [one pro and the other anti-government] mirrors the political and ideological polarization characteristic of the media and the Zimbabwean society in general at that time. Neither represented Operation Murambatsvina in an objective, balanced and informative manner. They failed to project the clean-up operation in a manner reflecting its multi-faceted nature.

Chari (ibid) attributed this polarization to ‘ownership constraints, a socio – political context characterised by hostile international relations, the waning power base of the ruling party; an economy under siege …’ The real danger with such reporting [going beyond permitted partisanship] is ‘the possibility of the media alienating one of their most key constituencies – the readers who look to them for information and wisdom’ (Chari 2005:117). The problem with Chari’s perspective is that he does not shade light on what the fluid concepts of ‘objective, balanced and informative manner’ should mean in a context of veritable or real transitions marked by fractured ideologies not only of the dominant ruling class or the opposition political parties, but also the fissured perspectives in narrated stories on Land Reform in dominant media and oppositional media. Chari’s explanations of polarisation of media are dogmatic, rigid, and inflexible and rely on a single explanation. My study introduces a discourse analysis approach whose explanatory potential carnivalises perspectives adopted by dominant and subordinated newspapers.

Nyamahindi in Vambe (ibid: 118) unlike Chari (ibid) looked at the representation of Operation Murambatsvina through press cartoons. He looked at the representation of the operation in the public and private press and he concluded that, ‘Cartoons in both the public and private media created contestable categorizations of public events and issues that reflected particular conceptual ways of experiencing Operation Murambatsvina (Nyamahindi in Vambe, 2008: 133). This visual dimension is very central to my study that analyses stories which sometimes carry visuals not as accessories to the story but as constitutive to the narrative story. Visuals placed in a story can add, accentuate the message and even contradict what the verbal words are suggesting. Readers’ curiosity is captured by pictures more than words, and often, conclusions are made on the basis not of what has been read but what has been seen in the form of a picture. My study will consistently comment on what visuals such as pictures and even the font size in
which the story is written can bring to the meanings of a story that on the surface seem harmless or even harmful. On the other hand, Mahoso in Vambe (ibid: 159), unlike Chari and Nyamanhindi (ibid) chose to ‘read the 2005 Tibaijuka report on Zimbabwe in a global context’ with the view to unravel the power discourses informing the content of the report on Operation Murambatsvina. The major contribution made by Mahoso in his reading of Tibaijuka report is that he revealed that:

In its mode of describing Murambatsvina, the report has been ideologically prevented from saying certain things; the report has been silenced and ends up saying more about Murambatsvina from what it is forced to authorize. In its failure to disclose the most important causes and dimensions of Murambatsvina, the Tibaijuka report participates in undermining the quest for democracy in Zimbabwe (Mahoso in Vambe, 2008:168)

Notwithstanding their limitations, the researches done by the three scholars above (Chari, Nyamanhindi and Mahoso) are vital in my study in that they demonstrate that the language used by the press in Zimbabwe is not objective, balanced and what is more, undermine the quest for democracy in Zimbabwe. Their researches on the coverage of Operation Murambatsvina highlighted that the press is very much polarised. The public media is always in support of the government policy while the private press is always anti-government policy.

Although the researches highlighted above managed to show the polarised nature of the press in Zimbabwe, all these research studies did not indicate that even in a polarised state, language in itself is not stable. There are always instabilities within language itself and the product of these instabilities of languages is the creation of multiple or new meanings or frames. Readers can actually read the story from what is not said. Secondly, these studies which were made in Zimbabwe only focused on the coverage of Operation Murambatsvina and none attempted to find out whether this same behavior is/was also prevalent in the coverage of other issues like Third Chimurenga. This gap therefore necessitates this research. Thirdly, although the three scholars above who did some analysis of the language of representation of Operation Murambatsvina, neither of them really attempted to demonstrate exactly what they meant when they say that the press is polarised. They just demonstrated this by either citing the number of stories that have been produced in favour of one position against the other (content analysis) or by the kind of language used (whether it supports or dismisses) the policy. In this study, this
polarised nature will be demonstrated by exactly showing how the media frame or select their language after a speech is presented by a political actor, for instance.

The reason for this presentation is two fold: first this will demonstrate exactly what is meant when scholars arrive at the conclusion that the media is polarised. Secondly, this presentation will also go a step further in demonstrating that in their attempts (media houses/journalists) to frame issues in ways that will give support to one particular view/s at the expense of the others; this is not always successful in that; through omission or through the choice of other words, these journalists can actually come up with a totally different frame which is neither near to the original frame used. The ultimate argument or stance which my study wishes to demonstrate is that while some readers can be left with a distorted and misrepresented piece of report in which to base their judgments or decisions on, other readers will try to come up with the unsaid or different frames in order to arrive at the possible meanings of the reports.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theory according to Kwaramba (2000:13) is ‘a set of rules, guidelines or law – like rules that help understand phenomenon’ such as the language of reportage of Third Chimurenga. Plag cited in Zivenge (2009:10) defines theory as ‘conceptual and pragmatic principles forming the general frame of references for inquiry...’ Theories guide procedure, assessments, analysis and notation during documentation (Zivenge, ibid: 11). In other words, theories are basis of arguments and decision making and they help in reaching to some optimal conclusions rather than mere descriptions or through trial and error. This study makes use of the following four theories:

- Frame theory,
- Social Responsibility theory,
- Language theories and
- Reception theories.

These afore – mentioned four theories will enable the researcher to critically investigate the language of reportage of Third Chimurenga in four selected newspapers mentioned above. Framing theory has been chosen in this study because it suggests that how something is presented (the ‘frame’) influences the choices people make. In the words of Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), the concept of framing is related to the agenda – setting tradition but expands the
research by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand, rather than on a particular topic. The basis of framing theory is that media focus attention on certain events and then places these events in a field of meaning. In order to quickly and efficiently process large amounts of information and make sense of complex stories journalists thus use frames. Tversky and Kahneman (1981) see frames as ‘abstract notions that serve to organise or structure social meanings’. In other words, framing is a quality of communication that leads others to accept one meaning over another. It is a process by which a communication source defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy. Thus news frames guide journalists in deciding which details of a story to select and emphasise and which to leave out or de-emphasize. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) summarise framing theory as a process by which:

The media draws the public attention to certain topics; it decides what people think about. The journalists select the topics. This is the original agenda setting ‘thought’…the way in which the news is brought, the frame in which the news is presented, is also a choice made by journalists. Thus, a frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers organize and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided.

The importance of using framing theory in this study is that ‘it helps in understanding the multiple ways in which journalists display value judgments in the products they create’ (Moritz in Stuart, 2010:322). Lester and Ross (2003:32) underscore the point made by Moritz (ibid), Fairhurst and Sarr (ibid) as well as Tversky and Kahneman (ibid) when they say that, ‘The selection of what to cover, the prominence given to that coverage in terms of headline size …as well as the choice of words, images …all play a role in framing a story and thereby in influencing [readers] perceptions of content and meaning’.

The synopsis above further highlighted that media products are human products or constructs that audiences take for granted. What is being written constitutes a ‘dominant cultural order which imposes “taken for granted” knowledge of social structures’ (Hall, 1980:134). Thus ‘far from being neutral observers, journalists come to their work with racial, gender, sexual orientation, class, geographic and generational identities that deeply affect not only what they select to cover but also how to cover it’ (Moritz In Stuart, 2010:321). Frames therefore direct
readers to develop meanings that go well beyond the words and pictures on the page. They shape the news narratives by suggesting connections of:

[Each] story to others and to a wealth of cultural myth and legend, to cultural beliefs of how the world works, and of how stories end. Framing connects today’s news with ...personal and social histories and with the myriad of images and stereotypes [people] use to represent reality (Lester and Ross, 2003:31).

In this way, news frames help to formulate the larger discourse. Entmam (2004) points out that, ‘while the specific facts of an individual news account may be accurate, the cumulative impression of repeated news stories may none the less lead to distortions and misrepresentations’. Furthermore, by drawing on longstanding stereotypes that resonates deeply with their audiences, media workers can reduce complex issues to simplified binaries of right and wrong, strong and weak, normal and perverted. Framing is therefore an important theory since it can have a big influence on what people think. In addition, framing is not per se a bad thing and in fact is an unavoidable part of human communication.

Insights from Social Responsibility theory will also be applied in this study. This is one of the normative media theories which include Authoritarian, Soviet – totalitarian and Libertarian, which are based on the book *Four Theories of the Press* produced in 1957 by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (Mazango and Chiumbu, 2000:36). Normative media theories deal with ideas of how media ought to, or are expected to operate. Normative theories of the media help people to understand how different kinds of governments relate to media and why government or the state regulates the media. Social Responsibility theory or model emphasises press responsibility. The social responsibility model view holds that the media have clear obligations of public service that transcend moneymaking. The press could be more educational and stress the positive and eliminate or minimise the negative. Kwaramba (2000:131) says that the role of the media, so is its language of reportage, is to inform, educate and entertain. The media has to reflect social diversity and minority viewpoints. The media, through its language of reportage, is expected to represent the widest possible diversity of views and opinions in society and should act as a forum of debate. McQuail cited In Chiumbu and Mazango (2000: 40) says that under social responsibility model the media should among other things ‘... use [language] which sets high standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance...’.
tremendous power to influence people. The majority of people rely on newspapers to get information and often believe what the newspapers say. Because of this reliance by the public on newspapers for information the language of reportage used by reporters or journalists must be accurate, truthful and fair. Journalists should check and re-check their stories.

The study also uses ideas from some language theories propounded by Hall and Morley cited in Boyd – Barret (2002) and Derrida (1978) as well as Bakhtin (1986) who talk of polysemy or the fluid or liquid nature of language which ultimately suggests that language is subject to divergent meanings. Following these language theories, Boyd – Barret (2002:45) describes the work of Hall and its later development by Morley as follows:

Hall developed a theory of ideology which allows that texts are ‘polysemic’, which is to say that they offer the possibility of a diversity of readings, even if a ‘preferred reading’ is inscribed within the text by its producers. Through the work of Morley, in particular, this crucial insight has been further explored to reveal the divergent meanings that different groups, whether defined in terms of social class, gender or ethnicity, could draw from texts. Although journalists might try to use certain frames when reporting on an issue in order to provide readers with a template on how to view that issue (preferred reading), language theories or theorists, however, state that readers of the same news frame, story or language could be seeing or hearing it differently. They can actually come up with different or alternative frames of explaining that same story. What they see and hear will be defined by their own class, gender or ethnicity. The assumption here is that people will be ‘closed off’ from the intended (encoded) message and will in fact create their own meanings. One of the conclusions that some language theorists like Derrida and Foucault made is that meanings/language frames are created in the encounter between the reader and the text and that each new encounter could potentially create a new meaning/frame. This is also known as iteration. In short, the study makes use of language and reception theories because they perceive the text/language and receivers or readers of mass communication messages as disaggregated. Audiences are perceived as constructing meaning according to their individual needs, and this process according to Kwaramba (2000: 37) is guided by culture and the context in which the message is received.

In this section I have outlined the theories that inform my study. The discussion justified my approach and gives direction to the study as a whole. The next section looks at the how of my
study, that is, the means through which my inquiry is going to be accomplished. The section discusses the methods to be employed in the research.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative or textual approach in its exploration of the language of reportage of Land Reform. Qualitative approach has been chosen over quantitative approach because it is first hinged on the belief that there is no one objective ‘reality’ which can be observed and neutrally quantified (Lemon in du Ploy, 2001: 33). This is also underscored by Morrison (1989:24) who described or defined qualitative approach as a descriptive research tradition for things that cannot be instrumentally measured, such as feelings, behaviour, speech, thoughts and culture. Secondly, researchers using qualitative approach do not believe that human beings are homogenous and they can be simply categorised. Following this second belief regarding qualitative approach, that human beings are not homogeneous, the researcher chose this approach in order to explore how the heterogeneity nature of human beings (journalists in this instance) is reflected in their framing of Third Chimurenga following its promulgation by the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Robert Gabriel Mugabe, in the year 2000. In a nutshell, the study takes an interpretive approach to the study of the language of representing Land Reform.

Interpretive social sciences as Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 103) say, ‘traces its roots to Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey. The aim of this paradigm is to understand how people in everyday natural settings create meaning and interpret the events of their world’. Following the qualitative approach suggested in this study, below is an outline of the research design that will be followed.

A research design according to Guy (1987:92) is a ‘plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that are undertaken to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective’. The research design therefore involves the process of planning what and how data will be collected. In the words of Kothari cited by Lemon in du Ploy (2001:38) the research design ‘is the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data’. This study will start by reviewing literature to do with the historical background of the land issue in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. This will be pursued with a review of literature on the subject of language of news reporting or journalism. Particular attention will be paid on whether the language used by journalists in reporting Third Chimurenga in The Herald, The Daily News, The Daily Mirror and Kwayedza during 2000 and
2008 were objective, fair, accurate and balanced. As already indicated, the four selected media organisations mentioned above have been chosen because of their different ideological approaches to news. Chari in Vambe (2008: 107) indicates that these newspapers ‘are representative of diametrically opposed editorial policies and ideological viewpoints, and all play[ed] an important role in shaping public opinion’. Analysis of the coverage of Land Reform in newspapers will also prompt the researcher to incorporate critical voices of readers of the four newspapers being analysed in this study in order to get to the sources of their choices of particular frames at the expense of the others when discussing Land Reform in the public spheres.

To analyse the meanings of newspaper output – news frames or reports on Third Chimurenga - in this case – Jerkins (1983), reminds us that it is necessary not only to see how the producers encoded the message and the form it assumes but also how audiences have decoded it. In order to get to the feelings and thoughts of audiences regarding the language of communication or reportage used or the frames used, first, a review of some critical letters to the editors or stories or opinion stories written by readers on Land Reform will be conducted. These letters will also help in portraying how readers have been influenced or otherwise by the news frames or languages of coverage used by journalists of the selected newspapers. In other words, frames or languages of reportage or coverage of Third Chimurenga (Land issue) used by the selected newspaper organisations will be compared against the letters written by various people in these newspapers or letters to the editor columns in order to see how the readers or writers have been influenced by them (frames used by the newspapers) and how far near or away are their analysis or stories from the historical backdrop of land issue in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the study will also make use of some critical voices in the form of limited interviews where necessary. This approach has been chosen in order to ensure reliability of information.

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is the Introduction. It presents the background of the study, the research problem, the research aims, objectives and questions, a justification of the study as well as a definition of terms, theoretical framework, scope of study and conclusion. Chapter Two is the extended Literature Review. It presents the historical background of land issue in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. This will be followed
with a review of Land in Literary works or novels in Zimbabwe and Land in Popular Music in Zimbabwe. Chapter Two will also present literature relating to the representation of land in newspapers. Chapter Three focuses on *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers which are State owned; to ascertain the newspapers’ ways of framing Land Reform (Third Chimurenga) in the period 2000 – 2008. The following general questions borrowed from Kuypers (2002:19) – who looked at press bias and politics in the United States by specifically focusing on how media framed controversial issues following speeches made by political actors – will be answered and these are:

- How did the historians or the government of ZANU (PF) frame Land Reform/Third Chimurenga?
- How did the newspapers, responding to the historians or the government of ZANU (PF), frame Land Reform/Third Chimurenga?
- At what time, if at all, did the frames converge to provide a unified contextual whole? Focus will be on the overall impression given by *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers when viewed as a collective whole?
- How did the language of reportage or frames used by *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* Newspapers affect the readers?

Chapter Four focuses on *The Daily News* newspaper. The centre of attention will be on analysing how *The Daily News* framed Land Reform (Third Chimurenga) in the period 2000 – 2008. The following general questions borrowed from Kuypers (2002:19) will also be answered:

- How are the historians or the government of ZANU (PF) made to frame Land Reform/Third Chimurenga in *The Daily News*?
- How did the newspapers, responding to the historians or the government of ZANU (PF), frame Land Reform/Third Chimurenga?
- At what time, if at all, did the frames converge to oppose portrayals of Land Reform in the newspapers analysed in chapter?
- How did the language of reportage or frames used by *The Daily News* newspaper affect the readers?
Chapter Five focuses on *The Daily Mirror* newspaper. The centre of attention will be on analyzing how *The Daily Mirror* framed Land Reform (Third Chimurenga) in the period 2000 – 2008. The following general questions also borrowed from Kuypers (2002:19) will be answered:

- How are the historians or the government of ZANU (PF) made to frame Land Reform/Third Chimurenga in *The Daily Mirror*?
- How did the newspapers, responding to the historians or the government of ZANU (PF), frame Land Reform/Third Chimurenga?
- And at what time, if at all, did the frames converge with or contradict the portrayal of land in the newspapers discussed in chapters three and four? Focus will be on the overall impression given by *The Daily Mirror* newspaper when viewed as a collective whole?
- How did the language of reportage or frames used by *The Daily Mirror* newspaper affect the readers?

Chapter Six is the Conclusion. It presents the overall findings of the study and offers recommendations for future research in the area of language, land and mediation in print media.

### 1.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research aim, objectives and questions. The reasons of why this study is necessary together with the theoretical framework were also highlighted. In addition to that, a brief literature review was presented coupled with the research methodology, scope of study, definition of terms and the anticipated layout of the thesis. The aim of this study, as presented above, is to analyse the language through Land Reform is reported in four Zimbabwean newspapers namely *The Herald, Kwayedza, The Daily News* and *The Daily Mirror* in the period 2000 and 2008. The study argues that journalists of the above mention media institutions or newspapers use frames which fail to take into account the historical context of the land issue in Zimbabwe. Secondly, the news reports regarding Land Reform are too closed and they are full of negative stereotypes. Thirdly, the frames used have the dilemma of portraying Zimbabwe as having undergone three *Zvimurengas* (Struggles), yet in each struggle, for instance, in the so called Third Chimurenga, there are other *Zvimurengas* (Struggles), like class or gender struggles. Furthermore, it is this
study’s argument that the frames used by the four selected newspapers mentioned above left readers with distorted and misrepresented pieces of reports in which to base their judgments and decisions on. Some readers will be misled while others will try to come up with the unsaid or different/alternative frames of their own in order to arrive at the possible meanings of the reports on Land Reform. In short, the study argues that newspapers so are the journalists in Zimbabwe who fail to provide the historical facts of the land issue, in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, will be unjust both to the citizenry and the political parties they claim to be aligned to.

The next chapter which is the Extended Literature Review focuses on what different scholars say about the historical backdrop of the land issue in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. The chapter will also touch on the reportage of land in literary works/novels and popular music in Zimbabwe. The chapter will furthermore look at the representation of land in newspapers in Zimbabwe and what is more, gaps which the present study tends to fill regarding the reportage of Land Reform in selected Zimbabwean newspapers will be identified.
CHAPTER 2
EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW ON ZIMBABWE’S MEDIA
REPRESENTATION OF LAND REFORM PROGRAMME

Citizens rely heavily on ... [the media] ... for news and information about public affairs
(Purvis, 2001:64).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter defined the area of study, provided justification of the study, gave a brief
outline of the literature review, elaborated on the theories used in the study, described the
research methodology and finally delineated the chapter organisation. The aim of this chapter is
to offer an extended review of literature relating to the language used in representing or framing
Zimbabwe’s Land Reform programme in history books, creative arts, popular music and
newspapers in Zimbabwe in – order to then help discuss the issue of the responsibility of media
in democratising society. The review chapter will begin by outlining and critiquing the language
used in describing the land issue in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular in history
books. This background is critical in this study in that it will provide readers with a framework in
which to evaluate the language used in discussing or reporting Zimbabwe Land Reform
programme in creative arts, popular music and some newspapers. A review of the language used
in framing or reporting Land Reform in Zimbabwe’s creative arts will follow the section on land
in history books in Zimbabwe. This will be preceded with an analysis of the reportage of Land
Reform in popular music. Finally, focus will be on the language used in covering Land Reform
programme in some newspapers in Zimbabwe.

In – order to quickly and efficiently process large quantities of information and make sense of
complex issues like the Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe, journalists use language to
frame issues. These languages guide them in deciding which details of an issue to select and
emphasise and which information to leave out or de – emphasise in news frame. The chapter
argues that this act of choosing what to include or emphasise and to exclude or de – emphasise in
a frame through language is problematic. Usually choosing certain languages in framing an issue
at the expense of others culminates – in most cases – in unbalanced or subjective news products,
among other things. This scenario, in other instances, can leave some if not most readers with
little information when it comes to the issue of Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe. Unbalanced news products can possibly culminate in polarised readers in most cases depending on which newspaper or newspapers a reader relies on. This point is emphasised by several critics who have written on how media languages frame issues and the subsequent thinking of readers in society. Among these scholars is Purvis (2001:71) who points out that, ‘[The way media cover and emphasise complex issues] … have contributed to a tendency to present important public issues … [in an often oversimplified form] … [and this] … results in a tendency to polarize issues [and readers understanding of those issues in most cases]’.

The starting point of this literature review is that media construct and define reality and this process takes place inside and not outside media’s different forms/languages of representing reality (Vambe, 2001: 4). Put differently, some of the ways in which citizens of any nation can get informed of Zimbabwe’s Land Reform can either be through media languages in history books, creative arts, popular music or newspapers, to mention but a few. Language consequently provides an incredible window for viewing or understanding or knowing public affairs or issues like Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe.

The chapter further argues that while journalists/reporters may try to use language or frames that may possibly seek to homogenise readers; they might not succeed in doing so all the time due to the languages’ refusal to be tamed; in all or most cases. The denial of language to be tamed at all times, thus, signaling its flexibility or uncertainty characteristic (Derrida, 1998) can also be attributed to the active role of readers in deconstructing texts. In other words; readers can interpret, negotiate, resist or subvert the polysemic meanings or frames of mass media and come up with different patterns or languages or frames of interpreting news stories presented to them.

2.1 LAND IN HISTORY TEXTS / BOOKS

Several scholars have written literature on the historical significance of the land issue in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Amongst these scholars is Bakare (1993). He reiterates on the aspect of land vis á vis native people before the colonisation of Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe that most Africans use to live in areas with fertile soils such as ‘Makoni country which was cut into numerous European farms’ (Nyagumbo in Bakare, 1993: 60). They worked the land and produced food to subsist themselves. In some cases, they generated surplus produce,
which they could then barter trade or sell to others. Bakare (1993: 46) further observed – within the same theme of land and native people in pre-colonial era – that land was and continued in the post – colonial epoch to be a form of a person’s identity, history, and livelihood and as such was always regarded as sacred. In view of the latter point, loss of land meant loss of one’s fathers and the home of one’s childhood (Bakare, ibid: 43).

Another important theme which was elevated by Bakare (ibid) was to do with land and ownership or tenure or occupancy or possession. He said that in order to forestall losing these sanctified lands; kings, chiefs and headmen were selected in communities to look after lands and this was done under customary land tenure ownership. Customary land tenure ownership involved the idea that land was owned by the whole community and was at the disposal of the individuals of that community. While Africans regarded land as revered in the pre – colonial period, the British, on the other hand, did not regard land as a sacred thing. As long as the land was arable or had minerals the British would make sure that they possess it. They would even displace the inhabitants forcefully. Bakare (1993:50) underpinned the latter point when he said that:

For Rhodes and his Pioneer Column, inspired from early childhood by traditional legends such as Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, there was nothing wrong with the idea of fighting for land, even if it was land already belonging to others. The BSAC’s desire, under Rhodes leadership, to invade Zimbabwe in order to occupy it and plunder its mineral resources was, within the context of British culture, an acceptable thing to do.

The quotation above further suggests that the British did not have respect of the laws or tenure systems of Africans in the pre – colonial and colonial epochs. Additionally, it can be argued that the removal of Africans from their traditional communal lands was indeed not a terrible thing in the eyes of settlers because these communal lands were not fenced or clearly marked and for the British unmarked land meant that it was not owned, thus, the African traditional concept of ownership was taken advantage of. It is therefore apparent from the language used by Bakare (ibid) that the two divergent views on land ownership systems by Africans and the British became the backbone of the British occupation of the Native or African people’s land and the source of three revolts namely the First Chimurenga, the Second Chimurenga and the Third Chimurenga. The British settlers’ interest in owning land lay solely in the potential mineral
resources (Bakare, 1993:50). Mining speculation was the primary reason for Rhodes’ desire to go north. When the British arrived in what is now called Zimbabwe, they forcefully removed Africans off their land and they pushed them to what are now known as ‘Reserves’. These reserves, as Amanor and Moyo (2008:56) comment were crowded and environmentally degraded areas.

With regards to the area of land occupied; Lipton in Antonie (2010:70) stated that, ‘There was a pattern of land alienation [in Africa], evident in the fact that, in 1970, in Zimbabwe, 6,400 white farmers owned almost half the land, while millions of blacks were confined by law to the rest’. In view of the above inequitable distribution of land in Zimbabwe, it can therefore be argued that Land Reform programme was carried out in Zimbabwe in order to re – address disparities and curb underdevelopment as underscored by Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (2008). They said that, ‘the majority of the rural poor [lived] in environmentally degraded and crowded areas [and in addition to that] these reserves were not only confined to the poorest land, but the size of land available to individual households was meager’ (Moyo and Matondi, ibid: 60).

Bakare’s (1993) views contribute significantly to the understanding of the historical background of land issue in my own study. His study managed to show that in the pre – colonial era most Africans used to live in areas with fertile soils. Apart from just living in these areas with fertile soils, they were also involved in subsistence farming. Over and above this, the language used by Bakare (ibid) also revealed that the concept of land is not only confined to agriculture or farming activities, as most people would like to think, but also stretches into mining activities. What is more, Bakare (ibid) revealed that there is a direct link between land and people’s identity, history and livelihood. This idea is captured well in the title of his 1993 book which is *My right to land*. Africans were for that reason identified with the land they occupy. This land apart from being a form of identity was also a source of income owing to the agriculture and mining activities that could be carried out on it. Consequently, the language used by Bakare (1993) in describing land seems to suggest that the removal or disconnection of Africans from their land – which they see themselves as the rightful owners - and their subsequent location to the reserves became the origins of insurgence between Africans and the British (Woddis, 1960). The language used to describe the land issue in Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe by Bakare (1993) also located the
colonisation of Southern Rhodesia by Cecil John Rhodes and his Pioneer Company or the British as the origin of the three struggles carried out in Zimbabwe.

This identical language of locating the colonisation of Southern Rhodesia by the British as the basis of revolt is also evident in Moyana’s 1984 book titled *The Political economy of land in Zimbabwe*. Moyana (ibid: 13) described land in Africa during the pre – colonial epoch as ‘never’ a cause of grievance between subjects and rulers, that is between African kings, chiefs, herdsmen and their communities as it became during the colonial experience. According to Moyana (1984: 13) and as suggested in the language used by Bakare (1993) above, the Shona and Ndebele land tenure systems “left no ‘scars and sores’ among the hearts of the people it served because it did not create classes of people who stood dialectically opposed to one another as the colonial capitalist formula did”. In other words, Moyana like Bakare argued that colonisation of Africa by the British or colonialism was the basic cause of the land issue in Africa in general and Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe in particular. Although the observation above is valuable, these two scholars however failed to reveal that ‘scars and sores’ were already in the hearts of the Shona and Ndebele people before the coming of the British. The establishment of the Ndebele state in southern Rhodesia following the Mfecane that accompanied the rise of the Zulu state in South Africa culminated in some Shona groups living near the Ndebele state such as the Kalanga to become under the influence of the Ndebele people (Moyana and Sibanda, 1982:87). Coming under the influence of the Ndebele people suggests loss of some land by some of the Kalanga people. This scenario was also evident within the Shona groups in the Chirumanzi area. These Shona groups as exemplified by the Chirumanzu people raided deep into the Ndebele country for cattle’ (Moyana and Sibanda ibid: 96) and cattle are subsequently part of the land or part of the economy.

Put differently, the idea that the land issue emanated even before the colonisation of Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe is best captured by Moyana and Sibanda in their 1982 book titled *The African Heritage*. Moyana and Sibanda (1982) revealed that in pre – colonial Zimbabwe some of the Shona groups, for example, had their land taken by the Ndebele, while the Shona themselves had driven the Bushman outside their lands. This revelation therefore challenges the binary approach of locating the friction of Africans and the British or colonisers in Southern Rhodesia.
as the only cause of revolt or land alienation of Africans or the native people in Southern Rhodesia as suggested by Bakare (1993) and Moyana (1984).

Moyo (2001) wrote an article titled *The Land Occupation Movement and Democratization in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neo – liberalism*, which appeared in the *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. He ascribed the Land Reform programme to the failure and decline of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) as the dominant economic ideology and the gradual collapse of the economy of Zimbabwe. According to Moyo (2001) the failure of ESAP and the decline of Zimbabwe’s economy led to increased demand for access to land and both factors are believed to have fuelled the so called ‘Fast Track Land Reform Program’. Moyo (2001) gave emphasis to this point when he said that, ‘Increased rural poverty, with 60 percent of the population living below the poverty datum line, [culminated in] social pressures and demands for access to land’. While Bakare (ibid) and Moyana (ibid) locate colonialism as the derivation of the land issue, Moyo (2001) coins the reason of land issue and the subsequent poverty of the Zimbabweans on the failure of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) as a paradigm for economic growth.

What is therefore noteworthy in the language used by Moyo (ibid) is that Land Reform was necessitated by increased poverty of the African people owing to poor economic strategies adopted by the Zimbabwean government. These economic challenges culminated in most Zimbabweans loosing their jobs. Having lost their jobs they (Zimbabweans) had nowhere to work on, thus, changing or shifting their focus to land. What is however not clear in the language used by Moyo (ibid) is whether the idea of ESAP which led to increased poverty amongst Zimbabweans was a baby or a direct consequence of the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that African countries were supposed to restructure their economies if there were to develop and also if there were to get some aid from them (IMF) or not. If this idea is to be examined closely, one could possibly argue that increased impoverishment among the black majoritry was a direct consequence of the poor modernisation theories imposed on Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular after independence in 1980 by the West. This (economic model – ESAP) further necessitated increased demand for land. The idea that Western countries are the basis of most of the woes experienced in Africa today is clearly captured by Mugabe in his 2001 book titled *Inside the Third Chimurenga* in which he said that, ‘The goal and struggle
for self-determination and sovereignty … rested and depended on our sovereign right, access, control and the use of those resources which God in his infinite generosity gave us, the land, all creatures great and small that crawl on it… (Mugabe, 2001:37).

The excerpt above highlights the fact that, although the black majority gained political independence in 1980, the means of production, however, remained in the hands of a minority (the British). According to Mugabe (2001), lack of economic sovereignty implied lack of power in the nationalist government to determine its own economic policies. Lack of self – determination and sovereignty was therefore the ‘basis of African poverty and indigence in this country [Zimbabwe]’ (Mugabe, 2001:37), a point that seems to have escaped Moyo (ibid). In addition, Moyo seems to be divorced from the historical fact that, before the colonisation of Africa, the native people used to live in areas with fertile soils (Bakare, ibid).

While some scholars located Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe as a direct consequence of the land imbalances inherited during colonialism, Moyo and Matondi (2008: 62) in their article titled Interrogating Sustainable Development and Resource Control in Zimbabwe’ situated Land Reform programme as the government of Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front’s [ZANU (PF)’s] need to lure people to vote for them in the 2002 elections which were just looming around the corner. In other words, these two scholars saw Land Reform as a political gimmick. Although the Zimbabwean government suggested or believed that Land Reform programme was a consequence of land inequalities necessitated in the colonial period; Moyo and Matondi (ibid: 62) revealed that, ‘Apart from these gross land imbalances emanating from the colonial period, the possibility of electoral failure in 2000 by the government of ZANU (PF) led the government to embark on the land redistribution exercise’. The point above was further underscored by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in their article titled What happened to our dream In Barry (2004: 40). They said that:

When ZANU (PF) lost the constitutional referendum in February 2000, it realized that its popularity had plunged. Faced with parliamentary elections within a few months, the ruling party formulated an election campaign strategy with land as its only trump card. Land helped shift the focus away from the liability of troubled economy. As the whites appeared to be supporting the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, they became the targets. So the strategy was to grab their land by force. The ZANU
PF leadership used the state apparatus to invade white owned commercial farms, and later invited war veterans to participate in the exercise. With war veterans at the forefront, it would be easy to sell the idea to the Zimbabwean public [that] war veterans were demonstrating against unequal distribution of land. Surely the government would be criticized if it failed to redistribute land to the landless Zimbabweans. After all, the liberation war was fought over land violently seized by white colonialists who had paid no compensation (Barry, ibid).

Lipton (2010) in her article entitled Land, Liberation and Compromise in South Africa further reveals some language concurrences or synergies with Moyo and Matondi (ibid) and Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (ibid) when she says that, ‘forced evictions were not part of President Mugabe’s initial strategy but he opportunistically used the land issue and the forced evictions of white commercial farmers to cover up his failing government’ (Lipton in Suzman, 2010: 70).

The discourse on the land by Moyo and Matondi (ibid), Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform’s (ibid) and Lipton (ibid) therefore suggest that the ruling class [ZANU (PF)] did not take seriously the issue of Land Reform since independence up until the time they lost the referendum in the year 2000. This is however debatable in that soon after independence, between 1980 and 1983 the nationalist government led by Mugabe had resettled more than 50 000 families as given emphasis by the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions, Land, Housing and Property Rights in Zimbabwe (2001:16). They said that the government of Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front [ZANU (PF)] led by Robert Mugabe, ‘in the first decade of independence…acquired 40 percent of the target of eight million hectares, resettling more than 50,000 families on more than three million hectares’. Moyana (1984, 24) further indicated that Zimbabwe and Britain agreed at Lancaster House conference on a three year programme with the aim of acquiring 1.1 million hectares of land on which would be settled some 18 000 families at a cost of $60 million. And the specific objectives of the programme were:

a. To provide some relief of the pressures on over-populated land,
b. To extend and improve the base for productive agriculture in the peasant farming sector

c. To improve the standards of living of the largest and poorest sector of the population of Zimbabwe,
d. To ameliorate the plight of people who have been adversely affected by war and to rehabilitate them,
e. To provide, at the lower end of the scale, opportunities for people who have no land and who are without employment and may therefore be classified as destitute,
f. To bring abandoned or underutilized land into full production as one facet of implementing an equitable policy of land redistribution,
g. To expand and improve the infrastructure and services that are needed to promote the growth of people and of economic production,
h. To achieve national stability and progress in a country that has only recently emerged from the turmoil of war.

What is significant in the citation above, apart from highlighting the fact that resettlement programmes were in the plans of the nationalists government since independence, as opposed to the thinking of the other scholars cited above, is the monetary support that the British government; in agreement with Zimbabwean government, decided or agreed to put aside for the resettlement programmes. The information on monetary support is noteworthy in that it connotes the message that the British government acknowledged the fact that it caused untold sufferings to the people of Zimbabwe during their rule of the colony when they displaced Africans off their land.

Manzungu in Barry (2004: 56) wrote an article entitled *Environmental impacts of the fast-track land reform programme: a livelihoods perspective*. His views concurred with the views of the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions, Land, Housing and Property Rights in Zimbabwe (2001:16). He stresses that:

During the initial stages of the discussion about land reform, the plan was to acquire five million hectares of agricultural land to relieve the pressure on the communal areas and correct the racial imbalance in the commercial farming sector… for economic reasons the government was to acquire only under-utilized land or that of absentee owners. Social or equity considerations were expressed through the one-man, one farm policy. No farmer, white or black, would be deprived of land. There was a legal spin to this. First, land would be acquired within the legal and constitutional framework of the country. Second, compensation would be paid for the improvements on the farm but not for the soil. For cultural reasons, farms adjoining communal areas would be preferred for resettlement to maintain the communal community’s cultural identity.
Manzungu’s insights, however, surpassed the above mentioned scholars in that he introduced six important aspects of viewing land in my study. The first aspect is to do with the nature of the land targeted for resettlement. The second aspect or theme is that of land and race. Third, he puts forward the idea of land and distribution (that is, the issue of equity). The fourth theme was that of land and compensation (which also includes how land ‘owners’ were removed) and lastly he introduced the theme of land and productivity. On the aspect of land and law/compensation, Manzungu in Barry (2004: 56) highlighted that Land Reform programme was not done within the confines of law as demonstrated by the forceful evictions of white landholders who were now seen as illegally occupying the land they were on; yet some of them bought the farms after independence, and in some cases from the government itself. Manzungu (ibid) also drew attention to the fact that ‘extreme rhetoric produced extreme results, which include violent and illegal evictions, lack of compensation to those whose land was expropriated, as well as massive corruption – as shown in multiple farm ownership by well connected, leaders’. Formerly productive farms ceased to function and disruption of farming activities on undesignated farms became the order of the day. The hidden meaning was that the government of ZANU (PF) through its ‘extreme rhetoric’ was the initiators of the violent removal of white commercial farmers.

Although Manzungu (ibid) seems to ascribe forced evictions with President Mugabe, it can be disputed that this conclusion appears to have been arrived at with a blind eye. Manzungu failed to understand that the British employed the same strategy during the colonisation of the indigenous black communities. Forced evictions were actually part of the British culture as underscored by Bakare in his 1993 book titled *My Right to Land*. Bakare said that:

> For Rhodes and his Pioneer Column … there was nothing wrong with the idea of fighting for land, even if it was land already belonging to others. The BSAC’s desire, under Rhodes leadership, to invade Zimbabwe in order to occupy it and plunder its mineral resources was, within the context of British culture, an acceptable thing to do (Bakare 1993: 27).

The inclusions of the word *invade* in the quotation above hinted the use of *force* to remove indigenous black people from their land and this act of using force is against the law. Moreover, while some scholars cited above argued that during the ‘Fast track’ Land Reform programme there was no rule of law, Roger in Moyana (1984: 42) said that there was no rule of law during
colonialism when Africans were deprived of their land. In other words, Roger is of the opinion that what goes around comes around and he reiterates that:

The moment a [white] man had pegged his farm...he regarded the African villagers on it as his serfs who would have to work for him. The chief means of mobilizing this pool of labour in the first years was the sjmbok or hippo – hide whip, and after 1908 labour agreements which committed tenants to work several months, usually three, for the privilege of remaining on their ancestral land (Roger, 1964:51).

The quote above helps in portraying the message that the settlers during colonial epoch had no respect for human beings (Africans). The colonisers forced Africans to work for them or to work for three months in order to be allowed to live in a place which was originally theirs, but, only taken by them (the colonisers) by force.

On the theme regarding the causes of the land issue in Zimbabwe and the subsequent Land Reform programme, Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (2008) attributed the land hunger and subsequent poverty of Zimbabweans to ‘the bad behavior of white landowners of converting land suitable for cropping to ranching and wildlife production’. This provided some gunpowder which latter exploded in 2000. Both politicians and peasants saw this act as socially undesirable and constituted an obstacle to land redistribution. The government, in bargain, saw the conversion of land suitable for cropping to ranching and wildlife production as an act of sabotaging food security although these white farmers emphasised the importance of wildlife ranching in promoting environmental sustainability and increased export earnings.

Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (ibid: 81) also put forth the aspect of land and development in my study. The thinking of the two scholars when it comes to the issue of land and the improved standards of living of the Zimbabwean people corresponded well with the ideas of Mugabe (2001) on land. Mugabe (ibid) akin to Moyo and Matondi (ibid) saw land redistribution as the crucial ingredient for sustainable development or prosperity of Zimbabweans. However, while Mugabe (2001) sees land as the economy and the economy as the land; he seems to have not realised that ownership of land by black people was the first step towards economic empowerment. As President of Zimbabwe for thirty two years, and Chief Executive Officer of a country that recently discovered vast amounts of diamond, Mugabe has not used his power to access funds to build enough dams, and establish farming infrastructure.
that would guarantee that his dream of redistributing land to the people was secure in future. Giving people land alone does not result in the ‘prosperity’ of Zimbabweans. Prosperity depends largely on how the beneficiaries of the Land Reform programme use or work on the land, amongst other variables or determinant factors. These other determinant factors are well described by Moyo and Matondi (ibid). Although provision of land and security over resources to people is the essential step in creating incentives for sustainable resource use, eventual prosperity of Zimbabweans was only going to be through

Sustainable land utilization [which] requires key land, agricultural and economic policy measures which are necessary to increase agricultural productivity, investment and exports, and to [which] bring stability and confidence in the new land property rights, and related laws (Moyo and Matondi, ibid)

Freedom or sovereign land rights were therefore seen as one of the itineraries to prosperity. That freedom was an important ingredient to prosperity of Zimbabweans was buttressed by The Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004: 31) when they said that, ‘Zimbabwe’s national liberation struggle was driven by grievances engendered by decades of colonial subjugation. The Land Apportionment Act of 1931 led the settlers to expropriate fertile lands from blacks and confined them to sandy, often arid soils’. In scrutiny of the above quotation, the First and Second liberation wars had the ultimate goal of freedom. Freedom did not only mean a transfer of power from white to black people but a whole restructuring of society and that included land redistribution. What is furthemore indicated is that ownership of land by a white minority during the colonial period culminated in the impoverishment of the indigenous black people/communities (Mugabe (2001). Although political freedom equates not only to ‘a transfer of power from white to black people but a whole restructuring of society’ (Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform, ibid) as well as prosperity of Zimbabweans (Mugabe, ibid), the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform argued that after independence there was no smooth transfer of land from the minority white settlers to the majority Zimbabwean citizens.

In other words, the language used by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform unpacked the themes of land and distribution and land and class struggles in post – colonial Zimbabwe. Within the blacks that were elected after independence there arose some elite minority classes which took the place of the erstwhile colonial white classes in exploiting its comrades. The idea of restructuring the
entire society was thrown into the dustbins of history. Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (ibid) said that:

[There] was need to wrest power from the colonial regime not just to gain freedom but also to address the structures in the country. It gradually became clear that the old nationalist parties simply wanted to take power, change the name, flag and anthem and put blacks into positions where whites had been before. These old parties did not want radical change in a way that would open up opportunities for the masses of people.

Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform also made a very significant contribution by revealing that in every struggle there are other internal struggles. While land was supposed to be redistributed between the masses, the critics revealed that this was not entirely so, for the masses only realised during the Third Chimurenga that the fight was not only between whites and blacks but between the minority black elite classes and the poor black majority. While most people were made to think that poverty was mainly due to colonial land imbalances (though it is a fact) the same was also true in post colonial Zimbabwe where the ZANU (PF) elite class took the same position and stance, as of the colonial masters, in exploiting the majority of Zimbabweans through the ownership of several farms. The ultimate of this multiple farm ownership was hunger, food shortages, loss of exports, acute poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and loss of production (Sachikonye in Barry, 2004: 69 and Goebel, 2005: 7). In stressing the afore – mentioned point, Manzungu (2004:57) said that The Herald of 13 March 2003 quoted the Minister of Information saying, ‘in response to allegations that some top government officials had more than one farm each, the minister did not deny it [But] he simply said this criticism was irrelevant [And] what was important was that ‘we, the blacks,’ acquired the eleven million hectares’. The Minister was therefore hiding under the banner of nationalism yet in reality We, the blacks in the quotation above referred to the minority black elite class and this led the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (ibid) to arrive at the conclusion that, ‘With the exception of independence and the national flag, nothing else forms part of their original aspirations. No economic opportunities… [And] Zimbabweans in general feel hollow; genuine war veterans in particular feel worse because their sacrifices were in vain’.

On the issue or aspect of land and distribution, Manzungu and Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004) believed that the government of ZANU (PF) hid behind the concept of
‘nationalism’ yet in reality it was only the minority (black elite class) who benefited and continue to benefit. What is more, Manzungu (ibid) articulated that people should not only look at Land Reform program through the race card at the detriment of the development of a holistic society – based political economy. The emphasis on land and ‘race’ culminated in the neglect of other important issues that can also be classified as the impacts of ‘Fast-Track Land Reform Programme’ (Manzungu In Barry, 2004: 61). According to Manzungu in his 2004 article titled \textit{Environmental impacts of the fast-track land reform programme: a livelihoods perspective}, Land Reform Programme culminated in land, previously zoned as non – arable, being brought under cultivation, predisposing it to environmental degradation as well as increased possibilities of flooding. Mukwashi in Manzungu (2004) introduced the aspect of land and expertise or training. He said that many resettled farmers were poorly trained and had poor waste disposal systems which culminated in bacterial contamination of water and that posed some serious health risks through waterborne and water related diseases such as diarrhoea.

Still on the holistic approach suggested by Manzungu (ibid); Sachikonye in his 2004 article entitled \textit{Land Reform and Farm Workers} suggested that equitable Land Reform programmes should always ensure that farm workers who are displaced find alternative employment opportunities, or at least have access to tenure security and land. He argued that, ‘Farm workers have not been a major force in land reform, nor have they been beneficiaries … they have been marginalised throughout the reform process in Zimbabwe’ (Sachikonye, 2004:70).

Since citizens rely heavily on the media for news and information about public affairs (Purvis, 2001:64), history books are but one medium by which citizens rely on for news regarding an issue like Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe. People also get informed about the land issue in Zimbabwe by reading novels or creative arts. It is from this perspective or brief background that the next section resort to review the language of reportage of Land Reform in creative arts.

\section*{2.2 LAND IN ZIMBABWEAN CREATIVE ARTS}

Mazoruse (2010: 1) revealed that literature is one of the ways people in a community or geographical landscape use to communicate or reflect their social, political and cultural realities at any given time. In order for literature to contribute meaningfully, that is, to stimulate debate and discussion on developmental issues in society it has to be critical enough owing to the fact
that society only succeed dynamically and achieve mature fruition with the aid of criticism (Mazuruse, ibid). With regards to the issue of Land in Zimbabwe, a number of Shona authors of Zimbabwe have written novels or poems which demonstrated that land redistribution exercise was first inevitable and second a necessary ingredient for improving the standards of living of the black Zimbabweans who had been deprived of their land during colonialism. These scholars include and are not limited to Marechera (1973), Mungoshi (1975), Members of Zimbabwe’s writers organization called ‘The Budding Association of Zimbabwe’ (2004) namely Denenga, Muchuri, Chihombori, Tapureta, Jingura, and Chinodya as well as Mutasa (2005). The above mentioned scholars or authors discussed or touched on various aspects of land.

Marechera wrote a poem in 1973 called Pledging My Soul. In the poem he described land as a ‘potential sex partner’ when he said that, ‘When I was a boy I climbed onto your granite breasts; Smooth and round… I was yours / And you were mine’. While the poem seemed to have some sexual connotations, the words *I was yours* and *You were mine* in the poem suggest that before the coming of the colonisers in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular the land belonged to the Native people. They were the rightful owners of the land (Bakare, ibid). However, with the coming of the colonisers, the Native people ceased to be the rightful owners of their land. The land which rightfully belonged to them suddenly became that of the colonisers. What is more, the poem also metaphorically demonstrated that the land issue emanated during the colonial period.

Land did not only cease to be theirs (the native people) but they were removed/ pushed or resettled in areas with poor soils. This point is best captured by Mungoshi (1975) in his book titled *Waiting for the rain*. With regards to how land was distributed amongst the people (black and white), Mungoshi (1975:39) said in his novel that:

> The sudden transition from the rolling ranches of Hampshire Estates with their tall dry grass and the fertile soil under that grass, into 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….

The reference above assists in portraying that during colonialism Africans were relegated to areas with poor soils; where nothing could be ploughed, while the colonisers took vast pieces of fertile lands, which in most cases, they could not even plough, as connoted by the *tall dry grass*
and the fertile soils under that grass. Dry grass signifies lack of production or land utilization. The so called reserves or Tribal Trust Lands had poor weather conditions, to mention but a few. Mungoshi described these Tribal Trust Lands as ‘dead landscapes…except for the heat… [And] In these Tribal Trust Lands Africans were impoverished. In bargain, these Tribal Trust Lands were ‘full of lifeless objects’ (1975:40) and indeed they were a ‘dead country’ (ibid: 42). What is apparent in the language used by Mungoshi (ibid) in describing land is that there was need to resettle Africans if their lives were to improve for the better as suggested by the title of his book Waiting for the Rain. The rain could have been symbolizing the resettlement programmes which the Nationalist government soon embarked on after independence in 1980 and the Land Reform programme dubbed Third Chimurenga which marked the ‘finality’ to the issue.

In the year 2004 members of of The Budding Association of Zimbabwe wrote a journal titled Exploding the Myths about Zimbabwe’s Land Issue. These writers included Nhengu, Muchuri, Chinodya, Tapureta, Denenga, Jingura and Chihombori. According to Nhengu (2004: 4) the stories and letters in the journal ‘represent[ed] the different views of the Zimbabwean civil society’.

Muchuri (ibid) wrote a letter titled We will never turn back. This letter represented the views of industrial workers. These views were brought to light through a fictional character known as George throughout the journal. George regarded blacks as inferior when compared to whites. Within the scheme of the Tarzan theory, the Whitemen was the saviour of the blackmen and as such without the whitemen the blackmen can not survive at all. According to Muchuri (2004: 5) George ‘believes that blacks cannot own farms because they neither have the technical know – how nor the resources to meaningfully turn the land into food which can feed the whole nation’ George believed that ‘blacks should only stick to domestic farming and leave commercial farming to the whites’, who according to him, “… are the champions of the Zimbabwean economy” (Muchuri, ibid). What is clear in the language used by Muchuri (ibid) through the fictional character of George (an industrialist) is that Land Reform programme was not properly carried out. George saw land as belonging to the whites and that Zimbabweans did not have the right to ‘forcibly invade the white men’s farms’ (Muchuri, ibid: 8). Furthermore, Muchuri highlighted that people [the natives] did not have the material and financial resources to plough and produce food which could feed the entire nation.
In a nutshell, Muchuri (ibid) through the fictional character of George demonstrated the fact that Whites were and are still good farmers when compared to Blacks because they had and still have the financial and material resources. The major weakness of George’s thinking as portrayed by Muchuri (ibid) is that he is divorced from the historical facts that have necessitated Land Reform programmes in Zimbabwe which started soon after independence and intensified in the late 1990s. The fact that these programmes were meant to correct colonial land imbalances seemed to have escaped people like George (an industrialist) or urbanites. In bargain, George appeared to be saying that Africans were and are still inferior when compared to Whites, an idea which is best explained by Denenga (2004:54) when he said that, ‘When a man has been trodden upon for too long he thinks he is inferior. He disowns himself and devalues his work. He sees the oppressor as the liberator’.

The fact that the Reserves which were created by the colonisers did not have fertile soils and the land they (colonisers) inhabited had fertile soils seemed to have blinded people into thinking that whites were and are good farmers when compared to Africans or blacks. Little did people like George know that Africans, ‘occupy the mountains, gullies and sandy soils…’ while whites ‘have rich soils and the leveled land that is why [they] think they are good farmers’ (page 9). Despite all these disadvantages Muchuri (ibid: 19) argued that Africans ‘tilled … [their] own small and poor fields and still got enough to feed … [themselves], so why do … [they - Africans] believe in the superiority of the white man?’

With regards to the aspect of land and ownership, Muchuri (ibid: 9) also said that, ‘the land does not belong to these [white] oppressors’. In other words, Muchuri saw Africans as the rightful owners of African land. Muchuri’s views (ibid: 9) are also significant to my study in that they provide a comprehensive definition of land. According to Muchuri (ibid), hotels are land, animals [graze on the] land, fruits are land, all business and buildings are land’. The significance of this broader understanding or definition of land is that it revealed that the government’s call for indigenisation of factories or industries is/was therefore within the confines of land. That explains clearly the idea put forth by Mugabe (2001) that ‘Land is the economy and the economy is land’. Factories, flora and fauna all contribute to the countries economic growth or decline hence owning all these resources is therefore the course to prosperity (Mugabe, 2001).
That owning the land is the path to prosperity was furthermore underscored by Muchuri. He said that, ‘When you see a stranger [Whiteman] cling to what does not belong to him; you should know that he sees survival in the land. He sees the life in the soil. He perceives the happiness derived from the land. He sees its prosperity…’ (Muchuri 2004: 9)

On the aspect of land and compensation, Muchuri (ibid: 9) did not see any reason or justification that Africans or the Zimbabwean government should pay compensation to the white commercial farmers because this land that they repossessed rightfully belonged to them (Africans). It is the Whiteman who stole the land from the Blackman during colonialism and:

> If a thief steals, and the goods are found, they are returned to the owner without compensation. As such our land, our cattle and all our wealth must be returned to us without compensation. If a thief sells stolen goods to somebody, those goods if recovered by police, will be given back to their owner without compensation… our stolen land must return to us without compensation because it is ours’ (Muchuri ibid: 9)

On the aspect of land and violence in farms, Muchuri (ibid: 10) reiterated that it was only inflicted to white commercial farmers who did not cooperate. He posited that violence was only inflicted on farmers who were ‘selfish’ as opposed to farmers who, ‘Know well about the history of our land [that land does not belong to them] and has agreed to let [Africans] stay on the other part of the land without ANY CONFLICTS OR BLOOD SHED…’ (ibid) What is worth mentioning in the quotation above is that Africans were or are not the ones who colonised white settlers and because of this, there is no justification whatsoever that they should pay compensation or even introduce willing buyer willing seller principles.

While other people as well scholars like Moyana and Sibanda (1982) see the land issue as emanating from pre – colonial era when the so called native people of Southern Rhodesia (the Shona) ‘… stole the land from the San hunters’; Chihombori (2004: 16) on the other hand sees the San as ‘just wanderers … [and as people] of no fixed abode [because of this] The land belonged to the [Shona] people since time immemorial’. Chihombori (ibid) further saw ‘poverty, poverty and more poverty’ as a result of not owning land. By not owning land Africans continued to ‘toil under the stranger’ and this led to more suffrage of people in the present times and if this is not addressed this trend will also continue in the generations to come.
Jingura another writer/contributor in the journal mentioned above wrote an article called *The Eviction*. He was mainly concerned with the theme of land and the plight of farm workers. According to Jingura (2004: 24) land evictions made farm workers landless and it was xenophobic. Xenophobic language was demonstrated by Jingura through the syntax which say that, ‘… you people [farm workers] from Malawi you’re beasts of burden you’ll join other beasts in the forests’ (2004: 24). The language clearly demonstrates that when land was being allocated to landless black majority, farm workers were not involved or were not given land, since they were regarded as foreigners in the Zimbabwean land, just like the white settlers.

On the aspect of land and settlers, Chinodya (2004:26) wrote a short story titled *Settlers*. The story revealed that land was distributed to people who knew much about farming and those who knew less if at all about farming. He further revealed that this land was distributed to people who were ‘truly desperate for a handful of rich soil in which to plant seed’ (Ibid: 27). Land was also given to people who had ‘trooped from towns, greedily looking for a patch of land to claim as their own [And] many of these people did not have a clue about farming’. In short, land which was once productive became unproductive or idle land.

On the aspect of land and distribution and land as well as land and productivity, Chinodya (ibid) commented that there were inequalities amongst the beneficiaries. He said that, ‘The once flourishing farmhouses and barns were now for the ‘chefs’ who drove Mercedes Benzes and Pajeros… [And] some were interested in amassing farm after farm (Chinodya ibid: 27). The citation above moreover susgest that land was distributed unfairly amongst the black people and it was the elite class that benefitted a lot in the process. Some of the beneficiaries did not make good use of the land as well. That during the struggle the thinking of the people was that the attainment of independence (symbolizing the defeat of the erstwhile colonizers) was automatically going to resolve the issue of land was revealed by Vambe (2006). In Vambe’s critical appreciation of Choto’s (1990) book titled *Vavariro*, Vambe (2006: 268) commented that:

What Raymond Choto successfully captures [in *Vavariro*] is the struggle to control land that is now between the peasants living in the overbrowded sandy soils and the black elites… the peasants are whisked back to their sandy soil… [And this suggests] that the masses were betrayed by those whom they fed during the struggle.
Vambe (2006) like Choto (1990) and Chinodya (2004) is therefore of the view that Africans, especially the peasants, did not even visualise that after this protracted struggle for land amongst other things, independence was going to give birth to a class of black elites that was going to exploit them (the peasants).

Put in a different way, Vambe (2006), Chinodya (2004) and Choto’s views (1990) are striking in this study in that they pointed out that after independence the leaders ‘cheated’ the masses by not restoring the fertile lands that the masses had been deprived of during colonialism – within an accepted and anticipated space or time. Vambe in his article *The struggle for Land in the Shona Novel: Allegory, Seizure and Betrayal* (2006:267) gave emphasis to the above mentioned point when he says that, ‘the results of the struggle [did] not measure up to the contributions that the peasants put up or to what Africans expected’. In addition, Choto (ibid) revealed that not only did the black elites cheated the peasants, they even went further into regarding any peasant who stood up and choose to disagree with them as a rival of the regime.

On the aspects of Land and resources which ultimately impacted on the output of the land; Chinodya said that:

*The soil was rich, but the poor farmers had no cattle or donkeys for traction, no tractors and tillage was hard. The few tractors that were available were overbooked. As if to punish the new settlers the skies refused to give rains, for years in a row (Chinodya in Barry 2004:27).*

Chinodya is therefore important in this study in that he revealed that lack of material and financial resources coupled with drought culminated in reduced output in farms. This is opposed to the views held by people like George as depicted by Muchuri (2004) in the letter titled *We will never turn back* who saw Africans as ‘lazy people who can only sleep and snore’ (Muchuri, 2004:8).

Tapureta (2004:21) wrote a letter with the title *Letter from Britain*. In the letter he focused on the aspect of land in relation to the ‘born frees’ (that is those born after independence – 1980). He highlighted the need to educate the ‘born-frees’ about Zimbabwean history if the Land Reform programme was to be a real success. According to Tapureta, these ‘born frees’ did not have the ‘full knowledge’ of why land was being redistributed. In this respect, the ‘older’ people (those
born prior attaining independence in 1980) should tell these ‘born frees’ everything including the
decision to ‘retrieve the land from the greedy [white men]’ (ibid). While the latter point is
valuable, Tapureta (ibid) failed to acknowledge that even the black elites are greedy and as such
should share with the masses some of the lands which they amassed.

Mutasa’s (2005) novel *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* sees land as a production tool. Being a means
of production; land should not be monopolised by a few whites or black elites. That land should not
be monopolised by a few whites’ shows that Mutasa (2005) acknowledges first the fact that land
inequalities started during colonial rule or era and made inroads into post – colonial Zimbabwe.
In addition, Mutasa’s (ibid) view of land as production tool is noteworthy in this study in that it
moves or shifts the land discourse from the distribution level to production or efficient utilization
level. He said that instead of continually grumbling about the manner in which the land
distribution exercise have been conducted, it is time people should look forward and begin to
think of ways on how to make good use of the land acquired. In a nutshell, Mutasa’s language
seems to be suggesting that Zimbabweans should remember that land is a resource which should
be used in producing food and minerals and as such efforts should be focused on how to
maximise productivity on the pieces of land acquired. One of the ways that productivity on these
pieces of land was to be enhanced was through training. This aspect of training was portrayed
through *Sekai* – a fictional character in the novel – *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* who went to America
to study and she acquired a degree in Agriculture and Environmental studies. This training
culminated in Sekai becoming one of the few prosperous black female farmers in Zimbabwe.

With regards to the subject of land and distribution, Mutasa (2005: 36) like other scholars urged
the government to give land to almost all landless Zimbabweans without regard to political
affiliation. *Sekai*, who is female, advised those in charge of land redistribution to be fair. She said
that, ‘*Musapa minda muchitarira bato rake*’ (Do not give land according to political party
affiliation) (Vambe, ibid). The assumption here is that during colonialism almost all black
Africans were deprived of their land and they all united against the removal of the common
enemy (the white settlers) with the intention of restoring their land. That all black Zimbabweans
should be equally given land also means that land redistribution should cut across gender or race
lines/divide.
On the subject matter of land and infrastructure, Mutasa (ibid) made a critical contribution which other scholars above failed to highlight. He emphasized the point that the government should provide supporting infrastructure such as dams to the newly resettled farmers. This underscores the point made by Vambe (2001:17) in the book titled Media and Development that, ‘Development [is] associated with the redistribution of the country’s wealth, which among other things encompasses land and the provision of the entire supporting infrastructure’ (Vambe, 2001: 17). Put in another way, newly resettled farmers should have access to roads, railway lines and dams as well as markets apart from land if their standard of living is to truly rise. Vambe (2006: 271) underscored the latter point when he says that, ‘land is the first phase [and it] has to be followed by careful planning in terms of building dams’. While Vambe (ibid) sees land as the first phase, Muchuri (2004: 14) appeared to disagree when he declared that, ‘the government should [have] first (emphasis mine) enforced a law that…would guide the whole land redistribution process without any prejudice’.

Although the above mentioned scholars discussed the various aspects of the land issue ranging from land as agriculture, land as mining, land as industries, land as a production resource, to mention but just a few, none of the scholars or authors attempted to reveal that the land that was distributed was in two categories. These categories were known as A1 and A2 models and they had different purposes. For instance, people under A1 model were expected to do subsistence farming and those settled under A2 model were supposed to be commercial farmers. A2 model farmers were also expected to be financially and materially sound and as such were not supposed to rely too much on government subsidies.

As have been indicated already above; that history books, creative arts are but some of the ways amongst many others that people acquire their information, popular music is also one of the other ways. Not all citizens in a country are able to read and write or have the time to read history books or creative arts like novels and as such these people rely on oramedia for news. It is from this perspective that the next section focuses on popular musicians with the intention of understanding how they depicted the issue of land in Zimbabwe.
2.3 LAND IN ZIMBABWEAN POPULAR MUSIC

Popular music according to Chari (2003: 117) is music which emerged from popular experiences of the marginalised black people under colonial rule and it became a form of resistance against the ideology of the dominant classes in the struggle for political independence. In a nutshell, dominated or marginalised black people expressed their aspirations through popular music, along with other channels. Kwaramba (1996: 17), on the other hand, sees popular music as ‘music for the people’. In terms of its production, Kwaramba says that, ‘[Popular music] is a social interactive process where the musician on one level speaks to the people’ and at another level speaks of and on behalf of them (Kwaramba, ibid).

In view of the above excerpt, it can therefore be argued that music in general and popular music or songs in particular are a form of representation of the people’s aspirations or hopes (Chari, ibid). In addition to what Chari (ibid) and Kwaramba (ibid) said, one can therefore argue that popular songs are used by musicians who sing them, first to define issues of the day and secondly to act as platforms of representing the views and beliefs of people on certain issues like Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe. Since popular music or songs play an important role in defining issues the following passages critically analyses the language used by some renowned musicians, in their music or songs, on the Land Reform in Zimbabwe.

A lot of songs were composed and sung during the colonial era. Pongweni (1982: 18) revealed in his book titled Songs that Won the Liberation War that at some stage in the colonial period the Liberation choirs sung many songs and one of the songs sung was titled Maruza vapambepfumi (You have lost the war you Marauders). The title of the song Maruza vapambepfumi (You have lost the war you Marauders) points to three distinct aspects of land. Firstly, the title suggests that land belonged to the native black people. Secondly, the message implied by the title Maruza vapambepfumi is/was that when Africa in general and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in particular was colonised, Africans or the native people were forcibly removed from their land, that is, their land was forcibly taken away from them. The use of the linguistic sign Vapambe… (Marauder) in the song further suggests that when the colonisers came to Africa they took by force the native peoples’ land. Thirdly, the linguistic sign Vapambepfumi connotes marauders or looters of wealth. What is momentous in the song Maruza vapambepfumi is its definition of land
as wealth as denoted by the word …pfumi (wealth) in the linguistic sign Vapambe pfumi (looters of wealth). Put differently, the song Maruza vapambe pfumi can be titled explicitly as ‘You have lost the war you looters of wealth – land’. This interpretation of land as wealth from the Liberation choirs’ song titled Maruza vapambe pfumi (Pongweni, ibid) concurred with what Mugabe (2001) declared when he said that ‘Land is the economy and the economy is land’.

Thomas Mapfumo, a renowned Chimurenga musician also composed various songs that commented on land. His songs were and are still labeled Chimurenga or popular songs by scholars like Kwaramba (1996) and Vambe (2001), to mention but just two, because they believe that what he (Mapfumo) sang and still sings ‘emerged from the popular experiences of a people in relation to changing forces that shaped their history’ (Kwaramba, 1996: 18). While the Liberation choirs sang during colonialism songs like Maruza vapambe pfumi (Pongweni, 1982), Thomas Mapfumo on the other hand composed and sang a song titled Kuyaura kweasina musha (the distress of the displaced) amongst many others. The significance of this song is that it recognised land as wealth and owning it (land) as the way to prosperity (Mugabe, 2001). Furthermore, the title of the song Kuyaura kweasina musha (the distress of the displaced) underscored the sentiments that when the native people were forcefully removed from their land – which signifies wealth – and settled in the created Reserves, their lifestyles deteriorated. The native people were literally impoverished. From the sentiments echoed by Mapfumo in his song Kuyaura kweasina musha which was released in 1974, which may be taken to be his own representation of land or the peoples’ representation of land, it can be argued that the singer, so are, the people, were subtly positing the idea that Land Reform programme was a ‘necessary evil’ that was meant turn or change or bring their distressful lives back to harmony.

Put differently, the song is important in this study in that it acknowledges that the deprivation of Africans from their land culminated in untold sufferings. To reverse the situation of untold sufferings an armed struggle against the colonisers was therefore inevitable as reflected in the song Tora gidi uzvitonge (Take up arms and free your – self) which was composed and sung during colonialism. The mood then among the masses was that by engaging in war with the colonisers they were going to retain the land or wealth they lost during colonialism and in a short space of time would emerge as victors.
However, after independence the newly elected black government did not restore the land as soon as possible as anticipated and this led Thomas Mapfumo to register his disappointment at the delay of the black leadership on delivering independence promises, particularly on the land issue (Vambe, 2004: 174). In 1993 Thomas Mapfumo released an album called *Hondo* (War). In this album was a track called *Maiti Kurima Hamubvire* (You used to say you were good farmers). Through the song *Maiti Kurima Hamubvire* Mapfumo commented on the issue of land and expertise. Mapfumo believed that owning the means of production alone, which included land, cattle, ploughs or money was not enough. In other words, being in possession of the material or financial resources alone was not enough if the country was to prosper.

What seems to be the missing ingredient in Mapfumo’s song with regards to land is first the issue of knowledge or expertise on how to exploit or to utilize the land apportioned. Mapfumo’s definition of land is however limited to agriculture. Secondly, the language used by Mapfumo in the song *Maiti Kurima Hamubvire* also focused or touched on the issue of land and distribution. He suggested that the material or financial resources that most Zimbabweans had after independence in 1980 did not warrant them to acquire vast pieces of agricultural land. The resources, both materially and financially were so meager or paltry to an extent that they could not match the large tracts of land amassed and awaiting to be put to full production. These sentiments were subtly revealed in the syntaxes *Maiti Kurima Hamubvire... muchiti mombe munadzo...muchiti gejo munaro* (You said you were good farmers because you had cattle and ploughs). The use of the words *mombe* (cattle) and *gejo* (plough) was meant to show or portray the inadequacy or the lack and inability of Zimbabweans to rely on cattle alone to conduct commercial farming. According to Mapfumo, it is therefore only those people who had/have tractors, to mention but a few of the items, who could or should be given land. While this may possibly be true, little did Mapfumo realise first that it was and it is mostly the colonisers who had and have these tractors and so what he (Mapfumo) was or is suggesting through the song *Maiti Kurima Hamubvire... muchiti mombe munadzo...muchiti gejo munaro* is/was that land should not be given back to Zimbabweans. Secondly, Mapfumo expressed ignorance to the fact that one does not always need tractors or sophisticated equipment to do farming on the land especially the subsistence type of farming.
If land was going to be given to the black majority there was going to be disaster or increased impoverishment. This message is evident in his other songs Disaster (1997) and Mamvemve (1998) in which he criticised the black leadership for running down the country, maybe by giving land back to the black majority. One other thing that Mapfumo seemed not to know regarding the issue of land redistribution as reflected in his song was the fact that Land Reform was carried out as early as 1980s and it was meant to give or resettle the black majority on productive land. Through the land resettlement programme, the government believed that the standards of living of the people were going to improve. Lastly, Mapfumo commented through the song Maiti Kurima hamubviri (1993) that land should be given to people who are earnestly want land or are willing to utilise it as opposed to those people who just want land because they have the power, financial and material resources to acquire the land but are not willing to seriously exploit it. This is a very valid point and one expects it to emerge in the stories from the newspapers that are going to be analysed in my study.

However, the government of ZANU (PF) started to give land to undeserving people as long as they were affiliated to the party. The ultimate of this was the accumulation of large tracts of land in the hands of a few. This was synonymous with the colonial structure. This scenario culminated in an increase in the number of idle lands which ultimately resulted in increased impoverishment of Zimbabweans. Thomas Mapfumo, through his protest music of Chimurenga sang another song titled ‘Marima Nzara’ (You have caused poverty) in 2001. For Mapfumo, unequal distribution of land and increased ownership of land in the hands of ZANU (PF) party loyalties, who; in most cases, did not even have the knowledge or interest of farming, caused untold sufferings to the Zimbabwean populace.

Vambe (2004: 90) avowed that, ‘popular music as narrative discourse is also problematic in the sense that it is not always fully aware of the meanings that it embodies at any given time, nor are the singers totally in control of the meanings refracted from the music they create’. The ultimate of this fluidity nature or characteristic of language (Derrida, 1998) is manifested in Thomas Mapfumo’s ‘Marima Nzara’ (You have caused poverty) (2001) song that is still entangled in the colonial ideology or mentality that Africans are second class citizens when compared to Westerners. Vambe (2004:174) underscores this point when he says that:
In Marima Nzara (You have caused poverty) (2001), the singer criticizes the Mugabe government for attempting to introduce equity in land redistribution. He takes the process of removing excess land from white minority as an ‘invasion’; he sees white settlers as a silent and persecuted group, endowed with natural capacity to farm… instead of exploring the democratizing potential of land redistribution, Mapfumo in this song claims that Africans exist to be, and are only validated when they are, “vasevenzi,” or manual labourers.

Through the song Marima nzara (2001) as in Maiti kurima hamubviri (1993), Mapfumo suggested or promoted the myth that Zimbabweans are incapable farmers or miners or do not have the expertise to carry out agricultural or mining activities successfully. This myth, which Mapfumo seems to perpetuate, is what the British used to perpetuate during colonial era in colonial Rhodesia to dispossess Africans of their rich or fertile land (Vambe, ibid). What is further reflected by this Tarzan mentality in Mapfumo is his tangent thinking, that is, his thinking seemed to be tangent with the historical facts that Africans had been good farmers since time immemorial when compared to whites in Rhodesia. This is the reason why the settlers decided during colonialism to push Africans to the so called Reserves which had poor soils. The British ‘feared stiff competition from the native people’ (Woddis, 1960).

Another musician who composed songs especially at the height of Land Reform programme or Third Chimurenga is Tambaoga. In one of his songs he composed and sang the lyrics, Ivhu iri machinda ramunoona ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe … Kana mvura ikanaya gore rino tichazadza matura (The land that you see comrades is what is known as Zimbabwe … if rains fall Zimbabweans will fill up their silos with maize). Tambaoga raised some important aspects of land and ownership. If the native people of Zimbabwe were to be viewed as a dignified humanity, they were supposed to be in possession of land. It (land) was and is their birth right (Bakare, ibid). The message Tambaoga wanted to convey to audiences through the song was that Zimbabweans were the rightful owners of the land. On the aspect of land and distribution, Tambaoga suggested that land should be given to all people born and bred in Zimbabwe and this cuts across race and gender or ethnicity or class. Secondly, Tambaoga sees or defines land as a space on which one can either farm, mine or conduct business activities, as opposed to Mapfumo (ibid) who saw land only as agriculture.
While Mapfumo (ibid) emphasised the need for training or farming knowledge as the necessary ingredients to successful agriculture, Tambaoga (ibid) saw the natural environment as another determinant factor in the success of agriculture in Zimbabwe. For Tambaoga, water is the most important ingredient in successful agriculture be it subsistence and commercial. Even if people build dams or reservoirs to store water, the availability of water in these reservoirs or dams depends on the amount of rainfall that falls in a particular season in the country concerned. This is portrayed in the lyrics *Kana mvura ikanaya gore rino tichazadza matura* (If rains fall Zimbabweans will fill up their silos with maize). While this frame is true to some extent, it is misleading or it downplays other equally important aspects of land which include the availability of labour, expertise and fertilizers to run the new farms and ensure maximised agricultural production. Rains may fall but if these latter ingredients are missing in the equation silos may not even become full and people will not prosper.

Having seen what other musicians, amongst a large body, say about Land Reform, the next section looks at how land was reported in newspapers. Newspapers are one medium in which people acquire most of their information on various issues because of its affordability and wider circulation. This study continues to argue that the frames that newspapers use will either allow or prevent most citizens in coming up to the real terms of the Land Reform programme, a thing which may be beneficial or detrimental to the country as a whole.

### 2.4 LAND IN ZIMBABWEAN NEWSPAPERS

That citizens’ are expected to be well informed in a democratic society have been emphasized by several scholars. Purvis (2001:7) like Stuart (2010), Sanders (2003), Borchers (2002) and Mencher (1997) cited in the previous chapter stated that, ‘the architects of…democracy considered it vital for the nation to have an informed citizenry’. One of the ways in which citizens of any nation can therefore get informed is through newspapers. Hence newspaper languages provide an incredible window for viewing or understanding or knowing public affairs such as the Land issue or Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe. Purvis (ibid: 6) also indicated that, ‘…media provide the link between politicians and the public, [and] the means by which citizens can be informed about politics and government and civic affairs’. In a nutshell,
newspaper languages act as a ‘…beam of searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision’ (Lippmann, 1992).

In Zimbabwe few scholars have written literatures on media representation of Land Reform which was carried out soon after independence and expedited in the late 1990s. These scholars include Chari (2010) and Willem (2004). This section therefore focuses on what these two scholars say about Zimbabwe’s media representation of Land Reform programme.

Willem (2004) in her article Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders: Representations of Land in the Zimbabwean Press compares and analyses how The Daily News and The Herald newspapers have represented the Land Reform programme and the land occupations in Zimbabwe which gained momentum in early 2000. Willem (ibid: 1767) argued that:

Media representations of the land question in the run – up to the June 2000 parliamentary elections came to parallel the polarized political environment, thereby missing chances for a serious and more subtle debate on the land issue in the Zimbabwean media.

Media parallelism was notably demonstrated after a constitutional amendment on compulsory acquisition of land by the government which was pushed through Parliament in April 2000. Before this constitutional amendment Bill was enacted or passed in Parliament, the citizens of Zimbabwe had already rejected it through the referendum which had taken place in February 2000. Despite this background, The Herald, according to Willem (ibid):

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 19th 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 (Willem, 2004:1767).

The point Willem wanted to put across was that The Herald instead of vilifying the Bill went on to support it, amidst the fact that it was against the people’s will. She concluded that The Herald failed to denigrate the Bill because it was and is still sponsored by the state.
The Daily News, on the other hand, commented negatively about the new Bill through a cartoon which portrayed ZANU (PF) MPs dancing to the tune of “ZANU ndeyeropa” which Namate, the cartoonists, literally translated as ZANU is “bloody” (Willem, ibid, 1768). While The Herald quickly focused on the historical background of the land issue that has necessitated the passing of the Bill by Parliament [government of ZANU (PF)]; The Daily News were forward looking and they focused on the ‘violence that would be a likely accompaniment of the [ZANU (PF)] strategies to remain in power’ in its reportage.

The quotations above therefore demonstrate how the two dailies became apart in terms of the way they looked or interpreted the new developments concerning the land issue as they took place in 2000 following their already different views on the just passed Bill. In view of the above, Willem’s article discussed the way 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. In her article, she focused on three main themes of land and these were: representation of the land reform and resettlement program, portrayals of farmers and farm workers and reporting on the causes of farm occupations.

In terms of methodology, Willem (ibid: 1769) looked firstly at how the two dailies selected their headlines. Secondly, she looked at the stories that were included and those that were omitted, their choice of vocabulary and their attribution of roles to various agents. In a nutshell, Willem looked at how news was ‘selected and silenced’ in these two dailies. Applying silence to news production, van Dijk (1991: 114) in Willem (2004: 1769) argued that an analysis of the ‘unsaid’ is sometimes more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in a text. By choice, information is both excluded and included. Owing to the above background, Willem (ibid) therefore argued that headlines are usually read more frequently than the articles themselves and so ‘are powerful ways to convey a particular ideological view’. Furthermore, the choice of vocabulary also constructs particular ideological representations of events. Willem (ibid: 1769) further argued that words apart from their descriptive function ‘express views and attitudes [and] 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’. Lastly, Willem argues that the roles or subject positions which grammar constructs for the participants have ideological meanings. She said that, ‘participants can be grammatically constructed either as direct agents of
processes such as violence and repression or as affected participants, frequently as victims’ (Willem, 2004: 1769). In terms of her findings, Willem stated that:

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 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 (Willem, 2004: 1778)

According to Willem (ibid) The Herald clearly attempted to provide a positive image of ZANU (PF)’s main campaign issue: its radical land reform programme. In the representations of the land occupations and land questions in general, The Herald frequently drew upon anti – colonial discourses in which the past played a dominant role. In drawing extensively upon the past, Willem (ibid: 1779) highlighted that:

*The Herald* neglected to assess critically 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 shifts registered by Willem from “land occupations” to “land reform” suggest that these are two separate events in a single process. One would want to explore how these shifts are registered in Kwayedza, a Shona based government – owned newspaper. On the other hand, Willem (ibid) saw The Daily News as a paper which was very much concerned with the present, thereby missing its chance to reflect upon the past. She commented that:

Focusing on the negative economic effects of what the paper describes as “land invasions,” it failed to get into serious debate on land reform. By discrediting the land as party politics, the newspaper ignored that there certainly is a clear desire for land amongst Zimbabweans

From the two findings above, Willem (2004: 1779) arrived at the conclusion that:

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 toward the land question. Concerning the further course of events in Zimbabwe, this polarization of attitudes might lead to more divisions on the issue within society whereas a lively public dialogue could potentially contribute to a final solution.

Willem (2004) is therefore significant in this study in that she introduced an important concept known as ‘polarization’ which characterized the two dailies in Zimbabwe in the year 2000. In addition to that, the methodology employed by Willem (ibid) in her study which looked at how language was used to mediate or frame Land Reform is very important in my study. The study will adopt the method in that it will also focus on how headlines or words were employed in the selected newspapers. In other words, my study will use the languages of discourse used in newspapers by focusing on headlines and vocabulary, to mention, but a few. Willem also contributed immensely on three very important aspects of land which are also part of the argument of my study. These three aspects are the representations of land reform and resettlement program, portrayals of farmers and farm workers and reporting on the causes of farm occupations. My study will build on the themes, the methodology and the Newspapers that were a point of focus.

However, the points of departure of this study to Willem (2004) is that whereas Willem focused on two dailies (The Herald and The Daily News) this study will focus on two more newspapers, in addition to the two that she focused on. This study will bring to the fore Kwayedza and The Daily Mirror newspapers. In addition to that, this study differs with Willem in terms of period being covered. Willem only focused on the representation of land during the referendum and parliamentary election period in 2000 and in this study focus will be on the representation of the land issue in the above mentioned four newspapers in the period 2000 to 2008.

In terms of the conclusions arrived at by Willem (2004) that readers of the two papers were confronted with very different positions which clearly made dialogue or compromise more difficult. This study argues that although readers were confronted with two different positions,
even in such scenarios readers can come up with different languages or frames of explaining the issues on hand. In other words, instead of Willem (2004) calling for the need of a ‘lively public dialogue’ as the necessary ingredient that could potentially contribute to a final solution on the land issue or debate, this study argues that “lively dialogues” are already in the minds and heads of people as soon as they engage or interact with the newspapers and they are not located somewhere outside themselves. Readers of newspapers come up daily with different frames of interpreting issues owing first to their active agency/nature or involvement in interpreting issues of the day and secondly due to the language’s refusal to be tamed all the time. Even in a polarized media environment where journalists may try to present views from certain angles by trying to tame language, they may partially, but not fully, be successful in taming languages all the times. The reason for this is that language is flexible and this flexible character of language makes it possible for readers to see or hear what is not said in the news frames or languages provided by journalists (van Dijk, ibid).

Chari (2010) has looked at the representation of land in newspapers is. He published an article titled *Salience and silence: representation of the Zimbabwean crisis in the local press*. Chari (2010) envisaged the press as having the power to shape public opinion by providing a cue to news readers on ‘how much salience to attach to an issue’. The press are therefore ‘primary sources of “the pictures in [people’s] heads” and [they] furnish [them] with interpretative frameworks for understanding public affairs’ (Chari, ibid, 131).

In *Salience and silence: representation of the Zimbabwean crisis in the local press* Chari (ibid) imagined land issue as a crisis and as such he sought to examine how the land issue was represented by the local press between 2000 and 2008. He argued that, ‘representation of the Zimbabwean crisis [land issue] mirrors the contours chalked by the polarized media environment’ (Chari, 2010: 131). To support his argument he quoted Raftopoulos (2005: 1) who accordingly commented that:

> In the journalistic world the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000 has been constructed through the dichotomy of either a radical nationalist redistributive project carried out as historical redress in the face of neoliberal orthodoxy, or a breakdown of the norms of liberal governance through the machinations of an authoritarian figure (Chari, 2010: 131).
Chari (2010) used textual analysis which was informed by Maxwell McCombs’ agenda – setting theory in his study of the representation of land in the state and privately owned press between 2000 and 2008. News articles were selected on the basis of accessibility and potential to furnish relevant data. He looked, first, at how the press (*The Herald, The Chronicle, The Daily News* and *The Zimbabwe Standard* newspapers) in Zimbabwe represented land issue; secondly, he looked at the aspects of land that have been accorded salience or have been downplayed. Lastly; focus was on how the newspapers’ attempt to manufacture public opinion about the land issue. In terms of the justification of the demarcation of the period (2000-2008) of study and classification of ‘elements of the crisis’ Chari (ibid) argued first that the choice have been ‘necessitated by space constraints as well as access of data and second, that, there was a general assumption that the Zimbabwean crisis [land issue] gained unprecedented media attention after the constitutional referendum in 2000.

Chari (2010: 133) further argued in his article that, ‘in terms of reporting, the media became more polarised after the formation of *The Daily News* and the opposition, often holding entrenched positions on social, economic and political issues’. According to Chari (ibid), state owned newspapers – *The Herald* rallied behind the ZANU (PF) government while the *The Daily News* vigorously and unapologetically backed the MDC…’ Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) in Chari (2010: 134) commented that:

> The polarization in our society today is best depicted in the press. Basically the press is either pro-government or anti-government. Sometimes objectivity is sacrificed in order to be true to their chosen position … if you buy newspapers from one divide you will get half the story.

Chari (ibid) looked on how land was reported by focusing on three aspects of the land issue during the period 2000 – 2008. These three aspects were: land as either ‘political gimmick or correction of historical injustices’; hyperbole and ‘feel-good journalism’ and humanism and ‘worthy victims’. On the issue of whether land issue is a political gimmick or correction of historical injustices Chari (ibid: 134) argued that, ‘media representations of land reform reflected deep-seated and irreconcilable ideological differences between the state and the privately – owned media, with the state media advocating Land Reform on the grounds of correcting ‘historical injustices’ while the private press opposed it as a political gimmick by the ZANU (PF)
government’. In order to show that privately owned newspapers did not support redistribution of land, Chari (ibid: 135) pointed out that:

The private press characterized the programme as “violent seizure of farms”, “land grab”, “barbaric”, or “illegal farm occupations” [and] war veterans and peasants who occupied farms were labeled ‘thugs, squatters’, ‘goons’, ‘hoodlums’, ‘Mugabe cronies’… in contrast the public press referred to the land redistribution exercise as meant to ‘correct historical imbalances’ while land occupiers were constructed as ‘peaceful demonstrators’, thus downplaying violence on the farms.

In addition to the above strategies by state – owned newspapers, they also included numerous opinion pieces which showed that the land issue was not a political gimmick but an unfinished item on the country’s decolonization agenda coupled with the ‘historicizing of the issue’ by the state – owned journalists and the blaming of Britain for reneging on promises to fund the Land Reform in Zimbabwe (Chari, ibid: 135). Chari further pointed out that:

Voices opposed to land reform were marginalized, resulting in a narrower debate than it could possibly have been … The public press therefore fell short in terms of giving a holistic picture of the land issue … and the relationship between the state and privately – owned newspapers in relation to land issue became a struggle over meaning and the ability to win the hearts and minds of people. The social responsibility role of the press was thus shunted to the margins with the consequence that discourse on land reform became selective, simplistic and self-serving’ (Chari, ibid: 136).

In contrast to the positive presentation of Land Reform by the state media through historicising and selecting and publishing opinion pieces which supported the programme, Chari revealed that private owned newspapers delegitimized the Land Reform programme. The private press attempted to delegitimize the programme by employing ‘hyperbole and apocalyptic prophecies particularly with regard to the food security situation in the country’ (Chari, 2010: 136). Blame for the misery was shouldered on ‘lazy beneficiaries of the land reform programme thereby evoking racial undertones where white commercial farmers are constructed as “messiahs”’ (Chari, ibid). To underscore this latter point, Chari (ibid) quoted Ndlela (2005:84) who had also observed that:

White farmers are portrayed as benevolent, hard workers, and the source of food and foreign currency for Zimbabwe… these
assertions are only partially true. It can not be denied that white farmers contributed immensely towards the economy through the production of cash crops, such as tobacco, but the role of the black communal farmer should not be undervalued…

Chari (ibid) also noted that the public media ignored or gave token attention to violence on the farms and the temporary dislocation that could result from the Land Reform. Chari (ibid: 137) further said that the public media referred violence on farms as peaceful demonstrations and in most cases this violence was ‘sanitized through silence’. White farmers who were the victims of these violent demonstrations were ‘constructed as villains rather than victims’ (ibid). The private press, on the other hand blamed war veterans for the ‘orgy violence’ (Chari, ibid) while downplaying the killing that some white farmers did on the citizens of Zimbabwe. The scenario above led Chari to arrive at one of his conclusions that, ‘the press reporting and meaning construction around the land issue was a battle for hegemony between the two media camps. Their ability to report truthfully and professionally was thoroughly compromised (Chari, ibid).

In bargain, Chari (2010: 138) argued that, ‘in this polarised context it was not possible for readers to have full knowledge of what exactly was happening, since each side of the press became hostage to political forces’. Truth was thus not upheld. Public media attributed violence to commercial farmers who provoked newly – resettled farmers and deaths were attributed to ‘unknown gunmen’ or ‘assailants’. The private press on the other hand uses emotive language whereby white commercial farmers were depicted as ‘tremendously good’ people in order to wring sympathy from the readers (Chari, ibid).

This kind of language, Chari commented ‘makes it impossible for the reporter to be objective’ (ibid). In conclusion, Chari (2010:146) highlighted that:

The two press camps pursued completely different agendas, giving prominence to those aspects of the crisis which fitted into their political agenda while suppressing those which did not. The public press approached the land issue from a political economy perspective and accentuated history and the need to redistribute land in order to correct social injustices while downplaying the dislocation caused by the land reform on the agricultural sector. On the other hand, the privately-owned press was informed by a neo-liberal perspective which puts primacy on the sanctity of property rights, human rights and the rule of law while ignoring existing social inequalities and the injustices of the past.

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Chari’s (2010) views and conclusions are therefore important in this study in that they provide some very valuable information regarding the way the public and private media have been reporting Land Reform programme in the period 2000 to 2008 as shown above. Secondly, Chari is important in that he provided an important justification of the period 2000 – 2008 which this study also adopts. Thirdly, Chari is noteworthy in that he highlighted some of the important aspects of land which need to be looked at in this study. Lastly, Chari provided this study with valuable information on how to sample for stories relating to the issues under study.

While this study will build on what Chari (ibid) has done, my study argues for an expansive comparative analysis that focuses also on newspapers in indigenous languages. Chari’s important study had only focused on four newspapers namely, The Herald, The Chronicle, The Daily News and The Zimbabwe Standard, this study will focus on The Daily Mirror and Kwayedza newspapers on top of The Herald and The Daily News which he looked at. The other point of departure is on the methodology. In my study, very selective interviews with critical readers of the newspapers will be conducted and questionnaires will be sent to readers. These additional tools have been chosen in order to show that even in a polarized media environment in which Chari (2010) and Willem (2004) talk about, readers can come out with their own language or frames. Although media can try to pin down the meaning of words in a story so as to win the minds and hearts of readers (Chari, ibid), this study proposes that there are always differences in meanings of words that can be arrived at, on any given point in time, by readers. In other words, the major points of departure of this study with that of Chari (ibid) and Willem (ibid) on the representation of land in newspapers is that this study argues that texts do not have definable meanings and these meanings exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. These boundaries are what Chari (ibid) and Willem (ibid) classified or labeled as polarisation. The study will therefore employ discourse analysis informed by frame theory. Discourse analysis, according to Fairclough (1989) in Howarth (2005: 4), ‘Examines the dialectical relationship between discourses and social systems in which they function, and try to expose the way in which language and meaning are used by the powerful to deceive and oppress the dominated’. The study will also make use of Derrida’s concept of deconstruction. Deconstruction is an effort to crack open the nut, to go beyond the boundary (the so called poles or polarization), to disrupt the presence and allow the other as difference to come about. Deconstruction then aims at exposing the fallacy or misleading notion or belief of any metaphysics of presence and identity (Caputo,
Derrida in Caputo (1997: 42) said that deconstruction “… deprives the present of its prestige and exposes it to something ‘wholly other’ beyond what is foreseeable from the present, beyond the horizon of the ‘same’. The aim of deconstruction is therefore:

To put a concept “under erasure” [and] to place a word under erasure, therefore, is to say that the meaning signified by the words which we use cannot easily be pinned down. Meaning and essence can never be fully present in any one sign. This implies that meanings have histories of textual relations. All meanings are necessarily occupied by residual traces of other meanings. No meaning is ever simply present or present; every meaning is derived from and owes its significance to meanings that exceed the immediacy of any setting. With the question of meaning there is, therefore, always a difference, an occurrence of difference (Derrida in Caputo (1997:43).

The basic assumptions of this study are therefore that language is ineradicably marked by instability and indeterminacy of meaning and given such instability and indeterminacy, no method of analysis can have any special claim to authority as regards textual interpretation as marked by Chari (2010) and Willem (2004) who confidently arrive at the conclusion that media representations of Land Reform were polarized. They did not realize that even in what they may label as a ‘polarised media environment’ meaning creation from the language used in framing issues is ‘a free-ranging activity more akin/similar to game-playing than to analysis’ (Caputo, ibid). In conclusion, this study proposes that the image of readers as news prisoners that Chari (2010) and Willem (2004) seems to advance through their concept of polarization is an illusion or false impression. Polarisation seems to imply that readers are inactive in their interaction with texts. This point is deniable as portrayed by Bennett (1996: 168) who claimed that:

… this image of [readers as] news prisoners [implied by the use of the word polarization] does not imply that people are brainwashed, duped, or otherwise rendered incapable of thinking for themselves by the strategic communication aimed at them… people do not mindlessly believe everything they hear, see, or read in the media…

The implication of the active role/agency of readers is that when journalists use news frames which does not portray the real issues on hand, readers will try to fill in the gaps by coming up with new frames. Put differently, while reporters may perhaps try to use language frames to
homogenize readers, they might not succeed in doing so owing to the active role of readers; malleability and fluidity nature of language (Derrida, 1998). Readers can interpret, negotiate, resist or subvert the polysemic meanings of mass media and come up with different patterns of interpretation. This study also introduces some other new aspects of land such as Land and expertise, Land and environment, Land and distribution, amongst others, that Chari and Willem did not touch on.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter revealed that the problem of land inequality emanated during colonialism in Zimbabwe. This perspective was supported by various scholars and singers. Apart from locating the land issue as a direct consequence of colonial injustices, the chapter brought to light factors like greediness of the new nationalist government, unviable economic policies embarked on by the new government in post – colonial Zimbabwe such as ESAP and the need to cover up for the failing economic policies in elections as the roots of insurgency in Zimbabwe which was mainly evident in the year 2000. Issues of land and distribution, land and environment, amongst many others were discussed. With regards to the issue of land and distribution the literature reviewed proposed that land should be availed to every Zimbabwean and not along party lines. Over and above this, the government was urged to provide the necessary supporting infrastructures to newly resettled farmers. It was furthermore revealed that distribution of land was marred with class struggles. Several definitions of land were proposed in this chapter. The definitions included land as either agriculture, mining and industrial activities. With regards to the role of the media in a democracy, it was revealed in this chapter that media should endeavour to be ‘objective’ and ‘fair’ in its presentation of Land Reform programme to readers. The term objective was also presented as questionable.

The chapter also identified the gap in which the rest of the study will attempt to address. It was argued in this chapter that the critics who have commented on the relationship between land, language and representation through newspapers lacked robust theories that could be used to account for the ambivalent portrayals of land in Zimbabwe’s newspapers. The next chapter – which is chapter three – therefore applies the radical principles of discourse analysis and
deconstruction in the critical exploration of the reportage of Land Reform in *The Herald* newspaper and *Kwayedza*. The centre of attention will be on analyzing how *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* use language to frame the Land Reform programme (Third Chimurenga) in the period 2000 – 2008.
CHAPTER 3

REPORTAGE OF LAND REFORM IN STATE OWNED NEWSPAPERS

I am inclined to believe that instead of an objective Fourth Estate, the media have evolved into a partisan collective which both consciously and unconsciously attempt to persuade the public to accept its interpretation of [issues] as true. (President Bill Clinton in Kuypers, 2002)

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter reviewed literature related to the historical background of the land issue in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. In addition to that, the language used in describing the land issue in creative arts, popular music and some newspapers was outlined and critiqued. What is more, the preceding chapter exposed that journalists use language when framing issues and the act of choosing what to include or emphasize and to exclude or de-emphasise in a frame culminates - in most cases - in unbalanced or subjective news products. The ultimate of this scenario, on the one hand, is that readers may be left with little information regarding an issue. Chari (2001) and Willem (2004) consequently argued that unbalanced news products in most cases culminate in polarized thinking in readers. In the previous chapter some revelations were also made which showed that journalists may not succeed in creating poles all the times owing, firstly, to the active role of audiences in deconstructing texts and secondly, to language’s refusal to be tamed all the times (Derrida, 1998). In a nutshell, readers can interpret, negotiate, resist or subvert the ‘fixed’ meanings or frames of mass media and come up with multiple or different patterns or languages or frames of interpreting news stories presented to them. Implied, therefore, is the idea that language is not static but fluid and is capable of producing multiple meanings.

This chapter seeks to critically examine conceptions on the Zimbabwe land issue as presented or framed through language in selected State owned newspapers in Zimbabwe namely The Herald and Kwayedza in the period 2000 to 2008. The Herald newspaper packages to readers its news products in English language and Kwayedza newspaper delivers news to readers in Shona language. Being State owned implies that the newspapers receive their funding mostly from the government and the content that is reflected in these newspapers is more often than not shaped by government ideology. Thus, the languages that are normally used in reporting encourage
support of State or government development efforts like Land Reform – in this case. Put differently, the language used in State owned newspapers seek to promote positive news and social harmony, amongst many other things, which are tenets of Social Responsibility media theory.

This analysis first involves textual appreciation of the representation of land in selected stories. However, only where relevant will critical voices from readers be enlisted to support or complicate interpretations of how The Third Chimurenga is portrayed in the stories in *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers. In addition to the above, this chapter will also find out whether the use of a different language in *Kwayedza* newspaper (Shona language) when compared with *The Herald* newspaper which packages its news in English language has a bearing in the reportage or readers understanding of the entire issue of land. Secondly, this chapter seeks to find out whether the language expressions used by *Kwayedza* newspaper help in creating its own identity of informing readers effectively about Land Reform when compared with *The Herald* newspaper.

In this respect, story or news framing analysis will be conducted on newspaper stories on four themes namely: Land and History; Land Concept; Land and Compensation as well as Land and Distribution. In order to ascertain the ultimate effect of the language of reportage of Zimbabwe Land Reform on readers; a scrutiny of the languages used by readers in representing Land Reform in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ section of *The Herald* newspaper and *Kwayedza* newspaper will be enlisted where relevant.

**3.1 NEWS AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF REALITY THROUGH LANGUAGE**

The core idea of social construction theory is that news is dependent on contingent aspects of people’s social selves. Implied by this theory is that an issue could not have existed had people not constructed or invented it. Had people been a different kind of society with different needs, values, or interests, they might well have put together a different kind of issue or reality, or presented the issue at hand, differently. What is further suggested by this theory is that news is a social construction of reality and this construction or organization is done or framed through language. A frame, according to Chapman and Lupton (1994); Entman (1993); Iyengar (1991) and Ryan (1991), is a means of packaging and positioning an issue so that it conveys a certain
meaning. Chapman and Lupton (1994:12) further define framing as the emphasis placed around particular issues “that seek to describe ‘what this issue is really about’” and as “the process by which someone packages a group of facts to create a story”.

Schon and Rein (1994: xiii) define frames as “the broadly shared beliefs, values, and perspectives familiar to the members of a societal culture and likely to endure in that culture over long periods of time, on which individuals and institutions draw in order to give meaning, sense, and normative direction to their thinking and action in policy matters”. According to Wallack (1993: 82) framing does not only define an issue, but it also suggests solutions. Thus, “If we alter the definition of problems, then the response also changes” (Wallack ibid). In a nutshell, a frame is a collection of anecdotes/stories and stereotypes—that individuals rely on to understand and respond to events or issues. It is an inevitable process of selective influence over the individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. Frames or languages also define the packaging of an element of rhetoric in such a way as to encourage certain interpretations and to discourage others.

Specifically, frames or languages in political news call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions. In this way, framing or language becomes an important mechanism by which ideology is transmitted through the news (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 1998). News, thus, is never a vehicle for transmitting facts but a source through which institutionalized ideology is conveyed. Consequently, the language of news reporting never exists in political, economic, and ideological vacuum but serves as a filter to organize the reality. In view of the above, Entman (1993: 52) avers that the language of reportage can be examined or identified in ‘the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments.’ Consequently, in order to make the frame or language function for political and ideological purposes, journalists make use of many devices in news reporting. Those techniques include the choice of words used to depict participants and issues, the manner in which issues are framed, the tone and emphasis of the report, the way a news story is organized, the selection and omission of events, and the use of typical labels for persons, events and situations (Durham, 1998).
What follows is a textual analysis of the reportage of Land Reform in The Herald Newspaper in order to ascertain how it packages and positions the programme or issue. Entman (1993: 52) suggests that a textual analysis of the reportage of an issue like Land Reform look at how language has been used in ‘defining problems’ by determining “what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits”; “diagnose causes” by identifying the forces that create the problem; “make moral judgments” by evaluating “causal agents and their effects”, and suggest remedies by offering and justifying “treatments for the problems”.

3.2 THE HERALD AND KWAYEDZA NEWSPAPERS

*The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers are both public media. Their first duty is to serve the public in a democracy. They both serve to educate and entertain the audiences and do not serve to fulfill commercial interests (Watson and Hill 1989:4). They are guided by the Social Responsibility theory. This theory demands a commitment to serving the public interest. They are platforms for diverse views and offer universal access to all Zimbabweans. They are owned by public enterprises on behalf of the citizens of Zimbabwe. They receive their funding mostly from the government. The content that is reflected in Public / State media is mostly shaped by government ideology. At other times these newspapers follow Development Media theory which seeks to promote positive news, social harmony and preservation of indigenous cultural identity and heritage and encourages support of State development efforts. It is against this background that the following sections look on how the newspapers framed Land Reform.

The first theme to be analyzed in The Herald newspaper is *Land and History*. Under this theme, a critical analysis of the reasons that were given by The Herald newspaper in justifying the Land Reform exercise during the year 2000 to 2008 will be made.

3.3 FRAMING OF THE HISTORICAL MILIEU OF THE LAND ISSUE IN ZIMBABWE

A frame well used can help readers understand complex issues like Zimbabwe Land Reform. Conversely, a poorly chosen frame can distort and misrepresent issues. The story on Figure 1 below which was written by Herald Reporter dated 4 December 2000 and headlined *State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge* provides some of the reasons for Land Reform.
3.3.1 PREFERRED READINGS

The reasons for carrying out Land Reform exercise according to the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge were firstly to ‘correct the present land skewed system’ and secondly ‘to resolve land injustice’. The story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge accordingly seeks to impart to readers / audiences the idea that Land Reform exercise was carried out in order to re-address land disparities which were in the Independent or post – colonial Zimbabwe. These land disparities were as a result of the ‘sad social and economic condition of people who have endured over a century of humiliation and deprivation’. In this respect, Land Reform exercise was carried out because the government wanted to ‘eradicating’ the hardships or impoverishment that was being experienced by the indigenous black people due to colonial discriminatory policies on owning land. What is more, The Herald story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge also indicated that Land Reform exercise was carried out in – order to decongest communal areas or reserves in which the black majority was settled. The above mentioned view is supported by Lipton in Antonie (2010:70) who states that, ‘There
was a pattern of land alienation [in Africa], evident in the fact that, in 1970, in Zimbabwe, 6,400 white farmers owned almost half the land, while millions of blacks were confined by law to the rest.

That land disparities between blacks and whites was one of the reasons for carrying out Land Reform was furthermore suggested by Woddis (1960) who said that, ‘the removal or disconnection of Africans from their land - which they see themselves as the rightful owners - and their subsequent location to the reserves became the roots of insurgence between Africans and the British’.

3.3.2 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

Words are very precise building blocks that form the basis for all communicated ideas. They hold truths or lies but are always the products of expression. People express themselves not only through what they say but how they say it. Kress and Leeuwen (1996:2) state that, ‘the arrangement of words [syntax] in a news article affects the meaning so created’ and syntax allow an idea to be established in any number of ways. Thus, the use of the words / syntax correct the present land skewed system in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge seeks to communicate to readers the idea that the land people were / are currently holding is not properly distributed. This land is titled heavily towards one racial group (the whites) at the expense of the other (blacks or native people of Zimbabwe). This imbalance is as a result of a system put in place during colonialism by the colonizers as underscored by Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009: IV) who said that, ‘High unequal distribution of arable land bequeathed by British colonialism left some white commercial settler farmers with huge disproportionate share of land when compared to the Native people’.

The above mentioned concept have been carefully packaged in the words present and skewed in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge. The journalist also used the word correct to convey to readers the message that Land Reform exercise seeks to make right the slanted land distribution, by distributing it fairly amongst the British (who happen to be erstwhile colonizers) and the native people of Zimbabwe – the black majority. For this reason, Land Reform exercise seeks to redistribute land to the native people so as ‘to eradicate the sad social and economic condition of people [presumably the native people] who have endured over a
century of humiliation and deprivation’ (The Herald story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge, dated 4 December, 2000).

The use of the words justice and equity by The Herald in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge is ideological. The words seek to reveal to readers that distribution of land was going to be done in a just and equitable manner. The word justice is synonymous with fairness and impartiality while the word equity is synonymous with evenhandedness and fair play. Hence the story or reality which The Herald seeks to create through the use of the words justice and equity is that Land Reform exercise aims at sharing land fairly between different racial groups and amongst people of the same race. In parenthesis, distribution of land was going to be done objectively. Distribution will not be based either on tribal or political lines, to mention but just two. What is more, evenhandedness also suggested that an equal share of land was going to be allocated to each individual. Thus, the present land system which favoured the erstwhile colonizers lacked ‘principles of justice and equity’ (Mudenge in The Herald story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge, 4 December 2000) and it is this lack of justice and equity in land distribution during colonialism that impoverished the black majority and made them landless in post–colonial Zimbabwe. Land Reform was therefore aimed at exterminating poverty and congestion in communal lands or reserves. These reserves were characterized by poor soils and rainfall, amongst other bad conditions (Brown, 1959).

3.3.3 OMISSION ANALYSIS

In emphasizing certain frames, newspapers can omit or deliberately choose not to use other words that could result in different meanings. Omissions occur when important information is not reported or is reported incompletely. In other words, omission can be taken or viewed as news that should have been reported but is left out of the news people read, see or hear. When important news is omitted, readers get a slanted or distorted perspective of an issue. Jefferson in Purvis (2001:9) commented that, ‘The man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads the newspaper; in as much as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors’. Obviously no newspaper can cover every newsworthy story from every possible perspective. However, if important stories or issues like Land Reform are incompletely reported, or presented with facts that are not adequately verified,
then the obligation to seek the truth is undermined. In these cases the information that is omitted can be as important as the information that is published.

While the inclusion of the words *justice* and *equity* as shown in the story **State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge** by Herald Reporter, wanted to show readers why Land Reform was being carried out, the same words did not tell exactly who was going to decide or define the meanings of the words *justice* and *equity*. This information, it can be argued, was also vital to readers’ understanding of the whole idea of embarking on Land Reform. In other words, the language of reportage did not provide readers with information on what encompasses just and fair distribution. Brown (1959: 5) commented that the Native Areas (or reserves) in which the black majority were resettled during colonialism had ‘poor soils, usually the poorer types of granite-sand known technically as Class III land; while the European Area contains nearly all the areas of fertile soil in the colony’ and this point was furthermore reiterated by Woddis (1960) when he said that:

> ‘Native Purchase Areas’, deemed suitable regions of Southern Rhodesia for developing an African ‘middle class of farmers’ were situated in hot, malaria-infested areas, where great illness and suffering were caused among the people settling there due to lack of clinics and hospitals within easy reach. Other reserves were rocky that agriculture was impossible over most of the area (Woddis, ibid: 23).

From the quotation above, it can therefore be argued that **The Herald** story **State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge** did not reveal what Comrade Mudenge meant by *justice* and *equity*. Whether the words *justice* and *equity* meant resettling both whites and blacks on arable lands or resettling whites on rocky lands or malaria infested areas, as well, was not clearly stated. In addition to the above, the story **State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge** failed to furnish readers with information on whether *justice* and *equity* meant allocating to both whites and blacks equal pieces of land or blacks only. The word *eradicate* suggests removing something completely. The message implied therefore through the use of the word *eradicate* was that poverty was going to be ‘wiped out’ through decongestion of the communal lands as underscored in **The Herald** story **State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge** when it reported that the, ‘poverty of our people congested in the communal lands enjoins us to act’. The challenge however with this kind of thinking is that it does not tell whether poverty will
automatically be eradicated only through decongesting the communal lands and resettling people even on arable lands without the resources or technical knowhow or skills.

The inclusion of the word *congested* in *The Herald* story *State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge* above culminated in the omission of other vital information regarding the historical milieu of Land Reform. While it is true to say that the native people were overcrowded in the reserves, the word *congested* seeks to limit readers understanding of the reasons for Land Reform. The use of the word *congested* by the official voice (Mudenge) in the story *State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge* saying that ‘The poverty of our people congested in the rural communal lands enjoins us to act’ seeks to advance the only idea that the motive for land redistribution exercise was to decongest the communal lands by giving or resettling people anywhere provided they were not overcrowded. This emanated from the understanding that when the British arrived in what is now called Zimbabwe, they forcefully removed Africans off their land and they pushed them to what are now known as ‘Reserves’. These reserves, as Amanor and Moyo (2008:56) comment, ‘were crowded and environmentally degraded areas’. The idea of wanting to decongest the reserves saw the government of ZANU (PF) just resettling people in areas which were not suitable for inhabitation. This point is emphasized by Manzungu (2004) who says that, ‘[Land Reform programme culminated] in land, previously zoned as non-arable, being brought under cultivation, predisposing it to environmental degradation as well as increased possibilities of flooding’. Therefore, the author of the story *State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge* used some words in ways that did not open up other potential meanings.

Consequently, the other vital information that the story *State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge* omitted through the ‘deliberate’ use of the word *congested* was that not only did Land Reform exercise seek to readdress land injustices in terms of population densities but in terms of soil fertilities. One critical reader of *The Herald* noted that ‘to gain political mileage’ the Government just ‘decongested’ some areas by settling people in other areas with poor soils yet the actual motive of Land Reform was not only supposed to decongest communal areas or reserves but to resettle the black majority on fertile lands which they had been deprived of during colonialism. According to Woddis (1960:3) the Native Areas (or reserves) had ‘poor
soils, usually the poorer types of granite-sand known technically as Class III land’ while the European Area contains nearly all the areas of fertile soil in the colony (Brown, 1959:5).

What is, therefore, clear from the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge is that The Herald sought to conceal the fact that land redistribution exercise was supposed to culminate in the removal of people not only from congested areas but also from areas with poor soils and resettling them in areas with fertile soils. Thus, while the intent of The Herald was to press on the idea that Land Reform was meant to bring justice and equity on land distribution the situation on the ground communicated a different message or defeated the whole purpose of Land Reform as people were resettled in areas with infertile soils as argued above by Manzungu (2004). That could be the reason why Moyo and Matondi (ibid: 62) avered that, ‘Apart from these gross land imbalances emanating from the colonial period, the possibility of electoral failure in 2000 by the government of ZANU (PF) led the government to embark on the land redistribution exercise’.

Implied by Moyo and Matondi (ibid) was that land redistribution exercise was a political gimmick by the government of Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front’s [ZANU (PF)’s] in order to lure people to vote for them in the 2002 elections which were just looming around the corner. This conclusion must be taken as contestable. This is so because the misunderstanding or lack of depth that is alluded to may be attributed to the ideological limitations of the writer or reporter of the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge. On the other hand, from the extent that the reporter worked for The Herald newspaper that is an official paper, it is possible to argue that the perspective above is reflecting the employer’s vision and view on land.

The story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge also omitted vital information regarding the reasons why the native people were congested in the first place. According to Woddis (1960) the British congested Africans in fear of competition; a fact which The Herald did not highlight in the story. Maybe one of the reasons for this omission was to ‘manage’ news. Adams and Stratton (1975: 6) highlighted that slanted news are a result of news sources who believe that news should be “managed”; that is, newspaper readers should be told only what that source’s organization or government wants them to know or the editor of the newspaper may have directed that a certain policy be promoted in the paper regarding an issue like Land Reform program in Zimbabwe. By not highlighting the reasons why the native people were congested in
the first place, *The Herald* missed an opportunity to inform readers that Africans were good farmers as underscored by Woddis who pointed out that, ‘The fear of the Europeans … was that increased production by Africans would not only threaten their markets, but would diminish the flow of labour from the Reserves (Woddis, 1960: 10). Thus, one way of minimizing competition was to move the Black majority or native blacks to the reserves. This information, which *The Herald* omitted was going to dispel the myth that Africans are not good farmers when compared to whites as sung by Mapfumo (2001) in his song ‘*Marima Nzara ... kudzinga vanorima*’ (You sown hunger by chasing away white commercial farmers).

This official language sought to direct people’s attention into thinking only that Land Reform exercise was meant to depopulate the rural areas when in fact it was supposed to give back to the people their arable or fertile lands as put forth by Bakare (1993) when he said that, ‘in the pre-colonial era most Africans used to live in areas with fertile soils’.

**3.3.4 LIMITING DEBATE ANALYSIS**

People in positions of power often try to use the media to promote their positions or their “spin” on events or issues. The status quo hopes that their interpretation of events is accepted, rather than questioned, by the media. In this regard, they would make readers or citizens believe that their view of events should be shared by all – right thinking people. Sometimes the media, or at least some media, knowingly or unknowingly act as debate limiting agents. They, according to Curran (1982:21), act in tandem with the dominant institutions in society by accepting the official positions without adequately scrutinizing the assertions of those officials. Consequently the media thus ‘reproduced the viewpoints of dominant institutions not as one among a number of alternative perspectives, but as the central and “obvious” or “natural” perspective’ (Curran et al. ibid). According to adherents of Marxist political economy, in the mass media there is a tendency to avoid the unpopular and unconventional and to draw on ‘values and assumptions which are most valuable and most widely legitimated’ (Murdock and Golding 1977: 37).

The story **State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge** by Herald Reporter dated 4 December 2000 took the government position as fact; thus making itself (*The Herald*) susceptible to being used by government officials. This is also evident of lack of independent thinking in the part of *The Herald* reporters.
The Herald did not comprehensively substantiate the claim made in the headline State forced to adopt fast track approach – Mudenge. The Herald took it as a fact that the government was forced to take up the fast track approach owing to the failure by Britain to honour its obligation. The Herald states in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge that, ‘The current approach [fast track] to solving the land question would not have been necessary had Britain lived up to its commitments made at Lancaster House in 1979’. While this claim holds some truth it is however not comprehensive in the sense that it is not only the delay by the British government that forced the Zimbabwe government to adopt fast track approach but also the fear to loose the looming elections. This view was advanced by the spokesperson of the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (in Barry 2004:40) when he said that:

When ZANU (PF) lost the constitutional referendum in February 2000, it realized that its popularity had plunged. Faced with parliamentary elections within a few months, the ruling party formulated an election campaign strategy with land as its only trump card. Land helped shift the focus away from the liability of troubled economy. As the whites appeared to be supporting the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, they became the targets. So the strategy was to grab their land by force…

Secondly the government was forced not only by Britain or the elections to adopt the fast track approach but also by land hungry citizens. It was the people from Svosve clan who pioneered the occupation of farms in which the government through the war veterans latter ‘hijacked’ as shown on the story below.

![Figure 2: The Herald story Svosve people deserve to be congratulated dated 3 July 2000](Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)
According to Moyo (2001) the failure of ESAP and the decline of Zimbabwe’s economy led to increased demand for access to land and both factors are believed to have fuelled the ‘Fast Track Land Reform Program’. Moyo (2001) emphasized this point when he said that, ‘Increased rural poverty, with 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line, [culminated in] social pressures and demands for access to land’. Consequently, while The Herald newspaper locates colonialism or failure by the British government to live up to its Lancaster House obligations on land as the root of the land issue or fast track approach, Moyo (2001) suggests that the reason for Land Reform or the fast – track approach and the subsequent poverty of the Zimbabweans was the failure of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme adopted by the government of Zimbabwe as a paradigm for economic growth.

The language used by The Herald reporter in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge limited debate in that it only relied on one source, thus limiting readers understanding of the reasons for Land Reform also dubbed ‘fast track approach’. While to some it may seem unpatriotic to challenge what ‘our’ government is telling us it is however important to do so for it has been realized that ‘first casualty in war is truth’ (Knight, 1975). In this regard, The Herald newspaper became the ‘willing instrument’ of the government to providing incomplete information regarding the historical background of the land issue.

3.3.5 SOURCES ANALYSIS

Very often in journalism it is not the actual reporting that is biased but rather the very sources themselves. According to Sigal (1973) it is more objective to look at who the sources are instead of trying to interpret what the sources are saying. Nothing legitimizes a piece of news like commentary from an acclaimed ‘expert’ or government official. People like thinking that they are getting the story ‘straight from the horse’s mouth’. In this case The Herald used the government official (Mudenge) as its source and this labeling of opinion, to a greater extent, limited debate on the issue regarding the historical background of the Land Reform. The Herald or the journalist failed to realize that in any society there is more than one voice.

Accordingly, in any controversial issue, a good journalist ‘should collect as many of these sources as is necessary to create a complete picture, thus, balancing the scales’ (Sigal ibid). However the language of reportage used by The Herald reproduced the ideas of the ruling class
by using only one source. In other words, through the use of one source in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge; The Herald functioned in producing ‘false consciousness [es]’ in the readers through dissemination of monolithic expressions of ruling class values, which ignored any diversity of values within the ruling class and within the media, and the possibility of oppositional readings by media audiences’ (Chandler, 1994). When a source from the ruling party is heard or quoted in the story State forced to adopt fast-track approach: Mudenge saying our people it therefore becomes ambiguous to understand whether he is referring to the entire black people or to people based on political affiliations. While the word our can acknowledge closeness to people in terms of vision shared between the masses and the leaders, the same word, our people is patronizing; it makes leaders speak on behalf the ordinary people.

Having looked at how the story regarding Land Reform was framed in the year 2000 in the story headlined State forced to adopt fast-track approach – Mudenge by The Herald Reporter dated 4 December 2000 the following story headlined Land: Central to liberation struggle which appeared in The Herald newspaper dated 18 April 2005 and was written by Caesar Zvayi would be looked into.

3.4 FRAMING ANALYSIS OF THE STORY LAND: CENTRAL TO LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The Herald story Land: Central to Liberation Struggle by Caesar Zvayi dated 18 April 2005 which is shown on Figure 3 below discusses some of the reasons for undertaking Land Reform.

3.4.1 PREFERRED READINGS

The first, dominant or surface reading that the story Land: Central to Liberation Struggle by Caesar Zvayi carried by The Herald wants its readers to understand and accept is that Land Reform Exercise was carried out because the government wanted to give land back to its ‘rightful owners, the black majority’(18 April 2005). Having looked at the preferred or dominant readings of the story; Land: Central to liberation struggle dated 18 April 2005 by Caesar Zvayi below, the next section focuses on word choice analysis.
The affected white farmers were not to be allowed to remain. If they could not sell their property to the Ghana Government, they were to be paid compensation. The land would then be used for the benefit of the African population. However, this decision was never implemented.

Most of the white farmers, among them Justice Shaw, were evicted in 1959 and lost their land. This led to the formation of the Rural Land Owners Association. The association advocated for the protection of the land from being taken over by the government without proper compensation.

The government, which had the unwavering duty of placing the interests of the farmers first, provided them with the necessary resources to maintain and organise a Land Owners’ Conference that was held in October 1963. The conference, however, failed to yield positive results as the government was interested in developing the land for its own purposes.

The British government, however, was more interested in using the land for its own purposes, such as building the new capital city of Accra. This led to the formation of the Ghana Land Commission, which was established in 1958 to look into the issue of land and property in Ghana.

The commission recommended the establishment of a new land policy that would provide for the protection of the land from being taken over by the government without proper compensation. This recommendation was never implemented.

Figure 3: The Herald story Land: Central to liberation struggle dated 18 April 2005 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)
3.4.2 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

During the colonial era the native people were deprived of their land by the colonizers – the British. This deprivation culminated in the native people embarking on a protracted armed struggle. This struggle was meant to liberate land, amongst many other issues, which according to the story Land: Central to liberation struggle above was shown as ‘central’. In 2005 the government of ZANU (PF) was still in the process of repossessing land from white commercial farmers and redistributing it to the native people of Zimbabwe. It was therefore an opportune time for The Herald through its reporter Caesar Zvayi to relay this message of land being the backbone of the liberation struggle especially during the Independence Day which was being celebrated on the 18th day of April 2005 (the day the story was written).

As has been referred to above by Chapman and Lupton (1994), a frame is a means of packaging and positioning an issue so that it conveys a certain meaning. Chapman and Lupton (1994:12) further define framing as the emphasis placed around particular issues “that seeks to describe ‘what this issue is really about’ ” and as “the process by which someone packages a group of facts to create a story”. In an attempt to state the historical surroundings of land issue in Zimbabwe the story Land: Central to liberation struggle by Caesar Zvayi above made use of the headline Land: Central to liberation struggle so as to capture the message that land was at the centre of African revolts (Woddis, 1960) or was the “… pinnacle of the struggle” (The Herald story dated 10 August 2004). Willem (2004) quoting Brookes (1995) states that in the study of media discourses, headlines are important in the sense that readers often tend to focus on them 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.

In view of the above, The Herald through the story headline Land: Central to liberation struggle endeavored to create in the minds of readers the idea that the major reason for engaging in the liberation struggle was land as underpinned by Woddis (1960) who says that, ‘land was the root of revolt in Africa’ and whose idea is augmented by President Robert Mugabe (2001:36) who said that:

The main basis of our fight with settlers, a fight which began at the very onset of colonialism, had been the national question of land. It
informed Zimbabwe’s entire politics, generated a solid support base for the armed struggle with all its attendant hazards, and spurred our fighters on, right up to the bitter end. Land, Land, was the cry ... it was also the cry and plea in Church.

*The Herald* captured the above idea through the careful inclusion of the word *Central*. The word *central* is synonymous with innermost or pinnacle. Thus, through the headline *Land: Central to liberation struggle*, *The Herald’s* intent was to show readers or consumers that Land in Southern Rhodesia was the innermost or fundamental thing that Africans wanted to emancipate when they engaged in a fight with the settlers or colonizers. What then follows is the message that Land Reform was aimed at returning or restoring land to the black majority. What is more, this black majority are the ones labeled or denoted by the words ‘rightful owners’ in the story *Land: Central to liberation struggle*. The story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* by Caesar Zvayi that appeared in *The Herald* dated 18 April 2005 says that:

TODAY, after 25 years of independence and democracy, Zimbabweans celebrate the realization of the primary objective of the liberation struggle – the return of land to its rightful owners; the black majority that had been disenfranchised for over a century (Herald dated 18 April 2005).

The preferred reading is therefore that land should be restored to its rightful or lawful owners – the black majority. This land has for over a century been in the hands of illegal settlers – the British. The word *return* therefore suggests the coming back or restoration of something that has departed or disappeared or has been stolen or robbed (Woddis, 1960) – land – and which happened to be in the illegal hands of the settlers or colonizers and who happen to be a minority.

### 3.4.3 OMISSION ANALYSIS

While it is well acknowledged that Land Reform was the ‘... pinnacle of the struggle’ (*The Herald* story dated 10 August 2004) or ‘... Central to the struggle’ (*The Herald* story dated 18 April 2005) the story through its language of reportage did not clearly explain that all citizens of Zimbabwe were entitled to this land despite their political affiliations. More importantly, the story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* was biased in the sense that it concealed the fact that not everybody viewed land as central in Zimbabwe. President Mugabe (2001:120) put these different attitudes towards land in historical perspective when he observed that there are people
who cherished the Third Chimurenga and some who will did anything to thwart its success. Mugabe rhetorically asks:

Have we told them [our people] that the land is being brought to them by a ZANU (PF) government? Have we told them who it is that opposes land reforms, who is that is fighting for the continued occupation of our land by a mere 4 000 white commercial farmers?

The quotation above helps in portraying the failure by Zvayi’s story Land: Central to liberation struggle above to clearly enlighten readers that the struggle for land was waged at different ideological planes. The quotation above seeks to illustrate in a very subtle manner or way the idea that it was the ‘Movement for Democratic Change’ (which happened to be the main opposition party then) which was trying to distract Land Reform and this ultimately culminated in the deference (Derrida, 1998) of the intended meaning when some readers and scholars like Willem (2004) and Chari (2008) began to label Land Reform as a political gimmick by ZANU (PF) leadership. This omission moreover created a lot of challenges especially on the distribution stages of the land as will be shown later in the chapter under the theme land and distribution.

The language of reportage in the story Land: Central to liberation struggle dated 18 April 2005 in The Herald did not really portray who the rightful owners were/are or who decides on who the rightful owners are. If it is the government which decides; then it can become problematic, if the mentality above as avowed by Mugabe (2001:120) is loosely translated to refer to ZANU (PF) supporters, and who are referred as the black majority since they are the ones ruling or who claim to have brought the land back ‘single – handedly’ so as to ‘advance its [ZANU (PF)] interests’ (Mugabe, ibid). Omission of who decides on the people to be resettled culminated in the observation by a character called Sekai in Mutasa’s (2005) novel; Sekai Minda Tave Nayo clamoring that land should not be distributed along political lines.

3.4.4 LIMITING DEBATE ANALYSIS

The claim in the headline that Land is central to the liberation struggle is to a greater extent substantiated in the story. The Herald revealed that the black majority were ‘forcibly confined to 23% of the land [with] the poorest soils’. The Native reserves according to The Herald story Land: Central to liberation struggle dated 18 April 2005 and Brown (1959:5) had ‘poor soils, usually the poorer types of granite-sand known technically as Class III land; while the European
Area contain nearly all the areas of fertile soil in the colony’. Accordingly, the prime reason for the struggle or Land Reform was therefore to ‘correct…the colonial inequalities…” (The Herald story Land: Central to liberation struggle, ibid) in terms of the total land space and the fertility of the land.

The other reason that was set forth in the story Land: Central to liberation struggle in The Herald newspaper dated 18 April 2005 above was that land is a sacred resource in the sense that it is a form of a person’s identity, history and livelihood (Bakare 1993:46) and as such should be given to its ‘rightful people’. To underpin this fact, The Herald story Land: Central to liberation struggle above quoted Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa saying that, ‘…[T]o us Africans land is much more than a factor of production as we are also spiritually anchored in the hands of our fathers’. As a result, the removal of the black majority from their lands also implies delinking them from their spiritual fathers popularly known as ancestors. Ultimately Land Reform programme was meant to reunite the black majority with their ancestors. What is however not clear or omitted in the story Land: Central to liberation struggle is how the black majority were going to be linked to their ancestors/spiritual fathers. Whether people were going to be resettled in their original places of genesis or otherwise was not clearly enunciated.

3.4.5 SOURCES ANALYSIS

The story or the language used by the reporter of The Herald story titled Land: Central to liberation struggle emanated from multiple sources as evidenced by the introduction of the voice of the Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa. This introduction, to some extent, improved the validity of the story since incorporation of a ‘different’ voice is usually seen by some readers as an index of independence. Independence implying that it is outside the ZANU (PF) party structures. On the other hand, the story was marred by the absence of opposing voices especially on some of the grey areas such as ‘who are the liberators of the land in Zimbabwe?’ Again, failure by story Land: Central to liberation struggle in The Herald dated 18 April 2005 to include other ‘opposing’ or divergent voices in the country with regards to who should decide on the characteristics of the people to be resettled or what criteria should be used in identifying the people to be resettled; put out of sight a lot of information that could have made the story to be desired more by readers.
The third and final story whose language of reportage will be analyzed below under the theme Land and history is the one written by The Herald Reporter in The Herald dated 10 April 2001 headlined ‘Imbalance in landholding obscene’ as shown on Figure 4 below. The title of the story suggests that its content would complicate the kind of casual reportage of the issue of land in the previous stories discussed above.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLE ‘IMBALANCE IN LANDHOLDING OBSCENE’

The aim of this story was to blast or demonize the president of MDC party Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai. He is presented as validating the official thinking on the land issue which states that one of the reasons for carrying out Land Reform was to re-address imbalance in the racial land holding, a point which was cited even by Comrade Mudenge in The Herald story State forced to adopt fast track approach: Mudenge dated 4 December 2000. However, The Herald enclosed Mr. Tsvangirai’s reason or argument for conducting Land Reform in quotation marks, in an attempt to convey to readers the message that his statement should be digested or taken ‘with caution’. What follows now is a description of how the story framed the land issue.

![Figure 4: The Herald story ‘Imbalance in landholding obscene’ dated 10 April 2001 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)]
3.5.1 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

The story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* was written in 2001; a time when land repossessions or farm occupations have reached some heightened levels. This period was also marked with stiff resistance from white commercial farmers whose land was being taken away. What is more, some political parties in opposition to the Land Reform programme or ‘strategy’ such as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) advanced the ideas that the programme was inhuman as it was marked or characterized by violent occupations of white commercial farms (Willem 2004). Some MDC officials even went on to label or term the whole exercise as ‘land invasions or land grabbing’. Implied was the idea that ZANU (PF) party was invading or trespassing into white commercial farmers’ properties unlawfully. On the other hand, the government of ZANU (PF) saw the exercise as justified because it was directed towards correcting colonial land imbalances.

The statement that was made by MDC President Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai in the story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* above that, ‘The existing imbalance in the racial landholding, which is skewed heavily in favour of the white minority, is obscene’ sought to justify why the government of Zimbabwe was embarking on Land Reform exercise. The inclusion of the word *racial* in the syntax above was meant to convey to readers the message that land imbalance did not exist amongst one racial group but between two races, which in this case, denotes the black and white racial groups in the country. It is the latter racial group which owned the largest proportion of the land in the country while the former; which happened to be the majority, occupied a smaller fraction of the land. Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (2008:60) underscored the above sentiment made by Mr. Tsvangirai when they said that, ‘the reserves in which the black majority was confined to had the poorest land’ and what is more, ‘the size of land available to individual households was meager’. This may possibly be the message that the president of the MDC party intended to relay to readers when he used the term *obscene*. It is also possible to suggest that the use of Tsvangirai’s voice was meant to reveal to readers that even a politician like Tsvangirai, who in the eyes of the ZANU (PF) officials is compromised ideologically, at least could also see that the land issue was skewed in favour of whites. This provides ammunition to the author of the story to write in a way that justifies the Land reform. But the inverted commas can also suggest that Tsvangirai talk about land disparities cannot be trusted because his party is essentially
supported by whites who have vowed to take the land back once they are in power. In other words, the story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* casts doubt on the fact that Tsvangirai can speak on land for the majority of people.

While the story ‘*Imbalance in landholding obscene*’ was mainly aimed at demonizing Mr. Tsvangirai the language or the inclusion of quotation marks on the words spoken by the president of MDC did not help *The Herald*. In fact, the insertion of quotation marks on Tsvangirai’s argument for supporting Land Reform helped in discrediting ZANU (PF) party which they (*The Herald*) purports to support by indirectly conveying the message that Land Reform was an instrument that ZANU (PF) was using to gain political mileage. This went on to show that meaning of words in a story can not be tamed all the time and that language is not stable but fluid.

### 3.5.2 OMISSION ANALYSIS

While *The Herald* reporter wanted to disqualify Mr. Tsvangirai’s statement by putting his words in quotation marks, in the story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* little did the reporter realize that language is not static but fluid as propounded by Derrida (1998). The reporter did not realize that the statement made by MDC president was also put forth by ZANU (PF) officials, as one of the reasons for Land Reform. It has been argued above that the liberation struggle was embarked on in an endeavour to bring back the ‘stolen’ land to the black majority. Accordingly, readers were supposed to take Mr Tsvangirai’s utterance with a pinch of salt as suggested by the quotation marks in the headline. Thus, although reporters might try to use language frames that try to homogenize readers, they might not succeed in doing so all the time owing to the active role of readers and the malleability or fluidity nature of language (Derrida, 1998). It can be further argued that the story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* did not reveal that MDC had a different way of approaching the land issue. In other words, the story used Tsvangirai’s voice in order to undercut and dismiss him as an inauthentic source of information on the land issue. This allowed ZANU (PF) to claim monopoly of the discourse on land.

Readers can interpret, negotiate, resist or subvert the polysemic meanings of mass media and come up with different patterns of interpretation particularly through the inclusion of quotation marks, the story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* in *The Herald*. *The Herald* should have
removed the quotation marks and maybe explain to readers why the Land Reform exercise which
the government of ZANU (PF) had embarked on was so critical. In the process they would
possibly use the words uttered by MDC president Mr. Tsvangirai (*imbalance in racial
landholding obscene*) to strengthen their argument of why they [ZANU (PF)] saw it fit to do the
exercise.

3.5.3 LIMITING DEBATE ANALYSIS

In the story *Imbalance in landholding obscene* by *The Herald* Reporter dated 10 April 2001
that appeared in *The Herald* newspaper; the reporter also wanted to limit debate by writing the
headline in quotation marks and by only conveying the message that ‘this statement should be
handled with care’. However, *The Herald* newspaper did not realize that it was doing a
disservice to itself first by unknowingly conveying to the readers the message that ZANU (PF)
was using land as a political gimmick and not MDC as they suggested in the story *Imbalance in
landholding obscene* through the unnamed political commentators. Now that MDC was also of
the same view that land should be restored to the black majority, this left ZANU (PF) with no
‘other’ tangible thing to give to voters since they have been using land as their trump card to
wheedle voters. Put differently, now that MDC party was sharing the same sentiments with
ZANU (PF) on land, the latter saw it as a threat to their strategy of winning the hearts and minds
of voters as avowed by Mugabe (ibid) when he asked his party members whether there were
relaying the message to the masses that it was their party which restored land to them. In an
attempt to limit debate the reporter introduced unnamed political commentators who only
described Mr. Tsvangirai’s statement as a political gimmick by a desperate party (MDC) which
was tightly linked to the displaced white commercial farmers. Unnamed political commentators
often tell more than they know. Reporters who use such sources sometimes write more than they
hear. Editors too often let them get away with it. The result of the use of unnamed sources is that
fiction gets mixed with fact.

Thus, the message which the reporter wanted to convey to readers was that there was no way
MDC was going to restore land to the black majority for they were/are close allies of white
settlers. *The Herald* reporter failed again to apprehend that it was his/her opinion which he/she
allowed to creep in. According to the *Neutral Journalist theory* journalists:
Don’t make the news; … [they] report it…reporters do not cover stories from their point of view. They are presenting them from nobody’s point of view… [Thus, journalists] role is neutral, to gather and transmit information. The ultimate journalist, then, would be a disinterested, totally independent, all seeing, and ever-present observer and a recorder who never makes a mistake. Media [frame] is assumed to provide an accurate and representative portrait of the world (Shoemaker & Reese (1996: 31 -32).

The theory above, though looking innocent with regards to the operations of journalists’ vis-à-vis objectivity in news stories, a look inside the news systems however indicates that the inherent political relations among journalists, politicians, and publics make objectivity in the news a misguided expectation. Bennett (1996:141) argued that there is no such thing as objectivity in news when he said that:

The bias question is confounded by the fact that most people view the world through their own political biases and think that perspectives deviating from their views are unbalanced. Since there are so many different views operating in the public on almost any issue, the quest for news coverage that strikes a majority as fair, balanced, or objective appears to be an impossible dream (Bennett ibid:141).

The quotations above aids in demonstrating that while MDC president went on to explain what he meant by imbalance in racial landholding and what he expects to see, The Herald, just because they wanted to cover the story from ZANU (PF)’s point of view started tarnishing Tsvangirai’s arguments. In a nutshell, The Herald displayed through their language that they are biased towards ZANU (PF) party. The Herald even went on to limit debate by not mentioning even one source from the MDC party.

3.5.4 SOURCES ANALYSIS

As has been shown above sources are vital in that they bring credibility to the news being reported on. However the inclusion of unnamed political commentators who quickly labeled Mr. Tsvangirai’s utterances as ‘political gimmick’ could leave readers with no doubts that these so called political commentators are none other than ZANU (PF) staunch supporters. In addition to that the story Imbalance in landholding obscene by The Herald reporter undermined not only his view on the land issue but also unwittingly the story showed that ZANU (PF) had no other authorities on the land issue other than President Mugabe. Here the response and understanding
of the importance of land is personalized in the name of the president. History is therefore stripped of its collective identity.

There is common phenomenon in print news when a journalist will introduce an ‘expert’, a person who has an opinion to give about a piece of news but was not actually involved in making the news. This person may be a former government official, a think tank spokesperson or an academic. Regardless of their prior credentials, they are usually simply referred to as ‘expert’ or ‘analyst’ or ‘political scientist or commentator’ which give the appearance that they have no political stakes in the issue on which they are commenting. However, a former ZANU (PF) party member is likely to give his/her ‘expert opinion’ with a favourable bias towards his/her old party.

Alternatively, someone may be introduced as an authority on a subject, such as Land Reform, when in fact they may know less than what they are given credit. In view of the above, it is therefore important for readers to be wary of these ‘experts’ who are called in to give opinions. The tendency to assume that these commentators are fair and impartial simply because they are called experts is fallacious and dangerous. There is usually a good reason why a journalist has decided to source any particular ‘expert’. Misleading information about the true identity of a source may not be used in a story, even to ‘throw off’ suspicion. Information supplied by an unnamed source should be verified independently or confirmed by at least one other source.

Thus, in the above story headlined ‘Imbalance in Landholding obscene’ and dated 10April 2001 the political commentators are none other than ZANU (PF) staunch supporters because they relayed ZANU (PF) discourse.

At the time (around the year 2001 – the time the story was published) MDC party was not the ‘desperate party attempting to be sympathetic to the land cause…’ as the so called political commentators suggested because they had just come out from a referendum victory held in 2000 in which they managed to coax voters to vote against it (referendum). In this respect, it was actually ZANU (PF) which was a desperate party as noted by Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004: 40) when they say that:

When ZANU (PF) lost the constitutional referendum in February 2000, it realized that its popularity had plunged. Faced with parliamentary elections within a few months, the ruling party formulated an election campaign strategy with land as its only trump card. Land helped shift the focus away from the liability of
troubled economy. As the whites appeared to be supporting the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, they became the targets. So the strategy was to grab their land by force. The ZANU (PF) leadership used the state apparatus to invade white owned commercial farms, and later invited war veterans to participate in the exercise. With war veterans at the forefront, it would be easy to sell the idea to the Zimbabwean public [that] war veterans were demonstrating against unequal distribution of land. Surely the government would be criticized if it failed to redistribute land to the landless Zimbabweans. After all, the liberation war was fought over land violently seized by white colonialists who had paid no compensation.

Having looked at the coverage of the historical background of the land issue in *The Herald*, the following section focuses on the newspaper’s view or reportage on the concept of land.

### 3.6 FRAMING OF THE CONCEPT OF LAND IN THE HERALD NEWSPAPER

This section aims at analyzing the language used by *The Herald* newspaper in defining land. What follows immediately is an analysis of the language of reportage of the concept of land in *The Herald* story dated 18 April 2005 on Figure 2 above headlined *Land: Central to liberation struggle*.

#### 3.6.1 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

Land is viewed as the ‘basis of our survival as a people’ in *The Herald* story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* dated 18 April 2005. The word *survival* denotes continued existence. That land is the foundation for people’s survival is given some emphasis by Bakare (1993: 46) who observes that land is a form of people’s livelihood. The word livelihood connotes life. In order for the people to survive or to live they need land. The people use this land to farm, mine or build structures in order to earn some revenue or to create some employment. That land connotes life is further emphasized by Nyagumbo in Bakare (1993) who says that before the colonization of Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe the Native people worked the land and produced food to subsist themselves. In some cases people could generate surpluses which they would then barter trade or sell to others. What is therefore clear from the language used in the story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* is that land is the source of the continued existence for Africans – it is through the land that people are able to live, work, do business or create employment on. Because of this, it can be conspicuously argued that Land Reform exercise was necessary in the
sense that it brought better living standards to the black majority who had been impoverished during colonialism when they were deprived of the land. That land is the ‘basis of [people’s] survival’ is wrapped by Thomas Mapfumo in his song titled *Kuyaura kweasina musha* (1974). The singer was subtly positing the idea that, Land Reform was necessary in so far as it managed to change the distressful lives of black majority back to peace. Put differently, Mapfumo acknowledged that the deprivation of Africans from their land culminated in untold sufferings.

In addition, *The Herald* story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* saw land as ‘much more than a factor of production [but as something in which people] are spiritually anchored in the lands of [their] fathers’. To be spiritually anchored connotes to be spiritually fixed to the ancestors. Ancestors are spirit beings and they can be found everywhere; that is, they are omnipresent. The message therefore implied is that an individual can be resettled on any land within the country’s boundaries. Thus, possession of land within the country’s borders automatically links the landholders to their ancestors. What is more, to be in possession of the land connotes or transmit to other people the message that the landholder is a citizen of a country that he/she claims to belong to.

Lack of ownership of the means of production, such as land, suggests lack of identity or history. This idea is emphasized by Tambaoga in his 2004 political song or jingle *Sendekera* in which he sings thus ‘*Ivhu iri ramunoona machinda ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe (This land that you see comrades is what is called Zimbabwe)*. The message the jingle intends readers to get is that land is a form of a people’s identity and history as captured by Bakare (1993) when he says that, ‘in pre – colonial era land was and continued in post – colonial epoch to be a form of a person’s identity, history, and livelihood and as such should always be regarded as sacred’. In view of the above, loss of land by the black majority during colonialism signify loss of connection or links of the native people to their fathers and ancestors as well as loss of their citizenship or homes of childhood (Bakare, 1993:43) or citizenship. Consequently, Land Reform in Zimbabwe originated from the understanding that land is the abode of spiritual ancestors who are thought to be the guardians of the nation. Loss of land therefore means loss of spiritual ancestors or guardians.

Another contesting view of land according to the story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* in *The Herald* dated 18 April 2005 above is that land is not only confined to agricultural activities but includes mining activities as well. That land encompasses mining is captured clearly in the
story **Land: Central to liberation struggle**. The reporter said that the British colonized the native land because of the, ‘Gold deposits and potential support [that land could provide] to the thousands of farmers and their families’. Bakare (1993:50) reiterated the latter point when he said that, ‘The British settlers’ interest in owning land lay solely in the potential mineral resources’. Thus, mining speculation was the primary reason for Rhodes’ desire to go north (that is, coming from South Africa). When the British arrived in what is now called Zimbabwe, they forcefully removed Africans off their land and they pushed them to what are now known as ‘Reserves’. As a consequence, the inclusion of the words *gold deposits* and *farmers* in the story **Land: Central to liberation struggle** was intentional. Through the above mentioned words the intent of *The Herald* was to project to readers the ideology that land encompasses everything that is underneath or above it as stressed by Mugabe when he said that, ‘The goal and struggle for self-determination and sovereignty … rested and depended on our sovereign right, access, control and the use of those resources which God in his infinite generosity gave us, the land, all creatures great and small that crawl on it… (Mugabe, 2001:37).

It can be argued that the philosophy which *The Herald* wanted to convey to readers regarding the concept of land was that, ‘Land is the economy and the economy is the land’ (Mugabe, 2001). Possession of land by Africans or the Native people signified full control of wealth / economy / country or nation. Control of the economy or land by the native people – the black majority – denotes power to control or make decisions on how the country will move on or develop. Marx and Engels in Althusser (1971) highlighted that, ‘the class which owns the means of production determines the compass of an epoch … [and their] … ideas became the ruling ideas’. It can therefore be argued that the intention of Land Reform according to *The Herald* as reflected in the language of reportage used in the story **Land: Central to liberation struggle** was to enable the native people of Zimbabwe to determine the compass of an epoch (Marx and Engels, ibid) or to make them masters of their own destiny.

### 3.6.2 OMISSION ANALYSIS

Although the language of reportage in the story **Land: Central to liberation struggle** carried by *The Herald* above appeared to be comprehensive, it however omitted some vital information that readers could possibly have wanted to read in order to have a full appreciation of the concept of land. Land Reform exercise got a lot of resistance especially from the urban population because
of The Herald newspaper’s failure to explain in clear terms the concept of land. In most cases The Herald attributed this resistance to the fact that the urban population was MDC supporters who only wanted to oppose the efforts of the government of ZANU (PF). The reporters of The Herald failed to recognize that their definition of land which only included agriculture and mining was very shallow because it omitted acquiring of residential stands and businesses as also part of the Land Reform. If The Herald had taken the latter definition of land on board it was going to face stiff resistance from the urban population, but was going to win their minds and hearts as emphasized by Muchuri (2004: 9) when he said that, ‘hotels, animals, fruits, all businesses and buildings are land’. It can therefore be argued again that the government’s call of indigenization of factories or industries is/was within the confines of Land Reform as furthermore underpinned by Mugabe (2001) when he said that factories, flora and fauna all contribute to the country’s economic growth or decline hence owning them (land) is the route to prosperity or otherwise.
In a nutshell, when newspapers talk of land they should not limit their definition to agriculture, as reflected by the images in the story **Land Reform: Defending Zimbabwe’s sovereignty** above, but must include mining and industries as well. Land covers agriculture, mining and industrial activities which are carried out in any country and this is the broader definition of land. The Herald newspapers omitted in its stories on land. These omissions could possibly be attributed to The Herald’s failure to critique the dominant ideology of the status quo [ZANU (PF)]. Instead the stories in The Herald were not allowed to expand their meanings of the Third Chimurenga unlike President Mugabe (2001) who refused to view land as denoting agriculture only when he said that, ‘The goal and struggle for self-determination and sovereignty … rested and depended on our sovereign right, access, control and the use of those resources which God in his infinite generosity gave us, the land … (Mugabe, 2001:37). The syntax control and the use of
those resources in the above citation suggest control of farmland, factories, industries, and mines.

3.6.3 LIMITING DEBATE ANALYSIS

Bagdikian cited in Bennett (1996: 167) sees media plurality (the granting of citizens of a choice in ideas and information) as giving readers a choice in politics. If a nation has narrowly controlled information, it will soon have narrowly controlled politics’. It is crystal clear that, ‘the way media present news to audiences determines the extent to which audiences will be able to make some informed decisions since they follow the news to gather information that may help them in thinking about politics and taking more effective political action’ (Bennett, ibid: 180). Schudson (2008: 50) also says that readers have not been able to get quality information owing to the ‘bad’ behavior of journalists. With regards to newspapers, Bennett (ibid) said that, ‘The press is presumably the bastion of free expression in a democracy, but too often it has been one of the institutions that limit the range of expression, especially expression that is critical of leading centers of power in society’.

Journalists, thus, limit the range of expressions regarding an issue through their constant use of official sources who end up dominating the news. It is against this background that Land Reform was constantly attacked especially by the urban dwellers. The Herald relied mostly on the definition of land as given by ZANU (PF) officials who constructed it in a way that appealed more to the rural people (whom they thought were there potential supporters) so as to win their votes. Because of this, The Herald ended up using language which equated Land Reform with farming or agriculture only. The Herald could have possibly helped the government of ZANU (PF) to win even the urban voters – who were believed to be mostly anti – ZANU (PF) during that time – if they had carefully unpacked the statement made by President Mugabe in 2001 that, ‘Land is the economy and the economy is land’. The statement above clearly revealed that industries, mines and residential houses were part and parcel of land.

To put in a nutshell, the language of reportage of Land Reform vis a vis the concept of land limited debate due to its over reliance on official voices which culminated in them seeing land as agriculture and the return of agricultural land to the native people as the only motive of Third Chimurenga. The Herald paraded this thinking in the stories above when they said that, ‘The fast
track land reform programme has successfully delivered land to the people’ and ‘Massive empowerment…transformed… agricultural landscape … production picked up on most of the farms’. The presence of the word *agricultural* in the stories limits debate. What is more, nowhere in the stories are statistics on production figures which the newspaper stories reported as growing. Equating Land Reform to agriculture only limits the scope of the entire exercise or the motive of the whole programme. This limited understanding of the concept of land is also evident within the government of ZANU (PF) as reflected in their calling of the *indigenization programme* or indigenization of industries, minings and factories as the Fourth Chimurenga whereas the broader definition of land above revealed that the programme is part of Third Chimurenga. This brings us to the next section which is sources analysis.

3.6.4 SOURCES ANALYSIS

Since readers look up to the media for information, in most cases, one of the techniques that can be used to avoid ‘bias’ is the point or counterpoint method. This is whereby a journalist uses opposing views to comment on an issue. This approach theoretically allows diverse views to appear in the media. However, the person organizing the report still has the responsibility to choose people who really represent the breadth of opinion. The language used in the story *Land: Central to liberation struggle* by *The Herald* Reporter in *The Herald* to comment on the concept of land showed some reliance on one source, which is the government of ZANU (PF), which also claims to be the initiator of the Land Reform exercise. Reliance on the same government officials to define land culminated, in almost all stories in *The Herald*, defining Land Reform or land as for agricultural purposes only.

For instance, in *The Herald* story dated 5 January 2005 and headlined *Land Reform: One of Zim’s major successes*, shown below, the reporter said that:

> Credit must be given to the villagers from Svosve communal lands who were the first to occupy white commercial farms… Many villagers in Svosve, like others in Musana, Chipinge, Chimanimani, Gokwe, Chivhu and Mutoko before the land reform programme, lived in mountainous areas with poor rocky soils. Although they had been able to produce to sustain themselves, it proved to be an uphill struggle all the way.
The language used in the story *Land reform: One of Zim’s major successes* defined land only as agriculture. This is also evident in *The Herald* story *Land: Central to the liberation struggle* dated 18 April 2005 which says that, ‘Native reserves were allocated in agro – ecological regions four and five which are characterized by unreliable rainfall and poor soils’. The words *agro* and *poor soils* directs readers into seeing land as agriculture only. The sources used by *The Herald* impacted greatly in its reportage of the land concept. In most cases *The Herald* ended up ‘renewing, amplifying and extending the ZANU (PF) predisposition that constitutes the dominant culture…’ (Curran et al. 1982: 14). It can therefore be argued that the language of reportage used by *The Herald* newspaper in its stories in covering or defining the concept of land was to a greater extent impacted upon by the mainstream bias, which is according to Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) a tendency to report what everyone else is reporting and avoiding stories that will offend anyone in general and the ZANU (PF) officials in particular. It is possible that ZANU (PF) officials were sometimes let down by reporters who were out of depth in conceptualizing
the meaning of land to Zimbabweans. Conversely, it is also possible that *The Herald* reporters felt constrained to report critically on the land issue for fear of reprisals by their employer. Which ever case, none of the stories discussed so far have revealed the importance of training programmes for the people who are/were supposed to work on the land; there are no stories talking about the critical shortages of inputs such as labour and fertilizers, all that should be part of the discourse on land and the Third Chimurenga.

Having looked at the language used in describing or defining land, the following section focuses on stories which talked about land and compensation.

### 3.7 FRAMING OF THE ISSUE OF LAND AND COMPENSATION IN THE HERALD

To compensate is to reward, to pay damages, to reimburse, to give back or to pay costs. The aim of this section is to analyze the language used in the stories in *The Herald* newspaper in describing who should reward who or who should reimburse who or who should pay damages or costs of land. In this analysis I will first use the story *Land: Central to the liberation struggle* in *The Herald* dated 18 April 2005 above. The reporter of this story said that the settlers ‘expropriated [the native people’s land] without compensation’. In addition, in the reporter said that ‘compensation [will] only [be] for the infrastructure’. In yet another story by *The Herald* shown below and dated 10 August 2004 headlined *Land reform pinnacle of the struggle* the reporter quoted President Mugabe as saying in November of 1999 that, ‘We argued at Lancaster that the issue of paying compensation was a colonial responsibility of Britain… The Americans decided to mediate and pledged some funds to us for resettlement purposes which we would use for land purchases alongside what Britain would give’. On compensation of commercial farmers; the story *State forced to adopt fast – track approach: Mudenge* by *The Herald* Reporter in *The Herald* dated 4 December 2000 further quoted ‘Comrade’ Mudenge saying that, ‘[compensation] could only be given for improvements and not the soil, which should be shouldered by the former colonial power’.
The last story on land and compensation is to be examined is the one published in The Herald dated 6 July 2008 and headlined *White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition* as shown below. The visuals in the story *White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition* are meant to reveal how whites were benefiting from the ownership of land. Behind the all white human figures are green leaves of tobacco. What are left out in this picture are the ordinary African workers who did the actual physical work. The story *White farmer in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition* states that, ‘In early June of 2000 President Mugabe’s government earmarked 804 farms to be acquired without compensation…’ The story further states that, ‘Compensation for the land was to be paid “by the former colonial power” Britain – which has so far withheld some 36 million pounds (57 million dollars) until President Mugabe provides guarantees that the money would reach landless people’.
Figure 8: The Herald story White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition dated 6 July 2008 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

From the excerpts above, the dominant message or reading that The Herald wanted readers to get was that compensation was going to be paid for the infrastructure only and not for the soil. The language in the stories regarding the issue of compensation was also aimed at informing readers that compensation for the loss of land, by commercial white settlers during the Land Reform exercise, was a responsibility of Britain.

Below is an analysis of The Herald story dated 6 July 2008 headlined White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition on the theme of land and compensation.
3.7.1 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

De Saussure (1966) proposed that reader’s perception and understanding of reality is constructed by the words. The story Land: Central to the liberation struggle in The Herald dated 18 April 2005 above reported that the Native people’s land was ‘expropriated without compensation’ by the British. The use or inclusion of the word without in the quotation above is not by accident but is by design (Larson 2001) and is meant by The Herald to communicate to readers the message that the government of Zimbabwe had or has no obligation whatsoever to pay damages or costs to the displaced British farmers whose farms have been compulsorily acquired. The reason for this refusal according to The Herald and as underscored by Woddis (1960: 1) is that the British during colonialism took the native people’s land by force or by trickery. It implied is the idea that the British did not pay any compensation to the native people. Since the great scramble for Africa by the Western imperialist powers at the end of the nineteenth century, land – grabbing, has been the central aim. By direct seizure, conquest, pressure on chiefs, trickery, swindling, the repudiation of pledges and promises, by every means open to them, the representatives of the European powers took land. The language used by The Herald in the stories cited above revealed that land in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular was grabbed. To grab is synonymous with seizure which is synonymous with expropriation.

It is therefore crystal clear that no compensation was given to Africans when they lost their land. In this respect, the word expropriated used by The Herald and which is synonymous with the words confiscated; seized or grabbed is meant to draw the readers’ attention to the fact that issue of compensation is taboo. The British or commercial white farmers should not talk or think about the issue because they did not even think about it during colonialism when they took the native people’s land. The word expropriate used by The Herald also means to take without permission and in view of the latter meaning the government of Zimbabwe was not obliged in whatever way to pay compensation for land that was stolen from them. This fact was underpinned by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004: 40) when they said that, ‘the liberation war was fought over land violently seized by white colonialists who had paid no compensation’.

While the story White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition above argued that the dispossessed British farmers should not be compensated, the story, however, went on to explain what exactly was not going to be compensated for by the Zimbabwean government. The
story **White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition** revealed that the British settlers were not going to be compensated on the ‘lost’ land or repossessed farms which Mugabe described as ‘…resource[s] which God in his infinite generosity gave us…’ (Mugabe, 2001:37). The message therefore implied was that the government of Zimbabwe was going to pay compensation only on all artificial things or structures on the repossessed British farms. This is the reason why *The Herald* stated in the story **White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition** that ‘compensation [will] only [be] for the infrastructure’. The word *infrastructure* directs was meant to transmit to readers or British settler farmers the message that compensation was only going to be paid on the developments made on the farms such as roads, buildings, power, to mention, but just three.

Since language is a symbolic representation of a phenomenon, room for interpretation and distortion of the meaning exists. Thus, from the above excerpts, it can be argued that the inclusion of the word *argued* in the story **White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition** was meant to show readers as well as the British farmers that the issue of compensation was even a bone of contention at the Lancaster House conference in which it was later on agreed or resolved that the British should pay for the costs or damages. ‘Comrade’ Mudenge was quoted in *The Herald* story **State forced to adopt fast track – Mudenge** dated 4 December 2000 saying that, ‘[the issue of compensation] should be shouldered by the former colonial power’. The intention of using the word *shouldered* in the story is to show to readers the people who should bear the costs for the ‘lost’ land by the white commercial farmers. ‘Comrade’ Mudenge clearly stated that the issue of compensation was an obligation of Britain – ‘the former colonial power’. Moyana (1984: 24) avowed that, ‘Zimbabwe and Britain agreed at Lancaster House conference on a three year programme with the aim of acquiring 1.1 million hectares of land on which would be settled some 18 000 families at a cost of $60 million’. This cost of $60 million was going to be provided by the British government. President Mugabe underscored the latter point in *The Herald* story **Land reform pinnacle of the struggle** dated 10 August 2004 when he said that, ‘… The Americans decided to mediate and pledged some funds to us [Zimbabweans] for resettlement purposes which we would use for land purchases alongside what Britain would give’. What is crystal clear from the languages used in discussing the issue of compensation in *The Herald* stories above is that the government of Zimbabwe was not going to folk out any money to compensate the displaced white commercial farmers as emphasized
through the careful inclusion of the words *America ... pledged some funds to us ... alongside what Britain would give* and the headline in The Herald story below dated 12 July 2000 which says: **Honour your colonial obligations, UK told.**

![Image](https://example.com/image.png)

**Figure 9**: The Herald story *Honour your colonial obligations, UK told* dated 12 July 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

### 3.7.2 OMISSION ANALYSIS

In language, the order of words in a sentence affects the meaning of each word and of the sentence itself (Lotman, 1976:84). In addition to that, the order of words affects the interpretation that can be derived from them (words) (Kress, 1988:13). Implied therefore is that the order of words in a story guides readers on the exact or preferred meanings. From the word choices analysis above, regarding the issue of compensation on land that was repossessed, the language failed to clearly show the exact things white commercial farmers were to be compensated. While on one hand the government of Zimbabwe through *The Herald* newspaper indicated that compensation for the land was the sole responsibility of the former colonisers –
Britain – that is – the government would only pay for the infrastructure and not the soil – this statement seemed to be in contradistinction with the statement made in November of 1999 by Mugabe quoted in The Herald story dated 10 August 2004 that, ‘America ... pledged some funds to us ... alongside what Britain would give’ at the Lancaster House Conference. The statement suggested the possibility of some missing information. If America and Britain were going to provide funds for the Land Reform programme, the language used by Mugabe or The Herald did not reveal whether these funds were only for the soil or land; and not for the infrastructure, which the government of Zimbabwe said would compensate or were for both. Since the government of Zimbabwe led by Mugabe was only willing to pay for the infrastructure, then it can be argued that what America alongside Britain pledged to compensate was the land. The point is that both Mugabe and The Herald’s language failed to make this point or issue of compensation clear to the readers and hence is bound to result in different or multiple interpretations. The reasons why the Zimbabwean government was willing to compensate for the infrastructure was not explained by The Herald in all its stories.

In view of the fact that the British settlers deprived the native people of Zimbabwe of their land for over a century then the commercial white farmers who lost their land during Land Reform were not supposed to be compensated for the land as well as for the infrastructure by the Zimbabwean government. As an alternative, the British settlers, maybe with the help of the British government were supposed to compensate the people of Zimbabwe for the land they could not use productively to enhance their standards of living for more than a century. In addition, it can also be argued that the reportage of Land Reform in The Herald with regards to compensation was sympathetic to white commercial farmers. When the British colonised the African land in Zimbabwe, the British did not pay any compensation, but, they stole; seized or grabbed it by force. In this respect, as the common the adage says, ‘what goes around cones around’ then, the land in the hands of some white commercial farmers was expected to be repossessed without compensating the white commercial farmers. This point is emphasized by Muchuri (ibid: 9) who saw no reason for the Zimbabwean government to paying compensation to the white commercial farmers because this land rightfully belonged to the native African people. It is the Whiteman who stole the land from Africans during colonialism.
Muchuri (ibid) avered that:

If a thief steals, and the goods are found, they are returned to the owner without compensation. As such our land, our cattle and all our wealth must be returned to us without compensation. If a thief sells stolen goods to somebody, those goods if recovered by police, will be given back to their owner without compensation… our stolen land must return to us without compensation because it is ours’ (ibid: 9)

So it against the above quotation that this study argued that compensation in any form or on infrastructure should not be given to the British settlers owing to the fact that the British did not pay the native people any compensation when they displaced them by force of their land – a point *The Herald* omitted. In bargain, the British settlers really caused untold sufferings to the people of Zimbabwe for over a century when they displaced them from their land and hence are the ones who should compensate not the British but the citizens of Zimbabwe.

### 3.7.3 LIMITING DEBATE ANALYSIS

With regards to the reportage of Land and compensation, the stories in *The Herald* limited debate by excluding the voices of the native people who were displaced during colonialism. For instance, Roger reiterated that:

The moment a [white] man had pegged his farm…he regarded the African villagers on it as his serfs who would have to work for him. The chief means of mobilizing this pool of labour in the first years was the sjmbok or hippo-hide whip, and after 1908 labour agreements which committed tenants to work several months, usually three, for the privilege of remaining on their ancestral land (Roger, 1964:51).

What is apparent from the quotation above is that despite the crops or the animals that were in the pegged land, not to mention the people, the moment the whiteman grabbed the land, all these (crops, animals and the rightful people) automatically became his (the Whiteman’s) property (Muchuri, ibid). In view of the above arguments that the British stole land from the native people without paying them any compensation; the displaced white commercial farmers who were reported in *The Herald* story *White farmers in Zimbabwe appeal against land acquisition* dated 6 July 2008 as crying for the damages caused on their crops and properties; were supposed to be reminded that they got this land for ‘free’ during colonialism. This issue of compensation
could have been neutralized or ‘silenced’ only if *The Herald* had cited or brought to the fore the voices of the native people who experienced similar treatment during colonialism as expressed above by Roger (ibid).

Furthermore, *The Herald* newspaper limited debate by not describing the nature of the land that these white commercial farmers were appealing against its seizure. Whether this land was legally bought or not was not clearly highlighted in *The Herald* stories. In bargain, the reasons why the government wanted to pay for the infrastructure was not clearly explained. No voices from the British people or government were included or even from the government itself to explain why either of them should pay compensation for one thing and not the other. Whether this was meant to highlight to readers the fact that some of the land that was compulsorily acquired was legally bought by the British commercial farmers was left for speculation.

The reportage of land and compensation by *The Herald* was also marred by the sources that were consulted as shown below.

### 3.7.4 SOURCES ANALYSIS

With regards to the issue of compensation – that is – the reasons why the Zimbabwean government should pay or not pay compensation to the British commercial farmers whose land was compulsorily acquired, *The Herald* stories relied only on a single source namely ZANU (PF) government officials. These ZANU (PF) officials had similar interests to protect or ideologies to perpetuate through Land Reform. Overally the motive was to win the minds and hearts of the electorates pending the looming elections and because of this purpose the government deliberately controlled the kinds of information that could be put on the public domain.

The reportage of land and compensation in *The Herald* newspaper omitted voices of the British settlers or government. These voices could have revealed the other side of the story on compensation. The stories in *The Herald* did not highlight the nature of land that was acquired. Whether the land that was acquired by the Zimbabwean government was ‘unsettled land’ or was land that was illegally obtained by the British settlers during colonialism was not elucidated. Again, here, the stories in *The Herald* should have included the voices of the displaced white commercial farmers. Having looked at the reportage of Land and Compensation, the last theme whose reportage is to be scrutinized in this chapter is Land and Distribution.
3.8 FRAMING OF THE ISSUE OF LAND AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE HERALD

On the issue or aspect of land and distribution, Manzungu and Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004) were of convinced that the government of ZANU (PF) hid behind the concept of ‘nationalism’ yet in reality it was only a minority (black elites) who benefited and continue to benefit on the land redistribution exercise. What is more, Manzungu (ibid) also articulated that Land Reform program should not be seen through the race card and at the detriment of the development of a holistic society – based political economy. Implied, therefore was the idea that land was supposed to be distributed to all people despite their race and the motive was to improve the standards of living of all people which could consequently translate to the development of the entire country of Zimbabwe. To distribute means to share out, to give out or to allocate or divide. Below is an analysis of the reportage of the allocation of land in some stories in The Herald. The aim is to find out the nature of the language that was used in The Herald stories in describing land and distribution.

3.8.1 PREFERRED READINGS

The basic reason for Land Reform exercise was to redistribute land fairly to the black majority and this land was heavily skewed towards the white settlers. When the government of ZANU (PF) embarked on the land redistribution exercise the major reason was to redistribute land to the landless black majority. This land was to be taken away from the British commercial farmers because they had amassed huge tracts of fertile lands during colonialism as shown in the story below.

![Figure 10: The Herald story UK admits best farmland is in hands of whites dated 4 April 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)](image)}
With regards to the area of land occupied; Lipton in Antonie (2010:70) stated that, ‘There was a pattern of land alienation [in Africa], evident in the fact that, in 1970, in Zimbabwe, 6,400 white farmers owned almost half the land, while millions of blacks were confined by law to the rest’. In view of the inequitable distribution of land in Zimbabwe described above, it can therefore be argued that Land Reform programme was carried out in Zimbabwe in order to readdress disparities and curb underdevelopment. Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (2008) also said that, ‘the majority of the rural poor [lived] in environmentally degraded and crowded areas’. In addition to that, ‘these reserves were not only confined to the poorest land, but the size of land available to individual households was meager’ (Moyo and Matondi, ibid: 60). This is further reflected in the story European Christian leaders apologise to Africa dated 04 September 2006 and as shown below.

![Image](European Christian leaders apologise to Africa.jpg)

**Figure 11:** The Herald story European Christian leaders apologise to Africa dated 04 September 2006 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

### 3.8.2 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

In *The Herald* story Ensure majority land by *The Herald* Reporter dated 1 December 2000 above, the reporter quoting Nigerian Olusegun Obasango said that, ‘The struggle for land will continue to haunt Zimbabwe and the region unless deliberate land reform policies are affected in ways that ensure that the majority is satisfied’. Through the inclusion of the word haunt the
Herald journalist wanted to convey to readers the message that land was supposed to be distributed fairly to all Zimbabwean citizens if the ‘issue of landlessness’ was to be addressed once and for all.

The Herald dated 5 December 2000 carried a story by Ray Mungoshi headlined Land disparity linked to spread of AIDS reiterating the latter point that, ‘An equitable redistribution of land and the subsequent improvement in the quality of life for the majority of Zimbabweans [was going] some way towards halting the spread of AIDS in the country’. The story Land disparity linked to spread of AIDS furthermore reported that the majority of Zimbabweans depended heavily on the land for survival and so a durable solution to the long running feud over the ownership pattern was bound to yield immediate positive results. The intention of including the words equitable and improvement in the quality of life for the majority was meant to put forth the ideas or points that the standard of living of the majority was only going to rise if the government of Zimbabwe was willing to deal first with corruption or greediness before they give land to almost every citizen of Zimbabwe. Thus, in yet another story dated 17 August 2000, written by Ruth Chinhema and headlined Women battle to access land The Herald stated that the Government policy on land vis-à-vis gender should not be discriminatory, thus, ‘women should not be discriminated against in the redistribution of land’
Women battle to access land

Some single women, widows denied participation in resettlement

WHILE there is joy among the land hungry over accelerated land redistribution, women activists are complaining that women are getting a raw deal. They are asking for a quota system but the government says women must compete equally with men.

By Ruth Chinhema

When news reached farm workers at Skyview Farm in Brumley that the farm was one of the many earmarked for resettlement, the workers were overjoyed, for this meant that their dreams of owning land would now come true.

However, it was not so for the majority of women at the farm and the surrounding community, who were soon to learn that they would not qualify for resettlement due to their social standing.

Maidy widowed and single mothers were informed that they would not be resettled because they did not own farming implements and had no farming background.

Ms Chipa Ridge said single women at the farm who had nursed hopes of being resettled were told by programme co-ordinators that they did not qualify to get land.

“Because many of us had no farming experience, save for basic knowledge, having at one time been hired as casual labourers, our chances of getting land were slim,” said Ms Ridge, a farm worker.

**Discriminated**

Government policy says women should not be discriminated against in the redistribution of land. As the accelerated land resettlement programme gathers momentum in most parts of the country, many women are, instead being resettled.

There have, however, been isolated cases in which women have complained that some resettlement officials and traditional leaders have discriminated against them.

Some headmen are on record as having informed widowed and single women to go back to their original villages, where they came from before they got married, to register for resettlement.

In Makonde, women who met the criteria, possessing the required farming implements, were told to return to their original home areas to register for land.

This, however, was not possible. Most of the women had been married and had lived for many years far away from their maiden homes. As such, they could not be accepted, especially by men, as bona fide residents of their villages of origin.

As one woman put it in a generalised manner, women were in a situation where they could not qualify to get land anywhere.

Although women are aware that provisions have been put in place to ensure that they too are entitled to land, their hopes of getting land been dampened by the manner in which the resettlement exercise is being conducted. Information on how people can access land is not readily available to all. It is in the hands of a few people, like headmen.

Most headmen have been accused of being impatient with women whom they tell that only (male) heads of households should apply.

**Activists**

While women are, indeed, being allocated land, some women activist groups are complaining about the paucity number of women who are benefitting from the resettlement programme, as compared to men.

According to a research conducted by the Women and Land Lobby Group in Mashonaland West and Matabeleland, of the 779 families that had been resettled, only 79 were headed by females.

Women interviewed said their problems were being compounded by lack of access to critical information needed when registering.

Giving testimony on how difficult it was for women to be considered for resettlement, Mrs Tshidzidi Mazwanda of Nyanga resettlement in Hurungwe said that although some married women had been jointly given land with their husbands, their ownership was not guaranteed as their names were not appearing on lease forms.

“We would want our names to appear on the lease to ensure that we will still be owning the piece of land in the event of divorce or the death of our husbands,” she said.

Women and Land Lobby Group Coordinator, Ms Abdy Mupungu, said it was disheartening to note that policy makers had not put in place mechanisms to protect women and ensure that they benefit from the resettlement exercise.

**Sideline**

As a result, the majority of land-hungry women were being sidelined, owing to lack of resources and also due to cultural barriers, which sought to discourage women ownership of property, particularly land.

Responding to questions put forward by the participants to a meeting arranged by the Women and Land Lobby Group in Harare recently, Vice President Joseph Msika said everyone, women included, was entitled to land in the ongoing land resettlement exercise.

To ensure that existing gender imbalances would not be carried forward, Cde Msika said the Government had introduced policies that seek to eliminate the discrepancies.

He urged women to go back and register with their respective government and traditional authorities.

Cde Msika, however, reiterated that there would not be any preferential treatment given to women when it comes to land distribution.

“Women who wish to venture into farming can do so in their own right. They will have to compete equally with men,” he said.

But women feel that there is no way they can compete fairly with men because the competition field is not level. An activist women empowerment, Ms Nolive Ramo, said owing to socio-economic disparities that currently exist between women and men, women were set to lose the battle for land, unless the Government intervened.

“If women were given a fair share of the land, then the issue of poverty haunting the large number of women in the country would be solved,” she said.

**Concerned**

While acknowledging loopholes in the land resettlement, as far as women and land are concerned, the Government has so far taken a position that ensures that women, like their male counterparts, will be well catered for in the exercise.

Many women pressure groups strongly believe that the idea of a quota system, which was turned down by the National Land Acquisition Committee, would be the only way of addressing the discrimination faced by women in their quest for land in the resettlement programs.

**Weather**

THE airflow over the country should become northerly and warmer.

*Map: Mazowe, Harare, Makonde and Midlands: mainly partly cloudy though cloudy at times with a chance of a shower. Cold at first, mild later.*

*Gwanda: Mainly fine. Cold at first, mild later.*

*Bulawayo, Gwanda, Lovelaw, Masvingo and Gweru: Generally partly cloudy. Cold at first, mild later.*

*Eastern Highlands and Kariba Reservoir: Generally cloudy with rain or drizzle. Cold at first, mild later.*

*Outlook: Mainly fine and warm — Met Office.*

**Forecast City Centre Temperatures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Temp</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harare</td>
<td>15°C</td>
<td>21°C</td>
<td>10°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulawayo</td>
<td>24°C</td>
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<td>Gweru</td>
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<td>Kwekwe</td>
<td>23°C</td>
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| Sun | 06:24 | 15:58 |
| Time | 20:30 | 06:21 |
| Moon Phase | 23-05-00 | 07-05-00 |

Figure 13: The Herald story **Women battle to access land** dated 17 August 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)
In The Herald story **Women battle to access land** above, it was and is still the African women who provided and continue to provide the labour in European farms. Whites ultimately benefitted materially more than blacks. This unequal equation justified the Land Reform programme. In Mutasa’s novel, *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005: 36) the government was urged to give land to every Zimbabwean without any regard to political affiliation. In the novel, Sekai, who is female, advised those in charge of land redistribution to be fair when she said that, ‘*Musapa minda muchitarira bato rake*’ (Do not give land according to political party affiliation). The assumption here was that during colonialism, almost all black Africans were deprived of their land, and they ‘all’ united against the removal of the common enemy (the white settlers) with the intention of restoring their land. Thus, land distribution exercise was supposed to cut across gender lines. In terms of how land was to be distributed again, *The Herald* story **Multiple farm owners risk jail: Mutasa** dated 12 September 2005 furthermore explained the meaning of the word equitable. Comrade Mutasa, a ZANU (PF) government official said that, ‘Multiple farm owners risk[ed] jail’. The word *multiple* according to the story referred to owning more than one farm. *The Herald* explained this definition by quoting again Comrade Mutasa posing the question: ‘How can a single person own more than one farm?’, thus, by equitable distribution, it seemed the government was saying that an individual should not own more than one farm, acquired under fast track Land Reform programme.

What is therefore implied is that, an individual could have more than one farm, provided these farms were not acquired under fast – track Land Reform exercise. This definition ultimately leaves a reader with no option but to ask the logic of the so called ‘equitable distribution of land’ in the country considering the fact that an individual can be allowed to hold or own more than one farm. This ambiguity in the stories testifies to the lack of clarity in most stories dealing with the Third Chimurenga as reported in *The Herald*. 
3.8.3 OMISSION ANALYSIS

Omission analysis is when one searches for the unsaid. When Land Reform programme was introduced; one of the aims as shown above, was to equitably distribute land. The government since Independence had been trying to address land imbalances from which about 4 500 white farmers owned at least 75 percent of the productive land (as shown in The Herald story dated 5 January 2005 with the headline Land Reform: One of Zim’s major successes above).

The word ‘equitably’ used by The Herald in most of the stories cited above was meant to make readers think or digest the processed message that land was divided or shared fairly or impartially amongst the beneficiaries. However, the situation on the ground reflected the opposite. Some people argued that land was distributed along political lines and it was mostly
people from the ruling party – ZANU (PF) – who benefited. Secondly, the word ‘equitably’ was problematic in the sense that the word did not tell the criteria that the government used in order to arrive at the conclusion that land was equitably distributed amongst the black majority. Some people could possibly think that by saying that land was equitably or fairly distributed the message being communicated is that all the beneficiaries of land under Land Reform programme were apportioned equal pieces of lands, and what is more, with the same ‘fertility’. However, the situation on the ground as shown above reflected that land was not equitably distributed either in terms of area of space apportioned to an individual or ‘fertility of the soil’. Equitability in the eyes of the government was not based mostly on restoring fertile lands to its rightful owners but on the number of farms allocated to an individual.

Whether the word *equitable* or fair distribution of land implied distributing fairly only land acquired under Land Reform programme, and excluded land already in the hands of blacks, even if in excess, was not clearly explained, if explained at all by *The Herald*. *The Herald* stories however omitted to reveal to readers that even if people got one farm each under the Land Reform programme; the fact that these farms were not of the same sizes or area meant that the land was not equitably distributed as claimed. On the other hand, *equity* in land distribution implied a schemeless distribution exercise. Land was therefore not supposed to be classified or divided as either A1 or A2 under the Land Reform programme. The argument being that the number of people who needed land and the total number of hectares acquired for distribution were supposed to be ascertained first. The hectares were then supposed to be shared equally to the number of people who wanted land. This was however not done. The word *equitably* also suggested that the government was going to remove people located in the reserves which had poor soils and get these people resettled in the farms acquired which had fertile soils. The native people got involved in the liberation war because they wanted to restore their fertile lands. Whether that (restoration of the fertile land) happened on the ground or not was omitted in *The Herald*’s reportage of land and distribution. On yet another level, as one critical reader of *The Herald* portrayed:

> A1 and A2 models were put in place in order to make sure that the land acquired could on the first level allow subsistence farming to be practiced especially by families who did not have sufficient capital to run large tracts of land. A2 models were on the second level given to those people with the capital base to finance
commercial agricultural activities on acquired land. This would ensure food security (Questionnaire dated 21 November 2011).

The other piece of information that was missing in the reportage of land vis-à-vis distribution was that of land and ownership. Owning land implied having the title deeds for the land. History told us that the native people were deprived of their land or land which rightfully belonged to them. That land did not belong to the ‘state’ but to ‘them’ and was under the custodianship of chiefs. Land that was under the custodianship of chiefs was mostly the ‘unsettled land’ in communal areas. This was meant to avoid unscrupulous selling of land. Thus, the purpose of Land Reform was to restore land to its rightful owners who happened to be the black majority. However, the language of reportage used by *The Herald* regarding ownership of the distributed lands revealed that the land that was allocated to the beneficiaries of land did not belong to them but these lands remained the property of the government. What is further suggested was that the resettled people could be removed from these lands or farms any time if the state felt so or thought that the land was not being properly managed. This idea was clearly shown in *The Herald* story *Govt. plans to nationalize land* by Dumisani Muleya dated 16 August 2000 below.

![Image: Govt. plans to nationalize land](image.png)

*Figure 15: The Herald story *Govt. plans to nationalize land* dated 16 August 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)*
The message connoted by ‘nationalization’ of land ownership as reported in *The Herald* story **Govt. plans to nationalize land** above was that the land acquired was still not in the hands of its rightful owners as claimed by *The Herald* and the government of ZANU (PF) officials, for the State was and is not the black majority. If the black majority were truly the rightful owners then the language of 99 year leases was not supposed to be talked or heard of in *The Herald*. The fact that the resettled people were on a 99 year leases the implied message was that the land acquired did not belong to them. This further suggested that the new black minority (as represented by the State) had taken position of the erstwhile colonisers by possessing the land which belonged to the black majority as shown in the story **No policy change on land tenure, ownership** in *The Herald* dated 16 August 2000 as shown below.

![Image of the Herald story](Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

**Figure 16:** The Herald story 'No policy on land tenure, ownership' dated 16 August 2000

Land in the first place belonged to the native people of Zimbabwe and because of this land was not supposed to be leased to them. By leasing land the message that the government of ZANU (PF) was therefore conveying to readers was that land reform was not about restoring land to the black majority but it was about restoring land to the black minority who in turn would decide on who gets what and where. By right, the black majority were not expected to rent their own resource which was stolen and which they latter recovered. The other information that *The Herald* omitted in its reportage was to do with the basic infrastructure. *The Herald* did not
question why the government was reluctant to build schools, clinics and shops to service the resettled people, but instead opted to erect or drill boreholes. While Land Reform was intended at improving the standards of living of the black majority through the provision of fertile lands and what is more, through the provision of schools, clinics and shops to mention but just three, the government did not put these things in place in most resettlement areas due to lack of adequate funds or funding of the programme. The message which *The Herald* was communicating to readers was that the land that was acquired during land reform programme was not permanent. This land was going to be given back to white commercial farmers at a certain point in time. That could possibly be the reason why Moyo and Matondi (2008: 62) labeled the whole Land Reform exercise as a political expediency. That Land Reform exercise was a political gimmick was also evident prior to 2005 when many people were given pieces of land to build their houses in the urban areas. These urban resettlement areas, which were even graced by very senior government officials, during their inception, were demolished in the so called operation Murumbatsvina. This left many people (the once called black majority) landless. Many people were left wondering whether the government was genuine when it first allocated them some pieces of land/stands or it was just a political attention – grabber, now that the 2005 elections had gone (Moyo and Matondi 2008: 62)

### 3.8.4 LIMITING DEBATE ANALYSIS

The stories in *The Herald* omitted useful details on the notion of land and distribution mainly because it relied only on government officials for comments on land and distribution. *The Herald* stories should have allowed other diverse views to be heard regarding land and distribution in order to increase news objectivity. Having looked on the reportage of Land Reform in *The Herald* newspaper what follows is an analysis of the impact of these languages on readers’ understanding of the Land Reform exercise.

### 3.9 MEDIA FRAMES VERSUS READERS FRAMES OF LAND REFORM

People learn about the world through the media (Borchers 2002) and learning implies getting informed about events and issues of the day, month or year. It is through the information learnt that readers will be able to make decisions about important societal matters. Woo cited by Eksterowick and Roberts (2000: 21) says in his critic of public journalism that:
We are in a democracy, and there is only one way to get a democracy on its feet...and that is by keeping the public informed about what is going on. There is not a crime, there is not a dodge, there is not a trick, there is not a swindle, [and] there is not a vice which does not live by secrecy. Get these things out in the open, describe them, attack them, ridicule them in the press, and sooner or later public opinion will sweep them away.

Thus, in a democracy the media is supposed to expose every detail of an issue in order to help readers make sound decisions regarding the social issues at the end of the day. In Zimbabwe the issue of land distribution policy was a very controversial one and as such people always looked at the media to give them sound and factual background to the issue. Kuypers (2002: 1) underscored the latter point when he said that, ‘Controversial issues are, by their essential nature, unsolvable to everyone’s satisfaction. Such issues are open to discussion – debatable, questionable-and generally in dispute by contending groups. Controversial issues are [therefore] news and for news [people] look to the press’.

In a democracy newspapers should act as public spheres. Journalists should present news which is written from all possible angles so that when the readers targeted read the news they will get all sides of the story and ultimately be able to deduce from the data provided the information that they think can best explain the situation on hand. This called for the use of news frames which are capable of portraying all sides of the story or issue on hand as suggested by Mencher (1997:33) when he said that news stories must be accurate, properly attributed, balanced and fair, objective, brief and focused, and well written. In this respect, when reporting on controversial issues, like the land issue in Zimbabwe, reporters must always try to write stories encompassing or ensuaring that all sides in a controversy covered. The need to be objective when reporting on issues is also underpinned by Stuart (2010:26):

Under objectivity, journalists adopt the pose of scientist and vow to eliminate their own beliefs and values as guides in ascertaining what was said and done. Supposedly avoiding all subjective judgment and analysis the journalist strives to become a rigorously impartial, expert collector of information. More than just ending formal political alliances and external control, the objective press must eliminate any organizing philosophies or social commitments from influencing the news. In this fashion, the rarified ethic of objectivity seeks a high degree of differentiation from the polity,
News reports should be less biased. They should thrive to be objective – that is – carry more facts. Journalists should refuse to interpret, and should also keep a distance from all authorities if they are to elevate balance in their news stories they give to the readers. Ordinarily, objectivity amounts to the demand that journalists keep their own personal biases, emotions, interpretations, and other “subjective” factors out of the news. Based on this conception, the job of the journalist is to “report the facts “ not to create them (Cohen 1992:156). Implied therefore is that government officials have their stories to tell and it is the obligations of the journalists to closely examine the stories told by officials in order to make sure that the news they deliver to readers is not biased.

3.9.1 READERS FRAMES OF THE HISTORICAL MILIEU OF LAND REFORM

The stories in *The Herald* generally argued that Land Reform exercise was carried out because the government wanted to redistribute or correct the land imbalances or skewed land distribution systems that were in existence since colonialism between the white settlers and the native people of Zimbabwe. Guided by the stories in *The Herald* some of the readers went on to use the same frames in discussing about the historical backdrop of Land Reform. In *The Herald* letter to the Editor headlined *Land redistribution justified* shown below, the writer Limani Sinqobe, argued that Land Reform exercise was embarked upon by the government because it wanted to correct the colonial or British skewed legacy. Sinqobe (ibid) said that, ‘the major legacy of British settlement is the highly skewed distribution of land’.

Limani Sinqobe further argued in the story *Land redistribution justified* above that:

… [B]efore the land redistribution exercise, 4 000 large- sale (*sic*) commercial farmers privately owned just over 11 million hectares of land … Smallholder farmers, comprising nearly 6 million households, were living on about 22 million hectares of land that has the lowest agricultural potential, 74 percent of which is located in natural regions IV and V.
The language that Limani Sinqobe used concurred with that of The Herald stories above. The writer ultimately argued in the story Land redistribution justified that, ‘… there [was] need for more people to be given land to redress the colonial imbalances…’ In bargain, Land Reform was going to culminate in ‘land use intensification…’ since more underutilized land in the orbits of white settlers was going to be put under production ensuring intensified ‘horticultural export production’ (The Herald 18 August 2000).
That land was not fairly distributed and was therefore supposed to be re-distributed was further moreover underscored by Edward Ruzha in his letter to The Herald Editor Let land be redistributed to the land – hungry people dated 20 July 2000 as shown below:

![Image of The Herald letter to the Editor](image.png)

**Figure 18:** The Herald letter to the Editor *Let land be redistributed to the land – hungry people* dated 20 July 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

Ruzha (ibid) argued that, ‘For the past 20 years, my parents and I have been living and cultivating in an area designated for grazing at the expense of our cattle’. In view of this, Ruzha (ibid) concluded thus, ‘We, the landless, want land…’ From the above excerpts, it can be argued that some critical readers like Ruzha acknowledged the fact that Land Reform exercise was aimed at restoring or distributing land fairly amongst the black majority.

Some critical readers who read *The Herald* newspaper were also of the view that Land Reform exercise was carried out in order to resolve land imbalances. One notable response was that Land Reform Exercise was carried out in order ‘to correct the injustices in terms of land ownership and fulfilling the promises espoused in the liberation struggle’. In bargain, Land Reform was carried out in an attempt ‘to placate the restless and landless black Zimbabweans…’ (Urther Svuure, 21 November 2011)
What is clear from the above discussion is that the stories in The Herald managed to inform some of readers about the historical background of the land issue in Zimbabwe. The readers cited above seemed to have ‘fallen’ or got the preferred readings of the reportage of land and history by The Herald. The above observations underscored the point made by Richardson (2007:13) who said that:

> Journalism has social effects: through its power to shape issue agendas and public discourse, it can reinforce beliefs; it can shape people’s opinions not only of the world but also of their place and role in the world; or, if not shape your opinions on a particular matter, it can at the very least influence what you have opinions on; in sum’ it can help shape social reality by shaping our views of social reality. For these reasons, and many more, the language of the news media needs to be taken very seriously.

Philo in Stuart (2010:408) quoting Hall (1980:134) looked at the hegemonic nature of the language of reportage. He said that:

> What is being written constitutes a ‘dominant cultural order’, which imposes ‘taken for granted’ knowledge of social structures [hegemonic viewpoint]. This carries with it the stamp of legitimacy- it appears coterminous with what is ‘natural’, ‘inevitable’, taken for granted about the social order’... the language and visual images [journalists] uses will be organized within this taken for granted knowledge.

What is significant in Philo’s (ibid) quotation above is that the language and visuals (frames) that journalists use have several effects on the readers. In the process some readers will fall in the naïve readings of the story frames used by the journalists concerned as exemplified above. The reason for this could be that the readers will have seen the message as directly relating to what they see as normal, natural, and as ‘taken for granted’. In other words, these are the readers who are less critical of the news produced by dominant channels, however, inaccurate these may be.

Philo also indicated that readers take a ‘negotiated’ position when reading the language of report of an issue or event. These readers contain a mixture of ‘adaptive and oppositional’ elements. They might accept the frames used or the hegemonic viewpoint at a general level, but seek particular exceptions in terms of their own beliefs or behavior. The third and vital contribution was that readers can take a completely oppositional code. Readers after encountering news story decode the message / language contained in that report in a ‘globally contrary way’. The message
is re-totalized within an alternative frame of reference. As Hall (1980:136) writes, ‘this is the case of the viewer who listens to a debate on the need to limit wages but ‘reads’ every mention of the ‘national’s interests’ as ‘class interest’.

What follows below are examples of the impacts of the reportage of land and history in the stories contained in The Herald on the readers. While the intent of The Herald as revealed above was to make readers get the message that Land Reform exercise was meant to correct the skewed landholding system between white commercial farmers and the black majority, other readers took a negotiated or oppositional reading. In The Herald story State forced to adopt fast – track approach: Mudenge above, ‘Comrade’ Mudenge was quoted by the journalist saying that Land Reform was guided by ‘principles of justice and equity’. Implied was that the Land Reform exercise was meant to distribute land fairly amongst the black majority, thus in the process availing land to many landless people. However, the letter Urban party supporters subverting resettlement below by Norbert Mazungu dated 15 August 2000 and that was addressed to the Editor of The Herald took an oppositional stance.

![Figure 19: The Herald letter to the Editor Urban party supporters subverting resettlement dated 15 August 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)](image-url)
According to Mazungu (ibid), the notion that Land Reform was aimed at bringing justice and equity in the distribution of land as preached in *The Herald* stories was ill-informed. He said that:

The Governor for Midlands, Cde Cephas Msipa, has moved 14 families onto a 2,000 hectare ranch, displacing 15 families plus the farmer. More people have been made homeless than those settled … at least two of the settled people are not from the land-hungry mass in the overcrowded rural areas. They have homes and jobs in Gweru (Herald dated 15 August 2000)

Mazungu suggested that the ‘land – hungry overcrowded rural people are not being given land’. In fact many people are being made homeless or landless as shown in a letter to the Editor

**Unplanned resettlement could leave many people with no land** by Alex Weir dated 12 August 2000 as shown on Figure 18 below.

![Unplanned resettlement could leave many people with no land](image)

**Figure 20**: The Herald letter to the Editor *Unplanned resettlement could leave many people with no land* dated 12 August 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

Weir (ibid) argued that:

The Government talks in terms of 500,000 families being resettled on 2 million to 5 million hectares - that means on average 4 - 10 hectares per family - a size which can be handled by manual cultivation but which will also yield a good surplus to feed the towns and the export markets.

But then we see on evening TV allocations of 25 and 30 hectares per family. … are not careful then there will be many of the
planned 500,000 families who do not get any land at all or who will get farms much smaller than the average size.’

Weir argued that Land Reform was a political gimmick; a point which was also underscored by some critical readers of *The Herald*. These critical readers said that Land Reform exercise apart from ‘placating the restless and landless black Zimbabweans’ was used at the same time by ZANU (PF) as a card to ‘gaining political mileage’ (Questionnaire 21 November 2011). Other critical readers argued that the way Land Reform was reported in *The Herald* made one to conclude that the aim was to create a ‘land owning elite which sub-let[ted] to landless tenants farmers’ (Weir, ibid).

What is more, instead of readers getting the message that Land Reform exercise was meant to bring land back to its rightful owners and also correcting colonial land imbalances Norbert Mazungu argued in another story *What’s the fate of farm workers, their families on acquired farms?* dated 2 August 2000; that Land Reform was a form of ‘invasion’ because, for him the government was resettling people on the properties which belonged to white commercial farmers.

![Figure 21: The Herald letter to the Editor What’s the fate of farm workers, their families on acquired farms? dated 2 August 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)](image-url)
The writer of the letter **What’s the fate of farm workers, their families on acquired farms?** above saw land as belonging to the whites and not the black majority. In view of this, the reader saw the black majority who are regarded as the ‘rightful owners’ of the land by *The Herald* as ‘black settlers’ who ‘confiscated’ land which rightfully belonged to ‘whites’. While *The Herald* intended readers to to get the message that Land reform exercise was aimed at reducing impoverishment that was necessitated by over a century of land deprivation, Mazungu, on the other hand saw the exercise as a recipe for disaster. Land Reform created disaster in the economy, apart from poverty and starvation (Mazungu ibid). Instead of availing land to the black majority, Mazungu saw Land Reform as an exercise that made many people especially the farm workers landless; a point which was also underscored by Sachikonye (2004) when he said that, ‘Farm workers have not been a major force in land reform, nor have they been beneficiaries … they have been marginalized throughout the reform process in Zimbabwe’ (Sachikonye, 2004:70). Historical imbalances are also perpetuated under black rule. Some critical readers of the stories from *The Herald* felt that they ‘were not being told the truth’ by *The Herald*.

What follows below is an analysis of the impact of the language of reportage of *The Herald* on readers’ understanding of the concept of land.

### 3.9.2 READERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF LAND

The stories or reports in *The Herald* saw land as the basis of people’s survival. This view was supported by Bakare (1993) when he argued that land formed the basis of people’s history, identity and livelihood. Mugabe (2001) further remarked that, ‘For those people who argue that Zimbabwe is being turned into “peasant” land or that Zimbabwe is going where others are coming from, they are actually misguided and misinformed. As they say, “all wealth comes from the land, when the land is not healthy, neither is the nation”

That land does not only refer to agriculture, but also encompasses industries is best captured by Katanda in a letter to *The Herald* Editor dated 14 August 2000. He said that, ‘…without land there is no economy to talk about. For a start, you have to have land on which to construct a building, be it residential or commercial’.
The message that land is the economy and the economy is land in The Herald stories, consequently, relayed to readers such as Katanda (ibid) above that land apart from agriculture included industries or mines. One of the critical readers of The Herald revealed that land is a source of livelihood. He said that, ‘Land is a source and the basis of all livelihoods and as such, should be allocated, accessed and used by all people in a way that is not prejudiced (Lovemore Chitau, 21 November 2011). While some readers managed to reveal that land does not only refer to agriculture, most readers, however, had this limited understanding of the concept of land. This limited understanding of the concept of land was also as a result of the huge reportage in the stories found in The Herald that equated land with farming activities only.

In a letter White farmers’ protest is a wake – up call to black people addressed to The Herald Editor dated 2 August 2000 below, Martin Stobart said that, ‘Here is what I heard while travelling in a commuter omnibus: “These people [the government of Zimbabwe] want to chase away the whites. They are crazy. Who is going to feed us? I can’t even till my own backyard, let alone a farm’.
Figure 23: The Herald letter to the Editor White farmers’ protest is a wake – up call to black people dated 2 August 2000 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

From the observation made by Stobart in his letter to the editor White farmers’ protest is a wake – up call to black people, it can be concluded that most readers viewed land in terms of agriculture. This way of thinking of land in terms of agriculture was also expressed by Ndlovu in a letter to the Editor titled Zimbabweans cannot afford to ignore the agricultural sector dated 25 July 2000. He argued that:

There is one economic fact that the nation is not able to ignore or dispute. This is the role and importance of agriculture to the economy. Like it or not, Zimbabwe has an economy which is heavily dependent upon agriculture, through exports for a major portion of the foreign currency earnings.
In an attempt to justify why Land Reform was necessary, Ndlovu (ibid) highlighted that land should be taken away from whites and given to the black majority for agricultural purposes. He saw agriculture as the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy. What is therefore clear from the quotation above is that most readers who saw agriculture as the backbone of the economy were unconsciously preaching the gospel that land is agriculture as defined to them by *The Herald*.

That through the language of reportage of land by *The Herald*, many readers were misled into thinking of land as farming only, was also evident in a letter *Would rather get a job in town and live comfortably* by a ‘Frustrated’ reader below dated 18 August 2000.
The “Frustrated” reader said that:

This is probably the worst time to attempt land redistribution. Anyone who is unemployed or struggling to survive … will be content just to put food on the table. So farming seems like an attractive option, although when the economy recovers many of those on them would probably rather have a job in town and live in a comfortable home.

The quotation above showed a limited understanding of the definition of land by readers possibly because of the limited understanding or definition of the concept by The Herald in its stories. Below is an analysis of the impact of the language used by The Herald in reporting on the issue of land and compensation.

3.9.3 LAND AND COMPENSATION: READERS’ PERSPECTIVES

With regards to the issue of compensation, The Herald through its various reports as shown above attempted to inform its readers that compensation was only going to be paid for the infrastructure and not the land. Below is an analysis of the impact of The Herald stories on readers understanding of the whole issue of compensation. Most critical readers’ of The Herald newspaper were of the view that the displaced white commercial farmers were supposed to be
compensated. One notable reading was that, ‘Ideally, the erstwhile colonizers and their
descendants should be compensated for the developments on the land and not necessarily the
land itself’ (Lorraine Arimoso, 23 November 2011)

While the intention of The Herald in most cases was to convince readers that compensation
should be paid for the infrastructure only and not for the soil, other critical readers as
exemplified by Ruzha (ibid) were of the view that land should be taken without paying any
compensation. Ruzha in a letter Let land be redistributed to the land – hungry people dated
20 July 2000 above said that, ‘We cannot wait for donors funds to buy Zimbabwean land to
resettle the landless. No’. While, Ruzha (ibid) is reiterating the point that resettlement or Land
Reform should not be done on a willing buyer or willing seller approach, he is however not clear
as to whether compensation should not paid at all or should be paid for the infrastructure only.

The point is that, the language that Ruzha (ibid) displayed, concurred to a greater extent, with the
reportage made on the issue of compensation by The Herald, in most instances. While the
language of reportage used by The Herald endeavoured to create a story that compensation
should be paid to white commercial farmers only for the infrastructure, other readers moved out
of this frame and created their own frames. These frames were in opposition to the ones created
by the newspaper. In a letter to the Editor below dated 17 August 2000 headlined No standards
required to restore land, dignity to the African people Rushwaya said that compensation
should not be paid at all in any form or for anything by the Zimbabwean government. Rushwaya
(ibid) argued that:

Land and its natural resources [minerals, flora and fauna, etc] are
nature given to a particular country and people for their own use…. commercial farmers, found our forefathers well settled on the said
same farms they [whites] now wish to call their commercial owned
farms and removed through brutal use of arms and took away the
land
Figure 26: The Herald letter to the Editor No standards required to restore land, dignity to the African people dated 17 August 2000. (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

The message being put across by Rushwaya in the quotation above is that the British settlers are the ones who disturbed the native people who were living peacefully in their land, and this land rightfully or legally belonged to them. In this respect, if compensation was to be paid, the British were supposed to be the first to pay compensation because they are the ones who first displaced the native people, during colonialism, from their land, not peacefully but through brutal force. In view of this, the reader or writer of the story No standards required to restore land, dignity to the African people is therefore of the view that the reports made by The Herald in its coverage of the issue of compensation are not comprehensive, hence the oppositional readings being displayed above.
Ultimately Rushwaya the writer of the story No standards required to restore land, dignity to the African people (The Herald, 17 August 2000) avered that:

… [Zimbabweans] do not need and shall not require any conditions whatsoever to restore the land and dignity to the Africans’. Thus, ‘the rule of law … commercial farmers’ union use upon our forefathers will equally be used to redress the situation. No standards should be prescribed at all.

The message implied is that the British settlers did not compensate for the ‘little’ huts or ‘fewer’ cows that the Native people lost during colonialism (which is the rule they applied) and similarly no compensation should be paid for the soil which already belonged to Africans and the infrastructure which is similar to the ‘huts’ and ‘cows’ they did not compensate during colonialism. In other words, what goes around always come around.

The last section now focuses on the readers understanding of the concept of land and distribution after being exposed to The Herald.

3.9.4 READERS’ UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE OF LAND AND DISTRIBUTION

According to The Herald land redistribution exercise was meant to decongest the congested communal areas and also to give land to the landless black majority. Land according to the newspaper was going to be distributed in a just and equitable manner with the aim of improving the standards of living of the black majority. Below is an analysis how this language impacted on the readers understanding of the concept of land and distribution.

Critical readers of The Herald revealed that the aim of Land Reform was to distribute land in a free and fair manner irregardless of political affiliations of individuals or regardless of irregardless of race. These responses revealed that audiences got most of the readings as intended by The Herald. However, The Herald letter to the Editor dated 12 August 2000 headlined ‘Unplanned resettlement could leave many people with no land’ above by Alex Weir, questioned firstly what constituted a just and fair distribution and secondly whether land redistribution implied displacing many black people from their lands and replacing them with very few. Weir said that, ‘justice, equity, socialism and left wing politics are not about…’ displacing so many people and replacing with a few. This will be like ‘creating a one more land owning elite which sub – lets to landless tenant farmers’. Thus, while The Herald sought to fix
the idea that Land Reform was going to address colonial land imbalances, some readers like Weir above saw land redistribution exercise as a programme meant to benefit just a few – the elite. This point is underpinned by Chinodya (2004) who said that, ‘land was given to people who had “trooped from towns, greedily looking for a patch of land to claim as their own [And] many of these people did not have a clue about farming”’. What is more, there were some inequalities amongst the beneficiaries: ‘The once flourishing farmhouses and barns were now for the ‘chefs’ who drove Mercedes Benzes and Pajeros… [And] some were interested in amassing farm after farm (Chinodya ibid: 27). The excerpt above revealed that some of the readers believed that land was distributed unfairly amongst the people and it was the elite class that benefitted a lot in the process. In respect of the unfair distribution of land in the ground, readers came up with new frames of describing land distribution other than the one offered by The Herald. Matambo wrote a letter to the Editor dated 1 August 2000 titled Is it war vets or State responsible for land redistribution? as shown below.

Figure 27: The Herald letter to the Editor Is it war vets or State responsible for land redistribution? dated 1 August 2000. (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)
While *The Herald* did not offer to explain clearly who was going to be responsible for the distribution of land so as to ensure fair and just allocations, the readers interrogated the language of reportage by creating their own frames. The writer of the letter above acknowledged the importance of the redistribution exercise to the entire nation, but went on to look for the unsaid. The unsaid, according to the writer was that there was no mention of who really was responsible for allocating land to the landless majority. According to the Matambo, the writer of the story *Is it war vets or State responsible for land redistribution?* land was only going to be distributed fairly if the war veterans were excluded in the allocation exercise. While the reader managed to highlight what is not said in the frames of *The Herald* regarding the people who should be involved in the distribution exercise other than the war veterans; the reader however failed to indicate the ideal people or individuals who should be involved in distributing land ‘fairly’. This confirmed what Derrida in Caputo (1997: 43) said about meanings in frames. He said that, ‘With the question of meaning there is, therefore, always a difference, an occurrence of deference’.

The aim of the language of reportage of *The Herald* in relation to land distribution was to make readers think that excess land was going to be taken away from white commercial farmers and apportioned to the black majority. However, as shown above, the words black majority were ideological in that the government through *The Herald* wanted to persuade or coerce people into thinking that the reform covered every individual. However, some readers subverted this dominant reading by highlighting that the ‘black majority’ that was being referred to were actually a ‘New land owning elite’. This was shown in the letter to the editor below titled **Programme to create new land owning elite**. Creation of a new elite class, according to Alex Weir was due to the war veterans’ involvement in the distribution process. Distribution ended up being done along party lines and this culminated in some senior government officials acquiring many farms, and this prompted the government to come out in *The Herald* story **Multiple farm owners risk jail: Mutasa** dated 12 September 2005 cautioning people who held many farms that they risked loosing them and going to jail. This was underscored by Alex Weir in a letter to the Editor **Programme to create new land owning elite** dated 16 August 2000.
That land redistribution exercise was going to ‘create a new land owning elite’ was further emphasised by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (ibid). They said that within the blacks that were elected after independence there arose some elite minority classes which took the place of the erstwhile colonial white classes in exploiting its comrades. Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004) therefore argued that the idea of restructuring the entire society was thrown into the dustbins of history. While most people were made to think that poverty was mainly due to colonial land imbalances (though it is a fact) the same was also true in post colonial Zimbabwe. ZANU (PF) elite class took the same position and stance, as of the colonial masters, in exploiting the majority of Zimbabweans through ownership of several farms. Consequently, multiple farm ownership culminated in hunger, food shortages, loss of exports, acute poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and loss of production according to Sachikonye in Barry (2004: 69) and Goebel (2005: 7).

Having looked at the language of reportage of land in The Herald newspaper the following sections focuses on the reportage of land in Kwayedza newspaper – another State owned newspaper. News in Kwayedza newspaper is delivered or presented to readers in Shona language. However, the main objective of the following sections is to find out whether the use of a different language in Kwayedza newspaper (Shona language) when compared with The Herald newspaper which packages its news in English language has a bearing in the reportage or readers understanding of the entire issue of land. Put differently, the aim is to find out whether language
expressions used by Kwayedza newspaper helped in creating its own identity of informing readers effectively about Land Reform when compared with The Herald newspaper.

3.10 FRAMING OF LAND AND HISTORY IN KWAYEDZA NEWSPAPER STORIES

As has been stated above; a frame well used can lead readers to a better understanding of an issue or controversial issue like the Land Reform exercise in Zimbabwe. What follows is an analysis of the content of four stories which were selected in Kwayedza newspaper regarding the concept of Land and History. The centre of attention will be on how Kwayedza newspaper reporters used language in order to communicate to readers certain meanings regarding land. In other words, an analysis will be made on how Kwayedza newspaper structures its language in order to communicate its preferred readings to readers. Below is an analysis of the story Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu by a Kwayedza reporter dated Zvita 21 – Zvita 27 2001.

Figure 29: Kwayedza story Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu dated Zvita 21 – Zvita 27 2001(Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)
3.10.1 PREFERRED READINGS

In the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu*, Kwayedza enlisted the voice of opinion makers and religious community leaders to support the newspapers’ line of thought of the need for land to be redistributed to the needy and landless people. Three reasons for carrying out Land Reform were given in the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* (Churches say land should be given to people) which appeared on page 2 of *Kwayedza* newspaper dated Zvita 21 – Zvita 27 (December 21 – December 27) 2001 and written by a *Kwayedza* reporter. The first reason for carrying out Land Reform was to grant farming land to people who had no land. The reporter said that, ‘*Vatungamiriri vemachechi vakatsigira zvizere kuwaniswa minda kwevanhu vanga vasina ...* ’ (Church leaders backed fully the distribution of land to landless people…). That Land Reform exercise was meant to give land to landless people was underscored by the Zimbabwe Liberation Platform in Barry (2004: 40) when they said that, ‘surely the government would [have been] criticized if it [had] failed to distribute land to the landless Zimbabweans’

By allocating land to landless people through Land Reform the government, according to the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* (Churches say land should be given to people), wanted to settle the land issue once and for all. The Anglican Bishop Sebastian Bakare was quoted in the story saying that, ‘*Tiri kufara kuona nyaya yevhu yave kuzogadziriswa zvachose...* ’ (We are happy to see the issue of land being resolved once and for all…). The message that the story wanted to convey to readers was that the native people of Zimbabwe have endured untold sufferings since colonialism when their land was taken away from them by the colonisers.

The notion, put forth in the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* (Churches say land should be given to people), that the loss of land by the natives during colonialism culminated in untold suffering is well captured by Thomas Mapfumo in his song titled *Kuyaura Kweasina Musha* (the distress of the displaced) (1974). Mapfumo (ibid) expressed grief on the untold suffering that was inflicted on the native people during colonialism when they were deprived of their land through the lyrics, ‘*Vakuru vepano varipi vatungamirira. Harahwa dzekuno dziripi dztipa makano. Kutipa makano tione kutema mhandu. Kuyaura kweasina musha iwe*’ (Fathers and mothers of this place come and lead us. The old men of this place should
give us axes to slaughter enemies; the distress of the displaced). The implied message is that the native people should fight the colonizers who made them landless. It is this deprivation which culminated in distress or untold sufferings within the native people of Zimbabwe.

The third reason for carrying out Land Reform, as promulgated in the story **Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu**, was to return land to its rightful owners - the native people of Zimbabwe. This objective is captured in another **Kwayedza** story **Ivhu ndere vatema** dated 12 December 2008 and which is shown below.

![Figure 30: Kwayedza story Ivhu ndere vatema dated 12 December 2008 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)](image)

Tambaoga in one of his songs or jingles on Land Reform on his 2002 album **National Service** emphasized as well the thought that Land Reform exercise was driven by the need to give land back to its rightful to owners. He said that, ‘**Ivhu iri ramunoona machinda ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe**’ (This land that you see comrades is what is known as Zimbabwe) (National Service
album, 2002). The reading preferred is that Zimbabwean land belongs to the native people of Zimbabwe. In other words, it is through possessing land that the native people of Zimbabwe were going to be identified as Zimbabweans or be seen as the real citizens of Zimbabwe. Land was therefore their (the native peoples’) birthright (Bakare 1993).

Still on the same issue of land and history; Kwayedza newspaper carried a story on page 2 of its issue dated Mbudzi 2 – Mbudzi 8 2001 (November 2 – November 8 2001) which was written by a Kwayedza reporter with the headline Kutora mapurazi kutsiva – Cde Mudenge (Taking land is avenging - Cde Mudenge) as shown below.

The story Kutora mapurazi kutsiva – Cde Mudenge put forth the notion that Land Reform was carried out by the government of ZANU (PF) because it wanted to address unacceptable land disparities between blacks and whites. These land disparities were as a result of the land grabs which were instigated during colonialism, thus, leaving most of black families landless or
living in the created reserves. With regards to the nature of the reserves, Moyo and Matondi (2008:60) professed that:

The majority of the rural people [lived] in environmentally degraded and crowded areas. In addition to that, these reserves were not only confined to the poorest land, but the size of land available to individual households was meager. What is more, many white settlers occupied large tracts of land with soils.

The message connoted by the quotation above is that the British amassed large tracts of fertile lands during colonialism and the native people were allocated small pieces of unproductive lands. The need to reclaim the lost land was therefore the driving force behind the wars of liberation which were fought as portrayed in Kwayedza story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE dated Kubvumbi 20 - Kubvumbi 26 2001 below. In the story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE, the security forces are foregrounded as the ultimate defenders of the land revolution. The picture shows them blowing their instruments in a gesture that can be interpreted as a celebration of the Land Reform. The title MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE which seems to be suggesting that Britain should not meddle in the Land Reform revealed that the West is the primary audience of the story. The reporter quoted President Mugabe in the story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE above saying that, ‘ivhu inhaka yemadzibaba edu’ (Land is our heritage). Land, being one of Zimbabwe’s heritages, should therefore be in the hands of Zimbabweans, who happens to be the rightful heirs. What is more, the story quoted President Mugabe saying that, ‘Ndizvozvatakawana pakurwira rusununguko’ (land is what we got after fighting the liberation struggle). So the dominant message of the story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE is that Land Reform exercise was the root of the wars of liberation during colonial and post – colonial periods. This point was avowed by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004: 40) when they said that, ‘the liberation war was fought over land violently seized by white colonialists’.
Figure 32: Kwayedza story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE dated Kubvumbi 20 - Kubvumbi 26 2001 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)
That land was violently seized and was therefore supposed to be given back to its rightful owners is captured in the *Kwayedza* story *Munhu wose ngaawaniswe pokugara- Gavhuna* below.

![Image of newspaper article](image)

**Figure 33:** *Kwayedza* story *Munhu wose ngaawaniswe pokugara- Gavhuna* dated Chivabvu 18 - Chivabvu 24 2001 (Retrieved from The Herald Library by Washington Mushore on 20 November 2011)

That the intent of the wars of liberation was to return land to its rightful owners – the black majority, among other things, was underpinned in the *Kwayedza* story above dated Chivabvu 18 - Chivabvu 24 2001 (May 18 – May 24 2001) headlined *Munhu wose ngaawaniswe pokugara- Gavhuna* (All people should be availed land to live on - Governor). Land Reform was also carried out because the government wanted to avail some pieces of farming lands to both urbanites and rural peasants who had no land to farm or to build houses. In addition, Land Reform was not only meant to distribute land to landless Zimbabweans but fertile lands to the landless Zimbabweans. *Kwayedza* revealed this idea in its story *Muchena anotsigira chirongwa chevhu* dated Chivabvu 18- Chivabvu 24 2001. The story revealed that Land Reform exercise was carried out in order to give back fertile pieces of land to black people.
In the story Muchena anotsigira chirongwa chevhu above, Kwayedza enlisted the voice of a white farmer who supported the Land Reform. Implied is the perspective that the Land Reform was not targeted as revenge against whites. Further, even whites who saw and supported The Land Reform were welcome. After all, some whites actually supported the liberation struggle. Some of these white heroes are buried at the National Heroes Acre. All these signifiers are implied rather than directly addressed to the reader of the story Muchena anotsigira chirongwa chevhu. The Kwayedza reporter quoted Angus Guthrie, a white commercial farmer, in the story Muchena anotsigira chirongwa chevhu (White person supports land reform programme) saying that fertile lands should be availed to black majority. Guthrie said that, ‘kwenguva yakareba vatema vainge vasina minda yakatsarukana yekuti varime’ (For a very long time blacks/native people did not have fertile lands to till). Land Reform exercise was accordingly not meant to do harm to white commercial farmers, as some people would like to think, and as shown in the Kwayedza story Muchena okanganisa varimi vakagariswa patsva dated Mbudzi 14 2006 but to bring land abandoned or underutilized to full production.
Moyana (1984, 24) said that Zimbabwe and Britain agreed at Lancaster House conference on a three year programme with the aim of acquiring 1.1 million hectares of land on which would be settled some 18 000 families at a cost of $60 million. One of the specific objectives of the Land Reform programme was therefore ‘to bring abandoned or underutilized land into full production as one facet of implementing an equitable policy of land redistribution’ (Moyana, ibid).

Having looked at some of the reasons for carrying out Land Reform the following section critically analyses the language used in covering land and history in the stories cited above.

3.11 DECONSTRUCTING THE LANGUAGE OF LAND AND HISTORY

In an attempt to relay or communicate their dominant or preferred readings to readers regarding land and history Kwayedza reporters carefully chose specific or certain words and word
combinations. Preferred readings are the dominant interpretations that newspaper stories seek to convey to its readers. In other words, these are the meanings that the newspaper reporters want readers to understand and accept (Hall, 1975). The message the stories Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu, Kutora mapurazi - Mudenge, MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE, to mention but just three, wanted to put across to readers was that land should be given mainly to black people because they had been for a very long time deprived of it. Land was inequitably distributed between whites and blacks. Consequently, one of the reasons for Land Reform was to give land to kvene varo (to its rightful people).

In other words, Land Reform was not about ‘redistributing’ land but it is about ‘returning’ land to its rightful owners. The story Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu above put forth this idea by quoting the Anglican church Bishop Sebastian Bakare saying that, ‘vamwe vanhu vanotaura nezvekugoverwa kwevanhu minda asi ini ndinoda kutaura nezvekudzorerwa kwevhu kvene varo...” (Some people talk of redistribution of land but personally I talk of returning of land to its rightful owners). The syntax is meant to mould into the minds and herats of readers the idea that Land Reform was not carried out to redistribute land but to give back land to its rightful owners. The syntax; vamwe vanhu vanotaura nezvekugoverwa kwevanhu minda asi ini ndinoda kutaura nezvekudzorerwa kwevhu kvene varo... (Some people talk of redistribution of land but personally I talk of returning of land to its rightful owners); was ideological in the sense that it only located skewed distribution of land as existing between whites and blacks only yet in reality some blacks had and continued to have huge tracts of land when compared with other blacks or whites. Again, the message that land redistribution was about taking away excess land from whites only was carefully constructed through the inclusion of the syntax ‘returning land to its rightful owners’. The syntax returning land to its rightful owners creates binaries (whites versus blacks) and its intent was to pass on to readers the message that land inequalities were not between the native people but between two different races – black and white or between the colonized and the colonizer. The British, who happen to be the colonizers, were, thus holding on to land which did not belong to them. Ultimately Land Reform was conducted with the sole aim of taking land away from the British and giving it back to the native people of Zimbabwe. This view is supported by Lipton in Antonie (2010:70) who states that, ‘There was a pattern of land
alienation [in Africa], evident in the fact that, in 1970, in Zimbabwe, 6,400 white farmers owned almost half the land, while millions of blacks were confined by law to the rest.’

Headlines in newspapers occupy a prominent position by summarizing the most important news for the day, which facilitates the reader with quick reading and comprehension. From the headline Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu (Churches say land should be given to people) one of the reasons for carrying out Land Reform was therefore to give land to landless people. This idea is accentuated by Moyo and Matondi (2008) who say that during colonialism there were some gross imbalances in the distribution of land between whites and blacks. The inclusion of the word vemachechi (churches) is also ideological in the sense that it was meant to providing religious authority. This was a strategy to appeal to authoritative sources. Thus, the objective of the heading Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu was to underscore the ideology that Land Reform was a restorative justice exercise meant to bring back justice in the distribution of land and was therefore guided by principles of love and sincerity to the black majority in as far as land distribution was concerned. Consequently, Land Reform according to the Anglican church; was a divine exercise ordained by God and as such which should not be questioned by anyone. For God in His infinite love, according to Bakare (1993), gave each and every race land. Thus, in the present day Zimbabwe land belongs to the native people of Zimbabwe and should therefore be given back to them. It is their inheritance or heritage.

Although the intention of Kwayedza stories cited above was to transmit to readers the above mentioned readings, other several meanings forced their way out of these intended meanings. The intention of the first meaning which appeared to be the ‘preferred reading’ of the message was to make readers believe that Land Reform exercise was an impartial exercise ordained by God. However, Fuery and Fuery (2003:3) say that, ‘Within each [story] there are [words] that contest the [story] itself. Not only is the [reader] struggling against the dominance of the [preferred readings] but the [readers] are struggling against other [meanings]’. In view of the above, it can be argued that although the Kwayedza reporters of the stories cited above made use of national or collective language which was aimed at portraying Land Reform as an exercise which was carried out in order to return land to its rightful owners - the people – the stories omitted quite a number of information. The inclusion of the word people was meant to communicate to potential readers the message that all Zimbabweans were going to benefit from
the Land Reform exercise. This perspective was very problematic in that it did not clearly reveal who these *people* were.

The use of the words *vemachechi* (churches) and *kuvanhu* (people) were meant to narrow down the meanings of Land Reform. However, this discourse or these words *vemachechi* (churches) and *kuvanhu* (people) hid the real intentions of the exercise. Outwardly they project the message of collective gains but inside the process was meant to benefit only a small class – the elite. That Land Reform exercise benefited a small class was enunciated by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (in Barry 2004) when they said that, ‘Within the blacks that were elected after independence there arose some elite minority classes which took the place of the erstwhile colonial white classes in exploiting its comrades’. The interests of the elite assume public significance. The word *people* seek to project Land Reform as a national cause. However, according to Fuery and Fuery (ibid) the word refuses to be narrowed down to referring to the entire nation.

In reality; the native people did not all benefit and so the word *people* was not denoting the entire nation but something else. The story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* failed to really show or describe the human beings who were denoted by the linguistic sign *people*. In such instances readers create their own frames. One of the frames was that the word *people* referred to staunch ZANU (PF) supporters as propounded by one critical reader of *Kwayedza* newspaper, who said that Land Reform exercise benefited mostly staunch ZANU (PF) supporters who amassed large tracts of fertile lands. On the issue or aspect of land and distribution, Manzungu in Barry (2004) and Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004) were of the conviction that the government of ZANU (PF) hid behind the concept of ‘nationalism’ yet in reality it was only a minority (black elites) who and continued to benefit on land redistribution exercise. The dominant message in the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* was therefore that Land Reform exercise was meant to re – address land disparities emanating from colonialism. This story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* portrayed the government of ZANU (PF) as pursuing a noble cause as underscored by Comrade Robert Mugabe (2001) when he asked his party members whether they were telling the electorate, that it was their party, which had brought land back; this reading is in constant struggle with the other readings that are emanating within the stories above. So, if it is ZANU (PF) party which had brought land back as
claimed by President Robert Mugabe (2001) then the word *people* could be referring to people affiliated to the political party. That could possibly be the raison d'être why Mutasa (2005) through *Sekai* – a character in the novel *Sekai Minda Tave Nayo* (2005: 26) advised those in charge of land redistribution exercise to be fair when she said that, ‘*Musapa minda muchitarira bato rake*’ (Do not give land according to political affiliation). The assumption here was that during colonialism almost all black Africans were deprived of their land and they ‘all’ united against the removal of the common enemy (the white settlers) with the intention of restoring their land. That all black Zimbabweans were supposed to be equally given land also implied that land redistribution exercise was expected to cut across race, class, gender and ethnic lines/divide.

While the reporter in the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* included the word *Vemachechi* (Churches) in order to portray Land Reform as a noble and divine activity ordained by God, the meanings of the word *Vemachechi* however refused to be tamed or limited to nobility or divinity. In other words, the linguistic sign *Vemachechi* (churches) is not stable. It has its own internal instabilities capable of moving the objective subject or preferred meaning out of position, causing all reassuring certainties and univocalities to vacillate (Bakhtin in Ponzio 1993: 120). By including the word *Vemachechi* in the headline *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu* the aim of *Kwayedza* was to project Land Reform exercise as a righteous thing that was meant to distribute land fairly amongst people whereas in reality this did not happen. In other words, the sign *Vemachechi* concealed the facts that land was not distributed to all landless people and it was not even distributed fairly among people of the same race. The inclusion of the word *Vemachechi* (churches) therefore questioned the manner in which land was acquired and distributed. Churches are guided by principles of justice and equality. They are also sources of validating authoritative views. All races – black, whites and coloureds are equal before God and as such land was supposed to be distributed fairly between blacks and whites. There were white people who were born and bred in Zimbabwe and who also did not have land. Accordingly land redistribution exercise was supposed to benefit them as well.

Blacks and whites are all equal before God and if Land Reform exercise was guided by the same principles of love and sincerity, this was hypothetical or expected to be reflected in the way land was distributed. Perhaps the latter point was the rationale behind Tambaoga’s lyrics *Ivhu iri ramunoona machinda ndiro rinonzi Zimbabwe* (The land that you see comrades is what is known
as Zimbabwe). The signified message was that as long as an individual was born and bred in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwean by birth) then that individual, despite his or her race, gender, class or ethnicity had the right to own land. Distribution was therefore expected to be gender, race, class and ethnicity ‘blind’.

However from the *Kwayedza* stories analysed above the term or linguistic sign *people* referred not only to a black individual (the native person) but to a native individual belonging to a certain political party and class within those party structures. Some blacks who happen to be affiliated to some other political parties and of certain ‘inferior social classes’ as well as white or coloured people are out of the definition or are not regarded or classed here as *people*. This ultimately defeats the whole idea of the principles of fairness, love and sincerity which should guide the whole exercise of Land Reform if it was God ordained. The use of the word *vasina minda* (without land) sought to justify Land Reform. However, the words *vasina minda* also limit readers understanding in the sense that they do not clearly state whether the beneficiaries amongst the black people are only those who do not have a piece of land, be it in the so – called reserves or not.

It is, however, acknowledged that the liberation struggle was fought in order to restore land to the native African people. The native people have been pushed to areas with poor soils. As such Land Reform was not only supposed to benefit people without land as reported in *Kwayedza* story headlined *Vatungamiriri vemachechi vakatsigira zvizere kuwaniswa minda kwevanhu vanga vasina …*’ (Church leaders backed the distribution of land to landless people…) but every black person living in the so called or created reserves. The *Kwayedza* stories cited above did not articulately demonstrate whether Land Reform was meant to resettling people already living in the reserves or people who were born after the creation of these reserves. History however revealed that the native people who have been displaced from their fertile lands and placed in the reserves engaged themselves in the war of liberation. Fertile lands were one of the things that were supposed to be liberated and be redistributed amongst all native people. This means that people who had been settled in the so called reserves were supposed to be resettled in areas with fertile lands as well.

Although a church is a place guided by principles of justice, love and care; the word *Vemachechi* due to its internal instabilities also ‘fought’ the dominant reading that the story *Vemachechi*
vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu intended to relay to readers regarding ZANU (PF) vis a vis Land Reform. ZANU (PF) wanted to be seen as a political party that had brought land back. However the same church in the Kwayedza story Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe vanhu above said that Imi (Cde Mugabe) magara matipa zvanga zviri zvedu kare (Your excellence, Cde Mugabe you gave us what already belonged to us). In other words; the church was saying that instead of the government of ZANU (PF) to clamor that it did a fine job it should understand that it only brought back land which in the eyes of the church already belonged to the people of Zimbabwe. Sooner or later; with or without ZANU (PF) land was ‘one day’ going to be repossessed by its rightful owners. This argument was put forth by Tomu Zhuwawo (a critical reader of the Kwayedza newspaper) on 20 December 2011. The reading above from Tomu Zhuwayo portrayed that the potential meanings of words or languages used in a story can not be restricted but they (the dominant meanings or frames of stories) are also fought within the same stories by other potential readings that can emanate from the same linguistic signs (Fuery and Fuery 2003).

3.12 LAND CONCEPT IN KWAYEDZA NEWSPAPER

That land referred to agriculture was conveyed through the words chechi dzaitsigira zvizere chirongwa cheHurumende chokupa vanhu vanga vasina pokurima munda (Churches strongly supported Government’s efforts of giving people land to farm or plough). The inclusion of the word munda (farm/plough) denotes conduction of agricultural activities. That Land Reform was about giving land to landless people to farm/plough or conduct agricultural activities was underscored by Mungoshi (1975:39) in his novel Waiting for the Rain where he compared rural land with commercial farm land by saying that:

The sudden transition from the rolling ranches of Hampshire Estates with their tall dry grass and the fertile soil under that grass, into 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….

The significance of the quotation above is that it helps in portraying that during colonialism Africans were relegated to areas with poor soils were nothing could be ploughed while the colonizers took vast pieces of fertile lands, which in most cases, they could not even plough as connoted by the tall dry grass and the fertile soils under that grass. Dry grass implied lack of production or land utilization. The so called reserves or Tribal Trust Lands had poor weather
conditions, to mention but a few. Mungoshi (ibid) described these Tribal Trust Lands as ‘dead landscapes…except for the heat…’ In these Tribal Trust Lands Africans were impoverished. Mungoshi underscored the above mentioned point further when he said that Tribal Trust Lands were ‘full of lifeless objects’ (1975:40) and indeed they were a ‘dead country’ (ibid: 42). What is apparent in the language used by Mungoshi (ibid) in describing land is the need to resettle Africans to areas with fertile soils if their lives were to improve for the better as suggested by the title of his book Waiting for the Rain. The linguistic sign Rain in the title Waiting for the Rain was possibly symbolizing the resettlement programmes which the Nationalist government soon embarked on after independence in 1980 and the Land Reform programme dubbed Third Chimurenga which marked the ‘finality’ to the issue of land according to the government of ZANU (PF). That could possibly be the other reason why the church through the Kwayedza story Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu above saw land as agriculture as further denoted by the words kuwaniswa minda kwevanhu vanga vasina pasi pechirongwa che A2 (Availing farming/agricultural land to landless people under A2 scheme). A2 scheme was the commercial model under Land Reform programme. Commercial land implied land for conducting agricultural or farming activities only and not mining activities. It is against this background that one can argue that Kwayedza newspaper saw land as agriculture. Both the church in the story Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu and Kwayedza newspaper revealed or displayed a limited understanding of the concept of land.

That land stood for agriculture only is further revealed in the Kwayedza story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE dated Kubvumbi 20 – Kubvumbi 26 2001 (April 20 – April 26 2001), which described Land Reform as an exercise meant to give land to Zimbabwean populace to plough or farm. In the story, President Robert Mugabe saw land as agriculture when he said that kupihwa kwevanhu minda (the apportionment of farming lands to people). The word minda (lands) signifies farming or agricultural activities. In Zimbabwe munda (farmland) is a place or an area or a space for conducting agricultural activities such as ploughing maize or cash crops or raring animals. The definition of land above which the President emphasised and was further reproduced by the Kwayedza newspaper is in contradistinction to the broader concept of land. Mugabe once defined land as the economy and the economy as land (2001). Implied was that land represented both the flora and fauna since both contribute to the countries economic growth or decline hence owning them is therefore the
route to prosperity (Mugabe 2001). In other words, Mungoshi’s understanding of land is broader than that of the Kwayedza.

However, a shift in the language used in defining the concept of land is evident in two Kwayedza newspaper stories headlined Muchena anotsigira chirongwa chevhu and Munhu wose ngaawaniswe pokugara – Gavhuna respectively. In the former story, land is defined subtly as an arena for resettling people. Thus, land is an arena or space where resettled people can erect or construct structures to live in or spaces where they can conduct several activities. In the latter story; land is clearly defined as an arena for conducting farming activities and for allocating residential stands especially to urbanites. This concept of land is in line with the thinking of Muchuri (2004:9) who saw hotels, animals, fruits, all business and buildings as land. The significance of this broader understanding or definition of land is that it revealed that the government’s call for the indigenization of factories or industries is or was within the confines of land. This further makes it crystal clear what Mugabe (2001) meant when he said that ‘Land is the economy and the economy is land’

3.13 LANGUAGE OF LAND AND COMPENSATION IN KWAYEDZA NEWSPAPER

The aim of this section is to analyzing the language used in discussing the issue of land and compensation in the Kwayedza newspaper stories. In the story titled Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu (Churches say land should be given to people) the reporter, quoting the Anglican Church Bishop Sebastian Bakare, said that, vanwe vanhu vanotaura nezvekugoverwa kwevanhu minda asi ini ndinoda kutaura nezvekudzoserwa kwevhu kuvene varo (Some people talk of land redistribution but I talk of the return of land to its rightful owners). The Bishop went on to say that, ‘Matipa zvagara zvirí zvedu kare’ (You gave us [land] that already belonged to us). The message implied by the words above is that compensation should not be paid at all. The message suggested by the syntax Matipa zvagara zvirí zvedu kare’ (You gave us [land] that already belonged to us) is that the native people were not supposed in any way to pay compensation because the land they repossessed was rightfully theirs or belonged to them. The other meaning connoted by the syntax above is that the native people were not going to pay any money on the land that they repossessed because this land was stolen from them by the British or the white commercial farmers during colonialism. Consequently, if an individual recover his or her stolen possession the only prudent thing is for that individual to grab the item first and then
secondly decide on whether to make the thief or person pay for stealing the item and not vice-versa.

Similarly, the native people were therefore not entitled to pay compensation at all to the thief (the British settlers) who took their fertile lands during colonialism without paying any compensation to them. The Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in Barry (2004: 40) underscored the argument above when they said that, ‘After all, the liberation war was fought over land violently seized by white colonialists who had paid no compensation’. On yet another level, if compensation was paid during colonialism by the colonizers the Anglican Bishop Sebastian Bakare was not therefore going to say that *matipa zvagara zviri zvedu kare* because accepting compensation meant that the landowner or rightful owner has sold or given away or transferred ownership or has entered in a contract with the buyer. However, during colonialism the native people were deprived of their land by force and trickery (Woddis 1960) and no compensation was paid to them. In view of the above argument, it can possibly be argued that it is the British who should compensate the 100 plus years that they deprived the native people of their land and profits or benefits which culminated in untold sufferings. During these years the native people endured untold sufferings while the settlers enjoyed the fruits of the land they stole.

That compensation should not be paid is also evident in the *Kwayedza* story headlined **Kutora mapurazi kutsiva- Cde Mudenge**. The minister said that, ‘…*vanhu vatema ndivo vene vevhu racho sezvo vakabvutirwa ivhu nevachena avo varikuramba kuti rigoverwe* (Black people are the rightful owners of this land that was grabbed by whites who are now refusing to let it [land] redistributed). The intended message or reading is that compensation will not be paid at all. The key word regarding the issue of not going to pay compensation to white commercial farmers is *vakabvutirwa* (their land was grabbed). The word *grabbed* is synonymous with ‘stolen’ or ‘seized by force’. So if land was ‘stolen’ or ‘seized by force’ during colonialism what it means then is that nothing was paid to the native people. A thief does not pay anything. If nothing was paid and the stolen land was later discovered and acquired or found; then the only prudent thing that the native people could do was to take it [the land] back without paying any compensation. That could be the possible reason why comrade Mudenge used the word *kutsiva* (avenging) to describe Land Reform exercise. On the other hand, comrade Mudenge said that compensation will only be paid after Britain releases funds towards the cause. The suggested message was that
no compensation was going to be paid by the Zimbabwean government or from the coffers or treasury of the government.

Having looked at the language of land and compensation, the next section focuses on the theme on land and distribution.

3.14 FRAMING OF LAND AND DISTRIBUTION IN KWAYEDZA NEWSPAPER

With regards to the issue of land and distribution the preferred readings were that land was going to be distributed to all people fairly. Below are some of the preferred readings from selected Kwayedza newspaper stories.

3.14.1 PREFERRED READINGS

In the Kwayedza story dated 21 – 26 December by a Kwayedza reporter headlined Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu the use of the word kuvanhu (to people) suggests that land was going to be distributed to all people. That land was going to be distributed to all people was further portrayed in the Kwayedza story dated 2 – 8 November 2001 headlined Kutora mapurazi kutsiva – Cde Mudenge. The reporter quoted the Minister saying that land was going to be distributed to its rightful owners – the black majority. What is more, in a story by another Kwayedza reporter headlined MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRIRI WENYIKA KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE dated 20 – 26 April 2001 which appeared on page 7; land was going to be distributed fairly to all families or children of Zimbabwe so that there was not going to be any disgruntlement amongst them.

A shift in the manner land was going to be distributed is reflected in the Kwayedza newspaper story Muchena anotsigira chirongwa chevhu in which a white farmer in Mashonaland Central was quoted saying that, ‘land should be availed for resettlement purposes to most black families’. The message that the story wanted to convey to readers was that although land was going to be used for resettlement, it was not going to be apportioned to all native people even if they were the rightful owners. Instead, land was going to be allocated first to those people who did not have land at all. How an individual was going to be checked that he or she does not have a piece of land was however not discussed. The then Governor of Manicaland – comrade Oppah Muchinguri was quoted again in the Kwayedza newspaper story headlined Munhu wose
ngaawaniswe pokugara- Gavhuna and dated 18 – 24 May 2001 saying that ‘everyone should be given land’. What is therefore significant in all the above mentioned stories from the Kwayedza newspaper regarding the issue of land and distribution is the dominant message that land should be distributed to almost all native black people fairly.

What follows is a closer look at the language used in communicating these dominant or preferred meanings to readers.

3.14.2 DECONSTRUCTING THE LANGUAGE OF LAND AND DISTRIBUTION

The intended meaning of the word *kuvanhu* (to people) is further deferred owing to some internal instability inherent in every linguistic or imagistic sign. During the land redistribution exercise it was found out that a certain group of people amongst blacks benefited a lot from the exercise. This group included ‘chefs’ as observed by Chinodya (2004:27) when he said that, ‘The once flourishing farmhouses and barns were now for the “chefs” who drove Mercedes Benzes and Pajeros… [And] some were interested in amassing farm after farm’. It can therefore be argued that although the Kwayedza newspaper intention in using the word *kuvanhu* (to people) was to refer to every black Zimbabwean citizen, the other meaning that sprouted was that the word – *kuvanhu* (to people) – actually referred to an elite class – which happened to be the greatest beneficiaries of the Land Reform exercise. What is more, the use of the word *kuvanhu* played the role of masking or concealing the real beneficiaries of Land Reform exercise. In most cases the land that was acquired was given to ZANU (PF) supporters as commented by Chinodya (2004: 27) above. However, that during the struggle the thinking of the people was that the attainment of independence (symbolizing the defeat of the erstwhile colonizers) was automatically going to resolve the issue of land was revealed by Vambe (2006). In his (Vambe, ibid) critic of Choto (1990) book titled *Vavariro*, Vambe (2006: 268) avowed that:

What Raymond Choto successfully captures [in *Vavariro*] is the struggle to control land that is now between the peasants living in the overcrowded sandy soils and the black elites… the peasants are whisked back to their sandy soil… [And this suggests] that the masses were betrayed by those whom they fed during the struggle.

Vambe (2006) so are Choto (1990) and Chinodya (2004) are therefore of the view that Africans, especially the peasants, did not even visualize that after this protracted struggle for land amongst other things, ‘independence’ was going to give birth to a class of black elites that was going to
exploit them. The other assumption here was that during colonialism almost all black Africans were deprived of their land and they ‘all’ got united against the removal of the common enemy (the white settlers) with the intention of restoring their land. That all black Zimbabweans were supposed to be equally given or allocated land also implied that land redistribution was expected to cut across gender lines or divides. However, there were instances during the Land Reform exercise in which most females complained arguing that they were not being availed some pieces of land as underscored by one Miriro Mushonga, a critical reader of the Kwayedza newspaper (22 December 2012). In other words, Kwayedza’s deployment of language masked reality; whether this masking was intended or unintended, the effect was that the journalists’ language did not tell the whole truth. Or put differently Kwayedza was satisfying the ideology of its funders. Or better still, Kwayedza journalists had little vocabulary to discuss land, and in the process some potential meanings of the Land Reform programme were left out of the frames used. That undermined the certitude that Kwayedza attempted to monopolize for itself in its description of land.

The Governor in the Kwayedza story Ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu – Gavhuna dated 18 – 24 May 2001 also said that everyone should be availed land. Implied was the idea that land was supposed to be allocated to all people regardless of gender, race or class. However, reality showed that the word “everyone” actually referred to the black majority or the (ZANU [PF] supporters mostly) and this defeated the preferred message in the Kwayedza story MASHOKO EMUTUNGAMIRI KUMHURI YEZIMBABWE dated 20 – 26 April 2001 in which the President said that land should be redistributed fairly to all children of Zimbabwe so that there would be no disgruntlement amongst them. As long as land was not availed to some whites who were born and bred in Zimbabwe or to most women, and not to mention, failure by the government to relocating most native people who were living in areas with poor soils [the reserves] – disgruntlements were not going to stop but were going to be the order of the day. Some rural residents from Masvingo communal lands as well as Manicaland actually complained about people from other unknown locations being settled in farms acquired in their areas. These complaints were justified possibly because they emanated in the thinking that they [communal people] were going to be relocated to farms acquired in their areas (for it is this land they had been deprived of during colonialism).
Mapfumo in his 2001 song titled *Marima Nzara* (You have sown poverty) lamented on the unequal distribution of land and increased ownership of land in the hands of ZANU (PF) party loyalties, who in most cases did not even had the knowledge or interest of farming, resulting in untold sufferings amongst many Zimbabweans. As a consequence, the whole purpose of acquiring land from white commercial farmers for resettling the black majority was defeated.

### 3.15 General Remarks and Interpretations of *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* Newspapers’ Stories Analysed in This Chapter

The aim of this chapter was to critically analyse the language of communicating the necessity of the Land Reform, popularly known as The Third Chimurenga through the stories contained in *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers and to see how the frames or languages used by *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers impacted on readers understanding of the land issue in Zimbabwe.

With regards to the theme of land and history, *The Herald* managed to give some of the historical facts surrounding the land issue in Zimbabwe. From the analysis conducted, it was also revealed that *The Herald* newspaper devoted more time in explaining the rational of carrying out the Land Reform. Some of the reasons that the newspaper cited were that Land Reform exercise was aimed at restoring or redressing colonial land imbalances which left the black majority with small pieces of lands which were also infertile when compared to a minority white settlers who amassed large tracts of arable land.

*The Herald* newspaper, furthermore, revealed that land imbalances were an ultimate of colonial land systems, which were not based on principles of justice and equity. However, the stories which explored or reported on the theme of land and history in *The Herald* omitted some valuable information. For instance, it was revealed that *The Herald* newspaper did not fully give readers with information as to what it referred to as ‘just and equitable’ land distribution. Although most readers were able to get the dominant message as evidenced by the responses which they gave on the question of what they think were the reasons for carrying out Land Reform exercise; the information which *The Herald* omitted left some critical readers muddled headed in trying to understand the exact motives or the reasons for carrying out Land Reform
exercise in Zimbabwe. Some of the befuddled readers ended up labeling the Land Reform exercise a political gimmick by ZANU (PF) aimed at wheedling voters.

With regards to the concept of land, the stories in The Herald defined land, as agriculture. This could be attributed to its over – reliance on government officials who in most cases were used as sources and thus provided their definition of land which the newspaper adopted. The ultimate of this scenario was that most of the readers ended up thinking or equating land with farming or agriculture with the exception of a few who saw land as encompassing mines, industries and residential stands.

On the issue of land and compensation, The Herald reported that compensation was only to be paid for the infrastructure and not the soil. This reading got into most readers. Most of the readers and writers of the letters to The Herald Editor revealed that the displaced white commercial farmers should be compensated only for the developments that they made on the land/farms and not for the soil. This understanding was mainly due to The Herald’s lack of comprehensive reports on the issue of compensation. This led other critical readers into even asking the logic of paying compensation to settlers or the British commercial farmers yet during colonialism these settlers took the Native people’s land and belongings without paying any compensation. As a result, some readers broke away from the frames created by The Herald that compensation should be paid for the infrastructure only and created their own frames which conveyed the messages that compensation should not be paid at all by the Zimbabwean government.

Lastly, on the issue of land and distribution, the language used by The Herald had the motive of relaying to readers the messages that land was going to be distributed fairly amongst the black majority. In addition to that, land was also going to be availed to people congested in the communal areas with the intent of decongesting these communal areas. Some of the readers who wrote letters to the Editor or who responded to questionnaires concurred with The Herald that land was distributed fairly and the communal areas were decongested through the Land Reform exercise. Other readers, however, questioned the reportage of The Herald which did not provide information regarding the logic of the government displacing more people from acquired pieces of land during Land Reform and replacing with a few. This was in focus of the plight of farm workers. Secondly, the language of reportage of Land Reform used by The Herald failed to
inform readers about the manner in which land was going to be distributed fairly. Whether the word ‘fair’ implied relocating landless as well as those people with infertile lands; to arable lands; or whether the word ‘fair’ referred to the allocation of equal pieces of land to people so as to improve their standards of living was not fully covered. Some readers ended up discovering that land distribution created a new elite class which took the position of the erstwhile colonizers; the information *The Herald* did not highlight.

In view of the above, it can therefore be concluded that language have a variety of meanings to different readers. So readers of the same news could be seeing and hearing it differently. What they see and hear is determined or defined by their class, gender or ethnicity. Furthermore, differences in meanings arrived at could be as a result of the omissions, words, quotes or sources used in the reports by journalists which might be taken as otherwise by some readers.

Peresuh and Masuku (2002:31) on the other hand said that:

> The objective of using primary or indigenous languages in newspapers is to allow readers get the opportunity to learn the basic concepts in his language and to give [journalists] the freedom to express [themselves] without the inhibitions imposed by an insufficient mastery of the medium of instruction.

The significance of the above quotation is that through the use of Shona language in *Kwayedza* newspaper, journalists were expected to report or discuss more clearly the issue of Land Reform and on the other hand, readers were expected to be well informed as a result.

With regards to the issue of land and history, the stories selected in *Kwayedza* newspaper unlike *The Herald* managed to inform readers on the reasons for carrying out Land Reform. However, *Kwayedza* like *The Herald* cited most of the same reasons which in summation included the reason that land was being redistributed to its rightful owners. These rightful owners according to *Kwayedza* newspaper stories analysed above were the black majority. *Kwayedza*, like *The Herald* newspaper used languages with a national outlook in order to solicit support of the masses.

On the concept of land, *Kwayedza* newspaper used language which described land as agriculture in most cases. In some few instances the definition went on to include residential structures in the urban areas. Thus, the use of Shona language in *Kwayedza* newspaper enabled reporters or
sources consulted to clearly describe the concept of land unlike in *The Herald* newspaper. Furthermore, it was observed that although *Kwayedza* and *The Herald* newspapers fall within the same stable, the differences in interpreting the concept of land lied in the sources consulted or used. As an example; *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers always quoted Comrade Mudenge describing land as agriculture as opposed to *Kwayedza* that also used Comrade Oppah Muchinguri - who is/was another official voice – as a source. Comrade Muchinguri expanded the definition of land to include residential areas in urban areas. It can therefore be argued that these differences in the interpretations of the concept of land also emanated from the sources consulted. Both Comrades Mudenge and Muchinguri belong to the same political party and were therefore guided by more or less the same ideology of Land Reform but their interpretations were different maybe due to their different educational, socio-cultural and political backgrounds. *Kwayedza* newspaper, like *The Herald* failed to expand the definition of land to include mining and industries, to mention but just two. For instance, a quick glance of the headline in the story *Vemachechi vanoti ivhu ngaripihwe kuvanhu*; a reader may possibly not exactly tell the essence of *ivhu* (land). Whether by land the reporter referred to mining, agriculture, fishing or industries was not clear. However, after reading the entire story the language used directed readers to the idea of *ivhu* (land) as referring to agriculture or farming activities only.

On the theme of land and compensation, the use of Shona language made it clear that compensation was not going to be paid. Comrade Mudenge used the word ‘avenging’ in the story *Kutora minda kutsiva* in *Kwayedza* newspaper to convey so blatantly the message that the government of ZANU (PF) was not going to pay compensation at all than in *The Herald* newspaper. In *The Herald* story above headlined **State forced to adopt fast track land reform: Mudenge**; the Minister (Mudenge) used language which directed readers to an understanding that compensation was only going to be paid for the developments made on the farms while in *Kwayedza* the same Minister said that nothing was going to be paid at all. The use of Shona language actually enabled the Minister through *Kwayedza* the freedom to explain the issue of land and compensation more clearly and openly and without fear of being reprimanded by the Western world.

Regarding the issue of the distribution of land, an analysis of the language of reportage used by *Kwayedza* newspaper revealed that most cases the newspaper made use of language with a
national outlook and this collective language helped in masking private or personal [ZANU (PF) government] interest; yet the former are the real interests pursued. This paradox is clearly enunciated by Moyo and Matondi (2008: 62) who situated Land Reform programme as the government of Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front’s [ZANU – (PF’s)] need to lure people to vote for them in the 2002 elections which were just looming around the corner. In other words these two scholars saw Land Reform as a political gimmick. Although the Zimbabwean government suggested or believed that Land Reform programme was a consequence of land inequalities necessitated in the colonial period; Moyo and Matondi (ibid: 62) revealed that, ‘Apart from these gross land imbalances emanating from the colonial period, the possibility of electoral failure in 2000 by the government of ZANU (PF) led the government to embark on the land redistribution exercise’.

Thus, in order to lure the electorate ZANU (PF) had to make use of collective language or a national language; a language which phenotypically (outwardly) seemed to be serving the interests of everybody (the people) yet genotypically (internally) the language served the interests of a minority or small group or political interests.

3.16 CONCLUSION

In this chapter focus was on the language of representing Land Reform in The Herald and Kwayedza newspapers. The Herald and Kwayedza newspapers were shown to be government owned and funded. It was revealed that these papers packaged their news in English and Shona languages respectively. Being government or state owned implied that the language used in these newspapers was regulated and controlled by the government. It was revealed in this chapter that the ‘ideology’ of the government impacted greatly on the coverage of Land Reform in the two above mentioned newspapers and the subsequent readers’ understanding of the loose expression of land. The Herald and Kwayedza extremely succeeded in advertising, promoting and justifying the Land Reform. This was expected because the newspapers are funded by the various departments of government. But because the newspapers gave the readers a one – sided picture of the Land Reform, the newspapers failed in their social responsibility to inform the public critically on the issue of the Land Reform by taking diverse views of the Land Reform exercise. The two newspapers did not act as public spheres.
What follows in Chapter 4 is an analysis of the framing of Land Reform through language in *The Daily News* newspaper. *The Daily News* newspaper is independent of the government and is very critical of the Land Reform. It will be argued in the next chapter that *The Daily News* adopts an extremely negative attitude towards the Land Reform and that as a political stance, this is necessary because it introduces a plurality of perspectives on the Land Reform in Zimbabwe, rather than only merely depend on government funded papers that are uncritically supportive of the Land Reform.
CHAPTER 4

LAND REFORM IN THE DAILY NEWS NEWSPAPER

The press is presumably the bastion of free expression in a democracy, but too often it has been one of the institutions that limit the range of expression, especially expression that is critical of leading centers of power in society (Bennett 1996).

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter focus was on analyzing the language of reportage of Land Reform in The Herald and Kwayedza newspapers which are state owned and funded. It was revealed in chapter three that State owned newspapers extremely supported Land Reform exercise as reflected in the language used in the stories that were selected and analyzed. The aim of this Chapter is to present and analyze selected stories on Land Reform in The Daily News newspaper. As in the previous chapter, only where relevant, will critical voices from readers be solicited to support or complicate interpretations of how Land Reform programme is portrayed in these selected stories in The Daily News newspaper. In this respect, story framing analysis of The Daily News will revolve around three themes namely land and ownership, land and distribution as well as land and compensation. It is argued in this chapter that The Daily News’ representation of the Land Reform is in sharp contrast from the romanticized picture that we saw in chapter three. The Daily News, in the bargain features stories that are openly against the idea of a Land Reform in Zimbabwe for the benefit of the black masses. This ideological stance will be supported using relevant stories and secondary sources.

4.1 THE DAILY NEWS NEWSPAPER

The Daily News is regarded in Zimbabwe as a Private or Independent newspaper because it is independent of the government (that is, it is not funded and influenced or controlled by the government) but is dependent on individuals who represent narrow class interests. The Daily News is also aligned to corporate interests and depends on advertising revenue. It covers urban centres and is only concerned with the elite or the rich. In terms of content, The Daily News prefers entertainment over controversy, polarized and sensationalized political debate and not discussions that dig deeply; but in fairness, the newspaper also aimed to informing and challenging conventional opinion. In a nutshell, The Daily News is guided by neo-liberal
ideology. It plays a watchdog or Fourth Estate role. Watchdog journalism is a type of investigative journalism that refers to forms of activist journalism aimed at, holding accountable, public personalities and institutions whose functions impact social and political life (Wasibord 2000). It is exposure journalism in the public interest.

In view of the above, some Zimbabweans saw The Daily News as a newspaper which always exposed the truth about Land Reform as exemplified by the letter titled **Press bombing is misdirected anger** which was written by Muwoni of Chegutu on 31 January of 2001 as shown below.

![The Daily News letter](image)

**Figure 36:** The Daily News letter **Press bombing is misdirected anger** dated 31 January 2001 (Retrieved from The National Archives by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)

In the letter **Press bombing is misdirected anger** above Muwoni commented on the way The Daily News reported the feelings of Zimbabweans following the death of Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila. He said that, ‘To The Daily News; I say keep up the good
work lest we become a nation of pretenders, you honestly and accurately presented the real initial reaction of most Zimbabweans to Kabila’s death’ as opposed to the State media which:

has become common knowledge that the State – controlled media will go to any length to paint a rosy picture of the situation in this country even though there is evidence everywhere testifying to the fact that Zimbabwe has become a stinking mess. Theirs is a combination of wishful thinking and self-deception on a grand scale (The Daily News story Daydreaming at State – controlled media houses dated Friday 24 January 2003).

Implied by Muwoni (ibid) is the idea that The Daily News was bombed by ZANU (PF) because it always reported on issues which were believed to be hidden from public view by the government. This message is subtly stated by Muwoni when he says that, ‘The Daily News simply informed you [ZANU (PF)] of what the people were feeling and saying, so bombing their printing press was misdirected anger’(The Daily news letter Press bombing is misdirected anger above). What is furthermore implied in the story Press bombing is misdirected anger is the idea that ZANU (PF) hates truth and by extension does not even like to see or hear the populace being fed with truth.

That it was ZANU (PF) who bombed or blasted the printing press of The Daily News was further emphasized by The Daily News in the story Press bombed dated 31 January 2001 which was written by The Daily News Staff Reporter. The Reporter said that, “the bombing came after the war veterans’ burnt copies of newspaper” and Trevor Ncube, the Publisher and Editor – in – Chief of Zimbabwe Independent, also blamed the explosion on the government. He claimed that Mugabe, so is, his mouthpieces – the State owned media (The Herald and Kwayedza) – ‘have lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the people; [as a result] kill and maim are the tactics they are going to use’. The simple message that the quotation above is putting forth is that The Daily News was bombed because it told the truth. The stories Press bombing is misdirected anger and Press bombed are strategically placed and analyzed at the beginning of this chapter because they set The Daily News apart as a paper that was persecuted for telling the truth, that is, the stories framed The Daily News newspaper as a victim that needs to be sympathized with. Having said the above, the next section focuses now on the coverage of land and ownership in selected The Daily News stories.
4.2 FRAMING OF LAND AND OWNERSHIP IN THE DAILY NEWS NEWSPAPER

On the issue of land and ownership Bakare (1993) said that the removal of Africans from their traditional communal lands was indeed not a terrible thing in the eyes of settlers because these communal lands were not fenced or clearly marked and for the British unmarked land meant that it was not owned, thus, the African traditional concept of ownership was taken advantage of. It is therefore apparent from the language used by Bakare (ibid) that the two divergent views on land ownership systems by Africans and the British became the backbone of the British occupation of the Native or African people’s land and the root of three revolts namely the First, Second and the Third liberation struggles. In *The Daily News* story *Ex – fighters defy High Court order* dated 20 March 2000 the reporter Wallace Chuma saw ex – combatants as invaders as shown below.

![Ex-fighters defy High Court order](image)

*Figure 37: The Daily News letter Ex – fighters defy High Court order* dated 20 March 2000 (Retrieved from The National Archives by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)
4.2.1 PREFERRED READINGS

The simple message that the story \textit{Ex – fighters defy High Court order} above intends to convey to readers is that war veterans were entering into commercial farms which by right did not belong to them. These farms, so is, land are unequivocally portrayed in the story as rightfully belonging to white commercial farmers. Therefore, war veterans are regarded as ‘invaders’ (\textit{The Daily News} story \textbf{Farmers, workers join hands against invaders} dated 23 March 2000). In view of the above, war veterans who are seen as ‘invaders’ are or were therefore required ‘to vacate within 24 hours all the commercial farms which they have seized’. That war veterans were constructed in the language of the story \textit{Ex – fighters defy High Court order} as invaders because they had entered into farms, which according to \textit{The Daily News}, did not belong to them but were owned by whites is further and clearly captured in the story \textbf{Redistribution of land must be done in an orderly fashion} by Fr Oskar Wermter SJ dated 10 March 2000. With regards to land and ownership Wermter (ibid) said that:

Farmers, who are productive and contribute to the economic well – being of the nation, could be said to have earned the right to their land, even if the original occupation of the land by their great – grandfathers was morally and legally defective.

In view of the above quotation, ownership of land is determined or judged in terms of productivity. If a farmer is productive, be it white or black, he or she becomes the rightful owner of that land. Conversely, if a farmer, across racial grounds, is perceived as unproductive then that piece of land ceases to be his or hers. Implied therefore by \textit{The Daily News} through the story \textbf{Redistribution of land must be done in an orderly fashion} with regards to ownership of land is that land or farms that Zimbabweans claim to be theirs also belongs to white commercial farmers because they are using it productively. Father Osker Wermter SJ, a priest thus delegitimizes the land struggle for which more than 50 000 people died in the hands of whites. That \textit{The Daily News} was able to recruit opinion shaping voices from the religious community revealed the vested interests that some religious figures had in wanting to see the status quo of inequality between races maintained after independence in Zimbabwe. Since Father Wermter racialises the land issue in favour of whites; he becomes the voice box of the white commercial farmers who for more than 90 years refused to share fertile land with blacks.
This message that war veterans should vacate white commercial farms was also underscored in *The Daily News* story titled *Nyambuya after my farm, say Bennet* dated 29 January 2004 in which Bennet saw himself as the rightful owner of the farm because he was using the land or farms productively. *The Daily News* dated 13 January 2003 also featured a story which was written by Takaitei Bote on page 3 headlined *Sabina Mugabe, sons grab farms* as shown below.

Figure 38: The Daily News letter Sabina Mugabe, sons grab farms dated 13 January 2003 (Retrieved from The National Archives by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)

The visual picture of Sabina Mugabe is placed within the verbal context of the story to authenticate the story by showing the readers Sabina Mugabe who was being portrayed as a usurper. The dominant reading or the reading preferred by Bote (ibid) was that the native people of Zimbabwe were grabbing farms or lands which were not theirs. That the native people of Zimbabwe were the rightful owners of the land as well as that Land Reform was meant to restore land to its rightful owners was therefore regarded as a political gimmick. *The Daily News* story, *Ex – fighters raid minister’s farm* dated 8 March 2000 and which was written by Staff
Reporters saw the Land Reform as revenge directed towards commercial farmers. *The Daily News* story *Ex – fighters’ raid minister’s farm* (8 March 2000: 1-2) says that:

Mugabe has supported the invasions, arguing that whites – who own most of the large commercial farms – had influenced the electorate to vote against the draft because it contained a proposal empowering the government to seize land without compensation.

The dominant message is that the taking away of land from white commercial farmers was not really meant to restore land to its rightful owners – the native black people but to ‘fix’ white commercial farmers – who according to *The Daily News* stories cited above were the rightful owners – for influencing the electorate to vote against the draft constitution of 1999. The language of the story *Ex – fighters’ raid minister’s farm* reduces a historical grievance to a personal vendetta thereby attempting to diminish the idea that Land Reform was inevitable and historically inescapable for Zimbabweans. This message of seeing Land Reform as a political attention-grabber was avowed by Moyo and Matondi (ibid: 62) when they said that:

Apart from these gross land imbalances emanating from the colonial period, the possibility of electoral failure in 2000 by the government of ZANU (PF) led the government to embark on the land redistribution exercise.

The above point is further acknowledged by Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform in their article titled *What happened to our dream* in Barry (2004: 40) when they said that:

When ZANU (PF) lost the constitutional referendum in February 2000, it realized that its popularity had plunged. Faced with parliamentary elections within a few months, the ruling party formulated an election campaign strategy with land as its only trump card. Land helped shift the focus away from the liability of troubled economy. As the whites appeared to be supporting the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, they became the targets. So the strategy was to grab their land by force. The ZANU (PF) leadership used the state apparatus to invade white owned commercial farms, and later invited war veterans to participate in the exercise. With war veterans at the forefront, it would be easy to sell the idea to the Zimbabwean public [that] war veterans were demonstrating against unequal distribution of land. Surely the government would be criticized if it failed to redistribute land to the landless Zimbabweans. After all, the liberation war was fought over land violently seized by white colonialists who had paid no compensation.
In an attempt to convey to readers the message that the native people of Zimbabwe, as exemplified by the war veterans, are not the rightful owners of the land *The Daily News* reporters carefully selected certain words as demonstrated below.

### 4.2.2 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

War veterans are regarded as *invaders* in *The Daily News* story *Farmers; workers join hands against invaders* dated 23 March 2000. The word *invader* is synonymous with occupier, raider, and attacker or describes a process whereby one enters a farm or one’s land, for instance, by force. This act of entering land forcibly is synonymous with robbery or seizure. The inclusion of the words *invaders*, *grab* and *seize* in the stories cited above is therefore meant to communicate to readers the message that the native people, as exemplified by war veterans or ex–combatants in the stories above, were stealing land which did not belong to them. In the colonial language of euphemism, whites are lawful ‘farmers’ and blacks are ‘workers’ who join hands to fight wars veterans depicted as vermin. The voice of poor workers is co–opted to serve the interests of white farmers when it is convenient for the white farmers. That this land did not belong to war veterans was underscored by *The Daily News* in the story *Nyambuya after my farm, says Bennet* dated 29 January 2004. The words *my* on the headline coupled with the noun *Bennet* – who is a white commercial farmer are ideological in the sense that they seek to convey to readers the dominant message that the native people of Zimbabwe as denoted by *Nyambuya* in the story were robbing land which did not belong to them but to whites as denoted by the noun *Bennet* in the headline. The word, *my;* denotes that Bennet, who is white, is the rightful owner since he is using the farm productively as defined by Wermter above. Bennet was quoted by *The Daily News* in the story *Nyambuya after my farm, says Bennet* saying that:

> ZANU (PF) is using violence and intimidation because it is aware that there is resistance on the part of Chimanimani people because the constituency relies on my estate for a living and they have benefited so much from the projects that I have initiated (The Daily News 29 January 2004: 1).

In a nutshell, the reporters selected or made use of the words *invaders, grab, my* and *Bennet* to convey to readers the messages that Land Reform exercise was not meant to restore land to its rightful owners – the black majority – but to steal or rob land from its rightful owners – the white commercial farmers who were using it productively thus, contributing to the economic well
being of Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans. That the newly resettled farmers were not using allocated land productively and therefore should not be regarded as the rightful owners of the land was given further emphasis by Father Wermter in his story **Redistribution of land must be done in an orderly fashion** when he said that:

How to get land is only one question. There are many others government has not yet answered: once they have got the land, what do they do with it? One is reminded of the man who, watching a dog chase a bus, says, “I wonder what he is going to do with it once he has caught it” (The Daily News 10 March 2000: 8).

In support of Wermter’s anti Land Reform stance above, Chinja Maitiro of Mazowe wrote, in a letter to *The Daily News* Editor, titled **Say another ‘No’ to theft, corruption, dictatorship** dated 8 March 2000 that:

Commercial farming is a business; race has absolutely nothing to do with it. There are black, coloured and white commercial farmers in this country, just as they are manufacturing and commercial businesses owned and operated by entrepreneurs of all races. It may be that the majority of commercial farmers in this country are white, though certainly by no means all are and is extremely mischievous to suggest that. Though the rewards can be high, large-scale farming requires a great deal of knowledge and very hard work. Possibly black Zimbabweans should be more involved in commercial agriculture, but it is up to the individual to buy a farm and run it successfully. Race has nothing at all to do with it.

Implied by the quotation above is that ownership of land is determined not by race but by productivity. The writer of letter **Say another ‘No’ to theft, corruption, dictatorship** furthermore said that, ‘Now they say that because their “land grab” was thwarted by the “No” vote in last month’s referendum, they must take productive farms by force, because that suits them politically’ (Chinja Maitiro 8 March 2000: 9). The signified message is that the government of ZANU (PF) is trying to claim ownership by force through the grabbing of land from white commercial farmers who are using it productively. Chinja Maitiro is a discursive marker in the MDC’s arsenal of slogans, and therefore, the letter provides a coded message that it is patronized by supporters of the opposition party.

What is further suggested is the idea that neither blacks nor whites have the absolute right to land ownership. In view of the above most blacks do not have the right to own land when compared
with whites because they do not know how to use land productively. Thomas Mapfumo commented through the song *Maiti Kurima hamubviri (1993)* that land or ownership or land rights should be given to people who are really serious and willing to utilize it productively as opposed to those who can have the power, finance and material resources to acquire the land but are not willing to seriously exploit it.

*The Daily News* story, **Four years down the line, 7,5m face starvation** by The Litany Bird dated 2 February 2004 says that when land was given to the ‘black majority’ productivity declined culminating in hunger and starvation. *The Daily News* moreover said that, ‘What cause for national shame that out of a population of 11.5 million people, 7.5 million Zimbabweans need to live on handouts from the international community!’ Denenga (2004:54), however, countered The Litany Bird’s thinking which is in agreement with Thomas Mapfumo’s thinking when he said that, ‘When a man has been trodden upon for too long he thinks he is inferior. He disowns himself and devalues his work. He sees the oppressor as the liberator’.

So in an endeavour to communicate certain messages and dominant readings to readers through language or words, *The Daily News* omitted or did not dwell on the potential to development that the entrée of more blacks in productive farming and mining might bring to Zimbabwe. The stories presented to Zimbabweans in *The Daily News* were decidedly anti – land revolution. Where the paper correctly revealed the irregularities in the processes of Land Reform, the newspaper did not suggest better ways to solve the problem, save to insist that the only way to prosperity was to return land to whites.

**4.2.3 OMISSION ANALYSIS**

While reporters may try to contain the meaning of a word in order to communicate certain dominant meanings, a word refuses to remain stable and in the process creates other multiple meanings in readers (Derrida 1998). In this respect, although the words *invade, grab* and *seize* were used in the selected stories above to communicate to readers the dominant messages that land was unlawfully taken away from white commercial farmers, these same words communicated to readers the message that the native people were taking back what rightfully belonged to them – land.
This idea was articulated well by Doctor Vincent Gwaradzimba – an Agricultural Consultant – when he said that:

The land was taken from the former white commercial farmers and given to the landless blacks and that land can never be taken back to the whites it can only be redistributed if we have to go back and then we include those whites who are basically Zimbabweans as well….so land can not go back to the white people (The Transition – The Land Question, 2005, 6)

That land can only be distributed to ‘whites who are basically Zimbabweans as well’ suggest that land really belongs to the native people of Zimbabwe and by extension can include those white people who were born and bred in Zimbabwe. So ownership is by birth and does not depend on how productive one uses land. This information was omitted by The Daily News.

The Daily News also used the word my and the noun Bennet in order to convey to readers the message that land or farms belonged to white commercial farmers. In the process, the reporters omitted vital information regarding the land issue in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. According to Woddis (1960) the relationship of whites and blacks in Africa was through acts of robbery – robbery of African land. So with regards to the aspect of land and ownership or tenure, land does not belong to these – white – oppressors because the Whiteman stole the land from the African during colonialism. Muchuri states that:

If a thief steals, and the goods are found, they are returned to the owner without compensation. As such our land, our cattle and all our wealth must be returned to us without compensation. If a thief sells stolen goods to somebody, those goods if recovered by police, will be given back to their owner without compensation… our stolen land must return to us without compensation because it is ours’ (Muchuri 2004: 9)

So if the British robbed land when they colonized Africans the only prudent thing that the owner of the land [Native people of Zimbabwe] could do then is to grab, invade or seize the land the moment they find the the robber and the robbed or stolen land. That land was supposed to be grabbed or seized without begging is avowed by Woddis (1960: 1) who said that, ‘Both during and since the great scramble for Africa by the Western imperialist powers at the end of the nineteenth century, land – grabbing, has been the central aim. By direct seizure, conquest,
pressure on chiefs, trickery, swindling, the repudiation of pledges and promises, by every means open to them, the representatives of the European powers took land’.

What is therefore crystal clear is that land belonged to the native people of Zimbabwe as opposed to the ideas propounded by Edwin Munyari of Belvedere in a letter to The Daily News Editor titled God won’t bless chaotic, hate – driven, racially – fuelled land reforms who saw land as belonging only to God and not the native people of Zimbabwe or white settlers. He said that, ‘The Lord says: “The land is mine, because I created it,” or “Nyika ndeyamambo nevaranda vake.” You have got it wrong when you sing: “Ivhu nderedu, tapiwa minda isu” (The land is ours, we have been allocated fields) (The Daily News 20 January 2003: 9).

While The Daily News wanted to convey to readers the dominant or preferred reading that land does not belong to the Native people of Zimbabwe, the author of the letter God won’t bless chaotic, hate – driven, racially – fuelled land reforms did not know that he was communicating the message that Zimbabweans are actually the real owners of Zimbabwean land. This message is subtly suggested in the excerpt below. Munyari (2003: 9) said that, ‘Do not ill – treat foreigners who are living with you. Treat them as you would your own brother, and love them as you love yourself. Remember, you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God (Lev 19 vs. 33)’ (The Daily News 20 January 2003: 9).

The word foreigners denote aliens or outsiders. The simple message that the word foreigner therefore communicates to readers is that, blacks or the native people are the rightful owners of the Zimbabwean land and not white commercial farmers, who are aliens or outsiders and who actually grabbed the land from Africans. Munyari even said in his letter God won’t bless chaotic, hate – driven, racially – fuelled land reforms that land belonged to the San people. According to Munyari, ‘The Bantu migration, mfecane and the Pioneer Column make all of us [Zimbabweans and Whites] foreigners in this lovely land. The San could call the Shona, Ndebele and the whites, foreigners’. While other people like Sibanda et al (1982) and Munyari (2003) locate the land issue as emanating from pre – colonial era when the so called native people of Southern Rhodesia (the Shona) ‘… stole the land from the San hunters’; Chihombori (2004: 16) saw the San as ‘just wanderers … they were of no fixed abode … The land belonged to the [Shona] people since time immemorial’.

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In bargain, that land belonged to the native people of Zimbabwe and not whites is promulgated by *The Daily News* in the story *Sabina Mugabe, sons grab farms* dated 13 January 2003. Takaitei Bote, *The Daily News* Farming Editor, quoted Patrick Zhuwau, one of Sabina Mugabe’s sons saying that, ‘I come from Zvimba and asked to be allocated land in Zvimba. I have absolutely no apologies to make for being given land in Zvimba because we are the Zvimbas’ (The Daily News 13 January 2003)

The simple message that Patrick Zhuwau is saying; and that the reporter, Takaitei Bote, omitted and which could have benefited readers is that land is a form of people’s identity (Bakare 1993). Identity or uniqueness implying that land is only allocated and used by its rightful owners. This could be the reason why Zhuwau in the story *Sabina Mugabe, sons grab farms* above said that he has no apologies to make being allocated land in Zvimba because that is where he comes from and the land is consequently his. That could have been a different case or scenario if he had been given land in a territory which is not his or where he belonged. The land which they occupied which is ‘around Lake Manyame in Zvimba’ and which the reporter sees as strategic is by right theirs. This is also another reason why war veterans had to invade or grab lands which were strategically placed and were occupied by ‘robbers’ – the white settlers. In this respect, it is therefore the white settlers who were and are actually invaders, grabbers.

*The Daily News* consequently omitted all the information above which could have been useful to readers. Possibly this may be attributed to the way *The Daily News* newspaper uses sources. The sources that were consulted or used by the reporters were mostly in opposition to the Land Reform programme. They did not have a holistic approach to the question of land. *The Daily News* newspaper in turn limited debate by not reporting both sides of the story. In the next section focus is on the representation of land and distribution in selected *Daily News* stories.

### 4.3 LANGUAGE OF LAND AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE DAILY NEWSPAPER

Woddis (1960:3) pointed out that when Africans were deprived of their land, they were pushed to the so called ‘Native Area[s]’. These Native Areas or Reserves as they were and are popularly known today had ‘poor soils, usually the poorer types of granite – sand known technically as Class III land; while the European Area contains nearly all the areas of fertile soil in the colony (Brown, 1959:5). These ‘Native Purchase Areas’ – supposedly suitable regions of Southern
Rhodesia for developing an African ‘middle class of farmers’ – were also situated in hot, malaria-infested areas, where great illness and suffering were caused among the people settling there due to lack of clinics and hospitals within easy reach. Other reserves were so cursed with country soil so broken and rocky that agriculture was impossible over most of the area (Brown ibid: 23). On the other hand, the colonizers or Europeans who were a minority owned vast pieces of land. Brown who was a former Land Development Officer in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) says that, ‘There is a surfeit of land in the European area; and many European farmers can and do make a handsome living off their thousands of acres by improving and developing only a few of them’ (Brown, 1959: 24).

In view of the above colonial land distribution, the government of ZANU (PF) embarked on a fast track Land Reform programme in the year 2000 in order to readdress these land disparities mostly between whites and blacks. The Daily News newspapers however reported in most of its stories that the land redistribution exercise that was embarked upon by the government of Zimbabwe was not meant to correct colonial land imbalances but to avenge on the lost 2000 referendum which was meant to change the constitution in favour of ZANU (PF). The Daily News claimed that the constitution was crafted in such a way that it would allow the taking away of white commercial farms without paying any compensation. The fact that this constitution was rejected in the 2000 referendum by a majority was blamed on white commercial farmers who according to ZANU (PF), as reported by Staff Reporters in The Daily News story Ex – fighters raid minister’s farm dated 20 March 2000 ‘had influenced the electorate to vote against the draft because it contained a proposal empowering the government to seize land without compensation’. In a nutshell, the newspaper saw the justifications or reasons cited by the government of ZANU (PF) for conducting land distribution exercise as unfounded. That Land Reform was meant to give land to the landless black majority was further denied by The Daily News newspaper as shown in the story Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm dated 10 March 2000 which was written on page 5 by Godfrey Moyo as shown below.
Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm

From Godfrey Moyo in Bulawayo

A DEPUTY minister facing a group of angry war veterans threatening to invade white-owned and government farms in Matabeleland, last Wednesday denied he leased a government farm.

Deputy Minister of Energy and Transport, Zenzo Nsimbi’s strenuous denial came amid threats by former fighters in Bulawayo that they would seize land in the Marula Block of Matabeleland South.

The war veterans, defying instructions from the government, invaded two white-owned farms in Marula Block at the weekend.

Nsimbi is among top people, including Mines, Environment and Tourism Minister Simon Moyo, allocated farms in Marula ahead of needy villagers.

“I don’t own a farm,” said Nsimbi. "At a meeting in Bulawayo, war veterans threatened to occupy any farm, including those acquired by the government."

Matabeleland ex-fighters, who until recently had not invaded farms, have gone on a rampage, with President Mugabe’s blessing, they claim.

They accused Mugabe of having failed to educate people on the role of ex-combatants in the liberation war. That, they said, had resulted in society not respecting them.

Nsimbi is among top people including Mines, Environment and Tourism Minister Simon Moyo, allocated farms in Marula ahead of needy villagers.

“I don’t own a farm,” said Nsimbi. “At a meeting in Bulawayo, war veterans threatened to occupy any farm, including those acquired by the government.”

Members of the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) told the war veterans at Marula Farmers Hall that they would not surrender land to them under duress.

CFU’s executive officer Ben Zietsman said the war veterans had already invaded two commercial farms in Marula and Figtree and were threatening to go for more. Police, Zietsman said, had promised to evict the trespassers.

“There is nothing much we can do but to appeal to the laws of the country,” said Zietsman.

Figure 39: The Daily News letter Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm dated 10 March 2000 (Retrieved from The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)

4.3.1 PREFERRED READINGS

The dominant message that Godfrey Moyo, the reporter of the story Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm wanted readers to internalize was that the beneficiaries of Land Reform programme were not the landless black majority, but ZANU (PF) elites such Zenzo Nsimbi, deputy minister of energy and transport. Blacks without land are portrayed as the losers while those who already had land – ‘the “land full black minority’ are depicted in the story as greedy because they want more land. This idea is underscored by Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (2004) who says that:

[Although the motive of the liberation struggle was] to wrest power from the colonial regime not just to gain freedom but also to address the structures in the country. It gradually became clear that the old nationalist parties simply wanted to take power, change the name, flag and anthem and put blacks into positions where whites had been before. These old parties did not want radical change in a way that would open up opportunities for the masses of people
What is significant in the excerpt above is that while land was supposed to be distributed among the black masses, this was not the case after the country attained independence. The masses only realized during the Third Chimurenga that the fight was not only between whites and blacks but between a black minority or elite class and the ‘poor’ or low to middle class black majority. Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (2004) further revealed that within the blacks who were elected after independence there arose some elite minority classes that took the place of the erstwhile colonial white classes in exploiting its comrades through the ownership of several farms as situated in the story Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm and Sabina Mugabe sons grab farms above.

4.3.2 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

In order to convey to readers or expose to readers the message that it was mostly the big fish who benefited from the so called land redistribution exercise, the reporter of the story Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm attempted to restrict or confine the message with the preferred boundaries or frames through the use of Ministers names as well as the phrase needy villagers not to mention the word top. The reporter stated in his story that, ‘Nsimbi is among top people, including Mines, Environment and Tourism Minister Simon Nkaya Moyo, allocated farms in Marula ahead of needy villagers’. The word top signifies people at the apex of power. These could be the people who walk in the corridors of political power or who are the powerful few or the status quo as shown on the quotation above. In order to remove or clear any vagueness of the people being denoted by the word top the reporter went on further into naming the the government ministers being referred as the top people in the story. The story Cornered deputy minister denies leasing farm revealed that it was these top government officials who had amassed large tracts of land at the expense of the needy villagers. Chinodya (2004: 21) accentuated this latter point when he pronounced that, ‘The once flourishing farmhouses and barns were now for the ‘chefs’ who drove Mercedes Benzes and Pajeros… [And] some were interested in amassing farm after farm’.

The word needy also stands for deprived or disadvantaged rural folk. Thus, the inclusion of the phrase needy villagers is meant to convey to readers the message that these villagers really needed pieces of land to work on in order to improve their standards of living (Moyana 1984) as
opposed to the few black elite – the top people – who already had large pieces of land but still continued to amass some more land because of greediness and because they had the powers to do so. In veracity, they actually did not need all the lands they acquired. The state of landlessness culminated in impoverishment of the black majority as emphasized by Woddis (1960:8) when he says that the seizure of African land was meant:

To prevent the African peasant from becoming a competitor to the European farmer or plantation owner; and to impoverish the African peasantry to such an extent that the majority of adult males would be compelled to work for the Europeans, in the mines or on the farms. Thus not only the enrichment of the Europeans but the deliberate impoverishment of the Africans became a cornerstone official policy.

The few blacks from the elite class who managed to get land were in actual fact not in desperate need of land. This message of the hypocrisy on the part of the elite class is portrayed through the inclusion of the word leasing. To lease is to let or rent out property and in this case the property is the land. Renting out property conveys the message of plenty or abundance. What is further implied by the reporter through the use of the word leasing is that during the land redistribution exercise, the top elite class amassed land which they did not even want to use. The ultimate of this amassment of lands without the intention of using them was leasing.

The Daily News story Sabina Mugabe, sons grab farms dated 13 January 2003 also underscores the point above which declared that it was the top or elite class who benefited most from the land distribution or allocation exercise. The reporter, Takaitei Bote used the word farm in its plural form – farms – by design in order to convey to readers the message that the elite classes were taking more than one farm. Bote says that, ‘The government admitted in the State media last Thursday that the Land Reform programme was haphazard, resulting in ‘free – for – all allocation’(Daily News 24 January 2003: 11). Free – for – all allocations suggests that top government officials allocated themselves lands willingly or as they wished. Sabina Mugabe and her two sons were reported as having occupied farms which were ‘strategically situated around Lake Manyame in Zvimba’. What is further presaged in the story Sabina Mugabe, sons grab farms is that the elite classes gave themselves lands which had very fertile soils and with good
or better if not best infrastructure when compared with the lower to middle black classes who got land in areas which – in most cases – received little rainfall.

That it is the elite class or the top brass that got most of the land is moreover underpinned by Ruvimbo Madhaka of Harare in her letter to The Daily News Editor titled Made’s so – called land audit doesn’t fool us dated 31 January 2003. Madhaka (ibid) saw the so – called land audit as a waste of time because it was

Guided by the philosophy: “Let us steal and plunder as much as possible and when every member of us [ZANU (PF)] is through with stealing, let us constitute a fake audit/commission of inquiry made up of our ZANU (PF) members who have also stolen to conduct a cosmetic audit.

The message that the letter was possibly conveying to readers was that land was not only amassed, but, was stolen by the big – wigs and it is these big – wigs who then decided to constitute a politicized commission (Professor Rukuni: Transition video – The Land Question 2005) which had the mandate of overseeing who got what and where. The fact that it was ZANU (PF) officials who constituted this audit team meant that virtually there was nothing that was going to be come out or to be brought to light with regards to who got what and where. If the audit team were to report the authentic or true findings it would be like shooting themselves in the feet.

Edwin Munyari of Belvedere, Harare also wrote a letter on page 9 of The Daily News dated 20 January 2003 and headlined God won’t bless chaotic, hate – driven, racially – fuelled land reforms with the intention of exposing to readers the message that land distribution was racially driven. He said that:

The agrarian reform was to feed the nation, not to shame Britain, the United States and fellow detractors …. While the need for equitable land redistribution is very real, the selfishness and greed manifest in the process makes the whole thing a circus… (The Daily News 20 January 2003:9)

The message disguised by Munyari (ibid) is that although land redistribution exercise was a noble thing it did not benefit the real landless people. Instead, it was only the greed and selfish
black elite class who largely benefited. Furthermore, land redistribution exercise was as racially
driven owing to the fact that white commercial farmers whose farms were taken away were seen
as bad influences to the black populace. They were blamed by the government of ZANU (PF) for
enticing people to vote against the 2000 referendum.

Still on the issue of land and distribution, The Daily News published a story which was written
by Fr Oskar Wermter SJ captioned Redistribution of land must be done in an orderly fashion
on 10 March of 2000. This story was published at a time when the fast – track Land Reform
programme had just kick started. In this story Fr Oskar Wermter interrogated the criterion that
was used by the government in allocating land. He asked whether land was distributed according
to qualifications and under what conditions. While the government argued that land was
supposed to be allocated to the ‘largest and poorest population of Zimbabwe’ (Moyana 1984),
The Daily News through the story Redistribution of land must be done in an orderly fashion
by Wermter (ibid) argued that land was not expected to be given to everyone. Instead, land was
supposed to be given to those people who were able to use it productively as underpinned by
Wermter when he wrote thus, ‘But one of the ethical conditions for land tenure is that the tenant
be able to use the land productively without destroying it’.

In bargain, Mungoshi (1975) restated the need to give land to the black majority since they are,
first, the rightful owners and secondly, are the ones living in barren lands. However, for The
Daily News, Mungoshi’s argument could not hold water since ‘There are no such things as
absolute right to private property. Ownership always goes together with social obligations. In
this respect, land should only be given to deserving candidates, those who can use it
productively. That land distribution exercise was therefore racially driven as discussed above
was furthermore underscored by Wermter (ibid) when he said that the reason or statement that is
given by the government that, ‘Four – thousand farmers have half the agricultural land …
ignores that hundreds of thousands of farm labourers and their families live in that land as well’.
In other words the point Fr Wermter is suggesting is that the number of black people already
living on farms with fertile soils outnumbered the number of white commercial farmers in those
farms and so there is no need of redistributing land to the ‘black majority’.
While his argument sounds ‘good’ when looking in terms of numbers or quantities, his reasoning is based on lack of understanding of the essence of Land Reform. As has been shown above, Land Reform as discussed at the Lancaster House conference, was supposed to improve the standards of living of the largest and poorest population of Zimbabwe. In this respect, it can therefore be argued that Land Reform focused both on quantity, that is the number of people settled on arable lands and quality which is the kinds of lives the settled people will be living. Quality of life is not impacted by living in an environment where production is high but by actually owning the means of production. So as long as large numbers of people live in farms which they do not own but are used as labourers only; their standards of living will not rise. They will not be masters of their own destiny for they will not be owners of the means of production – land – in this case.

That Land Reform was not really justified was avowed by Frizell, as well, in his letter titled Invasion of idle land has finally exposed State hypocrisy dated 1 March 2000. According to Frizell (ibid) there were lots and lots of fertile lands which did not ‘belong’ to anybody which were just lying idle for quite a long time and so if the government were really serious about distributing land to landless people, it should have made use of these idle lands by allocating them to the needy villagers. Thus, if the government had allocated idle lands to the black majority, then no land could have been taken away from white commercial farmers. However, since land for resettlement was taken away from white commercial farmers at the expense of the vast pieces of lands which were lying idle, the signified message is that the government of ZANU (PF) had scores to settle with the white commercial farmers.

The other reason why idle land was not allocated to needy villagers by the government according to The Daily News letter Invasion of idle land has finally exposed State hypocrisy was that this land was reserved for the status quo. Frizell (ibid) avered that:

> It is evident that much good land has been lying idle for years and not been allocated to those who most desire it. Why? Is it just inefficiency? Or has it been reserved for ‘special people as popular rumour believes’… How can we trust a President and a party who know very well there is much unused land and yet they refuse to allocate it? Why try to take more land when so much is lying idle? (The Daily News 1 March 2000: 11).
Consequently, it can be argued that land redistribution exercise was racially driven. While the
government argued that they wanted to correct colonial land imbalances, *The Daily News*
through the story titled *Redistribution of land must be done in an orderly fashion* (10 March
2000: 8) by Wermter, believes that land redistribution exercise should not have been carried out
at all. The proper way of conducting Land Reform, according to Wermter (ibid), was not to take
away extra land from white commercial farmers and to add on to the land that was already lying
idle for so many years, but, to focus only on sharing amongst blacks, land that has been already
lying idle for quite a long time. Chinja Maitiro of Mazowe underscored the latter point in the
letter titled *Say another ‘No’ to theft, corruption, dictatorship* dated 8 March 2000 when the
writer said that, ‘we must reject a dying dictatorship that is destroying our country and tearing it
apart in a desperate attempt to survive’ and the writer further asked why ZANU (PF) did not settle
landless people on vacant farms and unutilized land [which] was not settled years ago’. He
therefore saw Land Reform as an unjustified exercise which was just but a political gimmick by
ZANU (PF) as underscored by the Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (2004).

What is more, Chinja Maitiro saw land redistribution as an exercise that was meant to maim the
economy in so far as it was only targeted at removing white commercial farmers who were the
backbone of the country and giving this land to blacks who did not even know how to use land
productively; a point also echoed by Mapfumo in his 1993 song titled *Maiti Kurima Hamubvire*
(You used to say you were good farmers). Chinja Maitiro (*The Daily News* letter dated 8 March
2000) so is Thomas Mapfumo (1993) saw the white man as superior in farming or using the land
productively when compared with the black man. This is a typical example of the Tarzan
mentality that had crippled so many citizens of Zimbabwe who saw or regard white commercial
farmers as God given masters who are supposed to use black people’s land as they wish and
blacks as God given servants who are supposed to work or provide labour to the whitemen.

4.3.3 OMITISSION ANALYSIS

In *The Daily News* story *Cornered deputy Minister denies leasing farm* the reporter, Moyo
says that, ‘A DEPUTY Minister facing a group of angry war veterans threatening to invade white
– owned and government farms in Matabeleland, last Wednesday denied he leased a government
farm’. Although the reporter wanted to convey to readers the message that war veterans were
against the ruling black elite class for taking too long to allocating land to them which they believe was central to the liberation struggle, a point also underscored by Mugabe (2001:36) when he says that:

The main basis of our fight with settlers, a fight which began at the very onset of colonialism, had been the national question of land. It informed Zimbabwe’s entire politics, generated a solid support base for the armed struggle with all its attendant hazards, and spurred our fighters on, right up to the bitter end. Land, Land, was the cry ... it was also the cry and plea in Church. Apart from being the basis of our liberation struggle, its loss was the basis of African poverty and indigence in this country. To this day, alienation remains casually linked to the poverty and backwardness of our people. Equally, to this day, its allocation is largely as shaped by the same forces and decrees... [The reporter’s linguistic frame was, however, problematic].

It was problematic in the sense that, while it is acknowledged that some black elites had multiple farms; whites also had large tracts of unused lands which they amassed for speculative purposes, during colonialism. The Daily News did not report to readers about this vital information. In addition to the above, The Daily News did not even report that although some black elites had multiple farms the other reason for taking some of the land away from white commercial farmers was to address some colonial land imbalances which saw land heavily skewed towards the white minority. Brown (1959) and Lipton in Antonie (2010) put forth this view when they said that, ‘not only did people wanted to be given land but they wanted fertile lands [which] was mostly in the hands of white commercial farms’ (Lipton ibid).

The Daily News also deliberately chose not to inform readers about the nature of land targeted for redistribution. Mugabe (2001) highlighted that the land that was targeted for redistribution was the ‘unsettled land’ or ‘some’ of the land owned by ‘some’ white commercial farmers that was unutilized. The word some does not mean all and the word unutilized means not being used. Consequently, the argument advanced by The Daily News, through a letter by Chinja Maitiro (ibid) above, that taking away land from white commercial farmers would maim the economy, was baseless, in the sense that, for quite a long time, this land had already been lying idle. Nothing was happening on it. The only prudent thing was for the government to acquire these idle lands and allocate them to landless people who possibly could use them productively to
enhance economic growth as opposed to *The Daily News* thinking. Furthermore; blacks had been good farmers since time immemorial when compared with whites.

Some white commercial farmers refused to let go these *idle* lands and this culminated in most ex – combatants getting into those farms by ‘force’ resulting in *The Daily News* stories calling or representing war veterans as trespassers as reflected in *The Daily News* story **LRF condemns State moves to amend constitution on land** dated 23 March 2000 in which the Staff Reporter says that:

> On farm invasions, the LRF [Legal Resources Foundation] said while it supported an orderly, equitable and transparent land reform programme, the current action by groups calling themselves war veterans was blatantly criminal. But what has happened recently in the name of land reform must be condemned by all law – abiding citizens. The crimes committed range from minor ones, like trespass…

Implied by the citation above was that land belonged to whites and not ex – combatants – who are labeled as trespassers and thieves. However, the story **LRF condemns State moves to amend constitution on land** did not go further to show that ex – combatants, who are regarded as invaders in the story, are in actual fact the rightful owners. They fought for Zimbabwe land in a protracted war which lasted for 15 years until political independence was ushered in Zimbabwe in 1980. The study therefore argued that *The Daily News* should have highlighted that whites and not ex – combatants are *invaders* or are trespassing in African lands.

While Fr Wermter (*The Daily News* 10 March 2000: 8) argued that most white commercial farmers bought the land that they are settling on; the same article did not however, show or indicate to readers how they got those farms. Whether they bought those farms from the new nationalist black government or from the erstwhile colonizers is not even mentioned. One critical reader of *The Daily News* argued that, ‘if commercial farmers bought land from the erstwhile colonizers who had obtained it through trickery and robbery [Woddis 1960] then it can be argued that these white commercial farmers received stolen property and by right are bound to loose it’ (Questionnaire dated 20 March 2012).
That land was also distributed to the black majority – the lower to middle class people – was not emphasized in *The Daily News* stories. Focus was only on the elite class (watchdog role). However, the challenge of this watchdog role is that it generalizes issues and leaves most readers with a biased understanding of controversial issues like Land Reform as exemplified by Chinja Maitiro letter (ibid) who saw land redistribution as land grabs by the native people of Zimbabwe (who) happen to be the real owners of the land.

Last but not least, *The Daily News* omitted vital information regarding the fact that soon after independence the government introduced the willing – buyer willing seller system and it is this system which also culminated in some ‘unutilized’ or idle lands. White commercial farmers were not willing to sell their excess lands. This unwillingness, on the part of white commercial farmers, culminated in land hungry people entering or taking those lands or farms by force. Failure to include these and other reasons for land distribution is detrimental since it leaves readers with biased understanding of issues. Commenting on the aspect of land grabs which were in other instances characterized by violence Muchuri (2004) said that violence was only inflicted on farmers who were ‘selfish’ as opposed to farmers who, ‘Know well about the history of our land [that land does not belong to them] and has agreed to let [Africans] stay on the other part of the land without ANY CONFLICTS OR BLOOD SHED’.

What is noteworthy in the passage above is that Africans did not colonise white settlers and because of this, there was or there is no reason why they should pay compensation or even introduce willing buyer willing seller system / principles. The next section focuses on the coverage of the issue of compensation in *The Daily News*.

**4.4 REPRESENTATION OF LAND AND COMPENSATION IN THE DAILY NEWS**

*The Daily News* story **UK refuses to pay for land** dated 10 February 2000 and which was written on page 1 by Staff Reporter says that, ‘Britain will not compensate any farmer whose land is compulsorily acquired by the government for purposes of resettlement as is proposed in the draft constitution.’ The story below captures the content of the above line of argument and deserves quoting:
UK refuses to pay for land

Denies any obligation to compensate farmers

Staff Reporter

BRITAIN will not compensate any farmer whose land is compulsorily acquired by the government for purposes of resettlement, as is proposed in the draft constitution.

Agreeing that there was a strong case for land redistribution in Zimbabwe, the British government says it, however, does not accept that it has an obligation to compensate farmers who lose their land to the government.

“We obviously fully recognise the right of the people of Zimbabwe to draw up their own constitution,” a statement issued by the British government in London said.

“The Zimbabwean government gazetted amendments to Clause 57 of the draft constitution on 19 January to make it obligatory for the British government, and not itself, to pay compensation for land compulsorily acquired from farmers for purposes of resettlement.

The amendment came after President Mugabe openly attacked the Constitutional Commission for not being explicit on land acquisition. He said the original clause on land in the draft document was “stupid”.

Mugabe himself appointed the commission.

Mugabe’s remarks were followed by demonstrations by war veterans, mainly in Harare. The former fighters demanded that land be acquired without compensation to farmers.

“The British Government does not accept that Clause 57 of the draft constitution imposes any obligation on the UK,” Britain said.

The statement said successive British governments made substantial contributions, both directly and indirectly, to the first phase of land reform in Zimbabwe.

“And all the obligations, agreed at the time of the independence agreement in relation to land, have been met.”

The British government said it would remain committed to supporting a transparent, fair and cost-effective programme of land reform in order to reduce poverty.

“The Government of Zimbabwe has not put in place a programme of land reform that would provide land to the poor of Zimbabwe,” the statement said.

The amended Clause 57 of the draft constitution says, in part: “The former colonial power has an obligation to pay compensation for agricultural land acquired for resettlement, through a fund established for that purpose.”

If the British government fails to pay the draft constitution says, the Zimbabwean government will not be obliged to pay the compensation for agricultural land acquired for resettlement.

Should the Zimbabwean government, however, decide to compensate, it will consider various factors, among them the history of ownership, use and occupation of the land; the price paid when it was last acquired; the cost or value of improvements on the land; the current use of the land, and the resources available to the government in implementing the land reform programme.

The overriding factors, the amendment to the draft says, are that Zimbabweans were unjustifiably dispossessed of their land and resources without compensation and that they must be allowed to reassert their rights and regain ownership of their land.

Figure 40: The Daily News UK refuses to pay for land dated 10 February 2000 (Retrieved from The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)

4.4.1 PREFERRED READINGS

The large font used in the first part of the title drew attention to the role of Britain in Zimbabwe’s Land Reform, and the rest of the story implies that Britain is justified in refusing to pay for the Land Reform that has deprived its white kith and kin. In the story, the government of ZANU (PF) says that it will compensate for the developments or infrastructure only and not for the land; a point underscored by Manzungu (2001: 16) who says that, ‘compensation would be paid for the improvements on the farm but not for the soil’. Compensation for land was supposed to be paid
to the farmers who lost their farms by the British. In other words, the message that the reporter seeks to convey to readers is that Zimbabwean government is not obliged to pay or compensate white commercial farmers. However, the main intent of the story is to reveal to readers the idea that Britain is not in any way obliged to compensate white commercial farmers. The reporter made this point clear when he said that, ‘Agreeing that there was a strong case for land redistribution in Zimbabwe, the British government says it however does not accept that it has an obligation to compensate farmers who lose their land to the government’.

The reasons that Britain cited were that, ‘one sovereign and independent state cannot use its constitution to impose conditions on another’. The simple message the story UK refuses to pay for land intended to propagate to readers was that Britain refused to pay for the lost land because this issue or idea of compensation did not originate from them but was imposed on them by the Zimbabwean government. What is more, the story also wants to disseminate to readers the message that Britain is not against the issue of land redistribution but is against the issue of compensation which it (Britain) seems to be saying or suggesting should be paid by the Zimbabwean government. This message is maintained by the reporter when he says in his story UK refuses to pay for land that, ‘The British government said it would remain committed to supporting a transparent, fair and cost – effective programme of Land Reform in order to reduce poverty’.

4.4.2 A DECONSTRUCTION OF THE DAILY NEWS STORIES ON COMPENSATION

The Daily News in its attempt to communicate to readers the message that Britain ‘denies any obligation to compensate farmers’ included the words sovereign and independent state as well as impose conditions on another. The word sovereign suggests independence of all others and the message therefore is that Zimbabwe as an independent state cannot impose or force its laws on another state. So the fact that Britain and Zimbabwe are two different sovereign states, the message that is therefore suggested is that each state should remain independent of each other. Laws of one country or state cannot be used to govern or control another nation state.

The Daily News dated 14 January 2000 also carried a story captioned State to seize land without compensation which was written by a Staff Reporter. The dominant message was that the government was going to seize or take by force or grab land back which ‘belonged’ to the
white commercial farmers without paying any compensation. According to the reporter, the issue of compensation for the land was an obligation of Britain. This point was emphasized by Mnangagwa who was quoted in the story *State to seize land without compensation* as saying that, ‘We feel the former colonial master has an obligation to make available a fund for the purposes of paying compensation for land compulsorily acquired for resettlement’. *The Daily News* further quoted Mnangagwa saying that, ‘if in the event that the former colonial master fails to provide that fund then the government of Zimbabwe has no obligation to compensate for the land’. In an attempt to explain why the government of ZANU (PF) was refusing to pay compensation and instead wanted Britain to set funds aside for the exercise; the reporter of the story *State may not compensate for land* quoted the petition which was handed to the British High Commission by the war veterans which read in part that:

> We [war veterans] who fought for the liberation of our people and its resources, deeply believe that there should be no obligation on the part of the people of Zimbabwe to pay any compensation to any commercial farmer who is on Zimbabwean land that is acquired for resettlement of Zimbabwean people.

The message that the newspaper wanted to pass on to readers through the quotation above was that the government was not going to pay any compensation to the farmers who lost their land. The reporter used the words *may not* in the headline in order to put across the message that the issue of paying compensation or not, on land, solely depend or rests with the government of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean people believe that the land that the commercial farmers are occupying belongs to them [the black people] and therefore are not supposed to pay for it. This land was taken away from them during colonialism by the British.

In an endeavour again to demonstrate lack of justice or fairness on the part of the Zimbabwean government, *The Daily News* dated 23 March 2000 featured a story titled *LRF condemns State moves to amend constitution on land* in which the reporter says that, ‘The Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) says the proposal to amend the Lancaster House Constitution to empower the government to seize land without compensation is in contempt of democracy (*The Daily News* 23 March 2000: 3). The use of the words *Legal Resources Foundation* by the reporter is ideological and is or was meant to transmit to readers the message that the refusal by the Zimbabwean government to compensate white commercial farmers was illegal.
On 8 February 2000 *The Daily News* wrote and featured a story titled **CFU says draft constitution defies national reconciliation** which also sought to express to readers the information that commercial farmers were being short-changed by not being compensated fully for both land and infrastructure. The reporter highlighted that, ‘the government proposes to pay compensation only for farm improvements and not for the land’. The reason for this denial or refusal by the Zimbabwean government according to *The Daily News* was that, ‘the government argued that the farmers inherited land from their colonial forefathers who took it from blacks by force.

That land was taken by force is underscored by Pongweni (1982). Pongweni (1982: 18) revealed that the title of the song *Maruza vapambepfumi* (You have lost the war you Marauders) helped in defining three aspects of land. Firstly, the title suggests that land belongs to the native black people. Secondly, the title implies that when Africa in general and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in particular were colonized, Africans or the native people were removed from their land by force, that is, their land was forcefully taken away from them. The use of the linguistic sign *Vapambe...* (Marauder) in the song suggests that when colonizers came to Africa they took by force the native peoples’ land. Thirdly, the linguistic sign *Vapambepfumi* also implies marauders or looters of wealth. However, in an attempt to mask or cover up historical facts that whites took African land by force, *The Daily News* Correspondent in Gweru says that:

> According to CFU, sections 56 and 57 on land redistribution contained political and historical overtones, creating an impression that the government intended to use the constitution to mete out retribution on the white farmers to settle historical differences (*The Daily News* 8 February 2000: 2).

In addition to that, the reporter quoted Henwood saying that, ‘the background to the resettlement exercise is well known but the constitution cannot allow this portion to override the far more fundamental requirements that the country be governed free of historical prejudice’. Last but not least, *The Daily News* quoted Henwood dismissing the argument that the land or farms that white commercial farmers were using actually inherited them from their colonial forefathers who had stolen it and says that the current CFU members acquired their land through bona fide lawful transactions.
The intention of the excerpts above was communicate to readers the simple message that the government of Zimbabwe was wrong in trying to deny paying full compensation to white commercial farmers. In counter to that; Shylock Makonese in his article *The unfulfilled dream of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle* dated 17 February 2000 says that:

If history were to repeat itself, white farmers who lost their farms to government cannot claim compensation. The Rhodesians lost the war. The winners must exact retribution against the defeated settlers. Why should the Government of Zimbabwe be obliged to compensate white commercial farmers who did not get rights from the owners of the land? The farms must be taken back by the State. If a tenant develops a landlord’s property, no compensation can be paid when the landlord takes possession of the property (page 8).

What is therefore significant in the citation above is that no compensation should be paid to white commercial farmers as shown below. The inclusion of this story in *The Daily News* is strategic. The story itself appears as if it is supporting the Land Reform and for such a story to have been included in *The Daily News* is meant to convey the message that the newspaper is more democratic than *The Herald* that did not include stories which criticized the way the Land Reform was carried out. *The Daily News* thus occasionally include opinion pieces that tend to go against the newspaper’s anti Land Reform stance in order to anticipate criticism and parry it by appropriating the voice of opposition in the story.
The unfulfilled dream of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle

WHY did ZANU PF and PF Zapa take up arms to engage in a protracted armed liberation struggle during the late 60s and 70s? This query continues for giving the correct answer. The rallying point which breathed life into the Chimurenga War which culminated in the signing of December 1979 of the Lancaster House Constitution was land. Zimbabwe’s independence was celebrated on 18 April 1980. The masses were set on the threshold of great expectations. Independence was a dream come true.

Although the liberation forces defeated the forces of the Ian Smith regime, the political leaders did not get what the people wanted — the land. The Lancaster House agreement did not provide for retribution against those who throughout the struggle had been regarded as the enemy. An anticlimax to the independence of Zimbabwe was the policy of reconciliation, as enunciated by President Mugabe.

The annals of history show that, in war, defeated nations do not get compensation. They lose out. Did Britain get any compensation when it lost its colonies during the American War of Independence? Following Germany’s defeat by the Allied forces in the First World War, Germany’s African colonies were parcelled out to Britain and South Africa. There was no compensation paid to Germany. The League of Nations enacted retribution against the losers.

It is only in Zimbabwe where history has not repeated itself. Government is required to compensate commercial farmers — mostly white — who are willing to sell their farms. The irony of the political saga is that land was grabbed from the indigenous people by the white settlers.

When the settlers established the so-called Responsible Government in 1923, it took them only seven years to pass the Land Appropriation Act of 1930. The Act classified land as European and African. Between 1938 and 1959, some 133,000 Africans were forcibly removed from their land on the Highveld and resettled in the barren Lowveld areas. They were not compensated.

Zimbabwe has made insignificant strides to correct the land issue, the bugbear stalling the process being compensation. Who should compensate the white commercial farmers should government be forced to take their farms and resettle the landless peasants?

If history were to repeat itself, white farmers who lost their farms to government cannot claim compensation. The Rhodesians lost the war. The winners must exact retribution against the defeated settlers. Why should the Government of Zimbabwe be obliged to compensate white commercial farmers who did not get land rights from the owners of the land? The farmers must not be taken back by the State. If a tenant develops a landlord’s property, no compensation can be paid when the landlord takes possession of the property.

Our legislators should have addressed the contentious land issue seriously. It has lingered in the minds of the landless peasants for two decades now.

Surprisingly, these legislators have been engaged in power politics at the expense of national development. They were bent on amending the Lancaster House Constitution to boost the power of the President. Their female counterparts, on the other hand, were preoccupied in fighting for proportional representation in the national Assembly and higher posts in Zanu PF.

It appears our legislators have been barking up the wrong tree. The real issues at stake have played second fiddle to power politics. While the Lancaster House Constitution was patched and stitched 14 times, the country’s economy reeled, and the nation’s moral fibre decomposed through corruption, like dead wood ravaged by white ants. Rome continues to burn while legislators debate politics.

Strategic development projects have been stalled indefinitely. The Dabuka-Bulawayo railway line still needs to be electrified. The country imports more electrical power than it generates. The Zambezi-Bulawayo water pipeline project is still to get off the ground. People need to be resettled. A country-wide shortage of fuel supplies caused by Nocin’s failure to settle its $8 billion debt is further crippling an already ailing economy.

But government can afford to finance — in scarce foreign currency — thousands of troops fighting in the DRC.

Seventy percent of the estimated 12 million Zimbabweans, according to the 1980 National Development Plan, live in communal areas. Amongst the six major development objectives of the plan, land reform was listed as priority number after transformation of the economy. The plan envisaged resettlement of 15,000 families each year. To date, only a few have benefited from the scheme.

Resources like soils and forests are getting depleted rapidly. The rural folk are aware of the problem. They are no longer amused by government promises. The Svosve community of Marondera district hit the headlines last year when they occupied a nearby commercial farm. The peasants vowed they would not going to be moved. Government agreed the problem was a political one, but the police riot squad was sent to evict the settlers by force of arms.

Some State farms were allocated to Cabinet ministers and senior government officials behind the people’s back, all these problems notwithstanding.

The 1990 corruption perception index issued by Transparency International ranked Zimbabwe as 49th among the 91 countries rated in a survey — one being the least corrupt and 91 the worst.

The report was refuted by a Ministry of Information spokesman. To select a few cases, the Willowgate scandal of 1989, the recent looting of the War Victims Compensation Fund, and the Nocin affair, are enough evidence to the perilous level of corruption in the country.

Figure 41: The Daily News opinion story The unfulfilled dream of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle dated 17 February 2000 (Retrieved from The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)
4.5 GENERAL REMARKS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE STORIES ANALYSED IN THIS CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter was to critically analyse the language through which Land Reform was reported in *The Daily News*. With regards to the issue of land and ownership, *The Daily News* saw ownership as determined by the level of productivity on the land and not by historical prejudices. Implied was that, ownership of land was not determined by birth but by productivity. Both whites and blacks had similar chances of becoming the rightful owners of the land provided they use the land they were given productively. Thus, either white or black farmers would cease to be the rightful owners of the land if they decide to become unproductive on the farms. When ownership or land rights or tenure is stripped off because of farmer incompetence, the government or state will assume ownership or land rights until a time this land is given to another potential farmer.

In addition to the above, *The Daily News* argued that both whites and the so-called ‘native people of Zimbabwe’ or the ‘black majority’ are foreigners in the Zimbabwean land and the San people are the real owners of the Zimbabwean land. However, some scholars like Chihombori in Barry (2004) revealed that the San people were just moving wanderers and with no fixed abode. Bakare (1993) also saw the native people of Zimbabwe as the rightful owners of the land and they were forced of this land by the British. While Africans regarded land as revered in the pre-colonial period, the British, on the other hand, did not regard land as a sacred thing. As long as the land was arable or had minerals the British would make sure that they possess it. They would even displace the inhabitants forcefully. Bakare (1993:50) underpins the latter point by saying that:

> For Rhodes and his Pioneer Column, inspired from early childhood by traditional legends such as Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, there was nothing wrong with the idea of fighting for land, even if it was land already belonging to others. The BSAC’s desire, under Rhodes leadership, to invade Zimbabwe in order to occupy it and plunder its mineral resources was, within the context of British culture, an acceptable thing to do.

From the quotation above, the chapter highlighted that the British settlers did not have respect of the laws or tenure systems of Africans during colonial era. Additionally, the chapter argued that the removal of Africans from their traditional communal lands was indeed not a terrible thing in the eyes of settlers because these communal lands were not fenced or clearly marked and for the
British unmarked land meant that it was not owned (thus, the African traditional concept of ownership was taken advantage of). It is therefore apparent from the language used by Bakare (1993) that the two divergent views on land ownership systems by Africans and the British became the backbone of the British occupation of the Native or African people’s land and the root of three revolts namely the First Chimurenga, the Second Chimurenga and the Third Chimurenga. The British settlers’ interest in owning land lay solely in the potential mineral resources (Bakare, 1993:50). Mining speculation was the primary reason for Rhodes’ desire to go north (that is, coming from South Africa). When the British arrived in what is now called Zimbabwe, they forcefully removed Africans off their land and they pushed them to what are now known as ‘Reserves’. *The Daily News* omitted all the above information in the stories analyzed in this chapter regarding the issue of land and ownership.

An analysis of the coverage of land and distribution in *The Daily News* showed that land was mostly taken by the elite class at the expense of the needy villagers. The elite or status quo amassed multiple farms to an extent that they ended up leasing some of the farms. *The Daily News* saw the redistribution of land as racial in the sense that it was meant to settle some scores and not to resettle the landless black majority. The taking away of white commercial farmers’ land was seen by the white community as a punishment from the government of ZANU (PF) following their failure to get the required number of votes during the 2000 referendum that could have enabled them to amend a clause in the constitution which would then allow them to acquire land without paying compensation. What is more, land redistribution exercise was seen by *The Daily News* as a political gimmick by the government of ZANU (PF). In addition to that, the white community through *The Daily News* argued that it was only idle land that was supposed to be redistributed. The assumption was that white owned land in Zimbabwe was not supposed to be touched. A critical analysis of the stories however revealed that *The Daily News* only focused on the elite class when it comes to the issue of land and distribution. They blamed the elite class for acquiring more farms which they did not use or lease resulting in reduced productivity, hunger and starvation amongst the black majority. Blacks were seen as a race which did not deserve land. No mention was also made on the number of low to middle black class who were given land and how they were using these lands allocated to them. Mphahlele (1959), however, revealed that Africans were actually good farmers. Europeans started using language which was full of negative stereotypes about Africans in their media. Their media began to use language or
frames which portrayed Africans as backward and inefficient farmers so as to prevent competition in agriculture. In other words, most Africans were socialised into thinking that Europeans were more superior to them when it comes to tilling the land. The fear of the Europeans, they point out, was that ‘increased production by Africans would not only threaten their markets, but would diminish the flow of labour from the Reserves (Woddis, 1960: 10).

On the other hand, although the media used language which portrayed Europeans as superior to Africans when it comes to farming it was proved that European settlers were inefficient farmers. Even with the best land in their possession they have to be constantly subsidized and aided by governments, and ‘protected’ against African competition by the introduction of various restrictions or limitations on African agriculture, and by the introduction of various discriminatory measures in favour of the European farmer (Woddis, ibid:8). If railways were already built, Woddis (ibid) further highlighted that Europeans would take good care to ensure that the lands they possessed included those portions adjoining the rail routes; and in the same way, new lines were built with European interests in mind. It was the same with access to main roads and markets. European farmers were given all the advantages. As with transport facilities, so with prices; it was the European settler who was favoured. The Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs publication (1959:22-3) states that while the European producer received 40s. Per bag of maize for the 1957 harvest, the African producer got only 27s. Despite the advantages provided for Europeans, Brown (ibid: 24) says that in Southern Rhodesia ‘no great examination is needed to see that European agriculture in Southern Rhodesia … [was] … the most inefficient in the world’.

With regards to the issue of land and compensation, The Daily News reported that white commercial farmers were supposed to receive full compensation as opposed to the government proposals that compensation was only going to be paid for the infrastructure and not the soil. The Daily News further revealed that United Kingdom refused to pay compensation for the land as propounded by the government of Zimbabwe in the draft constitution of 2000 on the basis that it was a sovereign State and the laws of another sovereign State were null and void in their country. Each country was independent and because of that no country had the power to impose its laws on another independent country. The Daily News however did not report that compensation, was in fact, not even supposed to be paid, be it for the land or infrastructure, since the land that white
commercial farmers claimed to be theirs was actually obtained by their forefathers through acts of trickery and robbery. This point was underscored by Woddis (1960) who said that, ‘The history of Africa’s relations with the West has been a history of robbery- robbery of African manpower, its mineral and agricultural resources, and its land’. If land was robbed, as indicated by Woddis (ibid) then it goes without saying that when the person (the Zimbabwean people) who have been robbed their land finally came to realise the robber and the land that was robbed, the only sensible thing to do was to take back what rightfully belonged to them. That was the essence of the Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe according to some people in Zimbabwe notably the government of ZANU (PF) led by Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe and as reported by state owned newspapers (Kwayedza and The Herald). The use of the term comrade was part of the discourse of legitimising Land Reform.

With regards to the operations of the media, The Daily News played a watchdog or Forth – Estate role. In a democratic society Schudson (2008) points out that the media should serve at least six functions and these are:

I. Information: the news media can provide fair and full information so citizens can make sound political choices;
II. Investigation: the news media can investigate concentrated sources of power, particularly governmental power;
III. Analysis: the news media can provide coherent frameworks of interpretation to help citizens comprehend a complex world;
IV. Social empathy: journalism can tell people about others in their society and their world so that they can come to appreciate the viewpoints and lives of other people, especially those less advantaged than themselves;
V. Public forum: journalism can provide a forum for dialogue among citizens and serve as a common carrier of the perspectives of varied groups in society;
VI. Mobilization: the news media can serve as advocates for particular political programs and perspectives and mobilize people to act in support of these programs (Schudson, ibid: 12).

Schudson pointed out that when reporting on controversial issues like Land reform in Zimbabwe newspaper journalists should provide fair and full information about the issue. In this study; fair and full information implies a well researched and comprehensive account of an issue like Land Reform program in Zimbabwe. In other words, for news stories to be regarded as fair and full the language that journalists use must incorporate all sides to the issues. By acting as a public sphere,
it is also assumed that at least all different voices so are languages pertaining Land reform in Zimbabwe will have their chances to be heard in a news story. That the language of reportage of Land Reform in Zimbabwean newspapers is vital as it directly affects readers’ perception of Land Reform programme is further emphasized by Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 24) who state that:

If we assume that the media provide most of the “reality” that people know outside their own personal experience, then studying media [frames] surely helps [in assessing] what reality it is that [people] consume [and] simply establishing that messages are available, does not by any means assure that those messages have an effect.

Consequently, although The Daily News managed to play its watchdog role, an analysis of the newspaper stories also revealed that it played a lapdog role. It supported the interests of white commercial farmers to a greater extent. Whenever it covered the black farmers the language was full of negative stereotypes (a characteristic that was prevalent in colonial newspapers in Southern Rhodesia). In view of the above The Daily News also failed to inform readers about other important issues regarding land. Although the newspaper was shown or presented as independent of the government but depended on individuals with certain interests, the reporters seemed to have used only white commercial farmers or those people who sympathised with white commercial farmers. This overreliance of The Daily News on similar sources culminated in half backed news stories. Readers were not fully informed on such issues like land and ownership or land and compensation.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter focus was on the language of representing Land Reform in The Daily News. The chapter revealed that The Daily News followed a neo – liberal ideology and it presented news in an extremely different manner when compared with State owned newspapers. It was argued that The Daily News adopted a stance that could at best be described as extreme in so far as the newspaper concentrated on stories that revealed the negative aspects of the Land Reform. This ideological posture was expected in a context of acute political differences. The Daily News’ very critical stance of the Land Reform was necessary to keep government politicians and their newspapers awake and not take people for granted. But it was also suggested that The Daily
News’ anti - the idea of Land Reform was unpatriotic. When The Daily News approach appeared ahistorical, the newspapers shifted goal posts and started to argue at the level of criticising the government for not compensating white farmers of the land taken from them. It is common knowledge that all newspapers use commissioned correspondents who are given space to write as independent voices. The Daily News exploited this fully. Use of Chinja Maitiro not only situated the reader within the MDC camp, but implied that all people who write and read The Daily News represent the new’ political voice of MDC. This strategy can backfire in the sense that not all people who read The Herald are ZANU (PF) as implied by The Daily News.

Chapter 5 focuses on the framing of Land Reform in The Daily Mirror newspaper. The Daily Mirror newspaper is independent of the government or individuals and claims to be operating in the ‘middle of the road’ thus serving the public interest. It will be argued that The Daily Mirror criticizes both The Daily News, The Herald and Kwayedza’s polarized ways of representing the Land Reform.
CHAPTER 5

REPRESENTATION OF LAND REFORM IN THE DAILY MIRROR

... it can make a big difference to people if they realize that becoming better informed does not simply mean reading more papers... it means decoding the information from [newspapers] with a critical eye (Bennett 1996)

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4 focus was on the coverage of Land Reform in The Daily News newspaper. The way The Daily News covered Land Reform was shown to be one sided and against the Land Reform, just as The Herald and Kwayedza were also biased and depicted one side, but in support of the land. The three newspapers (The Herald, Kwayedza and The Daily News), thus, adopted a similar stance in terms of their extremity of their entrenched approaches though for different purposes. In other words, The Daily News newspaper took an extremely oppositional position in its representation of Land Reform when compared with State owned newspaper that took extreme position in support of the Land Reform. Philosophically, The Herald, Kwayedza and The Daily News participated in polarising society. The newspapers succeeded in not giving the readers the total truth from different perspectives in the stories that they presented. This chapter focuses on the depiction of Land Reform in The Daily Mirror. The Daily Mirror is regarded as a ‘middle of the road’ newspaper. Middle of the road or centrist newspapers are often moderate or fair in their reportage of issues such as Land Reform, advocating or supporting neither extreme left – wing nor extreme right – wing positions when it comes to the reportage of issues such as Land Reform. In a nutshell, centrisr or middle of the road newspapers took positions which are not necessarily aligned to a single political ideology. They promote ideas that appear neutral and they support minor fine tuning changes that are typically designed to address popular demands rather than ideological views (Woshinsky 2008:141). In addition to the above, middle of the road newspapers do not produce propaganda (half truths, misinformation or party lines). They produce straight news. Middle of the road newspapers therefore act or can act as the bridges between two extreme positions. Centrist newspapers believe that focusing on one or the other extreme position closes off many options that can be
discussed. In bargain, middle of the road newspapers offers’ some solutions to a number of the challenges that may possibly be encountered.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to analyse textually the language of reportage of Land Reform in selected stories in *The Daily Mirror*. Only where relevant, will critical voices from some readers, be solicited in order to support or complicate interpretations of how Third Chimurenga is depicted or represented in the selected stories. Representation is the production of meaning through language. The basic argument of this chapter is that *The Daily Mirror* – as a middle of the road newspaper – directed most of its energies in writing or presenting stories to do with Land and Development as shown below.

5.1 REPRESENTATION OF LAND AND DEVELOPMENT IN *THE DAILY MIRROR*

Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (2008) attributed the land hunger and subsequent poverty of Zimbabweans to ‘the bad behaviour of white landowners of converting land suitable for cropping to ranching and wildlife production’. This conversion of land suitable for cropping to ranching and wildlife production provided some gunpowder which latter exploded in the year 2000. Both politicians and peasants saw this act of converting land suitable for cropping to ranching and wildlife production as socially undesirable and constituted an obstacle to land redistribution. The government, in bargain, saw the conversion of land suitable for cropping to ranching and wildlife production as an act of sabotaging food security. In view of the above, one of the objectives of Land Reform exercise as stated or agreed at the Lancaster House conference was ‘to improve the standards of living of the largest and poorest sector of the population of Zimbabwe’ (Moyana 1984: 24). In order to improve the standards of living of the largest and poorest sector of the population of Zimbabwe the government of ZANU (PF) embarked on a fast track land redistribution exercise. For Marx and Engels in Althuser (ibid) development can only be achieved through the distribution of the country’s wealth. In bargain, Moyo and Matondi in Amanor and Moyo (2008: 81) saw land as the crucial ingredient for development or prosperity of Zimbabweans. Providing people with land and security over resources is therefore an essential step in creating incentives for sustainable resource use and that eventual prosperity of Zimbabweans will be guaranteed as underscored by Moyo when he said that:
Sustainable land utilization requires key land, agricultural and economic policy measures which are necessary to increase agricultural productivity, investment and exports, and [which] bring stability and confidence in the new land property rights, and related laws (Moyo and Matondi, 2008)

Implied by the quotation above is the idea that owning land alone does not result in ‘prosperity’ of Zimbabweans. Prosperity depends largely on how the beneficiaries of the Land Reform programme utilise land, amongst other variables or determinant factors. The other ingredients are freedom or sovereign land rights as highlighted by Professor Rukuni, a critical reader. Even though land was distributed to the ‘black majority’ The Daily Mirror argued that the standards of living of the largest and poorest sector of the population of Zimbabwe did not improve. Underdevelopment according to The Daily Mirror was necessitated by unproductive use of arable lands allocated to the ‘black majority’. The Daily Mirror advanced the latter idea in the story captioned A2 farms’ lying idle which was written by Fidelis Zvomuya on pages 1 and 3 on 17 January 2003 as shown below.

**Figure 42:** The Daily Mirror story A2 farms lying idle dated 17 January 2003. (Retrieved from The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)
The visual picture in the above story presents a fat and well-known ZANU (PF) politician and what is implied is that this is the class of people who have benefited from the Land Reform. In the background of this story in black and white are huge cars; Prados and Pajeros. Again, the visual pictures are meant to influence the reader to think that the resources that could have gone to developing the land have been used to buy luxury cars. It becomes easier for the reader to understand why, from the perspective of *The Daily Mirror*, the A2 large tracts of land are lying idle.

### 5.2 Framing Analysis: Land and Productivity in *The Daily Mirror*

Productivity is the ratio of inputs over outputs. In order to improve the standards of living of people land should be efficiently and productively used in producing goods or services with an economic value. Mugabe (2001) fortifies this latter point when he says that, ‘land is the economy [or wealth] and the economy [or wealth] is land’. Accordingly, higher productivity usually translates in most cases to ‘improved standards of living of the largest and poorest sector of the population of Zimbabwe’ (Moyana 1984). What follows below is an analysis of *The Daily Mirror* story **A2 farms lying idle** dated 17 January 2003 which is shown above and which was written on pages 1 and 3 by Fidelis Zvomuya. This story deals with the issue of land and productivity.

#### 5.2.1 Preferred Readings

The story was written at a time when land redistribution exercise was almost at its peak and most of the black people have been allocated some pieces of land. During this time (around 2003), focus was greatly on ascertaining the success of land redistribution exercise by looking at or taking stock of what was happening on the pieces of land (farms) acquired and allocated to the landless black majority. The idea of land audits was underscored by Professor Rukuni (ibid) who said that, ‘if you don’t know where you are going any road will take you there’. This is the essence of auditing. From the view above, *The Daily Mirror* through its story headlined **A2 farms lying idle** revealed that most of the lands allocated under A2 model were not being fully utilised. The reporter, Fidelis Zvomuya, furthermore revealed that underutilisation or unproductive use of land allocated under A2 model were due to a number of distinct reasons. First; underutilisation or idleness of land ‘was due to the fact that most [of the] applicants were
expecting cleared land, infrastructure, [and] rich soil’. The word ‘expecting’ is synonymous to ‘looking forward to’ and so the dominant reading that *The Daily Mirror* wanted to relay to readers was that although most resettled farmers were looking forward to cleared lands, rich soils and infrastructure, the land that was allocated to them did not have fertile soils as anticipated. Secondly, these farmers did not get cleared lands with well-established infrastructure.

The story *A2 farms lying idle* also cited multiple farm ownership as an impediment to productive use of land. Zvomuya underscored the latter point when he said that, ‘there was also the complication of multiple applications that resulted in some people getting land in many places’. That most A2 farms were underutilised, if utilised at all, was furthermore underscored in the same story by Chanetsa in his report to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Land. Zvomuya (ibid), the reporter of the story *A2 farms lying idle* quoted Chanetsa saying that, ‘A2 farmers expected prepared land with heavy soils, some were after houses while others made multiple applications, resulting in some plots left unoccupied, affecting the provincial crop output’. This idea was underpinned by Sachikonye when he said that, ‘Multiple farm ownership culminated in hunger, food shortages, loss of exports, acute poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and loss of production (Sachikonye in Barry, 2004: 69; Goebel, 2005: 7).

Another dominant reading was that reduced productivity in the farms allocated to A2 farmers was due to lack of seriousness on the part of these new farmers and, ‘some [people] who took up their plots [were] only *cell phone farmers* who manage their plots from urban centres or only visit farms during weekends with very little production’ (*The Daily Mirror* story *A2 farms lying idle* above). Ngugi (1986:21) commenting of a similar situation in Kenya sums it all when he says that, ‘for unlike their settler white counterparts who farmed full time and reinvested in their lands, the new owners [black farmers] did so on their telephones for they have other full time jobs’. In short, the language of reportage in the story *A2 farms lying idle* advanced the idea or message that Land Reform did not culminate in increased productivity owing to underutilisation of the land that was mostly distributed under A2 model. These farmers were supposed to do commercial farming. What is more, the fact that most of these farmers were only after the farmhouses also meant that they were not greatly concerned with farming, but with finding some ‘decent’ accommodations or places to reside on. On the aspect of land and distribution as well as
land and productivity, Chinodya in Barry (2004: 27) commented that there were some inequalities amongst the beneficiaries. He reiterated that, ‘The once flourishing farmhouses and barns were now for the ‘chefs’ who drove Mercedes Benzes and Pajeros… [And] some were interested in amassing farm after farm (Chinodya, ibid). The citation above further suggested that land was distributed unfairly amongst the people and it was the elite class (A2 farmers) who benefitted a lot in the process. Some of the beneficiaries, however, did not make good use of the land.

5.2.2 DECONSTRUCTING THE STORY A2 FARMS LYING IDLE

Deconstruction, according to Johnson (1981), denotes a particular kind of reading and

Is not synonymous with "destruction" … It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis' itself, which etymologically means "to undo" - a virtual synonym for "to de-construct."… If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text's critical difference from itself.

In order to deconstruct the story A1 farms lying idle the following section will begin by analysing or deconstructing the lexical choices made by Fidelis Zvomuya – the reporter – in the story A1 farms lying idle.

5.2.2.1 WORD CHOICE ANALYSIS

Words, as one of the framing devices, are used in emphasising, excluding and elaborating certain ideas (Tankard 1990). The reporter used the syntax A2 farms in order to communicate or expose the caliber of people who were given land under the commercial model or scheme. A2 farms were given to people who were supposed to be financially stable and who were therefore able to start commercial farming without relying too much on government assistance or subsidies. Ability to start commercial farming at once suggested that these new farmers (A2 farmers) had the capacity of turning unproductive lands into productive ones or turning infertile lands into fertile ones. Being classified as an A2 farmer also meant that one had the capital muscle to set up the required infrastructure in order to run commercial farming activities successfully. However, the use or the inclusion of the word idle in the headline of the story A2 farms lying idle which is
synonymous with the words *inactive, unused, unoccupied, redundant, inoperative or at rest* suggests or communicates first; the message that the so called farmers with ‘strong capital bases or muscles’ were failing to use productively, the lands they acquired. Secondly, the word *idle* also suggests that the criterion that was used in selecting and qualifying new farmers or applicants as either A1s or A2s was not sound or robust.

That the criteria used in selecting applicants as A2 farmers was not robust is reflected in the story **A2 farms lying idle** above through the words *most applicants*. The inclusion of the word *most*, which stands for or represents majority or a greater number of applicants, is therefore used in this story to give emphasis to the ‘possible lack’ of a clear cut or robust system used in selecting appropriate applicants under A2 model. Put differently, the fact that A2 farms were lying idle also suggested that most of the applicants whose applications were considered successful did not deserve land under A2 model. Maybe a significant number of the beneficiaries did not have adequate farming skills and lacked a good track record in farming. Underutilisation of farms culminated in declining production trends, thus, food crisis.

The syntaxes *expected cleared land with heavy soils and infrastructure* in the story **A2 farms lying idle** were also not by accident but by design (Larson 2001) and they were meant to interrogate the manner in which these so called *successful applicants* in the story above managed to get land under A2 model. Implied therefore is the thought that these so called *successful applicants* did not have the needed capital to kick start production as they claimed. What is more, lack of financial resources to run A2 farms by the so called *successful applicants* suggested that these farmers were maybe given land on political grounds. With regards to the subject of land and distribution, Mutasa (2005: 36) urged the government to give land to every Zimbabwean without regard to political affiliation. In the novel *Sekai Minda tave nayo* (2005), Sekai, who is a female character in the novel, advised those in charge of land redistribution to be fair when she said that, ‘*Musapa minda muchitarira bato rake*’ (Do not give land on political affiliations or grounds). The word *fair* suggests that land should be given to deserving candidates. However, it was the government of ZANU (PF) which was distributing or allocating land to ‘landless’ people during the time and so the people who were given land mostly under A2 model may have been aligned strongly to the ZANU (PF) party. What this means is that capital requirements became secondary to political affiliations. As long as one belonged to or was aligned to ZANU (PF) he or
she was most likely to be given land under A2 model – even if he/she did not have the required capital.

The inclusion of the words or syntaxes *lack of expected infrastructure* or *heavy soils* is also ideological in sense that the syntax questioned the nobleness of the Land Reform programme, that is, whether the exercise was really meant to redistribute ‘fertile’ lands to the black majority or not. The word *majority* is synonymous with the words *greater part* of the Zimbabwean population. Thus, blacks constituted the greatest number when compared to the white race. What is therefore implied is the belief that all black people were supposed to be given fertile lands which were recovered from white commercial farmers. So if most of these successful applicants did not get fertile soils; then the next question would be that, who got these fertile lands? That during the struggle, the thinking of the people was that the attainment of independence, (symbolising the defeat of the erstwhile colonisers) was automatically going to resolve the issue of land is revealed by Vambe (2006). Vambe (2006) like Choto (1990) and Chinodya (2004) pointed out that after independence the leaders ‘cheated’ the masses by not restoring the fertile lands that the masses had been deprived of during colonialism – within an accepted and anticipated space or time. These black people (elite class) got into the position of the erstwhile colonisers. They amassed ‘all’ lands with fertile soils. In addition, Choto (ibid) revealed that not only did the black elites cheat the peasants; they even went further into regarding any peasant who stood up and choose to disagree with them as a rival of the regime.

That most farms were absconded because of lack of infrastructure also conveyed the message that the government farm mechanisation programme did not benefit a lot of people but only a few. Since most farmers who were allocated land under A2 model grumbled over lack of infrastructure, the message connoted that farm mechanisation programme only benefited a small group of people. On the aspects of Land and resources which ultimately impacted on the output of the land, Chinodya in Barry (2004: 27) said that:

> The soil was rich, but the poor farmers had no cattle or donkeys for traction, no tractors and tillage was hard. The few tractors that were available were overbooked. As if to punish the new settlers the skies refused to give rains, for years in a row.

The extract above aids in explaining that lack of material and financial resources coupled with erratic rains culminated in reduced output in farms. This is opposed to the views held by people
like George, a fictional character in Muchuri (2004: 8) letter titled We will never turn back who saw Africans as ‘lazy people who can only sleep and snore’. Bakare (1993) reiterated on the aspect of land vis à vis native people before the colonisation of Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe that most Africans used to live in areas with fertile soils such as ‘Makoni country which was cut into numerous European farms’ (Nyagumbo in Bakare, 1993: 60). The native people worked the land and produced food to subsist themselves. In other instances they generated surpluses which they barter traded or sold to others.

In an endeavour to explain why most A2 farms remained idle, the reporter also cited Multiple farm ownership as the other reason. The inclusion of the syntax Multiple farm ownership in the story A2 farms lying idle above was not by mistake but by design (Larson 2001). These words were meant to communicate to readers the dominant message that the way land was apportioned to new farmers was not properly monitored. It was haphazard or chaotic as underscored by Gasela in the letter Food crisis in Zimbabwe: the full picture below dated 9 January 2003 in which he described Land Reform as The chaotic fast – track.

It is the fastness in the distribution of land that led to some prospective farmers amassing many farms while others were left with none. The message that is subtly being communicated is that there were no systems in place to check and balance who got what and where in order to minimise or eliminate completely cases of multiple farm ownerships which culminated in some if not most pieces of allocated lands to lie idle. The message that there were no checks and balances on who got what and where and whether those who got what and where deserved these farms under A2 model was furthermore emphasised through the inclusion of the words A1 now the backbone of the country. The syntax A1 now the backbone of the country is sarcastic in the sense that it communicates to readers the idea that A1 farmers; who were once a downgraded group of farmers when compared with A2 farmers due to the fact that they were regarded by others as farmers lacking the financial resources and possible knowledge or skills to do commercial farming, in actual fact became the backbone of the country. They ran the economy due to their increased agricultural productivity levels when compared with A2 farmers. The ultimate of this sarcasm/mockery was therefore the further questioning of the manner in which land was distributed to ‘potential’ farmers under A2 model in order to boost productivity in the country. Chanetsa in the story A2 farms lying idle, however, placed the allocation of most of the
fertile lands to A1 farmers, whom he labeled as *occupiers* in the report, as the other reason why A2 farms were absconded and this thinking demonstrates some narrow minded judgments.

First; the word *occupier* seems to suggest that people who were allocated land under A1 model got these fertile lands by default, that is, they did not deserve these fertile lands. However, during the inception of Land Reform programme, one of the reasons that were put forth to justify the exercise was that Land Reform was meant to redistribute fertile lands acquired from white commercial farmers to the black majority. Manzungu in Barry (2004: 56) stresses the point when he said that:

> During the initial stages of the discussion about Land Reform, the plan was to acquire five million hectares of agricultural land to relieve the pressure on the communal areas and correct the racial imbalance in the commercial farming sector... for economic reasons the government was to acquire only under-utilized land or that of absentee owners.

The fact that Land Reform was aimed at relieving pressure on the communal areas as well as correct the racial imbalance in the commercial farming sector A1 farmers, who are the majority when compared with A2 farmers, should not be seen therefore as *occupiers* in the negative sense. Once more, the fact that A1 farmers became *the backbone of the country* does not mean that they got fertile lands as claimed by Chanetsa in his report. Getting fertile lands is one thing, and productive use of this land is another thing again, that ensures development. The verity that A1 farmers occupied farms is a clear demonstration that they meant business when compared with A2 farmers who in the story *A2 farms lying idle* are labeled as *Cellphone farmers*.

A1 farmers were mostly expected to do subsistence farming. Subsistence farming focuses mainly on producing food for home use and the surplus, if any, for sale. What is being communicated through the syntax *A1 now the backbone of the country* is that the expected foreign currency earnings which was supposed to be gained through commercial farming (A2 model) was now a thing beyond reach or imagination as most farmlands were turned first, into subsistence farming, and secondly, left unoccupied by A2 farmers, who lacked the element of seriousness in the way they conducted their farming businesses. Lack of seriousness on the part of most A2 farmers was demonstrated by their absence in the farms allocated to them and their ‘remote monitoring’ of the farms allocated to them.
Figure 42: The Daily Mirror letter Food crisis in Zimbabwe: the full picture - 9 January 2003. (Retrieved at The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)

Being a cellphone farmer as stated above furthermore implies that an individual does not step up foot on the land allocated to him or her in order to have a first hand experience of the events unfolding on his/her farm(s). A cellphone is a communication device that enables individuals to communicate with each other from different locations. Having said this, its usage in the story A2
farms lying idle above is intended to convey to readers the message that some, if not most, of the people who were allocated land under A2 model did not even bother to step up their feet on the farms. They operated from other locations or they maybe considered farming the ‘other’ business, that is, farming occupies a second or third place in the hierarchy of importance as evidenced by the inability or absence of A2 farmers to monitor events as they unfold on the farms. The consequent of this sad scenario, as revealed in The Daily Mirror story A2 farms lying idle above, was increased poverty amongst the black majority, and in the midst of Land Reform.

While the intention of the story A2 farms lying idle was to communicate to readers the message that lack of cleared lands, infrastructure and heavy soils and multiple farm ownership were the major causes of idleness in lands or farms allocated under A2 model, the story omitted a lot of information that readers could have wanted to hear with regards to farms left unoccupied. Some of these omissions are as discussed below.

5.2.2.2 OMISSION ANALYSIS

Omission is failure by the media to adequately report on important issues and this can and does have long term negative consequences. Thus, when potions of a story are revealed it is very difficult to understand the full story behind. What people see and do not see help shape their opinions. In the story A2 farms lying idle above, the reporter omitted vital information regarding the manner in which farmers were selected and allocated land under A2 model. A2 farms were supposed to be given to people who had strong financial or capital bases/resources to start commercial farming. In the story A2 farms lying idle the reporter says that, ‘More than 6000 offer letters were signed and distributed to successful applicants out of more than 40 000 who applied for the A2 model’. For an applicant to be considered successful one has to be financially strong or should have demonstrated that he or she has the ability or the resources to start commercial farming. However, it is these 6000 so called successful farmers who, in the story A2 farms lying idle, are now reported as grumbling about the absence of infrastructure to kick start commercial farming or to productively use the land that was apportioned to them. Furthermore, the farmers grumbled that they did not get fertile soils. It is against this backdrop that one wonders whether the reporter did his homework or research of the facts well before
writing this story to ascertain the criteria that the government used in allocating land under A2 model. Some of the readers would have loved to hear the vital information of how the so called successful applicants got their farms under A2 model and/or whether these A2 farmers in actuality had the capital or financial resources required to run successful commercial farming.

Hall’s (1997) theory of preferred readings states that readers of media products are not passive customers or consumers of media products. In this respect and in the event that the frame used by the reporter is inadequate to explain an issue at hand, readers can come up with other frames which they think best explain the issue(s) at hand. One of the frames that some critical readers of The Daily Mirror came up with was that, ‘lack of capital resources to run commercial farming on the part of the farmers who were allocated land under A2 model was due to land allocations which were based on political grounds or lines’ (Questionnaire dated 20 April 2012). If land was allocated along political grounds, what qualified an individual under A2 model was therefore not the soundness or strength of his or her capital or financial resources. If an applicant was aligned to ZANU (PF) party it was more likely that that person would be apportioned land; a point that Sekai, a character in Mutasa’s (2005) novel Sekai minda tave nayo, forewarned when she said that, ‘land should not be monopolised by a few whites or black elites’ and advised those in charge of land redistribution to be fair. She said that, ‘Musapa minda muchitarira bato rake’ (Do not give on political grounds or lines).’

In the story A2 farms lying idle the reporter also failed by omission to reveal to readers the nature or characteristics of people who were expected to clear the lands for A2 farmers. Since most A2 farmers expected to get cleared lands, the story should have interviewed one of the A2 farmers to ascertain the nature of people they anticipated to clear or to have cleared land for them. One critical reader of The Daily Mirror who happened to be an A1 farmer indicated that he was displaced several times from the land he was initially allocated and these lands were re–allocated to the so called A2 farmers (Questionnaire dated 20 April 2012). It is against the above comment that other people were left conjecturing on whether the so called ‘poor’ farmers or people (A1 farmers) (who could not afford the land under A2 scheme due to lack of capital resources) were the ones who were supposed to clear lands for the so called A2 farmers.
The fact that most A2 farmers expected land with fertile soils and in the end got lands with infertile soils gives to readers the impression that some, if not most, of the lands that were acquired under the so called Fast track Land Reform programme by the government did not have fertile lands as assumed. This latter point was underscored by Manzungu in his 2004 article titled *Environmental impacts of the fast-track land reform programme: a livelihoods perspective*. He said that Land Reform programme culminated in land, previously zoned as non – arable, being brought under cultivation, predisposing it to environmental degradation as well as increased possibilities of flooding. In view of this, A2 farmers were therefore ‘justified’ in absconding farms allocated. The story **A2 farms lying idle** therefore omitted information pertaining to the nature or characteristics of the land acquired and eventually allocated. This information was going to assist readers in ascertaining whether Land Reform exercise was really meant to restore fertile lands to the ‘black majority’ or not. The linguistic sign *majority* was used in the story to reveal to readers that blacks outnumbered whites in Zimbabwe. In view of the latter point, the information the reporter omitted was that if fertile lands were acquired and were not given to A2 farmers then could it be possible to say that all these fertile lands were allocated to A1 farmers and if not then the question would be that: who really got the fertile land amongst A2 farmers? Is it the so called elite class as underscored by Chinodya (2004)? That most fertile lands were taken up by A1 farmers was however put forth by Chanetsa who is quoted in the story **A2 farms lying idle** saying that, ‘those expecting farms with good soil on the A2 plots did not get them as most were taken up by farm occupiers, resulting in some being demarcated for A1’.

The information that is omitted in the story **A2 farms lying idle** is to do with whether A1 farmers were not supposed to be the beneficiaries of Land Reform exercise. These A1 farmers were or are also part of the ‘black majority’ who were expected to get fertile lands according to the mandate of Land Reform. However in this story comrade Chanetsa blamed A1 farmers for acquiring fertile soils at the expense of A2 farmers. The reporter, however, should have revealed that A1 farmers were also part and parcel of the Land Reform programme and deserved fertile lands as well. (The use of the term *comrade* in the story **A2 farms lying idle** is part of the discourse of legitimising Land Reform). The use of the word *occupiers* in the story **A2 farms lying idle** is therefore misleading in the sense that it conveys to readers the message that A1 farmers fertile lands by default or they were not supposed to get or be allocated fertile lands/soils. In a nutshell, the reporter should have informed readers that A1 model was also part
of the government of ZANU (PF) plan or strategy to allocating land to black people who did not have the capital resources to do commercial farming.

*The Daily Mirror* story **A2 farms lying idle** also failed to furnish readers with information regarding the government’s logic of acquiring infertile lands and allocating them to farmers yet one of the objectives of Land Reform was to restore fertile lands to the black majority who had been impoverished during colonialism when they were placed in native areas. The Native Areas (or reserves) had ‘poor soils, usually the poorer types of granite-sand known technically as Class III land; while the European Area contains nearly all the areas of fertile soil in the colony (Brown, 1959:5). The reporter should have furnished readers with information on why the government acquired these pieces of lands or why they distributed infertile or unproductive lands to farmers. This omission left readers with no option but to come up with their own frames in trying to interpret the story behind the story. One of the frames that emerged was that the whole Land Reform exercise was a ‘political gimmick’. Moyo and Matondi (2008: 62) underscored this point when they said that, ‘Apart from these gross land imbalances emanating from the colonial period, the possibility of electoral failure in 2000 by the government of ZANU (PF) led the government to embark on the land redistribution exercise’.

Still other critical readers of *The Daily Mirror* were of the view that A2 farmers were given – what they claim to be lands with infertile soils or with no infrastructure, to mention but just two – maybe because they had presented their credentials as people who had the ability to turn unproductive or infertile lands into productive ones because they had the capacity of introducing technology on the land on their own owing to their strong financial or capital resources. Again the reporter of the story **A2 farms lying idle** only mentioned ‘multiple farm ownership’ as the reason why most farms allocated under A2 model were left unoccupied or unproductive. The story did not, however, go on to show how most applicants got more than one farm if the government of ZANU (PF) had systems in place to check on who got what and where. If Land Reform was really the government’s programme as they claimed (Mugabe 2001) then they were supposed to have known the exact numbers of people who were allocated land and where. The challenge of ‘multiple farm ownership’ could have been unheard off. The idea of multiple farm ownership suggests that land was not equitably distributed amongst the so called ‘black majority’ as claimed by the government of ZANU (PF) who appeared during the time to be in control of
the Land Reform exercise which is dubbed Third Chimurenga. Whether the system that was used in monitoring who got what and where was robust or otherwise was therefore omitted by the reporter of the story A2 farms lying idle. This led other critics to view Land Reform as an exercise that was not done within the confines of law. If there was rule of law the number of cases of multiple farm ownership could have been minimal. Muchuri (2004: 14) emphasised the latter point when he says that, ‘the government should [have] first enforced a law that…would guide the whole land redistribution process without any prejudice’

The story A2 farms lying idle also mentioned that A1 now the backbone of the country. Whether it was the availability of fertile soils under A1 model that necessitated A1 farmers to produce more or whether their successes were due to other factors like expertise, rainfall, or availability of inputs like fertilizers and seeds were not even mentioned in the story. If most A2 applicants did not get fertile soils who then are the few people who got fertile lands is the question that the story did not answer. The information on whether the words ‘the few’ referred to the so called ‘the elite’ was omitted. This omission did not help some of the critical readers of The Daily Mirror but left them with room for speculation. One of the frames that emerged from the speculation was that the few A2 farmers who got fertile lands were ZANU (PF) stalwarts or those peasants who were strongly aligned to ZANU (PF) government.

What is more, the story did not even portray to readers the exact people or nature or caliber of the so called cellphone farmers. Whether these people were ZANU (PF) stalwarts or not was not mentioned. Because of this omission, some of the readers came up with their own frames in an attempt to fill up the void. And one of the frames that emerged was that, ‘the so called cellphone farmers were those ZANU (PF) supporters who had the opportunity to amass large and multiple pieces of lands. However, after amassing large tracts of land, these stalwart ZANU (PF) supporters were now finding it difficult to monitor the farms acquired or to use them all, productively and for the betterment of the entire nation. That multiple farm ownership was really a challenge and that some officials responsible for distributing land were corrupt or that the government of ZANU (PF) was not in full control of the entire process of land redistribution was not stated again in the report.
Language or words as Derrida (1998) put it are fluid. The meanings that words can project are multiple. The fact that the President of Zimbabwe Comrade Robert Mugabe said in the story **A2 farms lying idle** was going to *set up an inspectorate* conveyed the messages that the government of ZANU (PF) was not in full control of the entire process of Land Reform as they claimed. The statement by Comrade Robert Mugabe that he was going to *set up an inspectorate* is enough evidence that they did not even know what was going on. This may possibly be the reason why some A2 farmers ended up getting unproductive lands or land with infertile soils. Allocation of infertile lands also meant that some of the land that was acquired was in contradistinction with the mandate of Land Reform. The reasons for all the above cited omissions by the reporter of the story **A2 farms lying idle** in *The Daily Mirror* newspaper could be due its overreliance on a single source as shown below.

5.2.2.3 SOURCES ANALYSIS

The story omitted most of the information cited above owing to its use of one source. The reporter did not bother to visit the so called A1 farmers in order to ascertain from them how they were managing their farms. Whether their successes were due to the availability of infrastructure, fertile soils or otherwise was not reported. Instead the reporter used the information unleashed by Chanetsa only and this culminated in an unbalanced presentation of facts.

Now that we have deconstructed the story **A2 farms lying idle** which saw land abandoned by most A2 farmers as the source of food crisis amidst Land Reform or underdevelopment in Zimbabwe as underscored or reflected by *The Daily Mirror* in a letter above headlined **Food crisis in Zimbabwe: the full picture** and dated 9 January 2003 by Gasela (MP) MDC shadow minister of Agriculture and Environment which appeared on page 11; the message that the letter above wanted to convey to readers was that food shortages were also due to the inability of the government to:

Know how many of the admitted 50 percent [allocated land under A1 and A2 models] have actually put in a crop this season and the size of the land they have put under cultivation. The inefficiency of the regime manifests in the manner it fails to implement its publicly stated plans, at all (*The Daily Mirror* letter dated 9 January 2003: 11).
That the government did not even know what was being done on the lands allocated to the black majority culminated in His Excellency and Commander – In – Chief of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces Comrade Robert Mugabe calling for the setting up of an inspectorate that would investigate what went wrong with the programme.

Zvomuya in his story A2 farms lying idle which appeared in The Daily Mirror dated 17 January 2003 and on page 3 says that:

During his closing address to the sixth ZANU (PF) National People’s Conference in Chinhoyi, President Robert Mugabe told delegates that the A2 model has caused the greatest consternation, resulting in him planning to set up an inspectorate that would investigate what went wrong with the programme.

Although Article V of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which focuses on the Land Question says that, ‘the Parties [that is ZANU (PF) and the two MDC formations] agree to “conduct a comprehensive, transparent and non – partisan land audit … for the purpose of establishing accountability and eliminating multiple farm ownerships”’ (Zimbabwe Global Political Agreement 2008: 4) the reporter of the story A2 farms lying idle did not reveal who would constitute this audit or inspectorate team in order to ensure credibility of the findings.

While non – availability of heavy soils and infrastructure have been cited as some of the major reasons for lack of production on A2 farms in the story A2 farms lying idle; drought was also singled out as another factor that aggravated food crisis in Zimbabwe. That drought aggravated food crisis is reported in The Daily Mirror as evidenced by numerous stories that appeared in the newspaper and that includes the story Drought kills 35 000 cattle dated 17 February 2003 which was written by Pamenus Tuso.

### 5.3 REPORTAGE OF LAND AND DROUGHT IN THE DAILY MIRROR

Drought is an extended period of months or years when a region notes a deficiency in its water supply whether surface or underground. Generally, this occurs when a region receives consistently below average precipitation. The Daily Mirror story Drought kills 35 000 cattle dated 17 February 2003 and which was written by Pamenus Tuso reveals that drought affected
resettled farmers in Matabeleland South province severely and this culminated in destocking by most of these farmers as shown in the story below.

![Figure 43: The Daily Mirror story Drought kills 35 000 cattle dated 17 February 2003. (Retrieved by Washington Mushore from The National Archives of Zimbabwe on 30 April 2012)](image)

5.3.1 PREFERRED READINGS

Although Land Reform was supposed to culminate in improved standards of living of most resettled farmers the opposite was true. Most farmers ended up destocking as underscored by the reporter of the story Drought kills 35 000 cattle above when he quoted Dumisani Ncube – the
Provincial administrator saying that, ‘most areas in the province have run out of pastures as a result of the current dry spell in the country’. Dumisani Ncube (ibid) further says that, ‘despite the starvation, villagers had also embarked on a massive de–stocking exercise…’ The message that the above excerpts intend to communicate to readers is that instead of Land Reform improving the standards of living of people in Zimbabwe, the programme actually underdeveloped most of them as exemplified by the massive destocking exercise embarked by villagers in Matabeleland South province. What follows below is a deconstruction of the story **Drought kills 35 000 cattle**. This deconstruction will begin with the lexical/word choices analysis.

### 5.3.1.1 LEXICAL CHOICES ANALYSIS

Pamenus Tuso quoted Provincial administrator, Dumisani Ncube in the story **Drought kills 35 000 cattle** saying that, ‘most areas in the province have run out of pastures as a result of the current dry spell in the country’ The use of the word *current* in the syntax is meant to communicate to readers the message that the country did not lack rainfall in the previous season or seasons. It was only in that particular agricultural season (that is 2002/2003) that the country received less rainfall. Since words have the potential of communicating multiple meanings, the other meaning that the word *current* is communicating to audiences is that the government of ZANU (PF) did not take a holistic approach in its land redistribution exercise. The government of ZANU (PF) was supposed to carry out an agrarian revolution which was supposed to encompass construction of dams to capture and store rainfall during seasons of plenty so as to minimize the risk of running out of pastures due to lack of rainfall. Lack of rainfall as reported by IRIN in Johannesburg; in a story titled **Economic woes, poor rainfall worsen crisis, OCH** dated 30 January 2003 which appeared in *The Daily Mirror* culminated in an ‘increasing number of reports of hunger–related deaths, and of children and adults fainting from hunger’. Ironically, people were or are dying in the midst of Land Reform which was supposed to improve their standards of living.

The use of the words *massive destocking* in the story **Drought kills 35 000 cattle** are meant to communicate to readers the notions that Land Reform has totally failed to improve the standards of living of villagers who are involved in animal husbandry or livestock farming. What is more, instead of improving foreign currency earnings due to beef exports, the massive destocking
exercises culminated in beef shortages in the region. This also led to ‘worsening conditions in Zimbabwe [amidst Land Reform which] led the World Food Programme (WFP) to step up its food distribution…’ as shown in the story Economic woes, poor rainfall worsen crisis, OCH dated 30 January 2003 below.

The reporter also said that, ‘the deadly foot – and – mouth disease has also hit Masvingo, Midlands and Matabeleland provinces over the past years’. This prompted villagers like Maxwell...
Dube who depends on animal husbandry to sell the remaining cattle. He said that, ‘it is better for me to sell my remaining cattle than to just watch them die. Already I have lost more than 30 animals’. The message implied by the quotation above is that land reform is a failure. Below is an analysis of what has been omitted in the story.

5.3.1.2 OMISSION CHOICES ANALYSIS

Mugabe (2001) says that the purpose of the liberation struggle was for the native people to have control over their flora and fauna. Control of flora and fauna implied raring domestic animals for the betterment of the native people of Zimbabwe. One way of doing this was to always make sure that livestock had greener pastures as well as adequate vaccines. However, in this story the reporter did not mention that the absence of vaccines and pastures was a problem brought about by the government of ZANU (PF) when they embarked on the so called Third Chimurenga. Deaths of livestock as well starvation amongst the people of Zimbabwe were due to the failure by the government to construct dams in time so that villagers would be able to grow crops for food. On the subject matter of land and infrastructure, Mutasa (2005) emphasized the need for the government to provide the newly resettled farmers with supporting infrastructure such as dams. This underscored the point made by Vambe (2001:17) in the book titled Media and Development when he said that, ‘Development [is] associated with the redistribution of the country’s wealth, which among other things encompasses land and the provision of the entire supporting infrastructure’ (Vambe, 2001: 17). Put in another way, Mutasa (ibid) is of the view that apart from allocating land to people there is also need to see to it that these newly resettled farmers have access to roads, railway lines and dams as well as markets if their standard of living is to truly rise. Regarding the latter point, Vambe (2006: 271) underscored it by saying that, ‘land is the first phase [and it] has to be followed by careful planning in terms of building dams’.

In addition to the above, the story Drought kills 35 000 cattle did not mention that most of the cattle especially in Matabeleland province died due to lack of adequate pastures. This demonstrates, first, a constricted definition of the concept of land. Secondly, failure by the reporter to highlight that the government should have built dams as well under the land redistribution exercise is enough evidence that The Daily Mirror did not have a broader understanding of the concept of land.
What is more, the story **Drought kills 35 000 cattle** failed to inform readers that land redistribution exercise was also supposed to relocate villagers involved in animal husbandry apart from constructing dams for them, were necessary. The fact that their cattle were dying due to lack of pastures emanating from drought means that the government were supposed to have resettled them as well. This latter point is subtly suggested in *The Daily Mirror* story **Zimbabwe: Matabeleland hard hit by drought** dated 9 January 2003 which reported that ‘effects of the drought are striking in the Matobo district in the southern region…The land looks dry and barren…’ Implied is the idea that villagers in Matobo district were supposed to have been resettled as well. Since Land Reform was aimed at redistributing fertile lands to the black majority, the reporter of the story **Drought kills 35 000 cattle** did not communicate to readers the message that Land Reform excluded villagers from districts like Matobo, amongst many others.

According to Brown (1995) the native people during colonialism were settled in areas with poor soils and which received fewer quantities of rainfall. In this respect, the words Land Reform exercise suggests land improvement, reorganization, restructuring, modification, transformation or alteration. One of the ways of improving land or transforming the so called reserves was to build dams so that the little rains received in some of these areas could be kept for future use rather than left to run-off. Food crises were also as a result of the production of cash crops at the expense of food crops as shown in the story **Farmers welcome minister’s challenge** written by a Farming Reporter on page 12 of *The Daily Mirror* dated 8 January 2003 as shown below.

### 5.4 LAND AND CASH CROPS

Commercial farmers grow crops with the intention of selling them and at a profit. What this means is that they always have this profit motive. So if growing certain crops guarantees them profits even at the expense of the entire nation, they will do that. The story **Farmers welcome minister’s challenge** is a perfect example of the above scenario. Large – scale indigenous commercial farmers had been producing cash crops at the expense of food crops because these cash crops guaranteed them good returns in terms of money. This idea is put forth in the language of reportage used by the reporter of the story **Farmers welcome minister’s challenge**. The reporter says that, ‘Large – scale indigenous commercial farmers have expressed desire to venture into maize production using irrigation if government is willing to offer reasonable
returns on the crop’. The message that the reporter wanted to convey to readers regarding food crisis was that these were not as a result of Land Reforms but a direct consequence of indigenous commercial farmers who did not just want to produce the staple diet or food – maize – in this case because they claim that the crop did not have good returns in terms of cash. This was further revealed by Chimbwanda – the chairman of the Maize and Cereals Producers Association who was quoted by the reporter in the story Farmers welcome minister’s challenge saying that, “‘farmers’ Unions were finding it difficult to convince farmers, most of which have large loans to settle, to grow maize, as its prices was (sic) very discouraging”. The dominant message that the story intended to convey to readers was that the government was also responsible for the food crisis being experienced in the country amidst Land Reform because it was not willing to pay large – scale indigenous commercial farmers competitive monies which would enable them to pay for the inputs and electricity bills and at the same time remain in business. As a result the reporter revealed that, ‘a lot of farmers have been shifting into production of other cash crops such as tobacco, paprika, cotton which are not marketed through the GMB’.

Production of cash crops ensured foreign currency earnings to commercial farmers. Before some farms were taken away from some white commercial farmers, foreign currency earnings were high. However, when most black farmers replaced most of the white commercial farmers’ land, foreign currency earnings declined due to lack of agricultural or farming skills.

5.5 REPRESENTATION OF LAND AND EXPERTISE / TRAINING

Mutasa’s (2005) suggested that Zimbabweans should remember that land is a resource which should be used in producing food and minerals and as such efforts should be focused on how to maximize productivity on these pieces of land. One way of increasing productivity on these pieces of land is through training. Mutasa (ibid) put forth this view of training through Sekai (a character in the novel Sekai Minda Tave Nayo) who went to America to study and acquire a degree in Agriculture and Environmental studies. This training culminated in Sekai becoming one of the few prosperous farmers in Zimbabwe. In other words, Mutasa (ibid) was suggesting that time has come for Zimbabweans to focus more on the issues of training amongst other things in order to enable an efficient and effective utilization of land.
In this respect, *The Daily Mirror* featured a story with the headline ‘*Let’s work together to revive economy*’ dated 17 February 2003 which called for an integrated approach in order to revive the economy that ‘has taken a nosedive over the past few years…’ Below is an analysis of some local initiatives that were meant to boost the Zimbabwean economy.

### 5.5.1 Boosting Productivity: Local Initiatives

In 2003 some landless people had been given land and focus was on how to increase productivity on the farms acquired. One of the ways of boosting productivity was affording training to the newly resettled farmers involved either in crop production or animal husbandry. In *The Daily Mirror* story headlined *UZ introduces new farming techniques* dated 24 January 2003 and which was written by Godfrey Mutsango on page 10, the reporter revealed that the University of Zimbabwe in conjunction with a British organization DFID were running a research and extension programme aimed at ‘introducing new techniques in managing cotton, maize and wheat production’ as shown below.

**Figure 45**: The Daily Mirror story *UZ introduces new farming techniques* dated 24 January 2003 (Retrieved from The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)
The story **UZ introduces new farming techniques** revealed that farmers were urged to ‘till their land using recommended ordinary plough – shares and to make ridges in a manner ideally meant for preserving moisture in the ground’. Another important message that the story **UZ introduces new farming techniques** above intended to communicate to readers was that, both A1 and A2 resettled farmers, were capable of producing food for home use and for export market if they were equipped with the necessary training and skills to maximizing productivity in their farms. This is in contradistinction with the views put forth by Thomas Mapfumo in his 1993 song titled *Marima Nzara* (you have sown hunger) in which he describes Africans as incapable of feeding themselves or incapable of farming. Little did Mapfumo knew that Africans were also capable of farming provided they were given the necessary training as further discussed in *The Daily Mirror* story **UZ to train new farmers** that was written by Godfrey Mutsago on the 15 day of January 2003. The reporter Godfrey Mutsago reported that ‘the University of Zimbabwe will soon be embarking on an agriculture training outreach programme specifically to assist new farmers’. The training programme would ‘benefit new farmers who lack training in agriculture’ in view of the fact that it will ‘cover a considerable number of aspects involved in farming that include[d] natural resources conservation, farm management, animal and crop husbandry as well as production and marketing of produce’.

The reporter used the above language in order to relay to readers the message that Land Reform was and is still a noble thing that was done by the government of ZANU (PF). Moyo in his story titled **Of land reform, rights and the short – changed rural farmer** which appeared in The Daily Mirror dated 27 January 2003 said that, ‘Government’s land revolution and reform has clear objectives; first and foremost to decolonize Zimbabwe, secondly, to decongest the overpopulated rural areas, last but certainly not least, to “economically empower the blacks of this country”’. The connoted message is that land should never be given back to erstwhile colonizers as some people like Thomas Mapfumo (ibid) think but has to be retained by the black majority. Not only should land be retained by blacks but that these black people should be provided with training so that they will use this land productively. Drought has been reported in *The Daily Mirror* as one of the things impeding development in the sense that it culminated, in most cases, in reduced crop outputs or destocking. Godfrey Mutsago wrote a story with the headline **UZ introduces goat project in dry regions** on 20 February 2003 with the intent of informing readers that goats can actually be reared in the dry regions of the country thus
benefiting smallholder farmers. So, instead of blaming the government that Land Reform was not a success, The Daily Mirror through the story **UZ introduces goat project in dry regions** sought to educate the populace that even in these so called drought stricken regions like Matabeleland North, Mudzi district and Tsholotsho, smallholder farmers ‘could do well if they rear goats with intentions of making a living out of the animals. The animals provide meat and milk, which has the much needed nutrients. And at the same time, the animals have good hides which could be sold at reasonable prices’ (The Daily Mirror dated 20 February 2003).

The Daily Mirror further discussed in a story titled **Mulching – the route to high agricultural output** dated 27 February 2003 the benefits of mulching which is a practice often used by organic growers that entails ‘the spreading of large amounts of organic materials – straws, old hay and wood chips – over otherwise bare soil between and among crop plants’ as the other way of regulating soil moisture and temperature. This method also suppresses weeds and provides organic matter to the soil. In addition to the above, The Daily Mirror featured a story with the headline **New techniques for sustainable rural agriculture** on 27 February 2003 with the intent of informing and educating readers as well as new farmers about the benefits of inter – planting or inter – cropping. According to ATTRA, ‘INTERPLANTING two or more mutually beneficial crops in close proximity is one strategy for increasing biodiversity’ as shown below.
Apart from reporting on the local initiatives *The Daily Mirror* also reported on some of the regional initiatives that were directed at improving production levels in new farms. Below is an analysis of the coverage of land and regional integration in *The Daily Mirror*.

### 5.5.2 INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY: LAND AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

In an endeavour to show that the food crises that were being experienced in Zimbabwe were not due to inefficiency of new farmers *The Daily Mirror* wrote a story captioned *Drought – hit countries meet to formulate strategies* on 21 February 2003 as shown below.

![Figure 47: The Daily Mirror story Drought – hit countries meet to formulate strategies dated 21 February 2003 (Retrieved from The National Archives of Zimbabwe by Washington Mushore on 30 April 2012)](image-url)
The intention of the story *Drought – hit countries meet to formulate strategies* above was to inform readers that reduced productivity was due to droughts and not inefficiency of new farmers as claimed by other media. Reductions in crop outputs were a phenomenon that was being experienced by all southern African countries. Godwin Mangudya put forth this message when he says that, ‘SOUTHERN African countries affected by devastating drought will meet in Harare next week to formulate a sub-regional strategy for reducing vulnerability to drought and famine’ (The Daily Mirror dated 21 February 2003: 3). The story further indicated that, ‘about 13 million people from six of the 10 countries namely Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe are threatened with hunger and need immediate food aid’. The preferred reading is that food crises currently being experienced in Zimbabwe were not as a result of the Land Reform exercise which saw the restoration of land to its rightful owners – the black majority – but were largely due to droughts which had prompted International Labour Organization (ILO) to organize a meeting that was going to address or discuss the nature of disasters in Southern Africa. The meeting was also going formulate an action plan. What is furthermore signified in the story *Drought – hit countries meet to formulate strategies* is that the region was not entirely against Zimbabwe Land Reform as they did not put the blame of food shortages on land redistribution exercises but on drought – which is a natural phenomenon. As a follow up to the story *Drought – hit countries meet to formulate strategies* The Daily Mirror published a story with the banner *New thinking needed on food security for southern Africa* on 22 January 2003 in which Donald Mavunduse was quoted saying that, ‘the key solution to preventing hunger lies in increasing people’s participation in, and the effectiveness of, governance’. The language used in the story *New thinking needed on food security for southern Africa*, however, indicated that food shortages in southern Africa were due to inefficiency of southern Africa governments. According to Mugwara, ‘Disasters happen, whether it is floods or whatever. What is important is what capacity, what policies have been put in place, what is it that needs to be done institutionally to strengthen the institutions in order to respond [effectively]?’ The dominant message that The Daily Mirror wanted to convey to readers in the story *New thinking needed on food security for southern Africa* when they quoted Mugwara was that people can still go without food even if there is plenty of rainfall received. This is in contradistinction with Tambaoga’s thinking that if rains fall silos will fill up.
That Land Reform was therefore a necessary evil that was aimed at ‘returning the inheritance to the rightful heirs of course’ and has therefore nothing to do with the current food crises as some people in Zimbabwe think. That may possibly be the reason why *The Daily Mirror* featured a story titled **Why MDC now supports land reforms** on 17 June 2004 which was written by Mashizha Partson Matsikidze. The reporter quoted Coltart saying that, ‘we have always maintained that position, that the landholding in this country [Zimbabwe] was unjust and inequitable’. This further suggests that blacks were good farmers who could even produce more provided they were given training on how to run and manage the lands or farms allocated to them productively as shown above. *The Daily Mirror* in the story **Why MDC now supports land reforms** sealed the debate on Land Reform when they said that:

> After all, the ultimate reason Zimbabwe went up in flames first, during Mbuya Nehanda’s era, then the Second Chimurenga (1966–79) and now *Hondo YeMinda* whose catalyst was the Svosve land invasions of 1998, was the burning issue of land imbalances’ *(The Daily Mirror 17 June 2004:5)*.

The implied message is that Land Reform is irreversible and was an exercise which was long overdue. If Land Reform is irreversible as MDC later acknowledged in the story **Why MDC now supports land reforms** then the only prudent thing to do is to offer training to newly settled farmers and to provide infrastructure, amongst many other things, as underscored above by Mutasa (2005). The intent of offering training, providing infrastructure and availing inputs to newly settled farmers will be to boost productivity and ultimately improve the standards of living of the largest and poorest population of Zimbabwe (Moyana 1984).

### 5.5.3 GENERAL REMARKS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DAILY MIRROR STORIES ANALYSED IN THIS CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter was to critically examine the reportage of Land Reform in selected stories in *The Daily Mirror*. Mutasa (2005) revealed in his novel *Sekai minda tave nayo* that land is a production tool. Since land is a production resource, Mutasa emphasised that it ownership of land should not be monopolized by a few whites or black elites. In this respect, *The Daily Mirror* revealed through some of the stories analysed in this chapter that the decline in productivity was mostly due to corruption perpetuated by the powerful few – which was reflected in multiple farm ownership. Multiple farm ownership, according to *The Daily Mirror*, resulted in food crises. *The*
*Daily Mirror* also went a step further into showing that food crises were due to drought. Instead of enhancing the standards of living of the largest and poorest population of Zimbabwe (Moyana 1983) Land Reform did not do so. What is more, some farmers who were allocated land under A2 model did not even bother to visit the farms apportioned to them to see what was happening. Furthermore, *The Daily Mirror* revealed that some of the new farmers who got land under A2 model were not committed farmers. They were part time farmers and unlike their settler white counterparts who farmed full time and reinvested in their lands, the new owners/farmers did so on their telephones since they had other full time jobs (Ngugi 1986). The ultimate of this ‘bad’ behaviour which was displayed by most A2 farmers as highlighted by *The Daily Mirror* was reduced productivity.

*The Daily Mirror* also revealed that drought forced farmers involved in animal husbandry to destock due to lack of pastures. It was through destocking that the standards of living of most of the black farmers involved in animal husbandry declined. Starvation amongst the black majority was also caused by drought. *The Daily Mirror* however did not inform readers that food crisis which culminated in destocking and starvation was due to government’s failure to provide the required infrastructure not only under A2 model but in all areas which they acquired under Land Reform programme as underscored by Mutasa (2005). On the subject matter of land and infrastructure, Mutasa (ibid) emphasised the need for the government to provide newly resettled farmers with supporting infrastructure such as dams. Vambe (2001) concurred with Mutasa (2005) when he commented that, ‘Development [is] associated with the redistribution of the country’s wealth, which among other things encompasses land and the provision of the entire supporting infrastructure’ (Vambe, 2001: 17). Put in another way, Mutasa (ibid) was of the view that apart from allocating land to people the government was supposed to build or provide infrastructure to newly resettled farmers such as roads, railway lines and dams as well as markets if the standard of living of these farmers were to truly rise. Vambe (2006: 271) further emphasised the latter point made by Mutasa (ibid) when he revealed that, ‘land was/is the first phase [and it] has to be followed by careful planning in terms of building dams’. *The Daily News* did not reveal all this vital information which was reported by *The Daily Mirror* in the stories which were analyzed in this chapter.
One way of improving the standards of living of the black majority according to Bakare (1993) was to settle them in areas with fertile soils. The next thing was for the government to set competitive prices for the farm produce especially on food crops. An analysis of the reportage of Land and the types of crops grown revealed that most newly resettled farmers preferred to grow cash crops in the place of food crops. By growing cash crops farmers were guaranteed higher returns. The government did not offer favourable prices on food crops. The effect of this was food crisis which culminated in starvation and destocking. During colonialism the British were greatly favoured in all aspects so as to encourage them to produce more. Even with the best land in their possession they had to be constantly subsidized and aided by governments, and ‘protected’ against African competition through the introduction of various restrictions or limitations on African agriculture, and also through the introduction of various discriminatory measures in favour of the European farmer (Woddis 1960: 8).

If railways were built, Woddis (ibid) further highlighted that Europeans would take good care to ensure that the lands they possessed included those portions adjoining the rail routes, and in the same way, new lines were built with European interests in mind. It was the same with access to main roads and markets. The European farmer was given all the advantages. As with transport facilities, so with prices; it was the European settler who was favoured. The Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs publication (1959:22-3) states that while the European producer received 40s. Per bag of maize for the 1957 harvest, the African producer got only 27s. The Daily Mirror did not inform its readers that the government was also contributing much on worsening the food crises. The prices the government was offering new farmers were not favourable and this resulted in most farmers growing cash crops which guaranteed them good returns.

Another motive of Land Reform was to give the landless black people fertile lands, however, The Daily Mirror revealed through its stories that some of the farms allocated to farmers did not have fertile soils. This point was underscored by Manzungu (2004) who commented that Land Reform Programme culminated in land, previously zoned as non – arable, being brought under cultivation, predisposing it to environmental degradation as well as increased possibilities of flooding. Apart from increased possibilities of flooding, the number of farms underutilised increased resulting in food crisis. The Daily Mirror, on the other hand, did not question the government’s logic of resettling landless black people in unproductive lands or areas.
Mukwashi in Barry 2004 introduced the aspect of land and expertise or training and said that many resettled farmers were poorly trained and had poor waste disposal systems and that culminated in bacterial contamination of water thus posing health risks through waterborne and water related diseases such as diarrhoea. In view of the above concern, *The Daily Mirror*, being a centrist or middle of the road newspaper, also featured stories relating to local and foreign initiatives that were meant to boost productivity. *The Daily Mirror* further revealed through the selected stories that food crises were not only due to inefficiency of new resettled farmers but were as a result of some natural causes such as drought. This prompted local and international organisations to develop ways of enhancing productivity.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed the framing of Land Reform in *The Daily Mirror*. Focus was on stories dealing with issues of land and development. Instead of denigrating Land Reform, *The Daily Mirror* devoted most of its energy in discussing ways of enhancing productivity in farms. In all fairness, unlike *The Herald, Kwayedza* and *The Daily News* that spend energy in stories justifying why Land Reform was inevitable, *The Daily Mirror* considered this issue fait accompli. There was a tacit acceptance that the Land Reform was historically justified in the stories. However, *The Daily Mirror* also distinguished itself from the other three newspapers discussed in this study in that the stories in *The Daily Mirror* were futuristic. Most stories debated ways of enhancing production on the farms either by training farmers to secure expertise on the farms and they also underscored the need to build dams so as to minimise the risk of relying on erratic rainfall. The stories in *The Daily Mirror* also encouraged new farmers to benefit from new technology and highlighted the need for Zimbabwe to create networks with other African countries in order to mitigate the possibilities of devastating drought. These pro-active based stories in *The Daily Mirror* made it far more open and flexible when discussing the Land Reform in Zimbabwe when compared to the picture of agricultural atrophy painted in the other three papers (*Kwayedza, The Herald* and *The Daily News*). The question that *The Daily Mirror*, however, did not ask related to whether a mass-driven Land Reform programme aimed to benefit the majority could succeed in a capitalist framework in which the nationalist government was expecting financial help from the western countries whose kith and kin lost fundamentally in the Land Reform programme. This problem is reflected in *The Herald, *
Kwayedza and *The Daily News*’ silence about the future economic direction of the country. The next chapter is the conclusion. It presents a summary of the study, the research findings and offers some recommendations.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Controversial issues are, by their essential nature, unsolvable to everyone’s satisfaction. Such issues are open to discussion – debatable, questionable - and generally in dispute by contending groups. Controversial issues are [therefore] news and for news [people] look to the press (Kuypers 2002: 1)

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to critically explore the language through which the Land Reform Programme was reported in Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and the Daily Mirror newspapers and then interrogate the ideologies underlying the philosophies of the newspapers. The study had four objectives. The first one was to investigate whether or not newspaper reports on the land struggle in the period 2000 – 2008 confirmed to the statement derived from Robert Mugabe’s book titled Inside The Third Chimurenga (2001) that “Land is the economy and the economy is land”. The second objective was to critically explore the language through Land Reform programme was reported by exploring how newspapers’ reportorial practices took into account the historical background of Land Reform in Zimbabwe. The third objective was to examine the frames or the language of reportage used in representing Land Reform in Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror, that is, to investigate if the language of reportage of Land Reform by the above four mentioned newspapers was objective or adhered to or maintained the standards of good journalism. The fourth and last objective was to compare and contrast the different perceptions and ways of narrating the land in the newspapers in a manner that could suggest the philosophies informing the newspapers’ reportage of the Land Reform in Zimbabwe. In other words, the study was furthermore aimed at accounting for, and comparing the different ways in which the four newspapers contributed to the political debate on democratising Zimbabwe’s economy in general, and agriculture in particular through the medium of the printed word in the newspapers.

And more significantly, the period between 2000 and 2008 was chosen as the focus of the study because it witnessed the most intense struggles over land waged both in real terms as observed in the clashes between former white land owners and the new black farmers being resettled. In
terms of actual analysis; it was only the stories on land in *The Herald* that went up to 2008, which had been used, because, during this period and beyond, *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers – that are government owned – have continued to exist. The other two dailies which are *The Daily News* and *The Daily Mirror* existed only until 2004 and 2005 respectively mainly due to political and economic pressures. These two dailies were nonetheless used in this study in order to show the different trends in the reportage of Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe, a fact that strongly suggested that had they continued to survive beyond those periods, they would have sustained their critical stance against the reform.

In order to carry out this study, an interpretive approach that emphasized the framing theory to the study of the language of representing Land Reform was used. Interviews were used minimally because this study was not based on a quantitative approach. There was no contradiction in using limited interviews and targeted questionnaires in a study that was essentially interpretive and qualitative. The study also incorporated, where relevant, some critical voices of readers of *Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News* and *The Daily Mirror*. Some information regarding Land Reform was gathered through questionnaires and Letters to the Editor Section and Opinion columns. These critical voices were meant to support or complicate interpretations of how the Third Chimurenga was portrayed in the stories drawn from the above – four mentioned newspapers. In this respect, story or news framing analysis was the dominant method used to analyse stories as texts from *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers’ stories. The stories that were analysed in State owned newspapers focused on the historical background of land, the concept of land, the issue of compensation and distribution. Story framing analysis of *The Daily News* newspaper revolved around three themes namely land and ownership, land and distribution as well as land and compensation and *The Daily Mirror* newspaper focused more on the theme of land and productivity.

### 6.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

In examining the relationship of newspaper reports to people understanding of the Land Reform programme six questions were posed and the findings are as shown below.
The first question looked at how the media or the government of ZANU (PF) framed Land Reform or Third Chimurenga.

The study revealed that the issue of land emanated during colonialism in Zimbabwe. This perspective was supported by various scholars and singers. Apart from locating the land issue as a direct consequence of colonial injustices, the study also brought to light factors like greediness of some officials in the new nationalist government, unviable economic policies embarked on by the new government in post – colonial Zimbabwe such as Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the need to cover up for the unfailing economic policies in elections as the roots of insurgency in Zimbabwe which was mainly evident in the year 2000.

The study also revealed that some media scholars as well as the government were concerned more with issues of land and distribution, land and environment, land and development, land and infrastructure, land and compensation, land and expertise, amongst many others. Some media framed Land Reform along class struggles which were inherent in the entire exercise. The study revealed that class struggles within the struggle for land have impacted negatively on the Land Reform programme.

The study furthermore revealed that land does not only refer to agriculture or farming. When people talk of land, it has emerged in this study that they must not limit the concept to agriculture only but should include mining and industries as well. In other words the study revealed that the concept of land covers agriculture, mining and industrial activities which are carried out in the country and this could be the reason why Mugabe (2001) said that, ‘The land is the economy and the economy is the land’.

The second question looked at how *Kwayedza* and *The Herald* Newspapers, responded to critics of the historians or the government of ZANU (PF)’s ways of framing Land Reform/Third Chimurenga.

The study revealed that *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* newspapers used stories on Land Reform whose languages extremely and uncritically supported the promulgated Land Reform exercise by the government of ZANU (PF). The study further revealed that *Kwayedza* and *The Herald* newspapers excessively supported Land Reform partly because they were and are still owned
and funded by the government. Being always in support of the government ‘development programmes’ The Herald and Kwayedza newspapers have managed to operate up to today.

With regards to the theme of land and history, The Herald managed to give some of the historical facts surrounding the land issue in Zimbabwe. From the analysis conducted, it was also disclosed that The Herald devoted more time in explaining the rationale of carrying out the Land Reform. One of the reasons that the newspaper cited was that Land Reform exercise was aimed at redressing colonial land imbalances which left the black majority with small pieces of lands which were also infertile when compared to a minority white settlers who amassed large tracts of arable land.

Kwayedza like The Herald newspaper cited the same reasons which in summation included the reason that land was being redistributed to its rightful owners. These rightful owners according to Kwayedza newspaper stories analysed were the black majority. Moreover, Kwayedza, like The Herald newspaper used languages that had a national outlook in order to solicit support of the masses.

On the concept of land, Kwayedza newspaper used language which described land as agriculture in most cases. In some few instances the definition went on to include residential structures in the urban areas. Thus, the use of Shona language in Kwayedza newspaper enabled reporters or sources consulted to clearly describe the concept of land unlike in The Herald newspaper. Furthermore, it was observed that although Kwayedza and The Herald newspapers fall within the same stable, the differences in interpreting the concept of land rested solely in the sources consulted or used.

On the theme of land and compensation, the use of Shona language made it clear that compensation was not going to be paid. Comrade Mudenge was quoted as having used the word ‘avenging’ in the story Kutora minda kutsiva in Kwayedza newspaper to convey so blatantly the message that the government of ZANU (PF) was not going to pay compensation. The Herald addressed Mudenge as comrade and this was only found in State owned newspapers and was part of the discourse of legitimising Land Reform. It was not clear whether Mudenge said this in Shona. The point is that most of what Kwayedza say, politicians said, was translated from English to Shona. In such a situation failure of communicating effectively is difficult to attribute
either to politicians or to the editors of Kwayedza who translated these messages. In The Herald story Headlined State forced to adopt fast track land reform: Mudenge; the Minister (Mudenge) used language which directed readers to an understanding that compensation was only going to be paid for the developments made on the farms while in Kwayedza the same Minister said that nothing was going to be paid at all. The use of Shona language actually enabled the Minister through Kwayedza the freedom to explain the issue of land more clearly and he openly suggested the need of not paying compensation without fear of being reprimanded by the Western world.

Regarding the issue of land and distribution, an analysis of the language of reportage used by Kwayedza revealed that the newspaper made use of ‘national or collective’ language which internally masked private or personal [ZANU (PF) government] interests and externally projected national interests; yet the former are the real interests pursued. This paradox is clearly enunciated by Moyo and Matondi (2008: 62) who situated Land Reform programme as the government of Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front’s [ZANU (PF)’s] need to lure people to vote for them in the 2002 elections which were just looming around the corner. In other words’ these two scholars saw Land Reform as a political gimmick. Although the Zimbabwean government suggested or believed that Land Reform programme was a consequence of land inequalities necessitated in the colonial period. Moyo and Matondi (ibid) revealed that, ‘Apart from these gross land imbalances emanating from the colonial period, the possibility of electoral failure in 2000 by the government of ZANU (PF) led the government to embark on the land redistribution exercise’. Thus, in order to lure the electorate ZANU (PF) had to make use of language with a national outlook; a language which phenotypically (outwardly) seems to be serving the interests of everybody (the people) yet genotypically (internally) the language serves the interests of a minority or a small group (the elite) or political interests.

○ The third question looked at how The Daily News newspaper represented the Zimbabwe Land Reform until its demise in 2005?

The Daily News was guided by neo – liberal ideology and presented news in a reactionary manner that openly revealed its anti - Land Reform stance. The Daily News’ extremely negative
view on Land Reform carried out by a black government was the opposite of the State owned newspapers’ extremely romanticised picture of a positive Land Reform. With regards to the issue of land and ownership *The Daily News* saw ownership as determined by the level of productivity on the land and not by historical prejudices. What this means is that, both whites and blacks could be regarded as the rightful owners of the Zimbabwean land provided they use the land they occupied productively. It is only when land or the farmer ceases to be productive that ownership or land rights would be transferred to the State.

In addition to the above, *The Daily News* also suggested that both whites and the native people of Zimbabwe or the so called black majority are foreigners in the Zimbabwean land. Consequently the San people are the real owners of the Zimbabwean land. However, some scholars like Chihombori in Barry (2004) revealed that the San people were just ‘wanderers’. They were moving wanderers and with no fixed abode. Bakare (1993) also saw the native people of Zimbabwe as the rightful owners of the land as they were forced of this land by the British. While Africans regarded land as revered in the pre – colonial period, the British, on the other hand, did not regard land as a sacred thing. As long as the land was arable or had minerals the British would make sure that they possess it. They would even displace the inhabitants forcefully. Bakare (1993:50) underpinned the latter point when he said that:

> For Rhodes and his Pioneer Column, inspired from early childhood by traditional legends such as Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, there was nothing wrong with the idea of fighting for land, even if it was land already belonging to others. The BSAC’s desire, under Rhodes leadership, to invade Zimbabwe in order to occupy it and plunder its mineral resources was, within the context of British culture, an acceptable thing to do.

The quotation above further suggested that the British did not have a respect of the laws or tenure systems of Africans in the pre – colonial and colonial epochs. Additionally, it was argued that the removal of Africans from their traditional communal lands was indeed not a terrible thing in the eyes of settlers because these communal lands were not fenced or clearly marked and for the British unmarked land meant that it was not owned (thus, the African traditional concept of ownership was taken advantage of). It was therefore apparent from the language used by Bakare (ibid) that the two divergent views on land ownership systems by Africans and the British became the backbone of the British occupation of the Native or African people’s land and
the root of three revolts namely the First Chimurenga, the Second Chimurenga and the Third Chimurenga. The British settlers’ interest in owning land rested solely in the potential mineral resources (Bakare, 1993:50). Mining speculation was the primary reason for Rhodes’ desire to go north (that is, coming from South Africa). When the British arrived in what is now called Zimbabwe, they forcefully removed Africans off their land and they pushed them to what are now known as ‘Reserves’. The Daily News omitted all the above information in the stories analysed in this study regarding the issue of land and ownership.

An analysis of the coverage of land and distribution in The Daily News showed that land was mostly taken by the elite class at the expense of the needy villagers. The elite amassed multiple farms to an extent that they ended up leasing some of the farms. The Daily News saw the redistribution of land as racial in the sense that it was meant to settle some scores and not to resettle the landless black majority as claimed by the government. The taking away of white commercial farmers’ land was seen by the white community as a punishment from the government of ZANU (PF) following its failure to get the required number of votes during the 2000 referendum that would have enabled them to amend a clause in the constitution which in the end would facilitate the acquiring of land without paying compensation. What is more, land redistribution exercise was seen as a political gimmick by the government of ZANU (PF). In addition to that, the white community, through The Daily News, argued that land that was supposed to be redistributed was the idle land. Their land was not supposed to be touched.

A critical analysis of the stories however revealed that The Daily News only focused on the elite class in its reportage of the issue of land and distribution. They blamed the elite class for acquiring more farms which they did not use or lease resulting in reduced productivity, hunger and starvation amongst the black majority. Blacks were seen as a race which did not deserve land. Mphahlele (1959) however revealed that Africans were actually good farmers. In bargain, no mention was made on the number of low to middle black people who were given land and how they were using the lands allocated to them. The Daily News like Europeans during colonial era started using language full of negative stereotypes about Africans. The Daily News used language or frames that portrayed Africans as backward and inefficient as farmers so as to prevent competition in agriculture. In other words most Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular were socialised into thinking that Europeans were more superior when it comes to
tilling the land when compared with Africans. The fear of the White commercial farmers like the Europeans during colonial period was that of increased production by Africans that would not only threaten their markets, but would diminish the flow of ‘cheap’ labour from the Reserves.

On the other hand, although *The Daily News* like the colonial media used language that portrayed Europeans as superior to Africans when it comes to farming it was proved that European settlers were inefficient farmers. Even with the best land in their possession they had to be constantly subsidised and aided by governments and banks, and ‘protected’ against African competition through the introduction of various restrictions or limitations on African agriculture, and through the introduction of various discriminatory measures that favoured the European farmer (Woddis, 1960:8). If railways were already built, Woddis highlighted that the Europeans would take good care to ensure that the lands they possessed included those portions adjoining the rail routes; and in the same way, new lines were built with European interests in mind. It was the same with access to main roads and markets. The European farmer was given all the advantages. As with transport facilities, so with prices; it was the European settler who was favoured. The Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs publication (1959) stated that while the European producer received 40s. Per bag of maize for the 1957 harvest, the African producer got only 27s. Despite the advantages provided for Europeans. Brown (1959) also said that in Southern Rhodesia ‘no great examination [was] needed to see that European agriculture in Southern Rhodesia … [was] … the most inefficient in the world’. What is more, it was argued that the economic law of supply and demand seemed not to be applicable in Zimbabwe following Land Reform in the sense that instead of Africans to set the prices for their produce (tobacco for instance) it is the buyer (the erstwhile colonisers) who continue to determine the prices. When the erstwhile colonisers come back with the by – products of tobacco, for instance, it is them and not the buyers (Africans) who also determine the prices. This scenario helped in revealing that Europeans were favoured during colonial era and they continue to be favoured in the post – colonial era. The intention being to socialise Africans in general and Zimbabweans in particular that they are second class citizens or that they should always play a second fiddle role.

With regards to the issue of land and compensation, *The Daily News* reported that white commercial farmers were supposed to receive full compensation as opposed to the government proposals that compensation was only going be paid for the infrastructure and not the soil. *The
*Daily News* further revealed that United Kingdom refused to pay compensation for the land as put forth by the government of Zimbabwe in the draft constitution of 1999 on the basis that it was a sovereign State and the laws of another sovereign State were null and void in their country. Each country was independent and no country could or had the right or mandate to impose its laws on another independent country. *The Daily News*, however, did not report that compensation was in fact not even supposed to be paid, be it for the land or infrastructure, since the land that white commercial farmers claimed to be theirs was actually obtained by their forefathers through trickery. This point was underscored by Woddis (1960) who said that, ‘The history of Africa’s relations with the West has been a history of robbery – robbery of African manpower, its mineral and agricultural resources, and its land’. If land was robbed, as indicated by Woddis (ibid) it went without saying that when the person (the Zimbabwean people) who have been robbed their land finally came to realize the robber and the land that was robbed, the only prudent thing to do was to take back what rightfully belonged to them. This was the essence of the Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe according to some people in Zimbabwe notably the government of ZANU (PF) led by Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe. Furthermore, the study exposed that the act of robbing implied that the erstwhile colonisers did not pay any compensation when they deprived Africans of their land. Similarly, when Zimbabweans recovered their land which had been robbed they were supposed to take it back without paying anything to the robber (white commercial farmers).

Despite its negative language in its stories on the Land Reform, *The Daily News* was necessary in a country making a transition to full democracy. The newspapers’ very extreme and reactionary voice pluralised the mediascape even when it did so from a position that compromised its watchdog ambition.

- **The fourth question focused on how *The Daily Mirror* represented the Land Reform until its demise in 2004?**

The focus of *The Daily Mirror* newspaper was on stories which dealt with issues of land and development. Instead of denigrating Land Reform, *The Daily Mirror* devoted most of its energy on discussing ways of enhancing productivity in farms. Mutasa (2005) saw land as a production tool. Being a production tool, land was therefore not supposed to be monopolised by a few whites or black elites. *The Daily Mirror* revealed that the decline in productivity was mostly due
to corruption by the powerful few – which was reflected in multiple farm ownership. Multiple farm ownership as well as drought, according to *The Daily Mirror*, resulted in food crises. Instead of enhancing the standards of living of the largest and poorest population of Zimbabwe Land Reform did the opposite (Moyana 1983).

What is more, *The Daily Mirror* revealed that some farmers who were allocated land under A2 model did not even bother going to the farms to see what was happening. Some of the new farmers who got land under A2 model did not commit themselves into farming. They were part time farmers. For unlike their settler white counterparts who farmed full time and reinvested in their lands, the new owners did so on their telephones for they had other full time jobs (Ngugi 1986). The ultimate of this behaviour displayed by most of the farmers, as revealed by *The Daily Mirror* newspaper was declined productivity and starvation in people.

*The Daily Mirror* also revealed that drought forced farmers involved in animal husbandry to destock due to lack of pastures. It was through destocking that the standards of living of most black farmers involved in animal husbandry declined. Drought also culminated in starvation amongst the black majority. *The Daily Mirror* however did not inform readers that food crisis which culminated in destocking and starvation where due to government’s failure to provide the required infrastructure not only under A2 model but in all areas which they acquired under Land Reform programme as underscored by Mutasa (2005). On the subject matter of land and infrastructure, Mutasa emphasised the need for the government to provide the newly resettled farmers with supporting infrastructure such as dams. Vambe (2001) also concurred with Mutasa (2005) when he commented that, ‘Development [was / should be] associated with the redistribution of the country’s wealth, which among other things encompasses land and the provision of the entire supporting infrastructure’. Put in another way, *The Daily Mirror* through its language relayed the view that apart from allocating land to people the government was supposed to see to it that newly resettled farmers had access to roads, railway lines and dams as well as markets if their standards of living were to improve. This was also underscored by Vambe (2006) who said that acquiring land was the first phase and this was supposed to be followed by careful planning in terms of building dams. *The Daily News* unlike *The Daily Mirror* did not reveal all the vital information in the stories which were analysed from *The Daily Mirror* newspaper.
Bakare (1993) revealed that one of the ways of improving the standards of living of the black majority was to settle them in areas with fertile soils. The next thing was for the government to set competitive prices for the farm produce especially on food crops. An analysis of the reportage of Land and the types of crops grown revealed that most newly resettled farmers preferred to grow cash crops in the place of food crops. By growing cash crops farmers were guaranteed higher returns. The government did not offer favourable prices on food crops. The effect of this, as revealed by *The Daily Mirror*, was food crisis which culminated in starvation and destocking.

Woddis (1960) revealed that during colonialism the British were greatly favoured in all aspects so as to encourage them to produce more. Even with the best land in their possession they had to be constantly subsidised and aided by governments, and ‘protected’ against African competition by the introduction of various restrictions or limitations on African agriculture, and by the introduction of various discriminatory measures in favour of the European farmer. The study, however, revealed that *The Daily Mirror* did not inform its readers that the government was also contributing much on these food crises. The prices the government was offering new farmers were not favourable and this culminated in most farmers growing cash crops which guaranteed them good returns.

The other aim of Land Reform was to give back fertile lands to the landless black people; however, *The Daily Mirror* revealed that some farms allocated to farmers did not have fertile soils. This point was underscored by Manzungu (2004) who commented that Land Reform Programme culminated in land, previously zoned as non-arable, being brought under cultivation, predisposing it to environmental degradation as well as increased possibilities of flooding. Apart from increased possibilities of flooding, the number of farms underutilised increased resulting in food crisis. *The Daily Mirror* on the other hand did not question the government’s logic of resettling landless black people in those areas.

Mukwashi in Manzungu (2004) introduced the aspect of land and expertise or training and said that many resettled farmers were poorly trained and had poor waste disposal systems and that culminated in bacterial contamination of water, thus, posing health risks through waterborne and water related diseases such as diarrhoea. In view of the above concern, *The Daily Mirror* being a centrist or middle of the road newspaper, also featured stories relating to local and foreign initiatives that were meant to boost productivity. *The Daily Mirror* further revealed, through the
selected stories, that food crisis where not only due to inefficiency of new resettled farmers but was as a result of some natural causes (drought). This prompted local and international organizations to develop ways of enhancing productivity.

The Daily Mirror considered this issue of debating the necessity of the Land Reform a fait accompli. There was a tacit acceptance that the Land Reform was historically justified in the stories. However, The Daily Mirror also distinguished itself from the other three newspapers discussed in this study in that the stories in The Daily Mirror were futuristic. Most stories debated ways of enhancing production on the farms either by training farmers to secure expertise on the farms, thus, underscored the need to build dams so as to minimise the relying on erratic rainfall. The stories in The Daily Mirror also encouraged new farmers to benefit from new technology and highlighted the need for Zimbabwe to create networks with other African countries in order to mitigate the possibilities of devastating drought. These pro–active based stories in The Daily Mirror made it far more open and flexible when discussing the Land Reform in Zimbabwe when compared to the picture of agricultural atrophy painted in the other three papers. The question that The Daily Mirror did not ask related to whether a mass–driven Land Reform programme aimed to benefit the majority could succeed in a capitalist framework in which the nationalist government was expecting financial help from the western countries whose kith and kin lost fundamentally in the Land Reform programme. This challenge is reflected in The Herald, Kwayedza and The Daily News’ silence about the future economic direction of the country.

The fifth question focused on how the language of reportage or frames used by Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror Newspapers affected the readers?

The study revealed that the stories exploring or reporting on the theme of land and history in The Herald omitted some valuable information. For instance, it was revealed that the newspaper did not fully give information on what it referred to as ‘just and equitable’ land distribution. Although most readers got the message as intended by The Herald as evidenced by the responses which they gave pertaining what they think were the reasons for carrying out Land Reform exercise the study revealed that the information that The Herald omitted also left some critical readers with a lack of understanding of what exactly were the reasons for Land Reform in
Zimbabwe. Some of the readers ended up labeling the whole exercise a political gimmick by ZANU (PF) aimed at wheedling voters. It was therefore revealed in this study that the government’s ‘ideology’ had an impact on the coverage of Land Reform in Kwayedza and The Herald newspapers and the subsequent readers’ understanding of the loose expression of land.

With regards to the concept of land, the stories in The Herald defined land, as agriculture. This was attributed to its over – reliance on government officials who in most cases were used as sources and thus provided their definition of land which the paper adopted. The ultimate of this scenario was that most of the readers ended up thinking of land as only farming or agriculture with the exception of a few who also saw land as encompassing mining, construction as well as manufacturing activities.

On the issue of land and compensation, The Herald reported that compensation was to be paid for the infrastructure and not for the soil. This dominant reading got into most of the readers who furthermore revealed in the letters to the editor column that the displaced white commercial farmers were supposed to be compensated only for the developments that they made on the land/farms and not for the soil. This understanding was mainly due to The Herald’s lack of analytical reports on the issue of compensation. This led other critical readers into even asking the logic of paying compensation to settlers or the British commercial farmers yet during colonialism these settlers took the Native people’s land and belongings without paying any compensation. As a result, some readers broke away from the frames created by The Herald that compensation should be paid for the infrastructure only and created their own frames which conveyed the messages that compensation should not be paid at all by the Zimbabwean government. This trend of romanticing Land Reform was also identified in Kwayedza.

Lastly, on the issue of land and distribution, the language used by The Herald had the motive of relaying the messages that land was going to be distributed fairly amongst the black majority. In addition to that, land was also going to be availed to people congested in the communal areas with the intent of decongesting these communal areas. Some of the readers who wrote letters to the Editor or who responded to questionnaires shared the same sentiments that land was distributed fairly and it decongested some of the communal areas. Other readers, however, questioned the reportage of The Herald which did not provide information regarding the logic of the government in displacing more people from some pieces of land and replacing with a few.
This was in focus of the plight of farm workers. Secondly, the language of reportage of Land Reform used by *The Herald* failed to inform readers about the manner in which land was going to be distributed fairly.

Whether the word ‘fair’ implied relocating landless as well as those people with infertile lands; to areas with arable lands; or whether the word ‘fair’ referred to the allocation of equal pieces of land to people so as to improve their standards of living was not fully covered. Some readers ended up discovering that land distribution created a new elite class which took the position of the erstwhile colonisers; the information *The Herald* did not highlight.

Although *The Daily News* believed that in criticising the Land Reform it was playing its watchdog role, an analysis of the newspaper stories also revealed that it played a lapdog role. It supported the interests of white commercial farmers to a greater extent. Whenever it covered the black farmers the language was full of negative stereotypes and that was also a characteristic of the newspapers during colonial era in Southern Rhodesia. In view of the above, *The Daily News* therefore failed to inform readers about other important issues regarding land. Although the newspaper was independent of the government but depended on individuals with certain interests, the reporters seemed to have used only white commercial farmers or those people who sympathised with white commercial farmers as sources. This overreliance on one source or on sources with the same thinking culminated in half – backed news stories as reflected in *Kwayedza, The Herald* and *The Daily News*. Relying on single or same sources also prevented the readers from fully understanding the situation at hand such as land and ownership in Zimbabwe.

Readers who were exposed to *The Daily Mirror* were bound to feel that it was more balanced in its reportage of the Land Reform programme. While the paper convinced some readers of the necessity of carrying out Land Reform, it nevertheless implicitly criticised the government owned newspapers for uncritically celebrating and romanticising the process of Land Reform. Similarly, *The Daily Mirror* partially confirmed as important, the critical role that *The Daily News* performed in its criticism of the government project of Land Reform. However, *The Daily Mirror* was also sensitive to the fact that *The Daily News* exaggerated the negative effects of the Land Reform and *The Daily Mirror* implicitly criticised *The Daily News* for outrightly adopting a policy that was anti – Land Reform that *The Daily Mirror* firmly believed would benefit the
masses or the Zimbabwean populacy. In fact, *The Daily Mirror* went further than the government owned papers and *The Daily News* in that the stories it published were concerned more with raising issues about the strategies that would make Land Reform a success in Zimbabwe.

In this respect, the study concluded that language had a variety of meanings to different readers. Readers exposed to the same news, in most cases, could be seeing and interpreting the stories differently. What they see and hear would be defined by their own class, gender or ethnicity. Furthermore, differences in meanings arrived at were due to omissions, words, quotes or sources used in the reports by journalists which were at other times taken as otherwise by some readers.


From the analysis done on Kwayedza and *The Herald* newspapers’ stories on land, it was observed that these two papers fully supported the Land Reform. They did not offer criticism of the way Land Reform was carried out. They even racialised the Land Reform to a point where it appeared that it was meant to benefit only black people. The main reasons for affirming Land Reform through the government owned newspapers was that the authorities believed that they were justified in repossessing land as a measure to redress past imbalances between blacks and whites. Authorities also believed that media should be used to support government developmental projects that were deemed to benefit the majority. For the authorities; supporting Land Reform was both a social and a political mandate. The last possible reason was that the government understood that struggle over control of national resources such as land was waged in the media as a battle field to counter views that opposed government projects. Unfortunately the officials were unreflective in their extreme support of the Land Reform.

In sharp contrast, *The Daily News* revealed that it was opposed to both the repossession of the land and the way land was repossessed. Consequently the stories in *The Daily News* were not only critical but they resided on the negative aspects of Land Reform such as corruption in the distribution of the land and refusal to compensate the farmers in full; and what the paper generally viewed as the waste of land, since most of the possessed land remained unproductive and was left idle. By offering these criticisms, *The Daily News* viewed its role as that of the
watchdog even though the criticism was mostly extremely negative to a point where it became easy for the reader to infer that the paper was anti-Land Reform.

Since *The Daily News* representation of the Land Reform was disapproving and to a large extent oppositional, the paper did not highlight the potential positive aspects of the Land Reform. In recognition of this extreme far right ideological attitude *The Daily Mirror* chose to view Land Reform programme as a moderating voice. In its own stories *The Daily Mirror* highlighted both the positive and the negative aspects of Land Reform. The newspaper even went further to suggest that the Land Reform could only succeed if those who were driving it would pay attention to training needs of the beneficiaries of the land, provide new technology, eradicate corruption in the distribution of the land and suggested the building of agricultural infrastructure such as dams to obviate the vulnerability from drought. In adopting this middle of the road ideological stance towards the Land Reform *The Daily Mirror* affirmed the Land Reform as necessary, but cautioned against underfunding, encouraged productivity to take place on those newly owned farms. *The Daily Mirror* criticised both the government’s extremely supportive view of the Land Reform performed without coherent planning as well as openly criticised *The Daily News* for refusing to acknowledge the historical inevitability and necessity of the Land Reform that *The Daily Mirror* believed should have benefitted the masses more than the elites.

It could be argued that all the ideological positions advanced by the four papers were not necessarily unpatriotic. However, *The Herald* and *Kwayedza* as well as *The Daily News* tended to focus and approve one aspect of the Land Reform at the expense of other variables. It is therefore possible to conclude that of the four papers analysed in this study, *The Daily Mirror* provided a more balanced reportage of the Land Reform in terms of defining the concept of the land (farming and mining), the potential for Land Reform in spurring economic growth for the country, the need to resource the process of Land Reform (providing training, inputs, infrastructure) and the need to be transparent in continuing to implement the Land Reform. Thus, in the context of the findings of this study, *The Daily Mirror* seemed more balanced than *The Herald, Kwayedza* and *The Daily News.*
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings above of this study the following points are offered as recommendations for future research in media and how they represent the Land Reform in ChiShona and English languages:

- Media should have a broader historical understanding of the context in which Land Reform in Zimbabwe is taking place.
- Since newspapers are read by many people and influence opinion, newspapers should desist from sensationalising the reportage of Land Reform because this will not sufficiently inform the readers not only on the necessity of the Land Reform but also of the challenges required to achieve a successful Land Reform.
- To the extent that newspapers as part of the media view themselves as the watchdog of society, the newspapers are justified in criticising ill–planned Land Reform programme; however, in the interest of upholding social responsibility the same newspapers should not only criticise Land Reform for the sake of opposing it but they should balance their criticism in ways that reveals that the criticism is genuine and not malicious or meant to serve the interests of a minority group.
- It is hoped that in future, research in how newspapers report projects such as Land Reform could be based on an expanded comparative basis that includes the analysis of several newspapers over a longer span of time. This could help readers to have exposure of reading about the same subject or theme or issue of Land Reform in different newspapers and this could allow them to have wide or broader choices in terms of decision making.
- It is also expected that future research can be based on analysing the reportage of Land Reform in a single paper in order to confirm whether or not there are ideological shifts in how this single paper reports the Land Reform in Zimbabwe. This can help readers to avoid the pitfalls of dismissing the newspaper without critically understanding why a newspaper supports or criticises the Land Reform. A critical approach to analysing a single paper can also prevent the reader from adopting a polarised view of issues being reported on.
- Lastly and perhaps more important is that readers / scholars could in future analyse or encourage the development of community based newspapers that can have the capacity to
bring out views on the Land Reform as wished for and understood by the members of those communities.
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8.0 APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE

My name is Washington Mushore and I am undertaking a Doctor of Literature and Philosophy Degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA). The topic I have chosen is ‘Media construction of reality: A critical analysis of the reportage of Land Reform in Shona and English Zimbabwean Newspapers: the case of Kwayedza, The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror, 2000 – 2008 and the main aim of this study is to critically explore the language through Land Reform Programme is reported in these newspapers and see whether these languages make readers or consumers of newspaper products more knowledgeable of the Zimbabwe Land Reform Programme dubbed Third Chimurenga. Kindly answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. The information obtained shall be used only for the purpose of this research project and shall be treated with strict confidentiality.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: INFORMANT’S PROFILE

Indicate your response with a tick or cross

Age
20-30
31-60
Above 60

Sex
Male
Female

Level of Education
Tertiary
Secondary
Primary
SECTION B: INFORMATION REGARDING REPORTAGE OF LAND REFORM

1) Which newspaper did you read mostly during 2000 and 2008
   Kwayedza
   The Herald
   The Daily News
   The Daily Mirror

   State the reason(s) for your answer?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2) What do you think were the reasons for carrying out Land Reform Exercise?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3) What is your understanding of the concept of land?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
4) What are your remarks on Land and compensation?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5) What are your comments on Land and distribution?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

6) What is your statement on Land and development?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7) What is your commentary regarding the coverage of the historical background of Land Reform, the concept of land, land and compensation, land and distribution and land and development in the newspaper that you read mostly?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
8) What do you think should be done in order to improve the language of reportage of Land Reform in the newspaper that you prefer above so as to enhance public understanding of the issue; if any?