The ‘Not Yet’ of Society

What does analysis of the main public and private newspapers, *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, in Zimbabwe indicate about the role of farm workers in official discourse in the period between September 2001 and September 2002?

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“…the first casualty of conflict is identity”

Antjie Krog¹

“The visitor takes in the landscape as scenery, as a pleasing arrangement of colours and shapes. The [local] sees history, human history….the deeds of people written into the landscape.”

Jonny Steinberg²

² Jonny Steinberg, Midlands, (South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2002), p.77
Abstract

Academic research on the controversial Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in Zimbabwe during the early 2000s has continuously overlooked or generalised the experiences of farm workers, bar a few key pieces of literature. A similar trend can be found in official discourse, despite the fact farm workers were one of the main groups affected. This oversight can be attributed to their role in Zimbabwean society and the space they occupied within it; from their position under ‘domestic governance’ on Large Scale Commercial Farms (LSCF) as Blair Rutherford has outlined, to their ambiguity in terms of rights to citizenship and perceived ‘foreignness’. This study chooses to enter this discussion through analysis of two of the main print publications at the time: the state-funded The Herald and the independent The Daily News. On a superficial level, these two newspapers have been posited as being at two opposite ends of the political spectrum, with The Herald parroting state rhetoric and The Daily News advocating the views of the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). However, this study finds that these two publications were not so divergent, but instead deployed the same discourse in describing the experiences of farm workers during the height of FTLRP between 2001 and 2002. Farm worker experiences were co-opted for the benefit of those with discursive authority, for different reasons, but to the same effect. This discourse did and continues to shadow farm worker realities on-the-ground. Thus, farm workers were routinely denied space within Zimbabwe because they were not easily definable in the binary construction of the actors involved in FTLRP.
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<td>GAPWUZ</td>
<td>General Agricultural and Plantation Workers’ Union of Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>JAG</td>
<td>Justice for Agriculture</td>
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<td>Lancaster House Constitution</td>
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<td>LSCF</td>
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<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

There is little doubt that land has taken centre stage in academic research on Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and now Zimbabwe. This attention derives from the inherent value of land and its influence in shaping the political, social and economic structures of the territory. In the last two decades discussions on land have revolved around the controversial events of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), instigated in early 2000 by the ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). It is viewed as a pivotal moment in the history of land in Zimbabwe, and the history of the nation itself. At the height of FTLRP, during the period between 2000 and 2003, widespread ‘reclamation’, ‘resettlement’, ‘redistribution’ of mostly white-owned Large-Scale Commercial Farm(s) (LSCF) took place. Since 2000 a vast pool of academic research has emerged on FTLRP, with debates as to its implications still ongoing. However, this literature focused predominantly on three main actors, often written in combination with one another; ZANU PF, the war veterans, and the white LSCF farmers. As the separation between party and state has become less distinguishable, the literature has sought to understand the top-down motivations behind FTLRP, its implementation and political and economic implications. The relationship between ZANU PF and the increasingly estranged farming community (white LSCF farmers and their families) has been the subject of much scholarly attention.

War veterans have also warranted a large amount of interest. Whilst the term ‘war veteran’ appears self-explanatory, in the context of FTLRP the term encompasses an ambiguous group. It was claimed by the state at the time that the group at the forefront of the invasions were veteran fighters from the Second Chimurenga, or civil war, which took place between 1966 and 1980. However, as a group they are often homogenised, despite the fact that there is contestation over whether those that were involved in ‘reclaiming’ the land were all in fact veterans of the Second Chimurenga. There is reason to believe that the ‘war veteran’ groups also often included ZANU PF youth militia, land hungry peasants, opportunists and farm workers. The final group


to gain the most academic, and non-academic, attention were the white farmers. Initially, portrayal of their role in the FTLRP swung vicariously between ‘victim’ and ‘villain’. Yet in more recent years a shift in academic approaches to FTLRP has emerged and had significant influence on understanding of the events. Out of the plethora of general studies on FTLRP as a whole, and its widespread implications, have emerged more specific and nuanced studies on each of the actors involved. Examples of this more streamlined branching-off are the research done by Angus Selby in ‘Commercial Farmers and the State: Interest Group Politics and Land Reform in Zimbabwe’ (2006) and Rory Pilossof’s The Unbearable Whiteness of Being (2012), which detach, contextualise and analyse the realities of FTLRP for the white farmers in ways which the previous literature overlooked.5

What remains lacking in the surrounding literature are the voices and experiences of the farm workers that were employed on the LSCF. Farm workers have been side-lined in academic literature and national rhetoric pertaining to FTLRP. The reasons for this are suggested by Blair Rutherford in his explanation of farm workers’ positions in relation to their employers. Historically and discursively, the narratives of farmers have dominated over those of farm workers. Due to their socio-economic position, their race, their access to publicity outlets, and their accessibility for researchers, their experiences were strongly represented through a number of mediums. Simultaneously the farmers’ experiences were viewed as representative of the farm workers’, allowing the farmer to speak for the workers, with few attempts having been made to distinguish between the two. Because of the dominant place white farmers inhabited in accounts of FTLRP, farm workers voices and experiences were ignored and/or marginalised in the assumption that farmers spoke for them. Yet, as Rory Pilossof has stated; “Farmers didn’t understand the experiences of farm workers under Fast Track”.6 Through Rutherford’s theory of ‘domestic governance’, farm workers’ lives, employment and welfare were assumed to be the responsibility of the farmer, removing them somewhat from the mainstream national political sphere. This form of ‘domestic governance’ does not imply that there was no interaction between farm workers and ZANU PF. A question that can be posed is then; how did they regard one another and was this reflected in official discourse? It is important here to clarify that farm workers as a group are not a harmonious single entity. Like any other community they are fractured and differentiated in their motivations, desires and actions, but identified as one group nonetheless, based on their employment. It is paramount to stress this clarification and to understand that farm workers’ narratives and voices have for too long been associated and intertwined with those of commercial farmers, contrasting starkly with their lived experiences. Because their voices have been marginalised, their image has come to be moulded by others and

5 For an idea of the general literature that has been mentioned, and which remains highly relevant and insightful, the following works provide an overview of FTLRP in its historical and political context; Amanda Hammar, Stig Jensen and Brian Raftopoulos’ Zimbabwe’s Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis (2003), Jocelyn Alexander’s The Unsettled Land: State-Making and the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893-2003 (2006), and Sam Moyo’s “The Land and Agrarian Question in Zimbabwe” (2004), amongst many others.

6 Rory Pilossof, in discussion with author, 28 March 2016
thus easily exploited. Andrew Hartnack has expressed disappointment in the previous academic research conducted on farm workers, stating that:

“…while undoubtedly well meaning, much of it essentially denied farm workers agency or cultural competence, portraying them largely as poverty stricken, illiterate and powerless, giving the impression that they were passive victims of their circumstances.”

Yet, as he further points out, in reality farm workers have not been robbed of their agency, nor their capacity to have some control over their immediate surroundings, contrary to what their constructed image would have one believe. Hence, the question as to their role in official discourse is pertinent in understanding the level of agency they possessed to influence it.

It is difficult to infiltrate the seemingly erratic rhetoric of ZANU PF and FTLRP and emerge with a clear picture of the objectives. However, this study will attempt to do this, at least with regards to ZANU PF’s position on farm workers during FTLRP and its manifestation in mainstream discourse. The entry point for the research is The Herald, a government-funded daily newspaper in Zimbabwe which is widely regarded as the state mouthpiece, with known working links to ZANU PF. It provides the most public representation of ZANU PF ideology and policy that is easily accessible. What would their reporting of events of FTLRP reveal about their attitudes towards farm workers during the period between September 2001 and September 2002? As a comparison point to The Herald, this study will also focus on the independently-funded Daily News. The Daily News arguably displays similar levels of subjectivity to The Herald, but instead advocated the views of the main opposition party at the time, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The core motivations are; to analyse how farm workers feature in these national newspapers, and how this reflects their position in Zimbabwean society as well as within the events of FTLRP.

The other motivation for this study besides the marginalisation of farm worker voices derives from a comment made by Tendai Chari in 2013; “An academic inquiry on how the perspectives of different actors have been articulated in the [Zimbabwean] media is still missing”. This study will further understanding that is lacking both in terms of the media in Zimbabwe and the experience(s) of farm workers. However, the current approach to media studies in Zimbabwe has been critiqued by Pilossof in claiming that:

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7 Andrew Hartnack, ‘Transcending Global and National (Mis)representations through Local Responses to Displacement: The Case of Zimbabwean (ex-)Farm Workers’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22.3 (2009), p.2
9 Chari, ‘Media Framing’, p.293
“The majority of media research in Zimbabwe has conformed to this pattern [of comparing the role of the independent media versus that of state or public media] with the key issue being how various publications have interacted with the political context”. 10

This statement does hold some value. Because of the polarisation that characterises the print media in Zimbabwe, the stances and biases inherent to each publication appear to be clear-cut. Yet, a more in-depth analysis of the print media is needed, as this study has uncovered some interesting dichotomies and undertones in The Herald and The Daily News which comprise but a small sub-section of the media in Zimbabwe as a whole.

It is also worth noting the significance of citizenship, belonging and identity politics that appear in discourses on FTLRP and the formulation of the farm worker identity. Since pre-colonial times, the power inherent in identification of oneself and others has been a point of contention in the bounded space that is now Zimbabwe. As with any nation, citizenship and identity are markers of inclusion and exclusion. At the beginning of the millennium these issues reached a climax with the rise of ‘authoritarian nationalism’ promulgated by ZANU PF. 11 Farmers and farm workers alike were marked as ‘aliens’ and ‘foreigners’ for different reasons, but to similar effect. This exclusionary view clearly shaped the way farm workers were perceived and portrayed by the media and ZANU PF. This was not only a matter of abstract framing. The amendment to the Citizenship Act in 2001 abolished dual citizenship and required the population to renounce foreign citizenship not only under Zimbabwean law, but also in accordance with the laws of other countries. 12 The Act led to the statutory exclusion of residents, many of whom were farm workers descendant from migrant workers from Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. 13

This was not an isolated incident in the history of the exclusion of farm workers, which is heavily associated with the allocation of land in Zimbabwe. After the formal transfer of authority from the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to the white settlers in 1923, a process of “territorial segregation” began. 14 This involved acts such as The Land Apportionment Act (1930) and the Native Land Husbandry Act (1951), which both sought to demarcate the separation of land tillage by whites and blacks, placing the majority of the rural black population into Communal Areas, or Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). The Communal Areas were controlled using both ‘customary’ and colonial law, meaning access to land was based on familial links to the

land. In this sense, the farm workers of foreign descent were excluded, with repercussions in the late 20th century being that they were dubbed ‘totemless people’ signalling their lack of a kamusha (a rural homestead). The majority of foreign farm workers arrived in Southern Rhodesia in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1992, the national census recorded that of the total farm workers, 164,824 were of Mozambican origin and 38,303 were Malawian. It was not only farm workers of foreign descent that faced marginalisation based on land segregation. Amongst Zimbabweans, farm work was considered the lowest rung of employment. Many of those who turned to farm work were compelled for reasons of poverty, destitution, and (perhaps most pertinently), landlessness. Thus, the idea of ‘Zimbabweaness’ also coincided with notions of ‘people of the soil’ and ‘natural farmers’ that were widespread during FTLRP. Again, the detrimental implication of these issues on the framing of farm workers in the media will become clear further on.

Despite the challenges involved in attempting to add to the already rich and dynamic literature on FTLRP in Zimbabwe, the hope is that this study will contribute to the further separation of the farm worker voices from their employers’ and will be able to situate them as their own political agents in Zimbabwe by understanding the role they played in FTLRP and whether their realities were reflected in official discourse.

Methodology

The approach to the issue of farm workers marginalisation, which lies at the heart of the motivation for this study, through a focus on the mainstream media was adopted mainly out of constraints of time and accessibility. One of the issues at the forefront of the study of farm workers post-FTLRP is the difficulty in accessing said workers. At the time of planning fieldwork, which was to last three months in total, it became apparent that it would not be possible to base the main data collection on interactions with the farm workers themselves, as there was no concrete way to guarantee access to a group or groups of farm workers. As Andrew Hartnack’s work has shown as well, farm workers that have been displaced by FTLRP have consciously sought to adapt and integrate into their new communities and environments. This renders them difficult subjects to engage with for predominantly ethical reasons. As the topics contained in this thesis remain sensitive issues in Zimbabwe, research would have to be conducted in a more or less inconspicuous and sensitive manner, so as not to expose or compromise the positions of the subjects. At the same time, it seems slightly oxymoronic to

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17 Ibid.
18 Hartnack, ‘Transcending Global and National (Mis)representations through Local Responses to Displacement’, p.15
19 Hartnack, ‘An exposé ethnography of Zimbabwe’s internally displaced ex-farm workers’, p.122
speak of being inconspicuous as a young, white woman researching these topics with said subjects in present-day Zimbabwe.

Hence, in need of a point of entry into this question this study sought newspapers as an interesting medium to analyse, especially because of the strong links known to exist between *The Herald* and ZANU PF. It can be viewed as a repository for ZANU PF discourse and thus a reflection of the ‘official discourse’ surrounding FTLRP. Newspapers are much more accessible, being found in the National Archives of Zimbabwe. The choice to analyse the month of September in both 2001 and 2002 alone came about during the fieldwork period. The initial plan had been to focus on the period between September and December 2003, with the conclusion of the climax of FTLRP and with an idea that there may be some more reflective views in circulation. However, it became apparent that there was little content on FTLRP, mostly because fewer land invasions were occurring at this time and because FTLRP had ‘officially’ been brought to an end in 2002. For this reason, and on the advice of a professor from the University of Zimbabwe, a more comparative approach was pursued. The focus was placed on the month of September, in both 2001 and 2002, to analyse what was written on FTLRP and if there were any discrepancies or changes in reportage one year apart. This has yielded much more content.

Even analysing four months’ worth of content in two different newspapers almost proved too much, not least because of mistakes that were made during fieldwork.20 There were significant problems in initially gaining access to the National Archives in Harare, with the main barrier being the discriminatory entry policy they enforce, which excludes foreign researchers from accessing archival content for longer than one day. This was also along with being unable to enter the Archives for the entirety of March, as they closed for stock-taking purposes. Being in Zimbabwe only between January and the end of March, this was a significant chunk of time to lose. Despite these issues, after clarification of my Zimbabwean nationality, the National Archives proved to be a friendly and helpful place to conduct research in. Any inaccuracies or discrepancies in the recounting of the content of the newspapers are entirely the authors’ fault.

In terms of the interviews conducted, it was possible to interview a range of key informants and academics. However, because of the lack of follow-up interviews, the arguments in this thesis will not be based too heavily on the content of each interview. In particular, the content gathered through interviews with the four farm workers is to be treated with careful objectivity. This is due partly to the way in which the interviews were arranged, through the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers’ Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ), and the monetary transactions that were associated with this. In the sense that, according to GAPWUZ policy, any workers’ attending workshops (or in this case, an interview) at their headquarters in central Harare, must be provided with compensation for travel and food costs. This compensation was covered by the author, out of courtesy, but may have influenced the dynamics

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20 At the time of conducting research, the author was also completing an internship with a local Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in Harare, which placed significant restraints on how much time could be dedicated to research.
of the interview itself and the answers given. There was also an issue of language, with Farm Worker 3 not being comfortable in expressing her opinions in English, and with myself not understanding Shona. Thus, translation of her words was given by the other interviewees. Subsequently, subtleties of language may have been lost and simplification of answers may have also occurred. This is not something that can be measured or ascertained, but it must still be noted.

**Terminology**

Before moving further into the background, there is a need to clarify some of the terminology that will be used throughout this thesis.

The first of these is to explain the interchangeable nature of the terms ‘state’, ‘government’, ‘ZANU PF’, and ‘ruling party’. The definition of ‘state’ referred to throughout the thesis is one derived from Michel Foucault’s theory, in which he refers to it as “a practice not a thing”. He further describes the state as a formalisation of relations of power, which occur on all levels of society. This theory is apt for the nature of the state present in Zimbabwe at the time of FTLRP. ZANU PF is arguably an authoritarian party, and despite a brief period of political coalition with the opposition MDC in 2008, continues to dominate government structures. Thus there is little need to distinguish between state actions and party actions, as they are both derived from ZANU PF ideology and agency. Hence, the state and party are inextricably linked.

Secondly, attention must be drawn to the terms surrounding FTLRP. FTLRP is also referred to as the Third Chimurenga in certain contexts. This links it with a history of struggles in the country; simply put the First Chimurenga (1896-7) was a struggle against the imposition of foreign rule, and the Second Chimurenga (1966-80) was the civil war that ended in the independence of the country. This term is usually used in nationalist rhetoric, in an attempt to link the reallocation of land with a continued effort to rid Zimbabwe of colonialism. This thesis will not use Third Chimurenga, unless referring to official discourse and national rhetoric. However, it is paramount to understand the power and influence of language in the events that will be discussed. Language use reveals so much of the undertones and biases of the actors involved, which is pertinent especially in the analysis of The Herald and The Daily News. There are also tensions involved in the wording deployed to explain what happened to LSCF during FTLRP. Land ‘invasions’/‘grabbing’/‘reallocation’/‘resettlement’/‘redistribution’ are all terms that have been used liberally. Each has strong connotations and is linked to a particular narrative framing of FTLRP events. With this in mind, it is difficult to decide which term to use, in an attempt to remain as a-political as possible. It is, however, almost impossible to avoid the politics involved in FTLRP. For this reason, ‘land redistribution’ and ‘land invasions’ will be used

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22 Ibid.
predominantly. The significance of ‘land invasions’ is not to be overlooked. Eric Worby explains why it was a term accepted by the various actors involved, in stating that “both the agents and objects of the process…have found sufficient righteousness in its implications for the term to remain remarkably uncontroversial”, yet no less political in nature.24
Chapter 2
Background and Literature Review

Background

There are two areas of background needed before exploring the findings of this thesis; one considering FTLRP and the ways in which farm workers were affected by the events, and another on the history of *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, including contextualisation of the media landscape in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s.

*Histories of The Herald and The Daily News*

The history of each of the publications varies quite markedly. *The Herald* was established in 1892, at a time when Rhodesia was still under administrative control of BSAC. It was produced by the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, which was based in South Africa. Argus’ subsidiary in Rhodesia was the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company (RPPC). Ironically, *The Herald* represented the white minorities’ views in Rhodesia for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. However, after independence in 1980, the new government of Zimbabwe bought out Argus’ shares in the RPPC using funding provided by the Nigerian government. RPPC was renamed Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Ltd., or Zimpapers as it is now commonly known, which was in turn overseen by the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT). Zimpapers now controls production and publication of *The Herald*. ZMMT purports to be an independent trust with an autonomous Board of Trustees. However, pervasive government interference in ZMMT has become the norm.

*The Daily News*, on the other hand, was launched in March 1999, a century after *The Herald*. It was the brainchild of Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, which has investments from both foreign and local businessmen, a fact that became a point of local controversy for the newspaper. The initial publications of the paper coincided with the formation of the main opposition party at the time, MDC, which was launched in September 1999. It was a politically, socially and economically volatile time in the country. From 2000 the media landscape in Zimbabwe changed dramatically, with the dissolution of the old Ministry of Information in favour of the new Department of Information and Publicity in the President’s

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27 Chuma, ‘Liberating or limiting the public sphere?’, p.124 and Chari, ‘Media Framing’, p.297
28 Willems, ‘Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders’, p.1770
29 Chari, ‘Media Framing’, p.298
30 Willems, ‘Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders’, p.1771
Office. This new department had access to unlimited funding from the President’s budget, which had major implications for ZMMT’s, and hence The Herald’s, finances.\(^{31}\)

In terms of readership, it has been argued that The Daily News threatened the dominance previously enjoyed by The Herald. Based on survey findings from 2000, Wendy Willems claims that The Herald had a total daily readership of 713,000, whereas The Daily News stood at an average of 424,000 daily readers.\(^{32}\) It must be noted here though that readership numbers do not imply agreement with the content. Readership statistics also do not recognise or give an indication of the “highly divergent ways in which Zimbabweans might engage with state media” as well as independent media, as Willems also argued.\(^{33}\) Research conducted by Dumisani Moyo agrees with the sentiment expressed by Willems, in that The Daily News threatened The Herald’s grip on the print media space. However, he presents a slightly different picture with regards to readership numbers. Moyo claims that by 2000, The Daily News had a total of 2 million readers, whilst The Herald lagged behind at 1.9 million readers.\(^{34}\) The true figures would lie somewhere in between these two projections. The fundamental point, however, is that The Daily News created and expanded a space for itself in the monopolised media space that was dominated by state-funded media outlets in the early 2000s.

### Media Landscape in Zimbabwe

The media landscape in Zimbabwe from 2000 became increasingly limited, especially with the run-up to the 2002 general elections. The two main enablers of this restrictive environment were the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which both took effect in 2002. POSA effectively banned any publications or statements that were deemed to be offensive to the Zimbabwean state or President Mugabe himself.\(^{35}\) AIPPA required each publication to register for accreditation with the Media and Information Commission (MIC).\(^{36}\) Moyo argues that due to the practice of heavy monitoring in the media landscape, “a culture of silence had become dominant”, which The Daily News challenged to some extent.\(^{37}\) Despite this, The Daily News suffered especially in this environment. Between 2000 and 2002 the publication was the target of two bomb attacks, one on their printing press and the other on the office of the editor-in-chief.\(^{38}\) Many of their journalists

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\(^{31}\) Chuma, ‘Liberating or limiting the public sphere?’, p.134

\(^{32}\) Willems, ‘Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders’, p.1771

\(^{33}\) Wendy Willems, ‘Beyond dramatic revolutions and grand rebellions: everyday forms of resistance in the ‘Zimbabwe crisis’’, Communicare, 29(2010), p.4


\(^{35}\) Willems, ‘Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders’, p.1771

\(^{36}\) Ibid.

\(^{37}\) Moyo, ‘The ‘independent’ press and the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe’, p.113

were harassed and intimidated. In 2003 *The Daily News* challenged AIPPA in the Supreme Court, refusing to register with the MIC. They eventually lost the case and were required to register. However, in attempting to do so, they were refused accreditation. On this basis they had to discontinue publication, only re-launching in 2010 after gaining approval from the relevant government ministry.

Both Tendai Chari and Wendy Willems have analysed these two publications and have separately concluded that *The Herald* and *The Daily News* leaned away from objectivity towards bias and distortion of the truth. Chari draws from this that the “social responsibility role of the press was thus shunted to the margins”. This is a view shared and expanded upon by Terence Ranger, who presented the idea of ‘patriotic journalism’ into discussions on the media in Zimbabwe. Ranger argues that the practice of ‘patriotic journalism’ coincided with the rise of authoritarian nationalism and was spurred on especially by the then Minister of Information, Jonathon Moyo. He elaborates that ‘patriotic journalism’ is “narrow and divisive – a substitute for ideology and analysis”, which breeds “hate journalism”. This form of journalism was applied in *The Herald*, leading it to be described as the “public relations arm of the government”. Moyo agrees in suggesting that *The Herald* was “co-opted into the state’s ‘nation-building’ project”. This co-option, whilst perhaps voluntary, would have also been driven strongly by *The Herald’s* financial dependence on the party. However, Ranger’s “language of hate speak” could also be found in *The Daily News’* reporting. Although it was in opposition to the “‘nation-building’ project”, similar to *The Herald’s* open aversion to the independent media, *The Daily News* directed their “hate speak” towards the government, in turn advocating for the opposition MDC. In this way, *The Daily News* has been ascribed the role of “independent watchdog”, being identified as “stridently critical of government policies”. In many ways though, this “stridently critical” stance and avid polarisation worked to negate *The Daily News’* watchdog role because of the blatant biases involved. Similarly, the “hate journalism” practised in *The Daily News* made it impossible for the publication to engage in any thorough debate or discussion. Thus, the “private media fell prey to partisan interests in the same way the public media did”, as Chari has argued. Within the volatile political context the two newspapers became ever more polarised and politicised in their approaches to what they considered news stories. The following comment, found in *The Daily News* in September 2002, demonstrates the frustration felt by the population as a result of this; “There are times when I am

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39 Willems, ‘Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders’, p.1771
40 Chari, ‘Salience and silence’, p.147 and Willems, ‘Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders’, p.1769
41 Chari, ‘Salience and silence’, p.136
43 Chari, ‘Salience and silence’, p.141
44 Moyo, ‘The ‘independent’ press and the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe’, p.111
45 Ranger, ‘The rise of patriotic journalism in Zimbabwe and its possible implications’, p.13
46 Chari, ‘Media Framing’, p.298
47 Ranger, ‘The rise of patriotic journalism in Zimbabwe and its possible implications’, p.15
48 Chari, ‘Media Framing’, p.314

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persuaded to believe that our newspapers are more divided than Zanu PF and MDC…which paper lies more than the other?”

Even the Justice Minister at the time, Patrick Chinamasa, passed comment on the extreme polarisation in place, stating; “I wonder why the MDC has Learnmore Jongwe as their spokesperson when they have the Daily News doing their job”.

There is thus a further need to expand upon Pilossof’s critique, in which he ascertains that:

“The majority of media research in Zimbabwe has conformed to this pattern [of looking at the role of independent media versus state media] with the key issue being how various publications have interacted with the political context”.

As aforementioned, this statement holds value, especially with regards to the research presented by Willems (2004) and Chari (2010, 2013). However, there is more research to be done using this approach. Much of the previous research has worked to re-affirm what has become general knowledge in Zimbabwe; that The Herald is the state mouthpiece and that The Daily News supported the opposition MDC. By focusing specifically on portrayal of farm workers in the media, this study has uncovered a more nuanced view of the media biases and distortions, that goes beyond simple posturing of The Herald and The Daily News as at opposite ends of a spectrum. In fact, it outlines strong discursive parallels between the two.

**The Fast Track Land Reform Programme**

At this point, an obligatory recounting of the events of FTLRP is needed. Not much space will be devoted to this task, both because there already exists a large amount of literature on the topic and also, although it may be the cause of the issue that lies at the core of this thesis, it is not the primary focus. The implementation of the FTLRP cannot be viewed as a singular event, nor as a phenomenon that is exceptional to the history of Zimbabwe. It has its roots in the history of land allocation and distribution in the territory in pre-colonial times, with the arrival of BSAC, with the transition to colonial rule, with the independence of the country in 1980, and with the emerging state of the post-colonial territory. Essentially, land allocation under colonial rule was organised along racial lines, exemplifying Mahmood Mamdani’s ‘bifurcated’ society in which the white population were treated as citizens, and the black population as subjects. Land distribution was at the heart of discussions at the Lancaster House Conferences, and the eventual drawing up of the Lancaster House Constitution (LHC) in 1979, which marked the beginning of the formal transition to independence. The clause which referred to land in the LHC stated:

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50 Chari, ‘Salience and silence’, p.133
51 Pilossof, ‘For Farmers, By Farmers’, pp.34-5
52 Mamdani, Citizen and Subject
“When property is wanted for one of these purposes, its acquisition will be lawful only on condition that the law provides for the prompt payment of adequate compensation and, where the acquisition is contested, that a court order is obtained.”

Thus the basis for redistribution in the 1980s and through to the early 1990s rested on a ‘willing buyer- willing seller’ concept coupled with payment of ‘adequate’ compensation, which made for slow progress. In 1992, two years following the end of the LHC’s remit, the state introduced the Land Acquisition Act. It outlined three types of land government wished to acquire and the manner in which compensation would be provided. Again, the process proved to be slow mainly because of the resistance posed by farmers of LSCF, many of whom took the government to court over the legality of the Act, and won. The government faced increasing pressure towards the late 1990s, predominantly from the war veterans that had served in the Second Chimurenga. In 1997, government paid indemnity costs to all registered war veterans, as well as providing them with their long-awaited pensions. Because of the unplanned and unbudgeted nature of this decision, the country was cast into economic turmoil. The war veterans arguably played a large role in pressuring the government to speed up the reallocation of land, as many sought to gain land for themselves as compensation for their services. It could arguably be viewed as a trigger in the processes which led to FTLRP. Simultaneously, the United Kingdom rejected any financial responsibility for land reform during the 1998 International Donors Conference on Land Reform and Resettlement in Zimbabwe, which was a major blow for ZANU PF. Subsequently, it has been widely argued, and is general belief amongst many Zimbabweans, that FTLRP was politically motivated, as opposed to motivated by the desire for truly equal land distribution. This argument claims that FTLRP was a political reaction to the resounding ‘no’ vote against ZANU PF’s proposal for implementation of a new constitution in the February 2000 referendum. It was seen as an indication of the waning popularity of ZANU PF and President Mugabe himself. One of the main constituencies advocating for the ‘no’ vote was identified as white LSCF farmers and their workers, as well as the opposition MDC party. LSCF held a large voting potential that was not dependent on ZANU PF, being made up of the large number of workers. One of the reasons for the farmers’ avid political mobilisation was a section in the new constitution which referred to the acquisition of LSCF by government, without provision of compensation. Despite the ‘no’ vote, ZANU PF still proceeded to formulate the FTLRP in the same year, claiming that it was a response to the spontaneous invasions of LSCF that were occurring countrywide led by war veterans. However, many scholars have argued that FTLRP

56 Ibid.
was a systematic, government orchestrated acquisition of land and displacement of people. As Bill Kinsey has written; “…displacement is consciously being employed as a political instrument” in Zimbabwe.

**Literature Review**

There continues to be strong rhetoric surrounding FTLRP. It involves identification and exclusion of certain groups, with much emphasis placed on ‘true Zimbabweans’, ‘natural farmers’ and ‘people of the soil’. Muzondidya wrote:

“In the historical text/narrative that emerged, only ‘native Africans’ or *vevhu/abantwana bomhlabathi* (sons of the soil) could be the original and true inhabitants of Zimbabwe, who had pre-eminent rights to the country’s land and other resources.”

This rhetoric has had lasting implications for the representation of farm workers. This study wishes to analyse the discourse surrounding farm workers, which is complex and multifaceted, from the perspective of two scholars. The first is Blair Rutherford, who conducted in-depth anthropological research on farm workers in the early 1990s and later in the 2000s following FTLRP. The second is Andrew Hartnack, who built on Rutherford’s work in the mid-2000s and contributed to an understanding of farm workers through the lens of James Scott’s ‘weapons of the weak’. Eric Worby’s work, which provides a thoughtful summary of the contextual issues surrounding farm workers and FTLRP, will be used to situate the work of Rutherford and Hartnack in the wider Zimbabwean context.

The enduring influence of Blair Rutherford’s work exists in his theory of ‘domestic governance’, which is used to explain the power dynamics on LSCF and their position in the wider political landscape of the nation. The concept does not claim that farm workers exist outside the government’s “sphere of interest”; just that domestic governance dominated the reality on-the-ground in spite of not being an officially institutionalised network of power. *Mitemo yemurungu* (the laws of the farmer, or the laws of the white man) and *pane mitemo yepurazi* (it is the laws of the farm) often outweighed the laws of the nation. It was not

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58 Ibid.
uncommon for *mitemo yemurungu* to be illegal in national terms, as Rutherford showed in the approach some farmers took to overtime pay. Domestic governance based itself on paternalistic values and the framing of the farmer-farmer worker relationship this entailed. Worby extrapolates this idea in saying that “the political energy and capacity of white farmers helps to account for the comparative invisibility and silence of their workers”, in the sense that they were viewed as the responsibility of the farmer and were thereby represented by them. Paternalistic tendencies ran deep, with the identity of farmers in national and local discourses hinging heavily on their ability to look after their workers. Even today there is mention of ‘enlightened farmers’ when referring to LSCF farmers that were involved in providing schools, crèches, beer halls and housing for their workers. Within the paternalistic framework lies the modern versus non-modern dichotomy. The farmer, being the ‘provider’, is viewed as modern and progressive, whilst the farm worker is posited as ‘lacking’ modernity. This is further complicated by their ambiguous position in the dualistic spaces of the rural areas in Zimbabwe. Farm workers do not fit into either of the categories which dominate the imagined space of rural Zimbabwe, those of; ‘African peasant’ and ‘European farmer’. This ambiguity in identity is crucial to their silencing and marginalisation, as identity and belonging played a pivotal role in FTLRP.

Rutherford takes a novel approach in exploring the multifaceted and multiple senses of belonging of farm workers. He insists that evocation of ‘nation’ “marks boundaries as it marks bodies; it excludes some identities and subjectivities just as it nominates others for inclusion”. In the context of a growing rhetoric of African nationalism in the 1990s and early 2000s in Zimbabwe, farm workers were not easily definable. This placed them in a vulnerable position; one which was easily exploited and manipulated to suit the needs of “those who have produced the enduring locations and relations of farm workers within the nation”. Farm workers thus became the “not yet” of society, in the sense that they were not yet legitimised by having a clearly defined identity in the nation-space. As Rutherford described it; “the “not yet” – you are not yet a true class with a history and a mission, not yet legitimately within the national imaginations of the various social groups of Zimbabwe”. Worby contextualises this situation in pointing out that “the attribution of identities and forms of consciousness to others continues to underwrite state justifications for relocating particular communities”, underlying the vulnerability of the farm workers. ZANU PF and the state thus aligned the farm workers with their employers, portraying them as belonging to the farmer and the farm as Rutherford has

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64 Rutherford, *Working on the Margins*, p.105
66 Commercial Farmers’ Union (CFU) employee, in discussion with author, 18 March 2016, and Andrew Hartnack, in discussion with author, 26 February 2016
67 Rutherford, *Working on the Margins*, p.231
68 Rutherford, ‘Belonging to the Farm(er)’, p.198
70 Rutherford, ‘Belonging to the Farm(er)’, p.203
71 Ibid.
72 Worby, ‘A Redivided Land?’, p.503
argued. Whilst this dominated the discourse surrounding farm workers, Rutherford has also outlined four other ways in which farm workers have been represented. The first is as “victims of violence”, mostly perpetrated by war veterans and/or white farmers. The second is as framed by their economic security due to their loss of employment and their general landlessness. Thirdly is as perpetrators of violence mostly against war veterans and land invaders. And lastly as “disruptors of development”, suggesting an inability to work for themselves or for the progression of agriculture in Zimbabwe. These frameworks hold true in further analyses of the content of The Herald and The Daily News, as will be discussed forthwith, and on which Rutherford commented the following:

“These sorts of mass media(ted) portraits are deeply problematic. Such oversimplified notions of how land intersects with politics in Zimbabwe cannot hope to do justice to the depth of complexity of the racial, class, ethno-regional, and gender-based institutional and political arrangements that have shaped social relations on and off farms in rural Zimbabwe, both during and after colonisation.”

Beyond this, Rutherford argues that little is known or understood of how farm workers have been “imagined in official discourses”, which this study hopes to rectify to some extent. Thus, Rutherford was one of the first to comprehensively identify the position of farm workers in the nation and their struggles in being able to represent themselves on both a micro-, local and national scale.

Hartnack’s work paints more of a picture of farm workers’ coping mechanisms during and after FTLRP, but remains relevant for this study in the ways it deconstructs the image of farm workers as a homogenise, harmonious group. One of Hartnack’s main concerns is the displacement of farm workers, with as many as 500,000 “farm dwellers” being defined as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a result of FTLRP. This figure does not even take into account those that remained in the farm compounds. Although they were not physically displaced, they experienced many of the same trials and anxieties of those that left leading them to be referred to as “displaced in place” by Godfrey Magaramombe. Whether displaced physically or not, the staggering amount of people rendered vulnerable by FTLRP has led Bill

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73 Rutherford, ‘Belonging to the Farm(er)’, and Rutherford, Working on the Margins
74 Rutherford, ‘Belonging to the Farm(er)’, p.193
75 Rutherford, Working on the Margins, p.233
77 Rutherford, Working on the Margins, p.2
78 This figure does not include their dependents - families - in its total. Many argue as many as 2 million farm workers and families were displaced as a direct result of FTLRP. Hartnack, ‘Transcending Global and National (Mis)representations through Local Responses to Displacement’, p.3
Derman to argue that FTLRP is “the only land reform in history which will dispossess those who work on the land in far greater numbers than those who will be resettled”.  

Hartnack is determined to provide insight into the existence of a strong, if sometimes hidden, agency on the part of the farm workers. This is an individualistic agency, especially at the time of FTLRP. “Coming from multi-ethnic backgrounds, and living in a fluid social setting, farm workers often did not have a strong sense of community before displacement”, leaving them to utilise their social and economic positions to manipulate their surroundings to their advantage. This idea runs contrary to the much used image of farm workers as a harmonious group, with a strong sense of community. As one of the primary targets of the violence that manifested itself during FTLRP, farm workers were not the helpless victims they have so often been portrayed as. As Worby has stated; “resistance to power is perhaps not a matter of choice between overt and covert means of protest”, which holds a lot of weight particularly in analysis of the actions of farm workers during FTLRP and the way they were then presented in the mainstream media. In a similar vein to Rutherford’s explanation of farm workers being framed as “disruptors of development”, Hartnack has identified that farm workers were often “accused of being responsible for some of the failures of the land reform programme [in] government press and official documents”. This view is readily available in The Herald.

Worby’s work situates the work of Rutherford and Hartnack well. He clearly positions the reasons why farm workers were overlooked based on categorisation of their group and the vulnerability that was implicit in this. His analysis of the fragility of identity construction is particularly apt:

“In the land reform problematic, the nation-space is portrayed as an organically and functionally integrated whole in which citizens of different juridically recognised types – ‘white’, ‘black’, ‘commercial farmer’, ‘communal farmer’ – are held to have on one hand, a set of natural dispositions, capacities and potentialities and, on the other hand, a set of moral entitlements and obligations.”

In the farm workers’ case, they could and were placed into varying categories, dependent on the context. Yet they did not have a category of their own to inhabit within the simplistic categorisations and thus were exploited for their ambiguity in the mainstream media and multiple other discourses. Worby also frames the reasoning behind the state’s understanding of who was ‘worthy’ of land. He aptly uncovers the pervasive idea that “it is a certain kind of individual who has the capacity to make the land fruitful”. Obviously, farm workers did not qualify under these

80 Worby, ‘A Redivided Land?’, p.492
82 Worby, ‘A Redivided Land?’, p.496
83 Hartnack, ‘Transcending Global and National (Mis)representations’, p.3
84 Worby, ‘A Redivided Land?’, p.488
85 Ibid., p.493
criterion, despite their constructed identity being solely based on their form of employment. This only further highlights that “farm workers have virtually no point of autonomous entry into established political discourse” 86

86 Ibid., p.501
Chapter 3

Farm Workers in the Print Media

In analysing *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, the focus will be on language use and what it reveals about the framing of farm workers. This analysis will refer to Rutherford’s ‘categories’ of representation, these being; victims of violence, framed by their economic security, perpetrators of violence, and “disruptors of development”.\(^{87}\) These representations clash at certain points rendering them seemingly contradictory, yet simultaneously they often overlap in subtle ways. This will be explored as a way to understand the overarching discourse in which farm workers became entangled. Furthermore, the placement of articles and the background of the authors will be reviewed in an attempt to gain insight into the approaches taken by the two publications. Whilst analysis of the two publications will be done separately, a comparative stance will be assumed.

*The Herald*

*The Herald* is problematic to analyse, as it initially appears to have an erratic and contradictory stance on farm workers. Essentially, *The Herald* can and did report what it wished in some ways mirroring government policy during the early 2000s. Mention of farm workers was limited in *The Herald* in comparison to *The Daily News*. In September 2001, out of twenty-four days of publication *The Herald* only directly mentioned farm workers in nineteen articles, whilst farm workers were mentioned in forty-one articles in *The Daily News*. In September 2002, these numbers dropped to ten times for *The Herald* and twenty-six times for *The Daily News*, out of twenty-five days of publication. This is a huge disparity, considering *The Daily News* mentioned farm workers directly at last once per issue, whilst *The Herald* only once every two days. This is not an indication that *The Herald* did not report on the events of FTLRP, however, it does reveal that their focus was on other issues and actors surrounding FTLRP.

\(^{87}\) Rutherford, *Working on the Margins*, p.233
Farm workers posed a problem for state rhetoric, and by extension reportage on them in *The Herald*. As aforementioned they did not fit into either the category of ‘African peasant’ or ‘European farmer’ and were thus not immediately aligned within the war-like *Third Chimurenga* discourse. Hence, the government and *The Herald* alike, tended to align them with their employers, in-keeping with past discursive tendencies. In this sense they were perceived to be ‘foreigners’ and ‘aliens’, making an ‘other’ of them and by extension, an enemy. This is indicated in phrases such as “several farm workers of foreign descent”.\(^88\) This constructed association with the farmer proved harmful for the portrayal of farm workers in *The Herald*. Mugabe was quoted in the paper in September 2002 as saying:

“The [white farmers] do not deserve to be in Zimbabwe and we shall take steps to ensure that they are not entitled to our land in Zimbabwe…They belong to Britain and let them go there.”(emphasis own)\(^89\)

The idea that one can be deserving of being in Zimbabwe and being Zimbabwean reveals the complete subjectivity and elasticity used in official definitions of identity and citizenship in the early 2000s. As Rutherford and others have previously pointed out, a centrally defining feature of white farmers in Zimbabwe had come to be their treatment of workers. This appears in *The Herald*, written, in fact, by a foreign investigative journalist, Gregory Elich. He wrote; “Land owners who had mistreated workers, paid excessively low wages or exhibited racism, were much more likely to experience occupation of sections of their farm”.\(^90\) Not only were their characters and morality called into question based on their treatment of workers, it becomes a justification for claiming they were not ‘good’ farmers, therefore not deserving Zimbabweans, and thus not worthy of owning land. In *The Herald*, and government rhetoric, a link was developed between

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\(^88\) Crime Reporter, ‘No violence in Wedza’, *The Herald*, September 7, 2001, p.4
\(^89\) Innocent Gore, ‘Unrepentant whites have no place here: President’, *The Herald*, September 5, 2002, Front page
\(^90\) Gregory Elich, ‘NGOs to cause mayhem in Zimbabwe’/’West exaggerates effect of land reform’, *The Herald*, September 5, 2002, pp.8-9
being labelled a ‘good’ farmer (and a subsequently assumed natural/inherent skill with the land) and being a true Zimbabwean.

This vague sense of ‘Zimbabweanness’ was often invoked in *The Herald* and was related to ideas of ‘blackness’ and natural farming ability. An example is a letter to the editor entitled ‘Time for blacks to reclaim land’, which appeared in 2002. This reference to a generalised ‘black’ group introduced a friction into the meticulous way in which the different groups involved in FTLRP were constructed. Yet it indicated a co-option of these groups’ narratives for the furthering of state justification of FTLRP. The above letter was not an isolated article, in fact the Minister of State for the Land Reform Programme, ‘Comrade’ Flora Bhuka, was quoted in an article as saying, “Land reform should be viewed as a move meant to empower the black people who were marginalised during the colonial era”. Considering that there is concurrence on the fact that farm workers, who without doubt fit Bhuka’s description of “black people who were marginalised during the colonial era”, received less than 5% of the land redistributed under FTLRP, this statement can be held to question. Yet at the same time it reveals how easily farm workers were at certain points included and excluded from the discourse surrounding FTLRP.

Building on the notion of deserving to be Zimbabwean, and the association assumed between farmers and farm workers, an article published on 18th September 2002 is telling. In it is written:

> “People born in Zimbabwe but whose parents originate from SADC [Southern African Development Community] countries - particularly Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia - may soon be accorded special treatment to be recognised as Zimbabweans.”

The concept that despite being born in Zimbabwe, the people referred to are being “accorded special treatment” alludes to some level of entitlement involved in fulfilling the criterion for access to citizenship and the associated rights. It also reveals the ambiguity present in citizenship and citizen rights at the time. Further examples of the connections being made between being ‘truly’ Zimbabwean and being a ‘good’ farmer are found in the following titles and quotes from *The Herald*: ‘Africans have always been good farmers’, “All the farms that have been taken now belong to the people of Zimbabwe”, and “As the majority of people are natural farmers and love the soil”. It is interesting to note here that the majority of these articles were published in September 2002, and were less apparent in September 2001. This could suggest an increased pressure to justify the aims and motivations of FTLRP on the part of the state.

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Farm Workers and Criminality

With regards to farm workers specifically, *The Herald*’s reporting fell into two of the categories Rutherford outlined. The first of these framed farm workers as perpetrators of violence, or more specifically, as criminals. In September 2001, thirteen of the nineteen articles directly mentioning farm workers adhered to this trend. There was a significant reduction in the use of this framing in 2002, however, with only two of the total ten articles applying this imagery. Yet, the low number of total articles mentioning farm workers in September 2002 could be an explanation for this decrease. Strong language was prevalent, being especially involved in the numerous reports published on a particular land invasion which occurred at Bita Farm in Wedza in 2001. “Farm workers at Bita Farm in Wedza attacked them [the “resettled farmers”] when they arrived to occupy allocated plots.”96 The incident was further described as being a “heavy attack” involving “murderous behaviour” by the “ready-for-hire and ready-for-murder bands of farm labourers”(emphasis own) and “white farmers and their mercenary armies of farm labourers”.97 This violence was framed as “an attempt to discredit the Government”, an obvious criminalisation of the act.98 Another incident involving farm worker violence was written about like so; “The workers armed themselves with axes, steel chains, spears, sticks, stones and knobkerries and attacked the settlers resulting in the death of two”.99 A final example; “… the pair [of farm workers] allegedly attacked and killed the victim before stripping him naked”.100 These are snippets of the general trend of reporting in detail on the violence perpetrated by farm workers. These acts of violence were all portrayed as offensive, lacking a contextualisation of the wider scope of violence being simultaneously directed towards the farm workers. The descriptions of the violence tended towards an assumption of premeditation, and posited them as having clear intent. This becomes clear in reading the following comment; “What we see as war veterans’ violence is more a reaction than an initiating response”(emphasis own).101 Within this description of war veterans’ violence is a justification of it, a reduction of its implications, and a subsequent de-criminalisation of it. This is not to ignore that their violence was also reported on; “Several farm workers’ dwellings were later burnt down as the settlers retaliated to avenge the death of their fellow resettled farmers”.102 Yet clearly justification for the violence is given, thereby almost excusing it. Furthermore, within the description of the violence perpetrated by the farm workers were attempts to depersonalise them. Phrasing such as “ready-for-hire and ready-for-murder bands”, “mercenary armies”, and “they armed themselves” stripped farm workers of their individuality. This lent their grouping an air of anonymity, reduced morality, and thus

96 Herald Reporter, ‘Resettled farmers killed’, *The Herald*, September 17, 2001, Front page
98 Herald Reporter, ‘Resettled farmers killed’, Front page
100 Herald Reporter, ‘2 on murder charges’, *The Herald*, September 17, 2002, p.4
102 Herald Reporter, ‘Resettled farmers killed’, Front page
increased blind group cruelty and intent. The use of more militaristic imagery can be linked to the discursive language of the Second Chimurenga and its revival in the Third Chimurenga.  

_Perpetrators or Victims of Violence?_

The second way in which _The Herald_ portrayed farm workers was as ‘victims of violence’, or victims of exploitation. This framing surprisingly overlapped heavily with the image of farm workers as perpetrators of violence. The recounting of the Bita Farm invasion was riddled with this. Villagers from nearby the farm were claimed to have said that the workers had been “trained to resist occupations at the farm”, with “Bibby [the owner]” being accused of having “instructed his workers to attack the settlers”. These were all front page headlines, as was; ‘Farmers warned. ‘Stop inciting farm workers to attack resettled farmers”’ (see image below), which was drawn from a quote of President Mugabe.

This argument was greatly emphasized. Another example of this is found in an article entitled ‘Farm workers plight ignored in the region’, stating that “at present farm workers are being used by white commercial farmers to attack people allocated land by the Government”. One reporter extrapolated this as “white farmers have certainly declared war on black settlers and the

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103 Pilossof, _The Unbearable Whiteness of Being_
105 Herald Reporter, ‘Farmers warned. ‘Stop inciting farm workers to attack resettled farmers”’, _The Herald_, September 22, 2001, Front page
106 Ibid.
107 Wisdom Mdzungairi, ‘Land reform is the answer. Farm workers plight ignore in the region’, _The Herald_, September 17, 2001, p. 11

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Government”. A number of tropes are evoked here. Firstly, the supposedly violent nature of the workers, secondly their assumed alignment with their employers, and lastly, their exploitation by said employers. Yet, The Herald was also using the stories of farm workers’ actions as a reflection on the character of the farmer, as was explained above, and not as individual agency driven by individual motivations. Thus seemingly contradictory portrayals of farm workers in fact can and were used together to perpetuate a complex, yet distorted view of this group involved in FTLRP.

At the same time, and often in the same issue, The Herald reported on the farm workers as helpless, defenceless slaves to the farmers. “There is no need to talk about the rule of law when black farm workers have been assaulted by their employers” is an example. This was not used to justify, or reduce the violence perpetrated by the workers, however, in the way that was done for the war veterans. Instead the tone of paternalism becomes clear. Farm workers were described as on the “periphery of the periphery” and as the “poor losers” of the FTLRP. Building on this was the following, painting farm workers as a pathetic group; “And like all serfs in history, a good many of them would rather die than see the status quo is overthrown in their favour”. This notion of farm workers as a group caught up in oppressive, slave-like conditions, was perpetuated throughout The Herald perhaps most strikingly in the following excerpt from a letter to the editor in the 2nd September 2002 issue:

“Besides using unkind terms towards the land reform process there has also been this sudden concern of the plight of the farm workers who are said to be without employment and are becoming destitute. How can anyone with senses take this as a valid concern for farm workers by the same masters who have abused these people for so long and for so little pay while the white farmers themselves lived in unparalleled luxury from the sweat of these farm workers. These people are actually being given economic freedom so that they can become masters of their own destiny. They are also being freed from this self-oppressive thinking that without the white farmers they will perish…”(emphasis own)

The reference to “these people” is something which was found also within The Daily News and to a certain extent resulted in an othering of farm workers as a group. This extract feeds into the notion of farm workers as lacking modernity, which is implicit in the assertion that farm workers can now become “masters of their own destiny…freed from this self-oppressive thinking”, building on a notion of ‘false consciousness’. What is interesting about this excerpt in particular is that it came from a letter to the editor sent to The Herald by an individual living outside of Zimbabwe as indicated in their name being given as ‘W.T. Kanyongo, U.S.’.

108 Chana Chevhu, Gutu, ‘We need land, we don’t want to die’, p.10
111 Professor Katama Mkangi, ‘Land: why racial inequality?’, p.10
The mixture of government justification for FTLRP and the portrayal of farm workers as victims often clashed in a confusing fashion. This was evident in an article entitled ‘Colonialism shaped farm workers’ living conditions’. In one sentence, quoting Lloyd Sachikonye (a prominent Zimbabwean scholar), was written; “It was sad to note that during the reform process, farm workers had not been resettled”, and if any had “this has been an exception to the rule”. Yet only a few sentences following the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, ‘Comrade’ July Moyo, commended land reform for being a historic moment in the promotion of workers’ rights. These two comments seem so contradictory as to be almost opposing views, yet they are presented as components of one argument. This is characteristic of the way in which farm workers’ situations were constructed in an appropriate way so as to be co-opted for government rhetoric purposes. Similarly, the irony in the following excerpt is grating; “there has been little political will in some countries in the region to ensure that farm workers do no remain marginalised.” In-keeping with this stance, almost exactly a year later it was written that “government has actually integrated the farm workers into the [Fast Track Land Reform] programme”(emphasis own), as if this was an exception. These statements did not recognise farm workers as land hungry Zimbabweans eligible to gain land in FTLRP, in a case of blaming the victim. This paradoxically further marginalised them in FTLRP rhetoric in an attempt to highlight their marginalisation.

As important as analysing the language use in The Herald is also contextualisation of the articles with regards to their authors. The Herald did not often cite individual journalists responsible for the articles, instead using terms such as ‘Herald Reporter’, ‘Court Reporter’, ‘Bulawayo Bureau’ and so on. However, this makes those journalists given credit all the more interesting. Often these writers penned feature or opinion pieces, which can be most revealing. One of these writers was Gregory Elich, who appears to have written four separate articles for The Herald in September 2002. Having not analysed any other months in 2002 during the course of research, it is not possible to ascertain whether Elich wrote more pieces for The Herald that year, but the natural assumption would be that he had. On the blurb of a book Elich wrote, entitled Strange Liberators: Militarism, Mayhem, and the Pursuit of Profit (2006), Stephan Gowans has written of Elich; “[he is] the model investigative journalist of the anti-imperialist left”. Herein lay the attraction for The Herald; his anti-imperialist stance, and his leftist leanings which would contribute to discussions on the efficiency of LSCF in comparison to small-scale farming. In another appraisal of the book, the publisher of Covert Action Quarterly, Louis Wolf, said that “on Yugoslavia, North Korea, Zimbabwe and Iraq, no one digs deeper, and no one uncovers more, than Elich”. So, whilst The Herald missed no opportunity to bash “the

113 Herald Reporter, ‘Colonialism shaped farm workers’ living conditions’, The Herald, September 13, 2001, p.2
114 Ibid.
115 Wisdom Mdzungairi, ‘Land reform is the answer’, p.11
116 Political Reporter, ‘Land reform is empowerment’, p.4
118 Ibid.
West’, they simultaneously allowed a Western journalist to contribute numerous times to their publication. Wolf’s description of Elich as a “special breed” might be the most apt.\footnote{Ibid.}

Another notable writer is Professor Katama Mkangi, who wrote; “what we see as war veterans’ violence is more a reaction than an initiating response”. Professor Mkangi was a sociologist of Kenyan nationality. In the 1980s he had been detained for almost two years for his open criticism of President Daniel arap Moi and (ironically, considering his contribution to The Herald) his calls for democracy in Kenya.\footnote{Ibid.} He was consequently labelled a ‘dissident’ and prevented from teaching until the early 2000s. In 1997 he ran for Presidency himself with the Kenya National Congress party. His connection to Zimbabwe was forged through his wife, Dr. Kaendi Munguti’s, work with the United Nations (UN) in the country.\footnote{Nation Correspondent, ‘Leaders pay tribute to Prof. Mkangi’, Daily Nation, March 8, 2004, accessed 16 June 2016, http://allafrica.com/stories/200403080634.html} Based on his political activism in Kenya, it is unsurprising he commented politically in Zimbabwe.

**The Daily News**

*The Daily News* contains a relatively large amount of content on farm workers specifically, and FTLRP in general. At first glance, *The Daily News*’ reporting seems to have comprehensively covered the farm workers’ experiences under FTLRP, highlighting the violence, uncertainty and displacement faced by farm workers. It also consistently pointed out the fact that farm workers were generally ignored or overlooked by the government in the FT process, with their inability to view farm workers as land hungry Zimbabweans, eligible for resettlement themselves. “Over 1,5 million people living on commercial farms will have been displaced and become destitute…The government certainly does not care” was part of an article published in the 1st September 2001 issue.\footnote{Pius Wakatama, ‘Farm workers among the wretched of the earth’, The Daily News, September 1, 2001, p.4} The following is drawn from the same article:

> “The Zanu PF government has proved beyond any reasonable doubt that it does not care for people. Otherwise it would have included farm workers in the resettlement programme, instead of treating them as *disposable objects*. They should have been given priority because their homes are already on farms.”(emphasis own)\footnote{Ibid.}

Articles in 2002 reiterated this point, with one quoting Justice for Agriculture (JAG), an organisation formed by disaffected members of the largely influential Commercial Farmers’ Union (CFU):

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\footnote{Ibid.}
“The few published lists and information from farms show that some people, particularly those associated with police and defence forces, government and the ruling party are receiving pieces of land far larger than those maximum farm sizes, largely at the expense of other Zimbabweans including skilled farm workers.”¹²⁴

The Daily News related this issue to one of identity and citizenship, publishing a piece stating that “if you do not give support to those in power you are a non-person as far as the State, or rather party, is concerned” (emphasis own).¹²⁵ Phrasing such as ‘disposable objects’ and ‘non-person’ give an idea of a part of The Daily News’ purported stance on farm workers.

However, a more in-depth analysis of the newspaper reveals strong undertones to many of the articles referring to farm workers and again can be conceptualised using Rutherford’s theory. The Daily News used even more of the frameworks Rutherford outlined. Though they are not used to the same effect as in The Herald, the intent is comparable – that of co-opting the stories of the farm workers. It has also been argued that The Daily News, in applying Ranger’s “hate journalism” “refused to historicise and contextualise the land issue”.¹²⁶ This allowed the newspaper to expand upon the construction of identities involved in reporting on the key actors involved in FTLRP, using those that worked to their discursive advantage, as will be shown.

‘Cornered animals’: Farm Workers as Victims

Similar to The Herald, The Daily News also used the framework of perpetrators of violence to describe some of the actions of the farm workers. Just as in The Herald the Bita Farm incident was also reported on quite extensively, with “so-called war veterans” being remanded in custody “following clashes between workers and so-called war veterans threatening to take over Bita Farm”.¹²⁷ This language is replicated in a number of other articles, for example; “clashes erupted on farms at the weekend”.¹²⁸ And; “The invaders ordered the workers to vacate their houses, saying they now belonged to the settlers, resulting in violent clashes”.¹²⁹ There is a noticeable difference in the way the farm workers were implicated in the violence that occurs. In The Herald there was a marked implication of the farm workers’ violent intent and premeditation that was not present in The Daily News. In The Daily News violence was something that happened to farm workers, as opposed to being initiated by them, and thus removes blame from them. Suggesting “clashes erupted” or events “resulted in clashes” did not implicate either party in the violence, seemingly de-criminalising it, which is in direct opposition to The Herald’s portrayal of events as farm workers “attacked [the “resettled farmers”]” and “armed themselves”.

¹²⁴ Staff Reporter, ‘State urged to give land to peasants’, The Daily News, September 24, 2002, p.33
¹²⁵ Fr. Oskar Wermeter S.J., ‘Sovereignty, independence or liberation don’t mean anything to the homeless poor’, The Daily News, September 12, 2002, p.6
¹²⁶ Moyo, ‘The ‘independent’ press and the fight for democracy in Zimbabwe’, p.119
¹²⁷ Court Reporter, ’70 farm invaders remanded in custody’, The Daily News, September 4, 2001, p.20
This notion that violence was something that happened to farm workers, or was forced upon them, comes across strongly in the following extract; “Like cornered animals the farm workers defended themselves while the majority made good their escape…the farm workers…were sandwiched by the attackers.”

When not framing violence as something that happens to farm workers, *The Daily News* is careful to provide justification or motive for the violence as a way to excuse it, just as The *Herald* did for the violence perpetrated by the war veterans. Or similarly, the paper provides information on farm workers’ violence in contrast to violence that is meted out against them. Thus; “At least four farm workers and a group of suspected MDC supporters last week burnt a Zanu PF flag and destroyed a cabin set up by the farm invaders at Gletwyn Farm along Enterprise Road”, going on to describe how these farm workers were then picked up by “Zanu PF people” and “beaten up”. As well as; “Three policemen…were yesterday sentenced to one year in jail for brutally assaulting farm workers suspected of having murdered a colleague at the Ruware Ranch.” Thus they reduce the violence perpetrated by farm workers, and by extension any violence associated with farmers, removing farm workers from the realm of criminality.

Similar to *The Herald*, this depiction intersects well with the other major lens through which farm workers were framed in *The Daily News*; this being as ‘victims of violence’. It was a pervasive image, with too many examples to recount here, but all with a similar tone and phrasing. Despite the awareness of the plight of farm workers this framing may have triggered, a strong sense of paternalism and often condescension are detectable. Furthermore, these accounts distinctly lacked the voices of farm workers themselves, although they were not completely overlooked in *The Daily News* as a whole, nor were they as overlooked as in *The Herald*. One of the more striking examples of this framing can be found in the next extract, from an article entitled ‘Farm workers among the wretched of the earth’, in the 1st September 2001 issue:

“All that is gone now. Their [farm workers’] lives were thrust without warning into the horror of torture, rape, death, humiliation and hopelessness. They suffer without comprehending the reason as hordes of bloodthirsty Zanu PF mobs from outside beat up and torture them, rape their wives and children, burn their goods and drive them from what they regarded as their only home. They have become refugees in their land of adoption…Their white bosses mostly support Morgan Tsvangirai…and it stands to reason that they would also vote for Tsvangirai…One displaced farmer said to me: “Sindina bwelela mundo kuno ine. Ndina bwelela nchito ya ndalama kua zungu. (I did

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not come to Zimbabwe for a piece of land. I came to be employed by a white person for money)” (emphasis own).133

Looking beyond the emotive language deployed, there are many layers to this extract, not least because it is a sizeable one. It portrayed farm workers as a defenceless, agency-less group, overlooking distinctions between the individuals by suggesting that all farm workers were foreigners, which was not the case. Wakatama, the writer, also defined farm workers by the farmers’ actions in insisting that “it stands to reason” they would vote MDC because their employer does. This paternalistic tone is also found in the assertion that farm workers “suffer without comprehending the reason”, playing simultaneously into the modernity dichotomy. A depersonalisation of ZANU PF is applied, in describing them as “bloodthirsty…mobs”, in a manner that is comparable to The Herald’s depiction of farm workers and the violence they were involved in. Strident paternalism was abundant, found also in; “The farm workers who face death and destitution with quiet courage, the farmers who have not killed a single person in anger despite unimaginable provocation”.134 This quote almost conjures a sense of the ‘noble savage’ discourse that was so pervasive during the colonial era with the use of ‘quiet courage’. On a side note, the idea that the farmers’ restraint in not killing war veterans should be recognised would almost be comical if it were not so misguided. This linking of the farm worker and farmers’ experiences was further perpetuated in a letter to the editor, which argues; “Farmers and farm workers stand together with newly found friendship to face the violence”.135

The defencelessness of the farm workers was an image conjured regularly, with defencelessness often being connoted with innocence. “This is the latest in an orgy of destruction and violence which started on Saturday, with assaults on 12 workers, resulting in one worker losing his front teeth”.136 Not only did this portray the farm workers as victims of violence, it also framed the violence as an uncontrollable, inexplicable force. Using the phrase “orgy” invokes a sense of pleasure taken from the violence, casting it as an immoral as well as brutal act. The force of violence was also suggested in the following; “Farm invaders have launched a reign of terror on farms…The farm workers said their situation was desperate as they were viewed as allies of the farmer” (emphasis own).137 Again, the sense that violence is something which was forced upon farm workers is clear here.

There is an interesting press release which emerged on the 6th September 2002, answering to the arrest of seventeen farm workers in Bindura, a farming town around 90km from Harare. It was written by the Executive Director of an organisation known as the Zimbabwe Community Development Trust (ZCDT), which played a relatively large role in advocating for

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133 Pius Wakatama, ‘Farm workers among the wretched of the earth’, p.4
134 Charles Frizel L., ‘Mugabe is deliberately trying to provoke civil war’, The Daily News, September 4, 2001, p.6
136 Farming Editor, ‘More farm invasions reported countrywide’, The Daily News, September 13, 2001, p.3
137 Staff Reporter, ‘Invaders terrorise farm workers in Matabeleland’, The Daily News, September 18, 2001, p.3
farm workers’ rights during FTLRP. A scanned version of the press release can be seen below in Image 2.

Image 2. Press release by ZCDT, published on 6th September, 2002

This piece perhaps treats the issue and framing of farm workers in the most nuanced way. It stated:

“…research carried out on the farm workers showed that the level of psychological disturbance, from all the traumas that the farm workers had faced was 80 percent, higher than any other population group in Zimbabwe…we saw that the violence these workers have endured needs to be brought out through counselling and therapy, or else, internalised it will produce brutal behaviour in the future.”

‘These People’: Paternalism in The Daily News

There are a number of articles that stood out, each displaying a similar tone and parallels in content. In reading further into them it becomes clear that they ingrain the idea of farm workers as lacking modernity, and in doing so further the paternalistic tones that are embedded in The Daily News. The first of these was penned by Cathy Buckle, a former LSCF farmer who continues to publish books and opinion pieces on the situation in Zimbabwe. One of her articles, entitled ‘The baby is crying but nobody can hear her’, spoke primarily on the issue of

139 Ibid.
farm workers. Buckles wrote; “They [the farm workers] have become homeless, jobless and destitute and some are resorting to desperate measures as a means of survival”, going on to claim that some farm workers have turned to “extortion” of the farmers by claiming their Statutory Instrument 6 (SI6) severance packages. Further, she wrote:

“You cannot just tell these people to go away and stop being insane…If the farmer refuses to pay [the SI6 severance packages] then a mob arrives at the gate, bangs tins and lights fires, barricades them in their home…[resulting in] horrific scenes”.141

This article contains a number of overlapping themes and undertones, which become essential to the endeavour of moving beyond a simplistic understanding of The Daily News’ stance. The sense of paternalism is extracted from the image of the farm workers going to the farmer, the ‘provider’, in a time of crisis. Buckle also used this to explain the supposedly exceptional behaviour of the farm workers, behaviour which shatters the romanticised image of the farmer-farm worker bond of ‘friendship’. The notion that this was exceptional behaviour is found in her impassioned cry that “you cannot just tell these people to stop being insane”(emphasis own), indicating they moved beyond sane, rational behaviour. There is a sense of betrayal and injustice in her writing, an idea that the farm workers should not be the enemy, but have cast themselves as such. These feelings of betrayal and injustice were widespread, according to Pilossof, and rooted in the implementation of the SI6 severance packages for farm workers in 2002.142 -These packages required LSCF farmers whose land was acquired under FTLRP to pay their workers the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Severance Pay</th>
<th>3 months salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(b) Wages in Lieu of Notice</td>
<td>3 months salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) An added amount</td>
<td>2 months salary for each completed year of continuous service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) A relocation allowance</td>
<td>1 month salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Any Gratuity payable in terms of section 23 of SI 323 of 1993</td>
<td>See paragraph 10 and the table above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Cash in lieu of vacation leave</td>
<td>Only applicable to leave accrued in the year in which the termination of the employment contract occurs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Outline of SI6 severance package143

SI6 packages provided farm workers with quite a substantial pay-out if paid in full. Charles Laurie claims that SI6 were “financially disastrous for farmers”, with one farmer’s spouse

141 Cathy Buckle, ‘The baby is crying but nobody can hear her’, The Daily News, September 20, 2002, p.6
142 Rory Pilossof, in discussion with author, 28 March 2016
suggesting it was “utterly punitive”.\footnote{Charles Laurie, \textit{The Land Reform Deception: Political Opportunism in Zimbabwe’s Land Seizure Era}, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.252} Pilossof argues otherwise, stating that the majority of farmers could afford the SI6 packages, but it fostered bitterness and a sense of betrayal. Essentially it was a “kick in the face” for the farmers.\footnote{Rory Pilossof, in discussion with author, 28 March 2016} This is obvious in Buckle’s tone. Pilossof argues further that farmers justified their anger against the SI6 packages based on the ways in which farm workers spent them, in a clear display of ingrained paternalism.\footnote{Ibid.} This becomes clear, when further in the article Buckle wrote; “There is no one to help these people invest their money and to give them advice or guidance and so some just drink their lives and futures away.”\footnote{Cathy Buckle, ‘The baby is crying but nobody can hear her’, p.6} The same sentiments can also be found in Laurie’s analysis of FTLRP events, when he quotes a farmer that was interviewed insisting:

“All [the farm workers] wanted was the money because they saw everybody getting enough money to go and buy nice shirts and bicycles and radiograms [music playing device]. It was a large amount of money.”\footnote{Laurie, \textit{The Land Reform Deception}, p.252}

The networks of power on the farms meant that farmers were accustomed to having a personal role in the finances of each of their employees. Hence their ingrained instinct to comment on the spending habits of their employees with regards to the SI6 packages and their assumed right to do so.

Buckle also evoked strong \textit{jambanja} imagery, which was highly emotive and topical at the time.\footnote{\textit{Jambanja}, as Pilossof has described it, is a term “with no precise definition”, but used to “encompass a range of violent and angry confrontations on the land, which varied in degree, severity and manner” in \textit{The Unbearable Whiteness of Being}, p.44} She described the farm workers as fulfilling the role the war veterans were perceived to assume – that of the aggressor. Thus, according to Rutherford’s theory, she was painting them as “disruptors of development”, because of the manner in which they placed themselves in opposition to the farmer. Her tone resulted in the depersonalisation of the workers, both in the way it links the farm workers to the war veterans and in her description of “these people”.

Pilossof has commented on this tendency, stating that:

“…once the black man [or woman] has decided to take a stance and remove himself [or herself] from the subservient position under white control, he [or she] can be totally dehumanised…he [or she] can thus be treated as a native savage.”\footnote{Pilossof, \textit{The Unbearable Whiteness of Being}, p.170}

This amounts to a disassociation of farm workers from the farmer in this moment of supposed insanity. Whilst this seems to contradict the general discourse which combines farmer and farm worker narratives, the act of removing oneself from a ‘subservient position’ and the subsequent
sense of betrayal caused Buckle to distinguish between the two groups. This created a way in which to claim the actions to be beyond the realm of reason, rendering them inexplicable and outside of the farmers’ behaviour.

Another article of a similar nature was that written by Jerry Wampole; ‘What Zimbabwe needs are farmers who will make best use of the land’. In it Wampole stated:

“And if Mugabe were to suddenly take charge in America and give the land back to the original people, who would he give land to? There aren’t many ‘original Americans’ remaining, and guess what, they probably don’t have any idea how to operate a farm. Which I would guess is exactly the same in Zimbabwe. How many of those ‘native’ folks in Zimbabwe, who are getting their own little piece of the pie, actually know how to run a modern farm?”

Whilst this extract was not directly referring to farm workers, it did refer to this notion of ‘original people’. This can be perceived to mean indigenous Zimbabweans of which some farm workers could be included. This article situated itself contrary to the official rhetoric in which a person of the soil, a ‘good’ farmer, is a black Zimbabwean. Wampole instead bound notions of race with modernity, and posited them as criterion for being a ‘good’ farmer. In this way he made the link in arguing that “‘native’ folks” would not “actually know how to run a modern farm”. It is important to note that this piece was included in the Features section of The Daily News.

There is very little available information on the author, apart from a comment he made on a BBC article in 2002, stating; “Very little that happens in Africa today makes much sense to the rest of the world. Zimbabwe being a prime example”. However, it is clear from a letter he wrote to the editor of The Daily News and that was published on the 19th September 2001 that Wampole was based in the USA, as the letter was signed “Jerry Wampole, Sacramento, US”. In the letter, Wampole asked; “I’ve often wondered but never asked…which is worse for a black Zimbabwean citizen, living under white Ian Smith or black Robert Mugabe?”

The way in which Wampole commented on and contextualised the situation in Zimbabwe is quite extreme and, arguably, uninformed. It is surprising then to note that The Daily News published work by Wampole on numerous occasions, including in the Features section.

A final article which is in need of analysis is one that was published on the 17th September 2002, entitled ‘Poverty’s victims are vulnerable to exploitation’. In it, Tagweirei W. Bango wrote; “Hunger…distorts cultures and edges people out of the generic human gentility

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154 Ibid.
necessary to maintain their values”.

The writer is referring to “men, women, boys and girls, the majority of ‘discouraged’ job seekers and displaced farm workers”. There are parallels to Cathy Buckle’s article, in the depersonalisation of farm workers and the framing of their actions in moments of desperation or crisis. In a similar way to Buckle’s mention of ‘insanity’, Bango determined that hunger pushes people beyond a normal, or sane, frame of mind, removing them from their values, which he implicitly associated with morality. It is also interesting to comment on the way in which both Buckle and Bango associated times of crisis with acts of ‘insanity’. Bango wrote of ‘gentility’, again evoking the opposite, ‘savagery’, and its connotations with a lack of modernity. Thus, Bango framed farm workers as beyond morality, ‘gentility’, and thus modernity. This is all underpinned by a tone of condescension.

The lack of agency attributed to farm workers is obvious in a cartoon found in The Daily News on the 19th September 2002. Despite its apparently ironic perspective of the plight of farm workers, the message is just as poignant. The cartoon can be seen below.


In the image Presidents Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Levy Mwanawasa “Cabbage” (Zambia), Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique) and a figure representing Central African Republic (CAR) are seen to be taking sacks of farm workers away with them, from a pile entitled ‘Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers’ Dumping Site’. The workers are depicted again as a group, faceless and anonymous. Whilst the image invoked some sense of sympathy, it

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155 Tagweirei W. Bango, ‘Poverty’s victims are vulnerable to exploitation’, September 17, 2002, p.11
156 Ibid.
also graphically reflects the written framing of farm workers as lacking agency, as sub-human objects (reflected in their size compared to that of the Presidents) and as tools in a larger event beyond their control.

“It was time I was heard”: Farm Worker Voices in The Daily News

Finally, The Daily News published two pieces that would likely never have appeared in The Herald. These were pieces written by former farm workers, with both having appeared in the Letters to the Editor section. Apart from the occasional quote from a farm worker, this was the closest The Daily News came to publishing the voices of the farm workers in an unmediated manner.

The first letter to the editor was published on the 15th September 2001, entitled ‘Chigwedere has abandoned farm workers who voted for him’ written by ‘Ex-Farm Worker, Hwedza’ (see Image 4).

In it the writer stated that “farm workers are living a pitiful life”. Through the various structures Zanu PF has organised, they are driving these farm workers from their homes, beating them up in the process. This is…what I have witnessed personally”. A direct (negative) opinion was given on ZANU PF. The writer went on further to state; “What have farm workers done to deserve all this turmoil? It seems the Third Chimurenga is between Zanu PF, on the one hand, and farm workers and commercial farmers, on the other”. This is interesting, as it aligns farm workers with farmers, implying loyalty in a way that the next example written by ‘Alien Great Grandson’ discredited.

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158 Ex-Farm Worker, Hwedza, ‘Chigwedere has abandoned farm workers who voted for him’, September 15, 2001, p.5
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
The second article was published a week earlier in the 8th September 2001 issue and was entitled ‘Loyalty tested to the limit’. It was signed ‘Alien Great Grandson, Hwedza’ (see Image 3).

Image 5. ‘Loyalty tested to the limit’, 8th September 2001

It addressed several issues, including citizenship, identity, hardship and agency. He wrote; “I am a third generation from an immigrant who came from Malawi to the then Southern Rhodesia”. Most significant is the following; “…it is time I was heard”. Through the course of the letter, the writer explained the process he went through in applying for land under FTLRP. He explains that nothing came of his first application attempt. Wary of “being cheated once more”, he did not apply again. However “by not answering calls to apply for land, the “war veterans” concluded this amounted to their “loyalty to the whites””. The way in which this was phrased, suggested that “loyalty to the whites” was a misconception held by others about farm workers.

“The government of today is a replica of yesterday’s in the sense that they both view farms as places where uneducated aliens and their families are tamed. The aliens and families are tools used only when it is necessary.”

Although this was the opinion of an individual farm worker it again reveals a negative opinion held of ZANU PF and answers to the views that are perpetuated around farm workers. This becomes significant in that it used the language of this discourse, words such as ‘uneducated aliens’, ‘tamed’ and ‘tools’, appropriating them so as to dispel it. His awareness of this discourse comes across strongly, as well as the wish to rework the ingrained presentation of these issues.

163 Ibid.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
A comment that was published towards the end of September 2001 is interesting to note in the context of the two letters published above. Another Letter to the Editor, from ‘Anti-Guesstimate, Harare’ wrote; “It is a shame that the farm workers are being ridiculed and sacrificed as they have no means of responding to such reporting [referring to an article written in *The Herald* on 17th September 2001, covering the Bita Farm incident]”. Whilst this comment speaks to the analysis that has emerged in this study, that farm workers were most often portrayed by others with little involvement from the subjects themselves, the two letters sent by ‘Ex-Farm Worker’ and ‘Alien Great Grandson’ prove otherwise. They may not have been a response to policy, or had a huge impact on their situation, but at the same time *The Daily News* provided a space in which they could respond.

Finally, it is interesting to acknowledge the frequency with which issues of FTLRP and citizenship/belonging were reported on in each publication, as well as the sections they appeared in. Often these articles would include mention of farm workers directly. Whilst *The Herald* and *The Daily News* have different sections, many of them are very similar. Graph 2 shows that in both publications, FTLRP and citizenship/belonging issues appeared most frequently in Local News/National News sections.

Graph 2. Graphs showing the mention of FTLRP and citizenship/belonging issues in *The Daily News* and *The Herald*

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Chapter 4

Interviews

The interviews conducted for this study provide greater insight into the reasons why the depiction of the farm workers were so varied and so often seemingly contradictory in *The Herald* and *The Daily News*, as well as in general discourse. In particular, interviews conducted with Rory Pilossof, four (former and current) farm workers, and a CFU employee provided the most insight. These will be referred to the most. Both the CFU employee, and three of the four farm workers, wished to remain anonymous because of the sensitive nature of the topics discussed. The fourth farm worker is thirty-nine year old Wellington Yakufiya. This hesitance in being named is telling of how significant these issues continue to be in Zimbabwe, over a decade after the height of FTLRP.

The CFU employee interviewed worked within JAG for a number of years in the mid-2000s and thus has insight into both organisations’ approaches to the events of FTLRP and their interactions with various key actors, mostly from the perspective of the white farmers. He maintains that farm workers’ experiences during FTLRP were treated as “an afterthought”.168 This concurs with his opinion that *The Daily News* used farm workers’ stories as “an article filler”.169 He claims this was the case because of the rise in a “nationalist idea of citizenship” in Zimbabwe, where ZANU PF criterion outlined that “a Zimbabwean has to be black, male and Shona”.170 This is indeed the case, as could be gleaned from the implementation of the amendment in 2001 to the Citizenship Act, which attempted to exclude certain groups from retaining Zimbabwean citizenship. In this way, the informant recognised that there were two layers to the exclusion, and marginalisation, of farm workers; both in not being viewed as Zimbabwean and in not being perceived as land hungry individuals.171

This view on citizenship and exclusion is corroborated by Pilossof. Not only this, but he believes that white farmers “co-opted the farm worker narrative into their own stories”.172 This is evident in *The Daily News*, and to some extent, *The Herald*, in the way that farmers’ and farm workers’ narratives are predominantly aligned and presented as indistinguishably the same and representative of one another. Farm workers embodied a convenient way in which to display the detrimental effects of FTLRP for the farmers, hence their co-option of farm workers’ experiences. By including farm workers in their stories, farmers could boost the profile of the violence and displacement by boosting the total number of people FTLRP affected. Thus,

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168 CFU employee, in discussion with author, 18 March 2016
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
172 Rory Pilossof, in discussion with author, 28 March 2016
representation of FTLRP became a “matter of scale” for the farmers. This was an approach employed by JAG as well, as revealed by the CFU employee interviewed. He claimed that at the time of FTLRP, JAG’s “strategic agenda” was to show the conditions of farm workers under FTLRP as a way to demonstrate why FTLRP was so unfavourable. The Daily News utilised the same approach, explaining why the farm workers’ stories were an “article filler” and why JAG’s statements played such a pivotal role in many of The Daily News’ reports on FTLRP. In fact, so much so that a Letter to the Editor published on the 5th September 2002 in The Herald was entitled ‘Go home Jenni’. This was referring to Jenni Williams, JAG’s spokesperson at the time, who was oft quoted in The Daily News. Thus JAG, and by the same logic the farmers and The Daily News, was not primarily interested in or concerned about the plight of the farm workers. In a similar vein, the CFU employee stated during the course of the interview that CFU members (white LSCF farmers) were the “primary victims” of FTLRP, with farm workers being the “other victims”. Considering the number of workers affected by FTLRP far exceeded those of the farmers, the choice of language is striking in its revelation of the CFU and JAG’s incumbent attitudes.

Based on this evidence, Pilossof’s argument that farmers “didn’t understand the experiences of farm workers under Fast Track” holds great credibility. Because they were not understood, and because their stories were co-opted, Pilossof believes their actual experiences were mostly ignored during FTLRP and only gained attention later. He attributes this increase in interest to the events of Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order or Operation ‘Drive Out Trash’ in Shona), which occurred in 2005. This Operation saw an estimated 700,000 people displaced by the government’s sentiment to ‘clean-up’ the cities, resulting in the demolition and destruction of homes, businesses and vending sites beginning in May 2005. Whilst it originated in Harare, the Operation spread nation-wide in a short amount of time. Pilossof’s analysis is that “Murambatsvina brought the plight of farm workers into focus”. In other words, once attention was drawn to a large group of marginalised and generally impoverished people that were intentionally being harassed by the government in 2005, links began to be made to the events of FTLRP and the plight of farm workers, which contained many parallels.

The co-option of farm workers’ narratives also explains the lack of farm worker voices present in the publications, and in the discourse as a whole. Pilossof maintains that this is also due to the fact that interviews with farm workers at the time of FTLRP were predominantly

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173 Ibid.
175 CFU employee, in discussion with author, 18 March 2016
176 Willems, ‘Beyond dramatic revolutions and grand rebellions’, p.1
178 Rory Pilossof, in discussion with author, 28 March 2016
“mitigated” by a camera or a farmer, which affected their answers.\textsuperscript{179} The pervasive fear which characterised many people’s experience of FTLRP must also be taken into consideration. The farm workers interviewed all agreed that even if farm workers were interviewed, they were scared.\textsuperscript{180} Farm Worker 4 claimed that \textit{The Daily News} only had a “small chance” of entering the farms during FTLRP, so were often unable to interview farm workers.\textsuperscript{181} Whilst on the other hand, \textit{The Herald} and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Company (ZBC) had a monopoly on access to the farms.

During the course of the interview, the CFU employee explained his opinion on the behaviour of the farm workers and the rationale behind it. He claimed farm workers had two plans. “Plan A” consisted of defending their employer, as “he” (specifically gendered) is the “sole provider of their livelihood”.\textsuperscript{182} If “Plan A” was not successful then farm workers reverted to “Plan B”, in which they would push for the best severance packages possible. He claimed this drove a wedge between employee and employer. The framing of “Plan B” as a secondary option in a time of desperation characterises the simple action of farm workers asking for their severance packages in a negative light. Applying the CFU perspective it is possible to comprehend why Cathy Buckle would go to the extent of calling this action “extortion”. The CFU informant did admit that there could have been more done to separate the issues of farmers and farm workers in discussions and discourse surrounding FTLRP, as he claimed they “must” have had separate issues.\textsuperscript{183} Notice the choice of wording again, in the use of “must” instead of “did”. The choice of language and framing of FT events by the CFU informant all led to an impression of the union and JAG as self-involved organisations, with little regard for their members’ employees. This self-absorption was recognised by Pilossof in his framing of the CFU and \textit{The Farmer} magazine (a publication closely associated with the CFU) as parochial. He described how tactics of isolationism and apoliticism were consciously deployed by the CFU and the publication during the events of FTLRP.\textsuperscript{184}

Interestingly the farm workers’ themselves believed that the general public and relevant trade unions (such as GAPWUZ, CFU, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), and JAG), were aware of what was happening to the farm workers, but were unable to do anything about it.\textsuperscript{185} Thus, they felt they were fairly represented in the media, namely in \textit{The Daily News}. Mr. Yakufiya insisted that \textit{The Daily News} reported the “truth”, whilst \textit{The Herald} printed “malicious content…guided by the government”.\textsuperscript{186} Although even today they claim it is still risky to read \textit{The Daily News} on farms in the more rural areas. Farm Worker 4 asserts that

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{180} Farm workers, in discussion with author, 24 March 2016
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{182} CFU employee, in discussion with author, 18 March 2016
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{184} Pilossof, \textit{The Unbearable Whiteness of Being}, p. 70
\textsuperscript{185} Farm workers, in discussion with author, 24 March 2016
\textsuperscript{186} Wellington Yakufiya, in discussion with author, 24 March 2016
\end{flushright}
reading *The Daily News* could lead to one being labelled a “sell-out”.\(^{187}\) All of the farm workers agreed that the government did not consider them at all under FTLRP. In fact, Farm Worker 2 referred to the “new farmers” who took over the acquired land, claiming that they treated farm workers badly. Their justification for this treatment was that, in the words of Farm Worker 2, they felt “we fought for this country so we are the law”.\(^{188}\) This corresponds somewhat to ZANU PF, and *The Herald*, rhetoric, going some way towards explaining the erratic approach.

Furthermore, the treatment of farm workers by the new farmers could be even worse if the farm worker was known to have been close to the white farmer. As Mr. Yakufiya explained, that particular worker would be viewed as the “enemy”.\(^{189}\) This plays directly into the *Third Chimurenga* rhetoric advocated by ZANU PF.

The reason why farm workers may have considered themselves well represented in *The Daily News* is a matter of perspective and comparison. *The Herald* was a newspaper linked to the ruling party, one which was generally believed to be behind the land invasions. As a farm worker reading *The Herald*, it would be relatively clear to see the differences in reporting on violence perpetrated by farm workers, and the general lack of reporting on violence perpetrated against farm workers. In comparison, *The Daily News* was seemingly sympathetic to the plight of farm workers in their semi-regular reports of violence against the workers. They used quotes from farm workers more than *The Herald*. This approach taken by *The Daily News* would have been more reflective of the lived experiences of the farm workers; hence their faith in its accuracy and representation and their aversion to *The Herald*. It is also not illogical to assume that as a voice of opposition to ZANU PF, *The Daily News* may have assumed to be more objective and less propagandist in its approach by farm workers. Whilst in fact this was not the case, it could have contributed to increased trust in the publication to portray events accurately. What would not have been so obvious at the time was the co-option of their stories in both newspapers, not just *The Herald*, and the condescension involved in construction of the farm worker image.

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\(^{187}\) Farm workers, in discussion with author, 24 March 2016

\(^{188}\) Ibid.

\(^{189}\) Wellington Yakufiya, in discussion with author, 24 March 2016
Chapter 5
Conclusions

It became apparent through analysis of The Daily News and The Herald that this statement holds great weight; “[t]he private media fell prey to partisan interests in the same way the public media did”. This has been evidenced in previous research, including those mentioned in the introduction to this study. However, whilst the two publications seemingly diverged in their pursuit of separate partisan interests, the language and discourses of these interests intersected, especially with regards to farm workers. This gives an extra layer of meaning to the idea that they “fell prey to partisan interests in the same way” (emphasis own). The intersection occurs because the foundation of the framing of farm workers is the same. The assumptions and imagining of the workers was based on the four depictions of farm workers that Rutherford uncovered. These four strands have been building upon one another since the pre-FTLRP period, and therefore have a long and ingrained discursive history and weighting. This constructed discourse resonated with those in a place of power to define and account for events of FTLRP, including The Daily News and The Herald. Because of the width of the four categories in describing farm workers it became an agreed-upon ‘truth’ that was accepted as a comprehensive picture of the farm workers’ lives and experiences. Hence, why the newspapers depicted the farm workers in the same way.

In terms of the portrayal of workers as victims of violence, The Herald and The Daily News assigned different perpetrators to the violent situations. For instance, The Herald predominantly accused the white farmers of meting out violence against the farm workers, whilst The Daily News insisted on violence against farm workers originating predominantly from ZANU PF and the war veterans involved in farm invasions. Despite this, both publications portrayed the farm workers as helpless in the face of the violence forced upon them and therefore agency-less.

There was slightly more divergence in framing farm workers as perpetrators of violence in the newspapers. What does become apparent, however, is that again a lack of agency is ascribed to farm workers. Farm worker violence is most often described as a group activity, veiled in anonymity. The following statement of Pilossof’s holds value; “…once the black man [or woman] has decided to take a stance and remove himself [or herself] from the subservient position under white control…he [or she] can be totally dehumanised.” This can be extrapolated, to argue that once a black farm worker had acted to remove themselves from the subservient position under any control, they could be discursively dehumanised. This was the case in both The Daily News and The Herald. Once farm workers agitated against farmers in The Daily News, as in Cathy Buckle’s article, they were effectively dehumanised. Similarly, when farm workers agitated against war veterans or ‘new farmers’, who were portrayed as an extension of state
control, they were dehumanised in *The Herald*. Thus, the violence enacted by the farm workers was assigned a more immoral and brutal nature because of the way in which the workers were depicted as sub-human and anonymous.

The framing of farm workers as ‘disruptors of development’ coincides heavily with the framing which highlights their economic stability. This also contributes to the image of farm workers’ as lacking modernity. Modernity and development are often directly associated with one another, as well as being connoted with accumulated financial wealth. Thus, within *The Daily News* farm workers were depicted as disruptors of development at any point they removed themselves from the hierarchies of the status quo, mostly in relation to the LSCF farmers. The disruption of this relationship placed farm workers as agitators against the farmer and subsequently as agitators against modernity. In *The Herald*, farm workers were framed as disruptors of development predominantly when they displayed violence or intolerance towards the war veterans and ‘new farmers’. This was posited as acts disrupting ‘progress’ towards the ‘nation-building project’, thereby as upholding the farmer-farm worker status quo that was viewed as colonial and outdated. Through this authoritarian nationalist lens, farm workers did not constitute modern African citizens.

In both publications the perceived ‘foreignness’ of the farm workers contributed to the framing of them as lacking modernity, which implied a disruption of development. By being ‘foreign’, and therefore not fully Zimbabwean, they were viewed as subverting the ‘natural’ course of Zimbabwe. Their marginalisation, in having no ‘space’ in Zimbabwe, further added to the idea that they were disrupting some sort of process; whether it be a nation-building project or protection of the LSCF against compulsory acquisition. Thus, farm workers’ themselves disrupted discourse in their inability to be easily definable.

In this sense it is evident that the media in Zimbabwe during the time of FTLRP did forego its “social responsibility”, as Chari put it. The rise of this form of “hate journalism” meant that conscious and objective debate and discussions about the realities of FTLRP were both not possible, nor were they engaged with by both *The Herald* and *The Daily News*. Thus, the discourse surrounding farm workers was able to be constructed and used at will by those in a place of discursive power. At the same time, the statement that “farm workers have virtually no point of autonomous entry into established political discourse” can be complicated slightly. Whilst this argument does resonate with the reality of marginalisation of farm workers, it can be seen through the reporting done by the two newspapers that farm workers did have some point of entry within their pages. Many did feel they were represented and portrayed accurately in *The Daily News*, if not in *The Herald*. Yet because of the pervasive imagery that characterised the discourse surrounding farm workers and the agenda behind the use of their experiences, entry onto this platform was not on their terms. Their stories, whilst undeniably portrayed with some level of accuracy, were moulded and manipulated for the benefit of other parties, whether this be advocating for ZANU PF justifications of FTLRP, or for underpinning arguments against the implementation of FTLRP by LSCF farmers and opposition voices.
This all comes down to their lack of space, their denial from the “national imaginations of the various social groups of Zimbabwe”, as Rutherford wrote. Even articulating their group as ‘farm workers’ does not recognise the disparities in gender, nationality, ethnic group, socio-economic position, age, health, and so on of the individuals involved, which affect their place in society, both when under ‘domestic governance’ and now as mostly displaced persons. With the event of FTLRP their already ambiguous label, with its particular connotations of a certain historical agricultural arrangement, is now a term of the past in the Zimbabwean context, although it is still used. Hence, farm workers from the period of FTLRP are further silenced and lacking definition in the nation space. If no longer farm workers, what do they then become in official discourse in the environments they have adopted as their new homes and are attempting to adapt to?

Farm workers occupied an ambiguous space in the newspapers; the not quite individuals, the not quite Zimbabweans, the not quite humans. Hence the description of them as the ‘not yet’ of society. They were ‘not yet’ definable in the nation space and thus ‘not yet’ part of it, or its history, from the perspective of those in positions to wield discourses with authority.
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