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**Book Chapter :Colonial designs, landscapes and the mediation of forced removals in postcolonial Zimbabwean press**

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**Abstract**

The colonial project was as much about segregated occupation of geographical spaces as it was about occupation of knowledge and epistemic spaces on the basis of race and ethnicity. Legal, coercive and persuasive means were used interchangeably or in combination in the racial design and geography of colonial Zimbabwe since 1890. The process of land segregation involved a drawn-out process of systematic removal of Africans off agriculturally productive land to areas of marginal agricultural potential ‘native reserves’, later known as ‘tribal trust lands. While the physical aspects of land segregation and their effects on African livelihoods have been widely researched, the mediation in the press of that physical displacement of indigenous peoples which came to a head around 1970 has not received adequate scholarly and analytical attention in existing literature on colonial land policy in Zimbabwe. It is a matter of historical record that the policy of separate development (Rhodesian euphemism for apartheid), once legally entrenched had to be coercively enforced through physical uprooting and resettling of African families away from European areas. What is least known though is how at the epistemic level, the colonial press as a form of symbolic power discursively inscribed, reproduced, challenged or subverted racial and gender inequality and discrimination. This paper triangulates postcolonial and critical discourse analysis in analysing the racial geography of press coverage of the removals of the Tangwena people from Gairezi Ranch in Inyanga and the Hunyani people from Central Estates area near Mvuma in the 1969-70 period. It contends that colonial press coverage of forced removals largely tended to reflect, reinforce and reproduce rather than challenge and refract the physical racial landscape of colonial Rhodesia with implications for the archive of interpretive tropoi journalism continues to draw on when reporting on the land question in Zimbabwe.

**Key Words:** Forced removals; epistemic violence, symbolic annihilation; discourse; racial landscape

## Introduction

The layout and design of a newspaper anywhere in the world is regarded as critical in signposting and signalling to the reader which news story is of the greatest significance. Such things as headline size, space occupied by the text, picture size and caption structure our sense of what 'real' world issues are more urgent. The newspaper's differential treatment of issues and personalities caught up in those issues frames our judgements and evaluations of events, guides and sets the discursive boundaries and outer limits of our responses to them (Schudson 2011). Using *The Rhodesia Herald* and *Moto*'s coverage of specific moments in the history of forced removals and resettlement of Africans in colonial Rhodesia, I use postcolonial and critical discourse analysis to find out how news texts on forced removals of the Tangwena and the Hunyani people between 1969 and 1970 obscured and concealed more than they revealed abuse of power by the colonial regime. In doing so I hope to extend postcolonial theory's analytic engagements beyond the literary and historiographical enclaves and bring its analytic focus to bear on the news archive on forced removals as texts structured in power (Shome and Hegde 2009). The aim of this paper is to find out how forced removals of 'natives' and their resettlement in 'native reserves' later known as tribal trust lands (TTLs) were (re)presented in the colonial press specifically in *The Rhodesia Herald* and *Moto*. I pose the question: how different were *The Rhodesia Herald*'s discursive maps of forced removals and resettlement in TTLs from those which *Moto* provided for its readership. Firstly, the paper sketches out the theoretical and conceptual interstices between a racial ideology on the basis of which Rhodesia was racially demarcated into European and 'Native' areas and a news logic that privileged white accounts and interpretations of mass evictions of Africans from their ancestral lands to make way for white occupation. Next, the paper sets out the historical context of the cases of forced removals under study, before outlining and discussing how colonial discursive practices, intersected with a news ideology that marginalised black voices and reified white narratives on land segregation. Findings seem to corroborate the Fanonian and Cesairian thesis that colonial (news) discourse tended to thingify the colonised subject (Cesaire 1972, Fanon 1967). I contend that the colonial news archive on land segregation served to conceal the full extent of the brutality and injustices of white seizure of black lands in colonial Rhodesia.