

6. The mobilisation of indigeneity

Representations of the indigene and, more particularly, the process of indigenisation became prominent during Zimbabwe's second decade of independence. According to Horowitz (1991:4), the introduction of new terms designating categories of people invariably reflects aspirations of an improved collective status or a different conflict alignment. Changes in language therefore indicate the setting or shifting of borders and reveal other, alternative configurations regarding who properly belongs within them and how these people are connected to the land. The ways in which the subject position of the indigene have been constructed, represented and mobilised (Brah 1996:191) and, at the same time, the question of white ethnicity brought into sharp relief, are discussed in this chapter. First, the Rhodesian narrative of the indigene and the lines along which Rhodesian, and later Zimbabwean, society was divided terminologically are addressed. This is followed by an account of various representations of the indigene that have appeared since 1990 and, in particular, how these have played out in the economic sphere. Towards the end of the chapter, the implications of the revised term for white autochthony—their right to be of the land—are examined.

Representations of the indigene during the Rhodesian era

The 1969 Rhodesian *Constitution* and *Land Tenure Act* for the first time explicitly divided the population into European and African, and provided definitions of both. A European was

any person who is not an African, and an African, any member of the aboriginal tribes or races of Africa, and the islands adjacent thereto... and any person who has the blood of such tribes and races and who lives as a member of an aboriginal native community. (Quenet 1976:21; Murphree and Baker 1976:388)

Rhodesian society was thus divided constitutionally into two main races, a division reflected judicially in land apportionment, the electoral and education systems and employment opportunities (Quenet 1976:4). In practice, the Rhodesians' crude racial border was not something new. In 1898, a Southern Rhodesian Order-in-Council established two administrative hierarchies—structures that reflected the racial division of the land. The Native Affairs Department had from early in the colonial era administered the lives of Africans, the collective other. European 'Native Commissioners' made up the department's

senior staff and the government-subsidised native chiefs and headmen manned the lower echelons (Gann 1965:148–9; Bowman 1973:11). The department was in effect ‘a state within a state’, appointed exclusively to oversee African affairs (Gann 1965:276; Day 1983:169).

Importantly, while producing Rhodesia in this way as a country with ‘two races’, the colonial discourse stressed that neither was in a position to claim descent from the ‘original’ inhabitants of the area (Lewis 1973:3). This designation fell to the San—or, to employ Rhodesian terminology, the Bushmen—hunter-gathering Stone Age peoples who lived on and around Zimbabwe’s Central Plateau from about 3000BC and who had now all but disappeared (Beach 1980:4). Testimony to their habitation existed in the numerous rock paintings across large stretches of the country. Consequently, Ian Smith described both Bantu¹ and Europeans as ‘immigrants to this part of the world, neither are birds of passage—both are here to stay for all time’.² Certainly the Rhodesians did not deny that some arrived earlier than others. The early Iron Age predecessors of the Shona came from north of the Zambezi River in three waves during the first millennium AD (Beach 1980:6–9). The Ndebele, a Zulu offshoot from the south, moved into the land during the mid 1800s, not long before the first Europeans appeared towards the later part of the century. In the official Rhodesian discourse, however, ‘the Shona, the Ndebele and the Europeans were all migrants, conquerors and settlers and all of them now know no other home. They have established for themselves and their successors the right to remain in this country in perpetuity’ (Whaley 1973:31).

Claims to permanent settlement were at the forefront of European representations. Rhodesian Front supporter, and later Senator, Sam Whaley remarked that

there was never any question of Europeans residing in Rhodesia on a temporary basis in order to develop the land and then hand it back to earlier settlers...Rhodesia is the permanent and rightful home of people of different origins and backgrounds and does not belong to one race alone. (Whaley 1973:31)³

For some of Whaley’s contemporaries, the legitimacy of the European, as well as the Ndebele, settlement lay in conquest. The Rhodesians had fought for and won the land for themselves and future generations during the Matabele Wars and the first *Chimurenga* of the late 1890s.⁴ Immigrant blacks had arrived with and fought alongside the Pioneer Column, making them part of the invading

1 The term includes both Shona and Ndebele.

2 *Rhodesian Commentary*, November 1975. See also Whaley 1973:31.

3 His statements were made despite ample evidence to the contrary. For instance, Professor Roberts (1978:61) commented in an article published by the Rhodesian Historical Society that, for every 100 immigrants arriving, between 60 and 80 were leaving, even at the height of the postwar and Federation boom.

4 See Murphree and Baker 1976:38; Palmer 1977:55; Chennells 1989:124

force and giving them a vested interest in settler capitalism (Muzondidya 2002:13). Thus, in a very short time, the Shona found themselves the victims of two aggressive invasions.

Other Rhodesians downplayed conquest in favour of 'winning' legitimacy. Father Lewis, for example, used historicist preoccupations surrounding notions of civilisation and modernity to justify European settlement.

In a single lifetime an almost empty wilderness has been transformed into a thriving, modern western style state...One can not unscramble the past. We inherit it...The European has won his place in Rhodesia, not by conquest, but by his immense contribution to it. His place is his by right, for himself and his children...Mr MacMillan's⁵ [sic] winds of change put him under no obligation to pack his bags and go. (Lewis 1973:4, 6)

Thus, while Rhodesians Ian Smith, Father Lewis and Sam Whaley⁶ recognised the notion of aboriginality as historical priority, they did not take this to preclude the presence of others in the territory. Instead, they argued that the land belonged to all the people who inhabited it, and whites, as latter-day immigrants, were also legitimately placed in the country.

Behind these claims, however, and sharing much in common with other settler states, lay the history of European invasion and oppression (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995). 'Uncontested belonging is a luxury' (Read 1996:xi) not realised in, for example, Australia or New Zealand, where histories of invasion and dispossession also call into question the legitimacy of these settler societies. 'Latecomers' (Read 1998:173) need somehow to remove their alienation vis-a-vis the natives whose roots in the territory are deeper and more profound. Goldie (1989:12–14), writing of Canada, has identified two avenues by which settlers as sign makers generally attempt to erase illegitimacy and separation that arises from their colonial past. They might both valorise and superficially incorporate the other, most commonly by joining indigenes in their association with nature and thereby becoming indigenes themselves. Or, alternatively, they might reject or deny the other. While this second option is 'not an openly popular alternative' today (Goldie 1989:13), it is nonetheless the flip side of the coin and the Rhodesian rejoinder to arguments regarding the illegality of their presence.

The Rhodesians denied the indigene when they represented the country as 'beginning' with the arrival of the whites. This discourse set the industry and

⁵ Father Lewis refers here to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's 1960 'Winds of Change' speech that was delivered in South Africa and flagged Britain's intention to divest its African colonies.

⁶ W. R. (Sam) Whaley was a prominent Rhodesian lawyer; Father Lewis was an Anglican priest. Both were Rhodesian Front supporters and later senators.

civility of the modern settlers against native indolence. The native problem was a labour problem⁷ which various colonial administrations tried to ameliorate by attracting 'external' or 'foreign' African labour from Mozambique, Nyasaland (now Malawi), Zambia and various regions of South Africa (MacKenzie 1974:8). These migrant labour schemes had their critics. For example, in 1900, the Resident Commissioner, Sir Marshall Clarke, defended the rights of 'indigenous' labour against infringement by 'external' African labour (quoted in MacKenzie 1974:9). The Resident Commissioner's use of 'indigenous' denotes a locally born, or 'on-site', African inhabitant of Rhodesia. Some years later, D. G. Clarke (1974:22) chose the same term when he compared the unwillingness of indigenous African labour to work on plantations with the migrant 'well-looked-after-farm-boy', or, in the language of the 1930s, 'alien' native (Gann 1965:270). Alien natives' offspring were issued with registration certificates 'that were different from those of the locals and were clearly marked non-indigenous African. That hurt', said the son of an immigrant farm worker after Zimbabwe's independence but before land reform in 1997, 'because, although we knew no other home, we were considered alien in the then Rhodesia' (Masina 1988:11). Thus Rhodesian administrators issued Africans with identity documents that set in place rigid, terminological borders between local and migrant, indigene and non-indigene, based on descent.

Each racial group was encouraged to 'preserve' its identity and coexist, rather than intermix with others (Whaley 1973:31). Hybridity,⁸ as the interdependence and mutuality of cultures, met with little acceptance in Rhodesia. As far as white leaders were concerned, 'compulsory integration...was opposed' (Whaley 1973:32). Nonetheless, the settlers concurrently forged, through opposition to both British and Afrikaner, a distinctive culture that was neither metropolitan nor native. The pioneer population had lost its frontier character by the time of self-government in 1923 (Roberts 1978:59; Kirkwood 1984). First Column terminology gave way to 'settlers', or occasionally 'modern settlers', meaning the Europeans, and the Cape Coloureds and Africans who arrived with them, in contradistinction to the earlier influx of Shona and Ndebele. Gann (1961) documents the changing image of the colonial settler during the post-Victorian

7 See Gann 1965:172–82; Clarke 1974:18; MacKenzie 1974:1; Kinloch 1975:108–10.

8 The idea of new forms emerging through contact and intermixing, of indigeneity as the product of exchange and adaptation, was to be found in terminology used to describe new animal and plant species. Rhodesians applied the term to cows and pigs, the progeny of animals brought to the Cape 200–400 years ago by European and Chinese trading ships, and now adapted to local conditions through interbreeding. Bulls, imported from South Africa after the rinderpest outbreak at the end of the 1800s, had interbred with African Sanga cattle, commonly found in the Tribal Trust Lands (Stubbs 1994:139). Initially, their progeny, the indigenous animal, was depicted as 'the poor relation' of the exotic European stock. By the 1950s, however, the hybrid, proving more able to withstand African drought and disease, had caught the interest of Rhodesian commercial farmers. The term indigenous continues to be heard in this sense today. For instance, permaculture programmes in Zimbabwe distinguish between exotic trees, which require planting and watering, and indigenous species that 'self-seed' and need little care thereafter.

era and a swing in opinion against empire in the wake of World War I, with the first calls for independence some years later. The once-exalted image of the settler as the idealised representative of empire became deprecatory (Gann 1961:30–1). The term lost acceptability in Rhodesia as well. Whites began to refer to themselves instead as Rhodesians. Africans, the object of the white racial discourse, were not described in this way. Some referred to themselves as ‘white Africans’, but not generally as ‘native’. The term ‘native’ intimated people whose customs were more distant, or different, to those of the European (Anderson 1990:112; Appadurai 1988:37). ‘Going native’ in the form of assimilating or adapting to local conditions by adopting African dress, housing and language, or entering an African marriage, although not illegal, was frowned on in white circles (Kennedy 1987:173). The Europeans also separated themselves into the old and the new. Salisbury’s fledgling repertory company, established in 1931, was fraught with tension between the two groups (Cary 1975:117). Similarly, Berlyn (1967:87), around the time of UDI, draws a line between herself—Rhodesian born and bred—and more recent European immigrants, ‘who come to my country to milk it of its wealth and desert it in its time of need’.

The situation on the ground, however, was more complicated, varied and fluid (Muzondidya 2002, 2004). The ambiguous, intermediate category of ‘coloured’⁹ blurred Rhodesia’s official terminological boundaries. From the 1930s onward, this community, comprising immigrants from South Africa as well as offspring from unions between local European men and African women, became increasingly self-aware and pleaded unsuccessfully for official recognition and inclusion (Gann 1965:321; Quenet 1976:88). Instead, the nascent community was ‘encouraged to find, or establish, its “own place” in society’ (Kinloch 1975:113). Another intermediary, coming in the wake of European settlement, was Indian, known locally as ‘Asian’, arriving either directly from the Subcontinent, via South Africa or from the Portuguese colony of Mozambique. This term also incorporated a small number of Chinese and Malays. These ‘subject races’ (Muzondidya 2004:213) occupied an unstable middle ground. Categorised as European with regard, for example, to identity cards and national service and for electoral purposes, they, like Africans, faced discrimination in other areas, such as residence, employment, schooling and the right to own firearms.¹⁰ Asians were also subject to a series of legislative and administrative restrictions, notably with regard to immigration.¹¹ The Rhodesians, having first distanced themselves from these two minority communities, began in the 1960s to try to draw them into closer political and social participation in order to counter rising nationalism (Kinloch 1975:114).

9 Muzondidya (2004:213–14, 2005:31–3) outlines the complexity of the groups subsumed under this label.

10 See Good 1974:13; Murphree and Baker 1976:396–7; Quenet 1976:29, 31–3, 102; Murapa 1984:58.

11 See Gann 1965:178; 319; Stigger 1970:5; Quenet 1976:87; Roberts 1978:58; Kennedy 1987:97.

In sum, Rhodesia was a place where identity was reduced to a racial binary of civilising and modernising European colonisers, pitted against a largely undifferentiated black, colonised people. The racial hierarchy intersected with a discourse about indigeneity that foregrounded themes of migration and conquest, settlement and nation building, and the maintenance of cultural difference. This body of knowledge produced Africans as natives, indigenous or foreign, and Europeans first as pioneers and settlers, and then as Rhodesians of longer or more recent standing in the country. It was a pluralistic discourse, which allowed whites to be positioned as one of several indigenous groups, all legitimately connected to the land, while also maintaining white separation and dominance.

Post-1980 representations

After independence, Africans were officially positioned to write themselves as the subject of the indigene narrative. Control of semiotics was for the first time in their hands. Hence, it is pertinent to ask how questions of race, culture and historical origins have been mobilised within African representations thereafter.

While the new political elite envisioned Zimbabwe as a non-racial society, it was also a black nation, and black advancement was necessary to redress historical imbalances. To this end, the Ministry of Labour, Manpower Planning and Social Welfare collected data on educational enrolments, employment, occupational profiles and much else according to race.¹² At the same time, some official effort was also put into using terms that referred to ethnic rather than racial categories. For example, census questions asked for ethnic rather than racial origins, although contradictorily, respondents were—and are today—given the choice of African, European, Asiatic, Coloured or sometimes ‘Mixed’. In everyday parlance, the colonial code of European/African was put aside in favour of a black/white distinction.

The most notable example of measures taken by the new government to correct racial proportions in employment and other facets of life such that they reflected the demographic make-up of the country was the Presidential Directive of May 1980. At the time, this programme of accelerated African placement and promotion was discussed in terms of ‘achieving a suitable representation of the various elements of the population’.¹³ In effect, the Directive meant the Africanisation¹⁴ or blackening, of the Public Service. Within a few years, its

12 See, for example, the 1984 and 1986 *Annual Review of Manpower* (Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Planning and Social Welfare 1984, 1986).

13 See Panter-Brick 1983:224; Murapa 1984:72; Sithole 1987:94.

14 Twenty months after the introduction of the Presidential Directive, Africans accounted for 83 per cent of employees in the Public Service and 47 per cent of senior posts. Two years later, the figures were 92 per

implementation created a civil service with an 'African personality' that, 'in structure and in spirit, would work in consonance with the policies of the new government' and would be 'manned by officers whose destiny lies in the country' (Timbe 1991:5, 72). The Presidential Directive was therefore an act of sovereignty, affirming and asserting an African identity for the Public Service, which was largely absent during the colonial era. The programme contributed significantly to stratification within the black majority, as senior civil servants joined the new political elite and lower-ranking officers became part of the petite bourgeoisie (Weiss 1994:133).

During the first decade of independence, some historical revision also took place, challenging the veracity of the earlier Rhodesian indigeneity discourse. First the San¹⁵ were sidelined as the original inhabitants, although their paintings continued to provide tourist interest and motifs introducing the evening news on ZBC television. Instead, the Bantu from the north were foregrounded as the first people 'to settle' and cultivate the land, rather than simply pass through the area (Ushewokunze 1984:14). By this means, the Shona appropriated the mantle of the first people—descendants of the original settlers who by right enjoyed greater legitimacy and priority in the polity. Second, the colonial era (as argued in previous chapters) was re-presented in ZANU PF's master narrative as an aberration, a time of distortion and dislocation, and whites were configured as colonists, immigrants and settlers. And third, equivalence has been assigned the 'so-called coloureds' and Asians to the 'Rhodesian nationality'. Their position in the country was never fully addressed or defined at independence (Muzondidya 2004:221). Having in the past worked closely or been associated with the settler economy, they were seen as both the instrument and beneficiaries of colonialism. Without representation at Lancaster House and despite protest from some quarters at the time, they were excluded from the common voters' roll. They were placed instead on the white electoral roll and in this way were conspicuously aligned with the criminal past of the white man (Muzondidya 2005:275).

Outlining the reasons for the last of these to an Asian and coloured gathering in 1982, the Honourable Comrade Ushewokunze¹⁶ pointed out that, as largely

cent and 72 per cent respectively. These changes were made possible by expanding the service and accepting the resignation of many whites, who either emigrated or joined the private sector. Timbe (1991:268, 273) also notes that 'younger whites were conspicuous by their absence'. Disaggregating 1992 census figures indicated that 25 positions, or about 1 per cent, of senior posts were held by whites, whereas in 1978 they held 90 per cent of these (Weiss 1994:126).

15 A San community remained in the Tsholotsho District of Matabeleland North, close to the Botswanan border. Forced to settle after independence, they have largely been ignored by the government ever since. The community lived in poverty and faced discrimination when it came to receiving food aid. Their language was dying out and some tried to conceal their identity by using Ndebele or Kalanga names (*The Herald*, 16 September 1998, p. 10).

16 Dr Herbert Ushewokunze held various ministerial posts in the ZANU PF government, including Home Affairs during the reworking of citizenship provisions described in the previous chapter and, more recently,

urban communities, both had forged a closer bond through economic ties with the Rhodesians than with the Bantu speakers. Privilege was the colonists' hallmark. Having 'lived and worked in the economy' set up by the Europeans, Asians and coloureds enjoyed some privileges that natives had not and had benefited in other ways from the black/white divide (Ushewokunze 1984:15). Where it had been advantageous to assert a non-African identity (Muzondidya 2002:5) Ushewokunze ignores the fact that while some Asians and coloureds supported the colonial regime, others did not (Stigger 1970:6). Instead, he treats colonialism as an existential condition, which was lived or shared differently (Parry 1995:84), regardless of one's political loyalties. On this basis, Asians and coloureds have been reclassified, despite their protestations that it was not just Africans who suffered under colonialism. In addition, Ushewokunze (1984:16) projected stasis into the future when impressing on his audience that, following independence, the factor common to all groups subsumed under the Rhodesian category was 'their failure to identify with the mainstream politics of our country'.¹⁷ In this way, he reinstated closure through categorisations that compromised individuality and forced people from the racial minorities to belong to Zimbabwean society as members of a collective (Cohen 1994:12).

At the time of this research, the Asian community maintained, as it had done historically, a low public profile. Coloured representatives, on the other hand, wanted objections to their community's classification heard. They claimed that the relationship between the coloured and African community 'is a kindred one', embodied in blood,¹⁸ and they insisted 'we are your cousins'. Some raised by black mothers in the absence of white fathers argued their rightful place was as an integral part of the black community. Another urban group, raised speaking English, 'wanted to be white', but, finding themselves rebuffed, turned to blacks for inclusion at independence. Both groups disavowed the social capital of miscegenation. Instead, coloured representatives argued their community was in some ways historically 'more oppressed than the blacks'. For instance, the *Land Act* confined Salisbury's coloured community to the areas around *Kopje* and *Arcadia*. 'There were no elite suburbs, such as *Marimba Park*'¹⁹—where wealthy black businessmen and professionals lived in a manner

the Minister of Health. He was proclaimed a national hero after his death in 1995.

17 Ushewokunze suggested one way to escape such criticism was to join the ruling party. The process involved nomination, vetting of the applicant's political history and a financial payment. While some informants, in particular small-business owners, had considered early on that it was 'sensible' to do this, by the 1990s, party membership had lost its cachet due to widespread disenchantment with the party and accusations that people were 'just buying party cards' without any commitment.

18 For example, in 1998, Rachel Stewart responded to questions regarding whether she was suitably qualified to hold the title Miss Universe Zimbabwe by pointing out that she had 'the blood of all three races in my veins'. She therefore embodied the nation. Earlier the local press had questioned the authenticity of another coloured girl, Dionne Best, when she was crowned Miss Zimbabwe in 1995, asking her whether she considered herself worthy of the title since her skin was not black.

19 This suburb housed a small, modern black elite whose prosperity was built on professional skills or business ownership, in particular general stores and bus companies (see Kileff 1975).

not dissimilar from whites—‘for the Coloured. Getting only crumbs from one’s father’s table is not benefiting, it’s degrading’, stressed the speaker. ‘The fact that we were classified as white for some purposes did not mean we liked it. We were also subject to racial discrimination.’²⁰

Nor do coloured informants believe much has been done for their community since 1980. Africans ‘were provided with schools and training. Black lawyers, doctors and such like were to be found even during Smith’s time, while coloureds were restricted to jobs as teachers and artisans.’ Furthermore, they say, the government’s ‘new policy of indigenisation will be used to discriminate against us; we will not benefit from this doctrine’. Indeed, coloureds found themselves unable to source small-business loans that became available as part of the indigenisation programme in the mid 1990s (see below). Miscegenation does not appear to be of much assistance in achieving insider status, either before or after independence. In the absence of significant social and cultural assimilation, mixed unions are refracted through the lens of race as privilege and, depending on gender, are dubbed either prostitution or ‘up-classing’.²¹ The coloured community continues, as before, to be caught in the middle.

So, in short, during the first decade of independence, Africanisation, localisation and black advancement were the terms used to refer to the process of correcting racial imbalances, thereby opening historically white space to blacks in the public and private sectors.²² Little was heard of the term ‘indigene’.²³ As part of historical re-visioning, however, state representatives put in place ideas that enabled the realisation of indigeneity during the 1990s. By continuing in its commitment to count and classify the population, the State racialised, elaborated and circulated knowledge about the social body.²⁴ Critics believed this heightened awareness of race, rather than making race irrelevant in Zimbabwe thereafter.

20 *Newsline*, ZBC Radio 1, 26 February 1997.

21 McFadden (1994) documents the controversial nature of black/white relations.

22 See Zimbabwe Department of Information, 18 February 1986, and 29 January 1990.

23 The term had, however, been introduced into parliamentary debate and academic writings, which, more recently, revisited and reworked the Presidential Directive and ancillary events (*Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 1995, col. 4890; Timbe 1991). Timbe (1991:6, 170), for example, draws a distinction between ‘indigenous’ and ‘non indigenous citizens’ when calling for the ‘effective control of the national government and other state apparatus by a majority of the people...by virtue of its inherited claim on the country through its ancestors’.

24 See, for instance, questions regarding the racial make-up of individuals granted stand allocations by local councils, the prison population and the Harare agricultural show organisers (*Parliamentary Debates*, 10 June 1998, col. 5189, 17 September 1997, col. 1250, 21 February 1996, col. 4088, 20 August 1997, col. 434). Data were also collected annually on school enrolments.

The rise to prominence of the terms ‘indigene’ and ‘indigenisation’

By 1990, the Zimbabwean Government was voicing its concern over the country’s poor economic performance and, in particular, low levels of investment and serious unemployment.²⁵ The shortcomings of African socialism were acknowledged and an Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), designed to foster new business opportunities, began in 1991 (Government of Zimbabwe 1991:1; UNDP 1998:26). Its introduction gave moral legitimacy to capital accumulation by blacks that had been largely absent during the socialist 1980s (Raftopoulos 1992:68). At the same time, members of the government and the educated elite were aware that economic reform programmes could benefit multinationals, large companies and wealthy members of society rather than small, ‘indigenous’ enterprises and the poor (Government of Zimbabwe 1991:20; Mlambo 1997:xi, 10). In view of this, African entrepreneurs, backbenchers and pressure groups²⁶ began to lobby the government, demanding measures be put in place to protect and promote black economic empowerment. The term coined to describe this process was ‘indigenisation’.²⁷

The case for indigenisation was grounded in the illegality of the 1888 Rudd Concession, the treaty made by the BSAC with Lobengula, King of the Ndebele, on which the colonial state was founded.²⁸ Proponents, introducing the idea of indigenisation to Parliament, took as their time frame 1890 to the present—namely, the colonial and post-colonial periods. The agreed goal of this ‘mother of all motions’ was to ‘uplift black Zimbabweans’, in particular the disadvantaged, in order to ‘place the commanding heights of our national patrimony in the hands of Zimbabweans for the well-being of our patriotic broad masses’.²⁹ Thus, the indigenisation programme, couched in nationalist and patriotic terms, and the materiality of land called up a subaltern history that retold and re-inscribed the narrative of European invasion and colonial exploitation.

Indigenisation, as the ‘second phase of our revolution’, was also mindful of the ‘unfinished business’ of independence. Reference has been made to the belief in some black circles that reconciliation has not been taken in the spirit in which it was enunciated. Evidence of the minorities’ failure to reciprocate was to be

25 See Bloch and Robertson 1996:3; UNDP 1998:19.

26 The three most notable were the Indigenous Business Development Council (IBDC), the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) and the Indigenous Business Women’s Organisation (IBWO). Relations between them, however, often lacked unity and were soured by mistrust and infighting over tenders. See, for instance, the Telecel tendering saga (*Business Herald*, 10 September 1998, p. 6).

27 In early presentations, Zimbabwe took Malaysia’s Bumiputra (sons of the soil) Movement as its model.

28 *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 March 1992, cols 4338–403.

29 *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 April 1991, col. 3875.

found in the 'ownership structure' of the economy.³⁰ Consequently, national reconciliation was re-presented as only a 'stopgap'. For example, political analyst and lecturer John Makumbe used a boxing analogy to explain that the policy of reconciliation was simply a cease-fire that brought about 'the end of the fighting'. Reconciliation allowed both sides 'to get back in their corners'—namely, the low and high-density suburbs.³¹ Other members of the black urban elite began to pose difficult questions, not just to Zimbabwe's minorities, but to the government. For instance, Sichone (1997:26) asked 'if this [reconciliation] is what you will offer our former enemies, what will you offer us, your own people'. Sichone's and Makumbe's remarks reflect a growing realisation that reconciliation cannot be spoken about outside a dialogue of economic equity. They, like Parry (1995:88), question whether reconciliation and historical remembrance can ever be aligned with radical social, economic, political and cultural restructuring, which renders the colonial past as properly superseded. To their way of thinking, reconciliation demands reciprocity of some kind, restorative justice in the form of compensation or reparations, not just for individual victims of political violence but for communities as a whole, in order that the urge for retribution be extinguished (Parry 1995:88). Indigenisation, by 'dis-investing' whites and Asians in favour of blacks thus flagged, according to Makumbe, the start to 'the end of the war'.³²

Calls for indigenisation appeared as well as 're-Africanisation'—an attempt to exert some control and 'gain mastery' (Furusa 1998:53) over Zimbabwe's future development. There was a perception among academics, policymakers and in business circles that Zimbabwe was being integrated into the world economy on less than equitable terms. Zimbabwe looked to be one of globalisation's 'notable losers' (Goldin and van der Mensbrugge 1993:10). The forces of globalisation seemed outside 'our control...All we have is the word indigenous and nothing else'.³³ These comments reflect the lack of agency felt by many Zimbabweans. 'Internationalism' was said to be missing.³⁴ Again Africa found itself dominated by the West, which remained insensitive to economic disparity and cultural diversity. Indigenisation, here in the guise of re-Africanisation, attempted to get rid of Euro-centric ideas and institutions in favour of centring that which was local. Western cultural practices were seen to be, at best, inappropriate and, at worst, incompatible and polluting and should therefore be kept separate. Proponents of this position searched for 'indigenous solutions' for various social ills and advocated indigenisation of the legal code, the film industry, professional

30 *Parliamentary Debates*, 31 May 1995, col. 318.

31 *Insight*, ZBC Radio 1, 20 August 1996.

32 *Ibid.*; *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 April 1991, col. 3875.

33 *Parliamentary Debates*, 22 February 1995, col. 4990.

34 See papers presented to the seminar Globalisation: Challenges and Opportunities for Zimbabwe, co-hosted by the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation and held in Harare in November 1998.

practice and so forth. Images and institutions required decolonisation in order that they reflected African culture and 'the people' could see their own lives and experiences portrayed before them. In this context, indigenisation referred to a desire to reconnect with Zimbabwe's cultural heritage and to develop its institutions and values, rather than being a search for atavistic purity or a return to a 'traditional' past. Thus indigenisation represented a step towards constructing a new and modern African society whose identity was not conferred from outside (Zoungrana quoted in Appiah 1991:134).

In sum, when the term indigenisation first appeared in the early 1990s it had a somewhat unfocused social, cultural and economic agenda that included levelling the economic playing field, redressing the inequalities of the past and promoting the inclusion of blacks into the mainstream society and economy. Subsequently, public attention shifted to the means by which indigenisation's economic goals in particular were to be met. Black and white liberals, including some members of the ruling party, spoke of wealth creation via an expanding economy. Steps to broaden black participation included deregulation of the financial sector, making capital available on easier terms, privatising parastatals and warehousing the shares for indigenous investors, removing legislation that inhibited the entry of entrepreneurs into the formal and informal economies, sourcing donor funds for disbursement to indigenous companies and convincing multinationals and large companies to allocate discounted shares to indigenous Zimbabweans. Some liberals also agreed to the idea of individual title being made available in the communal areas and resettlement schemes as a means for blacks to raise capital by using land as collateral. Liberals therefore supported a programme of wealth creation and accepted that economic empowerment of the black majority needed facilitating procedures in order to overcome past discrimination.

Also supporting indigenisation as wealth creation were the more conservative black captains of industry who either had established their own companies or held senior positions in multinationals and other large companies. Already successful in their fields, they tended, however, to perceive much of the accompanying affirmative-action rhetoric as somewhat demeaning. Other conservatives included chiefs who, as traditional leaders, wanted to 'develop' their localities but did not support individual title to land in the communal areas.³⁵ They believed land distribution, as their power base, had been usurped by state-run rural councils since independence.³⁶

The more radical approach to indigenisation adopted by lobby groups, war veterans and some MPs rested on wealth repossession and redistribution. For

³⁵ *Parliamentary Debates*, 26 August 1997, col. 653.

³⁶ See Cheater 1990:189.

instance, the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) advocated that ‘the thing to do is to take what they [whites] have no right to possess and restore it all to the rightful owners’.³⁷ Lobby groups projected themselves as the ‘liberators in Zimbabwe’s economic jihad’ and accused the government of dragging its feet over the issue. Indeed, the need for an indigenisation programme was in itself a criticism of ZANU PF’s years in office, and the ruling party, law courts and lobbyists not infrequently clashed over who should be directing the process. In part, this conflict reflected generational tensions, as senior political leaders, having established their careers during the liberation war, still held office. Political and economic leadership had not passed to younger men, and clearly certain lobbyists were interested in entering the political sphere, which was known to offer lucrative business opportunities.³⁸

Consequently, the indigenisation programme meant somewhat different things to different players, particularly in the absence of a clear government policy.³⁹ For some, the new term replaced reconciliation as a ‘new attempt at real independence’.⁴⁰ Stronger than Africanisation, localisation or black advancement, indigenisation transformed ‘the whimper for advancement’ into the self-assertion of control.⁴¹ The term created commonality among blacks through recognition of the mutuality of suffering and their desire to move beyond colonial disadvantage. While blacks were united by their common history, there was, however, less agreement about the present and future direction the country should take. While plans to rectify colonial inequities through economic empowerment and compulsory land acquisition (see below) marked another start in the process of restructuring Zimbabwean society, different sectors offered alternative proposals for how imbalances engendered by the colonial past were to be addressed.⁴² More importantly for present purposes, the multiplicity of interacting indigenisation discourses established the visibility and ‘otherisation’ of Zimbabwe’s minorities, stimulating questions about race and authenticity with concomitant implications for white autochthony. Nowhere was this more apparent than in competing representations of the indigene.

37 ‘Debate goes on’, *The Herald*, 15 April 1996, pp. 5, 7; ‘Black empowerment has been hijacked’, *Zimbabwe Independent*, 10 May 1996, p. 5.

38 The 2000 election saw political office opened to the driving force behind the AAG, Philip Chinyangwa, and the Chairman of the War Veterans’ Association, Dr Chenjerai Hunzvi.

39 Cabinet did not approve the Indigenisation Policy Framework document until February 1998 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 20 May 1999, col. 5995).

40 ‘What does “indigenisation” mean to you?’, *The Financial Gazette*, 3 March 1994, p. 12.

41 Editor, *SAPEM*, June 1990, p. 2.

42 *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 April 1991, col. 3889.

Competing black images of indigeneity

The Cabinet Task Force set up in 1992 to look into these questions failed in the body of its report to describe an indigene, although the glossary referred somewhat ambiguously to indigenous Zimbabweans as 'those who inhabited Zimbabwe before colonial rule and thereafter' (Cabinet Task Force on the Indigenisation of the Economy 1994). The policy's objective was spelt out as 'economic justice between the races' and, alternatively, 'democratisation of the economic system by eliminating the racial and ethnic differences such that disparities between the races and provinces are a thing of the past' (Cabinet Task Force on the Indigenisation of the Economy 1994:1, 3). A later document put out by the Department of State Enterprises and Indigenisation, Office of the President and Cabinet, also skirted around exacting definitions. The second report did, however, use the terms 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous' in conjunction with 'citizenship' and 'enterprises' in order that 'the ownership structure of the economy is reflective of the population composition of the country' (Department of State Enterprises and Indigenisation 1997:1–2). Importantly, both documents made a clear distinction between foreign and domestic ownership of the private sector. Foreign ownership by transnational corporations was estimated to be about 80 per cent. Domestic ownership, while dominated by non-indigenous enterprises, was the small and weak junior partner, a situation that appears unchanged since the *Growth with Equity* document of 1981 (see Chapter 2).

Introducing the motion on the floor of Parliament, Mr Mangwende was less ambiguous regarding which sections of society qualified as indigenes. As the future Chairman of the Indigenisation Task Force referred to above, he spoke in terms of 'foreigners' and 'white settler stock' in contradistinction with the black patriots and the broad masses.⁴³ 'Indigenous business...equates to ourselves' and is 'not a foreign body or something that is peripheral to the whole social and economic fabric of this country'.⁴⁴ An indigenous businessman was, for example, a 'patriotic businessman, sympathetic and supportive to government', someone who did not threaten to dis-invest whenever the government introduced new regulations.⁴⁵ Other parliamentarians, debating the various interim reports of the Indigenisation Committee between 1991 and 1997, also applied the term indigenous to 'patriotic' or 'bona fide Zimbabweans'. Minorities were simply 'Zimbabweans' or 'our other' or 'quasi citizens'. And, repeating analogies heard in the earlier citizenship debate, indigenes 'demonstrate a national character of staying' while 'our other citizens lack this national character'. 'Here to stays' were 'people who were born here, who stay here, who die here and who have

43 Ibid., col. 3877.

44 Ibid., col. 3886.

45 Ibid., col. 3888.

no second home'⁴⁶—that is, not white. They were 'wholly Zimbabwean' and 'dedicated party cadres'.⁴⁷ Thus, representations privileged immutable heritable signifiers and cultural indicators of indigeneity, while also challenging the rootedness and loyalty of those who were foreign or peripheral.

At the same time, more conservative parliamentarians aired cautionary tales of unpatriotic black entrepreneurs. They referred to the 'briefcase businessmen' of the 1980s who sold their foreign exchange allocations at a premium to those starved of hard currency, the 'fronts' who allowed themselves to be used by foreign businesses and 'telephone farmers' holding vast tracts of under-utilised land for status and speculative purposes.⁴⁸ Added to these were black professionals leaving the country during the 1990s in search of better remuneration elsewhere.⁴⁹ Labelled 'mercenaries' and 'fortune seekers', they, like their white counterparts, could not realistically expect to own a modern house, car or provide education for their children in Zimbabwe's economic climate.⁵⁰ They emigrated to earn foreign exchange, in order to be better able to establish themselves financially in Zimbabwe at a later date.

Members of the lobby groups (AAG, the Indigenous Business Development Council and the Indigenous Business Women's Organisation) were the more militant contributors to this debate. They and radical parliamentarians were not timorous with definitions. Indigenous simply meant 'black'.⁵¹ Lobbyists were forthright in calling for 'the wholesale dismembering of white businesses' in favour of blacks. Indigenisation was to 'transfer the unimpeded opportunity of accumulating wealth on the home front to the descendants of the people who were here long before the money economy arrived'.⁵² Thus, lobbyists embraced an 'Africanist' view that allowed only two categories: the indigenous to whom the country legitimately belonged and settlers who came from elsewhere.

To achieve these lofty goals, high-profile lobbyists urged African businessmen to decolonise their thinking, to 'think big' and have the courage to pursue 'big ventures'.⁵³ In addition, they advised Africans intent on entering the economic sphere to actively support, rather than undermine, each other. Entrepreneurs

46 *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 May 1992, col. 6371.

47 *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 April 1991, col. 4086.

48 *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 April 1991, col. 4460.

49 *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 April 1991, col. 3893.

50 The government set the hourly rates charged by professionals and interest rates for building societies. Building societies ceased to offer bonds (mortgages) during 1997 (*The Herald*, 24 April 1998, p. 16; *Business Herald*, 3 December 1998, p. 9). They were unable to attract depositors' funds, for they could not compete with interest rates offered by other financial institutions. At the time, banks were charging 40 per cent interest on loans over 20–25 years.

51 *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 February 1997, cols 3381, 4082.

52 'What does "indigenisation" mean to you?', *The Financial Gazette*, 3 March 1994, p. 12.

53 *Parliamentary Debates*, 19 March 1992, col. 4666; 'Think big indigenous business people told', *Business Herald*, 12 September 1996, p. 5.

should be prepared to pool resources and form partnerships rather than rely only on their most trusted family members, take out insurance policies instead of putting their faith in *muti* (African medicine) and the protection of their ancestors,⁵⁴ and further, they should keep business records. It was accepted that many businesses failed because of demands from kin and inadequate accounting. Without these innovations, 'we remain colonised, we shall never go anywhere, we shall remain natives'.⁵⁵ Here 'natives' were those confined by beliefs and 'modes of thought' (Appadurai 1988:37) that obstructed wealth creation. Lobbyists also supported individual ownership of land, arguing that the 'traditionalist view that the indigenous never owned land...is a serious handicap...that does not measure up to the pressing and necessary needs of present day economic development'.⁵⁶ Indigenisation therefore called forth 'a new breed' of businessman, willing to 'extricate himself from traditional beliefs and practices' and prepared to embrace a Western style of business management (Chipeta 1998; Bloch and Robertson 1996:49–51). In effect, indigenisation was about capital accumulation and 'becoming modern' by moving away from, or breaking, restricting practices associated with kinship economies while, at the same time, remaining true to other aspects of African culture. It was a discourse that did not set up an adversarial relationship between modernity and African identity. Rather it created progress by adapting business acumen derived from the West to accord with local conditions and values.

By the late the 1990s, however, the euphoria that accompanied the introduction of indigenisation a few years earlier had waned. Lobby group leaders, some obviously well off, provoked the general public's ire. The empowerment rhetoric appeared to be emanating 'from the wrong mouths', from, for instance, a lobbyist professing to be already 'stinking rich'. Some found the lobby groups' confrontational attitude and 'demands to spill [white] blood' worrisome and wondered whether this 'could delink us from the international sphere'.⁵⁷ Also taking stock, local businessman and writer Chido Makunike prudently cautioned that blacks should remain sensitive to the rights of other groups if they were not to damage their moral cause by becoming, or being perceived to be, the 'new oppressors'.⁵⁸ Disquiet over just who was really benefiting from the programme prompted some terminological refinement. Critics, such as Chief Makoni, began to refer to 'the authentic indigenous' as poor blacks:

54 Without insurance cover, many black retailers were unable to restock or reopen their businesses after the 1998 price riots.

55 *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 March 1992, cols 4447, 4756.

56 *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 March 1992, col. 4344.

57 Mr Chanika, the chief executive of a financial institution, gave this warning at the 1997 Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries Conference (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 7 January 1997, p. 13).

58 'In might, let's be sensitive', *The Financial Gazette*, 16 May 1996, p. 7.

What you [parliamentarians] call indigenisation, it is only the rich we are talking about who are not even indigenous. Some say we are Zimbabwean and we are indigenous. If you want to see the indigenous proper, go to the rural areas, go and uplift the indigenous rural people... The rich, you have failed this country.⁵⁹

A year earlier, Chief Mangwende said very much the same thing,⁶⁰ for it was apparent that those living in the rural areas had not benefited in the same way as urban dwellers.⁶¹ The government's Social Dimensions Fund, which was to have offered some protection from the effects of structural adjustment to the very poor, proved ineffectual (UNDP 1998:28), while the 'embourgeoisement' of officials appeared to have undermined the political will to channel resources to lower-income groups.⁶²

Chief Makoni, cited above, draws a parallel between indigeneity and those who continue to suffer the material conditions of subjection, in contradistinction with indigeneity as a status shared by all who were once historically marginalised. Many taking advantage of the indigenisation programme could no longer be described economically or politically in this way. Plagued by corruption, it was obvious that only a handful of wealthy, politically well-connected families had benefited.⁶³ Zimbabwe's indigenisation drive looked as if it had been 'hijacked' by 'pirate' entrepreneurs, with contracts awarded to firms ill equipped to complete the work⁶⁴ and funds spent on consumption rather than invested in the productive sector.⁶⁵ Consequently, employment opportunities the poor hoped would flow from wealth creation had not materialised.⁶⁶ Against this background, the term indigenous became a word of contempt. Trade unionists, urban workers and farm labourers used it to describe an 'emergent businessman' or an 'emergent commercial farmer' who did not pay workers award rates, or did not pay on time, or was socially irresponsible in other ways.

59 *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 March 1998, col. 4035.

60 *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 March 1997, col. 3959, 2 September 1997, cols 892–6.

61 See, for example, the disbursement of the Z\$720 million World Bank loan for enterprise development, the bulk of which stayed in Harare and its satellite Chitungwiza (*Parliamentary Debates*, 25 February 1998, col. 3528).

62 *Parliamentary Debates*, 10 March 1998, col. 3733; Dashwood 1996:32; Jenkins 1997:594; UNDP 1998:7.

63 See Jenkins 1997:594; Mandebvu 1997:12; Sylvester 2000:75; *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 1997, col. 3325.

64 For instance, the public anger over the failure of a construction company to successfully complete the Mundi-Mataga Dam, which was to have supplied water to thousands of Mberengwa families (*Parliamentary Debates*, 2 September 1997, col. 880).

65 *Parliamentary Debates*, 8 January 1995, cols 4051, 4058, 22 February 1995, cols 5055, 5059, 31 May 1995, col. 255, 12 February 1997, col. 3333. Also 'Truth Commission needed to probe instant millionaires', *The Financial Gazette*, 2 November 1995, p. 4; 'Violence preached as answer to white oppression', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 19 July 1996, p. 4.

66 See also 'Pastoral statement by the Zimbabwe Bishops Conference', *The Sunday Mail*, 11 May 1997, p. 8.

Moreover, disquiet was being voiced over just which regions of the country were benefiting from the government's programme. People from areas that missed out on development funds and opportunities earmarked for indigenisation projects started to apply the term more reservedly. An indigene narrowed to someone 'from within the province'. This usage reflected the anger mounting over the perceived 'Shonisation' of the country's wealth and culture.⁶⁷ The lack of development in some parts of the country appeared as part of a deliberate government strategy and key factor behind 'the revolt' or split between backbenchers and members of cabinet during 1997.⁶⁸ The needs of the Tonga, for example, residing in the remote and impoverished Zambezi Valley and accounting for 1 per cent of the population, have been ignored by the State. So too have districts in Matabeleland, where few growth points, sealed roads, water projects or decent schools are to be found.⁶⁹ The 1987 Unity Accord had fed hopes of reconstruction and development as a reward for Matabele participation in the agreement (Alexander et al. 2000:232). Instead, continuing neglect appeared as ethnic and regional discrimination. Consequently, competition, tension and antagonism marked relations between various indigenous groups from different parts of the country.

Black feminists added the dimension of gender to indigene representations, a perspective largely absent in the discourse of government and lobby groups (Gaidzanwa 1997:2). They argued that after independence 'black males stole the pie'. Women were largely excluded from the opportunities that opened to blacks at around that time. They vowed not to let this happen again and pushed the idea that the indigenisation process should be about helping the greatest number of the most disadvantaged members of society—namely, women. To this end, black businesswomen, alert to their exclusion and marginalisation, set up their own lobby group, the Indigenous Business Women's Organisation (IBWO). Paradoxically, while 'well-empowered' MPs were frequently seen haranguing rural women and the resource poor to greater effort, directing them to try harder and come up with ideas for their own economic betterment, male students, administrators and academics alike vigorously resisted an affirmative-action programme, introduced in 1995, to encourage female applicants to enter

67 Talmu 1994; *Parade*, February 1995, p. 2; *Parliamentary Debates*, 12 February 1997, col. 3322, 14 October 1998, col. 1051.

68 Mandaza 1997:5; *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 February 1997, cols 3444, 3452, and throughout 27 November 1997 and 19 December 1997.

69 For extensive coverage of this issue, see speeches by Mr Matura, MP for Gokwe South, Midlands Province, and Mr Ndlovu and Mr Sibanda from Matabeleland constituencies (*Parliamentary Debates*, 18 March 1997, cols 4142–77). Also note the anger fuelled by poor administration at the National University of Science and Technology, itself an indigenisation initiative designed to develop human resources through education (Cabinet Task Force on the Indigenisation of the Economy 1994:3). Although located in Bulawayo, the institution took only 20 of its 500 first-year intake from Matabeleland. Figures such as these were taken as evidence of regional discrimination that resulted in a lack of skills and future underdevelopment (Amani Trust 1998:5).

university. Women were also generally wary, in the light of experience in other parts of Africa, of individual title to land becoming available. Where the lineage holds corporate rights to land, females in their capacity as kin can, if need be, expect to reside and draw a livelihood from land allocated to males, over their lifetimes. When freehold title was introduced, however, as for instance in Kenya, registration was invariably made in individual male names and women were alienated from access rights to land (Okeyo 1980). Locally, they have found themselves discriminated against in land dispersal at state resettlement schemes, despite the passage of the 1982 *Legal Age of Majority Act* that conferred legal majority on black women. Thus, feminists were sensitive to the fact that indigenisation and black empowerment were profoundly gendered processes, finding all too often the authentic indigenous Zimbabwean appeared as a black male (McFadden 1996:41).

So, in brief, introduction of the terms indigene and indigenisation signalled change in the making and the shifting and reframing of Zimbabwe's borders of national personhood. While indigeneity was understood to be the preserve of those whose origins were pre-colonial, and indigenes the nominated beneficiaries of a programme of economic empowerment, there were competing representations about who among the black majority this might be. Was a distinction to be made on the basis of individual material disadvantage? Or was it a status to which all blacks qualified on historical grounds? Would locally born descendants of migrant labour brought from neighbouring countries during the colonial era also be entitled to use the term? At the same time, indigeneity, like class and ethnicity, is constructed and refracted through gender. In short, the term's use gave rise to dissension out of which emerged a hierarchy of those depicted as authentically indigenous. How did whites speak about and construct their ideas of indigeneity, how did they constitute and convey their connection to the country at a time when they faced economic loss and dispossession?⁷⁰

White representations of indigeneity

White informants put the case that indigenous did not necessarily mean only 'black' or 'original inhabitants'. Instead, they typified indigenes 'as those born in' and occasionally added 'and those who have registered as citizens and travel on a Zimbabwean passport'. Alternatively, 'indigenous means born, educated, employed and still resident in Zimbabwe'. This terminology created

70 At the time of fieldwork, invasions of white as well as some black and state-owned farms and multinational plantations by war veterans and villagers had begun. These were to become more systematically organised and widespread in the run-up to the 2000 elections. In the cities, some 'white' and 'Asian' businesses, clubs and schools were also harassed by members of the AAG and Sangano Munhumutapa during the mid and late 1990s.

commonality between fellow nationals regardless of race. Indeed, just after 1980, Mr Pratt, a 'patriot' from Marandellas (Marondera), had written, 'as one who was born here, I consider myself an African in the same way that a Harlem Negro is an American'.⁷¹ Thus, without regard for their historical recentness or colonial antecedents, whites appealed for legitimacy on the grounds of birth and residence. It was on this basis, and their love of the land, that they constructed an image of themselves as indigenes. The term denoted a sense of association and attachment, of properly belonging to a place, and did not refer, as the lobbyists cited earlier, to a human condition of suffering, confinement and incarceration.

The majority of whites, city and country folk alike, spoke in this way of their love of the bush, the smell, the light, the heat, the sunsets and 'the raw beauty of the red soil and the long brown grass', 'the great granite boulders strewn across the land'. An urban worker said, 'I feel Zimbabwean in the bush, my second home, especially fishing in the Zambezi Valley.' This remote wilderness region provided the inspiration and background for numerous wild-game stories. The whites' keen ecological knowledge was evident in conversation and on display at amateur painting and sculpture exhibitions. Extensive 'insider' knowledge of the country's flora and fauna also privileged them and set them apart from the endlessly mobile expatriates and other 'rootless' foreigners. These references and representations of the beauty of the Zimbabwean landscape and expressions of love for the country sustained a sense of belonging and their right to be of the land, and helped 'fix in place a powerful association between a culture and home' (Hall 1995:182). Some felt bonded to the continent as a whole. 'I read somewhere that we whites are like seeds scattered in the wind by our forefathers, scattered across Africa, an exciting, turbulent, colourful continent. So we are. We've put down roots and become native to the continent.' Transformation had begun with their ancestors' migration and adaptation to the new environment. A unique cultural production then emerged out of the formative influences of geography and climate and their bonding to the land.

Other scholars have written of the ties formed by settlers with the land where they were born and laboured.⁷² And yet in Rhodesia a paradox existed. Literary critic and lecturer Anthony Chennells (1995:109) wrote that Rhodesian novelists were 'torn between allowing their characters to live in harmony with the wilderness as a means of recovering their essential humanity, and transforming the wilderness into a space where agricultural, mining and industrial capital could flourish'. Certainly that pertained with regard to the Kariba hydroelectric scheme. Hughes (2006b) charts the whites' initially ambivalent response to the damming of the Zambezi River's waters. They were filled with sadness and regret by the environmental destruction (Hughes 2006b:825); however, with

71 'White patriots also help this country', *The Herald*, 25 September 1980, p. 12.

72 See Handler 1988:34; Goldie 1989:157; Dominey 1993; Read 1996:70.

time, their 'triumphalist narratives of progress' rewrote the African landscape (Hughes 2006b:829). In effect, they destroyed the wild only to remake it in their own image (Hughes 2006b:838). Chapter 3 indicated the pride many still held in Rhodesia's development, in their transfiguring the landscape into a modern and Western Rhodesian location. Indeed, a few still thought of themselves as Rhodesians. 'I call myself Zimbabwean, but that's only because the word has changed. When I use the term, in my heart I think of Rhodesia, the country still in my heart is Rhodesia, which is where I made a name for myself.' Here memories of youth and sporting prowess, opening windows to another place and time, are nostalgically linked to life during the colonial period, the era when he felt he belonged. A second informant denoted himself in this way because of his alienation from the current political situation: 'I'm a Rhodesian, not a Zimbabwean, because I can't identify with this new government.'

For others, however, 'being called a Rhodesian grates. I'm offended when people refer today to Rhodesia or Rhodesians. I say "that is not the name of my country". It is usually the "when wes" [of South Africa] and people from overseas who use the term'. It was a deprecating term. 'To be a Rhodie is to be a Smith man, a "God's own country" man' and a 'class of person who wears *veldskoens* [a bush shoe or suede ankle boot] and boxer shorts, a lager lout whose mates come before all else'. Progressive whites contrasted themselves with the 'when wes' who, while galvanised by political developments in their former homeland, vowed to remain Rhodesians forever (Uusihakala 2008:25, 199). Living in the past, 'when wes' were a source of irritation, perceived to have ossified rather than changed to meet the new political dispensation. Thus the majority of whites self-referred as Zimbabwean with 'no hyphens' and 'no qualifications'. Very occasionally, a younger white described him or herself as a 'new-breed Zimbabwean', indicating attitudes different to those held by the older generation.

Members of the ruling elite also made a terminological distinction along these lines, between Rhodesians, who had the temerity to take members of the government to court, and white Zimbabweans who 'support the President' and recognised it was not patriotic to do so.⁷³ Cognisant of this, a young man, looking for an apolitical term, chose the self-referent 'white African'. By this means, he, as Hughes (2005:160) suggests, skipped the nation-state and claimed citizenship of the continent as a whole. The young man confirmed earlier observations that

whites here are very bush oriented, they're knowledgeable, they know the names and habits of even the most rare animals...I've asked myself why are the whites so ill informed about their history when they know so much about the flora and fauna...I think it's because they followed

⁷³ *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 September 1993, col. 3491.

the British school system and the English curricula...the history taught was the history of the British Empire and [was] ethnocentric. This British history was followed by Rhodesian history, followed by ZANU PF's version.

He, like Read's (1996:29) European exiles, preferred to use a generic term to describe himself and his origins. His father also called himself a white African but for different reasons. An elderly man, in poor health, he said towards the end of his life 'all my most meaningful relationships are with Africans'. Another old man shared in greater detail the sense of belonging that friendships engendered:

I started my life in Ciskei [South Africa], outside Fort Beaufort in Red Xhosa country, before Ciskei became a homeland. I call myself first and foremost an African. I was an only child, I grew up fighting with sticks,⁷⁴ up before dawn, riding to mission school with the Africans on tiny ponies...We [he and his mother] left, and I spent the next 50 years in Rhodesia. I love the rural African people and the smell of the African bush. Squatting down with the old men, talking in Ndau [a Shona dialect] about the old days, it gives me such pleasure! I miss hearing Xhosa so much that I speak to myself in their tongue when in Australia...sometimes when I disagree with someone, and don't want to be rude, I tell them so in Xhosa, they never ask what I said...My heart bleeds for Africa.

His narrative expressed the sense of himself at home in Africa when speaking its languages or, as Hollander (1991:47) noted, when 'the way they talk is yours'. An image of himself as a 'white African' points to some recognition of affinity, born out of interaction with others. The term reflected a changed consciousness, of having moved beyond European ethnocentrism evident in white aesthetic representations, which while taken from the African landscape and its wildlife, depicted the national space as largely devoid of an African presence. Notwithstanding this, in 1992, a census enumerator disallowed the old man's self-identification. The notion of a non-black African proved problematic and he was recorded as a European. Bureaucratic practices therefore marked a boundary of personhood and compelled him to render himself in ways that were not of his own choosing (Cohen 1994:12). Yet, mulling over these memories, he said, 'I'm an African, I'll never lose it.' The enumerator's decision was not, however, out of line. To be 'white' and 'African' was perceived as enigmatic. Generally, white claims to being an African or white African called forth both

74 Sparring with sticks is a popular pastime among Red (rural traditionalist) Xhosa youth. See Mayer and Mayer 1970:164-72.

laughter (Hills 1981:113) and angry retorts from members of the black majority of the ilk that ‘no white man should tell me he is Zimbabwean by virtue of being born here. Whites are alien to this country and Africa as a whole.’⁷⁵

Terminological disputes such as these were one means by which black and white competed for autochthony—‘the transcendent moral right to be of the land’ (Thornton 1994:12). Similar concerns are evident in the academic literature covering settlerism in Australia and New Zealand, countries where indigenes and non-indigenes also dispute physical possession of, and emotional attachment to, the territory. Antipodean settlers seek to achieve legitimacy in their new lands and to erase their ‘separation of belonging’ (Goldie 1989:13, 215) by themselves becoming indigenes through claims built around birth and residence. Their representations call up a definition of indigeneity that is not tied to a specific historical moment. In much the same way, white Zimbabweans arrogated indigeneity to themselves by virtue of their birth, adapting and putting down roots in the country. Where initially pioneers and early settlers could not be considered indigenes, their descendants’ status has changed. After a century of white presence, they believed the term indigene could no longer be applied exclusively. Recognition by others is, however, critical, leading Goldie (1989:13) to describe indigenisation as ‘the impossible necessity’ not satisfactorily resolved in the New World, where the settler–native boundary remains an ‘anxious and ambivalent one’ (Bhabha 1994:116); nor in Zimbabwe where, if not credited with indigene status, the whites’ image would be that of foreigners and aliens, or worse—‘the fifth column amongst us’ and ‘the enemy within’. Remarks from white and coloured informants that ‘we call ourselves indigenous and the blacks indigenous-indigenous’ suggested an appreciation that while some were more entitled to use the term than others, the minorities were nonetheless also legitimately able to consider themselves as indigenes. Thus, they were not so much arguing for authenticity on the same terms as blacks as trying to establish a discourse within which they too could speak of a sense of belonging, connection and placement. Economic factors worked, however, to obstruct the realisation of their desire.

Indigenisation of the economy

Zimbabwe’s indigenisation debate brought to the fore complex questions regarding ‘ownership’ of the economy, the distribution of wealth and the means to correct historical imbalances and get the racial proportions right. For their part, white Zimbabweans deeply resented, as non-indigenes, being added to a category of ‘whites and foreigners’ who purportedly owned and controlled the

75 *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 February 1997, col. 3416.

economy. The future Chairman of the Indigenisation Task Force, Mr Mangwende, stated that 98 per cent of the economy in the private sector was owned by ‘foreigners [multinationals], Europeans and Asians’ as an off-the-cuff statistic in Parliament in 1991.⁷⁶ His figure was repeated by other committee members, adopted by the lobby groups and reproduced uncritically in the Zimbabwean media.⁷⁷ Mangwende’s figure was, however, not subsequently supported by his committee’s report.⁷⁸ Whites believed talk of a white ‘stranglehold’ or ‘white-owned’ economy was ‘mischievous’. Not only was the statistic incorrect, it gave the minorities a prominence they did not deserve and blurred Zimbabwe’s equally problematic class, gender and regional wealth disparities. Certainly, statistics such as this legitimated the notion that the economic empowerment campaign was the continuation of the armed struggle.⁷⁹ What was also beyond dispute was that minorities were over-represented in terms of the private sector’s demographic profile, and that Zimbabwe’s wealth was distributed unequally, with 20 per cent of the population receiving 60 per cent of the income (UNDP 1998:12–13; Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare 1995:81).⁸⁰ Female-headed households and rural rather than urban dwellers carried the burden of poverty.

76 *Parliamentary Debates*, 3 April 1991, col. 3877.

77 For example, another committee member, Mr Mudariki, claimed that 99.9 per cent of the economy was in Asian and white hands (*Parliamentary Debates*, 29 September 1993, col. 3482) and lobby groups such as the IBDC based their arguments on these statistics. The IBDC depicted ‘market forces’—namely, multinationals, large companies and the stock exchange—as ‘white’, whereas ‘blacks’ were just ‘consumers’ (see IBDC advertisement sponsored by Roger Boka, *The Herald*, 14 March 1996, p. 12). Local economic commentator Eric Bloch (Private correspondence) noted, first, the lack of consensus regarding the basis of measurement, which could variously be the market value of assets, according to income or contribution to GDP. He then estimated that in excess of 70 per cent of the economy lay in non-white hands if calculated according to net asset value or contribution to GDP.

78 The *Policy on Indigenisation of the Economy* (Cabinet Task Force on the Indigenisation of the Economy 1994:1) divided the economy into seven sectors—manufacturing, mining, financial, energy, construction, transport, and wildlife and tourism—and indicated that whites and Asians predominated in manufacturing and tourism and wildlife, the latter being a new sector developed since 1985. Investment in the other sectors was largely in the hands of multinationals, the government and/or local blacks (pp. 10–18). Agriculture was treated separately with its own sectoral policy papers. Tobaiwa (1998), examining racial ownership and control of the economy by shareholding and directorships, found that determining the racial category of shareholders was fraught with difficulties. Identifying data were not available through the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange, which had been active only since 1992 (Tobaiwa 1998:3, 4). Ultimately, Tobaiwa found it more meaningful to analyse shareholding along institutional lines. A major proportion of listed equities were held by Zimbabwean insurance companies and pension funds, in addition to companies such as Astra and Delta Corporations, in which the government was a major shareholder (see also *The Financial Gazette*, 24 February 1994, p. 5, 7 March 1996, p. 6). In terms of chairmanships and directorships held in each sector’s four major companies, whites were over-represented, accounting for 17 of 26 chairmanships and 153 of the 221 directorships. Blacks held the remaining nine chairs and 68 directorships (Tobaiwa 1998:23, 24). No breakdown along regional lines was available. Tobaiwa’s findings also indicated that the white and Asian-dominated manufacturing sector was the most diverse and competitive, with the four largest players producing only 8.1 per cent of the total sector output. This was followed by the black-dominated services sector, whose four major companies accounted for 9.3 per cent of that sector’s total output (Tobaiwa 1998:7–8).

79 ‘Confusing signals’, *The Sunday Mail*, 21 September 1997, p. 10.

80 While the Ministry’s findings were not disaggregated by race, empirical observation indicated that the average white per capita income was greater than the black (*The Financial Gazette*, 7 March 1996, p. 6).

Economic Structural Adjustment also impacted unevenly on Zimbabwe's population (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Zimbabwe Economics Society 1997). In some ways, urban dwellers benefited from a variety of newly registered, indigenously owned financial institutions. Material goods not seen in stores since the 1960s reappeared and transport queues became a thing of the past. Commercial farmers were among the beneficiaries, adjusting to globalisation by moving into horticulture for the European markets. The declining dollar, however, due in part to globalisation as well as to government ineptitude (Harvey 1998:6), undermined the purchasing power of lower-income earners and rural folk in particular. Many on fixed incomes, including elderly whites, found themselves on the breadline. Nonetheless, indigenisation lobbyists promoted the equivalence of local whites and multinationals, parties that benefited from SAPs, while blacks 'suffered' (Mlambo 1997:10). This struck a responsive chord among Africans, to whom producing wealth looked 'easy' for whites given they faced fewer competing demands diverting capital from economic enterprise. Blacks, however, found the expectations of money and assistance from their extended families irksome, for these made capital accumulation difficult at a time when the cost of borrowing was also prohibitive (Mlambo 1997:10).

Asked where responsibility for economically empowering the majority lay, whites replied that first and foremost the government must create an enabling environment; 'it must get the macroeconomic climate right'. The government recognised this 'primary responsibility' in an early version of its policy document (Cabinet Task Force on the Indigenisation of the Economy 1994:1). As the major spender in the economy, the government was well positioned to direct tenders to indigenous firms and decentralise procurement to the provinces. Yet it had been slow to act on these and actively obstructed black entrepreneurs who were not 'party faithfuls'.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the then Minister of Finance, Ariston Chambati (1994:12), indicated 'a definite role' of 'genuine and selfless commitment' for white entrepreneurs to play in the indigenisation process. Whites certainly perceived themselves as agents for the realisation of national economic goals. That they took some pride in their assignation was borne out by comments such as 'we're an economic plus for the country' and 'the yeast that makes the economic cake rise'. At the same time, organisations such as the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association did not believe its members received the kudos they deserved for their considerable efforts to promote black tobacco farmers. Also aware that whites were blamed for 'not doing enough' to promote blacks in agriculture, business, sport and so forth, a data processor with a local computing

81 For instance, the highly publicised case of Strive Masiyiwa, who became a folk hero when his efforts to set up a 'cell' (mobile) phone network were repeatedly frustrated by senior party officials and went unsupported by the affirmative action lobby groups. His treatment provoked the question of when was an indigenous indigenous, and when was an indigenous not indigenous (*Parliamentary Debates*, 13 March 1997, col. 4105), as well as cartoons in the papers.

company asked whether it was realistic to expect measures taken by less than 1 per cent of the population to 'liberate' the black majority. Talking of 'levelling the playing field' by closing the skills gap, she noted that 'since independence skills transfer has worked, blacks are now competent and confident in their work...But the meaning of indigenisation is lost when you talk of empowering and promoting 98 per cent; the focus disappears'. Many whites would probably agree with Mulgan (1989:49) that blacks, as the majority and having achieved full political independence, should be able to turn this to their advantage and, giving up the colonised's dependence (Fanon 1963:74), assume the economic initiative.

While a few informants felt they had missed out on opportunities as a result of black economic empowerment—passed over for promotion, fishing and tourism licences cancelled and reissued in favour of indigenous companies, and so on—most did not overstate their case, one man describing them simply as 'pinpricks'. Adopting a regional perspective, an informant, who at the time was finding it an uphill battle establishing a bakery ('two years and I haven't turned my ovens on yet'), had this to say when comparing the skylines of the main cities of Mashonaland and Matabeleland:

I'm indigenous. Indigenisation is certainly taking place, but it won't get in my way. White business and professionals need not be threatened by it. Only the poorly qualified should be concerned. And even so whites are such a minority that it won't change much for whites in business. But Harare has lots of new buildings, [it's] a boomtown, go ahead. Bulawayo is a ghost town, stagnant, dying, hardly a new building in 20 years. Perhaps Matabeleland should declare UDI, they're the ones losing out!

Indeed some whites found that indigenisation worked in their favour, as businesses benefited from the increased spending power of middle-class, urban blacks (expensive flower orders on St Valentine's Day, money spent on outfitting young boys in suits and so forth). A woman who had expected to be appointed to a senior position was, however, less enamoured as she related her experience of indigenisation:

When the old boss retired, there were two of us in the running for the top job: myself, with better qualifications, and a black Zimbabwean with a year's more seniority who got the job. For 18 months, I was unhappy and when an opportunity came I raised this with the parent company. They admitted not treating me fairly, but asked why I could not be content being 2IC. Afterwards I thought about this remark and came to the conclusion that I could come to terms with this. But I wonder if they [management] would ask a black male if he would be content with a white woman being promoted over him as his boss.

This informant indicates she is aware that race and gender intersect in contradictory ways in affirmative-action programmes, where one person is promoted over another equally or better qualified person because he is black and male. For their part, parent company representatives asked whether she would divest herself of the superior position that she had assigned herself, rethink and accept a non-leadership role, or would she insist on dominance.

There was also widespread concern among whites regarding the longer term. White farmers discussed looking for land in Zambia, Mozambique or Angola, where governments were perceived to hold 'a more positive attitude to investment'. Another family spoke of moving their kapenta⁸² fishing operation from Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba to Cabora Bassa in Mozambique. More immediately worrying for most was the anti-white sentiment contained in a series of what became known as the 'Boka advertisements', condoned by the President, which ran in the daily papers during 1996.⁸³ Racism seemed to be coming 'from the top down'. One person, recently returned to Zimbabwe, said:

I became aware of this push through the Boka ads. I'm for indigenisation [as economic empowerment], but not racism. I got the feeling they don't want us. I hadn't expected that. Whites can be indigenous, but the criteria seem a race thing. I noticed the old-timers take no notice. Now I rarely buy a newspaper. I'm learning to switch off and to ignore it.

Also concerned was the elderly 'white African' described at some length above, who said 'this is dangerous political talk in that it holds out false hope to the unemployed and uneducated. Yet ordinary black folk are not anti-white.' A retired tobacco farmer quipped, 'Is it just political rhetoric, is it for real, and how do you tell the difference?' Another individual described his sister-in-law's increasingly circumscribed life on a plot outside a town in the south of the country, from where their family had originated.

She restricts her life, she's withdrawn, she focuses upon her Christian group, Weight Watchers and the small acreage on which she and her husband keep chickens. They are trapped in a fool's paradise. The racism makes whites more insular; they retreat into a laager mentality and evangelical escapism.

82 A small, sardine-like fish.

83 These were funded by business tycoon Roger Boka. See, for example, 'The whys and why nots?' and 'Hunter becomes hunted', printed in *The Herald* (22 February 1996 and 14 March 1996), and Sangano Munhumutapa's 'The African tragedy' of the same dates. The advertisements vilified whites and, in Western countries, would have been actionable for inciting racial hatred.

Such is the purchase of racial hostility on inner life. The man suggests his sister-in-law has distanced herself mentally and physically from external political realities, retreating to the private or domestic domain. Ghettoised, she, like many whites, hoped to avoid contestation while also resenting being excluded.

The white role is upliftment, but not to share in the new initiatives that come from economic liberalisation. We are also excluded from the political debate. If you're white and question government, you're called a racist; if you're black, it's puppet or Uncle Tom. This makes for public apathy and no accountability on the part of government. At the end of the day, whites are not welcome. The inner circle of government does not want us. The general population is apathetic. They don't care if whites are here or not. A huge gulf exists between the politically and ideologically motivated and the population in general.

Taking a similar tack, a woman mused:

The government does not mean what it is saying. The genuine meaning of indigene is born in. Indigenous is used by the government to mean black, Shona and cronyism. It is excluding and elitist rhetoric which divides us into first and second-class citizens. Whites, as second class, are told that they are not real citizens but settlers, colonialists and thieves. We are citizens but not allowed to participate in the share issue, for example. We would support economic empowerment if it had been called economic promotion. But then whites, like my son, would have applied and competed for a soft loan. Indigenisation excludes us and protects blacks from competition.

She and a sizeable number of others believed whites were scapegoats for government inaction. The race issue effectively shielded the government from criticism over economic mismanagement and earlier sidelining black entrepreneurs. State officials enriched themselves during the 1980s, in spite of the Leadership Code introduced to prevent the amassing of wealth by those in public office, while reconciliation distracted attention away from the black majority's need for 'economic emancipation'.⁸⁴

The discourse of indigeneity, however, did more than this. The terminology made whites aware that others did not share their vision of a future Zimbabwean society. 'The indigenisation rhetoric showed us that some Africans, like the Rhodesians, are not interested in building a multiracial society.' Many felt offended by media coverage, which fixed whites in particular racial positions, and the militant lobby groups' exclusive image of the indigene and discourse of dispossession. Privately, whites feared that indigenisation could come to mean

84 See also *Parliamentary Debates*, 24 April 1991, col. 4471.

‘blacks can take what they want under the guise of empowerment’. For example, the 1992 *Land Act* (see below) allowed for the compulsory acquisition of land for not only agricultural purposes but a number of other, unrelated reasons (von Blanckenburg 1994:35). Thus dispossession in the countryside could well spread to the cities.⁸⁵ The discourse refuted white claims to legitimacy and permanence, because ‘in the longer term, indigenisation implies that neither I nor my children have a legitimate right to earn a living in Zimbabwe’. Thus, whites perceived indigeneity as the language of their exile and alienation (Brah 1996:203). They and black liberals would have preferred making entrepreneurial promotion and wealth creation national development priorities in terms that were not first and foremost about race and historical origins. Also making this point, local economist Eric Bloch wrote, ‘[I]t’s time to cease thinking in terms of race and ethnic past and instead build a nation of all Zimbabwean peoples, united in pride and love of their country and the common aspiration for an improved life.’⁸⁶ Bloch’s vision of national development is forward looking, whereas discourses of national attachment that foreground ties of custom and tradition are exclusive and regressive. Compulsory land acquisition in 1997 proved, however, to be the contingent event that crystallised national membership in indigene terms.

The land question

At independence, Zimbabwe inherited a highly inequitable distribution of land ownership along race lines (Government of Zimbabwe 1998a:4; Palmer 1990:165). During the 1980s, the government acquired, as agreed at Lancaster House, land for resettlement on a willing buyer/willing seller basis, with the United Kingdom underwriting half of the cost of land purchases (Palmer 1990:166, 168). In the early years, 55 000 families were resettled—well below the projected target of 162 500, and not always with the infrastructure or capital necessary to work their land productively (UNDP 1998:32). After 1983, the domestic budget could not sustain the programme and the numbers declined substantially for the remainder of the decade.

At the expiration of the entrenched constitutional conditions in 1990, the government set out in the National Land Policy⁸⁷ plans to acquire land compulsorily and legislated in 1992 to enable this. Several farms were designated soon after.⁸⁸ The government was concerned that land reform redressed the

85 See *Horizon*, November 1992, pp. 7, 50; MacGarry 1994b:Preface; *Parliamentary Debates*, 11 March 1998, col. 4002.

86 ‘Racial bigotry retards economic recovery’, *The Financial Gazette*, 24 September 1993, p. 6.

87 *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 July 1990, cols 1216–52.

88 Political factors were prominent in compulsory land acquisition from the start. Two of the earliest farms to be compulsorily acquired in 1993 belonged to government opponent Ndabaningi Sithole and to Henry Elsworth, a recidivist Rhodesian. Sithole’s farm, on the outskirts of Harare, was home to 4000 people, who

historical racial imbalance at the same time as productivity was maintained in large-scale farming areas, and commercialisation of agriculture was to be promoted in communal areas.⁸⁹ To this end, late in 1997, the government gazetted 1471 commercial farms for compulsory acquisition⁹⁰—about 30 per cent of all large-scale farms and 40 per cent of that sector's land area. Criteria set down to guide land identification included derelict or under-utilised land, multiple and absentee farm ownership and proximity to urban and communal areas.⁹¹ Thus, the criteria did not aim to sustain or recreate historical or customary ties to particular areas, although on the ground this proved to be a priority of some traditional leaders.

While all stakeholders agreed on the imperative of reform, the land question re-emerged as a political issue in changed local conditions (Palmer 1990:174). For a start, the black population had almost doubled since independence⁹² and, by 1994, between 400 and 500 of the country's black elite had become large-scale landowners (von Blanckenburg 1994:21; McCandless and Abitbol 1997:27; Palmer 1990:175). A few were among the largest landowners the country had ever seen.⁹³ In addition, several hundred more leased commercial farms purchased ostensibly for resettlement from the government.⁹⁴ Von Blanckenburg (1994:21)

were evicted without any plans being made for their resettlement (Deve 1993:22).

89 The Minister of Agriculture pointed out that acquiring land was not in itself a solution to poverty. In addition, people needed the wherewithal to make land productive—namely, capital investment. Lack of capital was one of the main causes of under-utilised land, which existed in all of Zimbabwe's agricultural sectors. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1998:35) presented a similar argument regarding land reform as a solution to Zimbabwe's unemployment problems.

90 In 1997, 2209 farms were identified, of which 1471 were gazetted. Earlier in 1993, land councils in each district, which included CFU representatives, had identified 10 farms in each province for acquisition according to criteria laid down by the government. When the list was gazetted, however, only half of these farms were on it. Productive and single-owner farms had been substituted for the rest (von Blanckenburg 1994:36).

91 Proximity to communal areas proved controversial and was downplayed by the government as the land acquisition process progressed.

92 The black population of 700 000 in 1901 had risen to more than 7 million in 1982, 10 million in 1992 and 11.6 million in 2002 (see Appendix Table 1) (CSO 1994:164; UNDP 1998:6). Thus, between 1982 and 1992, the population growth rate was more than 3 per cent, exceeding that of the sub-Saharan region as a whole (CSO 1994:1; UNDP 1998:14). This slowed considerably, however, between 1992 and 2002 due in part to the impact of HIV/AIDS and emigration.

93 For instance, far and away the largest owners of land identified for compulsory acquisition in 1997 were Anglo American Corporation (427 200 ha, which represented 11.89 per cent of identified land) and Vice-President Nkomo's Development Trust of Zimbabwe, which owned the three properties making up Nuanetsi Ranch (319 929 ha or 8.02 per cent of identified land). Indeed, it would have been possible for the State to acquire 60 per cent of the 5 million ha it wanted from fewer than 300 large or multiple-farm owners (Moyo 1998b:36). The size of landholdings identified in 1997 then dropped to several companies and individuals who owned between 40 000 and 60 000 ha, and fell again to a much greater number of black and white large-scale farmers, who held less than 30 000 ha (Moyo 1998b:30–1). Neither Anglo American nor Nkomo, however, lost their properties. Anglo American came to a private agreement with the government, while Nkomo's land was de-listed.

94 Some 300 000–400 000 ha of land acquired during the 1980s for resettlement had been leased for commercial enterprises by successive Ministers of Agriculture—not to black graduates of Zimbabwe's agricultural colleges, but to members of the political elite. The farms were not surrendered nor were officials sacked after this became public in 1994.

noted that, while the productive capacity of a minority of them compared favourably with their white counterparts, many without training carried on farming in the manner of the communal areas. More than half were absentee farmers with little interest in agriculture, and many were politicians. Thus, given the identification criteria spelt out above, land redistribution in 1997 could have meant, for some members of the political elite, redistributing their own properties⁹⁵ (Palmer 1990:175).

Notwithstanding the recent entry of blacks into the commercial agricultural sector, land continued to be disaggregated into the categories of 'white' commercial and 'black' communal. In reality, the nature of landholding was much more complex.⁹⁶ First, although it was variously held that about 4000 to 4500 white farmers⁹⁷ 'dominated the agrarian economy' (Moyo 1998b:1), the large-scale farming sector included multinational plantations, some large state-owned estates and the already mentioned black commercial farmers. Second, landholding among whites was highly differentiated. There were some very large, white-dominated landowning companies in addition to 1000 smaller-sized white-owned family farms or companies (Moyo 1998a:38–40). It might, therefore, have been more useful to talk, as Moyo (1998a:38) suggested, of Zimbabwe's landed gentry—a term encompassing both black and white commercial landowners.

Nonetheless, the debate proceeded along the lines of white or non-indigenous farmers, where 'white' agriculture, built on freehold tenure, was perceived as capital intensive and highly productive, and linked to local and international markets (von Blanckenburg 1994:21, 29). White farmers and representatives of government set up a one-on-one relationship between these factors, which, while not totally unwarranted, went some way in legitimating large-scale commercial landholding. For instance, by the late 1990s, the large-scale agricultural sector accounted for between 35 per cent and 45 per cent of all exports, 40 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings and about 11–15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) (von Blanckenburg 1994:27; Bratton and Burgess 1987:201; Grant 1998:50; Government of Zimbabwe 1998a:5; UNDP 1998:23). Furthermore, growth in the industrial and services sectors was directly linked

95 Equally, political considerations played a part in the failure to designate. For instance, the Minister of Agriculture had not seen fit to sign the papers necessary to allow fellow Minister Msipa's farm, bought on the outskirts of Harare in 1981 and declared derelict in 1989, to be acquired (*Parade*, February 1991, p. 21).

96 Zimbabwe's five agricultural subsectors comprised large and small-scale commercial farmers, state farms, communal and resettlement areas (see Land Tenure Commission 1994). Individually held land (urban title and large and small farmland) made up 35 per cent of the national land, unalienated state land made up 15 per cent, communal land 42 per cent and national parks 8 per cent (*Parliamentary Debates*, 12 March 1992, col. 4347).

97 The number of white commercial farmers peaked at 6255 in 1955 (von Blanckenburg 1994:17) and then fell to about 4000 by 1982. Disaggregated 1992 census figures indicate the bald number of local white farmers to be 2224 (see Appendix Table 3). This figure reveals nothing, however, about the number or size of their farms.

to expanding agricultural production. For these reasons, some in government circles argued that it would be a 'massively destructive blow to expropriate white commercial farmers en masse' (Chung 1989:9). This was also the position held by most whites. 'The CFU has kept this country afloat for years,' explained an informant: 'Land distribution is acceptable if the land goes to those who need it and use it productively. But indications are that it will go to the politicians and *chefs*.'⁹⁸ This informant did not argue that the white agricultural sector remain untouched, but, rather, that acquisition should proceed as a transparent and ongoing, staggered process. Similarly, an urban white with close links to the CFU complained that 'on the one hand the government keeps saying foreign exchange earned from tobacco sales will bail the country out and, on the other, the government is threatening the goose that lays the golden egg. It defies logic.' She was, however, equally critical of the CFU, saying:

The CFU should have grasped the nettle a long time back. Local CFU councils should have identified under-utilised and derelict farms and multiple ownership. They should have talked to the farmers and got together and offered excess land to the government. They should have worked to defuse the situation and made a conciliatory gesture in the interest of future stability, but then the Afrikaner⁹⁹ farmers would never give up land voluntarily. It's in their souls, just like the Africans.

Her remarks point to differences of opinion within the CFU and to unrealistic expectations on the part of many Afrikaner and African men that, as males, they have an unconditional right to land. Indeed Zimbabwe's land reform programme provoked a reappraisal of the nature of land. Was it a traditional entitlement or birthright of black males whether they made good use of it or not, or an economic asset, a commodity to be bought, sold and utilised productively for the general good? For their part, some CFU officials belatedly acknowledged their failure to address the land question for, in effect, abdicating responsibility for correcting historical wrongs.¹⁰⁰ Late in 1997, the organisation offered—albeit under threat of compulsory acquisition—to immediately avail the government of 1.5 million hectares (of the targeted 5 million) with more forthcoming and to fund the resettlement of this land. This proposal, known as 'Team Zimbabwe', was supported by, among others, Professor Rukuni, the Chairman of the Land

98 The term '*chef*' came back to Zimbabwe with ZANU leaders who were in Mozambique during the liberation struggle (Meredith 2007:78). Zimbabweans, across the racial spectrum, have adopted the word to denote a man in government with status and power. In contrast, the masses are referred to as the '*povo*'.

99 Hodder-Williams (1974:637) describes the 'deeply felt need for land' by the Afrikaners of Marandellas District (now Marondera), Mashonaland East Province. Countrywide, their numbers peaked in 1921 at 20 per cent of the total white population. By 1951, Afrikaners represented 13 per cent of Europeans (Blake 1978:279). In particular districts, however, such as Marandellas, they continued to make up a socially exclusive 20 per cent and were treated with some suspicion by the English speakers (Hodder-Williams 1974:613). With independence, many Afrikaners left for South Africa.

100 See McCandless 1997:27.

Tenure Commission, as the way 'to kick-start' the reform programme.¹⁰¹ Robin Palmer (1998:1) described it at the time as the 'best prospect of modest but effective land reform, especially if conceived on a largely self-financing basis'. The offer highlighted the rift that existed between black liberals who pursued economic arguments and black radicals who put more weight on historical and political factors, the latter condemning the plan out of hand (Moyo 1998b:37).¹⁰² In the event, the government failed to act on the offer.

While historical injustices underpinned the official indigenisation discourse, no distinction was made between white farmers who inherited or acquired land during the illegal colonial era and others who purchased it under the current regime. In neither case would the government pay compensation for 'stolen land', with Mugabe saying it was up to the British Government to compensate 'their cousins' and 'its children'.¹⁰³ In this way, the President metaphorically conferred on white Zimbabweans an external mother country responsible for their wellbeing.¹⁰⁴ It was also extremely doubtful whether the Zimbabwean Government was in a financial position to compensate farmers for improvements, such as housing, dams, tobacco barns and irrigation, as well as the schools and clinics that served the farm workers and surrounding rural communities. Legally, the State was required to do so,¹⁰⁵ although the government had allocated very little finance to land acquisition or resettlement in its budget¹⁰⁶ (Ministry of Lands and Agriculture 1998:4; Moyo 1998b:10). Some of the complexities flowing from compulsory acquisition are illustrated in the next informants' accounts of events.

We borrowed heavily to buy a farm two and a half years ago after government issued the necessary certificate of nil interest.¹⁰⁷ It's a single ownership. Then two bad seasons followed. Our farm was designated,

101 Rukuni 1998:16; Grant 1998:51; *Parliamentary Debates*, 17 March 1998, col. 4157.

102 'Nauseating spectacle', *The Sunday Mail*, 25 January 1998, p. 8.

103 'ZANU PF's Byo conference bars western diplomats', 'Mugabe unlikely to carry out land threats', *The Financial Gazette*, 19 December 1996, p. 1, and 16 October 1997, p. 5, respectively.

104 His comment is a far cry from Nkomo's (1984:166) recollection of Lancaster House, where the nationalist delegation argued that they did not consider whites to be settlers but Zimbabweans. At that time, Zimbabwe's new leaders hoped to negotiate a land scheme similar to Kenya's, where, under a British-subsidised programme, most of the 3500 white-owned farms passed into black hands within two decades of independence (Fitzgerald 1982; Palmer 1990:165).

105 Although the government talked in terms of land designation, the farms were in fact gazetted in 1997 under Section 5 of the *Land Act*, which governed compulsory acquisition, or expropriation, and not according to Section 12, which determined designation. As such, the State was legally obliged to compensate the farmers for the land and improvements (Nherere 1998). While compulsory acquisition may apply to any land in Zimbabwe, rural or urban, designation applies only to rural land.

106 Resettlement was an expensive and time-consuming undertaking, involving as many as 15 different government departments.

107 The government had the right of first refusal for rural land. If not interested, the government issued a certificate of no present interest and the seller could then proceed to put the land on the open market. Kriger (2007:65) noted that the government availed itself of less than one-third of the 1800 commercial farms offered between 1985 and 1992.

but who now owns the debt: the government, the new owners, the bank or ourselves? The farm has been on and off the list ever since.¹⁰⁸ I console myself that this designation is unreasonable and therefore won't happen. But then I know the unreasonable does happen.

This woman's argument appealed to legality and financial rationality. Compulsory acquisition without compensation for the land or improvements threatened to destabilise Zimbabwe's financial sector and undermine its agro-based industries. The next farmer's appeal was made differently, on the basis of a long association with the land, utility and political allegiance. The man, whose family had farmed a property for five generations, described his position thus:

I am a Zimbabwean, I don't want to go anywhere else, I belong to this country, I am committed to farming and building up my country. We've always said we can work with government, we want to work with government, it is our government, let's get together and make it work, it's our future. I regard myself as...indigenous, I believe I can make a contribution to this country, the only people who can develop this country properly are all the indigenous people to this country. (CCJP 1995)

The farmer chose his words carefully, yet his seemingly positive remarks were perceived as provocative by militant blacks. Why this was the case reflected, in part, the processes by which whites could acquire, in the eyes of blacks, authenticity as indigenes. During the Rhodesian era, 'working for' Africans was considered paternalistic by politically aware blacks (Hancock 1984:22). Instead, whites were reminded that to 'work with' Africans, or the government, was preferred because these terms reflected relations of partnership and equality. Today neither is acceptable. Both smack of the 'outside-in, top-down' colonial orientation that is deeply resented (Betts 1998:80). Thus, it was no longer sufficient for the CFU, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries or whites generally to speak of wanting 'to work with blacks' or 'working with the government'. Instead, they were told to be part of Zimbabwean society—a point I return to below.

108 Many identified white farms were delisted and then later re-listed as the Minister of Lands and Agriculture (Kangai), the ZANU PF National Chairman (Msipa) and others argued the merits and demerits of acquiring various farms (see *The Herald*, 11 June 1998, p. 5, 29 June 1998, p. 7, 5 July 1998, p. 1). While some black-owned farms were gazetted in 1997, they were delisted, as were identified plantations and state farms, on the grounds that their acquisition went against the aims of indigenisation (Moyo 1998b:44, 46; Ministry of Lands and Agriculture 1998:7; *Parliamentary Debates*, 18 May 1999, col. 5582). Delisted farms did not, however, escape invasion. The bulk (70 per cent) of farms remaining on the list were single, white Zimbabwean-owned farms of less than 1500 ha (Moyo 1998a:7, 1998b:50, 53). Given that each family may hold one reasonably sized farm, 70 per cent appear to have been mistakenly identified (Moyo 1998b:42). The CFU gave a lower figure of 609 of the 1471 farms incorrectly listed (*The Herald*, 7 September 1998, p. 5).

Meanwhile, land reform late in 1997 brought the distinction between the indigenous and non-indigenous sharply into focus. In order to create a more racially balanced representation in the commercial agricultural sector, the government committed itself to promoting the entry of blacks into commercial farming.¹⁰⁹ This was also the section of black society that had benefited from state loans since the introduction of the ESAP, and it was their claims to land, rather than those of poorer black Zimbabweans, that were the most visible in the media (Moyo 1998a:32, 1998b:10). Indeed, the land acquisition process appeared to be driven by blacks interested in becoming commercial farmers producing for global markets¹¹⁰ (Moyo 1998b:9). Not all key figures in the debate shared the government's priorities. Some, such as the Chairman of the Land Tenure Commission, talked of the largest proportion—maybe 75 per cent—being settled by the landless, disadvantaged and the poor (Rukuni 1998:16). Others believed the government should transfer the land to the 'better-off' but still small-scale black farmers, in particular those with the skills and capability to use the land productively (UNDP 1998:17). War veterans forcefully presented the position that the government had overlooked their needs in violent street demonstrations and sit-ins during 1997.¹¹¹ They believed the land was theirs on account of promises made to them during the liberation war. So a shared or unitary vision of the sort of redistribution Zimbabweans would like to see eventuate from land reform was lacking. State officials also treated ancestral claims to land as 'impractical'.¹¹² For this and a number of other reasons, the general public had little faith in transparent land reform.¹¹³

What needs to be remembered is that it was not simply white farmers who were threatened with dispossession as non-indigenes during Zimbabwe's land acquisition exercise. The place of farm workers—invariably referred to by their countries of origin and accounting for about one-quarter of Zimbabwe's formal work force—was also being challenged and denied. Estimates were that between one-half and two-thirds were descended from introduced 'foreign' African labour, mentioned earlier in this chapter. This 'invisible minority' (Muzondidya 2004:213) had been largely ignored since 1980. Colonial domestic arrangements

109 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Zimbabwe Economics Society 1998a:6; *Parliamentary Debates*, 25 July 1990, col. 1223.

110 About half of all the farms gazetted grew tobacco, Zimbabwe's major export crop.

111 Riot police had to be called when countrywide meetings between the war veterans and MPs turned hostile. Ministers were shown fleeing out back doors to their waiting Mercedes. Recognising the gravity of the situation, Mugabe, in a seven-hour meeting, agreed to an unbudgeted compensation package that included promises of land. According to Kriger (2007:70), the gratuities alone cost double the government's spending on land reform since 1980. See 'Meeting with war veterans turns nasty', *The Herald*, 21 July 1997, p. 1, and 'War veterans package is agreed', *The Herald*, 22 August 1997, p. 1.

112 'State will not renew leases', *The Sunday Mail*, 15 December 1996, p. 6.

113 Leased farms were not identified for acquisition in 1997 as the government considered the land already available for redistribution to 300 black 'tenant' commercial farmers (Moyo 1998b:10, 20). Some, such as Buttercombe Farm, earmarked for resettlement in 1992 but leased to Harare Councillor Mrs Hativagone, were invaded in 1998.

continued on the commercial farms and the government, perceiving labour as 'belonging' to the white farmer, left the responsibility for providing health care, schooling, transport and so forth to them (Rutherford 2001:231). While this provided farm labourers with some claim to resources and patronage, it also left them outside the national project, their uncertain status being overlooked in the 1984 renunciation of foreign citizenship exercise. Before the 1985 national election, however, ZANU PF functionaries had sold spurious one-dollar citizenship cards to foreign farm workers (Rutherford 2001:44). According to Rutherford (2001:226), this led many to assume that they were in fact citizens. One explained, 'I am originally from Mozambique, but I have been working on this farm since 1964. This farm is the only home I have in the world. If I go back to Mozambique I will be just like a stranger. I now regard myself as a Zimbabwean' (Madinah 1993:7). Another farm worker, who shared this anxiety, said 'we would like to be considered sons of this country, we fought in the liberation war, we are the same as you, we are like the Zimbabweans who live in the rural areas'.¹¹⁴ Farm workers such as these, however, remained 'foreigners' despite marriages to local spouses.¹¹⁵ As non-indigenes, they did not enjoy customary rights to land, and as 'migrants', they were unable to participate in government resettlement initiatives (Munyanyi 1998:71). Callers to talkback radio and Chief Chiweshe of Muzarabani District, among others, were demanding their repatriation.¹¹⁶

There were other settlers too: the 'new settlers' or blacks who either owned small farms outside their areas of historical origin or joined the rural cooperatives established by the State in resettlement areas soon after independence. Some 100 or so African 'strangers' found their farms in Mashonaland gazetted (Moyo 1998a:44). Further south, Chief Makore in Gutu¹¹⁷ labelled newcomers in his district 'settlers and enemies of the people' and called for their expulsion.¹¹⁸ Earlier, to the chief's chagrin, a nearby farm available for resettlement had been distributed to 'people from Bulawayo and Harare' rather than to those with an ancestral claim.¹¹⁹ The terms 'stranger' and 'foreign' denote someone from

114 *Spotlight*, ZBC Radio 1, 24 February 1998.

115 In the past, some 'foreign' husbands have found themselves unwelcome in their wives' rural homes. On the woman's death, her husband could be asked to leave (Masina 1988:12). In view of this, Catherine Muchongwe, speaking for the Zimbabwean wives of foreign farm workers, asked 'are we to go with our husbands to Mozambique or are we going to separate' (*The Herald*, 13 April 1998).

116 'Chief asks state to repatriate foreigners', *The Herald*, 5 September 1998, p. 12.

117 Chiefs and their headmen confer use rights to land in the communal areas, which should then (but often were not) be registered with the local council, institutions imposed on and deriving legitimacy from a source different to that of traditional authorities (see Rukuni quoted in UNDP 1998:17). Rights to land in all other areas are administered by the State. Traditional leaders, however, believe the State has undermined their role and some encourage settlement or squatting on farms or game parks adjacent to their communal areas (*The Herald*, 13 August 1998, p. 8). Land as a sacred medium was rarely mentioned by anyone contributing to the debate.

118 'Resettlement exercise gives headaches in Gutu', *The Herald*, 16 February 1999, p. 6.

119 'We need our land', *The Herald*, 1 August 1997, p. 10.

another community, someone born in and deriving from outside the area. Others seeking a home outside their area of origin were physically attacked.¹²⁰ Internal migration within Zimbabwe to other districts or provinces in search of land was, however, a long-established practice. Local chiefs, or their headmen, were approached and presented with gifts or 'monetary kickbacks' in exchange for usufruct.¹²¹ These illegal and insecure 'land sales' within the communal areas, which served to financially and politically empower traditional leaders at the same time as they thwarted and obstructed the plans of state administrators, were common and increasing in number (Moyo 1998b:11).

Indigeneity as cultural affiliation

Zimbabwe's land acquisition exercise provided, in short, an opportunity for ethnic unmixing¹²² (Brubaker 1996:166–9). While various state authorities condemned ethno-regional exclusivity in the land reform programme, they supported exclusion on the basis of colonial origins. How were arguments justifying this position presented?

The Minister of Agriculture was quite frank when he said social and political factors were just as important as economic ones in decisions regarding compulsory acquisition of white-owned farms in 1997.¹²³ Also speaking about this at the Harare Land Conference,¹²⁴ Sam Moyo explained that

some members of minority groups who are Zimbabwean citizens by birth or naturalisation regard themselves as being indigenous in contradistinction to foreign companies owning large estates. But, though Zimbabwean citizens, the limited social integration of most LSCF [large-scale commercial farm] owners into the social and political organisations of black communities renders them relatively isolated. This isolation tends to determine their conceptual disqualification as indigenous persons. (Moyo 1998a:43, 44)

120 *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 September 1997, col. 909, 2 February 1999, col. 3563.

121 See Cheater 1990:192, 194; Dzingirai 1994; O'Flaherty 1998:540.

122 Land acquisition was also unevenly dispersed across the country, with the southern areas—which had few representatives among the upper echelons of the political elite—accounting for most of the land identified (Moyo 1998b:36).

123 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4 February 1998, col. 2897.

124 The Harare Conference was convened early in 1998 in order to develop a consensus on the land acquisition programme. All stakeholders and other interested parties attended. Later in the year, the main issues were presented to an international donors' conference in the hope of attracting external funds. While donors supported land reform in principle, little financial assistance was forthcoming, as donors were unconvinced of the transparency of the land programme. Donors were, however, prepared to pledge funds for resettlement purposes.

Furthermore, in the eyes of black nationalists, white separation and reserve confirmed them as colonial settlers who were not infrequently told that 'Africa is for Africans' and they should 'go back to their original homes from whence their forefathers came'.¹²⁵

Indeed, the question posed by educated urban blacks was 'when are the whites going to be part of the new Zimbabwe'. What did they share with the black majority? When were they going to provide proof of their rootedness by, for example, both understanding and using a vernacular language, developing an interest in soccer and demonstrating in other ways 'fellow-feeling with the indigenous peoples of Africa'?¹²⁶ Disinterest was taken as evidence of the whites' refusal of Africa. To this effect, S. Tsingo of Harare wrote:

An unacceptable number of you, born in this country and expressing the feeling that this is your home refuse to give up your British and foreign passports...The time has come for you to change your attitudes and come out of your shells and participate...Stand up and be counted as true and genuine citizens of Zimbabwe...You say you accept the need for land reform, you say you see the merits of the indigenisation programme but...none of you has thought of offering some of the land you hold to the blacks. None of you has offered to sell you[r] businesses or equity specifically to blacks at concessional rates...your actions or lack of them are more noticeable because you are a minority. We can only view you as Zimbabwean citizens genuinely concerned with the development of this country if you show us that in your heart of hearts that is what you are.¹²⁷

In this excerpt, Tsingo challenged whites to move beyond their familiar home to a less safe or comfortable place. His words highlight the extent to which identity as an indigene is participatory, dependent on what one enacts. Along similar lines, a former political detainee remarked: 'Remaining whites do not mix, they have withdrawn and are not seen around, they are not visible in the central business district. They should be seen so that suspicion of them dissipates.'

In part, this observation was correct. Whites, particularly housewives, had withdrawn to suburban shopping centres—hence the importance accorded holding mass evangelical gatherings, described earlier in reference to national reconciliation, at venues in the high-density suburbs. Agricultural outreach programmes also made whites visible and accessible. At the same time, however, the former detainee's comments reflect a common perception that there are more

125 'Two ways of dealing with racism', *The Sunday Mail*, 17 October 1994, p. 6.

126 'Racism', *MOTO*, May 1993, p. 19.

127 'No one should get away with racism', *The Sunday Mail*, 3 October 1994, p. 6.

whites in the country than in fact there are. Their number almost halved in urban and rural areas, falling from 82 000 to 47 000 (or from 0.8 per cent to 0.4 per cent of the total population) between 1992 and 2002.¹²⁸ The once-white elite suburbs and schools had for some time been overwhelmingly black. Among better-off Zimbabweans, race was no longer the factor determining where a family lived or their access to schools, clubs and so on. These borders have been reset by income (Weiss 1994:115, 148). Thus, indigeneity goes beyond class distinctions; it is a border that is simultaneously social, cultural and psychic (Brah 1996:198).

Not sharing historical origins or common descent, whites 'must develop an appreciation and understanding of the riches of African culture' (Henson 1988:10) if they are to sustain a permanent identity with the land. Contrary to the hopes of Mr Pratt from Marandellas, cited earlier in this chapter, they were not perceived as fellow nationals regardless of colour, but, because the cultural divide was too great to countenance, as aliens.¹²⁹ White Zimbabweans should 'learn to be African'¹³⁰ (Hove 1990:24) for without this 'they remain settlers, and not part of Africa' (Henson 1989:9). Tom Holloway contributed a letter:

As Europeans we have been in Africa for plus or minus 250–300 years. But we have persisted in keeping ourselves apart, aloof and separate. I have now started calling myself a white African because that is exactly what I am. Nothing less, nothing more... There is a lot to admire in both Shona and Ndebele and for that matter any African culture. I do not know of any white man in Africa who has even attempted to bridge the gap culturally.¹³¹

Holloway was, however, an exception in recognising this shortcoming. The majority of whites, while claiming insider knowledge, showed no great interest in the lives of the various African peoples. They wished to retain European cultural traditions (Memmi 1965:40), making them in the eyes of the majority native-born colonisers rather than indigenes. Indeed, the continued use of the term 'settler' referred to imposition and domination and served to underline

128 See Appendix Table 1; CSO 2004 Tables 1.8, 1.9, 1.10.

129 On the same grounds, African-Americans on a roots journey back to Zimbabwe found to their consternation that they were referred to as white. Similarly, Maya Angelou (1987:19–23, 40–1) describes the disillusionment of African-Americans making their way back to Ghana only to find they are no longer recognised as being of the continent.

130 For instance, patrons of the Harare Repertory Theatre were told not to view themselves as 'aspiring Europeans... this yearning for London is surely based on false cultural assumptions at an immense cost' (Hove 1990:24). Following London theatrical productions was taken to reflect that whites still looked to Europe as the cultural centre. Instead, they should support local productions that developed an African theme—for instance, plays such as *Mbuya Nehanda*, *Citizen Chi* and *Dog Eat Dog*, at which expatriates made up the bulk of the audience.

131 'We have never bothered to be assimilated into African culture', *Zimbabwe Independent*, 23 October 1998, p. 8.

the white inability or refusal to 'integrate' or 'assimilate'. To belong and be recognised as indigenes, whites must rid themselves of 'separateness' and 'apartness'¹³² or, to put it in other words, Euro-centrism and superiority. They must 'pierce the veil' (Chakrabarty 2000:150) and develop cultural affiliation not just with the African landscape but with its peoples, for indigeneity is relational, conferred by what one enacts and how roots are demonstrated.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the appearance of the terms indigene and indigeneity reflected black frustration and disappointment with the government's failure to effect social and economic transformation during Zimbabwe's first decade of independence. The subject position was mobilised out of concern that opportunities expected to derive from structural adjustment and trade liberalisation policies announced in 1990 be realised by the black majority. The application of the term indigeneity derived 'authority from an African experience of resistance to colonialism' (Chennells 1995:107), its semiotic function being to realign and set limits to the communities of beneficiaries. Paradoxically, while the language of indigeneity was often inward and backward looking, the discourse served to propel black entrepreneurs towards modernity, sanctioning their breaking time-honoured but confining social and economic customs. Thus, as an economic process, indigenisation provided a trajectory enabling blacks to embrace social and business practices that derived from outside the African continent. The revised term also referenced a politics of location that problematised the European presence by recovering and foregrounding socioeconomic and historical referents of the colonial encounter, at the same time as it juxtaposed the whites' place of origin with their place of current residence. Thus, the narrative established the borders of legitimate connection and placement by privileging historical origins and shared cultural resources (Brah 1996:204; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995:20).

Whites, cognisant that this reading of indigeneity replaced the community suggested in the discourse of national reconciliation with themes of division and persistent conflict, produced an alternative representation of the indigene. They arrogated indigeneity to themselves on the basis of birth and love of the land in order that they too might inhabit the comfortable and privileged space associated with legitimate belonging (Brah 1996:191). Their narrow and neutral image did not, however, enjoy widespread acceptance among the black majority. Whites as colonisers, or the beneficiaries of colonialism, were not disadvantaged by settler rule and were therefore not creditable as indigenes. To overturn the

132 *Newsline*, ZBC Radio 1, 24 February 1997.

colonial experience, they must become linguistically, culturally, socially and politically competent in the ways of the black majority and thereby develop cultural concepts that will sustain a permanent identity with Africa (Thornton 1994:12). To quote Chakrabarty¹³³ against the grain, whites 'to survive, should learn to speak in the [new] master's voice, and educate themselves in the conqueror's ways' and, in effect, develop the double consciousness of the once colonised (Young 2001a:274). Having failed, however, to demonstrate cultural affiliation in these ways, white Zimbabweans were described as non-indigenous and therefore not legitimately connected to the land. They were considered to be improperly placed and to have a home elsewhere to which they could always return.

133 Anthropology Seminar Programme 2000, The Australian National University, Canberra.