

Chapter 7

Women and the limitations of Zimbabwe's indigenization and economic empowerment policy: a gendered appraisal

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Introduction

In 2007, the Zimbabwean government legislated and began to implement the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA). The primary aim of the IEE Act is to redress the historical imbalances in resource distribution in order “to benefit any Zimbabwean person who, before 18th April 1980, was disadvantaged by unfair discrimination on the grounds of his or her race and any descendant of such person.” However, the indigenization drive marginalizes women at every level even though they constitute over half of the formerly colonized Zimbabwean population. The process is failing to integrate gender and its male-focused approach perpetuates discrimination against women in urban, rural and mining economic sectors. This chapter examines the limitations that negate the IEE Act's aim to bring about broad-based economic empowerment and stresses gender imbalances and women's marginalization in the implementation process.