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# Unfulfilled Promises: Britain and Zimbabwe in the Post War Era

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Abstract: Southern Rhodesia had been engulfed by a marauding civil war which had enveloped the country for years. The British had to intervene in order to salvage the country from sliding to the brink of the abyss by the advent of the Lancaster House conference which led to the cessation of hostilities between the belligerent parties, hence paving the way for elections and independence. The success of British preventive diplomacy of negotiation and mediation was apparent; ceasefire, election monitoring and peaceful transition. The dexterous ability of the British to cajole the belligerent parties to agree to an independence constitution and to reach a compromise was an acid test that the British government passed. The independence constitution constituted the bedrock for any further negotiations to come. The warring factions had ambivalent views, with the Patriotic Front leaders envisaging a sovereign state which would control the police, army, judiciary and civil service. They also hoped that the British would monitor and supervise the elections hence were willing to exchange the bullet with the ballot. For Muzorewa, this gave him the opportunity to argue that the holding of another election would be tantamount to unnecessary duplication of activities since he had been democratically elected in the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia internal settlement. Ian Smith argued that he had bridged the dichotomy between black and white, with black numerical superiority in the house of assembly. The agreement at Lancaster House had very sound and commendable provisions on constitutional democracy, legislative system, elections, the executive and criminal justice. However, the land issue which was the major bone of contention and the long term cause of the war was not dealt with amicably at the conference. It was supposed to be expedited, were a matter of immediacy and not a matter of prolongation. This procrastination sowed seeds of disgruntlement and betrayal that later gave rise to catastrophic consequences between Zimbabwe and Britain in particular and the International Community in general.

Keywords: Lancaster House Agreement, Willing Seller-Willing Buyer, Britain, Zimbabwe.

#### **ACRONYMS:**

PF ZAPU Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union AG Attorney General ESAP Economic Structural Adjustment Programme Rhodesian Front RF UANC FTLRP Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme United African National Congress Unilateral Declaration of Independence LHA Lancaster House Agreement UDI Lancaster House Constitution LHC USA United States of America ZANLA Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army MDC Movement for Democratic Change NPA National Prosecuting Authority ZANU PF Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front Patriotic Front PF

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### The Lancaster House Agreement and the Birth of a New Nation:

The Zimbabwean-British history that dates back to the colonial times is a very engrossing and intriguing one that is politically charged. As International Relations students and as Zimbabweans who are directly affected and touched with such history, we greatly developed an interest in the history of British-Zimbabwe relations from that colonial period. In that long and arduous Rhodesian history of oppression and civil war laid the Lancaster House Agreement that forms the bedrock of the history and birth of a new era in Zimbabwe since it necessitated a smooth transition from colonialism to independence. The topic thus constitutes a highly contentious area and an emotive issue towards the independence of Zimbabwe. It will broaden our horizons of knowledge as it exposes the different views, interests and aspirations of all the political parties at the conference who had the potential and ambitions to rule Zimbabwe after the elections. The topic also captured our interest because it clearly brings out the effectiveness of diplomacy through mediation and negotiation by a colonial power in order to grant independence to colonies, especially those enveloped by debilitating civil wars. It is also a highly contentious topic on the Zimbabwean perspective since it provides an acid test on whether Britain succeeded in handling civil strife and conflict in one of its colonies. The topic also allows us to air out our academic views on the literature and other comments already said and published pertaining the topic and to give our own assessment as a scholars. It also enables us to know and appreciate the British-Zimbabwe history and relations from 1980 backwards and from 1980 up to present day, and how such historical events have survived the vicissitudes of time. We also developed an interest in the British-Zimbabwe history and relations and this topic seems to cover almost all the fundamental aspects of such relations since pre-independence to independence up to present day. We thus find it comprehensive and holistic. We also find the topic ground-breaking because prior to our choice of the topic, no in-depth studies had been carried out focussing on the topic. This article therefore seeks to fill that gap.

#### Aims and Objectives of the Paper:

- -To assess the impact of the Lancaster House Agreement on the Zimbabwean people
- -To measure the degree of success or failure of the Lancaster House Agreement
- -To evaluate the effectiveness of British diplomacy of negotiation and mediation in civil war situations towards one of its colony (Southern Rhodesia).
- -To analyse the success or failure of British foreign policy over the land issue in Zimbabwe in the post-Lancaster House Agreement era.

#### The Thrust of the Paper's Argument (Thesis):

My argument (thesis) is that the Lancaster House Agreement was a success in terminating hostilities in Southern Rhodesia, but in the long run failed over the land issue. The British government succeeded in ending a civil war that had engulfed Southern Rhodesia. The war had dragged for long that no belligerent party (The Patriotic Front, United African National Congress and the Rhodesian Front) was still interested in. It was thus in no one's interest to continue the gruesome war. The Lancaster House Agreement had thus a long-term success on the political divide (ending a civil war) and had a long term failure (failure of Britain to abide by its previous obligations to compensate for the purchase of land from white farmers).

#### **Assumption:**

The Lancaster House Agreement was a success on the political divide but was a failure over the land policy in Zimbabwe.

#### The Paper's Standpoint:

This paper will be moving that the Lancaster House Agreement success was ephemeral. The agreement only succeeded in terminating hostilities in Rhodesia but in the long run failed to address the core economic issue on land. Britain only succeeded in stopping the furtherance of a debilitating civil war in its colony by bringing the warring factions to the negotiating table through diplomatic means of negotiation and mediation. It however failed in the long run to maintain peace, especially on the land issue. Britain deliberately ignored its earlier obligation to compensate for the purchase of white farmland in Zimbabwe. The British government had promised that white farmland would be acquired on a willing

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seller-willing buyer basis with the British government providing the funds for such activities. Changes in successive British governments stalled the process, which stagnated for more than fifteen years. Attempts by the Zimbabwean government to put the matter on the table were fended off by the British government, and this infuriated the Zimbabweans.

Britain thus stands accused of taking a sluggish and casual approach in honouring its obligation to its former colony. It thus put the matter in the pending tray for too long, hence procrastinating and worsening the issue that was supposed to be expedited. Britain seemed to be hiding with the finger under Tony Blair's administration when the Blair government remarked that the new Labour Party was embarking on new relationships with its former colonies (The Commonwealth of Nations), and such relationships had no bearing, attachment or nexus with previous provisions or obligations. This meant that Britain was nullifying all the previously signed agreements and was no longer obliged to abide by them. On the Zimbabwean perspective, this specifically meant that Britain was no longer going to provide funds for compensating white farmland in Zimbabwe. This infuriated the Zimbabwean government which in 1999-2002 embarked on forcible farm invasions or the compulsory acquisition of land, popularly known as the farm invasions. The Zimbabwean government thus responded with great recalcitrance by stating that with or without British financial compensation the government was going to forcibly invade the farms and acquire the land. The British government in repudiating to honour its previous financial obligations on the land issue in Zimbabwe feared that such an action would be contagious. This was going to fuel such similar compensation claims from other British colonies and from colonies of British allies. Britain thus embarked on preventive diplomacy that was unfavourable to Zimbabwe as its former colony.

Although much blame is accorded to the British government in my argument, I will not solely castigate the British although they possess a lion's share of the blame. Zimbabwe also has its own share of blame in the post Lancaster House phase. Some scholars say that the idea that Britain betrayed Zimbabwe on the land compensation issue plays not a prominent role, but a prominently destructive role to the Zimbabwean-British political landscape. The basis that the British downplayed Zimbabwe by failing to compensate white farmland was baseless, repugnant and totally unfounded because in the Lancaster House Agreement there is no clause that explicitly states a certain compensatory amount that the British were supposed to pay to Zimbabwe. No monetary figure was therefore agreed upon by the two governments and therefore to assert that the British are to blame for lack of compensation are allegations which have no binding force. Contrary to some statements that the land reform programme achieved nothing, the land reform programme was a success and achieved a great milestone from 1980-1990 when Britain was availing some funds to the Zimbabwean government for land resettlement. The land reform programme only began to stall after 1990 after which 71 000 families had been resettled. From 1999-2002 the land reform programme was done chaotically when Robert Mugabe used it for his political survival and expediency in the wake of vociferous war veterans who wanted compensation and threatening to force him out of power. He succumbed and let the war veterans and ZANU PF militia and youth embark on violent farm invasions.

Robert Mugabe also used the land issue as a campaigning tool in the wake of a strong and promising opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in order to stay in power. Furthermore, the land issue did not address the problems of the day such as corruption from government officials, inflation, and bad governance, abject poverty and incessant droughts that were ravishing Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government therefore diverted peoples' attention from the real and touching needs of the day. The Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme (FTLRP) was illegal as it did not follow the correct legal procedures. The exercise was thus tainted with illegality and led to a catastrophic decline of agricultural production. However, all this can be traced back to the failure of Britain to honour its financial obligations emanating from the Lancaster House Agreement. If Britain had faithfully executed its compensatory financial obligations on the land issue in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe would never have acted in such unethical and violent ways that are detrimental to international law.

#### 2. STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

This paper will comprise of five sections. We have decided to have such number of sections because they holistically and comprehensively cover all the aspects that can be investigated on the British-Zimbabwean unfulfilled promises in the post-war era. The number of sections will exhaustively cover the aspects under investigation rather than very limited or few sections, say two or just one. Each section carries a different and unique aspect under investigation and this makes my whole article of five sections balanced, exhaustive, informative and ground-breaking. In section one we will be writing

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about the Lancaster House Agreement's context, origin and what it contained; what was it supposed to do, was it viewed as a 'success' or 'failure' at the time. The context and origin of the Lancaster House Agreement has its genesis in the Southern Rhodesia debilitating civil war between the Rhodesian Front and the guerrilla fighters of the Patriotic Front (Patriotic Front Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union-ZAPU and Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front-ZANU PF). Its origins can thus be attributed to the brilliant British diplomacy of negotiation and mediation whereby Britain managed to terminate an engulfing civil war that had walloped Southern Rhodesia for years and was no longer in any party's interest. The war had dragged for almost five years and thus the Lancaster house Agreement can be conceptualised as a success of British foreign policy on preventive diplomacy in war situations. In section one we will also write about what the Lancaster House Agreement contained, that is, the provisions of the agreement, for example, acceptance of the authority of the governor as a success, abiding by the independence constitution as a success, compliance with the preindependence constitution as a success, abiding by the ceasefire agreement as a success, renunciation of the use of force for political ends and acceptance of the election results and to instruct all the forces under them to comply. We will also write and explain about the terms of the agreement which formed the basis of contention and pivotal issues among the warring parties. Such terms are: 1)-Universal suffrage was to be the basis of achieving independence when all qualified citizens cast their vote. 2)-the Zimbabwe National Army was to be formed from the independent state. 3)-The distribution of land was to be done on a willing seller-willing buyer basis for the first decade awaiting policy review, with the British government reimbursing the funds for the purchase of those farms. The independent state was to be a constitutional democracy and soon after elections a new democratic constitution was going to be crafted at Lancaster. The new independent state was to inherit a debt burden of \$200 million. The agreement also compelled all the parties to hold elections by March 1980 and all belligerent parties were to cease hostilities and disarm. The Lancaster House Agreement was thus supposed to gather all the warring parties to the negotiation table and make them reach a compromise for the sake of peace and independence. We are going to support that at that time the Lancaster House Agreement was viewed as a great success of British preventive diplomacy and foreign policy in averting the continuation of a gruesome civil war.

In section two we will be writing about the views of those who had been engaged in the conflict (and others) of the Lancaster House Agreement, that is, what they thought it was going to do, what they thought of it at the time (1980), for example, the Patriotic Front leaders Nkomo and Mugabe hoped that the post-independent state would be a sovereign state with the ability to exercise sovereign authority. They also hoped that the independent state would control the police, army, judiciary and civil service. The Patriotic Front leaders also hoped and advocated for the British government to monitor the elections since they perceived that if they were left in the hands of Ian Smith he would rig them in favour of Muzorewa who was Smith's ally. The Patriotic Front also hoped that the elections would also transform the country from colonialism to independence thereby exchanging the bullet for the ballot. Muzorewa's United African National Congress (UANC) used the Conference to argue that he had been democratically elected and there was no need to hold further elections. He hoped that by accepting his authority he will cajole the British and the International Community to lift the sanctions imposed on Smith when he unilaterally declared independence in 1965. Muzorewa also advocated that he stood for the wishes of the blacks and took a swipe on the Frontline States for interfering in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia by supporting liberation movements. For Ian Smith the Lancaster House Conference gave him the opportunity to assert that he had bridged the dichotomy between white and black in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and hence proffered solutions to their differences. He wanted the International Community to support the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government as it was representative, having an equal number of white and black cabinet ministers in parliament, and the majority of members of parliament in the House of Assembly being blacks.

In section three we will be writing about those clauses of the agreement that some people point to as successful, that is, constitutional democracy, elections (Universal suffrage), criminal justice, parliament (legislative) system, and the executive. In section four we will be discussing about the long term issue of land that the Lancaster House Agreement did not deal with effectively or fairly, that is, we will be arguing that to a greater extent Britain is to blame for failure to fulfil its obligations at the conference by repudiating to compensate for the purchase of white farmland which led to the deterioration and souring of relations between itself and its former colony. In section five we will be discussing and looking back at the contemporary views, opinions, attitudes, appreciations and critiques of the Lancaster House Agreement's 'success or failure' from Zimbabwe (all sides), the idea of the advent of travel restrictions or bans popularly known as 'Smart Sanctions' embedded in the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA). We will also write on our conclusions and recommendations in section five.

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#### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper's methodology is literature based. We consulted books, periodicals, magazines, journals and newspapers. We also made use of grey literature that is government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) reports as well as credible websites.

#### The Genesis of the Lancaster House Agreement:

In this section we are going to write about the origin and context of the Lancaster House agreement, that is, how it started and who initiated this political symposium. We are also going to elaborate the fundamental provisions of the agreement that were stipulated in the independence constitution and what the conference was supposed to do. Ultimately, we are going to give an evaluation of whether the conference was viewed as a success or failure at that time.

The Lancaster House Agreement came as a result of a horrendous and debilitating civil war that had engulfed Southern Rhodesia for years. The war had drained substantial resources from the Frontline States, caused misery and untold suffering and by late 1979 it was in no one's interests to continue the war. The conference was also seen as vital due to the failure of the internal settlement which was described by the Queen as defective. Since the commencement of the war up to the beginning of 1979, all the parties involved in hostilities in Southern Rhodesia thought that they would resolve their differences through the barrel of the gun. At the beginning of 1979, all parties to the Rhodesian conflict were committed to alternatives away from the negotiating table (Steadman, 1991:165). Rhodesia's gargantuan appetite for war had portrayed a recalcitrant and incorrigible picture to the International Community. For any possible mediators, Rhodesia had seemingly inscribed itself on the permanent agenda of the world's political-ethnic conundrums-Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the Middle East, South Africa-unamanable to human persuasion or reason (Davidow, 1984:13). There was great political polarisation and pessimism about the possibility of reaching an amicable solution at the Lancaster House Conference as the environment was politically charged. One of the architects of the Lancaster House Conference estimated that at the beginning of the conference there was a 1 in 100 chance of a settlement. Upon reaching agreement in December, he estimated that the chances of the agreement actually ending the war were 1 in 20. In his advice to Thatcher, he remarked that there is a 1 percent chance of this conference succeeding and Britain incurring high risks. However, in the unlikely event it does succeed, we then incur a 95 percent chance that our troops and the Commonwealth troops we commit to the ceasefire will be involved in a bloody morass, from which extrication might prove extremely difficult (Renwick, 1981:168-169).

One fundamental purpose of the Lancaster House Conference was to establish an independent constitution which would provide a roadmap to democratic elections under British jurisdiction with the aim of smooth transition to Zimbabwean independence. Lord Carrington, the former British Foreign Secretary for Commonwealth and Foreign Affairs, stated explicitly that the Lancaster House Conference was a constitutional conference since the constitution was the dominant cause of war. It is essential to the prospects of success that we should first seek agreement on our destination-which is the independent constitution. If that can be achieved it will be necessary to decide the arrangements to give effect to that agreement (Carrington, 1979:176). Lord Carrington argued that the issue of the constitution had to be solved first before embarking on any matters since the constitution was the major cause of strife in Southern Rhodesia. The only way to end the war is to remove the reasons for it...the approach of the British government has been to discuss the best way to achieve a solution with their friends and allies and the parties involved. It was clear from these discussions that the root of the problem lay in the constitution. If the conference could agree on the constitution, it would remove the causes of the war, once agreement on the constitution was settled; agreement on other matters could come more easily (Ibid, 1979:177).

The establishment of an independent constitution formed bedrock of the Lancaster House Agreement and was hoped to be the dominant remedy for any other negotiations to come. Successful establishment of such a constitution would necessitate smooth flow of activities and furtherance of negotiations to fruition. The British chose to deal with the constitution first in the belief that because that was the reason for the war, it had to be confronted first. The British felt that if agreement was reached on the constitution, there will be greater pressure on the parties to settle the later issues of the transition and cease-fire (Stedman, 1991:215). The attainment of majority rule was what the war was supposed to be about. If it were possible to attain an independent constitution which, indisputably, provided for that, the constitution would be reduced to the dimension of a struggle for power; and the pressure would be greater on the parties for that competition to be settled by other means (Renwick, 1981a:16). An independent constitution would necessitate universal

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suffrage and democracy through the ballot and solve the Rhodesian predicament once and for all. By contrast, in 1979 the British were willing to accept any party coming to power in Rhodesia, as long as they did so through the ballot box. The British preferred that Muzorewa or Nkomo win, but they could live with Mugabe if he was the choice of the Zimbabwean people. The overriding interest of the British can be described simply as getting the Rhodesian problem "off their backs," once and for all (Stedman, 1991:224).

The independent constitution stipulated that all the parties present at the Lancaster House Conference would agree to the holding of democratic elections under British authority. This was envisaged to necessitate partiality and neutrality, although some Patriotic Front leaders such as Mugabe were sceptical about the British conducting elections since they were doubtful that the British would be neutral (Stedman:183). There had to be free and fair elections, properly supervised under the British government's authority. This refers to our responsibility for the conduct and supervision of the elections (Carrington: 183). Since democracy entails majoritarian as well as respect of minority rights, in the Lancaster House Agreement the principle of majority rule was emphasised and Lord Carrington warned against abrogating constitutions. The British proposals still contained important safeguards for protecting minority interests. The most important of these safeguards was an extensive bill of rights guaranteeing individual freedoms, an undetermined number of white seats in a 100-person legislature for a period of seven years, remuneration for any land that might be distributed, and the honouring of pension rights for white public officials (Stedman: 178). Zimbabwe was thus to become a constitutional democracy where the constitution will take precedence and any other law that is not enshrined in the constitution becomes inconsistent and thus invalid. All the armed forces of the belligerent parties were to be demobilised and integrated as a regular army under the banner 'Zimbabwe National Army.' The public service was to include at least two former civil servants and the newly independent state was to inherit a debt burden of \$200 million. The newly formed government would also be obliged to pay pensions to all Rhodesian civil servants, even to those who had emigrated. The newly independent state would also be obliged to repudiate the concept of dual citizenship, with Zimbabwean citizenship granted to those who had stayed in the country for more than five years (Southern Rhodesia Constitutional Conference Held At Lancaster House, London September-December 1979 Report). In the elections to come, all political parties were to conduct their political activities such as campaigning, within the confines of the law. Lord Carrington reiterated that an election does not mean that there will be winners and losers, but that each party will have an opportunity to win an election (Carrington, 1979). Equitability in media coverage amongst the political parties as well as the amelioration of the political status of the African population had to be granted. All parties had to abide by the ceasefire agreement and accept the outcome of the elections and instruct the forces under their authority to comply as well (Ibid, 1979).

The land issue was central to the liberation struggle and can be traced back to the colonial infamous legislations such as the land Apportionment Act, Land Tenure Act and Land Husbandry Act which all marginalised native Africans and relegated them to sandy and tsetse fly infested areas of Gwaai and Shangaani reserves. Land was the dominant long term cause of the liberation struggle and hence the land issue was an emotive one. Since land is the backbone of Zimbabwe and the chief cause of the war, at Lancaster House it was agreed between the British government and the warring parties that land was to be distributed on a "Willing Seller-Willing Buyer" basis for the first ten years awaiting policy review, with Britain promising to provide the money for the purchase of the farms (Mutonho, 2014). The issue of compensation may have motivated the warring parties to calm down and become optimistic since British financial intervention was safely assured. One ZAPU delegate stated what was mentioned in many interviews: "The land issue was the hardest to accept, because it involved such visceral feelings and our mobilisation had depended on land, thus we decided we had to make some kind of stand (Stedman, 1986:182). Carrington publicly set another deadline. According to Jeffrey Davidow, Carrington also approached the PF in a bilateral session and presented them with a British offer to cover some of the expense of reimbursing farmers for land redistribution. This offer was pocketed by the Patriotic Front's leaders, and did not lead to an immediate change in their stance (Ibid). At that time, therefore, the British policy on land towards Zimbabwe was a success due to its financial assurance that provided optimism to the Zimbabwean representatives.

#### An Evaluation of the Lancaster House Agreement at that Time:

The success of the negotiations at the Lancaster House Conference can be attributed to the dexterous and brilliant British diplomacy of negotiation and mediation, especially the realisation of the fundamental importance of the independence constitution. According to Lord Carrington, nothing could proceed or reach fruition before all the belligerent parties could agree on the independence constitution. It is thus the independence constitution that was supposed to take precedence

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before any other decision for the successful progression of the conference. The independence constitution thus stood as a cornerstone for the progression of negotiations at the Lancaster House Conference. The purpose of the talks at Lancaster House was to open up the proper avenue to grant legal independence to Zimbabwe. To do that constitutional arrangement had to be decided and put in place. It was stated that, "if (the independent constitution) could be achieved it will be necessary to decide the arrangements to give effect to that agreement (Magaisa, 2003:2). British insistence on the precedence of the independence constitution for any further negotiations was a diplomatic success which necessitated further negotiations hence smoothing the process. Carrington reiterated that the constitution was the key to the settlement, and that only when that was solved would the conference proceed to discuss about arrangements (Steadman, 1991). The British insisted that all matters having to do with the transition and ceasefire would be addressed, but only after agreement was reached on the constitution. Considerations of traditional matters could not be taken before the constitution was settled. It was not good enough to "agree to disagree" and leave it. There must be agreement. The British government had taken into account all sides and had presented a constitution as "the only basis on which it is now possible to reach full agreement at this conference" (Ibid, 1991).

The Lancaster House Agreement was viewed as a success at that time. Considering that the British had successfully cajoled all the warring parties to compromise and reach a consensus on the independence constitution, this signalled British diplomatic victory in mediating and negotiating civil war situations. All parties were encouraged to come to a consensus in order to compromise and strike common ground for progress' sake. Joshua Nkomo who was representing the Patriotic Front also cemented this view by saying that, "real issues which should be brought before the conference (must be) solved." Debating such highly politically charged issues in the press does not solve anything since leaders start to respond furiously to inflammatory, exaggerated and speculative messages in the media. Lord Carrington reiterated that, "It is illusory to think that any settlement can fully satisfy the requirements of either side." The success of the implementation of the independence constitution marked the success of the Lancaster House Agreement at that time. The conference was concluded after 47 plenary sessions with agreement on a new constitution, arrangements for the transitional period, preceding independence and ceasefire agreement on December 15 1979, with the formal agreements being signed by the leaders of the delegations on December 21 1979 (Mutonho, 2014). The Lancaster House agreement was also viewed as a success at that time because it succeeded in ending a civil war in Southern Rhodesia, which had dragged for long and was no longer in anyone's interest. Lord Carrington reiterated that there was (in 1979) also a widespread feeling that continuation or intensification of the war was not in the best interest of any of the parties to the dispute, nor of the people of Zimbabwe (Carrington, 1979). The war had caused untold suffering of the people of Zimbabwe and had caused much havoc, devastation, ruin and destruction of communities.

The Lancaster house Agreement was also considered a success during that time because it succeeded in necessitating British foreign policy of decolonisation of that time, fulfilling American President Harold McMillan's "Winds of Change." Lord Carrington remarked that the British were serious about asserting their decolonisation responsibilities (Stedman, 1991: 176). The Lancaster House Agreement was a successful British endeavour towards its decolonisation process in Southern Rhodesia. At the time the British government took the responsibility of convening the conference as the colonial authority with a constitutional mandate to decolonise its former dependent territories (Magaisa, 2003:2).

The success of the British at Lancaster House was produced through their political skill at taking advantage of the opportunity to manipulate each side into an agreement containing features odious to both sides, even though strong voices on both sides spoke against settlement. The opportunity consisted of four components that came together at one time: First, the military and economic situation had deteriorated to such a point that the whites were losing and would face political elimination in the future. Second, the election of Muzorewa in Rhodesia weakened those within the Salisbury coalition that were adamantly against settlement, namely Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front, and strengthened the faction that favoured a settlement to forestall elimination, in particular, Peter Walls, David Smith, and Ken Flower. Third, Muzorewa's election handed the British direct leverage with Salisbury: the British, instead of dismissing the change in "Rhobabwe," particularly acknowledged and embraced it in order to press for a settlement that would win international acceptance. By not rejecting outright Muzorewa's election, they enhanced the belief that they might recognise the new government. By only partially embracing Muzorewa, they kept in their possession the carrot of full recognition, which could be used to win commitments from the Salisbury delegation at Lancaster House. An important component of this opportunity was that the British were free to negotiate a settlement that was not dictated by South Africa and that therefore could include Mugabe and ZANU. Finally, the war continued to take a large toll on the guerrillas' patrons,

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Kenneth Kaunda and Samora Machel, who were therefore willing to pressure the Patriotic Front into accepting a settlement, if they were assured it was a fair settlement (Stedman: 1991:214).

The Lancaster House Agreement was necessitated by the Queen's invitation in London to map out a settlement that might ameliorate the war situation in Southern Rhodesia. It was also necessitated by Britain's policy of decolonisation when it was in the process of granting independence to all its colonies. The agreement had fundamental provisions such as majoritarian and respect of minority rights, monitoring of elections under British jurisdiction, equality of all parties to press and media during campaigning, compensation for the purchase of white farmland in a willing seller-willing buyer basis, demobilisation of all forces as well as compensation issues for the Rhodesian white bureaucracy. The Lancaster House agreement was viewed as a success at the time since it succeeded in making all the belligerent parties to accept and sign the independence constitution, ending of colonialism and granting of independence, terminating a civil war that had drained away the country's resources as well as optimism on the land compensation issue. At that time, therefore, the Lancaster House Agreement was viewed as a success.

#### Ambivalent Views of the Plenipotentiaries at the Lancaster house Conference:

In this section we are going to write about the different views of the belligerent leaders who were engaged in the debilitating Rhodesian conflict, as well as others who were witnessing the political drama at that time. We will write about what each interested and participating party thought was going to happen before the elections, during the elections and after and the different thoughts that each official had even after independence.

#### Different Views of the Delegates at the Lancaster House Agreement:

There were ambivalent thoughts and expectations on the Zimbabwean nationalist entourage at the Lancaster House Conference. The Patriotic Front under Nkomo and Mugabe hoped that the post-independent state will be a sovereign state with the ability to exercise sovereign authority (Magaisa, 2003). The Patriotic Front had also expected that the independent state would control the army, police, judiciary and civil service, contrary to what it was under the Muzorewa regime. The Patriotic Front was also concerned as to who would monitor the elections as it felt that if they were left in the Smith regime's jurisdiction, Smith would rig the elections in favour of Muzorewa. The Patriotic Front also hoped that the election would revamp the country and transform it from colonialism hence exchange the bullet with the ballot (Ibid, 2003). For the Patriotic Front, external supervision and monitoring of elections will be a great advantage for them as there would be minimal chances of Smith rigging the elections in favour of Muzorewa.

Patriotic Front leaders Mugabe and Nkomo also hoped that the newly independent state would attain international recognition as a state since it will possess all the qualities of statehood. They also envisaged increased aid from the International Community and the improvement of Salisbury due to the aid (Stedman, VII). What remained was the prospect of international recognition of the new government that would emerge after elections in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and the people that such recognition would lead to an increase in aid that might improve Salisbury's position. Without such recognition, however, the situation of the Rhodesian side was desperate. The military, intelligence, and economic arms of the white government saw the situation clearly: it would be a matter of time before they faced outright defeat (Flower, 1987).

Individually, the political leaders Mugabe, Nkomo, Muzorewa, Smith as well as other delegates who were at the conference had ambivalent feelings ranging from pessimism to optimism. On the Patriotic Front's side, specifically on Mugabe's perspective, ZANU was convinced that victory was certain. Their only doubts were about the time span necessary to finish the job and how the final victory would take place. Robert Mugabe had finished his job of consolidating his leadership and was committed to the further intensification of the guerrilla war and bringing down the white government by force. ZANLA's training bases in Mozambique had grown tremendously; they were able to render much of Zimbabwe ungovernable and had succeeded in bringing the war to Salisbury for the first time (Stedman, 166).

For Joshua Nkomo, he knew that Mugabe would win the war with or without him. Mugabe had the larger and more vociferous army and was quite sure that he will win the war. For Nkomo to align with Mugabe would mean that he would be in a dependent relationship. For him not to align with Mugabe would surely relegate him to obscurity since Mugabe was destined to win the war alone. Nkomo was thus in a limbo. Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, however, were playing a different game. Nkomo favoured a negotiated transition to majority rule but knew that a settlement was unlikely to hold

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without Mugabe. On the other hand, by casting his lot with Mugabe, he ran the real risk of being a junior partner in a coalition with a much larger partner who might decide to fight alone. ZAPU's strategy called for a build-up of conventional war-fighting capabilities in order to compensate for their numerical disadvantages within the partnerships. ZAPU's military strategy, based on Soviet advice, assumed that ZANU would fatally weaken the Salisbury regime through guerrilla warfare without being capable of dealing it a final death blow. Basing their experience on the Angolan civil war, ZAPU believed that a last-minute change of strategy to a conventional blitzkrieg tank and plane attack would be necessary to bring down the Salisbury regime. Such action by ZAPU would also provide them with bargaining leverage with ZANU in a liberated Zimbabwe. The ZAPU dilemma can be summarised as this: they saw that no coalition could win without ZANU but realised that ZANU might be strong enough to win on their own. Therefore, cooperation was risky for a junior partner that had real limits on its base of support (Stedman, 166).

Muzorewa's United African National congress (UANC) used the Lancaster House Conference to argue that he had been democratically elected in the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government. Muzorewa castigated the independence constitution by saying that it was not necessary since the people of Rhodesia had already decided on the constitution. He hoped that by accepting his government the British and the International community would lift the sanctions that had been imposed on the country when Smith declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 (Needham, Mashingaidze, Bhebhe, 1984; Mutonho, 2014). Muzorewa lambasted the Patriotic Front by accusing it of disrupting the progress of the country and perpetrating mayhem by advocating for a new government yet there was already one in place. Muzorewa asserted that he represented the interests and wishes of the blacks and stood for unity. He took a swipe at the Frontline States for their interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia by supporting liberation movements (Ibid, 1984; 2014). For Muzorewa, he did not like the idea of elections and took his stand on the internal settlement that had been described by the Queen as 'defective' (Moyana and Sibanda, 2007). Elections would almost certainly end his political foothold on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia as he knew that he and Smith did not command more support than that of the Patriotic Front leaders. The acceptance of carrying out an election and the subsequent defeat of Muzorewa would also mean the defeat and political demise and obscurity of Smith since Muzorewa was being labelled a puppet of Smith (Ibid, 2007).

For Ian Smith the Lancaster House Conference gave him the opportunity to try to convince the world that he had bridged the gap between the whites and the blacks and that the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government had proffered solutions to their differences (Chigora, 2006). Smith thus wanted the world to support the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government as it had an equal number of black and white cabinet ministers and the majority of parliamentarians being black. It was this status quo the Patriotic Front was against as while real power was maintained by the whites with the small group of whites in parliament having the power to negate any decisions made by the rest of parliament. However, one of the requirements was for Smith to drop his insistence on the white minority's veto power in parliament over any changes to the constitution (Mataire, 2014). Smith insisted on his ideas of the dominance of the white minority in every sphere in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, especially the principle of white veto which he said that was now done in order to maintain standards. He emphasised that white officials should maintain their top positions in defence, police and public service. For two and a half hours Ian Smith argued his position. He had backed off his insistence on the white veto; his insistence now was based on "maintaining standards," by retaining the dominant position of white officials in the commissions for defence, and public service, and the army and the police" (The Observer, 1979: 23, cited in Baumhogger, 1984: 1059). One delegate from Muzorewa's entourage remarked that Smith's arguments were not practical, but philosophical in nature (Ibid).

#### Different Views from other Plenipotentiaries at the Lancaster House Agreement:

There were also other views from some plenipotentiaries who were at the Lancaster House Conference who had ambivalent feelings towards the conference and even on the aftermath. When the conference began in September 1979 at Lancaster House in London, one of the chief architects of the conference estimated there to be a one in twenty chance of a resolution of the war. One of the architects of the Lancaster House Conference estimated that at the beginning of the conference was a 1 in 100 chance of a settlement. Upon reaching agreement in December, he estimated that the chances of the agreement actually ending the war were 1 in 20. In his advice to Thatcher he remarked that, "There is a 1 percent chance of this conference succeeding and Britain incurring high risks. However, in the unlikely event it does succeed, we then incur a 95 percent chance that our troops and the Commonwealth troops we commit to the ceasefire will be involved in a bloody morass, from which extrication might prove extremely difficult" (Cited in Stedman, 1991).

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The world, especially the International Community could not believe that Southern Rhodesia, with its gravity of political polarisation and strife, would ameliorate and come to the negotiation table. They could not believe that the warring parties would eventually come to a compromise, hold peaceful and credible elections and move forward in peace, orderliness and tranquillity. At the beginning of 1979, all parties to the Rhodesian conflict were committed to alternatives away from the negotiating table. For any possible mediators, Rhodesia had seemingly inscribed itself on the permanent agenda of the world's political-ethnic conundrums-Northern Ireland, Cyprus, the Middle East, South Africa- unamanable to human persuasion or reason (Davidow, 1984:13). One black opponent of Mugabe summed up the prevalent feeling when the election poll was announced: "The result- a successful settlement and election-stunned everybody. (Cited in Stedman, 1991)

In conclusion, there were ambivalent feelings at the Lancaster House Conference, positive and negative, optimistic and pessimistic, concerning the proceedings that were transpiring and the anticipated events that would occur after. Patriotic Front leaders hoped that the independent state would control the police, army and civil service and will be able to be recognised as a state. They hoped that Zimbabwe will be a sovereign nation with the ability to execute all sovereign duties and functions. Mugabe hoped to win the war in the near future and it was only a matter of time before the fall of Salisbury. He had greater military and manpower superiority and was greatly being supported and backed by the Frontline States. Nkomo was a political and military underdog in this struggle, and had to align with Mugabe although he would risk a dependent relationship. For Nkomo, the conference would not yield without Mugabe since Mugabe could still fight alone without Nkomo and win the war. Muzorewa was clinging to his Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and was stonewalling on his opposition of elections and an independent constitution. He argued that he had been democratically elected such that holding another election would be tantamount to duplication of duty. Ian Smith seized the Lancaster House opportunity to cajole the world that he had closed the dichotomy between black and white in Zimbabwe by amalgamating with Muzorewa in a political relationship and maintaining equilibrium of white and black cabinet ministers in parliament, with blacks having numerical superiority over the whites in the house of assembly. Other plenipotentiaries thought that the Lancaster House Agreement was going to be a furore, the election and post-election phase chaotic and barbaric, only to be astonished by the pendulum of events that tilted against their expectations.

#### **Commendable Clauses of the Lancaster House Conference:**

Although there may be some clauses in the Lancaster House Constitution that were deemed retrogressive, oppressive and undesirable on the Zimbabwean side, it would be very unfair to throw away the baby with the dirty bathing water since there were some clauses of the Lancaster House Agreement that were very commendable, sound and progressive. Such clauses anchored on elections, democracy and human rights, rule of law, parliamentary system, criminal justice and the executive. Most of these clauses were inherited and incorporated in the current Zimbabwean constitution (Amendment Number 20, 2013), showing how successful such clauses were. This section dissects and analyses those clauses of the Lancaster House Agreement that some people point to as successful and showing the degree of how successful they were.

#### **Constitutional Democracy:**

The Lancaster House Constitution explicitly stated the type of democracy that the newly independent state of Zimbabwe was to adopt, that is, a constitutional democracy. Such type of democracy has been regarded as highly successful in the Zimbabwean context as it contains several essential features that are fundamental for a democratic state, for example, it contains fundamental rules of good governance, human rights and freedoms, rule of law, human dignity, privacy, and separation of powers. Although most of these provisions only appear on paper in the Zimbabwean context, they are however greatly adored by the state and the new constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) was greatly fashioned in the style of the Lancaster House Conference, incorporating most of these provisions of the earlier constitution. The new constitution of Zimbabwe has also been crafted and styled in the fashion of the Lancaster House Constitution as it stipulates that Zimbabwe is a constitutional democracy and any law, practice or custom that does not follow or is inconsistent with the constitution becomes null and void. This constitution is the supreme law of Zimbabwe and any law, practice, custom or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid to the extent of the inconsistency (Lancaster House Agreement Document, 1979). Section 2(2) of the new constitution of Zimbabwe further stipulates the tiers of the state that are obliged to be bound by such a constitutional democracy, namely the executive, legislature and judiciary. The obligations imposed by this Constitution are binding on every person, natural or juristic, including the State and all executive, legislative and judicial institutions and agencies of government at every level, and must be fulfilled by them (Zimbabwean Constitution,

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Amendment Number 20). These principles, including even the wording, was adopted and inherited from the Rhodesian Lancaster House Agreement which stipulated that Zimbabwe will be a constitutional democracy and any law, practice or custom that is not in tandem with it becomes inconsistent with it and therefore becomes invalid.

The 'New Constitution' of 2002 which was aimed to replace the Lancaster House Constitution was overwhelmingly rejected by the 'No Vote' in the 2000 referendum. The 'No Vote' triumphed over the 'Yes Vote' in the 2000 referendum, meaning to say that the people of Zimbabwe preferred to continue being governed by the Lancaster House Constitution instead of the proposed 'New Constitution.' This cements the view that the Lancaster House Constitution had some sound, successful and solid provisions which were preferred by the people of Zimbabwe to govern the country than the proposed 'New Constitution.' The current new constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment Number 20, 2013) also cannibalised on the Lancaster house Constitution on most of its provisions, showing that the Lancaster House constitution had great successful clauses that can be relied upon. The current new constitution of Zimbabwe, for example, still contains in Chapter 4, Declaration of Rights such as the right of the media to be protected, right to publication, freedom of expression and of the media, every citizen's right of access to information, right to administrative justice, right to privacy, freedom of association and assembly, freedom of conscience, freedom of occupation, trade and profession.

All these rights and freedoms were adopted from the Lancaster House Constitution which stipulated such freedoms during the election campaigns that were to follow between the belligerent political parties and in the aftermath, for example the Lancaster House Constitution stipulated that all political parties were to campaign peacefully and were to have equal access to information, broadcasting on both radio, press and television. One can therefore safely assert that the new constitution of Zimbabwe is not abrogated but amended as it contains many provisions of the Lancaster House Constitution which were inherited and incorporated verbatim into the current constitution, hence showing the success of such Lancaster House Constitutional provisions regarding constitution making.

#### **Legislative System:**

The Lancaster House Constitution can also be regarded as successful on some of its provisions, for example on the functions of the parliament. Such provisions have been incorporated verbatim by the Zimbabwean government in its current constitution hence cementing the success of such provisions which were inherited in the 1979 constitution. An example is the current Zimbabwean Constitution's Section 141 entitled "Public access to and involvement in Parliament (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20, 2013). This section provides various mechanisms in which the public can have access to their parliament. These include the mandatory role that the parliament should perform, for example the facilitation of public access and involvement in committee and legislative functions. The parliament, including its committees is obliged to conduct its legislative business in a democratic and transparent manner as well as holding its sittings in public. The legislature is also obliged to preserve order, regulate media and public access, and including to exclude them if necessary, as well as searching persons entering the parliament and to refuse them entry whenever it deems necessary (Ibid, 2013).

Such legislative clauses adopted from the Lancaster House Constitution can be regarded as quite successful as the current Zimbabwean parliament is bound by such provisions, for example the Zimbabwean parliament conducts its legislative business in a transparent and open manner by broadcasting live on radio and television on parliamentary sittings whereby legislators will be discussing, deliberating and asking each other questions on various issues that may need clarification. This edifies and educates the Zimbabwean masses on various economic, political, cultural or religious issues affecting the country. The Zimbabwean parliament also prints Parliamentary Debates Pamphlets (Hansards) and avails them freely to the public, educating and congentising the masses on various parliamentary debates which would have taken place on different parliamentary sittings. All this was adopted from the clauses of the Lancaster House Constitution which provided a roadmap to such a successful legislative path.

Section 148 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which is entitled 'Privileges and immunities of parliament' accords protection of freedom of speech of the Senator President, members of the House of Assembly (MPs)as well as the speaker, meaning to say that they are immune from arrest or facing charges or criminal prosecution or to face litigation in civil courts or to be liable for incarceration for anything in connection, said in or produced before, and submitted in Parliament or any of its committees (Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment No. 20, Section 148, 2013). All these provisions were adopted from the Lancaster House Constitution of 1979, hence showing evidence of the success of some

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of these clauses. The survival of some old provisions in the constitution is a result of the preservative nature of the political arrangements that were taking place during the constitution making process and is a tribute to the positive development that took place in the shaping of the Zimbabwean law since the Lancaster House Conference up to 2013 when the new constitution came into effect (Nyabeze, 2015:3).

#### **Elections:**

The Lancaster House Agreement's ultimate aim was to grant independence to Southern Rhodesia with an aim of a smooth transition through elections. Since there was political polarisation between the belligerent parties, the holding of elections under British supervision was to pave the way for a peaceful transition. The British were prepared to supervise a free and fair election in Rhodesia, and this electoral transparency explains Smith's presence at the conference as well. The holding of elections would end Rhodesia's bloody civil war that had raged for almost twenty years between the natives and the white settlers. The Lancaster House Constitution on elections has been regarded as one of those successful clauses and a dexterous British diplomatic endeavour as elections were monitored and supervised by the British in a peaceful and tranquil environment. The outcome of the elections was also largely accepted by the International Community as credible, free and fair (Nyabeze, 2015). Up to present day Zimbabwe has been following the roadmap of the Lancaster House Constitution's principles (at least in theory) on free and fair elections although some of the elections have been allegedly marred by fraud, intimidation, coercion and torture (Makumbe, 2002). Irrespective of these Zimbabwean electoral setbacks, the Lancaster House constitution's clause on elections remains a roadmap for Zimbabwean elections hence it can justifiably be labelled a success.

#### The Executive:

The Lancaster House Constitution established a non-executive president, with executive powers vested in the prime minster and the cabinet. This establishment is regarded as one of those successful and stable clauses of the constitution as it managed to push on for 7 years peacefully in Zimbabwe (up to 1987) when the constitution was amended after ZANU PF and ZAPU amalgamated (Teitel, 2003). One is justified to assert that the clause of the executive prime minister and a ceremonial president was successful as it enabled peaceful administration of the state for almost a decade before amendment. The success of such an establishment pioneered at Lancaster can further be witnessed by Zimbabwe's adoption of almost the same establishment (implemented the other way round) in 2010 when there was a government of national unity between ZANU PF and the two MDCs). That establishment led to the adoption of the Lancaster House Constitution when an executive presidency was created with powers of Head of State, Head of government and Commander in Chief of the Defence Forces (Mugabe). The Prime Minister (Tsvangirai) was relegated to a ceremonial prime minister (Gross, 2004). This adoption can be traced back to the Lancaster House constitution's fashion hence highlighting its success and how meaningful and commendable it was even in shaping successive governments.

#### **Criminal Justice:**

The area of criminal justice in the Lancaster House Agreement has been accredited as successful because the new Zimbabwean constitution has inherited and adopted the Lancaster House establishment, showing how sensible and commendable the establishment is. In Zimbabwe the 2013 constitution provides for the National Prosecuting Authority in Section 258 and the office of the Prosecutor General in section 259 whose functions include the institution of criminal proceedings on behalf of the state. This is coming from the backdrop of the previous Lancaster House Constitution which provided for the office of the Attorney General in section 76 which gave the office the power to institute criminal proceedings on behalf of the state. This is a large step towards safeguarding against impunity and partiality (Nyabeze, 2015). In the previous constitution the Attorney General was an ex-officio member of cabinet, principal legal advisor of the government, member of the Judicial Service Commission and the chief public prosecutor (1980 Constitution of Zimbabwe, Section 76(1) and 76(3b). In the New Zimbabwean constitution (Amendment No. 20), nothing much has really changed from the Lancaster House style, except for the creation of the National Prosecuting Authority and the Attorney General offices which operate in a patron-client relationship (Nyabeze, 2015). This establishment, which was largely adopted from the Lancaster House Agreement, bears testimony of how successful some of these clauses are.

From the above discussed issues, it can be clearly asserted that the Lancaster House constitution had some sound and commendable provisions which the Zimbabwean constitution makers could not let go. They thus had to incorporate them in their new constitution, relegating only those provisions that were deemed undesirable, autocratic, oppressive and

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marginalising. Such fundamental provisions retained and incorporated in the new Zimbabwean constitution included provisions on elections, constitutional democracy, the executive, conduct of elections, legislative system, rule of law and criminal justice. The Lancaster House constitution in this regard can be accredited by its contribution of operating from the comprehensive rational model, whilst the Zimbabwean constitution operated from incrementalism.

#### The Land Issue: the Lancaster House Agreement's Undoing:

British policy inconsistency concerning the land issue in the Lancaster House agreement constitutes its own undoing. Britain has been widely vilified for bearing the lion's share of the blame for the failure of the Lancaster House agreement on land when it took a sluggish and lackadaisical approach towards such a politically and economically charged issue. Britain also misjudged how potentially explosive such an issue could be in the long run. Relegating the land issue to market forces of willing-seller willing-buyer proved to be a catastrophic policy measure for the British since the black people of Zimbabwe were hungry for land and expected an expeditious land policy which would distribute the land to the landless. This made the landless, poor and marginalised Zimbabweans to grow weary and dreary hence became impatient, disillusioned, livid and ravenous. British policy vacillated and evaded earlier policy obligations reached at by successive governments. Attempts by the Zimbabwean government to solve the land issue amicably were trivialised and fended off by the British, provoking feelings of disgruntlement, betrayal and arrogance on the Zimbabwean side. The British government's repudiation to honour its financial obligations on the land issue in Zimbabwe put the Zimbabwean government on the horns of a dilemma. The Zimbabwean government was in a quandary and caught in an unenviable position of either continuing to honour the dry Lancaster House Agreement on land on one hand (hence maintaining good relations with Britain and the International Community) or forcibly redistributing the land on the other (hence risking the severing of ties with Britain and the International Community) since it was facing pressure from the landless black people. The Zimbabwean government opted to pursue the latter option which proved to be a harbinger for the souring of relations between the two countries and the International Community as well, hence creating an impasse.

#### Inconsistencies and Variations of British Foreign Policy on the Land Issue in Zimbabwe;

Chapter 3(16) of the Lancaster House Constitution unequivocally stated that land was to be bought on a 'willing sellerwilling buyer' basis, with Britain providing the money for the purchase of the farms (Lancaster House Constitution Document, 1979). Therefore, the willing seller, willing buyer principle was arrived at, by controversial and continuous discussions at the Lancaster House in Britain, it was the promise given by the government of the United Kingdom, with the support of the United States government, to set up a fund for financing the purchase of land from the white settlers, which made it possible for Lancaster House Conference to succeed (Moyo, 2014:69). The land issue stands as a testimony for the failure of British foreign policy towards Zimbabwe. From Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 Britain took a casual approach towards meeting its financial obligations to fund the purchase of farms in Zimbabwe. The British government had promised to honour its financial obligations when its former foreign minister Geoffrey Homehad had remarked that, "...Her Majesty's government is now willing to be more flexible with regard to the release of funds to be used in the land acquisition and development." Successive British governments over the years brought policy changes, with the Blair administration stonewalling, turning the tables on the Zimbabwean government over the land issue. When the Blair government repudiated the reimbursement of funds to compensate white farmland in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean government embarked on violent farm invasions, sometimes referred to as Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme or compulsory acquisition of land (Makumbe, 2010). Britain procrastinated in dealing with the land issue as a colonial master and stands accused of consigning the matter to the pending tray for too long. It is on record that a number of requests were made by the Zimbabwe government for almost ten years since 1992 to reopen the issue with a view to permanent solution, but successive British governments have somehow managed to fend off such dialogue (Chigora, 2006:64).

Investigations reveal that Zimbabwe has very much made a gesture to invite Britain at this conference table for almost a decade, waiting for Cook and those before him, to no avail. It is the British government that spurned and frustrated such a dialogue for years and who must, also, bear responsibility for the recent consequences on reneging on the proposed negotiations (Adromidas, 2000). The Blair administration shifted goal posts on the land issue in Zimbabwe. The view that the new Labour Government wanted to look for a new basis for relations with the Commonwealth countries, which basis had no bearing on the past was a fundamental policy error given the understanding at Lancaster House Conference at which the British played a role of mediator and made an undertaking for responsibility towards the resolution of the land

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problem (Patel, 1987). Britain also feared that such a compensation act could be contagious. It feared that her commitment to fund land reform in Zimbabwe will spark series of demands from former colonies, thus leading to loss of support both at home and externally from other allies who have basically the same obligation as Britain in their former colonies (Ankomah, 2002). Such British policy inconsistency was tantamount to evading binding promises and obligations, and therefore a breach of contract. British policy vacillated on the land issue, and this frustrated the Zimbabwean government.

#### Why the Willing Seller-Willing Buyer Principle Failed:

The concept of willing seller-willing buyer principle means a completely voluntary transaction between a buyer and a seller. In this regard the principle accurately denotes the lack of compulsion on landowners (Moyo, 2014). In this regard, hardly any white landowner would want to relinquish the family's silverware, or the chicken that lays the golden eggs. Section 16 of the Lancaster House Constitution was very protective to the white minority rights to property when it stated that land redistribution was to be conducted on a willing seller willing buyer basis. This seemed to protect property rights of the haves against the have-nots. Since the natives' grievances were mainly centred on the land issue, over-protectionist policies of the Lancaster House agreement became the death blow to the natives of Zimbabwe. Their liberation efforts seemed to have been cast in jeopardy. The Lancaster House Agreement therefore failed to empower and protect those who were marginalised by colonial rule for years, leaving them with great bitterness and the desire for redress.

The willing seller willing buyer principle for the first ten years did not really bear any fruits because the land that the Zimbabwean government acquired from those who were willing to sale was mostly very marginal and expensive. To make matters worse, in most cases the land that was available for sale would be found on sporadic locations or areas around the country making it very difficult to carry out a homogeneous and systematic land reform programme. Julius Nyerere seethes on the land situation in Zimbabwe by saying that, "To tax Zimbabweans in order to compensate people who took it away from them through the gun. Really the British cannot have it both ways" (Cited in the Utete Report, p.17). The Fast Track Land Reform Programme or the compulsory acquisition of land was therefore a quest by the Zimbabwean government to change the status quo of the land question from the shackles of the market forces (Magaisa, 2007). The late Zimbabwean Vice President Joshua Nkomo, addressing white commercial farmers in Matabeleland in 1989 once said, "I don't think we are being unreasonable if we say you commercial farmers, who own the best of the bulk of Zimbabwe's land because of history, should share part of it with the indigenous, displaced and landless blacks who are the majority" (Sunday Mail, 9 July 1989).

Political polarisation, suspicion and enmity between blacks and whites in post-war Zimbabwe made the willing seller willing buyer principle a fiasco. This therefore meant that the minority white farmers who constituted 1% of the population continued to own 65% of the best farmland in Zimbabwe whilst the black majority, constituting 9 million of the Zimbabwean population were left landless, relegated to marginal areas, infertile, tsetse-infested, sandy and jobless (Mubako, cited in Moyo, 2014). The socio-economic predicament of the native black communities residing in the rural areas also constituted to the ineffectiveness of the willing seller willing buyer principle. The overcrowding nature of the rural peasantry community and the poor and infertile nature of the soil made these communities to grow impatient, pugnacious and vociferous. Elich (2014) notes that, "Without land reform six million poor black farmers crowded into the [marginal] communal areas are likely to be driven from their homes as their land becomes incapable of producing crops, the lack of land reform, or even the delay in the implementation of land reform, could spell economic and human disaster of grand proportions" (Cited in Moyo, 2014). It was against this backdrop that in 1990 after the expiry of the willing seller willing buyer provision of the Lancaster House agreement the government of Zimbabwe adopted the Fast Track Land Reform Programme to redress the land imbalance.

Limited fiscal space on the side of the Zimbabwean government constricted the pace of the land reform programme. Being a third world banana republic that was just evolving from a devastating civil war, and inheriting a \$2 billion debt from Britain, Zimbabwe found it a mammoth task that is insurmountable to carry out a sound, expeditious and efficient land reform programme. Linington, (1999) further notes that, "For the first ten years of independence the government was precluded from embarking on a meaningful process of land redistribution because section 16 of the Constitution was effectively insulated from amendment during that time." Thus the legal framework designed by the former colonial master appeared as a hindrance to any effective move towards black empowerment and that led to the unpopular of the principle (Moyo, 2014).

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The pessimistic attitude of the white farmers towards the land reform programme also compromised the willing seller willing buyer principle. Given that the white farmer possessed the most fertile soils in the country as well as enjoying bountiful harvests of cash crops such as cotton, tobacco and maize, it means hardly any single farmer was willing to sell any piece of land for redistribution. More so, a free market willing seller, willing buyer basis was never going to adequately resolve the problem given that it depended on the will of the seller and the financial capacity of the buyer to take up any offer (Moyo, 2014). Land redistribution in the first fifteen years was very redundant especially on the supply side and became a signal for protracted economic and social calamity to come.

Britain, the United States of America and the donor community relinquished their financial support to the Zimbabwean land reform programme, alleging that it was marred by corruption. On the Zimbabwean side, financial suffocation from Britain, the United States and the donor community as well as the failure of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) meant that the resettled peasant farmers could not get sufficient support such as finance, farming implements, fertilisers, infrastructure such as roads, clinics and schools. On this note again, it is justified that Britain's policy of disengagement was retrogressive. Constructive dialogue with the Zimbabwean government and the establishment of transparent institutions which reimburse the funds to newly settled farmers would prove to be effective. The nature of the talks at the Lancaster House Conference also left a lot to be desired. The talks were a serious mistake in the sense that they included groups who were not well informed about the situation in the country. The liberation movements and the British government were all not clear about issues affecting sectors of the country they were not in direct contact with. The Rhodesian government and the United African National Congress went to the conference in bad faith (Surplus Project, 1992). They had a hidden agenda to consolidate a relationship, which had the aim to dignify the formation of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, which was born at Unilateral Declaration of Independence (Paulo, 2004).

#### Other Legislative failures of the Lancaster House Agreement:

It can be asserted that the constitution drafted at Lancaster was aimed to mummify the land reform programme as can be evidenced by the framing of Chapter 3(16) which gave room to the white farmers to object to any government intention towards acquisition of land by writing (within 30 days), thus giving room to the landowner to object (Moyo, 1991). The negotiations were not 'practical' negotiations in the sense that there were negotiation tactics employed to influence a decision reached hence the era is called the Lancaster House "mistake." These are some of the tactics that were employed at the conference:

- -Speedy attempts to bulldoze certain issues with insufficient data on the part of the liberation movement;
- -The threat to remove sanctions as to accept Muzorewa's UANC constituency;
- -Promises of financial and technical support to the resettlement;
- -An appeal to the liberation movement not to rush for land redistribution (Ibid, 1991).

The British government made some of the pledges to support the resettlement process, which were not honoured. The American "Kissinger Million" was stillborn and never to be mentioned soon after the Lancaster House Agreement (Moyo, 1991). Procrastination in the land redistribution process to a willing seller willing buyer for the next ten years was a Lancaster House ploy aimed at offsetting and fending off the land reform programme because Britain envisaged that Zimbabwe would be overwhelmed by population growth in the ten years hence rendering the exercise futile. Furthermore, over bureaucratisation of the purchasing and distribution of land which had been set up by the agreement was meant to make sure that the Zimbabwean land reform programme was going to be slow hence frustrating (Masilela and Weiner, 1996).

From the above discussed facts in this section, one is justified to argue that the issue of land at the Lancaster House Agreement was not dealt with effectively and fairly hence it bred sundry and unbearable consequences a decade and a half later. Britain was not honest in its dealings with its former colony, planting a constitutional landmine that would detonate years later and causing the severance of relations between it in particular and the International Community in general. Britain, with its financial muscle, could have simply honoured its financial obligations on the Zimbabwean land issue, ensuring that transparent and accountability was enhanced in the process, but, like a stubborn fly that is buried by the corpse, it maintained its stiff-necked stance towards Zimbabwe. The disengagement policy that was adopted by Britain

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also proved destructive to the land redistribution exercise as it widened the dichotomy between the two countries. It is therefore safely asserted that the Lancaster House Agreement did not satisfactorily and fairly deal with the land issue.

#### The Lancaster House Agreement in Retrospect:

The Zimbabwean-British political field is a field of pulling, shoving, elbowing, punching and hauling. None of the two countries admits shouldering the blame of whatever wrongs that transpired. However, there is general consensus on the Zimbabwean side that the Lancaster House Agreement was a failure since it continued to safeguard the interests of the colonisers at the expense of the colonised, hence furthering an elitist perspective. Although it succeeded in alluring the belligerent parties with a carrot and stick method of immediate political independence, it however short-changed the majority poor and landless Zimbabweans. Experiencing a gruesome evolutionary history of the Land Apportionment Act, Land Tenure Act, Land Husbandry Act, taxation and oppression, the majority of Zimbabweans agree that at the Lancaster House Agreement they only won political independence but lost economic independence. The Lancaster House Agreement therefore continued to be a thorn in the flesh, a constricting economic python and an elephant in the room towards black economic empowerment in Zimbabwe.

#### **Notable Successes of the Lancaster House Agreement:**

Although the Lancaster House Agreement has been widely vilified by the Zimbabweans as an economic policy failure document, it is however accredited with some great achievements on the political divide. Firstly, it shows how successful British diplomacy is concerning negotiation and mediation in conflict times. Secondly, it shows the success of a colonial power in granting independence peacefully to its former colony hence ensuring peaceful transition. Thirdly, it shows how successful British foreign policy was in averting continued civil war and bloodshed by instituting preventive diplomacy and ultimately granting independence. The British thus succeeded in necessitating a political compromise amongst the belligerent parties, safeguarding of human rights and democracy in Zimbabwe, which necessitated the policy of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. The British government also succeeded in restoring peace in Zimbabwe through its efforts of monitoring of elections and setting democratic and universal principles of such elections. This ensured a smooth transition that astonished many (Makumbe, 2010).

#### **Notable Failures of the Lancaster House Agreement:**

The Lancaster House Agreement, according to the natives of Zimbabwe, was so flawed, absurd and unilateral, safeguarding the interests of the white settlers at the expense of the black, poor and underprivileged Zimbabweans hence perpetuating its crisis of legitimacy. One fundamental problematic aspect of the agreement is that it was dominated by the British government which did not put the interests of the poverty-stricken and land-hungry natives of Zimbabwe at heart. In short, it appears that the proposed Zimbabwean constitution has been designed more to maintain the present structure of commercial agriculture than to address comprehensively the national problem of land (Riddell, 1980). A majority of the liberation movements perceived the constitution as unsatisfactory, as it lacked popular participation and contained unsavoury provisions. The liberation groups believed that a new constitution was needed to consolidate a democratic state in Zimbabwe once independence was achieved (Ndulo, 2001).

The 1980 Zimbabwean constitution was not very reflective of the wishes and aspirations of Zimbabweans as it had many residual colonial provisions especially on property rights which tilted in favour of the whites and whose provisions insulated the state from amending them. The constitution thus still maintained the colonial status quo. The Lancaster House Conference did not create the potential for the necessary institutional change-not merely the institutions in the political realm, but also the institutions that govern the way the economy functions and influence productivity and equity. The Lancaster House Conference itself failed to serve as a framework for local political and economic actors to negotiate the transformation from a colonial state with great economic disparities to a more equitable Zimbabwe, largely because it contained entrenched provisions, which ensured certain policies could not be changed until a specified time (Ndulo, 2001).

#### Other Dissenting Views of the Lancaster House Agreement:

The Lancaster House Agreement unfortunately had no binding or written commitment from Britain or from foreign donors to pay any fixed amount at any given time to Zimbabwe. The agreement thus had no contractual and binding obligations, and hence cannot be justiciable at the International Court of Justice. This made the Zimbabwean government

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to act politically than legally and executed the land reform programme. The British government had promised to avail 75 million pounds for the land redistribution programme, but this was not agreed formally on paper hence were just statements. On the other perspective, the United States government had also promised to inject financial support of \$500 million and again these were just informal promises without any binding force (De Villiers, 2003). The Africa All Party Parliamentary Group (2009), for example notes that, "The narrative that Britain 'betrayed' its promises at Lancaster House plays not only an active role, but an actively destructive role in the present politics of Zimbabwe." This accusation that Britain breached its financial obligations towards Zimbabwe at the Lancaster House Agreement does not hold any water since there was no concrete, formal or tangible agreement of any binding nature ever reached upon or established. All Party Parliamentary Group received no evidence from any source that behind the scenes at Lancaster House a deal was reached and a sum of money was agreed upon for land reform that Britain later reneged on. The narrative that Britain betrayed its promise at Lancaster House has no basis (Ibid, 2009).

Britain found it an uphill task to reverse the policies of colonial rule of more than a century ago which tilted in favour of whites. Such policies could not be rectified by a single conference. Some scholars equate the black economic defeat at the Lancaster House Conference as tantamount to economic capitulation. Mumbengegwi, (2001) notes that, "This agreement so compromised the character of the new Zimbabwean state that it was constrained from acting decisively in the interests of the peasants, especially over the land issue...The post-independence state found itself reduced to the role of mediator between the conflicting interests of the two agrarian classes (commercial farmers and peasants). The commercial farmers demanded continuity while the peasants expected change." The Lancaster House Agreement on land was thus a blank cheque for the majority poor and marginalised Zimbabweans, signalling the triumph of the forces of continuity over the forces of change.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Although Britain had satisfactorily, efficiently and effectively succeeded on the political divide (granting independence to Southern Rhodesia), its constitutional decision on the land issue left a lot to be desired especially by the poor natives of Zimbabwe who were clamouring for land for over a century. Although one is justified to argue that the white minority in Rhodesia were also justified and entitled to property rights since they were citizens, it is however not very sound since the blacks were the majority and the most impoverished class. The Lancaster House Agreement thus perpetuated eliticism by continuing to empower those who were economically advantaged and neglecting the majority third estate which was economically disadvantaged. Since some of the provisions promising compensation from the United States of America, donor community and Britain were not formally agreed upon and hence had no binding force, Britain might have been legally correct in reneging on its compensation promises but might have been morally wrong considering the millions of impoverished black natives of Southern Rhodesia who had been ravaged, raffled and pummelled by poverty, colonialism, imperialism, war and famine. At the Lancaster House Conference therefore, the African revolution turned outwards as the forces of continuity triumphed over the forces of change.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Britain should faithfully and fully honour its financial obligations on its former colony towards the land issue.
- Binding treaties and obligations should be fulfilled even if successive governments come to power. The fact that
  Zimbabwe had established such obligations with Britain and America justifies the fact that Britain and America still
  had an obligation to compensate for land redistribution regardless of whatever political party that comes to power in
  those states.
- Zimbabwe, particularly ZANU PF should de-politicise the land issue and desist from manipulating the land issue as a campaigning tool.
- The land issue in Zimbabwe should be dealt with amicably and equitably. Land should be distributed to all the needy, landless and poor Zimbabweans and not only to politicians, ministers, war veterans, ZANU PF youths and supporters and those who are politically connected to ZANU PF as is currently the case.
- All those war veterans, ZANU PF youths and militia, ministers and supporters who invaded farms should be evacuated and those farms returned to their rightful white owners.

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- All unproductive farms should be repossessed by the state and redistributed to productive white farmers.
- All white commercial farmers should be given back their land as they proved to be much more productive, hardworking and competent than black farmers. When Zimbabwe was under white commercial farmers, it was the largest producer of tobacco in the world contrary to what it is under black farmers (currently Zimbabwe ranks one of the poorest tobacco, maize and cotton producers in the world).
- Since white farmers are the answer and backbone of the Zimbabwean economy, they should be summoned back and granted strong incentivisation such as loans and grants in a quest to revamp agriculture, industry and mining so that the Zimbabwean economy may be on its feet again.
- Britain should honour its financial obligations on Zimbabwe to compensate the land issue only if white commercial farmers are called back to Zimbabwe to repossess their farms.
- Britain and America should lift sanctions on Zimbabwe only if the ZANU PF government restores back white farmland that it grabbed violently. If the white farmers are called back and given back their farms and lacks evacuated from those farms, then, and only then, can sanctions on Zimbabwe be lifted.
- The United Nations Security Council and the International Criminal Court should exercise their jurisdiction on Zimbabwe for crimes against humanity perpetrated by ZANU PF during and after the violent farm invasions.

#### **Grand Conclusion:**

Summatively, the Lancaster House Agreement came as a result of a gruesome civil war that had engulfed Southern Rhodesia for years. The agreement was necessitated by the brilliant British preventive diplomacy which was conducted through mediation and negotiation. The belligerent parties at the conference, the Patriotic Front, UANC and Rhodesian Front could not unanimously agree on common principles and hence had to compromise and agree to the terms of the independence constitution for the furtherance of the talks. The independence constitution formed the cornerstone of the Lancaster House Agreement and if all parties could put their differences aside and agree to the independence constitution, everything else could transpire smoothly. This is exactly what the British government managed to do, that is, to cajole the belligerent parties to agree to the independence constitution.

For Muzorewa, he found an opportunity to argue that there was no need of holding any elections since his government of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia had been democratically elected. For Smith, he took the platform to argue that he had bridged the gap between blacks and whites in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and had necessitated black representation in parliament. Patriotic Front leaders Mugabe and Nkomo were very sceptical about electoral fraud especially if the elections were left in the hands of Smith since Smith was suspected of intending to rig the elections in favour of Muzorewa. Patriotic Front leaders also expected the newly independent state to control the police and army. At that time, the British succeeded in making the warring parties to agree on the independence constitution which paved the way for elections and hence a smooth transition. At that time as well, the British had succeeded in ending the Rhodesian civil war hence averting further bloodshed as armed forces were ordered to demobilise, cease fire and amalgamate at assembly points.

The Lancaster House Constitution had some sound and solid provisions that were retained in the current Zimbabwean constitution. These clauses pertain to constitutional democracy, parliament system, and conduct of elections, the executive and criminal justice. Zimbabwe was to be a constitutional democracy and any law that was not in tandem with the constitution was deemed invalid. The Zimbabwean parliament was also to adopt the Westminster style, bicameral, transparent, educative, with immunities embedded on top plenipotentiaries of the House of Assembly. Conduct of elections was also to be done, in a transparent, free and fair environment which is in consonant with democratic principles. The Zimbabwean government also adopted the phenomenon of the executive prime minister and a ceremonial president which was inherited from the Lancaster House constitution, making a few marginal changes in 1987 at the Unity Accord by the advent of an executive president, and again utilised a similar concept in the 2010 government of national unity with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In the field of criminal justice, the Zimbabwean government inherited institutions such as the National Prosecuting Authority and the office of the Prosecutor General in a quest to maintain impunity. All these clauses were adopted from the Lancaster House Constitution since the new Zimbabwean government found such clauses successful, substantial and solid.

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Amid a plethora of provisions in the Lancaster House Constitution, the land issue formed the crux of the matter. It was the nucleus of the Lancaster House agreement. This is where the British government failed and planted a political and economic landmine that detonated a decade and a half later. Article 16(3) stipulated that land was to be distributed on a willing seller willing buyer basis for the next ten years waiting for further policy review. This was detrimental on the Zimbabwean perspective since the new state was debt-ridden and just evolving from war. Besides that, since land was the backbone of the people of Zimbabwe both black and white, no white farmers were prepared to dispose any piece of land to the state. The few farms that the Zimbabwean government obtained in that period were very infertile, sporadic and expensive, making it very difficult to carry out a sound and homogeneous land reform programme. To make matters worse, the money that was promised by the British was not made available to the Zimbabwean government hence this retarded the land resettlement programme. The poor black peasants and war veterans became restless, impatient and pugnacious, putting pressure on their government and demanding land. Attempts by the Zimbabwean government over the years to put the issue on the negotiation table were trivialised and fended off by the Blair administration. Successive governments that came to power from the Thatcher administration to the Major administration up to the Blair administration also meant that the issue was diluted at each stage. This lack of commitment from the British government irritated the Zimbabwean government which later embarked on violent farm invasions which were characterised by egregious violations of human rights.

By relegating the land issue to the voluntary market forces of willing seller willing buyer basis and the failure to support its impoverished former colony with money to carry out a sound and democratic land reform programme, the British in this regard failed. There are however other dissenting views on the Lancaster House Agreement who have supported the British side by saying that there was no any formal or written agreement between Zimbabwe and Britain which stipulated that a certain amount of money was going to be paid by the British government to the Zimbabwean government towards the land issue. Such views advocate that since there was no formal agreement, the idea that Britain betrayed Zimbabwe in this regard is repugnant, retrogressive, baseless and totally unfounded.

This paper's and objectives in this study have been satisfactorily achieved, that is, to assess the impact of the Lancaster House Agreement on the Zimbabwean people. The study has thus taken a standpoint, through research from other scholars, that the Lancaster House Agreement had a negative impact on the Zimbabwean people especially on the land issue which constituted the hot debate at the conference and which was the major cause of the civil war. The study has also undoubtedly succeeded in measuring the degree of success or failure of the Lancaster House Agreement, that is, to a greater extent the Lancaster House Agreement on land policy was a failure since it failed to address the major hot issue, creating sour relations later between Zimbabwe and Britain in particular and the International Community in general. However, to some extent it also succeeded in ending continued civil strife and bloodshed in Rhodesia. The study has also managed to evaluate the effectiveness of British preventive diplomacy as a success story. Britain displayed diplomatic maturity of unprecedented and unparalleled proportions that cannot be questioned or doubted. Equally importantly, the study has also managed to validate its assumption that the Lancaster House Agreement was a success on the political divide, but was a failure on the land policy in Zimbabwe. This is because its success was ephemeral on the land issue, which exploded one and a half decades later. To a greater extent therefore, this paper finds the authors' aims and objectives satisfactorily met and hopefully have also filled some gaps that other scholars may find substantial.

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