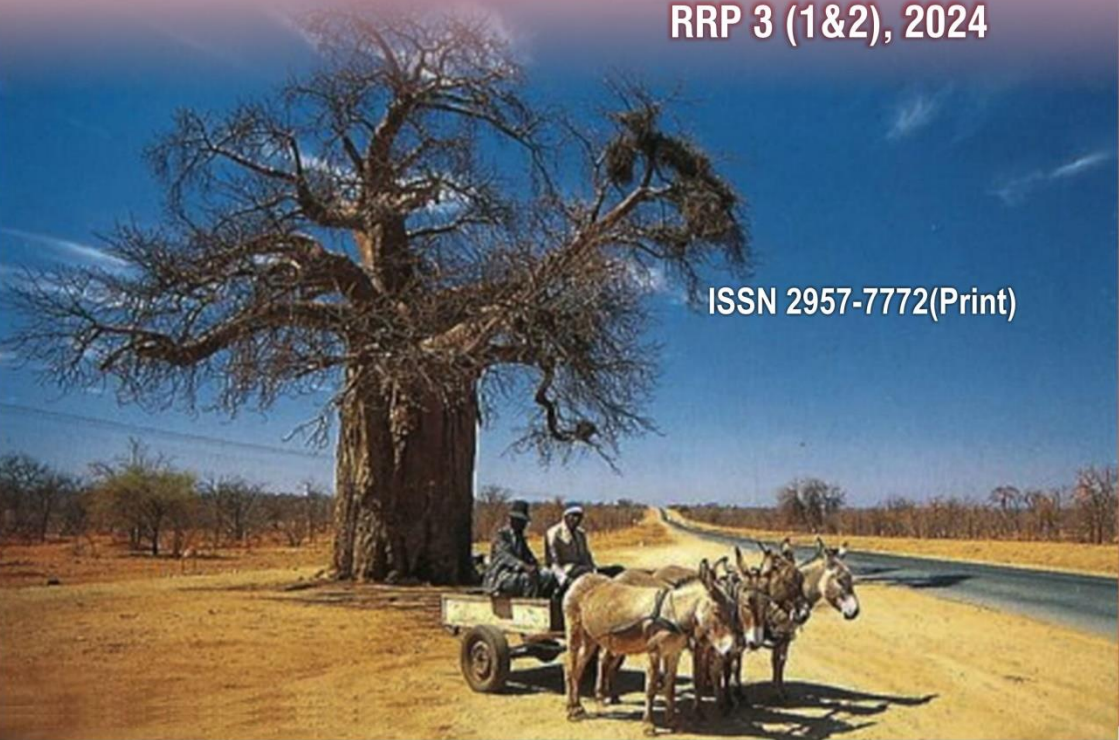




# REVIEW OF *Rural Resilience Praxis*

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The purpose of the *Review of Rural Resilience Praxis* is to provide a forum for disaster risk mitigation, adaptation, and preparedness.

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Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, economists, among others, whose focus is on rural resilience.

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Italicise *et al.*, *ibid.*, words that are not English, not names of people or organisations, etc. When you use several authors confirming the same point, state the point and bracket them in one bracket and in ascending order of dates and alphabetically separated by semi-colon e.g. (Falkenmark, 1989, 1990; Reddy, 2002; Dagdeviren and Robertson, 2011; Jacobsen *et al.*, 2012).

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# Rural Planning: Missing Link in Fast-track Resettlement Plots in Zimbabwe

RUMBIDZAI MPHALO<sup>1</sup>, MARLVIN MALINGANISO<sup>2</sup> AND MIRACLE P MABVUDWI<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

The Fast-Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe was undertaken to address the land question that the liberation struggle war had hitherto sought to use as a way of trying to correct the racial inequalities of resource distribution embedded in settler colonialism in Rhodesia. The land reform was undertaken mainly to address the poverty that was being faced by poor Zimbabweans in the erstwhile reserves who had limited access to productive agricultural land. Agriculture emerged as the key to poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe to lift most of the poor Zimbabweans and those who had returned from the war landless. The study critically explores how rural planning was not implemented in the resettlement process in Zimbabwe. The article examines the missing link in the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe as the government tried to resolve the inherent poverty in black African rural communities. The study used a qualitative methodology with a bias towards the case study design. The study concludes that the land reform has not realised its potential so far. This might be because it has a missing link that is it lacked rural planning. The study recommends the decentralisation of the resettlement process from the central government to the rural councils.

**Keywords:** *government, agriculture, poverty, livelihoods, stratification, infrastructure*

## INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the implementation of the land reform in Zimbabwe in 2000, the rural landscape was massively transformed (Moyo, 2011). With the reconfigured agrarian structure, the relationship between the rural areas and urban areas has changed, too (Scoones and Murimbarimba, 2020). There are on-going debates on how to create sustainable rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa. Research has found that development practitioners work with the assumption that rural societies in sub-Saharan Africa are eager to embrace

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modernisation (Phuhlisani, 2009). For this reason, the modalities of rural development in most sub-Saharan communities has focused on transforming them into urban settlements, instead of making them more liveable rural areas (Chigbu, 2013).

Thebe (2018) observes that there is growing dissatisfaction with the post-colonial rural development policies in Zimbabwe, land reform and agricultural developments included. The post-colonial state in Zimbabwe seems to have an official policy of transforming rural areas into modern zones where small-farm agriculture can be promoted as a vehicle for development and growth (Thebe 2018). Chaumba *et al.* (2003) argue that agricultural-related policies of rural development policies in the post-colonial era are an extension of colonial policies of the 1950s. A key area of policy continuity in post-colonial Zimbabwe is the emphasis on centralisation together with agricultural betterment approaches as evidenced by the popularity of the villagisation models after independence (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003).

Thebe (2018) observes that these two assumptions form the basis for planning resettlement schemes (Model A and A1) and by extension communal areas across all five agro-ecological regions. Due to the discriminatory and inequitable land ownership laws of the Rhodesian state, it was to be expected that a popularly elected post-colonial government would adopt a redistribution policy to address the question of access and control of the nation's fundamental yet highly emotive asset land (Gonese *et al.*, 2002). This article critically addresses the view that planning is the missing link in the fast-track resettlement in Zimbabwe as the process was fast-tracked with no planning or models to be followed in the redistribution of land.

The study seeks to understand how the resettlement process in Zimbabwe lacked rural planning. The study aims to understand how the resettlement process in Zimbabwe was undertaken and implemented without considering rural planning. The study seeks to reveal the connection between rural planning and the resettlement process. There is a gap in the existing literature as the existing literature focuses mainly on how the land reform addressed the overpopulation in the reserves (Gonese *et al.*, 2002, Chaumba *et al.*, 2002 and Kabonga, 2020) the literature gap is on rural planning and the resettlement process. It is at the backdrop of the lack of rural planning that the study seeks to explore an understanding on how the land reform programme overlooked rural planning in resettling people. The study can be significant beyond the academic scope and inform policy makers and rural planners on how to deal with the aberrations of the resettlement process such as human-wildlife



conflict. The study is significant in closing the literature gap in addressing the link between rural planning and resettlement. The study is organised in this way, introduction, theoretical framework, literature review, methodology, presentation of findings, discussion of the findings, conclusion and the reference.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING THE STUDY**

The theory that guides this study is the theory of change as posited by Weiss (1995) theory of change simply and elegantly navigates how and why an initiative fails to work. AUDA-NEPAD (2019) argued that the blueprint that envisages change largely comes from generating political commitment and will, changing the rules of the game, getting and enhancing voices and participation by rural residents. Kabonga (2020) observed that a sound initiative requires a developmental state and political leadership, building multi-sectoral institutions for rural transformation prioritising decentralisation to create competent rural planning strategies at all levels. This envisages rural planning that can bring about development of rural infrastructure stimulating growth of rural non-farm and farm economy strengthening the resettlement areas through improved rural planning (Kabonga, 2020).

Rural planning is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of communities living in unpopulated areas (Queensland Farms' Federation, 2024). Thus, the study chose the theory of change because the theoretical lens sharpens the rural planning and implementation of the resettlement process. The theory becomes appropriate in this study as the resettlement process in Zimbabwe had a missing link that is it lacked rural planning as Ndlovu (2015) observed that the process of resettlement in Zimbabwe resettled people into areas reserved for wildlife causing human-wildlife conflict limiting change of quality of life and economic well-being. The study becomes applicable to the study as it encourages political commitment and will to transform rural communities through adding rural planning to the resettlement processes.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section provides the literature review that will guide the crafting of the discourse on the rural planning and resettlement process providing a contextual historical background on the resettlement issues in Zimbabwe. The review show how the current models of resettlement come short of producing productive results in Zimbabwe as rural planning is the missing link.

## **RURAL PLANNING AND THE FAST-TRACK LAND REFORM IN ZIMBABWE**

Rural planning is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of communities living in relatively unpopulated areas rich in natural resources (Queensland Farms' Federation, 2024). Rural development has traditionally focused on the exploitation of natural resources such as agriculture forestry and mining (Queensland Farms' Federation, 2024). Planning in rural areas aims to allow the establishment and operation of productive agricultural industries while conserving important natural areas allowing urban activities in appropriate areas (Dandekar, 2002). Rural planning is about developing and practicing physical and human capital and addressing the at times conflicting goals of economic development and resource conservation (Dandekar, 2015). Tomaney *et al.* (2019) observed that regional planning provides a critical framework for rural development and planning. Rural planning encompasses both the development of agriculture and natural resources minerals, forests, fisheries improving the access of rural people to infrastructure, education, housing and amenities (Dandekar, 2015).

Gallent (2015) observed that rural planning combines land-use and spatial planning elements with community action, countryside management and the projects of national and supra-national agencies and organisations. OECD (2017) posits that rural planning navigates the key challenges facing rural communities and the ways that public policy and community action shape rural spaces. Rural planning offers a broad analysis of entrepreneurial social action as a shaper of rural outcomes with particular coverage of the localism agenda and neighbourhood planning (Gallent, 2015). Marabuka (2013) observes that the land legislations during the colonial era were discriminatory and by 1979 when it was clear and obvious that the liberation movement would in the event of an outright military victory institute a radical land redistribution and agrarian reform policy several options were put forward that aimed at deflating and obviating such an eventuality. The Fast-track Land Reform in Zimbabwe lacked rural planning as it only constituted making the economic lives of the people better notwithstanding the fact that there was a need for improvement of infrastructure and other amenities.

At independence in 1980, whites who constituted 3% of the population controlled 51% of the country's farming land (44% of Zimbabwe's total land area), with about 75% of the prime agricultural land under the Large-Scale Commercial Farming (LSCF) sector (Weiner *et al.*, 1985) and hence inaccessible to the black majority. Farm sizes in the Large-Scale Commercial Farming Sector ranged between 500 and 2000 hectares, with most of them located in the better agro-ecological regions I, II, and III (Marongwe *et al.*,

2011). This necessitated the Fast-track Land Reform in Zimbabwe as the land question remained unanswered in the post-independence era. Communal Areas (CAs), that were home to about 4.3 million blacks that constituted 72% of the rural population, had access to only 42% of the land, three-quarters of which was in the poor agro-ecological regions IV and V. Poverty was concentrated in the Communal Areas with Government estimating that more than half of the households had few or no cattle to use as draught power (TNDP, 1982, Kabonga, 2020).

Given this background, land reform became welfarist in settler selection criteria that emphasised the landless, the poor, and war-displaced were not allowed to be in formal employment, giving credence to the use of land resettlement as a tool for fighting poverty (Marongwe *et al.*, 2011). The liberation struggle that claimed the lives of thousands of Zimbabwe's sons and daughters was waged to ensure that the historical dispossession was reversed, and the land was returned to its rightful owners (Mangena, 2014). The need for land redistribution was evident at the independence with highly skewed land distribution, with around 6,000 white-owned farms and several large agro-industrial estates occupying more than a third of the country's land area, much of its areas of higher agricultural potential (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003). Moyo and Chambati (2013) rank land redistribution among the major reasons that underlined the nationalist movement in Rhodesia. It is an uncontested truth that the land in Zimbabwe had to be redistributed given the historical imbalances (Kabonga and Marime, 2017). Munemo (2016) argue that during the Lancaster House discussions Lord Carrington wittingly made sure that the clause on land redistribution only stipulated that any form of land reform had to be done 10 years after independence without a guarantee that Britain would finance the land Reform Programme.

Land reform in Zimbabwe has emphasized poverty alleviation and this is operationalized through the programme objectives that sought to allocate land to the poor (Marabuka, 2013). Land allocation in the country is done through respective resettlement models, with the most relevant to the discussion on poverty alleviation being Model A, that has since assumed a new name as the A1 resettlement model and A2 emphasized commercial farming and increasing production to alleviate poverty (Marabuka, 2013). The Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe facilitated the transfer of land to nearly 170000 households excluding the informal settlements that are largely excluded from the official fast track programme (Moyo, 2011). The idea of redistributing land is not only peculiar to Zimbabwe but is practised in both developed and developing countries, more so in the developing world where

historical inequalities in terms of access to land demanded changes in such inequalities (Kabonga, 2020).

The reviewed literature has shown that the land issue in Zimbabwe's post-colonial state presented an area of contention as the area was fraught with imbalances and inequities from the past that needed to be corrected and the post-colonial government tried to correct the mistakes of the past by trying to create social cohesion through the land reform co-existence between settlers and natives. The literature also showed that land reform created tension between the West and Zimbabwe plunging the country into economic turmoil as the process of land reform was fast-tracked. The reviewed literature presented the Land Reform Programme as a strategy by the post-colonial government to address and alleviate poverty among the natives there are gaps in this literature as it does not highlight that most of the people in communal areas lacked the knowledge to operate commercial farms and the literature does not highlight how the economy took a nose dive after the programme and how rural poverty increased.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology with a case study research design. A case study research design focus on holistic description and explanation, flexibility in the design and data collection methods, reliance on multiple sources of evidence, and emphasis on the context in which phenomenon occurs (Crowe, 2011). In the setting of this study, the article used secondary data from published books and journals comparing sources and revealing that rural planning is the missing link in the Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe. The study used narrative data analysis to analysis.

## **FINDINGS**

The study findings indicate that the Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe has a missing link that is rural planning as the findings of Kabonga (2020) revealed that the land reform in Zimbabwe was done to address the inequalities of the past and answer the land questions of the War of Liberation. The findings of Marongwe *et al.* (2011) revealed that Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 and embarked upon its land Reform Programme thereafter for a period spanning almost 30 years, the country's land Reform Programme has undergone changes in terms of its key implementation characteristics, including methods of land acquisition and quality of land acquired, scale of beneficiaries, objectives of land reform and provision of support services, among other issues. The rationale for the land reform was that the historical inequalities in Zimbabwe demanded action by

the government and its citizens' policy shift have, over the years since 1980, however, been necessitated by the need to achieve a reasonable balance between equity objectives and efficiency of production through various approaches to land acquisition and redistribution (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003, Gonese *et al.*, 2002).

The findings from the Government of Zimbabwe (1985) indicate that in the early stages of resettlement, poverty alleviation and decongestion of the communal lands were central objectives of land reform thus, initially the criteria for resettlement emphasized, among other categories, the landless or those with too little land to support themselves and their dependents, the unemployed, the poor and the returning refugees this strategy only looked at the need to address the inequalities and give land to the landless without considering the impacts of these moves on production and rural development. The findings from (Thierfelder *et al.* 2015) indicate that there was a significant agricultural production shift during the FTLRP (Fast-Track Land Reform Programme) period affecting the major crops and livestock and the infrastructure and technologies around the agricultural industry also collapsed the optimal utilisation of available technologies especially for the peasantry was constrained by limited access to inputs, such as machinery, equipment and infrastructure seeds, fertilizers chemicals thus, limiting the areas planted to most crops at the back of droughts hence missing in this resettlement was rural planning.

Marlowe *et al.* (2011) observes that gradual emphasis shifted to production-oriented goals, although this was abandoned in the Fast-Track resettlement (post-2000) period, the overall, changes in the implementation characteristics of land reform had a bearing on the performance of land reform, especially its ability to reduce poverty among beneficiaries and even beyond. Marabuka (2013) reveals that what never changed in almost 30 years of the implementation of the land reform and resettlement is the political set-up and governance systems providing policy direction to the programme and work on the assessment of the land Reform Programme has often overlooked the limitation that from the fact that only ZANU-PF, a liberation war based political party is at the helm of governance of the country. Bangwayo *et al.* (2010) observe that the colonial legacy left a disproportionate distribution of fertile lands in the hands of few white settlers showing the need to redistribute land. Marongwe *et al.* (2011) observe that whilst it is understood that land reform, seeks to address poverty alleviation, not much is invested in unpacking poverty at the local level as the discussion has failed to unpack

social differentiation among smallholder farmers has not been factored in the land reform.

The findings of Gunning *et al.* (2000) indicate that households in resettlement schemes had higher incomes, lower income variability and more evenly distributed incomes but worryingly higher childhood malnutrition levels than their counterparts in the communal areas showing that the missing link in resettlement is planning. The findings from Scoones and Wolmer (2003) show that resettlement had a missing link in rural planning as the process became violent and politically charged such that the beneficiaries became political party supporters rather than the intended targets the poor and the landless and this affected production leading hunger and starvation. The findings from Scoones and Wolmer (2003) posit that the fast-track planning process was to merely ratify and formalise the self-allocations of the land done during the Jambanja in 2000 and it rarely involved considerable reallocation of land, and this had no rural planning but it only had a plan to ratify what had been done to placate the war veterans that campaigned for the 2002 elections using land as the reward.

Ndlovu (2015) observes that in Matobo District land reform lacked rural planning as the people were resettled in areas that formerly housed wildlife as commercial farmers were replaced by less experienced subsistence farmers. Ndlovu (2015) argue that these subsistence farmers brought too many domesticated animals in areas with limited pastureland. Ndlovu (2015) argues that the land reform programme in Matobo District introduced small-scale farmers into farms that were originally occupied by commercial farmers who knew how to deal with wildlife and these farmers have converted these farms into subsistence farms using traditional techniques. This indicates that the land reform programme in Matobo District lacked rural planning. Williams (2011) revealed that one other area that the land reform lacked rural planning was the Save Valley Conservancy where people were resettled in areas that were used to conserve wildlife and this created human-wildlife conflict with the newly resettled subsistence farmers struggling with keeping wildlife away from their domesticated animals. This evidence observes that land reform lacked rural planning in Zimbabwe.

Chaumba *et al.* (2003) observe that the resettlement process was too hasty, incoherent, haphazard, unsystematic, chaotic, and lacking in rigour the criteria for settler selection was not transparent, vague and subject to cronyism, and there is frequent and sustained criticism of the dumping of people on land without adequate infrastructure (roads, shops, clinics) and with insufficient

provision of inputs, credit and marketing assistance and agricultural extension advice. The findings of Scoones and Wolmer (2003) indicate that there was no planning in the resettlement process as the government just grouped people and settled them in a bush with no adequate infrastructure this led to the lack of poverty reduction and the resettlement process missing out on its goals of poverty reduction and correcting the inequities of the past. The findings of Ndlovu (2015) indicated that the government resettled people in the Matobo District in areas that used to be reserved for wildlife. Williams (2011) indicates that the land resettlement in Save area resettled people in conserved areas that formerly housed wildlife such that they had to clear the land and set traps for wild animals to avoid livestock predation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study show that the land reform programme had a missing link as the main goal of the programme was to address the inequalities from colonialism without proper rural planning. The study revealed that the resettlement programme was done to answer the Liberation War land question and placate the war veterans and the electorate for the ruling party in Zimbabwe showing the lack of rural planning. The study showed that the ruling party was starting to lose popularity and therefore, introduced land reform hence, the process lacked rural planning as it was driven by political motives rather than rural planning and development. In support of these findings is Thierfelder *et al.* (2015) who observes that the resettlement process in Zimbabwe lacked planning as it was just to placate the electorate to vote for the ruling party in the 2000 and 2002 general elections after the party had lost the referendum vote for the new constitution. Similar to the study are Scoones and Wolmer (2003) who observe that the resettlement process in Zimbabwe was just the ratification of the Jambanja it lacked rural planning as it was to rubber stamp the political tensions between the government and the war veterans on the land question. This is consistent with the theoretical framework as it signals the need for change in the resettlement process with the inclusion of rural planning as observed by Weiss (1995) that there is a need for change to transform rural lives through infrastructural development,

The study revealed that the resettlement lacked rural planning as the implementation characteristics keep changing even the land acquisition and the quality of land acquired. Consistent with the study are Chaumba *et al.* (2003) who observed that the resettlement process lacked planning as it ended up resembling the colonial land apportionment. The study showed that the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe lacked rural planning as it only targeted decongestion and poverty alleviation in the reserves without considering the

human capital, financial capital, and natural capital. Concurrent with these findings is the theoretical framework the theory of change as observed by Connell *et al.* (1995) that there is a need for a change in political will through decentralisation and including rural planning in the resettlement process to change economic well-being.

The study revealed that the land reform programme lacked rural planning as it created human-wildlife conflict by resettling people into areas where wildlife resided. In line with these findings is Chimimba (2015) who observes that land reform created human-wildlife conflicts and the hunting and trapping of endangered carnivorous species. The study showed that the lack of rural planning in the process led to the shift in production of the major crops in farms as the incoming farmers lacked human and financial capital due to a lack of training and financial resources to undertake large-scale farming. From the findings of this study it can be deduced that rural planning remains the missing link in the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe as the process was done as a corrective measure rather than a development measure it lacked the foresight and hindsight of what the outgoing farmers had to pose the land as despite having the white skin these farmers also had intensive training, skills and financial capacity to operate these lands while the incoming farmers had at most the black skin and slogans. The resettlement programme in Zimbabwe had a missing link that is rural planning it missed the human and financial capital on the selection of the beneficiaries of the programme as the people that benefited could not develop infrastructure, technologies needed for large-scale farming, and even the capacity to produce the livestock needed for the country to meet the required quantity for poverty alleviation.

The study revealed that the resettlement programme in Zimbabwe had a missing link that is rural planning as it was spearheaded along political party lines, rather than through national development strategies as this would have incorporated rural planning. Consistent with the findings is Munemo (2016) who showed that the resettlement process was hijacked and ended up favouring people along the lines of sloganeering dexterity rather than the people in need of land that are good at farming. The study showed that resettlement targeted poverty alleviation, but it overlooked social differentiation among the beneficiaries of the programme as it lacked rural planning it did not understand the financial capitals of the beneficiaries hence, they failed to develop infrastructure and acquire technologies that propel productivity. The findings of the study indicated that there was no planning in the resettlement programme as the government grouped people in bushes with no infrastructure or technological tools for productive farming this made



agriculture come short of rural development as this strategy lacked rural planning. Similar to the study Moyo and Chambati (2013) observe that the real resettlement favoured the government elites, and the rest of the beneficiaries were just grouped in places with no developed infrastructure signalling a lack of rural planning in the resettlement process.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study revealed that the land resettlement programme in Zimbabwe targeted to address the land question raised in liberation struggle and alleviate poverty. The study revealed that the land resettlement programme did not factor in rural planning as it offered land along political party loyalty lines. The study showed that the Land Reform Programme lacked rural planning as it brought the human-wildlife conflict by resettling people into areas inhabited by wildlife leading to livestock predation. It can then be concluded that the resettlement process in Zimbabwe had a missing link than is rural planning as it deviated from its core tenets that is to address the mistakes of colonialism by giving back land to the rightful owners hence the process ended up being captured along political party lines and political elites gained more than other people. The resettlement process in Zimbabwe lacked rural planning as some people ended up being resettled in areas with no infrastructure with no chance of development hence the goal of resettlement to alleviate poverty was thwarted in the process making rural development impossible.

The resettlement programme lacked rural planning matrixes as the compensation of white settlers after the land reform goes against the Kissinger Plan of 1976 with the second republic on the re-engagement drive the gains of the resettlement are exposed as something that lacked planning through the compensation of the white farmers instead of the white farmers compensating Zimbabweans for ill-treatment during colonial rule. From the study, it can be deduced that the Land Reform Programme lacked rural planning as the beneficiaries of the programme were never trained on how to utilise large scales of land this made the process lack planning as this impeded poverty alleviation through the underperformance of the beneficiaries in agriculture that the government believed would alleviate families from poverty.

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