CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION
For the past twenty – five years, the Zimbabwean government has engaged in a land redistribution programme that continues to be supported and contested by many different internal and international actors. As a result, Zimbabwe’s foreign policy toward Britain and South Africa and visa versa has been greatly influenced by the land redistribution programme, and all three countries have been in the headlines as a result of it for the last few years.

The aim of this research report is to investigate the Zimbabwean land redistribution programme, and place it on the international stage. This is done through applying it to political discourse and domestic and international foreign policy theory in order to highlight the importance of the land programme and how international governments work with and against one another to achieve certain aims. This refers to regional co-operation in southern Africa, and the involvement of the rest of the international community with Zimbabwe and the effects of this on Zimbabwe. This is achieved through a critical examination of an international relations discourse, and an investigation of international law. International treaties that Zimbabwe is party to, such as the ICCPR, are particularly important in international law because they provide concrete examples that, as will be shown, support the research.

Examples of international relations discourses that will be investigated with regard to the topic are Realism, Liberalism, Normative Theory and the International Society Approach. These theories will be used to explain the many facets of the case and highlight aspects of their critiques in order to support the research. In international relations, the internal workings of a nation state go hand in hand with that state’s foreign policy and the role that state plays in the regional and international community. The international relations theory used in this research highlights and explains this concept in order to contribute to a better understanding of Zimbabwe’s internal politics and its foreign policy.
Land redistribution in Zimbabwe from so-called ‘white colonial’ farmer into the hands of ‘native Zimbabweans’ is entrenched in the history of the country. The path that Robert Mugabe’s rule has taken over the last quarter of a century also has its roots in the country’s history - colonial Europeans took land from the Africans during Britain’s rule of Zimbabwe.¹

In 1898 the Southern Rhodesian Order in Council established a legislative council to govern the area² (at this time, Southern Rhodesia was not yet a colony; the British South Africa Company ran it).³ In 1907, European land settlement in Zimbabwe was encouraged, thus beginning the Zimbabwean land debate.⁴ Later, in 1925 the Morris – Carter Commission formed the permanent basis of division of land into African and European areas, followed by the 1931 Land Appointment Act.⁵ Over the following years, African homelands were lost to white settlers. Africans lived in tribal trusts (part of the Tribal Trust Land Act of 1961), and the large majority of Africans were left landless, unemployed and starving.⁶

Pro–majority rule political parties began to emerge in the late 1950’s. In 1957, the African National Congress (ANC) was launched.⁷ It was subsequently banned two years later and reformed in 1960 as the National Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP was banned in 1961 and regrouped to form the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU).⁸ In 1963, the breakaway party to ZAPU was formed and was named the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).⁹ The two pro–independence parties ZAPU and ZANU joined in 1976 to form the Patriotic Front.¹⁰ It is important to note here that the white majority ruled government of Rhodesia issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from the United Kingdom (UK) in 1965, following British pressure to begin constitutional talks toward majority rule.¹¹ Britain and the majority of the international community considered UDI unconstitutional and illegal and as a result imposed sanctions on Rhodesia.¹² This was supported by African nationalists but the Smith regime refused to recognize it.

A declaration of independence is a proclamation of the independence of a newly formed or reformed country from part or the whole of the territory of another, or a document containing such a declaration. Declarations of independence are generally made by one side without the consent of the previous government, and hence are often called
Unilateral declaration of independence (UDI)... In international law, unilateral declarations of independence are generally frowned upon, since preservation of territory is one of the few things that countries of the world universally agree on.

The United Nations (UN) Security Council imposed mandatory economic sanctions against Rhodesia in 1966. In 1968 the UN broadened the sanctions into a total embargo on virtually all commercial relations with Rhodesia.

After the UDI, Rhodesia declared itself a republic in 1970.

Smith did sign an accord in 1978 with three moderate black leaders headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa that introduced universal suffrage and a black majority rule with safeguards for whites, but when the Africans fighting against the Smith government began to turn the tide, Smith was forced to the negotiating table in 1979 and subsequently lost the 1980 elections to Mugabe in a landslide victory.

This history forms the backbone of this research because it marks the beginning of an unfolding process centred on land. The Lancaster House Conference in 1979 (that forced Smith to the negotiating table) specifically, highlights the many different aspect of Zimbabwean policy and international involvement that will be expanded upon.

There were so many people involved in the negotiating process of the Lancaster House Conference in 1979, from Apartheid South Africa and liberated Mozambique, to the UK itself and the United States. The granting of independence to the liberation movement was conditional – and imposed a number of limitations on the new government (see Appendix 1). Although conditional, white and black Rhodesians were part of this process and could accept or refuse the stipulated conditions.

One provision stipulated that for a period of ten years, land ownership in Zimbabwe could only be transferred on a “willing seller, willing buyer” basis, a formula that affectively stymied any meaningful attempt at land reform. Whites were also allocated a quota of 20 out of the 100 seats in Parliament, far exceeding their actual percentage in the population, and the measure had the effect of making constitutional change nearly impossible.
The Lancaster House Conference set the scene for what would become a raging land debate in Zimbabwe. It was not seeking human rights or democracy – it was fundamentally undemocratic because the provisions in the agreement ignored the need for social justice in the country. As David Monyae, International Relations lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, puts it: “It (the outcome of the Lancaster House Conference) was pregnant with contradictions…it ensured a soft – landing for white Rhodesians in the face of political change.”21

Since one cannot analyse then Rhodesia without looking at the global political situation, it is important to place event in context. During the Lancaster House Conference, apartheid South Africa practised institutionalised racial segregation, favouring the white minority, and it is therefore not difficult to understand why they backed a constitution for Zimbabwe that had safe – guards for whites.

Another major factor that greatly influenced Zimbabwe’s land reform process was the notion of “willing seller, willing buyer”. Centuries of inequality could not be solved this way due to the fact that Zimbabwe had no black bourgeoisie and therefore the “landless” could not afford to buy land.22 Also, due to the fact that the state was, and to some extent still is, the only arena of capital accumulation, it is not surprising that after independence black political figures were the ones who bought land – they were the ones with the money.23 Also, the problem of land has never been solved in any country by relying on sales based on market prices. The issue of land around the world has been settled in blood, for example, the land that was fought for between Native American Indians and immigrants in North America.24 Also, land redistribution in South Africa has thus far not played out like the redistribution in Zimbabwe. The redistribution process in South Africa has not been without violent incidents, yet the reason it has not progressed to all – out violence is the fact that South Africa’s legal system (unlike Zimbabwe’s) is still strong (uphold the rule of law and entrenched human rights) and fair.
The above-mentioned issues set the scene for the land debate in Zimbabwe and show how many different factors contribute to this research. These factors are divided up and explained in the section entitled “Chapter Outlines.”

RATIONALE

The rationale of this research is as follows:

In terms of this thesis topic specifically, the notion of land rights are extremely important. As Lerato Mbele, Research Co-ordinator for The South African Institute of International Affairs wrote in her article “The Land Question, Myth or Reality?”

Land rights are human rights! Not because Robert Mugabe says so, but because our history and identity are embedded in the soil. Observe any ritual for the rights of passage and you will see offerings being poured out onto the ground. Not just in Africa, by the way. Even in biblical history, people were ordered to present the first fruits of their labour to God. Labour involved ploughing the earth. All of us, irrespective of race, culture or creed bury our dead in the ground, or at least pour ashes out onto the soil. As such, land is the embodiment of a person’s spirit and their foregone existence...In real terms, land is the mainstay of human survival (whether or not you buy genetically modified foods). This is especially true in Africa where about 80% of the population is agrarian, and approximately 70% of economies rely on agricultural exports. The expansion of African trade therefore depends on the productivity of the land and the profits accrued in the agricultural sector.25

Land has always been, and continues to be a significant issue on the African continent. Zimbabwe’s internal politics created the land problem in the country, but since its independence, its foreign policy too has been tied to the land crisis.

Prior to independence in 1980, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe’s former name) was a British colony. Also, the initial phases of Zimbabwe’s land redistribution were funded in part by the British government as agreed in the Lancaster House Conference, which created an independent Zimbabwe. These two facts have governed Zimbabwean foreign policy toward Britain during the last twenty – five years of the land redistribution programme. Britain later withdrew funding due to the fact that it did not feel that the land process in Zimbabwe was being carried out democratically.26 Zimbabwe felt that the flow of British funds was slow considering the pressure from
the masses for land. These different attitudes of the two countries resulted in a breakdown in foreign relations. Robert Mugabe has also cited Western and European interference and influence (mainly British) in Africa as the main reason why Africa should be left to its own devices. In other words, he has justified his land redistribution programme by blaming the British for creating the problem in the first place. By this he means that colonialism created Zimbabwe’s land problem initially. However, as award – winning South African journalist and author of *Beyond the Miracle*, Allister Sparks says, British presence in Zimbabwe from early on may have been exploitative, but it also brought the modern world and development to Zimbabwe.  

Moving on to Zimbabwean relations with South Africa - these began prior to independence, with the Apartheid government in South Africa supporting the Ian Smith regime during the guerilla war in Rhodesia in the 1970’s (after UDI). South Africa supplied the white minority government in Rhodesia with substantial foreign investment, arms, and ammunition in order to help them fight the African liberation movement. Also, prior to 1980, both countries practiced a capitalist system that focused on mining and agriculture with a racial division of labour. In this respect, the countries were very similar to one another, and therefore understood each other economically and politically speaking.

Much of the internal unrest experienced in Zimbabwe has been caused to a large extent by its land redistribution programme. For this reason, Zimbabwe’s foreign policy toward South Africa continues to be affected by it. Also, since the democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, South Africa’s own foreign policy aims have changed from that of intervention to that of diplomacy in the region. These two aspects make the foreign policy between these two countries both interesting and complicated.

South African and British foreign policy toward Zimbabwe is also important as Britain is an influential international leader, and South Africa is an important leader in the Southern African region. Thabo Mkebi’s so – called “quiet diplomacy” toward Zimbabwe has received much media attention over the last few years, with many of his countrymen being sharply critical of his approach. South Africa’s history in the
Southern African region prior to 1994 was based on a policy of destabilization - one centred around power, and South Africa enforcing its power on other countries, for example, its backing of UNITA in Angola in the late 1980’s. However, since 1994, South African foreign policy has shifted from one of imposing power to one of using its power to keep a balance in the region. This new foreign policy approach is based on diplomacy, which by its very nature is quiet. Mbeki has been criticised for not affecting any real change in Zimbabwe, and for being so “quiet” on the subject.

Britain has played a significant role in the international community’s approach toward Zimbabwe – it refused to continue to fund the land redistribution programme in 1998 unless it was carried out in a transparent, fair and sustainable manner with proper respect for the law. This was because after Britain’s initial funding for the programme, it came out (in the media particularly) that farms were being taken away from their owners illegally, there was illegal squatting on land that had yet to be allocated, land owners were being threatened and abused by so – called “war veterans”. Land was not going to the poorest people who really needed it. The Zimbabwean government argued that the money was not coming in fast enough, and the pressure from its people was fierce. One has to consider that the illegal seizure of land in Zimbabwe happened so fast that Britain was powerless to stop it. British stipulations in 1998 were ignored and British funding was then cut. The situation steadily worsened relations between Zimbabwe, Britain and the other members of the Commonwealth, leading in 2002 to the country’s suspension from that organisation.

This research is important because it adds to the discourse surrounding Zimbabwe and explains international relations in a practical context. This report included many domestic and international factors when looking at land redistribution in Zimbabwe. The historical section is one often omitted in academic research. This research provides the reader with the initial knowledge they need in terms of contextualising the case study, and then gives it a practical application in terms of domestic and foreign policy, and regional and international co – operation.

**METHODOLOGY**

**1.1 Introduction**
This section outlines the methodological approach that will be taken to this research, that is, the way in which the research will be carried out. It highlights the type of research being done (qualitative), and the way in which it should and will be carried out.

Qualitative research refers to:

...that generic research approach in social research according to which research takes as its departure point the insider perspective on social action. Qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves.  

The way in which qualitative research design distinguishes itself from quantitative design, includes a focus on process rather than outcome, a primary aim of in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events, and a main concern of understanding social actions in terms of its specific context.  

Qualitative researchers have always primarily been interested in describing the actions of the research participants in great detail, and then attempting to understand these actions in terms of the actors’ own beliefs, history and context. Qualitative description however is vastly different from the kind of quantitative, statistical descriptions that are typical of experimental and survey studies. Instead of focusing on counting and quantifying patterns in behaviour, the emphasis in qualitative description is on ‘thick description’.  

“Research methodology focuses on the research process and the kinds of tools and procedures to be used.” It also focuses on the specific data collection at hand, and the most objective procedures to follow.  

Due to the fact that this study focuses specifically on the Zimbabwean land redistribution process, it falls under the case study section of research literature:

The case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit (Handel, 1991; Runyan, 1982; Yin, 1994). Most case studies involve the examination of multiple variables. The interaction of the unit of study with its context, is a significant part of the investigation. Thickly described case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of a multilevel social system...
In terms of this research report, this is a case study of land redistribution in Zimbabwe, and includes other variables such as human rights and foreign policy.

Validity and objectivity is also vitally important in qualitative research. Ultimately, objectivity consists less of ‘controlling for extraneous variables’ and more of generating truthful and credible inter-subjectivity. This means that the researcher controls any sources of error that might affect the results. Generating legitimate and truthful descriptions is vital. Validity can be achieved by regularly referring to ones notes so that one can adjust its design as the research progresses, since the social world is not static.

Credibility is achieved through adequate use of references, covering the topic over a period of time, and persistent observation.

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. This can be achieved through thick description and purposive sampling (by choosing different, specific informants to maximize the range of specific information). Confirmability, on the other hand, “is the degree to which the findings are the product of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher.” The way to get around this is to leave an adequate trail in order to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their source and support the inquiry: 1.) Raw data 2.) The use of summaries and condensed notes, theoretical notes such as working hypotheses, concepts and hunches 3.) Developing themes, finding and conclusions, and a final report 4.) Methodological notes 5.) An inquiry proposal.

Case studies can create theories. They can also test theories, antecedent conditions, the importance of these antecedent conditions, and explain cases of intrinsic importance. This specific case study tests specific discourse (international relations and international law) while explaining a case of intrinsic importance (land redistribution and foreign policy in Zimbabwe).

In order to investigate the research topic, I have conducted interviews and undertaken documentary research. This is known as data collection. “Qualitative data generally
rely on the integration of data from a variety of methods and sources of information..." Documentation is good because it is stable and can be reviewed repeatedly, unobtrusive, exact, and can accumulate a broad coverage. Interviewing is effective due to its targeted nature, and the insightfulness of the end result. The interviews provided in-depth accounts of different opinions and ideologies. Both the interviews and the theory section of this paper therefore support the documentary research.

In this section, basic individual interviewing, depth interviewing, and factual interviewing will be used. This is because one format (basic individual interviewing) allows the interviewees to speak for themselves guided by the interviewer as opposed to answering specific questions posed by the interviewer. This allows for the interviewer and the interviewee to have an open ended conversation as opposed to a question and answer session which can be limiting. The other format (depth interviewing) allows the interviewer to ignore the actual content of the conversation in order to focus on the process by which the content of the conversation has come into being. This means that the person’s frame – of – mind is investigated, for example, asking a Zimbabwean why they hold certain rights important as opposed to what rights they find important. Factual interviewing was used because it’s a straightforward way of collecting factual data.

1.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with a white Zimbabwean farmers (for his view on property rights and sustaining an agrarian economy), a journalists (who has undertaken extensive work in Zimbabwe), a Zimbabwean student at the University of the Witwatersrand, and an International Relations lecturers at the University of the Witwatersrand (for his academic insight into Zimbabwe). Purposive sampling was used when choosing interviewees, because each person added their own unique and specific piece to this research puzzle.

CHAPTER OUTLINES
This section lays out the format of the chapters in this report and gives a brief summary of the contents of each chapter.
Chapter 2: Zimbabwean History
This chapter examines the history of Zimbabwe and highlights certain significant effects it has had on the current situation in the country. When viewing Zimbabwean history in this context, colonialism plays the most significant role especially when it comes to land reform. For this reason, the periods of colonialism and post–colonialism are investigated, concentrating on land reform of the past, African nationalism and British intentions. These issues are all proved relevant when examining the countries situation today in terms of the land issue, internal politics and foreign policy.

Chapter 3: International Relations Discourse on Zimbabwe
This chapter investigates the discourse to be used, and then develops it in order to investigate and explain Zimbabwe’s situation. It achieves this through identifying the factors that make up a country, and how they work both independently and together along with the regional and international community, in order to sustain themselves. Many theorists are used in this chapter to support and explain the claims of the specific discourse. All the discourse discussed in this chapter are re – investigated in later chapters in order to tie the research together.

Chapter 4: Land in Zimbabwe
This chapter is the centre-piece of this research report. It highlights the concept of land to African people specifically. It takes a deeper look into the land issue in Zimbabwe’s past, and shows its progression to the present day. The chapter investigates many aspects of land in Zimbabwe, including who owns what, who wants what, how to go about obtaining land, the treatment of white and black farmers, and the legality of the current land redistribution programme. This chapter is descriptive as it links to the other chapters about Zimbabwean foreign policy and the international community.

Chapter 5: Human Rights
This chapter investigates the notion of human rights and the sociological human rights discourse in order to find out what rights are, how they are used, and why they are important. The chapter then looks at human rights in Zimbabwe specifically and cites
certain human rights abuses. It goes to the cause as well as the perpetrators of these abuses. Human rights practices are then linked to foreign policy decisions.

Chapter 6: Zimbabwean Foreign Policy
This chapter examines Zimbabwe’s foreign policy toward South Africa and Britain, why it is important to the current discourse on Zimbabwe, and how it is linked to the country’s land redistribution programme. It also highlights the differences in their separate foreign policies toward each other.

Chapter 7: The International Community
This chapter investigates South African and British foreign policy, as well as a broader examination of regional and international co-operation as a whole. South African foreign policy centres on the notion of ‘quiet diplomacy’ as a tool for good relations and negotiation. It looks at the pro and cons of this approach, as well as the opinion on it held by South Africans. The subject of British foreign policy is very different, as the process of colonialism and the initial funding for Zimbabwe’s land redistribution programme comes into play. “Recent Responses by the Regional and International Community” deals with organizations including the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and focuses on the work of countries such as America and organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

Chapter 8: Conclusion – Prospects for the Future
This chapter summarizes the entire research report, showing why the research is important. It highlights how the research is linked to the land issue in Zimbabwe. Recommendations are then made for the country based on what might/should happen in Zimbabwe in the future.
Endnotes


3 Ibid, pp. 33.

4 Ibid, pp. 34.

5 Ibid, pp. 34.


8 Ibid, pp. 29.

9 Ibid, pp. 32.

10 Zimbabwe, Op Cit, pp. 1.


12 Ibid, pp. 3.


14 “Zimbabwe Profile”, Op Cit, pp. 3.

15 Ibid, pp. 3.


17 Zimbabwe, Op Cit, pp. 1.

18 External pressure assisted in these negotiations:

“Following the collapse of Portuguese control in Mozambique, Rhodesia not only became more exposed to guerrilla infiltration, but also suffered increasing pressure from the South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, to reach an accommodation with the guerrillas. A brief ceasefire came into effect in December 1974 and, although this failed, Vorster and Zambia’s president, Kenneth Kaunda, arranged negotiations between Ian Smith and nationalist leaders on the Victoria Falls bridge in August 1975. There were further talks between Smith and Nkomo in early 1976 and in September of that year, under considerable South African pressure, Smith conceded the principle of majority rule within the context of an overall agreement worked out by Vorster and the United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. A conference at Geneva from October 1976 to January 1977, however, failed to produce a settlement acceptable to all parties, and further proposals put forward by the British and US governments in September 1977 also came to nothing. Ian Smith then reached an internal settlement
with three nationalist leaders — Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and Chief Jeremiah Chirau — in March 1978, by which Muzorewa and Sithole entered a transitional government. This did not, however, rule out further negotiations between Smith and Nkomo in Lusaka in August 1978. In April 1979, as a result of internal elections, Muzorewa became the first black prime minister of Rhodesia. The republic declared in March 1970 was formally brought to an end in June 1979 with the creation of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The final political turn of events was the Lancaster House Conference in London between September and December 1979, which resulted in a British-supervised ceasefire on 28 December 1979 and a transitional British administration under Lord Soames as governor. Elections were held in February 1980 with Zimbabwe gaining full legal independence in April.” – “The Rhodesian Army: Counter – Insurgency 1972 – 1979” (accessed from http://www.members.tripod.com/selousscouts/Rhodesian%20army%20coin%20 on 20 July 2005), pp. 2.


21 Taken from an interview with David Monyae – International Relations lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand – 24 June 2005.

22 Taken from an interview with David Monyae – International Relations lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand – 24 June 2005.

23 Taken from an interview with David Monyae – International Relations lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand – 24 June 2005.

24 Taken from an interview with David Monyae – International Relations lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand – 24 June 2005.


27 Taken from an interview with Allister Sparks – South African journalist and author – 28 June 2005.


29 Taken from an interview with David Monyae – International Relations lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand – 24 June 2005.


32 Ibid, pp. 270.

33 Ibid, pp. 272.

34 Ibid, pp. 75.

36 Ibid, pp. 281.
38 Ibid, pp. 275.
40 Ibid, pp. 277.
33 Ibid, pp. 277.
42 Ibid, pp. 278.
43 Ibid, pp. 278.
46 Ibid, pp. 231.
49 Ibid, pp. 289.
50 Ibid, pp. 291.