

This Discussion Paper draws attention to the often overlooked aspects of the limits, poverty and contradictions embedded in the “unfinished business” of the Zimbabwe nation-state project. It is located within the broader context of the crisis of the nation-state in an African continent increasingly buffeted by waves of globalisation. It also revisits the debate on whether postcolonial nationalism can completely avoid reproducing the racial and ethnic discrimination that characterised its colonial past. Zeroing in on Zimbabwe, the paper argues that the nation-state crisis has roots in the legacy of settler colonialism, the ethnic fragmentation that marked the history of the liberation movement and the character of the nationalist elite. Its critique of the politics of the nationalist and political elite, the Lancaster House Agreement, the National Democratic Revolution and the Global Political Agreement makes this paper an important contribution to the debates on the real legacy of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and the prospects for a common national identity based on nationalism, social justice, inclusive democracy and development in the country.

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The Zimbabwean Nation-State Project

A HISTORICAL DIAGNOSIS OF IDENTITY AND
POWER-BASED CONFLICTS IN A POSTCOLONIAL STATE

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