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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/13677

DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/13677>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EUROPEAN UNION (EU) SANCTIONS ON ZIMBABWE (2002-2013): TESTING HYPOTHESES OF INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 31 August 2021

Final Accepted: 30 September 2021

Published: October 2021

Key words:-

Conformity, Detracting Factors, Eu Sanctions, Foreign Policy Actions, Hypotheses Of Influence, Political Science, Zimbabwe

Abstract

The focus of this article was to test the hypotheses (factors) of influence that enabled the EU and its partners to exert influence in Zimbabwe between 2002 and 2013. Four hypotheses; volume of actions, severity of actions, commitment and the timing of actions have been tested. The article has also tested four hypotheses of non-influence (detracting factors); prestige, desirability of violations, internal power struggles and aid-dependence exhibited by the Mugabe regime during this period. The article concludes that it was due to the overwhelming weight of the foreign policy actions over the internal situation of Zimbabwe that finally pushed Mugabe to bowed down. The great lesson learned from the Zimbabwe experience is that the influencing state must evaluate the detracting factors in the target state well in order to select and maximise on the best influencing actions.

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Introduction:-

The immediate cause of the Zimbabwean sanctions was the expulsion of the EU observer mission chief, Pierre Schori, from Zimbabwe in February 2002. After a meeting of the EU foreign ministers on February 18, 2002 in Brussels consecrated on Zimbabwe, the ministers "agreed that the escalating violence against opposition activists and the restrictions on the media were enough to trigger automatic sanctions set in place three weeks ago." (Evans-Pritchard, 2002, para. 2). The EU had been warning Zimbabwe for weeks that it would impose sanctions if the work of the EU observer mission is hampered by the government. Mugabe accused Schori for "political arrogance" (Ibid). Mugabe had actually set the table for sanctions himself through his actions. He banned six members of the EU from sending observers to cover the election and "accused them of working to overthrow his regime" (Thornycroft, 2002, para. 5). The EU was particularly concerned that the elections will not be free and fair. This was contained in its final statement that said: "The EU remains seriously concerned at political violence, serious violations of human rights and restrictions on the media ... which call into question the prospects for a free and fair election." (The Guardian, 2002, para. 5). The ministerial meeting also decided to recall all the remaining observers in Zimbabwe. On the same day that the EU ministers took the decision to sanction Zimbabwe, Mugabe's supporters attacked the headquarters of the main opposition party, the MDC, throwing stones and smashing windows (BBC, 2002a).

This decision was the first that the EU had unified to take on Zimbabwe. In the past, there has been opposition to sanctions on Zimbabwe. Though the sanctions seemed to be borne out of the political and human rights situation in Zimbabwe, one cannot exclude that Mugabe's land grab from whites was the foundation to the sanctions. Britain's role in the sanctions cannot at the same time be underestimated. The EU, in fact, did back the British call to maintain "calibrated" pressure on Mugabe (Evans-Pritchard & La Guardia, 2002). The Council of the EU common position of

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February 18, 2002 concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe expressed serious concern about recent legislation in Zimbabwe which, if enforced, would seriously infringe on the right to freedom of speech, assembly and association, mainly the Public Order and Security Act and the General Laws Amendment Act (both of which violate the norms and standards for free and fair elections as agreed by SADC Parliamentarians in March 2001) and the proposed legislation to regulate the media (EUR-Lex, 2002, para. 2).

The sanctions adopted fell under Article 15 of the Treaty of the EU and under Article 96 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement. The most important sanction concerned the supply and sale of arms to Zimbabwe. Its Article 1(1) prohibited the supply or sale of arms and related material of all types including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts to Zimbabwe by Member States (EUR-Lex, 2002). Paragraph 2 further stressed the prohibition, training or assistance or maintenance of the materials mentioned in Paragraph 1 while Paragraph 3 exempted nonlethal military equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use (Ibid). Article 2 prohibited the supply of any equipment that might be used for internal repression. A list was established of Zimbabweans officials and the Member States urged to “prevent the entry into, or transit through, their territories of the persons listed.” (Ibid). A derogation to the travel ban was inserted for Member State to notify the Council in writing and it would be deemed granted unless one or more of the Council Members raises an objection in writing within 48 hours of receiving notification of the proposed exemption. Funds, financial assets or economic resources of persons listed were to be frozen (Article 4). The list in Article 3 was to be reviewed periodically and the EU promised to engage third parties to take the same sanctions on Zimbabwe. The sanctions were to be reviewed over a 12-months’ period. The sanctions took effect on February 18, 2002, the day of its adoption.

I-Conformity

The EU’s targeted sanctions had as objective the establishment of a democratic system that upholds human rights and freedoms. Target travel ban brought a lot of frustration on the individuals concerned. Interviews of some on the list by Eriksson showed the “measure seem to have caused uncertainty, economic costs, indignation and annoyance.” (Eriksson, 2011). The travel-ban also had an impact on the capacity of the Zimbabwean government to attend international meetings. Many in the targeted lists saw the sanctions as a kind of punishment of the people of Zimbabwe and some did not hesitate to point out the racist character of the sanctions as an NGO official remarked (Ibid).

The EU’s lack of response, just like other international bodies to the flawed Zambian elections of 2001, in contrast to the punitive measures following the Zimbabwean election “has fueled opinion in Africa that foreign positions on democratic processes continue to be characterized by inconsistency, thus weakening African support for punitive sanctions against regimes like Robert Mugabe’s in Zimbabwe.” (Mendelsohn, 2002, p. 11). This was the prominent view in Zimbabwe.

In order for Zimbabwe to comply with the EU exigencies, a new constitution that is truly democratic had to be adopted. These constitutional requirements especially concerned the electoral process – the institution to organize, supervise and declare results. Zimbabwe’s electoral law was considered defective in a democratic system and opened to patronage by most critics and the opposition. The election management bodies, first the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) and then the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) were viewed as part of state bureaucracy prone to manipulation and hence lacking independence.

The ESC in particular was impotent since it had no constitutional provisions. The state indirectly controlled it by providing a little budget and other resources and thereby constraining its effort to carry the heavy task of supervising elections. However, the real power over the electoral process in Zimbabwe was with the Registrar-General of elections, a public servant and having almost the entire electoral process from the registration of voters and provision of electoral staff to the declaration of election results and the custody of election materials (WIPO, 2005).

The first steps to conformity by the Zimbabwean government to the EU demands was the creation of the ZEC in 2004. ZEC’s real test as an efficient body to organize and supervise elections came in the 2008 elections. This test proved ZEC to be totally incompetent and unreliable as an organ to manage free and fair elections. The presidential elections of 2008, saw the massive presence and intervention of security forces comprising of the police, military and intelligence. Apart from the shortcomings of ZEC manifested in the organization of the election, the political atmosphere remained tense with the media remaining partisan and totally behind Mugabe and the ZANU-PF. It

became evident that the Zimbabwean government had only paid lip-service to the Principle and Guidelines on Democratic Elections of SADC. It is for this reason that the AU criticized the Zimbabwean government for failing to be fully committed to the implementation of the relevant electoral legislation in a transparent and accountable fashion.

In the midst of condemnation and criticisms coming from internal and external actors, a new ZEC was appointed in 2009 where for the first time, parliament was directly involved in the selection of members. An all-party parliamentary commission was charged to interview and assessed the candidates, and the names of successful ones forwarded to the President for the final selection.

With this important step taken in the nomination of Commission members, the next contestation focused on constitutional reform and substantive electoral reform as well. Under international pressure, especially from the AU, a Global Political Agreement (GPA) of power sharing was signed in September 2008 with the then South African President, Thabo Mbeki as the guarantor. The Agreement took effect in February 2009, where Mugabe remained President and Morgan Tsvangirai assumed the role of Prime Minister. A new constitution and the holding of presidential elections were key elements in the GPA (ICRtoP, 2010). The constitution review process started in June 2009 and in October of the same year Mugabe called for a new start with the West. Mugabe held talks with Tsvangirai in January 2013 to reach a deal over the new draft constitution, which introduces a limited two five-year terms for president, and the constitution was finally approved by an overwhelming majority in March 2013 referendum (BBC, 2019). The new constitution responded to most of the EU demands and most sanctions were dropped on March 25, 2013 (Smith, 2013).

Other Actors

United States (US)

By imposing sanctions in 2002, it was clear the EU and the US were working on the same agenda with regards to Zimbabwe. It is improbable that the US sanctions had been taken independently without consultations with the EU. The timing is a confirmation that they were consulting each other. President George W. Bush ordered for sanctions on Zimbabwe on February 22, 2002, barely four days when the EU took a similar decision. These were sanctions ahead of the March elections in Zimbabwe.

The White House spokesperson, Ari Fleischer, said the sanctions were being imposed because "conditions for a transparent election process in Zimbabwe have eroded" (BBC, 2002b, para. 13). The US sanctions, just like the EU's sanctions, involved a travel ban and asset freeze of the Mugabe's entourage and individuals or companies that benefit from doing business with his regime.

Supporters of Mugabe reacted angrily, calling the US sanctions a "Western ploy". Didymus Mutasa, external secretary for the ruling party, said: "We are not surprised at the sanctions. The aim is to put us under pressure and to give an advantage to the opposition" (Ibid, para. 5). The Bush Administration in 2008 further tightened the measures after the 2008 presidential elections and when Obama won the presidency, he refused to lift the sanctions.

The Commonwealth

Unlike the other actors above, the Commonwealth did not impose sanctions on Zimbabwe before the March elections of 2002. However, the idea came up during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Australia where Britain, Australia and New Zealand wanted an immediate action. Discussions amongst the leaders recommended that three leaders, John Howard (Australia), Thabo Mbeki (South Africa) and Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) to decide on the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth if the nation's upcoming presidential election is not "free and fair" (Holloway, 2002). Mugabe, apparently aware of these developments, told Australia and Britain to keep their "pink noses" out of Zimbabwe's affairs. (Ibid)

The Commonwealth observer mission condemned the presidential elections of 2002 as deeply flawed and held in a climate of fear and suspicion (VOA, 2002). The Mission's interim report raise a number of issues like the exploitation of state resources by the ruling party for its campaign, voter-registration couple with voting problems, politically motivated violence mostly by the ZANU-PF and failure of the police to investigate reported cases of violence (Ibid).

Following the report of the Commonwealth observer mission, the association suspended Zimbabwe for one year. The German Foreign Minister then, Joschka Fischer called Zimbabwe a country "that could create economic progress, as well as social and political stability, not just for its own citizens, but for the whole region" (Welle, 2002, para. 10). He added: "When you see a country like that being driven to ruin by an irresponsible president, then it brings tears to your eyes" (Ibid). The suspension did not go down well in Zimbabwe and Mugabe decided to withdraw Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth in December 2003. Mugabe said he would not accept a decision by Commonwealth leaders meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, to reaffirm Zimbabwe's suspension and announced Zimbabwe's immediate withdrawal. He described the decision being sponsored by Britain and Australia as "pure racism." (TNH, 2003, para. 2)

Australia, New Zealand, Canada & Others

Australia took "smart sanctions" such as denying Zimbabwean officials entry into Australia and freezing any of their assets, as well as freezing any non-humanitarian aid (THE AGE, 2002). New Zealand wanted immediate sanctions on Zimbabwe during the Commonwealth summit in Australia. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said on Australian television: "It is important that the Commonwealth does back the principles which it repeatedly says that it stands for; those principles being constitutional law, human rights and democracy," and confirmed that "It is clear in New Zealand's view that Zimbabwe has breached all of them." (Holloway, 2002). Just like Australia, New Zealand opted for smart sanctions and stopping all sporting contacts with Zimbabwe. After the interim report of the Commonwealth observer mission, New Zealand's Foreign Minister said: "It's our intentions to proceed with targeted sanctions which prevent any of the leadership group of Zimbabwe visiting New Zealand for education, for health, or as official visitors or tourists." (TVNZ, 2002, para. 12).

Canada only imposed sanctions on the Mugabe regime after the disputed 2008 elections. The Foreign Affairs Minister at the time, David Emerson described the government of Mugabe as "illegitimate and illegal" (CBC, 2008, para. 1) and announced sanctions hours after Mugabe was sworn in. He said the Canadian Federal government has rejected the results and the following sanctions taken with immediate effect: Restricting travel, work and study of senior members of Zimbabwe's government within Canada. Banning Zimbabwe-registered aircraft from landing in or flying over Canada and summoning the ambassador of Zimbabwe to Canada to convey Canada's position (CBC, 2008, para. 6).

Other countries that took punitive measures against Zimbabwe were Switzerland, Norway and Liechtenstein. On March 20, 2002, the government of Switzerland imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe on what it termed the "constant violations of human rights in that country" (Swissinfo, 2002). The government of Norway had suspended its direct assistance to Zimbabwe in 2000.

Internal Opposition

Irrespective of the role played by external actors, the internal actors were fundamental to a change of attitude of Mugabe. They were the ones who constantly gave headaches to his rule. The internal opposition is also the one that suffered most from his autocratic rule. Mugabe constantly use the military and security forces against them. The internal actors included the church, civil society and opposition parties.

After the first round of the 2008 presidential elections, a coalition of Christian churches called for international help and issued a critical statement which said: "People are being abducted, tortured, humiliated by being asked to repeat slogans of the political party they are alleged not to support," and also claimed that, "In some cases, people are murdered." (CNN, 2008, para. 12). Earlier in 2000, when Mugabe's government started putting pressure on judges to resign for ruling against the government for land seizures, church officials criticized the government saying it was unacceptable to put pressure on judges. Mugabe's pressure had led to the early retirement of Chief Justice Anthony Gubbay (Nyamutata, 2001, para. 1). The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) was not pleased with Mugabe's interference and said: "We have noted with dismay that pressure is put on Supreme Court judges to resign from their positions for racist reasons. This is unacceptable." (Ibid, para. 2). The Baptist Union of Zimbabwe even went further cautioning the government against political intimidations and to respect the rule of law, it declared: "Knowing that we are all accountable to God, who sovereignly put them into power (Roman 13:1-2), the Baptist Union of Zimbabwe calls upon the government to refrain from and oppose all political intimidations, to re-establish the rule of law, uphold the independence of the judiciary, its integrity and impartiality ..." (Ibid, para. 3). One church leader that remain a vocal critic of Mugabe was the Roman Catholic Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo — Zimbabwe's second largest city.

Influence

The EU's influence in the democratic and human rights process in Zimbabwe has been a tumultuous one. It is still an on-going process. Looking at the political events since the 1990s, the influence can be divided into three phases; an initial non-influence phase up to 2002, a partial influence phase from 2002-2008, and an influence phase from 2009 -2013. This classification follows actually the sequence of policy measures taken from the EU and the reaction of the Zimbabwean government to them. A brief analysis of these phases follow below.

First phase: No Influence

Zimbabwe, unlike other African countries that went through a serious struggle before multipartism was introduced, was never a one-party state. Most political observers and commentators have always considered Zimbabwe a one-party state up to the 1990s. To an extent, this is true because in the 1980s after independence, the new leadership under Mugabe advocated aggressively for a one-party state and actually acted as one (Sithole & Makumbe, 1997). Real political violence started in 2000, when Mugabe lost a referendum to increase his presidential powers. The general elections of 2000 was the first real taste of democracy in Zimbabwe. The EU observer mission criticized the elections. Pierre Schori, head of the EU observer mission said "The term free and fair elections is not applicable to these elections."(The Guardian & agencies, 2000). Though the EU condemned the elections, no measures were taken against Zimbabwe.

It was only in the 2002 presidential elections, that the EU became proactive in the Zimbabwean politics, putting in sanctions before the elections. Hitherto, Mugabe had only suffered public rebuffs of his human rights and democratic shortcomings. The EU had been in the illusion of thinking diplomacy could work in Zimbabwe. So it can be concluded that up to the year 2002, the EU had no influence on the democratic process in Zimbabwe.

Second Phase: Partial Influence

Gradual influence of the EU in the democratic process in Zimbabwe started in 2002 with the sanctions. However, electoral reforms were carefully crafted in a way that the ruling party could still have a leeway over them. These were half-hearted measures aimed at pleasing the international community and aid donors while still maintaining control over them. Firstly, the Mugabe government dissolved the ESC, a body with little power, although it was tasked with the responsibility of supervising the electoral process. The ZEC was brought into existence on February 1, 2005, in conformity with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act. Secondly: "On August 30, 2005 a constitutional amendment was passed which, among other things, abolished the ESC and re-established the ZEC on a constitutional foundation by substituting a new Article 61 for the existing constitution." (EISA, 2018). To dilute the powers of the ZEC, two other bodies were involved in election management; The Registrar General's Office which is a department of the Ministry of Home Affairs and The Elections Directorate (ED) which is a statutory body tasked with "the administrative logistics of the election process" on Election Day. Its function is primarily that of coordination of effort of the various organs involved. The Chairperson is appointed by the President, and it is staffed with civil servants.

The year 2008 once more exposed the true colours of Mugabe. There was every evidence to show he was not yet ready for a fair competition. ZEC proved its incapability to organize free and fair elections. African countries, including Zimbabwe's neighbours who have shielded him all along started grumbling. By 2007, Ghanaian President, John Kufour who also doubled as the AU Chairman at the time, called the situation in Zimbabwe "very embarrassing."(Forsythe, 2009, p. 403). In 2008, Kenya's Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, referred to Mugabe as "an embarrassment" and called for Zimbabwe to be expelled from the AU (Ibid). Botswana, Zambia, and Tanzania all criticized Mugabe for the human rights and democratic shortcomings in Zimbabwe. The EU and the US extended sanctions after the 2008 elections. The Bush administration at the time particularly tightened a travel ban to 250 Zimbabwean individuals and corporations and forbade Americans to do business with them (Ibid).

With the screws tightened on Mugabe, it is at this juncture that he for once started meaningful discussions with the international community and the opposition.

Third Phase: Influence

From 2008 onwards, Mugabe was pushed to a corner and had to succumb to international pressure for change in Zimbabwe. The country was already suffering from mounting humanitarian and economic crisis due in part to the sanctions from the West. Mugabe at this point in time risked further isolation from its immediate neighbours who

had started frowning at him. The neighbouring countries wanted a solution to curtail down the refugee wave coming out from Zimbabwe.

Negotiations for a power-sharing government brokered by Thabo Mbeki began on July 23, 2008 and ended on September 11, 2008 with the ZANU-PF, the MDC-Tsvangirai faction and the Mutambara-MDC faction reaching an agreement. ZANU-PF was allocated 15 ministries, Tsvangirai-led MDC 13 ministries and Mutambara-led MDC 3 ministries (Pindula, 2017). The Government of National Unity (GNU) succeeded to put in new members into ZEC who were independent and chosen by an all-party commission of parliament and Mugabe only had to validate their names. The GNU also came out with a democratic constitution where the office of the president becomes limited to a maximum of two five-year terms. These developments fulfilled most of the Western demands and the EU dropped sanctions in 2013. These achievements were brought about by the EU and other national and international actors pressing for change in Zimbabwe. The EU had been the initiator of the sanctions and played a great role to bring others to follow its line of action, so we can conclude that the EU's influence was "significant". Testing hypotheses of influence follows below.

II-Factors Concerning Foreign Policy Actions (hypotheses of Influence) Volume

Hypothesis

An influence-attempt directed at a state's behaviour in the field of human rights and democratization is more likely to be successful if more foreign actions are undertaken by more than one influencing actor.

By "Volume", we mean the number of actions and also the number of actors taking action(s) on Zimbabwe. The number of policy actions taken by the EU in particular and other actors were enormous. COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 314/2004 of 19 February 2004 concerning certain restrictive measures in respect of Zimbabwe is the starting point, though the EU had before been criticizing Zimbabwe's human rights and democracy shortcomings. The restrictive measures of the EU comprised of the legislative measures based on Article 215 TFEU and those based on the relevant provisions of the Treaty establishing the European Community (in the years prior to 1 December 2009: Articles 60 and 301) and the relevant CFSP Decisions and (prior to 1 December 2009) Common Positions, including those which merely provide for measures for which no specific Regulation was made, such as restrictions on admission. From 2004-2016, The EU took nine Regulations on Zimbabwe, though they were amendments to previous Regulations either to tighten or loosen the restrictive measures. These measures were also accompanied by measures taken by individual Member States.

The US imposed sanctions as well in 2002 and tightened them in 2008. The Commonwealth on its part suspended Zimbabwe in 2002 and since then the suspension has not been lifted, partly due to Zimbabwe's withdrawal in 2003. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, Norway and Liechtenstein all impose some kind of sanctions on Zimbabwe. The AU and in particularly SADC put pressure on Mugabe for a GNU after the 2008 presidential elections.

Severity and Credibility

Hypothesis

An influence-attempt is more likely to be successful if the action undertaken by the EU and/or other actors is more severe and credible.

The actions taken by the EU and the other actors were severe. Mugabe's isolation and the inability of his entourage to travel to the West was a heavy blow. Even in cases where he was allowed for exceptional reasons, his visits were followed by controversy and criticisms. He attended the UN General Assembly meeting in February 2002 where on his transit in Paris, he was not allowed to leave the transit zone, he attended the FAO summit in Rome in June 2002 where an FAO official said: "It is the big scandal of the summit," before continuing to say "We have been inundated by complaints by people from around the world who are furious." (Johnston, 2002). Even his various visits to the Vatican which is not a member of the EU, after the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005, the Beautification of Pope John Paul II in 2011, inaugural mass of Pope Francis in 2013 and the latest in 2014 for the Vatican's ceremony to make saints of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II, were all met with criticisms from human rights groups and some religious leaders.

The impact of the sanctions was felt most in the economic domain. The negative image of Zimbabwe made life difficult for the local industries and companies to have access lines of credit. Foreign companies were also scared of

investing in Zimbabwe. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) dropped from 444.3 million USD in 1998 to a meagre 40 million USD in 2006 (Mbanje & Mahuku, 2011). The sanctions led to the shortage of foreign currency that resulted in the country accumulating external payment arrears. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe in 2007, Gideon Gono, observed that: "A combination of current account deficits and reduced capital inflows, resulted in excessive pressure on foreign exchange reserves which as a result, declined from US \$830m in 1996 to less than one month import cover in 2006." (Ibid). The financial problems due to sanctions forced Zimbabwe to abandon its currency when it became worthless in 2009 and turned to US dollars as well as Bond Notes.

The withdrawal of developmental aid was a severe blow to the local population. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) pulled out of Zimbabwe in 2001 and 2003, respectively, terminating all projects in progress and retrenching their employees further increasing an already lamentable employment situation in Zimbabwe.

The effects on the human domain were significant as well. Neighbouring countries, especially South Africa received a lot of economic migrants from Zimbabwe, and Botswana was forced to erect a 300-mile electric fence on its border with Zimbabwe to reduce this exodus (Carroll, 2003). Among the economic migrants were also skilled workers which left Zimbabwe skill-drained.

The sanctions were also credible because the EU was serious in carrying them out and actually implemented them. These sanctions increased the number of people against Mugabe's rule and the enormous population fleeing the country was an embarrassment and a disgrace to a very proud man like Mugabe. If the sanctions were not severe and credible, Mugabe would have remained stoic defiant as before.

Commitment Hypothesis

An influence-attempt is more likely to be successful if the policymakers show a strong commitment to pursue the policy in the target state.

It does not suffice to issue statements without a proper follow up. Commitment can also be difficult to define. It would depend on the side this question is posed to. The target state may consider the actions of the acting state too committed while the dissatisfied population or critics may consider the commitment of the acting state inadequate or less robust. In this case we can add that if a member state or a high ranking EU official fully commits to a policy action, then the chances for it to be successful are higher.

The case for Zimbabwe clearly demonstrate how the EU was unanimous and committed in implementing the sanctions in Zimbabwe. The number of policy decisions and vocal criticisms of the Mugabe regime were voluminous. The EU's commitment can be measured on how it coaxed its allies in Europe, America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere, including the international financial institutions, to impose economic and other sanctions on Zimbabwe. By renewing the sanctions on a yearly basis, the EU was committed in following up the situation on the ground. It made the Mugabe regime to understand it would be rewarded with reforms or punished for non-compliance.

The EU's commitment was further boosted by the personal involvement of the UK to maintain the lid on Zimbabwe. Without the UK's role, the EU would not have gone as far with sanctions as it did. The UK as the former colonial master understood the Zimbabwean crisis more than any other member state of the EU. It also used the Commonwealth to put pressure on Mugabe. In addition to the EU sanctions, the UK also had theirs in place. One can conclude the factor on commitment has been a positive one in influencing Zimbabwe.

Timing & Precision Hypothesis

An influence-attempt is more likely to be successful if the EU reacts immediately in situations of human rights violations or to new developments in an ongoing situation of human rights violations or democratic breakdown. The wishes of the EU need to be expressed in precise terms free of nuances.

The EU sanctions in 2002 were well timed with precision to the Zimbabwean situation. The EU had already anticipated non-compliance of the Mugabe regime to conduct free and fair elections and avoided a situation where

the elections could be validated by another body and diluting the reaction of the EU. By condemning and criticizing the conditions for the elections, the foundation was laid to give the elections illegitimacy in the eyes of the world. The drafted restrictive measures were made known to the public and were cleared of any misunderstanding by the Zimbabwean authorities.

In 2008 after the controversial presidential elections, The EU promptly took further restrictive measures on the Mugabe's regime. Other allies of the EU followed suit. The timing was a clear indication to Mugabe that any subsequent elections organized under dubious circumstances will be followed by further sanctions. One cannot exclude that the timing made Mugabe to have a second thought and to accept a GNU which reformed the ZEC and drafted a new democratic constitution. The immediate lifting of the sanctions in 2013 after the constitution was approved in a national referendum also gave the EU credibility in the eyes of Zimbabweans. This was well timed so as not to give the impression that the EU was pursuing another agenda in Zimbabwe.

Factors concerning Zimbabwe (hypotheses detracting influence)

Prestige & Sovereignty

Hypothesis

An influence-attempt of the EU is more likely to be successful if Zimbabwe can comply with the wishes of the EU without suffering loss of face, and less likely if it perceives compliance as shameful.

No government no matter how little or weak would like to be influenced by another state or actor. No government likes to lose face especially to its own internal critics. Every government attempts to protect its sovereignty jealously.

Mugabe was a very proud and arrogant man. In order to save his image, he has always attempted to paint the EU and Western sanctions as an attempt to colonize or to continue to colonize Zimbabwe. As a veteran fighter who fought for Zimbabwe's independence, sovereignty lied deep in his heart. He took it personal and apparently still had spite for the British and more generally the white race. This stemmed also from the repression and injustices he suffered. He spent about 14 years in prison under Ian Smith's regime for advocating for independence. His greatest motivation for the liberation of Zimbabwe was land and threatened during the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 that he would go back and continue the fight till no white man had an acre of land (McGreal, 2002).

In a rare interview to CNN's Christiane Amanpour in 2009, Mugabe depicted himself as an African hero battling imperialism and foreign attempts to oust him. He justified the land seizures as the best thing that happened in an African country and said: "It has to do with national sovereignty." (CNN, 2008). He further rejected claims he lost the 2008 elections and insisted that: "You don't leave power when imperialists dictate that you leave." (Ibid). He never failed to use the race card to criticize Western policies towards Zimbabwe. When sanctions were decided in 2002, Mugabe denounced Western criticism and sanctions of his government as a racist campaign to undermine his nation's independence (THE AGE, 2002). From all Mugabe's declarations, one notices a man full of pride and ready to sacrifice democracy and human rights to defend his country from what he called "imperialists". To Mugabe, giving up power tantamount to giving up the country for white domination. To him, the opposition was just a proxy of the imperialists in Zimbabwe ready to compromise and serve the interests of the British colonialists. In the early years of the sanctions, Mugabe felt that abiding to the EU and other Western demands was a humiliation and did everything to prove strong to his critics. He was ready to sacrifice the economy as long the reins of power remained under his control. It was only after the 2008 elections that the economy was in a very bad shape and there was pressure coming from neighbouring SADC countries because of the exodus of many Zimbabweans that he changed his mind.

Desirability of the Violations

Hypothesis

An influence-attempt is less likely to be successful if Zimbabwe considers the violations which the EU aims to end or prevent or the reforms the EU wants introduced, as harmful for the consolidation of the state or survival of the regime in power.

The desirability of the violation of human rights especially through land grabbing or closing the political field to the opposition was justified to the Mugabe regime because he felt he had an obligation to "right" the wrongs of the past. Land reform laid at the heart of the ZANU party at independence. White-owned farms to Mugabe represented an

illegality and an unacceptable situation in Zimbabwe. With criticisms and later sanctions from the West, he became radicalized and more hostile to the white farmers. He failed to respect court orders that the seizures were illegal and went ahead with the seizures while at the same time putting pressure on the judges to resign so that he could appoint friendlier judges. He told his supporters that: "You must strike fear into the hearts of the white man, make them tremble, our real enemies!" (Muleya, 2006).

Subsequently, he reformed the Supreme Court and increased the number of judges who overturned earlier decisions against farm seizures. This was a clear desire from the Mugabe regime to continue with the land reforms. His distrust for the MDC and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai, who had support from white farmers and the West convinced him not to have a level-playing field for elections. The sanctions were biting and opposition to his rule from fellow Zimbabweans was only mounting and Mugabe resorted to military harassment of the opposition and developed all means of rigging elections. Before the 2008 presidential runoff, Mugabe warned that "only God" can remove him and added that: "The MDC will never be allowed to rule this country - never ever," and further made the precision that: "Only God who appointed me will remove me, not the MDC, not the British" (The Telegraph, 2008). Mugabe saw himself as some God-sent messiah to Zimbabwe. On his 89th birthday, Mugabe claimed he had been charged by God to lead Zimbabwe and he insisted that he would see through his "divine task" (Zimbabwe Light, 2013).

Internal Power Struggles

Hypothesis

An influence-attempt is less likely to be successful if Zimbabwe has strong divisions within its ruling party or with the opposition. A less conflictual political society will on the other hand favours influence.

Internal power struggles within any state will be a factor less favourable to influence. These struggles can take two forms; within the ruling regime itself or between the regime and the opposition. The fear of implementing certain policies that might send "Backbenchers" to revolt within the same party or for the opposition to attack will make difficult the proper implementation of the foreign policy of the acting state.

Power was primordial to Mugabe than anything. All his tactics were centred on his maintenance of power. His revolutionary life had made him to believe that any opponent had to be crushed. His ability to defeat the white-regime of Ian Smith's before independence and his fight after independence to do away with his greatest rival, Joshua Nkomo and opposition from his Ndebele tribe in the South of Zimbabwe epitomizes the real Mugabe. In his duel with Nkomo, whom he dismissed in 1982 from his cabinet, accusing him of plotting a coup, Mugabe sent his Presidential Guard and a North Korea-trained Fifth Brigade into Mataberland (the region of the Ndebeles); they killed more than 10,000 people, in the next five years that ensued (MCNEIL JR., 1999).

With Nkomo's opposition crushed, Mugabe had a new challenge coming from the trade unions under Morgan Tsvangirai. Tsvangirai succeeded to change the trade unions anti-movement to Mugabe's rule into a political party. The successes of the MDC prompted Mugabe to go back to his old tactics – intimidation, harassment and repression. With power almost slipping away from his hands in 2008, he employed the highest repression against the opposition and the military Generals openly declared that they will not recognize anyone as President except Mugabe. The MDC, human rights groups and Western nations accused ZANU-PF of launching a campaign of violence to ensure Mugabe wins any run-off (Macanda, 2008).

These sharp differences between the ruling party and the opposition was not conducive for the implementation of the EU's human rights and democracy policy, because Mugabe did not envisage or consider handing over power to the opposition. To him, the opposition was not just an internal one but represented his arch Western enemies. Any eventual loss of power to the opposition tantamount to a victory of the "Western imperialists". If Mugabe had a democratic culture, the EU policy would have been very successful from the onset.

Aid Dependence

Hypothesis

An influence-attempt is more likely to be successful if Zimbabwe is more dependent on aid

The level of any state's dependence on foreign aid can play a real part in influence. Aid can be economic, military, technological, educational, etc. How vital each of this can be to a target state can be a source of influence. This is

particularly important since a target state can be economically stable but faced with military challenges that can only be sought from the outside. Even great powers can be influenced by other great powers when it comes to certain strategic information or capabilities. This is particularly evident with US influence over the EU.

EU's aid is channelled through bilateral aid (country to country or EU to recipient) in the form of grants and low interest loans with a smaller amount being channelled through multilateral aid agencies, such as the United Nations and the World Bank. Funding originates from the European Development Fund (E.D.F) and from the Commission's budget. According to realists, aid can be used as a device for gaining influence. Robert Jervis observes that, "economic aid appears to be a prominent component of a broader foreign policy designed to expand influence in the underdeveloped countries. The developed countries give aid in order to win client states as well as to increase their power and secure their geo-strategic interests." (Wight & al, 1979, p. 77).

After the farm invasions of 2000 and the withdrawal of the EU's assistance starting 2002, the Zimbabwean government had to rebuild and re-equip commercial agriculture from "ground zero", thereby making Zimbabwe a very aid-dependent country. In the 1980s, EU's official assistance to Zimbabwe's education sector was very high and it was used to support the government's Transitional National Development Plan 1983-1985 and the Five Year National Development Plan 1986-1990, (Mbanje&Mahuku, 2011). "The EU's aid programmes involved construction of teachers' houses; provision of wells and boreholes at rural schools; training of teachers; construction of classrooms, laboratories and libraries; capacity building and supply of special education needs." (Ibid, p. 7). EU's aid beginning the 2000s decreased due to sanctions, led to low salaries and poor working conditions forcing many teachers to abandon their jobs and emigrate, and this led to a fall in the quality of education in Zimbabwe. Brain-drain was also witnessed in the health sector where many doctors left the country. DANIDA supported the transport sector with a value of 48 million USD, but when it pulled out of Zimbabwe in 2001, the rehabilitation and maintenance of the Harare-Nyamapanda and Kwekwe-Lupane roads were left uncompleted.

Zimbabwe, still very young as a state was very much dependent and this dependency played a significant role in changing the "stubborn" Mugabe. Without aid, Zimbabwe was on a free fall and many commentators started referring to it as a "failed state," a reference that particularly irked Mugabe. The withdrawal of EU's aid to fund major government programmes, plans, policies and projects forced the Zimbabwean leadership to adopt the "Look East policy" (Gara, 2009). However, this could not completely fill the hole left by the EU. Zimbabwe's near collapse made the assertion of Mugabe that "Zimbabwe will never be a colony again either militarily or economically," (Ibid, p. 23) laughable. Had Zimbabwe been an economical and viable country, Mugabe would not have engaged any reforms that reflected the wishes of the EU.

Summary

The tested hypotheses above have shown which factors favoured the EU policy on human rights and democratization in Zimbabwe. From the early beginning, the EU limited itself to making criticisms and declarations which were simply shrugged off by Mugabe.

Even when the EU decided to take restrictive measures on Zimbabwe, Mugabe was still in the illusion that the sanctions will not be effective or that at one point the EU will drop the sanctions. He had in mind the violation of the EU arms embargo by some member states on Nigeria between 1993 and 1995. He had engaged in an unplanned reform programme, seizing farms from whites and giving them to friends and members of the ZANU-PF. He politicized the farm reforms making enemies at home and abroad. MDC supporters and sympathizers were chased away from farms or not allocated land. The EU's insistence and commitment to sanctions finally bore fruit with Mugabe accepting a GNU which reformed the ZEC and drafted a new constitution that reflected the wishes of the EU. Mugabe's resistance to the EU stated preferences were motivated by the internal factors discussed above. Mugabe all along had the conviction that the sanctions were a ploy by the EU (and especially the UK) to remove him from power. The opposition at home, to Mugabe was just an extension of the imperialists. He had no faith in them and equated the handing over of power to them as the handing over of Zimbabwe to whites again.

The worsening economic situation of the Zimbabwean economy, especially due to sanctions and the mass exodus of Zimbabweans to neighbouring countries became unbearable to Mugabe. His neighbours, all along had adopted a non-interference attitude to Zimbabwe and when the exodus became a social issue in their respective countries, they started grumbling and put pressure on the Mugabe government to move on with democratic reforms. Mugabe,

cornered by the Western powers and neighbours had no other choice than to engage in reforms and had to opt for a power sharing government with the opposition.

The sanctions were finally dropped in 2013 after the constitution was approved. However, the EU and the UK still maintain certain restrictions on Zimbabwe. This paper on Zimbabwe clearly shows what is going on in other African countries where leaders have confiscated power and employ sophisticated methods to rig elections. Unfortunately, the EU or the West in general has not been in a united position to most of these countries because of interests. It is only because Mugabe had annoyed everyone that there was a united Western front against him. It is also arguable that race had a role in the sanctions since Mugabe seized white-owned lands and hence there was sympathy from the West for them. As earlier mentioned, other African countries were at the same level with Zimbabwe or at a higher level to it with respect to human rights abuses or democratic deficit and received little rebuff or sanctions from the West.

This paper concludes that if the EU in particular or the West in general shows unity, commitment, severity and timing in their sanctions reforms can be achieved in states shying away from democracy and human rights. But seen from what is going on so far in African countries, this unity is farfetched due to the particular interests of Member states. France's support of the Biya regime in the 1990s and host of its former colonies even after poorly organised elections or constitutional abuses depicts this difficulty of a unified front.

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