

Effects of sanctions on Zimbabwe (2000-2020)

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Abstract: The study evaluated the imposition and effects of sanctions on Zimbabwe. The study is guided by exchange theory. This was a desk research which used the internet and secondary sources. The study revealed that the imposition of sanctions is regarded differently by those who imposed them and by those on whom the sanctions were imposed. Each side explains the imposition of sanctions on the basis of their own interests. For the Zimbabwean government and the ruling party sanctions were imposed as a result of the land reform carried out by the government to solve the uneven distribution of land in the country. On the other hand, the western countries who imposed sanctions explain the sanctions as being caused by the Zimbabwean government's failure to respect human rights and lack of rule of law. The study also reveals that there is divergent interpretation of whether the sanctions were legal or illegal. The Zimbabwean government believe that the sanctions were illegal as they did not have the blessing of the United Nations but those who imposed the sanctions believe they were legal as they passed through their parliamentary institutions. Sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe had a negative impact on the economy to a certain extent as they are other factors for the economic instability in the country. It is recommended that the Zimbabwean government should try to improve the political environment in the country to influence those who imposed sanctions to remove them.

Key words: sanctions, imposition, effects.

I. INTRODUCTION

Life for Zimbabweans since 1980 has been characterised by ups and downs. In literature they would call the life of Zimbabweans as being characterised by vicissitudes. From 1980 to 1990 the economy of the country was generally good thereby benefitting citizens' livelihood. From 1990 to 2000, Zimbabwe went through a turbulent period as it tried to find its own economic character after a honeymoon decade when the economy was basically supported by well-wishers from different countries. From 2000 to 2010, the economic landscape of the country and lives of citizens was eclipsed by politics as the ruling party, ZANU (PF), fought opposition politics led by MDC of Morgan Tsvangirai. The decade after 2000 also witnessed an economic crisis as a result of combination of factors such as land reform, political instability, and participation of the army in the DRC war, sanctions imposed by western countries, corruption or drought. From 2010 to 2020 the country was characterised by two main issues: Government of National Unity and the implosion within ZANU (PF) leading to the coup de' tat in 2017 and the ultimate fall of the long-serving president R G Mugabe and his passing on 2019. The subject of this paper is to analyse one of the factors, sanctions, which allegedly had negative effects on the economy of Zimbabwe.

The paper is presented in the following order: definition of key words/terms, conceptual framework, events leading to sanctions, explanations for sanctions, effects of sanctions and conclusion.

Definitions of key words

Imposition is derived from the word impose which means to force someone to accept. <https://www.miriam-webster.com> . Oxford Dictionary defines impose as simply force on someone or take advantage of someone by demanding their attention or commitment. Similar words for impose are words like thrust, inflict, press, abuse, exploit or manipulate. Therefore impose means the use of force or coercion in order to demand someone or a country to accept what you require that person or country to do. The meaning of the word has a negative connotation or tone in order to force or coerce a country or someone to give in to particular demands. It is a burden that is put on someone in order to cause some pain which may result in a desired change. In the context of what happened it means sanctions were imposed in order to bring about change in the country.

Effect is similar to result or consequences. An effect is a change which is a result or consequence of an action or other cause. In this case it means when sanctions were imposed, what change occurred in the country?

Sanctions is a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule. It is official permission or approval for an action. Similar words for sanctions include punish, penalty, deterrent or discipline. This means to sanction is a form of punishment imposed on a country or someone for disobeying something regarded as correct. It can also be regarded as a penalty for wrong doing. Or a form of discipline for doing something wrong. It is supposed to act as a form of deterrent from doing bad things or bad behaviour. In relation to law, sanctions means measures/actions taken by a country to coerce/compel another to conform/obey international norms of conduct. The sanctions may be in the form of trade restrictions or barred from participating in sporting activities with other nations. In the case of Zimbabwe sanctions were said to be targeted at particular individuals or entities accused to be responsible for negatives occurring in the country.

Theoretical Framework

The work in this chapter is guided by sociological perspective of interaction. Although the issue of sanctions may better be guided by an economic perspective or international relations understanding, exchange theory under the interaction perspective appears to be appropriate as well as it explains

what drove individual countries or group entities to impose sanctions on another state without the approval of the world body. In simple terms exchange theory says that interaction between individuals in society is characterised by rewards and punishment. Rewards are given to those who do well or act positively while punishment is for those who have done wrong or acted negatively to accepted norms. Thus Zafirovski (2005:2) (citing Homans 1961) says that exchange theory is based on the “premise that human behaviour or social action is an exchange activity, tangible and intangible” especially of rewards and costs (punishments). Thus human behaviour with others is shown by reward and punishment, pleasure and pain, cost and benefit, gain and loss (ibid: 12). Relating this theory to the issue of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, it means the countries which imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe were not happy with what Zimbabwe was doing so punished her in order to change her behaviour.

Events leading to the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe

The second half of the last decade of the 20th century witnessed a number of events which cumulatively led to the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe. It should be noted that some of the events are not directly linked to sanctions but when in unison with other events they show how a country that was a darling of the west became almost a pariah to the same countries.

Parliamentary elections of 1995 and Presidential elections of 1996 were held at a time when citizens were feeling the effects of Structural Adjustment Programme implemented by the Zimbabwean government. Parliamentary elections were easily won by ZANU (PF). Even the presidential elections were won by R G Mugabe without much opposition from A Muzorewa and N. Sithole who pulled out of the race when their names were already on the ballot papers, so the withdrawal was not recognised. The elections were important in the history of the country for a number reasons. Masipula and Makumbe (1997) argue that both parliamentary and presidential elections were characterised by violence and disputed results. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) adds that the elections were boycotted and had a low turn-out of voters with only 32.3 % of registered voters casting their votes. The parliamentary general elections were characterised by many independent candidates, some of whom were disgruntled former ZANU (PF) members (Masipula and Makumbe, 1997). The significance of the independent candidates was an indication of divisions within the ruling party which was rare since 1980.

Another event which had negative effects on the economy was the Zimbabwe Defence Forces’ participation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war under the guise of SADC in order to support President Kabila who was under siege from internal opposition, Rwandan and Ugandan forces. The Zimbabwean participation in the DRC from 1998 was costing the Zimbabwean economy one million USD dollars a day. The army leaders were also accused of looting DRC diamonds. The western countries ended up referring to DRC

diamonds as ‘bloody’ diamonds. Apart from negatively affecting the economy, Rupiya (2002) adds that Zimbabwe’s participation in the DRC caused citizens to be disgruntled with the government.

The war veterans led by Chenjerai Hunzvi in 1997 demanded to be compensated for their involvement in Chimurenga 11 from 1966 to 1979. The demands were so incessant that the government was forced to pay each of the war veteran 50 000 Z\$ which was an equivalent of 4500 USD at that time (Musemwa, 2011). The effect on the economy of the pay-out was immediate as the funds used were not budgeted for. The local currency lost its value in a single day which became known as Black Friday. The Bretton Woods institutions suspended support for the government until the government has regularised its budget.

The Executive and Judiciary were at loggerheads with each other in the late 1990s when the government was trying to amend the law to give it power to take the land without compensation. The conflict was so bad that the Chief Justice at that time, Justice Anthony Gubbay, was forced to retire which paved way for a new Chief Justice who was sympathetic to the intended land reform programme. The significance of this was that the government was blamed for interference in the work of the Judiciary, failure to adhere to the dictates of separation of powers and rule of law. In a detailed report on justice in Zimbabwe, the International Commission of Jurists (2002) expressed alarm over accusations of executive interference in judicial appointments and tenure. The executive failed to reign on war veterans who threatened the judiciary for making judgements on land contrary to their wishes of invading farms and taking them. The worst example was in 2000 when the war veterans entered the high court by force to intimidate the judges and calling on the white judges to go (ibid).

Following the loss of value of the local currency after war veterans were compensated with unbudgeted funds, the government announced its intention to raise taxes. One of the intended tax was specifically called war veterans’ tax. This triggered demonstrations in 1997 organised by the trade unions umbrella body, The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. The protest, though crashed by use of force, was billed as success as the government was forced to withdraw most of the intended taxes and totally abandoning the war veterans’ tax (Musemwa, 2011).

In 1999 the ZCTU and its affiliates formed a political party which was to prove to be formidable in the political scene of Zimbabwe. The new party, named the Movement for Democratic Party (MDC), was an instant hit especially for workers and in urban areas as it promised to solve their problems which were blamed on the ruling party’s government. Since its formation the politics of the country changed drastically as the ruling party had a strong challenger. What made the whole situation worse was that the ruling party was not prepared to be challenged nor to lose power which set

the ground for tense political conflicts in the country leading to more abuses, violence and deaths.

The accelerated Land reform programme popularly known as the Fast track land reform programme or by its war-related name, Third Chimurenga, was put in motion in 2000. The programme was led by war veterans and youth who moved to different white owned farms around the country forcing the white farmers off the land. Any resistance was met by violence. The position of the government was that the people who invaded farms were demonstrating against the unfair distribution of land in the country so the police should not act to remove them. The police gave an excuse of not having enough manpower to remove the farm invaders. When some commercial farmers sought recourse in courts they got positive response but there was no one to enforce the court decisions as police were not taking any action. The end result was that the land reform ended up being described negatively: chaotic, no rule of law, violent, no respect for property rights which gave the whole country a negative label. The situation on the farms was worsened by what was happening in the political arena in 2000: referendum for a new constitution.

The government had drafted a new constitution to replace the Lancaster House Constitution. Citizens were to choose Yes or No in a referendum which took place in February 2000. The government campaigned for Yes vote while the MDC campaigned for No vote. The No vote won in the referendum which was a major setback for the government and the ruling party which had not lost any election since independence. Blame for the loss was put on opposition parties, whites, urbanites and western countries. With parliamentary elections planned for June 2000, the course was set for a bruising campaign as the referendum results had acted a sign of citizens who were prepared to give other parties a chance to rule. This set ground for a tense political conflict characterised by violence, intimidation and lawlessness.

Parliamentary elections were held in June 2000. The results showed a large support for the opposition party, MDC, winning 57 seats out of the 120 seats. The support of the MDC mainly came from urban areas where it had almost a clean sweep of all seats available. This was a big setback for the ruling party which still had majority but with a small margin. Elections were also marred by violence and intimidation with some observers saying the elections were not free and fair because of violence. The parliamentary elections were followed by Presidential elections in 2002.

The main contenders in the 2002 Presidential election were RG Mugabe of ZANU (PF) and M Tsvangirai of MDC. The run up to the elections held in March 2002 was characterised by rallies and campaigns described by many as violent and full of threats. Mugabe won but the results were disputed by the opposition who said that there was a lot of rigging and intimidation. MDC and Tsvangirai took their disputes to the courts but nothing changed.

The events detailed above show a country without a stable political environment especially between 1995 and 2000. Political instability gave the country a negative image. Other countries and many organisations in the world complained of abuse of human rights, lack of respect for property rights, uneven political arena for opposition parties and cases of corruption. The government was blamed for not doing enough to solve these problems but the ruling politicians seemed not to care as they seemed to be more interested in their political survival. They blamed the west for helping in the formation of the MDC with the intention of removing them from power. They blamed the whites in the country for funding the MDC who they allegedly said were against the land reform program. Such rhetoric statements became the order of the day which divided the citizens of the country. It was with such atmosphere in the country that sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe by the west as a way of trying to enforce change.

Imposition of sanctions

Many authors have written on how and why sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe (Chingono, 2010; International Crisis Group 2012; Ogbonna, 2017; Grebe 2010). Sanctions on Zimbabwe were not imposed by the United Nations Organisation (UNO) but by countries or block of countries using their own laws. This was probably because the UNO would not have agreed to such measures as the eastern countries would block them as they were generally friendly to Zimbabwe. The first to impose sanctions was the United States of America (USA) in 2001. The USA imposed sanctions using their law dubbed Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act 2001 (ZIDERA). Under this law multinational financial institutions mainly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and African Development Bank (ADB) were restricted in assisting Zimbabwe with any loans or provide credit guarantee without USA approval. In addition the law prohibited any cancellation or reduction of debts owed by the Zimbabwean government.

The European Union (EU) followed in imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2002 using their own law known as Common Policy. Under the Common Policy the EU imposed what they termed restrictive sanctions which meant that sanctions were targeted at particular individuals in Zimbabwe accused by the continental body of being responsible for human rights abuses, bad governance, unfair elections and political violence. The targeted persons were not supposed to receive any financial assistance from EU and their movement in EU countries was not allowed. The policy also froze assets and bank accounts of the targeted individuals. Beef and tobacco exports to the EU countries from Zimbabwe were banned. In 2010 the list of individuals affected by the policy was 203 plus 40 organisations.

Australia, Canada and New Zealand, as countries which follow the ideals of the western countries, also imposed similar sanctions on Zimbabwe. Australia imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2002 as a result of concerns over political violence and human rights abuses (Australia Government, no

date). The measures of the sanctions included restrictions on sale of arms, assets for designated persons and travel bans on designated leaders. New Zealand imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2002 which included a ban on R. Mugabe and 334 associates to travel to the country, restrictions on sporting activities and suspension of visitor waivers. The reasons for sanctions by New Zealand was mainly to do with human rights abuses by the government of R. G. Mugabe.

Explanations for the targeted sanctions

The imposition and justification of sanctions on Zimbabwe has been explained from two main views. There is the Zimbabwean government view which regard the sanctions as illegal and the western countries' view which regard the sanctions as justified and proper.

Chingono (2010) gives a detailed analysis of the two explanations of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. The first view to be described here is that of Zimbabwe which Chingono calls the "sanctionee." The Zimbabwean government view the sanctions as "an illegal tool meant to destabilise the internal political affairs of the country" (Chingono, 2010). The internal affairs usually identified by the politicians in Zimbabwe is that of the land reform programme which began around the year 2000. According to this explanation the western countries were not happy about the land reform programme in which most of the white farmers lost their farms to newly resettled black farmers. The government of Zimbabwe said the land reform programme was inevitable as the land issue was one of the main factor which led to the liberation war. The whites numbering about 4000 owned most of the fertile and productive while the majority of blacks were living in less fertile lands after being removed from their lands during the colonial era. When some commentators complained that the demonstrations by war veterans and some civilians were illegal, the government countered this by a constitutional amendment in 2000 of Section 16 of the constitution which made it legal for the government to acquire land for blacks. When some commentators complained about the violent nature of the land reform programme there was the view that this was like war hence called the Third Chimurenga in which cases of violence were inevitable as the blacks were just taking back their land so those who resisted had force used to effect change. The Zimbabwean government also believed that sanctions were meant to perpetuate colonial rule (Chingono, 2010) in what is called neo-colonialism. The government of Zimbabwe has continued to hold this view up to this day and influenced many African countries to support them. The former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, who is now late, was very eloquent in trying to put across the view of Zimbabwe on the international arena like United Nations Organisation and African Union. As a result of pronouncements by the government some countries in the Eastern world like China and Russia did not support the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. Perhaps this explains why the western countries never took the sanction issue for discussion at the UN as they

believed that the two super powers which supported Zimbabwe would veto such a move.

The second view about sanctions is that held by most western countries which imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe. The view of the west is that sanctions imposed were not economic but referred to as "targeted, restricted or smart" (Chingono, 2010). This means the so called sanctions were not wide and comprehensive but targeted on those who were responsible for the negatives in the country. The reasons for imposing sanctions centred on failure to uphold the principles of democracy and good governance, human rights abuses, disrespect for property ownership rights and lack of rule of law in the country (Chingono, 2010). The issue of land is mentioned by those who imposed sanctions as a "scapegoat and political gimmick for ZANU (PF) to consolidate its autocratic rule" (Chingono, 2010). By implication the western countries mention the land reform programme when they say the government is failing to protect private ownership of land by allowing blacks to invade white owned farms and preventing the police to intervene. In the process of the land reform a number of whites and some black workers on the farms lost their lives. But the western countries argue whether it was necessary to use such force in order to reform land ownership? This is countered by some political activists who say when land was taken from our forefathers force was also used and people died. Western countries also emphasise that sanctions were imposed because of violence during elections and alleged rigging of results. But such allegations are denied by the Zimbabwean government who say opposition parties were the ones peddling such information to discredit the ruling party and government.

It is difficult to judge which of the two views is more credible than the other. It would appear as if each side has valid reasons for what they did. But if one uses the idea of exchange theory about reward and punishment which occurs when there is interaction between individuals or entities, then those who imposed sanctions have valid reasons for punishment as they were not happy with what was happening in Zimbabwe. In order to continue interacting in a normal way they wanted Zimbabwe to change what was happening in the country. But Zimbabwe has not accepted the justifications of sanctions and this has been worsened by the support she gets from some countries in Africa and elsewhere about sanctions being illegal. It would appear as if the support she gets from other nations makes the Zimbabwean government and political leaders more belligerent and adopt an 'I do not care attitude'. Hence the sanctions have continued for over two decades with no end in sight as the country and citizens continue to be affected.

Effects of sanctions

The debate on whether sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe have had an effects on the economy has raged on since the time when sanctions were imposed. On one side are those who solely blame sanctions for the economic mess in which the country finds itself in and on the other side those who do not

blame sanctions only for the economic instability. The Zimbabwean government and the ruling party are on the side of those who mainly blame sanctions for the economic problems in the country. The western countries, who imposed sanctions, are on the side of those who say the sanctions are not blame for any negative effects as the sanctions were targeted at particular individuals so not affecting all citizens. They gone to point out that when sanctions were imposed the economy was already on a downward trajectory with citizens already being affected. So instead of blaming sanctions for the economic effects such commentators blame other factors such as political instability, corruption or the land reform. If sanctions were to blame for the effects how come Ian Smith of Rhodesia was able to build a strong economy when the country was under sanctions from 1966 to 1980? How come that the economy of Zimbabwe between 2009 and 2013 showed an improvement even when the sanctions were not removed? How can the sanctions alone imposed by less than half of the world have such devastating effects on the economy for such a long time? Given such a scenario it is difficult to say with certainty that effects were solely as a result of sanctions neither can it be said that sanctions had not had any effects. When a punishment is meted out it is supposed to affect so that there is change. So what can be said is that sanctions has had effects on Zimbabwe to a certain extent. Sanctions have aggravated the situation in the country. The effects are a result of a combination of factors which include sanctions.

Many authors have tried to identify and analyse effects of sanctions on Zimbabwe (Prinslow 2010; Grebe, 2010; Mbanje & Mahuku, 2011; Crisis Group Africa, 2012; Ndaripa, 2014; Ogbonna, 2017; Mararike, 2019). In order to present a complex issue in a simple way the effects have been presented as social, economic and political.

Sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe have affected Zimbabweans socially. The social aspects affected are many but this paper analyses health, education, standard of living, decline in food production, migration and increased human rights abuses.

The health sector was partly affected by sanctions (Mbanje and Mahuku, 2011; Ogbonna, 2017). Mbanje and Mahuku (2011) point out that health in the country was negatively affected by sanctions due to loss of qualified health personnel who left the country for greener pastures in neighbouring or overseas countries. Shortage of drugs was also high due to shortage of foreign currency. This is also supported by Ogbonna (2017) who says that some countries in Europe who gave aid to Zimbabwe in support of the health sector suspended aid when sanctions were imposed by the EU. For example drugs for HIV and AIDS were difficult to get for the ordinary citizens who had no capacity to buy. The situation was worsened by other factors such as corruption by some leaders and doctors who took advantage to benefit from the system by converting the few drugs available to use in their own surgeries. A recent example is when some people in

government allegedly inflated prices of Covid 19 masks for personal gain.

Education was also affected by the imposition of sanctions. The education system in Zimbabwe benefitted a lot from overseas funding especially from western countries since independence. But such aid was reduced drastically from 2000 due to sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe (Mbanje and Mahuku, 2011). Furthermore Ogbonna (2017) noted that Sweden suspended aid to the education sector when the EU imposed sanctions. Many teachers left the country (Mbanje and Mahuku, 2011) as the government failed to pay a living wage to teachers who could hardly afford a decent living (Katsinde 2019, thesis). Students in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions were affected by loss of qualified teachers and lack of resources. But loss of qualified teachers was not only due to sanctions but to political instability in which teachers were accused of supporting opposition parties so became targets of the ruling party activists especially in rural areas (ibid).

The standard of living of citizens was negatively affected by the imposition of sanctions. The lines of credit for the government and private companies were closed mainly due to ZIDERA. Many companies closed which led to loss of employment of many people. Many school graduates failed to find employment. Retrenchment became the order of the day with no prospects to get another form of employment. Inflation wiped out the savings of many citizens who became paupers. Many citizens were forced to withdraw their children from schools as they could no longer afford tuition fees. Thus Mbanje and Mahuku (2011) asserts that the standard of living of general population declined as from 2000 which coincided with the time sanctions were imposed. Although sanctions may be partly to blame for poor living conditions, Crisis Group (2012) argues that the economy of the country was already collapsing due to other factors such as uncondusive investment climate and land reform programme which disturbed agricultural activities which sustained the livelihood of many citizens.

The land reform programme has been blamed by many commentators as a cause for Zimbabwe losing its known status of being the bread basket of the SADC region. But others (Mbanje and Mahuku, 2011) also put the blame on sanctions as having caused a decline in food production as resettled farmers failed to get outside funding to assist in agricultural production. Thus food production was reduced by 60% (ibid). EU suspended assistance due to farm invasions which the Zimbabwean government regarded as demonstrations.

Prinslow (2010) argues that sanctions sometimes have unforeseen and unwanted results in the country sanctioned and other countries. For example Prinslow goes on to say sanctions may lead to a crisis of refugees, increased human rights abuses, militarisation of the government and a spirit of nationalism among the citizens of the sanctioned country. Ogbonna (2017) concurs with Prinslow when he says

sanctions affects the rights and well-being of ordinary and innocent citizens. He points that the rights to health and education as being the most affected. In Zimbabwe there is a clear example of how government institutions have been militarised by appointment of senior personnel to lead key governments departments. Anyone in Zimbabwe who points out the weaknesses of the government is regarded as the enemy of the state and sometimes punished accordingly. Neighbouring countries, especially South Africa, have been affected by increased migration of Zimbabweans into their countries which has sometimes led to hatred by locals who accuse them of taking over their jobs. The result has been xenophobic attacks on foreigners including Zimbabweans. Thus sanctions which were intended to bring about change in the behaviour of the government has also brought unplanned results.

Although most of the sanctions were said to be restrictive in nature so intended to affect the individuals so targeted, they also impacted on the economy. This was mainly because ZIDERA used by the USA prohibited IMF, World Bank and ADB from providing assistance to Zimbabwe without permission of the USA. For example Mbanje and Mahuku (2011) blames sanctions for shortage of foreign currency to be used for imports. In addition infrastructure development such as roads declined as some European countries suspended aid. No wonder the roads in urban centres and major roads linking cities and towns are in a deplorable state. Grebe (2010) also adds that economic growth stagnated partly due to sanctions as the country could not borrow money for development. The leaders who were targeted found it difficult to travel so it affected their ability to engage with other nations for assistance (ibid). Crisis Group (2012) points out that sanctions imposed on the country made it an unattractive destination for investment. Many companies either closed or reallocated to neighbouring countries. Thus shortage of goods became rampant especially for basics such as cooking oil, soap or bread. Closure of industries also led to an increase in the unemployment rate in the country. The formal economy turned into informal economy as citizens battled to survive by importing goods from South Africa or Botswana to sell to citizens who could no longer find goods in supermarkets. All these economic problems led to the country experiencing the highest hyperinflation in the world in 2008.

As a way of trying to solve the economic problems, the government introduced indigenisation of business (Prinslow, 2010). Thus there was a cry for locals to take over businesses as the government came up with 51% shareholding for locals in companies. Although this might appear to be a good idea, the implementation seems to have benefitted supporters of the ruling party who used the policy for wealth accumulation (ibid) without actually growing the economy. The policy further aggravated the economic situation in the country as it led to more investors shunning Zimbabwe.

Sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe also had political effects. The political effects included the following: further political

polarisation; hardening of ZANU (PF); rejection of political reforms; crony capitalism (Crisis Group 2012; Ndaripa, 2014; Prinslow 2010).

The sanctions imposed on the country has deepened the political division. The ruling party accuses opposition parties for inviting western countries to impose sanctions as a way of effecting regime change. Citizens are divided between those who strongly believe sanctions are to blame for economic ills the country are experiencing and those who believe sanctions are justified because of human rights abuses. Thus Crisis Group (2012) argues that the ruling party activists have blamed sanctions on opposition parties.

In addition, Ndaripa (2014) points out that sanctions hardened the ruling party's tendencies of dictatorial practices in the country. Indications of this is seen in unexplained disappearances of opposition activists such as Itai Dzamara, curbing of freedoms such as press freedom or the right to demonstrate. In order to demonstrate people have to get permission from the police and in most cases opposition parties request to protest is usually turned down while those of the ruling party are allowed. For example in 2018 the ruling party organised demonstration against sanctions but when opposition party demonstrated against delay in announcing elections in the same year many people were shot dead. This is a clear sign of double standards by the police and government who give excuses for not allowing opposition parties to protest.

One of the terms of Global Political Agreement of 2009 was that the government should carry out political reforms before the next elections of 2013. Ndaripa (2014) argues that the ruling party had refused to implement any democratic and governance reforms arguing that sanctions should be removed first. Such conditions has brought a standoff between the government and western countries on the issue of sanctions. Western countries are steadfast in hoping that the government improve on human rights and rule of law while the ruling party is campaigning to have sanctions removed without any conditions. Thus the sanctions instead of changing the way government governs, they have done the opposite, creating more mistrust between the west and Zimbabwe. Thus Prinslow (2010) argues that sanctions usually assist in showing dissatisfaction while Ndaripa (2014) notes that the effect of sanctions are more psychological and political than economic. This is why authoritarian regimes are able to withstand sanctions as they use them to rally their citizens using the nationalistic and patriotic feelings against those who imposed sanctions (Prinslow, 2010). For Zimbabwe the sanctions have been here for almost two decades. The effects are there but citizens and government struggle and move on with politicians ridiculing sanctions as a regime change agenda.

Another notable effect of sanctions has been the emergence of what Prinslow (2010) calls crony capitalism. This is indicated by the government controlling the distribution of scarce resources in the country. There has been shortage of basics

such a maize and fuel. The state has intervened in the distribution of such basics which has resulted in ruling party elites benefitting more than others. For example the distribution of agricultural inputs is allegedly biased as those known to be supporters of opposition parties are denied access.

II. CONCLUSION

The study seem to suggest that the issue of sanctions on Zimbabwe is contentious and controversial. Two decades down the line sanctions seem not to have brought about any intended changes. It appears that there is no side willing to back down. The standoff has had negative effects on Zimbabwe as a whole and not only on particular individuals who were targeted. But it is also rather difficult to blame sanctions only on problems being experienced in Zimbabwe as a host of other factors are to blame as well. It is recommended that the government of Zimbabwe try to reach out to western countries by trying to improve rule of law and avoid human rights abuses. Pride will not get the country anywhere as citizens continue to suffer. For western countries which imposed sanctions it is recommended they try to use other means to bring about change as intended because sanctions seem to have hardened some sections of Zimbabweans causing division in the country.

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