

Helpful or Hurtful?

A Qualitative Study on How Economic Sanctions Affect
Violence



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Abstract

Recently, people have developed a more nuanced understanding of the efficacy of economic sanctions, and it is now generally accepted that some economic sanctions have serious consequences for the civilian populations of the target countries. The purpose of this thesis was to investigate whether or not the imposition of economic sanctions has an impact on the levels of violence committed by different actors. Based on previous research on economic sanctions, and theories of violence, economic grievance, and political opportunity, the implementation of sanctions is anticipated to raise the degree of violence committed by state and non-state actors in situations where violence already exists. To evaluate the impact that the imposition of economic sanctions, a comparative case study was conducted on Zimbabwe and Burundi, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative material. The results of this study led to the conclusion that five years after the imposition of sanctions, there was a reduction in the amount of violence that occurred in both countries and given that the overarching premise was that the implementation of economic sanctions would lead to an increase in violence, the empirical study demonstrated that this appears to be inaccurate.

Keywords: Economic sanctions, political violence, state violence, economic grievances, sanctions effectiveness

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Previous research indicates that the effectiveness of economic sanctions in achieving its goals is disputed. Some academics have concluded that economic sanctions are unsuccessful at obtaining policy objectives, while others point to a rather high success rate for the policy instrument (Galtung, 1967: 409; Hufbauer et. al., 1985). However, all these interpretations of sanctions' effectiveness overlook the possibility that the change in the target country could occur in the opposite direction of the sender's demands, making economic sanctions counterproductive (Peksen, 2019: 641).

In addition to the lack of clarity on the efficacy of economic sanctions, substantial evidence reveals that policymakers may have disregarded the counterproductive effects of the tool of coercive diplomacy while deciding to employ it (Peksen, 2019: 643). Some studies even suggest that, under some circumstances, economic sanctions could increase violence in a country (Wood, 2008; 2010; Marinov, 2005; Peksen, 2009; Heffington, 2017; Allen, 2008). However, in contrast to the growing literature on the socioeconomic effects of economic coercion, scant systematic research has examined whether sanctions have a significant qualitative impact on violence, and even fewer studies have examined the dynamics of state and non-state actor in the event of violent conduct (Hultman & Peksen, 2017: 1317). By focusing on research that explains how economic sanctions influence various actors in a country, to aim is to be able to acquire a better understanding of how the cost of sanctions paid by civilians could translate into an increase in political violence. Accordingly, this thesis intends to investigate the impact of sanctions on the use of physical violence to shed light on the post-sanction's dynamics between state- and non-state actors.

1.2 Previous research

The meaning of sanctions has been defined by Galtung as "...actions initiated by one or more international actors (the 'senders') against one or more others (the 'receivers') with either or both of two purposes: to punish the receivers by depriving them of some value and/or to make the receivers comply with certain norms the senders deem important." (Galtung 1967: 379). Economic sanctions are often used as supplemental measures to conventional armed and armed conflicts, to influence

targets to take specified actions (Hufbauer et. al. 2007: 5). The rationale of economic sanctions is based on the idea that economic interdependence between nations would lead to a more peaceful world since governments would be reluctant to lose trade benefits by engaging in conflict (Özgür & Shahin, 2021: 1661).

However, Galtung discovered nearly fifty years ago that economic sanctions were ineffective at achieving the stated policy objectives (Galtung, 1967). Though, when Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott's original large-N dataset (HSE) revealed that the actual success rate of economic sanctions was 34%, this impression changed (Hufbauer et. al., 1985). Pape, another distinguished academic in the subject, reexamined the HSE-dataset and determined that their conclusion was flawed, indicating with evidence from their own data that the success rate of sanctions was in fact closer to 5% (Pape, 1997). Hence, the effectiveness of economic sanctions has been the topic of numerous debates, and the root of the conflict appears to be a difference over what economic sanctions are designed to accomplish or attain, making it difficult to evaluate their effectiveness (Pala, 2021: 245). In the early 1990s, the United Nations adopted comprehensive sanctions against Iraq, which resulted in a humanitarian crisis of which the United States and the United Nations were held accountable. This coincided with the emergence of concerns about human security, prompting many humanitarian organizations to question the morality of comprehensive sanctions (Drezner, 2011: 97-98; Weiss, 1999: 500). Numerous efforts were undertaken in response to these concerns, to develop sanctions that would not have the humanitarian repercussions of comprehensive economic sanctions and thus be more successful by applying only direct pressure on certain political figures (Gordon, 2011: 315). Most sanctions imposed today are targeted sanctions; comprehensive sanctions are rarely employed anymore (Peksen, 2019: 639-643).

However, it is already difficult to determine if sanctions have the desired effect and to separate the independent weight of individual sanctions or other circumstances. Yet, the increased emphasis on human security has also caused a shift in what is perceived as effective (Pala, 2021: 243; 239). Thus, it is becoming increasingly clear that economic sanctions may have impacts beyond loss of trade or money, and that the majority of the sanctions' costs appear to be borne by civilians (Wood, 2008: 489). Recent research indicates that sanctions may, for example, damage the political stability of a target nation by generating more antigovernment demonstrations, putting the leadership at risk, and altering the dynamics of terrorist actions (Allen, 2008; Escribá-Folch & Wright, 2010; Choi & Luo, 2013). Yet, it appears that targeted sanctions do have some negative unintended consequences, and therefore the effectiveness of economic sanctions appears debatable because they continue to do severe harm to civilians (Peksen, 2019: 639).

1.3 Research aim

Yet, the literature on the efficacy of sanctions has emphasized the state-centric approach and disregarded the influence that economic sanctions imposed on state

figures may have on non-state actors. Thus, it is challenging to assess how the imposition of economic sanctions affects the relationship between state and nonstate actors (Özgür & Shahin, 2021: 1659; Peksen, 2019: 641). Since sanctions likely will continue to be used as a political instrument to minimize global conflicts, it is important to gain insight into the effects sanctions may have on violence, moving beyond the focus on interstate conflict (Radtke & Jo, 2018: 760). The goal of this thesis is to investigate the impact of sanctions on the use of physical violence by state and non-state actors. Considering the lack of research on the interactions between state and non-state actors and their use of violence, sanction cases will be analyzed in greater depth with an emphasis on violence. By doing this, the aim is to shed light on the causal links between the imposition of sanctions and the use of violence. Accordingly, the research question follows as: *How does the imposition of economic sanctions affect violence?*

In addition, a few questions based on the theoretical framework will be utilized to direct the research. Based on theories of economic sanctions, violence, economic grievance, and political opportunity, the implementation of sanctions is anticipated to raise the degree of violence committed by state and non-state actors in situations where violence already exists. By using data on actors active in two different countries with economic sanctions and violence present between 2001-2020, a comparative case study will be conducted. The thesis thus aims to shed light on the research gap that is the post-sanctions dynamics between state- and non-state actors in the aspect of violence. However, the analysis concludes that the empirical results does not support the hypotheses, meaning that economic sanctions in these cases decreased the levels of violence.

2 Theory

2.1 Theoretical framework

As noted, it is becoming increasingly evident that economic sanctions may have unintended consequences, and previous studies suggests that sanctions can lead to an increase in political violence in target states where it's found that sanctions can lead to a reduction in respect of physical integrity of individuals (Heffington, 2017: 124). However, sanctions may have varied consequences on various forms of violence and may thus influence the use of violence in other ways. This section attempts to develop a theoretical framework connecting existing theories on violence to the scientific literature on economic sanctions. Utilizing prior research, the framework will yield four hypotheses, which will be evaluated using existing empirical data.

2.1.1 Economic sanctions and state violence

Regarding the relationship between economic sanctions and state violence, scholars typically make references to both repression and violence without clearly distinguishing between the two. Nonetheless, repression often entails the use of violence, and the main scholar used in this theoretical framework emphasizes that he concentrates solely on: "physical repression: a subset of repression that includes abuses such as torture, extrajudicial killings, disappearance and political imprisonment." (Wood, 2008: 499). Therefore, this will also be the focus in this thesis.

Economic sanctions put on governments are intended to destabilize the target regime by depriving it of necessary economic, military and other resources required for political elites to maintain order and stability (Kirshner, 1997: 42). Once target regimes are denied access to foreign resources, sanctions are intended to weaken the coercive capacity of the repressive regime, hence reducing government repression. Contrarily, the alternative view highlights that the unintended political and economic effects of sanctions will likely lead to an increase in the government's use of repression (Peksen, 2009: 61).

Wood emphasizes that instability in the country heightens the state's perception of threat, which in turn adds to the increase in repression (Wood, 2008: 490). Sanctions can threaten regime stability due to their potential to alter economic structures and political alignments within the first state, which in turn can prompt the state to increase its level of repression and, by extension, cause an increased

frequency of violence to maintain the regime. This occurs when sanctions enhance the relative power of the opposition, contribute to societal unrest, and contribute to or encourage defections from the coalition of government loyalists (Wood, 2008: 490-491). There are two processes by which sanctions can exacerbate instability and pose a threat to the regime:

- i. By limiting the target leader's budget and restricting the flow of resources to supporters, the probability of defection from the state coalition to a challenger is increased (Wood, 2008: 492).
- ii. By generating public dissent, targeted leaders may be prompted to escalate their level of repression to deter threats and stabilize the regime (Wood, 2008: 492).

The first aspect of this idea states that economic sanctions can destabilize political leaders (Marinov, 2005: 564). This is due to the fact that the incumbent's capacity to sustain a flow of resources to core supporters is crucial to their survival. Failure to maintain this affects the government's stability, as the regime must offer more guarantees to its electorate than any potential rival. Sanctions risk making it more difficult to provide a credible promise of continuous resources and are therefore likely to destabilize target regimes.

Thus, target regimes will attempt to maintain stability, according to the theory, and this will increase the likelihood of an increased use of violence (Wood, 2008: 490-493). Moreover, when economic coercion instills greater resentment among economically disadvantaged people, the target regimes risk even greater insecurity. It is hypothesized that increasing socioeconomic need is a primary source of economic grievances and political violence, which challenges the regime and by extension leads to a rise in the use of violence by states (Gurr, 1968; 1970; Peksen, 2009: 63). Therefore, when governments perceive a large amount of civilian support for insurgencies, they are more prone to resort to violence to punish civilians and eliminate the opposition threat (Wood, 2010: 602).

2.1.2 Economic sanctions and non-state violence

Moreover, violence and political unrest in countries could be driven by conditions of extreme poverty and chronic underdevelopment, which are likely to intensify if sanctions are put on an economy that is already unstable (Wood, 2008: 489). Insurgents may resort to violence against civilians when the strategic environment is not conducive to attaining their objectives or when it appears to be a viable strategy for advancing their position within the strategic setting (Wood, 2010: 602). It thus appears that economic sanctions can motivate insurgents to use violence in two ways:

- i. Costly sanctions produce economic instability and grievances, allowing opposition groups to prosper politically, recruit more effectively, and conduct more attacks as a result (Heffington, 2017: 125).
- ii. Costly sanctions reduce the rebel group's resources, so weakening them. Weak insurgents are prone to employ especially low-cost methods, such as violence (Wood, 2010: 603).

The idea that economic hardship caused by sanctions will lead to violence is similar to relative deprivation theories of political violence. This proposes that when citizens feel entitled to a certain level of goods but are unable to attain it, their value expectations exceed their value capabilities, and their frustrations lead them to lash out against the government (Gurr, 1970). In the setting of economic coercion, punishments can cause economic suffering that stimulates feelings of relative deprivation. This could result in an escalation in political violence (Heffington, 2017: 125). As a consequence of economic hardships, the deprivation theory predicts that there will be an upsurge in antigovernmental activity under sanctions.

In accordance with political-opportunity theories of political violence, populations will take action against their government when the advantages of such acts outweigh their costs. This tendency should be more pronounced when sanctions are in place than when they are not (Allen, 2008: 919). Additionally, smaller resource endowments may lead to the use of violence to acquire both support and resources through coercion (Wood et. al., 2012: 647). Weak insurgent organizations may have a motivation to target civilians due to their inability to provide adequate advantages to entice loyalty. Stronger insurgents can more easily use their existing resource base and employ targeted motivators to incite civilian participation (Wood, 2010: 601).

However, the strategies accessible to insurgents and the effectiveness of a given strategy are primarily influenced by the group's capabilities. Weak insurgent groups are less able to offer potential supporters significant material incentives to induce voluntary cooperation, all else being equal. Thus, relative weakness restricts the strategic alternatives available for mobilizing resources, pushing weak insurgents to select low-cost techniques. In a variety of ways, violence is less expensive than providing strong positive incentives, and it modifies civilians' projected inclination to remain neutral (Kalyvas, 2006: 165; Lichbach, 1995: 58). Accordingly, weak insurgents with difficulties in resource mobilization are expected to resort to violence against people in order to collect the resources they need and avoid them supporting the government forces (Wood, 2010: 605).

2.2 Hypothesis

Based on the theories, my hypothesis is that violence will increase at either or both the state and non-state level. Following assumptions derived from this theoretical framework will guide the empirical analysis:

- i. Relating to the first mechanism regarding state violence, sanctions will contribute to a decrease in resource flows for the state, which increases the state threat perceptions and thus leads to an increase in state-based violence
- ii. Relating to the second mechanism regarding state violence, sanctions will contribute to public dissent, which may lead targeted leaders to increase their level of repression to deter threats and stabilize the regime.
- iii. Relating to the first mechanism regarding non-state violence, costly sanctions generate economic instability and grievances against the state,

which allows opposition groups to thrive politically, recruit more effectively and thus carry out more attacks

- iv. Relating to the second mechanism regarding non-state violence, costly sanctions result in less resources for the opposition group which weakens them, and because of this increases their use of violence.

Some of these are mutually exclusive, whereas others can be true simultaneously. The first two concerns state violence and does not seem to be mutually exclusive. They suggest that an increase is likely for either of two reasons. First, the state will take proactive measures to prevent defections or loss of support, The second one underlines that it will respond to popular opposition when sanctions are felt. The first one is thus more likely to occur early in the sanction period, but the second one may take longer and requires that the effect of the sanctions are felt. The third and fourth hypotheses concerns non-state violence and are likely mutually exclusive. The third hypothesis asserts that economic sanctions will increase non-state violence through improving possibilities of recruiting. According to the fourth hypothesis, a lack of resources will weaken the opposition, meaning that one highlights the opposition's weakness while the other emphasizes its relative gain in power.

3 Method and material

3.1 Research design

By examining situations that are experiencing political unrest when sanctions are implemented, the aim is to trace the levels of violence following the implementation of sanctions and assess whether the theories about economic sanctions and violence hold true when qualitative research is conducted. To fill the gap in the literature, this paper examines, through a comparative case study, how economic sanctions influence violence and violent behavior at various societal levels. The cases will be studied from the year the first actor imposes their sanctions, and five years forward. By doing this, the effects of the sanctions are likely to be experienced, and the aim is to capture how this affects violence in specific.

A comparative case study of the application of economic sanctions enables a comprehensive evaluation of the effects and identifies causal links and the empirical relationships between the variables, as opposed to simply quantifying them. Thus, the purpose is not to learn about the cases in themselves, but rather to obtain an understanding of the topic for which the cases are essential to comprehension (Lijphart, 1971: 683). By conducting a cross-national comparative study, the aim is to combine different levels of analysis and to gain a greater knowledge of the origins of political events, allowing me to generalize from these situations (Halperin & Heath, 2017: 233-234). Due to the complexity of both the dependent and independent variables, as well as the aim to look at in-depth mechanisms of violence, case studies are a useful method for potentially establishing a causal relationship (Hultman et. al., 2019: 118; George & Bennett, 2005: 19). This study's empirical analysis is conducted using a structured focus comparison. Therefore, it poses a series of questions to both the examined cases. Having multiple questions and indicators allows for a comprehensive measurement of the dependent variable, which is an essential aspect of case studies. In addition, the method is focused because the questions are customized to the theory's most essential components. In other words, the empirical research is structured by the theoretical argument. The questions are the following:

- i. How did violence by state actors change after the sanction imposition?
- ii. How did violence by non-state actors change after the sanction imposition?
- iii. How did public dissent change after the sanction imposition?
- iv. How did economic stability and grievances change after sanction imposition?

The most significant issue with case studies is the absence of substantial evidence for generalizations. Cross-national case studies lessen generalization issues, and by using two cases it allows for a complete, in-depth investigation of each issue and thus wider generalization. Each case is analyzed to determine what similarities and differences exist (Halperin & Heath, 2017: 238). As a case study, the methodology of this thesis has a high level of internal validity, as it will allow for a more in-depth understanding of the complexity of the effects of economic sanctions (Halperin & Heath, 2017: 238).

However, the external validity is likely to be lower. As previously mentioned, the validity issue associated with generalizing from a single sample is minimized by doing a small-N case study. Nonetheless, investigating circumstances in greater depth makes generalization difficult, and this thesis is no exception (Halperin & Heath, 2017: 238). In addition, case studies are likely to be affected by selection bias. Given the very small number of cases to be selected, random sampling is inapplicable for the purposes of this thesis. To avoid providing misleading results due to sample bias, the selection of cases will be deliberate.

3.2 Case selection

To prevent selection bias and strengthen the persuasiveness of the arguments, a number of important considerations will be taken into account, as will the rationale for my case selection. Specifically, this thesis will adopt a typical-case technique. The typical case demonstrates what is regarded to be a typical situation, given a general understanding of the phenomena, and may therefore also be considered representative.

In accordance with this, as a preliminary stage in selecting cases, only countries subject to United States and European Union sanctions were considered (See [Appendix 1; 2](#)). Using two senders rather than one was deemed appropriate given that the analysis is of the effects of economic sanctions, which necessitates that the sanctions be strong enough to have an effect. Furthermore, US-sanctions are used as a delimitation against the background that the US accounted for 40% of all sanctions in 2019, and given their economic dominance, it is logical to expect that its sanctions will have significant economic and geopolitical consequences (Kirilakha et. al., 2021: 74; 63). Regarding EU, trade is their most active area of international affairs, implying that their sanctions are also likely to be effective. It's also asserted that their sanctions are highly effective in attaining their objectives, supporting the assumption that EU sanctions have a considerable impact (Meissner, 2022: 9).

Moreover, the sanctions must aim to end violence, conflict, or breaches of human rights, which was a crucial criterion in selecting the cases. This is to justify the tracing of violent levels over time, and to avoid small-scale sanctions implemented based on changing the target-countries policy in the imposing country's special interests. In addition, because Africa receives an extensive amount of sanctions, the cases to be considered were limited to African nations.

Furthermore, the sanctions incident must have occurred after 2001, when conventional sanctions were replaced by targeted sanctions (Gordon, 2011: 320). One of the most important aspects were that cases with peacekeeping operations or comparable present throughout the sanction episode were removed during the final phase of the case selection. Cases with such large intervening circumstances were thus avoided to strengthen the internal validity of the study and to evaluate the effects of economic sanctions to the best of my ability (See [Appendix 3](#)). After this delimitation, only Burundi and Zimbabwe remained.

However, these cases are at most low-level conflicts and not full-scale civil wars. Nevertheless, violence by state actors and non-state actors in the form of armed groups is present in both cases. Yet, the theories likely focus more on rebel groups and armed groups in civil wars, and less on conflicts such as these. In the trade-off of selecting a civil war case with peacekeeping operations present versus a case experiencing conflict and violence on a smaller scale and without this major intervening factor, I determined that, for the purposes of my study, the armed groups in these two cases share sufficient characteristics with insurgent or rebel groups for the theory to still be applicable.

3.3 Conceptualization and operationalization

3.3.1 Economic sanctions

Economic sanctions are defined under the section on theory. However, as previously stated, the operational definition of sanctions only includes measures imposed by the United States and the European Union. Moreover, this thesis will look at sanctions using the Global Sanctions Database (GSDB). Regarding GSDB, they cover 729 cases of publicly traceable multilateral, bilateral and plurilateral sanctions between 1950 through 2016. Recently, it was additionally revised to include all sanctions through 2019. This dataset is widely used, and publicly available by request, and thus deemed appropriate for the purpose (Felbermayr et. al., 2020).

3.3.2 Violence

To conceptualize the dependent variable, violence must be defined. It can seem like an intuitive concept, but to study violence the concept must be limited. To do this, Stathis Kalyvas's definition will be utilized, which highlights that violence can be described as the: "intentional infliction of harm on people" (Kalyvas, 2006: 19). Consequently, violence can encompass more than the physical dimension, including for example the physical or psychological aspects.

This thesis and the theory upon which it is founded, however, concentrates exclusively on the physical dimension of violence and, as a result, will not embrace

all forms of violence. However, it will encompass more than fatalities by also taking assaults, abductions and sexual assaults into account.

To provide an initial assessment of the levels of violence in the different cases during the sanction episode, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) by Raleigh, et. al., (2010) will be employed. ACLED collects dates, actors, locations, fatalities and types of reported political violence and protests events around the world, making it a reliable source for the quantitative data (ACLED, 2019). Moreover, the database distinguishes between actors, which will give a greater insight on the dynamics and mechanisms in the violent behavior. ACLED divides the actions in categories and subcategories, and to provide a thorough picture of the amount of violence in a country, I will utilize three indicators that I believe address the aforementioned aspects. These are all under the categories of violent events, and are referred to as:

- i. Battles: violent interactions between two politically organized armed groups at a particular time and location. Battles involves at least two armed and organized actors.
- ii. Explosions and remote violence: one-sided events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to respond, usually using explosive devices.
- iii. Violence against civilians: violent events where an organized armed group (state- or non-state) deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed noncombatants, including sexual violence, attacks, and abductions and forced disappearances

Moreover, aiming to go deeper than looking at how widespread violence is, it is of great importance to know the specific characteristics of how the violence looks like. Thus, to test the different mechanisms, qualitative knowledge will complement the quantitative statistics.

3.3.3 Public dissent

For this thesis, a third variable is required. According to the theoretical argument, a regime that encounters increased opposition activity and discontent is more likely to expand repression. Antigovernmental strikes, riots, and demonstrations are said to be statistically and positively associated with regime repression; hence, it is vital to examine these factors as well (Wood, 2008: 506).

As with violence, ACLED is suitable for this purpose since their database includes demonstration events. This is subdivided between protests, which are defined as public demonstrations in which participants do not engage in violence; and riots, which are violent occurrences in which demonstrators or mobs engage in disruptive behaviors (ACLED, 2019). By incorporating these variables into the research, the aim is to acquire a full understanding of the situation in both cases.

3.4 Material

Due to data availability, secondary sources will be used to conduct the research. As aforementioned, the GSDB and the ACLED are used for the quantitative data on sanctions and violence in both cases. Both datasets are widely used and publicly available. In addition, the qualitative research will provide another method of studying the case and will hopefully contribute to capture a deeper knowledge. Therefore, the primary technique of data collection will be qualitative. For this, mainly reports from Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group, Amnesty International and reports from local NGOs will be used. By looking at a variety of different reports and using the same sources for information in both cases, a confirmation bias will hopefully be avoided.

4 Results on Zimbabwe (2002-2007)

4.1 Background

Zimbabwe gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1980. Robert Mugabe was elected prime minister in 1980 and president in 1987 after constitutional reforms created an executive presidency. He then ruled for 37 years (Amnesty International, 2017). In 2000, Mugabe proposed a constitution that would have given him the presidency for life. In that same year, his party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) narrowly defeated Morgan Tsvangirai’s Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the parliamentary elections. Mugabe also won the 2002 presidential election but was accused of engaging in a systematic campaign of intimidation to reduce opposition support, with violence escalating to intimidate political opponents (IRB, 2007; ZHRF, 2001).

His party, ZANU-PF, is accordingly a main actor in the conflict. Moreover, the government is accused of arming and training its youth wing, which has committed various violent crimes and according to reports, their military and police were also involved (Amnesty International, 2003). The opposition, mainly the MDC, represents the other side of the conflict. The MDC was founded against ZANU-PF in 1999, and the MDC, like ZANU-PF, uses violence to attain their goals and are accused of recruiting youth to assault civilians (Makonye, 2021: 7881).

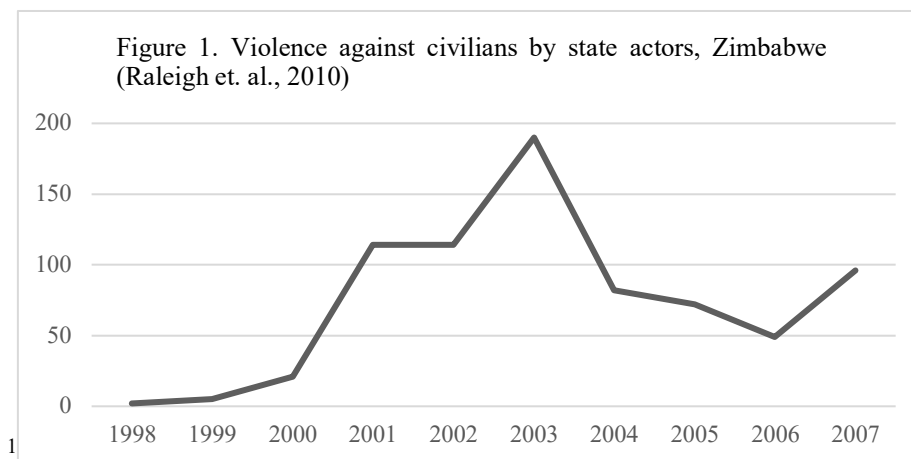
In light of this, sanctions were issued. In 2001, the US Congress passed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) to help the fight for peaceful, democratic change (United States Congress, 2001). Furthermore, in 2003, the US implemented targeted sanctions against Robert Mugabe and 76 Zimbabwean officials who harmed Zimbabwe’s democratic institutions. The sanctions froze all assets and prohibited US citizens from dealing with the specified people, aiming to push the Zimbabwean government to adopt democratic measures (White House, 2003). The EU had the Cotonou agreement as the sanctioning basis for Zimbabwe. The Cotonou agreement is an EU framework for working with countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Human rights, democratic values and the rule of law are fundamental parts of the Cotonou accord, and if one of the parties violates them, Article 96-compliant constitutions are initiated, and measures might be taken. The Cotonou Agreement Council initiated discussions regarding Zimbabwe’s human rights abuses in 2001 (The Commission of the European Union, 2001).

In response to Zimbabwe’s denial of admission to the EU mission head in February 2002, the EU imposed an arms embargo, restricted the movement of high-ranking officials, and froze their assets (Council of the European Union, 2002b). More than 75% of Zimbabweans lived below the poverty line at the time (ICG,

2002). Zimbabwe's economic decline begun before the sanction episode, but they nonetheless affected the economy by hindering business transactions, foreign direct investments and limiting development cooperation to humanitarian aid and non-governmental organization contributions (Grauvogel, 2017: 219).

4.2 How did violence by state actors change after sanction imposition?

According to ACLED data, state-sponsored violence against people in Zimbabwe rose in 2003. In 2002, state actors perpetrated 114 acts of violence against civilians; in 2003, that number increased to 190. After 2003, the incidence rate began to decline, dropping to 82 in 2004, 72 in 2005 and 49 in 2006. Despite this, there were 96 incidents of government actors employing violence against citizens in 2007, resulting in another increase. Close to zero battles and explosions were recorded during this period.



As observed, the violence altered after the application of the sanctions, with an early spike, a subsequent decline, and a final increase in the most recent year. Multiple reports indicate that in 2002, Zimbabwe was characterized by an increasing risk of internal conflict and regional instability, with state-sponsored violence against civilians aimed at crushing the political opposition. ZANU-PF, the ruling party, committed violence to achieve its electoral victory. Assault and torture were reportedly regularly used in Zimbabwe to crush dissent and acquire information from the public for political and other ends (ICG, 2001: 7). Furthermore, this pattern repeated itself in 2003, especially in the run-up to the March 2003 Parliamentary by-election (ZHRF, 2003).

Despite the severe economic conditions, polling data indicated that President Mugabe and his party had increased in popularity in 2004. However, as noted in figure 1, political violence persisted, albeit on a lower scale. There were still reports

¹ Due to lack of data in the year of 1997, this year is excluded in figure 1. The same goes for all graphs that have missing data.

of military soldiers beating civilians, particularly in low-income communities that were opposition strongholds (ICG, 2008). During the 2005 election campaign, however, the state did not resort to violence as frequently as it had in the past, and even permitted opposition campaign gatherings and speeches (ICG, 2004a: 2). Violence decreased in the month preceding the election, and both ZANU-PF and MDC pushed for a peaceful vote (ICG, 2005: 6).

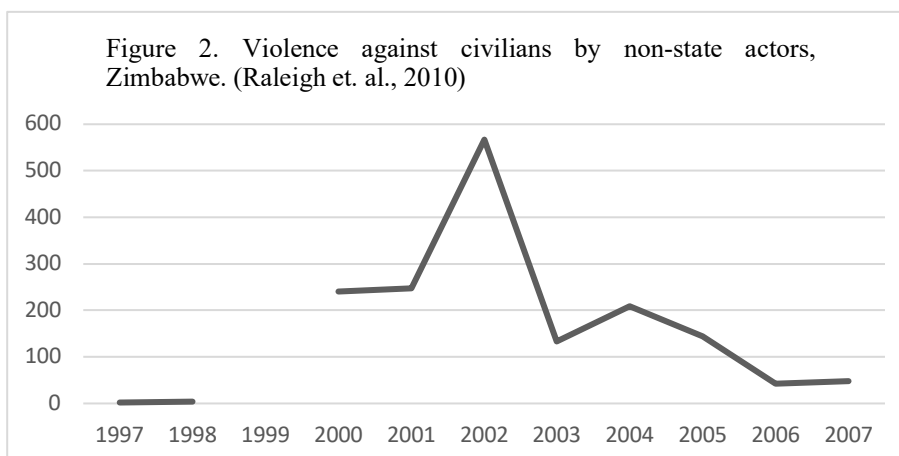
Likely as a result of the election, in which Mugabe and ZANU-PF were able to solidify their position in the government, violence decreased further in 2006. However, state-sanctioned violence appears to increase in conjunction with major political events, and this decline may be a result of a lack of civil society activity during that year (ZHRF, 2006a).

Consistently, members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe National Army have perpetrated most of the violence (Amnesty International, 2003). In addition, ZANU-PF has empowered war veterans and youth militia to eradicate opposition in rural areas. Some violence in Zimbabwe during this time was state-sponsored but not directly carried out by state actors and accordingly, the violence has been directed mostly on the opposition, with systematic attacks on opposition members and supporters (ICG, 2008: 6; Amnesty International, 2003). Thus, the majority of victims have been targeted because of their alleged or actual ties to the political opposition (*ibid*). Accordingly, sympathizers and members of MDC were the primary casualties during this period (ICG, 2001: 7).

4.3 How did violence by non-state actors change after sanction imposition?

As previously indicated, ZANU-PF granted war veterans and their youth militia the authority to act in numerous rural areas. As a result of the fact that some of them went beyond their mandates, part of the violence that occurred during this time was state sponsored but executed by non-state actors (ICG, 2008: 6). In this section, however, all non-state groups engaging in violence will be examined, which according to ACLEDs dataset are political militias from both political sides and unidentified armed groups.

During the beginning of the sanction event, non-state groups engaged in a notably high incidence of violence against civilians, according to statistics compiled by ACLED. In the years running up to 2004, this number was drastically reduced from 567 to 133 in 2003, and 209 events in 2004. In 2005, ACLED recorded a decrease with a total of 144 cases, a decreasing trend that continued as 43 and 48 cases were recorded, respectively, in 2006 and 2007.



Interparty violence has been prevalent during his time period, albeit to a diminishing degree. However, political violence continues to be reported in regions where there have been no elections or where they are not immediately pending (ZHRF, 2004a; ZHRF, 2004b). According to the reports, MDC supporters seem to have been the primary victims of non-state violence throughout this time period, demonstrating that state-sponsored violence continues to be an issue, 2004b).

However, in the ACLED dataset on violence against civilians perpetrated by non-state actors, MDC is a recurrent actor as a perpetrator of those crimes too. Moreover, the ZANU-PF and MDC youths performed a big part of the violence in the run-up to the Presidential election in year 2002, and the police failed to intervene to protect civilians but rather protected the militia members (Amnesty International, 2003). There have been allegations that the government ran six training camps where youths were taught how to torture and kill, so they could be used against the opposition in the elections (ICG, 2004b: 5) Throughout this time period, political violence associated with youth militias has consistently assisted ZANU-PF in elections, intimidating opposition supporters and compelling them to reject the MDC and join the ruling party (ICG, 2004a: 4).

There were also a few battles fought by non-state actors. In 2002, there were two noted battles; in 2003 there were four and in 2004 there were seven. In 2006 and 2007, it again declined, resulting in 2 and 1 occurrences, respectively. Despite this, it appears that nonstate violence in Zimbabwe substantially decreased after 2002. Following a modest increase in 2004, the decline persisted, and this is reflected in the reports that emphasize the fact that the violence coincided with key political events.

4.4 How did public dissent change after sanction imposition?

Following the introduction of sanctions in 2002, the number of protests by civilians and other non-state actors rose. In 2002, ACLED documented three protests carried out by non-state actors. In 2003 and 2004, there were 13 and 14 protests annually; in 2005, there were 30. The number of protests decreased to 27 in 2006, but

increased between 2006 and 2007 dramatically, from 27 in 2006 to 56 protests in 2007.



Interestingly, reports indicate that restrictions on political participation rose in 2007, the same year that ACLED reported a substantial increase in protests (ZHRF, 2007). Increasing socioeconomic suffering, coupled with the message of government disapproval and opposition support given by sanctions could have contributed to a rise in anti-regime mobilization in Zimbabwe, despite the country's lack of political openness during that time frame, according to multiple reports (Grauvogel, 2017: 213).

The MDC was instrumental in organizing big protests. However, reports state that they sought to explain that the intention of any large-scale demonstrations they might organize would not be to overthrow the government, but rather to force it to enter dialogue (ICG, 2006: 7). Nonetheless, in the ACLED dataset on violence against civilians done by non-state actors, MDC supporters and members were recurrent perpetrators of violence. Thus, despite the fact that hundreds of individuals were detained annually for holding political meetings or peaceful political demonstrations, protests surged during this time period. Reportedly, the police repressed civic demonstrations with excessive force, and journalists and demonstrators alike were harassed, imprisoned, and attacked (Amnesty international, 2004; ZHRF, 2006b). Again, the decline in protests in 2006 may have been attributable to the absence of significant civil-society activities that year.

4.5 How did economic stability and grievances change after sanction imposition?

During this time, Zimbabwe's GDP per capita decreased significantly. Between 2002 and 2007, it dropped from \$530.5 to \$431.8 (Worldbank, 2022a).

In 2003, a majority of Zimbabweans, according to surveys, blamed President Mugabe for the country's economic hardships, experienced in sharp declines in living conditions (ICG, 2003: 3). In 2002, the World Food Programme (WFP) projected that 6.7 million people were at risk of famine; in January 2003, this number increased to 7.2 million (ICG, 2003: 5).

According to the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, the US sanctions against Zimbabwe were intended to cause their economy to ‘scream’ and thereby split the people from the government (Alao, 2012: 183). In a similar line, the MDC believed that people would begin to demonstrate if the sanctions caused the economy to contract (Grauvogel, 2017: 221). It is essential to remember that Zimbabwe’s economic downturn occurred before the application of sanctions. Nonetheless, sanctions might be somewhat responsible for Zimbabwe’s economic decline. Between 2002 and 2007, this economic decline was a prominent topic of domestic political debate. ZANU-PF attributed the economic difficulties on EU and US measures (ZANU-PF, 2005: 12).

Importantly, the dictatorship and its supporters emphasized that the sanctions have a negative impact on ordinary people. Since its implementation, the MDC has criticized ZANU-PF economic policies for contributing to the unemployment rate on 70% (Grauvogel, 2017: 221). Especially the US sanctions in ZDERA were designed to make Zimbabwe’s economy ‘scream’ and thereby separate the people from the government (Alao, 2012: 183). Nonetheless, according to a 2004 Afrobarometer survey, a majority of the Zimbabwean population supported the opposition’s claim that the regime’s mismanagement, not sanctions, was responsible for the country’s economic plight (Afrobarometer, 2005). Thus, during this period, economic instability worsened which had a significant impact on the population of Zimbabwe.

5 Results on Burundi (2015-2020)

5.1 Background

Burundi's post-colonial history is marked by ethnic rivalries. A civil war was concluded in 2000 with a peace agreement that involved power-sharing. In 2005, in the first post-conflict election, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) won and placed Pierre Nkurunziza in office, where he remained for years. (Dom & Roger, 2018: 9-10).

In the run-up to the 2010 election, the ruling party CNDD-FDD became more dictatorial in an effort to solidify its authority, prompting the opposition to boycott the poll. After that, the CNDD-FDD continued to narrow the political field and political tensions grew until 2015, when it became increasingly evident that the ruling party intended to nominate Nkurunziza for a third term in office, despite constitutional concerns about such a nomination (Amnesty International, 2016). Initially, these tensions emerged as low-intensity and mainly peaceful events, but when the candidate's nomination became official, it provoked protracted rallies that were met with violent or even lethal suppression by security forces. In the aftermath of a failed coup, the government expanded its violent crackdown on dissidents (Dom & Roger, 2018: 1).

Main actors in the conflict are thus the ruling CNDD-FDD and, by extension, the National Defence Force (FDN), the National Police (PNB) and the National Intelligence Service (SNR). There are also reports that the government has armed and trained its youth wing (ICG, 2015a: 9). The opposition is comprised of a civilian platform and several armed factions. The variety of armed groups illustrates the fragmentation of the opposition, as each armed group retains its own forces which are bolstered by military desertions. The biggest groups include the National Congress for Freedom (CNL), the Resistance for the Rule of Law in Burundi (RED), the Republican Forces of Burundi (FOREBU) and the National Forces of Liberation (FNL) (ICG, 2016a: 17-19). The demonstrations between the opposition and state actors degenerated into urban guerilla warfare in December 2015, when violence culminated (Dom & Roger, 2018: 11).

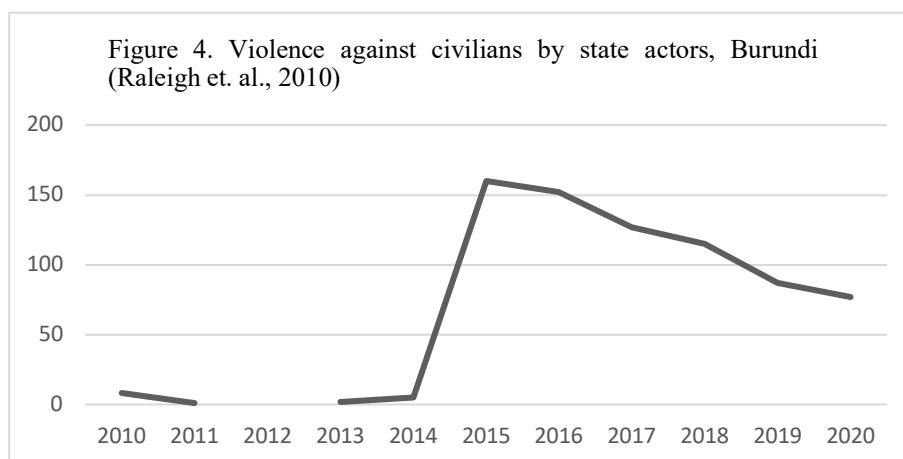
As a result of this circumstance, the United States and the European Union, among others, implemented sanctions on Burundi in an effort to prevent future instability and insecurity (Lester & O'Kane, 2022; White House, 2015). In October 2015, the EU first imposed sanctions on Burundi, including travel bans and asset freezes on four prominent Burundi leaders (ICG, 2018: 12). In addition, the United States implemented targeted sanctions against persons contributing to the current

problem. The Executive Order authorized the freezing of the assets of individuals who, among other things, engaged in or provided material support for actions that undermine the peace and security of Burundi (White House, 2015). Moreover, the United States announced that Burundi would be expelled from the Africa trade pact, thereby denying it access to the US market (DW, 2015). Moreover, in accordance with the Cotonou agreement, the EU discontinued direct financial support for Burundi in 2016, after deciding that the leadership had not done enough to stop human rights breaches. Prior to this, the EU supported almost half of Burundi's annual budget (ICG, 2016a: 16).

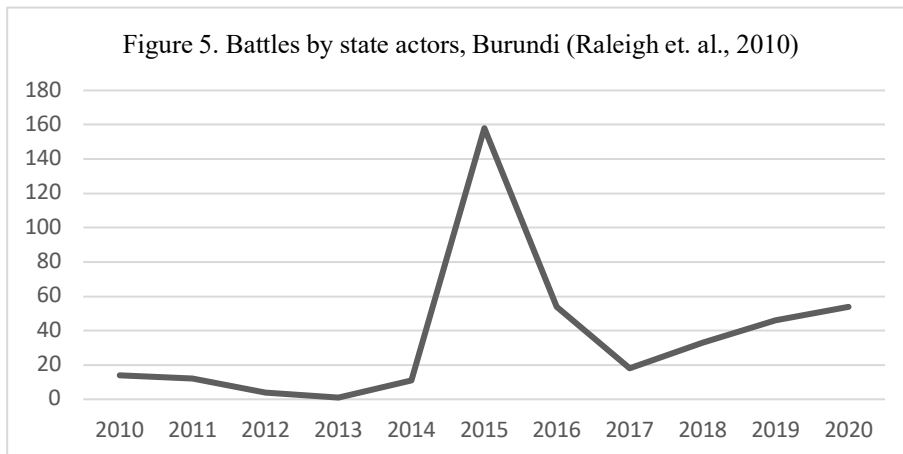
This had a substantial impact on Burundi beyond the four individuals sanctioned. The Burundian economy was structurally dependent on imports and international financial help, and as the result of the removal of donations and rising security expenditures, the government became increasingly desperate for finances.

5.2 How did violence by state actors change after sanction imposition?

In Burundi, general violence against civilians declined in 2020 after the adoption of sanctions in 2015. It began at rather high levels, with 160 incidents of violence against civilians recorded in 2015. In 2016, there were 152 incidents of violence against civilians, whereas in 2017 and 2018 there were 127 and 115 cases, respectively. Towards the conclusion of the time period in 2020, there were 77 cases.



Regarding the number of battles, there was a initial decline after 2015. The number of battles fought by state actors increased after 2017, however. There were 158 known occurrences of battles initiated by state actors in 2015. Although there was a decline in 2016, ACLED documented 54 incidents. The decline continued in 2017 with 18 reported battles involving state-actors, and then increased with 33, 46 and 54 documented events in 2018, 2019 and 2020, respectively.



Explosions and remote violence also began with relatively high levels of 34 occurrences. However, a decrease was consistent throughout the timeframe, with 18 occurrences reported in 2016, 2, in both 2017 and 2018, and none in 2020. The beginning of the president's third term in 2015 was thus marked by violence. Confrontations have taken the shape of urban guerilla warfare, and CNDD-FDDs historical roots as civil war rebel commanders have reportedly been acknowledged. The sanctions were imposed at the end of 2015, but Burundi's political and human rights crises worsened in 2016, as government forces continued to target perceived opponents with escalating brutality (HRW, 2017: i; 161). Nevertheless, figure 5 indicates that it was less violent than the previous year. In an effort to eliminate all opposition, political violence continued throughout 2017, albeit at a reduced intensity, with government troops targeting opponents with close to total impunity (ICG, 2017: 2; Amnesty International, 2017).

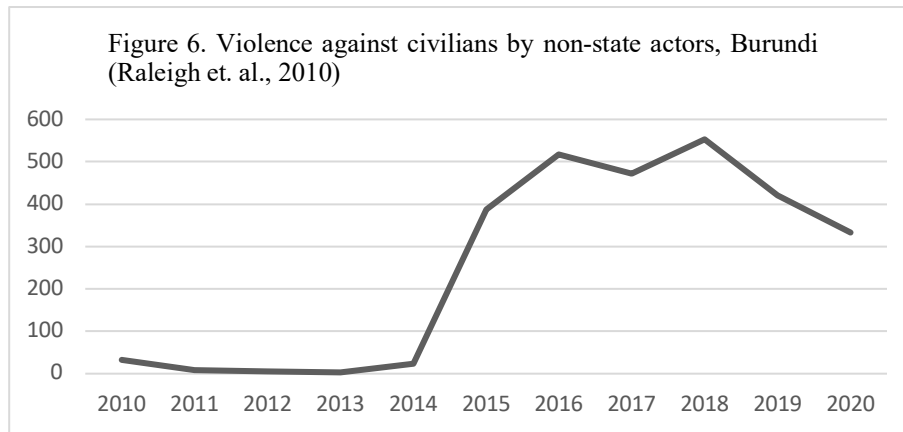
Together with the government youth wing, Imbonerakure, security forces were responsible for several murders, disappearances, abductions, acts of torture and rapes. The violence in 2017 cost a large number of lives, but the circumstances behind the deaths of many victims are unknown, making it difficult to assign blame. The majority of the violations have been attributed to the intelligence services, the police and the army (HRW, 2018a: 107; HRW, 2015).

In 2018, the decline continued, but the ruling party continued to violate human rights. Prior to the May 17 constitutional vote, which would allow the President to remain in office until 2034, many of the most severe abuses happened. People suspected of being political opposition supporters were killed and abused, although opposition workers were allowed to work in public more freely than previous years. The authorities have specifically targeted members of the CNL (HRW, 2020: 93-95).

5.3 How did violence by non-state actors change after sanction imposition?

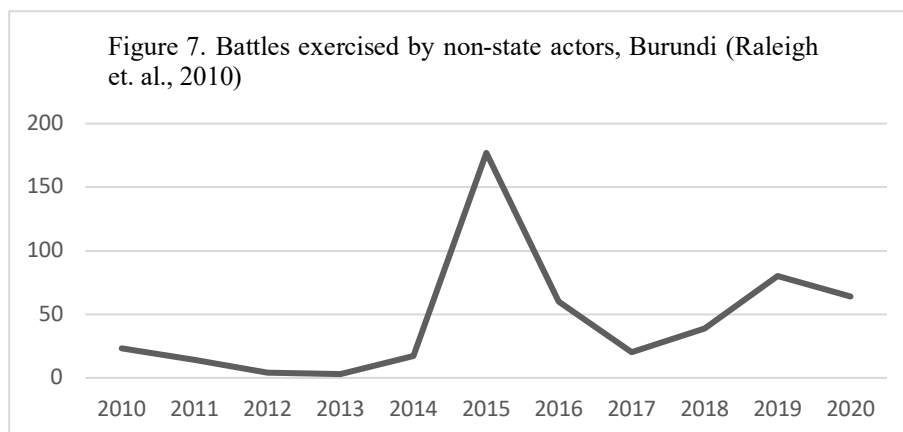
Following Nkurunziza's re-election in July, the state and various armed opposition groups have engaged in urban guerilla warfare. While it is difficult to attribute each

act of violence to a specific armed group, numerous groups have claimed credit for attacks, particularly against the security forces (ICG, 2016a: preface; 19). In ACLEDs dataset, a great part of the violence committed by nonstate actors is assigned to ‘unidentified armed groups’, while the remainder is attributed to various communal militias, ethnic militias, or political opposition groups.



Initially, after the implementation of economic sanctions, the violence perpetrated by non-state groups against civilians increased. In 2016, there were 517 instances, going from 388 in 2015. After that, ACLED recorded a drop to 472 occurrences in 2017, before the number began to rise in 553 in 2018. In 2019 and 2020, there was a reduction from the previous years, noting 420 and 333 events, respectively.

Looking at further violence, the number of battles decreased after 2015 until 2017, going from 177 events in the initial year to 20 in 2017. However, this trend did not last; In 2019, ACLED recorded 80 battles. This subsequently decreased to 64 battles in 2020.



Similarly, explosions started in 2015 with high levels and decreased steadily until 2017. The country started with 147 explosions perpetrated by non-state actors in 2015, and in 2017 this had decreased to several 45. After a slight increase in 2018, recording 50 events, the decrease continued in 2019 and 2020, and resulted in 17 explosions in the last year.

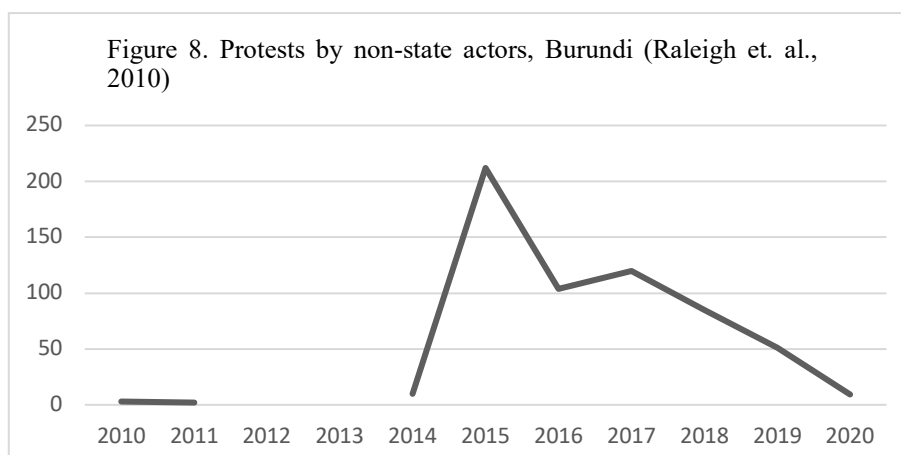
Local media and human rights advocates reported a number of grenade attacks and fatalities attributed to armed opposition groups in 2016. Other strikes by the armed resistance appeared more targeted and covert. In April and May of that year, unidentified individuals assaulted multiple bars with grenades, and gunmen killed several ruling party members (HRW, 2017: 161). The United Nations reported in 2016 that newly formed armed groups appear to have become more active, which seems to be reflected in figure 6 (UN News, 2016). However, violence in the year between 2015 and 2016 has reportedly mainly been between regime supporters and regime critics. Accordingly, as the conflict evolves, armed opposition groups have targeted police, militias, and security agents.

According to some sources, the armed opposition groups are referred to as suspected rebels (ACLED, 2016). As a result of the difficulty in documenting the violations performed by armed opposition groups, however, and the inability to determine who has been responsible for the various assassinations, information in the reports regarding the armed actors is limited (HRW, 2018b).

5.4 How did public dissent change after sanction imposition?

A week after the unsuccessful coup attempt, protesters established the “stop the third mandate” movement. According to a well-established organization, daily demonstrations were held in a number of locations (ICG, 2015b: 4).

This is indicated by the large start point in figure 8. Non-state actors launched 212 protests in 2015, which correlate to the actions described in the reports. In 2016, there were 104 events, then followed an increase in 2017 noting 120 events. The succeeding years displaying the numbers 85, 51 and 9 consecutively. Similarly, ACLED observed a high number of riots initiated by non-state actors in 2015: 244. Like protests, it decreased dramatically in 2016 to 48 before beginning to increase again. In 2018, there were 59 cases reported. In 2019 and 2020, the reported riots remained constant around 50, noting a number of 50 and 46 events in the consecutive years.



Some anti-Nkurunziza activists eventually turned to violence, despite the original peaceful nature of the protests. According to reports, government opponents escalated their violence after the July 2015 elections, mostly by targeting the police (HRW, 2015). Daily clashes between protesters opposed to the president's third term and security forces resulted in many deaths (ICG, 2015b: 4). As per the accounts, the protests concerned not only the future of President Nkurunziza, but also the longevity of the peace accord that included strict power-sharing conditions (ICG, 2016b: 4).

However, the National Police and the Security Intelligence have frequently employed excessive force against these protesters, and reports indicate that the once-vibrant civil society of the country has been shattered since the crisis began in 2015. In 2017, Burundi's national security council imposed a three-month suspension on all international nongovernmental groups, hindering the work of over 130 international NGOs (ICG, 2015b: 4; HRW, 2019: 101).

Reportedly, the main opposition party CNL also encountered severe impediments in their political activity. Such coercive methods have had a devastating effect on the people of Burundi, and the government's repressive actions may explain the decline in protests since 2017 (Amnesty International, 2020: 105; Amnesty International, 2018). According to a report issued by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (COIB) in 2020, it was stated that an atmosphere of fear and intimidation existed for those who did not support the ruling party (OHCHR, 2019).

5.5 How did economic stability and grievances change after sanction imposition?

Burundi has been one of the world's poorest nations for several years, but between 2015 and 2020, its GDP per capita decreased from \$305.5 to \$239 (Worldbank, 2022b). In response to the regime's more repressive approach, the European Union discontinued its assistance to the Burundian government, including fiscal support, and the United States imposed sanctions (Council of the European Union, 2016). Consequently, government revenues declined throughout this period, and foreign aid was reduced. Following this, the economy saw a rapid fall. Burundian living conditions and access to services deteriorated by extension (ICG, 2018: i).

Since 2017, the Burundian administration demanded payments from the Burundian populace to finance the May 2020 elections. These contributions were assumed to have fueled the exhaustion, frustration and resentment of a population that was already impoverished (ICG, 2020: 8; 12). Even though the government officially halted this contribution program in the summer of 2019, the youth militia continued to collect money and items from the population, and the government imposed taxes on the public (ICG, 2018: 16; ICG, 2020: 1). These circumstances reportedly infuriated parts of the already poor population (ICG, 2016a: 6). However, European, and American donors were continually blamed for the country's

economic and social problems and were accused of initiating a humanitarian war by the Burundian administration (ICG, 2016a: 9).

6 Analysis

In the following section, the observations will be presented in conjunction with the anticipated hypothesis. Given the findings of this thesis, the hypotheses regarding state-sponsored violence and its increase appears to be false.

Regarding the first hypothesis, it seems that despite the targeted character of the sanctions, they affected the economy of both nations, based on the economic conditions after the imposition. In Zimbabwe, the GDP per capita dropped substantially over this period. In addition, the United States hoped that the sanctions would generate public opposition to the government (Alao, 2012: 183). Similarly, Burundi's GDP per capita decreased throughout the sanction period. In accordance with the theory and given that both countries had high levels of nonstate violence to begin with, the application of sanctions may have raised the governments perceptions of threat and boosted their propensity to employ violence.

Moreover, state actors in both nations primarily targeted opposition members and supporters, which may also imply a sense of fear for the opposition. In both Burundi and Zimbabwe, however, state-sponsored violence decreased across the time frame, disproving the claim. Though, the example of Zimbabwe varies in that the state-violence increases dramatically in the year following the implementation of the sanctions, which may be related to a greater threat assessment by the state considering the initially high levels of non-state violence the first year combined with the imposition of sanctions. However, this analysis focuses on the five years following the imposition, and over this period violence has decreased overall. The first spike in state-based violence may have several alternative causes, such as the violence already being on the rise and the sanctions having yet to take effect.

Another interesting aspect that both cases share is that sanctions appear to be blamed for the economic downturn and political instability, which could be a reason why the state is not required to use more violence: the sanctioned states are directing the discontent towards Western countries rather than itself. To summarize the answer to the first hypothesis, sanctions do seem to have contributed to a decrease in resource flows for the state and looking at the targeting of the opposition and the accusation of the sanction senders, it could be argued that this increased the state's threat perceptions. However, this did not result in an increase in state-based violence.

The subsequent second hypothesis also concerned state violence. According to the theory, the economic sanctions could be seen to have increased antigovernment activity. The situation in Zimbabwe is particularly interesting, where non-state violence decreased when state-based violence rose, and the other way around. This may show some support for the hypothesis if the rise of either violence increased as a response to the increase of the other due to higher threat perception or anti-governmental activities. In addition, while non-state violence in Zimbabwe ended at substantially lower levels than it began, protests soared in the years following the

application of sanctions. On the other hand, the reaction in Burundi seems different where protests and battles conducted by non-state actors decreased.

However, violence against civilians by non-state actors increased at the beginning of the period and decreased some by its conclusion. This could be interpreted as correlating with the notion that economic sanctions would boost anti-government activity, but in a more violent manner in Burundi. However, violence did not increase in the countries compared to the initial levels, hence this hypothesis remains false.

The third and fourth hypothesis focuses on non-state violence. As aforementioned, non-state violence against civilians generally declined with the applications of sanctions in Zimbabwe, however protests increased during the same period. Similarly, non-state violence declined in Burundi, yet in contrast to Zimbabwe, violence against civilians escalated in the first year following the application of sanctions and the levels of non-state violence remained high. This could be attributed to the wide range of opposition groups active in the country, or the fact that the country's economy performed worse than Zimbabwe's or the government's collecting of money from already impoverished households which likely increased grievances. Yet, both nations ended with lower levels of non-state violence than they had at the outset, proving the hypotheses false.

In Zimbabwe, there seems to be a correlation between decreasing levels of non-state violence and rising levels of state violence. One potential explanation for this could be the political-opportunity theories outlined in the theoretical section. Given the government's violent responses to initial opposition, this could suggest that the costs of acting against the government were too high given the governments violent responses to the initial dissent. Looking at the case of Burundi, some support is given for the hypotheses that sanctions would increase non-state violence. Indeed, Burundi had higher levels of non-state violence in 2018 than in 2015, when the sanctions were likely to have had an effect. However, the economic aspects cannot be solely attributable to the sanctions, as the economies of these cases were already poor, and levels of violence were already high.

Nonetheless, the economic sanctions appear to be correlated with the economic downturn in both countries and may be linked to a rise in economic grievances. However, even though the sanctions may be ascribed to an increase in economic instability and grievances, the opposition did not appear to have increased their use of violence over a five-year period, meaning that the sanction could have a better effect over time. In both cases, parts of the population blamed the western nations that imposed the sanctions for their economic issues, which may have deflected some of the dissent from the government. In addition, it does not appear that the sanctions compelled the opposition in either of the cases to resort to cheaper measures such as violence. Nonetheless, the findings of this study do not appear to support the notion that economic sanctions will increase state- and non-state violence. Although levels of violence remained high during this period, it declined to lower levels than the outset within a time frame of five years, when the population and government officials could be expected to feel the effects of the sanctions.

7 Conclusion

This study aimed to contribute to the existing literature on the effectiveness of economic sanctions, and more specifically on the violence resulting from economic sanctions. The purpose of the qualitative method was to examine the mechanisms through which economic sanctions affect the country in which they are imposed. Against the evidence described, it appears that the sanctions were effective in reducing violence in these cases, considering that the violence is ending at lower levels than it began. In the theoretical section, it was mentioned that the aim of some sanctions is to reduce violence, which appears to have occurred, although we cannot be certain that it is a direct outcome of the sanctions. Given the theoretical justifications presented in the theoretical framework, the overarching premise was that the application of economic sanctions would lead to an increase in state and non-state violence; however, this appears to be inaccurate. Notwithstanding, there are a few interesting aspects to be taken away from this study.

A first noteworthy conclusion is that non-state violence in Burundi would have increased after the introduction of sanctions, thus confirming the theory, if the time had been reduced from five to three years. This may imply that sanctions could take several years to produce the desired result. Moreover, the amount of violence in Zimbabwe revealed an unexpected feature where the graph of state and the one of non-state violence against civilians appear inverted, with one increasing as the other declines. One possible explanation according to the outlined theory is that threat perception, and thus state violence, increased due to a rise in non-state violence. However, common for both cases are that the economies suffered considerably after the implementation of the sanctions, indicating that even contemporary targeted sanction episodes appear to have detrimental repercussions on populations.

In the case selection for this thesis, it appeared that omitting the instances with peacekeeping missions present unintentionally excluded the cases with present documented rebel groups. For future research, it would be of great interest to examine examples involving economic sanctions and peacekeeping operations qualitatively, to attempt to trace the levels and causes by which violence increases or decreases. Moreover, since both governments blamed the sanction senders for their economic downturn, it would be interesting to examine how the discourses surrounding the Western states change in relation to the imposition of sanctions and whether it is used as a motivator for violence. In conclusion, these results may have been influenced by several factors that were not considered in this thesis. The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that violence decreased in both countries five years following the implementation of sanctions, and that the impacts of sanctions seem highly context dependent. Therefore, it is important that such considerations be taken into account when deciding to implement economic sanctions.

8 Appendix

8.1 Appendix 1.

Appendix 1. Economic Sanctions imposed in the African region by the United States after 2001. (Felbermayr et. al., 2020).

Target	Begn	End	Trade	Military	Financial	Travel	Objective
Burundi	2015	Ongoing	0 0 1 1	human_rights,prevent_war			
Burundi	2016	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	end_war,democracy,human_rights			
DRC*	2006	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	end_war,democracy,human_rights			
DRC*	2012	Ongoing	0 0 1 1	end_war			
DRC*	2016	Ongoing	0 0 1 1	democracy, human_rights			
Ghana	2018	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	terrorism			
Ghana	2019	Ongoing	0 0 0 1	policy_change			
Liberia	2004	2015	1 0 1 0	prevent war			
Mali	2012	2013	0 1 1 1	democracy			
Mali	2013	2013	1 0 1 0	terrorism			
Mali	2019	Ongoing	0 0 1 1	democracy, human_rights, terrorism			
Nigeria	2003	Ongoing	0 1 0 0	other			
Nigeria	2013	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	territorial_conflict, terrorism, democracy, human_rights			
Nigeria	2019	Ongoing	0 0 0 1	democracy, human_rights			
Sierra Leone	2017	Ongoing	0 0 0 1	policy_change			
Sierra Leone	2018	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	terrorism			
Somalia	2010	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	end_war, prevent_war			
Somalia	2012	Ongoing	1 0 0 0	territorial_conflict, democracy, human_rights			
Somalia	2017	Ongoing	0 0 0 1	terrorism			
Sudan	2006	2017	1 0 1 1	human_rights, end_war			
Sudan	2006	Ongoing	1 0 1 0	territorial_conflict, end_war			
Sudan	2017	2017	0 0 0 1	terrorism			
Zimbabwe	2003	Ongoing	0 0 1 0	democracy, human_rights			

8.2 Appendix 2.

Appendix 2. Economic Sanctions imposed in the African region by the European Union after 2001. (Felbermayr et. al., 2020).

Target	Begin	End	Trade	Military	Financial	Travel	Other	Objective
Benin	2009	2017	0	0	0	0	1	other
Burundi	2015	Ongoing	0	0	1	0	0	human_rights,prevent_war
Burundi	2016	Ongoing	0	0	1	0	0	democracy,human_rights
CAR	2003	2005	0	0	1	0	0	human_rights
CAR	2013	Ongoing	0	1	0	0	0	end_war,democracy
DRC	2003	2005	0	1	0	1	0	end_war
DRC	2005	Ongoing	0	1	1	1	0	end_war
Egypt	2013	2019	1	0	0	0	0	human_rights,democracy
Eritrea	2010	2018	0	1	1	1	0	other
Gambia	2014	2017	0	0	1	0	0	human_rights
Guniea	2002	2006	0	0	1	0	0	human_rights
Guniea	2008	2013	0	0	1	0	0	human_rights
Guinea-Bissau	2012	2014	0	0	1	1	0	democracy
Madagascar	2010	2014	0	0	1	0	0	democracy
Mali	2012	2013	0	0	1	0	0	democracy
Mauritania	2005	2006	0	0	1	0	0	democracy,human_rights
Mauritania	2009	2009	0	0	1	0	0	democracy,human_rights
Niger	2009	2011	0	0	1	0	0	democracy
Rwanda	2012	2013	0	0	1	0	0	policy_change,democracy,human_rights
South Sudan	2014	2019	0	0	1	1	0	territorial_conflict,end_war
Sudan	2004	2005	0	1	0	0	0	end_war
Tanzania	2018	Ongoing	0	0	1	0	1	human_rights
Zimbabwe	2002	Ongoing	1	1	1	1	0	democracy,human_rights

8.3 Appendix 3.

Appendix 3. Countries in Africa with sanctions imposed by both European Union and United States after 2001, included ongoing peacekeeping missions (Felbermayr et. al., 2020; United Nations Peacekeeping, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c).

Country	United States	European Union	Peacekeeping mission
Burundi	[2015-Ongoing], [2016-Ongoing]	[2015-Ongoing], [2016-Ongoing]	
DRC	[2003-2005], [2005-Ongoing]	[2006-Ongoing], [2012-Ongoing], [2016-Ongoing]	MONUC/MONUSCO
Mali	[2012-2013]	[2012-2013], [2013-2013], [2019-Ongoing]	MINUSMA
Sudan	[2004-2005]	[2006-2017], [2006-Ongoing], [2017-2017]	UNMISS
Zimbabwe	[2002-Ongoing]	[2003-Ongoing]	

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