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The assessment of economic sanctions

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The article explores the complex world of economic sanctions, which have historically been used as a diplomatic tool by states. It examines their use as an ostensibly nonviolent instrument of foreign policy, exposing their flaws and unintended consequences. The story deftly navigates the complex web of repercussions, highlighting how harmful they are to many aspects of society. Sanctions have a lasting impact on the impacted population, affecting everything from public health and economic stability to human rights violations.

One of the main topics of discussion is the relationship between sanctions and state repression, especially in countries with democratic governments. The paper questions the widely held belief that sanctions invariably lead to increased repression and human rights breaches, which runs counter to conventional sense.

Introduction

The article examines the relationship between economic sanctions, democracy levels in targeted states, and human rights abuses. It suggests a connection between sanctions and increased repression, influenced by the democratic nature of the targeted governments. Recent research suggests sanctions exacerbate repression and human rights abuses, challenging the conventional belief that sanctions weaken oppressive regimes. The study critiques two contrasting theories on the relationship between sanctions and human rights abuses.

The article investigates the relationship between sanctions and repression, focusing on the role of democracy in the targeted state. It argues that the strategic allocation of sanctions to the

general populace allows the regime to sidestep economic harm and strengthen its relationships with powerful elites. The negative repercussions on the populace's welfare trigger complaints and instability, leading to repressive measures to suppress dissent.

Theoretical framework

Sanctions can trigger complaints and instability in a targeted nation due to their negative impact on the populace's welfare. During periods of external hostility, regimes may rally support around national unity, justifying repression against internal groups. Sanctions also hinder the expansion of human rights, stifling humanitarian tendencies and encouraging repression. Wood (2008) posits that sanctions heighten repression by inducing domestic changes that destabilize the targeted nation. Two key methods are curtailing the target regime's

access to resources and burdening the populace with unfair expenses. The degree of democracy in the target state influences the regime's response to sanctions.

- Sanction.

Economic sanctions are diplomatic measures used to influence the behavior of targeted states, often severing financial ties until desired changes occur. They aim to punish by depriving value and enforcing norms, often causing financial harm. Sanctions can also lead to internal opposition, poverty, unemployment, and public health issues.

- Dissent, Repression, and Regime Type.

Governments use coercion and repression to control society, curb civil liberties, and violate personal integrity. The "Law of Coercive Responsiveness" explains how regime type influences how governments handle dissent. Authoritarian regimes have higher rates of repression, while democracies, characterized by accountability, peaceful conflict resolution, and institutionalized dissent channels, are less inclined towards repression. Dissent poses a heightened threat to autocratic regimes due to limited avenues for expression. The degree of democracy can mitigate the impact of sanctions on repression. Studies show that sanctions often lead to domestic discontent, triggering an increase in repression. However, different regime types respond differently to dissent caused by sanctions. Democracies, with accountability mechanisms and peaceful conflict resolution, face constraints in deploying repression initially. The costs of repression are higher in democracies, leading to fewer incentives for its utilization.

Sanctions are often seen as a means to suppress dissent in target countries, which in turn fuels more repression. However, the effectiveness of sanctions depends on the degree of democracy. If the target is a democratic government, sanctions won't intensify repression as democracies have specific characteristics that restrict the use of repression. Democracies have institutions to ensure peaceful resolution of domestic disputes,

making discontent from sanctions less of a threat to the state's survival. Two reasons for this are accountability mechanisms and legitimate means for opposition to be expressed peacefully. In democracies, dissent is less likely to be seen as a threat, leading to higher costs of repression and fewer incentives to use it. As democracy increases, the impact of sanctions on repression in the target state diminishes.

Methodology

This essay investigates the impact of sanctions on repression in a state subject to sanctions. The research uses regression analysis to examine the relationship between sanctions and repression, using ordinary least squares regression (OLS), bivariate regression, multiple regression, and interaction effect. The study uses CIRI Human Rights Data (CIRI) and the Threats and Imposition of Sanctions Dataset (TIES) datasets, with sanctions cases as the analysis unit. The data is converted into country-year format, representing 202 nations between 1991 and 2021, and the time frame (1991–2021) is chosen to account for the conditional influence of the degree of democracy. The study aims to provide testable data and examine changes over time between nations.

a) Independent variable.

This article uses the TIES dataset as the independent variable, which identifies sanctions imposed on a country to persuade it to change its behavior. The dataset includes various economic penalties, such as import quotas, blockades, cessation of foreign assistance, and travel restrictions. The study omits travel bans as they do not fit within the theoretical parameters of the article. Sanctions can be unilateral or multilateral, have various goals, and take various forms. The study examines the effects of various sanctions and breaks down the different categories of sanctions. The value of 1 indicates that a country has received at least one sanction, regardless of the sanction's characteristics. The study also considers the delayed effect of sanctions and the time-order in which sanctions precede repression. The study also considers the degree of repression

a country exhibits, as high levels of repression are more likely to face sanctions.

b) Dependent variable.

The CIRI dataset is a tool used by researchers to measure the human rights policies of governments, focusing on the rights to personal integrity, civil liberties, labor rights, and women's rights. Repression includes both abuses of personal integrity rights and constraints on civil liberties. The CIRI evaluates the government's upholding of these rights, including freedom from torture, political incarceration, extrajudicial killing, and disappearance. Torture refers to instances where public servants intentionally cause victims' physical or emotional suffering. The scores are based on data from the Amnesty International Annual Report and the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices from the US State Department. The scale is flipped to indicate high levels of repression, allowing for better interpretation of regression analysis.

c) Interactional factor.

This article explores the interaction variable of democracy and its influence on sanctions and repression. The Revised Combined Polity Score, a global measure of democracy, is used to assess the degree of democracy among nations. The main characteristics that could condition the link between sanctions and repression are accountability, participation, and contestation. The score is based on the competitiveness of political involvement, openness and competitiveness of executive recruiting, and limits on the chief executive. The structure of executive recruitment significantly impacts accountability, as elections are required for executive accountability. Regulation and competition of participation refer to the extent to which the political system allows non-elites to influence political elites in regular ways.

d) Control variables.

Four control variables were chosen to assess the severity of sanctions and levels of repression in a country. These include prior degrees of repression, population size, armed conflict,

and GDP per capita. Armed conflict affects repression and sanctions, as it increases the amount of repression. Countries involved in intrastate military conflicts are more likely to be targeted by economic sanctions. Population size is a strong predictor of repression, and countries with less economic richness and progress are more prone to exhibit higher degrees of repression. Poorer nations or those with little trade connections are more likely to be targeted due to less financial impact. The dependent variable is adjusted for earlier human rights activities, as repression levels in the past have been connected to repression levels today. Both punishments and current levels of repression are thought to be predicted by earlier levels of repression.

Conclusions and analysis

The dataset used for regression analysis includes 4768 observations from 1991 to 2021, with descriptive statistics used for each variable. The analysis includes bivariate and multivariate regressions with interaction terms. The results are interpreted and discussed in terms of implications and method selection issues. Three factors account for the lesser number of repression-related observations: data lack, occupation, or state disappearance. The Polity IV Project's level of democracy is comparable.

This article suggests that the degree of democracy in a target state influences the impact of sanctions on repression, with a decreasing effect as democracy increases. Three regression analyses were conducted to test this hypothesis.

The study demonstrates a direct and statistically significant link between sanctions and repression in countries. The positive coefficient for sanctions indicates that sanctioned countries exhibit higher levels of repression than sanction-free nations. However, a multivariate regression analysis is performed to confirm the association. The coefficient for sanctions decreases but remains positive at 95% when population, GDP per capita, armed conflict, and levels of democracy are held constant. The main takeaway is that countries subject

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Repression	4.424	3.2	2.3	0	8
Sanction	4.768	0.2	0.4	0	1
Level of Democracy	4.700	1.8	7.2	-10	10
IPopulation	4.768	9.1	1.6	5.4	14.1
IGDP per capita	4.768	8.4	1.2	4.9	11.5
Armed Conflict	4.768	0.2	0.4	0	1

Table 2. Shown the results of the regression analyses that were carried out.
Dependent variable: Repression (Physical Integrity Rights Index).

	-1	-2	-3
Sanctions	0.621*** (0.088)	0.100** (0.045)	0.178*** (0.050)
Level of Democracy		-0.032*** (0.003)	-0.029*** (0.003)
Past Repression		-0.668*** (0.011)	-0.663*** (0.011)
IPopulation		0.146*** (0.013)	0.148*** (0.013)
IGDP per capita		-0.143*** (0.016)	-0.141*** (0.016)
Armed Conflict		0.851*** (0.054)	0.868*** (0.054)
Sanctions * Level of Democracy			-0.022*** (0.006)
Constant	3.131*** (0.039)	6.200*** (0.179)	6.128*** (0.180)
Observations	4.293	4.173	4.173
R ²	0.011	0.765	0.765
Adjusted R ²	0.011	0.764	0.765
Residual Std. Error	2.282 (df = 4291)	1.108 (df = 4166)	1.107 (df = 4165)
F Statistic	49.877*** (df = 1; 4291)	2,256.582*** (df = 6; 4166)	1,941.139*** (df = 7; 4165)

Note: Ordinary least squares regression. Figures are coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, * p < 0.10.

to sanctions exhibit more violations of physical integrity rights than non-sanctioned nations, regardless of their degree of democracy, past levels of repression, population size, GDP per capita, and whether or not they are engaged in armed conflict. The interaction term, the outcome of penalties, and the degree of democracy are also included in Model 3. The model's interpretation suggests that for each step up the scale for the level of democracy, the influence of sanctions on repression increases by the coefficient for the interaction term.

Figure 1 shows the marginal impact of sanctions on repression at various democratic level values. According to theory and hypothesis, the influence of sanctions on repression lessens as the level of

democracy rises, as seen by the line indicating the coefficient for sanctions across the spectrum of level of democracy. This essentially indicates that sanctions that are directed at more democratic nations do not heighten repression to the same degree as sanctions directed at less democratic nations. In reality, penalties against nations that exhibit the highest level of democracy (10 on the Polity IV scale), reduce repression, as suggested by the interpretation of Model 3.

The model's results, which are shown in Figures 1 and 2, corroborate the theory. As said, the degree of democracy in the target state determines how well sanctions affect repression. As democracy levels rise, it is discovered that the influence de-

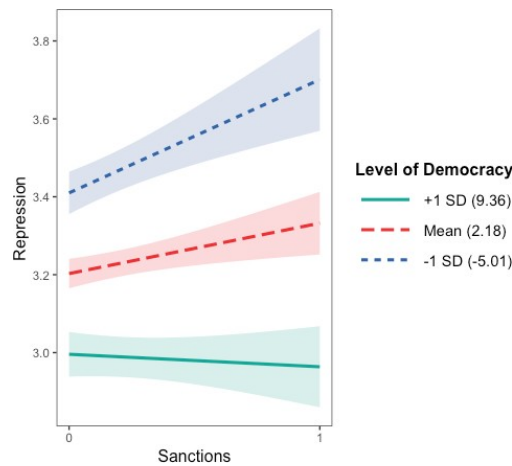


Figure 1. Marginal impact of sanctions on repression.

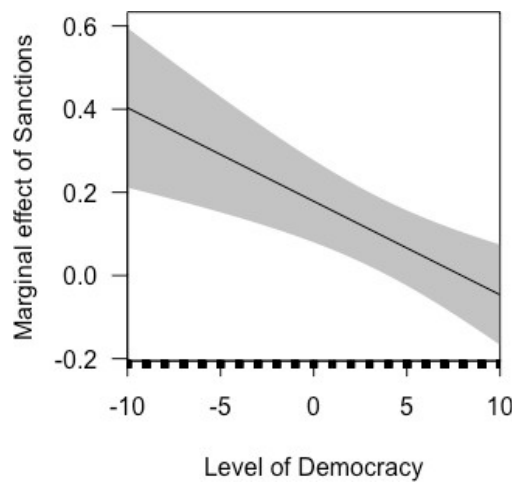


Figure 2. Conditional impact of democracy.

creases.

Discussion

The regression analysis results confirm the hypothesis that sanctions promote repression more than they do in more democratic nations in less democratic nations. This contradicts earlier studies that claimed penalties invariably led to greater repression. The findings suggest that while sanctions do increase repression, it does not always increase repression depending on the country receiving the sanction. The discourse on sanctions is characterized by a high degree of skepticism regarding the effectiveness of sanctions and its consequences. The GDP per capita variable supports the claim that rising repression is correlated with declining economic well-being. However, the remaining portions of the theoretical thesis, such

as how dissent is expressed due to poor economic situations and disagreement is handled at various levels of democracy, have not been tested or validated. To better understand how democracies manage internal issues brought on by sanctions, the theory needs to be improved and evaluated through qualitative research.

Conclusion

This article explores the relationship between sanctions and repression and human rights abuses. It suggests that the type of regime in the target state influences how sanctions affect repression, with a decrease in impact as democracy increases. Democracies have characteristics that limit government coercion and allow citizens to express their discontent. Accountability, involvement, and contestation are crucial qualities in democracies,

which influence dissent and lessen government incentives. Sanctions do promote repression in non-democratic countries, but not in democratic nations. The theory suggests that residents in targeted nations will not necessarily experience worsening human rights circumstances due to sanctions. Future research should focus on analyzing

the humanitarian effects of sanctions, focusing on the different sanctions and their distinct effects on repression. Qualitative research techniques like process tracing are needed to understand the causal mechanism and the relationship between economic sanctions and human rights.

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