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THE EFFECT OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

How do economic sanctions affect respect for human rights? While sanctions have the ability to coerce the regime to implement change, they also have the potential for increased human rights violations as a result of resource deprivation. Therefore, I hypothesize that economic sanctions decrease the government's respect for human rights. Further, sanctions often hurt citizens and elites in targeted countries. When this occurs, citizens may, in response to sanctions, engage in anti-regime protest while elites often threaten the leader with a coup attempt. In attempts to retain power, sanction-targeted government are therefore likely to respond to these domestic challenges by further increasing repression. Thus, I posit that an observed relationship between sanctions and increased government repression can be explained, in part, by the targeted governments' response to domestic challenges, namely anti-regime protest and coup attempts. I test this argument by analyzing how sanction imposition influences government repression in a global sample of non-democracies from 1970-2005. This study utilizes fixed effects regressions to test the observed relationship between sanctions and repression, while accounting for threatened sanction. I then use a mediation analysis to determine whether the sanction effect is mediated through coups and anti-government political protest. I find support for my findings, as the models illustrate that economic sanctions decrease government's respect for human rights. I also find support that protest is a partial mediator, but coups are not.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent decades, economic sanctions have become a commonly implemented foreign policy tool, as they are seen as a lower cost form of intervention than war or conflict. Since the 1970s, there have been hundreds of sanctions cases worldwide. Sanctions are used as a means to coerce regimes to implement change, and thus, deprive the targeted country of key resources. This resource deprivation has the potential to have adverse effects on the population as government leaders attempt to mitigate the effects of sanctions on themselves. Therefore, the threat or the imposition of a sanction may not hurt the intended government as they take resources from the populace.

This study aims to analyze this phenomenon, and seeks to answer the question “How do economic sanctions affect respect for human rights?” Specifically, it also breaks down this variation further by analyzing the effects of both threatened and imposed sanctions, as well as the domestic effects: whether sanctions can trigger a coup or political protest.

The answer to this question regarding sanctions and human rights has not been adequately addressed by previous scholars. Qualitative studies have been conducted to understand the humanitarian effects of sanctions, highlighting cases such as Iran and Iraq. These cases are well known in the realm of sanctions literature due to their strong negative effect on human rights, but the universe of cases must be considered as well—especially given the increased use of sanctions worldwide. Few qualitative studies analyze domestic effects, and those that do, neglect to take into consideration both the threat and imposition of sanctions.

There are also limited studies of the domestic effects of sanctions. Understanding whether sanctions can cause coups or political protest, which then lead to a change in government behavior, is critical to understanding how sanctions affect change.

This deeper understanding has important policy implications. In order to properly utilize sanctions as an effective tool, we must understand their effects. Scholars have debated whether sanctions are an effective foreign policy tool, as some argue that they achieve their intended purpose, while others disagree. This paper does not seek to answer the question if sanctions are effective or whether or not they should be utilized. However, providing a deeper understanding of how sanctions influence behavior can provide a piece to the heavily debated puzzle regarding sanctions effectiveness.

In the sections to follow, I will conduct a thorough review of the relevant literature on sanctions and their effects. I will then present my argument, discuss its theoretical implications, and discuss my three hypotheses. I will then explain my research design and findings and analyze these results, concluding with limitations of my approach and where there is room for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Up until 1990, the humanitarian impact of economic sanctions was not considered because most sanctions were neither devastating nor comprehensive. This is largely due to the Cold War environment—if the United States sanctioned a country, that country would simply trade with another member of the Eastern bloc. However, this shifted in 1991 following the United Nations sanctions against Iraq. These sanctions were very detrimental to the level of human rights in the country, and as a result, targeted sanctions, or smart sanctions, became utilized to mitigate the negative externalities (Gordon 2011, 316). However, even with an increase in smart sanctions, there is still the question if the threat or imposition of sanctions play a role in the level of a government’s human rights abuses.

Threat and Imposition

There is a growing consensus in the sanctions literature about the need to consider both the imposition and threat of sanctions. The early sanctions literature largely focused on the effectiveness of *imposed* sanctions, with effectiveness referring to the willingness of the regime to change its behavior following the imposed sanction. Essentially, it refers to whether or not the sanction achieved its goals or intended purpose. These studies emerged in recent decades due the increased use of sanctions and other various forms of economic coercion. Many of these studies “questioned whether sanctions were effective at obtaining compliance by the target state, even

when there was considerable impact on its economy” (Gordon 2011, 315). Some scholars, such as David Baldwin, claim that sanctions are an effective foreign policy tool. Others, such as Hufbauer et al. argue the opposite (Peksen 2009, 60).

More recent work shows that these contradictions may result from scholars’ sole focus on imposed sanctions. According to Taehee Whang and collaborators (2013), contradictions result when researchers fail to take the *threat to sanction* into consideration in their model (65). If the threat is credible and the state’s leader believes the cost of sanctions is high, that leader may change his or her behavior at the onset of a threat. Therefore, the actual implementation of the sanction would not occur (Clay 2018, 134).

Grauvogel et al.’s (2017) study backs up this claim. The authors focus on what factors influence protest following the threat or imposition of sanctions, and conclude that “sanctions threats, rather than imposed sanctions, increase the probability of antigovernment protests” (87). Navin Bapat and collaborators (2013) also make the argument that threats are an important aspect of sanctions. Thus, to truly determine the effect of sanctions, one must also consider cases in which sanctions are threatened but not officially imposed (84, 94).

The above scholars were all studying sanctions effectiveness, however, it is also important to account for both the threat and imposition of sanctions when specifically analyzing respect for human rights. When studying sanctions and human rights, some scholars, such as Reed Wood (2008) and Shagabutdinova and Berejikian (2007) fail to take the threat to sanction into consideration (489-513; 59-74). K. Chad Clay (2018), however, found that while “imposed sanctions are related to worsened human rights practices in target states, threatened human rights sanctions are related to increases in government respect for human rights” (133).

Type of Sanction Analyzed

Not all sanctions are the same. A new subset of sanctions research analyzes the effects of smart sanctions—a more precise, targeted sanction—compared to general, wide-reaching sanctions. For instance, scholars such as Joy Gordon, Ella Shagabutdinova and Jeffrey Berejikian analyze if smart sanctions are effective. While Gordon (2011) does this through qualitative means, Shagabutdinova and Berejikian use quantifiable data. Shagabutdinova and Berejikian (2007) find that smart sanctions are more likely to achieve their outcomes than overall sanctions, but they only take financial sanctions into consideration (59-74). Additionally, through her research, Gordon (2011) concludes that “targeted sanctions did not bring an end to the humanitarian damage of the ethical conundrums presented by traditional trade sanctions” (332). Thus, these findings have important implications, for they demonstrate that targeted sanctions are not fulfilling their intended purpose.

While the studies mentioned above focus on smart sanctions, it is also important to notice that they differ in the type of sanctions analyzed. For instance, Shagabutdinova and Berejikian (2007) focus on financial sanctions, whereas Gordon (2011) analyzes trade sanctions (59-74; 332). Peksen (2009) is in agreement, as he finds that comprehensive trade and financial restrictions are more detrimental than other sanctions types (59-77).

Another important component of sanctions research is regarding the implementing body. Some studies focus on specific sanctioning bodies, such as Guttman and collaborators (2016), who specifically analyzes United States economic sanctions (19). However, when comparing sanctions imposed by one or more bodies, research largely comes to the same conclusion: that multilateral sanctions, such as by the United Nations, can increase repression and are more

detrimental to human rights than unilateral sanctions (Peksen 2009, 59-77; Wood 2008, 489-513).

Definition of Human Rights Violation

There are inconsistencies as to how scholars define human rights violations. For instance, Peksen (2009) uses physical integrity rights when analyzing the effect of economic coercion (59-77). Reed Wood (2008), on the other hand, only analyzes human rights violations through the variable of physical state repression (489-513). These are slightly different variables that measure physical human rights violations, and both come to the same conclusion: that economic sanctions worsen human rights violations (Peksen 2009, 59-77; Wood 2008, 489-513).

With a wider definition of human rights, however, there is more room for disagreements amongst scholars. Guttman, et al. (2016) analyze “economic rights, political and civil rights, basic human rights, and emancipatory rights,” and concluded that sanctions do not have an adverse effect on human rights (1). Essentially, they find that their “results suggest that the widely offered criticism that economic sanctions will inevitably lead to targeted regimes becoming even more repressive, is not backed by the data” (Guttman et al. 2016, 19).

Domestic Effects

Both public dissent and opposition strength are linked to sanctions (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015, 132; Allen 2008; Wood 2008; Peksen, 2009). However, there is limited research as to what domestic mechanisms trigger the change in respect for human rights occurs following a sanction. While scholars agree that those facing sanctions need to respond domestically as a

means to remain in power, different types of regimes are more likely to face such destabilizing effects. Allen (2008) finds that states with “some degree of political openness,” sanctions increase the political action of the masses. In dictatorships, however, there is only a minimal increase (939).

Therefore, scholars such as Escriba-Folch (2012) have focused on how sanctions effect the public and private goods of support coalitions and the masses (705). Because of this, these changes—which are a direct result of the budget constraints sanctioned governments face under pressure—can potentially lead to destabilizing effects (Escriba-Folch 2012, 684). This is detailed further in Escriba-Folch and Wright (2015), in which they argue that because of budgetary constraints, public resources may dwindle causing public backlash and protest. They also argue that budgetary constraints can also strengthen opposition groups (125-127).

The Necessity for My Research

At this time, there are a limited number of studies that provide empirical evidence that denote the impact of economic sanctions on human rights (Peksen 2009, 59-77; Wood 2008, 489-513; Guttman et al. 2016, 1-46). Those that do exist have a limited definition of human rights, and usually focus on physical repression (Peksen 2009, 59-77; Wood 2008, 489-513). There are also inconsistencies between many scholars in whether the threat to sanction is taken into account when evaluating sanctions effectiveness and its relationship to human rights respect (Whang 2013; Clay 2018). In order to address these limitations, I investigate how both the threat and imposition of sanctions affect human rights, broadly defined. I also analyze the role that domestic effects play, specifically coups and political protest. There is also limited research that

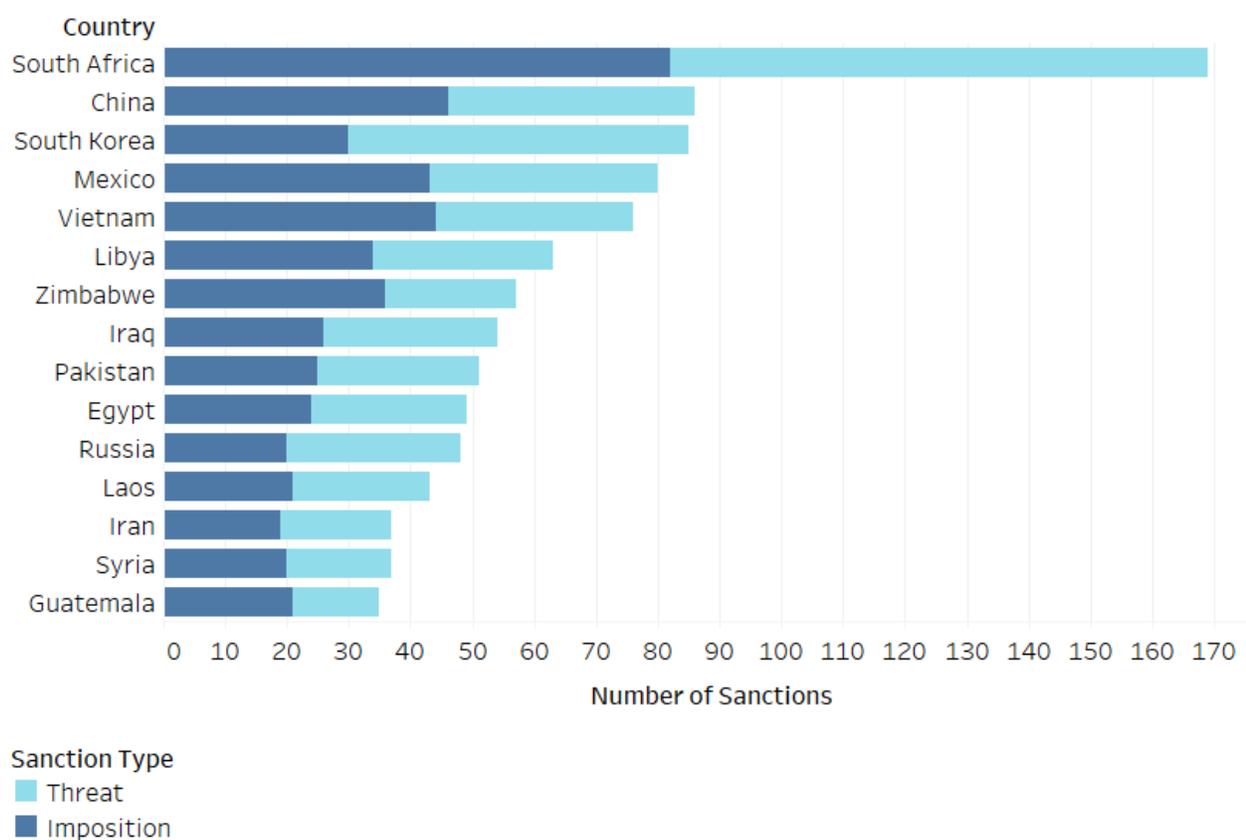
analyzes the effects of domestic events; thus, this study will add to the literature in that regard (Escriba-Folch 2012; Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015). Finally, my study provides a wide time frame. The literature needs to be updated to reflect the most recent data. Thus, my thesis is original in the the scope of the study and the empirical models employed. The combination of variables utilized—such as sanctions threat and the domestic effects of coups and political protest—all differ from previous research.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Approach

Countries and international organizations utilize sanctions as a means to coerce targeted regimes. Sanctions aim to limit or end economic relations as a means to attempt to convince the sanctioned country to enact change. “By definition, a sanction must (1) involve one or more sender states and a target state, and (2) be implemented by the sender in order to change the behavior of the target state” (Bapat et al. 2013, 85; Morgan et al. 2014, 541-558). In recent history, this tool has been implemented to a greater degree, so much so that the last decade has been referred to as “the sanctions decade” (Peksen 2009, 59). As demonstrated in Figure 1, South Africa, China, and South Korea are the non-democracies that faced sanctions to the highest degree between 1970 – 2005. Examples of types of sanctions include total or partial economic embargoes, asset freezes, termination of foreign aid, or can be unspecified (Morgan et al. 2014, 541). There are two possible results from the imposition of a sanction. If they are effective, they decrease human rights violations because they have weakened the targeted country. In many instances, this is the intent and purpose of the sanctions.

Figure 1: Top 15 Non-Democracies Facing Sanctions from 1970 – 2005



However, since economic sanctions deprive targeted countries of key resources, this has the potential to have adverse effects on the population. If sanctions, or the threat of sanctions, do not effectively coerce the government of the targeted country to change their behavior, the government may increase their human rights violations. Essentially, targeted governments will attempt to mitigate any effects of sanctions upon themselves and push the harm to the general public (Wood 2008, 490).

If this occurs, it signals a decrease in the government's human rights practices. Human rights practices refer to "the human rights-related actions of a government and any and all of its agents, such as police or paramilitary forces" (Cingranelli et al. 2014). It is important to note that

this definition only includes human rights practices of the government, rather than the policies or conditions. Therefore, “statutory or constitutional prohibitions” are not included, nor are the “overall human rights conditions” in the various countries (Cingranelli et al. 2014). It is also important to note that this definition does not refer to human rights violations against non-citizens of each respective country, nor the human rights violations of respective governments outside their own borders (Cingranelli et al. 2014).

In some scenarios, the regime needs repression to compensate for lost “spoils” that some groups in society receive but that are likely to be diminished as the economic cost of sanctions increases. Said targeted governments, and the political elites in charge, control the scarce public resources, and thus, will “divert the cost of sanctions to average citizens by unevenly using extant resources in their favor” (Peksen 2009, 62). As sanctions are most likely to achieve change when they target the political elite and the government—the intent of smart sanctions—regimes recognize that they must mitigate the costs of sanctions to maintain their previous level of power (Escriba-Folch 2011, 683-713).

This is directly contrary to the intent of the sanctions, which attempt to punish the government or key figures, not civilians. Sanctions have a “disproportionate economic impact on citizens, economic coercion inadvertently worsens public health, economic conditions, the development of civil society, and education in target countries” (Peksen 2009, 60). For instance, in the case of Iraq, sanctions led to “epidemics of cholera and typhoid, widespread malnutrition, the deterioration of the national health care system, severe shortages of electricity, and the collapse of public and private transportation” – all of which can have an uneven effect on vulnerable populations (Gordon 2011, 316). Therefore, because sanctions have the ability to further hurt economically disadvantaged groups, there is greater instability within the targeted

regime. This can turn to economic grievances, which fosters political violence, and in response, repression by governments (Peksen 2009, 62).

Opposition groups also play a role in how governments mitigate the effects of sanctions. As aforementioned, sanctions are a signal that the sanctioning countries disagree with the actions of the targeted regime. Thus, the reverse is true as well: sanctions indicate that implementing countries support the demands made by the regime's opposition groups (Escriba-Folch 2011, 683-713). That said, "as citizens begin to feel the economic burden of sanctions, they may be motivated to act to encourage their government to concede with sanctions pressure" (Allen 2008, 920). This follows in line with psychological theory, in which there is a relationship between human frustration and economic hardships (Allen 2008, 920).

Additionally, because sanctions reduce resources, they in turn reduce the budget of the government. While this has an effect on public goods, it can also affect private goods as well. This lack of funding, in turn, can diminish the private goods, namely, the funds or benefits, that members of the support coalition receive. This increases the price of the elite coalition's loyalty. If the sanctions destabilize the regime, the elite coalition is less likely to support the leader in charge. With greater increased uncertainty regarding the future stability of the government when continued to be faced with economic pressures, sanctions may cause individuals such as the elite and the military to initiate a coup. Therefore, in some scenarios, sanctions make coups more likely in the respective country (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015, 124-125).

It is also important to note that sanctions isolate their targeted country from the international system. Scholars have concluded that international trade and foreign investment help promote government respect for human rights, therefore, the lack thereof can have negative

consequences (Peksen 2009, 63). Thus, these principles have led me to construct my hypothesis as to the effects of economic sanctions on respect for human rights.

Hypotheses

H1: Sanctions cause a decrease in respect for human rights in targeted countries. There are various components of this hypothesized relationship that I will analyze that will allow me to explain further as to why this decrease may occur.

The null hypothesis is that sanctions will not cause a decrease in respect for targeted countries. Sanctions decrease the overall level of foreign currency, however, have the potential to increase the targeted governments' control over foreign currency. This, in turn, makes those in the support coalition who receive access to this restricted amount of foreign currency *more* loyal to the targeted government. Therefore, while some groups may be economic hurt by sanctions, if the targeted government can shield its core supports from the worst economic effects of the sanctions, this may decrease repression because the government now has more loyal supporters than when not targeted by sanctions. This assumes that those hurt by sanctions do not have the collective action capacity to credibly threaten the targeted government with destabilizing behavior – such as a coup or protest.

H1.1: Both the threat and the imposition of sanctions play a role in decreasing government's respect for human rights. Previous literature has emphasized the importance of including both the threat and the imposition of sanctions into consideration (Morgan et al. 2014, Whang et al. 2013, Li and Drury 2004). Thus, sanctions have the potential to occur in two stages: the sender's decision to institute a threat, and the sender's decision to impose sanctions. "A

threat may or may not be specific; it must only declare that sanctions are a possibility against a target state” (Morgan et al. 2014, 541). For instance, threats may include verbal statements, official legislation, or conditional laws (Morgan et al. 2014, 541-558). As described by Whang et al., “by explicitly taking the threat stage into account, we address the problem of nonrandom sample selection, which may result in a low success rate of imposed sanctions because sanctions episodes with the most resilient targets remain in the sample after the threat fails, while successful sanction threats need not be executed” (Whang et al. 2013, 66). Essentially, if the target state were to give into the sanction, it would prefer to comply when there is only a threat rather than feeling the later pain in the sanction (Li and Drury 2004, 379).

H1.2: Respect for human rights decreases because the threat or imposition of sanctions leads to one of two scenarios: either (1) the citizens to engage in antigovernment behavior or (2) the elites initiate a coup. In instances where sanctions cause the government to direct the economic pressure to citizens, the economic hardships will lead to dissatisfaction of the opposition. Therefore, when this opposition is vocalized through antigovernment behavior such as protests, riots, and rebellion events, the government will respond by increasing repression to maintain control (Allen 2008, 916-944). On the other hand, when sanctions cause the leadership to make up for scarce resources by removing them from their elite coalition, the shrinking of the elite coalition may motivate a coup. This coup has the potential to occur if the elite coalition includes the military and/or groups in society allied with factions of the military.

Therefore, sanctions may produce two types of domestic unrest—military coup attempts and popular anti-government protests—that could elicit repressive backlash from the targeted government. An observed relationship between sanctions and repression might work through either of these mechanisms, in which sanctions increase repression indirectly as a government

response to sanction-related political unrest. To test these expectations, I examine whether sanctions increase coup risk and protest, as potential mediating mechanisms. That is, if sanctions increase government repression on average, it is critical to know whether this occurs because sanctions breed domestic discontent with the government, which in turn leads to potentially destabilizing unrest.

In the analysis to follow, certain factors that have been demonstrated to have an important effect on the level of human rights in a respective country must be controlled. *GDP per capita* is included as a means to control for the differences in development across sanctioned countries. Additionally, wealthier countries are more likely to mitigate the cost of the sanctions (Peksen 2009, 67). *Population size* controls for, as the variable name indicates, the size of each sanctioned countries. *Level of democracy (Polity)* is included to account for the role that the type of regime will play on the government's human rights practices. *Civil war* controls for the fact that countries are more likely to increase human rights abuses during internal conflict.

Essentially, "as governments face internal challenge from anti-government armed forces, governments become more repressive to maintain control over the society" (Peksen 2009, 68).

The argument for including both types of international conflict, *internal armed conflict* and *internationalized internal armed conflict* as control variables follows a similar argument. They are included to capture the theory that governments tend to be more repressive during internal conflict as a means to keep control over their respective population (Peksen 2009, 68). *Total trade* is included as a control because there is a relationship between the total amount of trade and the severity in which a country feels the effects of a sanction (Wood 2008, 500). *Foreign military intervention* controls for instances in which military intervention caused the government to change their behavior rather than the sanction itself. For example, the United States levied

sanctions against Haiti in the early 1990s. The sanctions did not coerce the regime to change its behavior. It was not until the United States began to deploy troops that the military junta in power relinquished control. Thus, scholars such as Pape argue that when sanctions are later followed by military intervention, the success of sanctions is “overstated” (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015, 137). *Oil rents* is another control variable. This is included because since oil demand is inelastic, it is easier for a targeted country with oil to ignore the sanctions. These countries “frequently have large stocks of foreign reserves that they can tap during periods of shrinking government revenue. This may allow them to smooth government consumption even when hit with the loss of revenue when targeted with sanctions” (Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015, 137-138).

Chapter 4

Data and Methodology

In order to analyze the proposed hypothesis, my primary dependent variable is respect for human rights, and my primary independent variables are the threat and imposition of sanctions. While I used a standard linear regression to determine the relationship between these variables, I also employed a mediation analysis. The mediation analysis is utilized to determine whether governments' efforts to repress protest activity or coups in response to sanctions explain declines in respect for human rights.

Dependent Variable: Respect for Human Rights

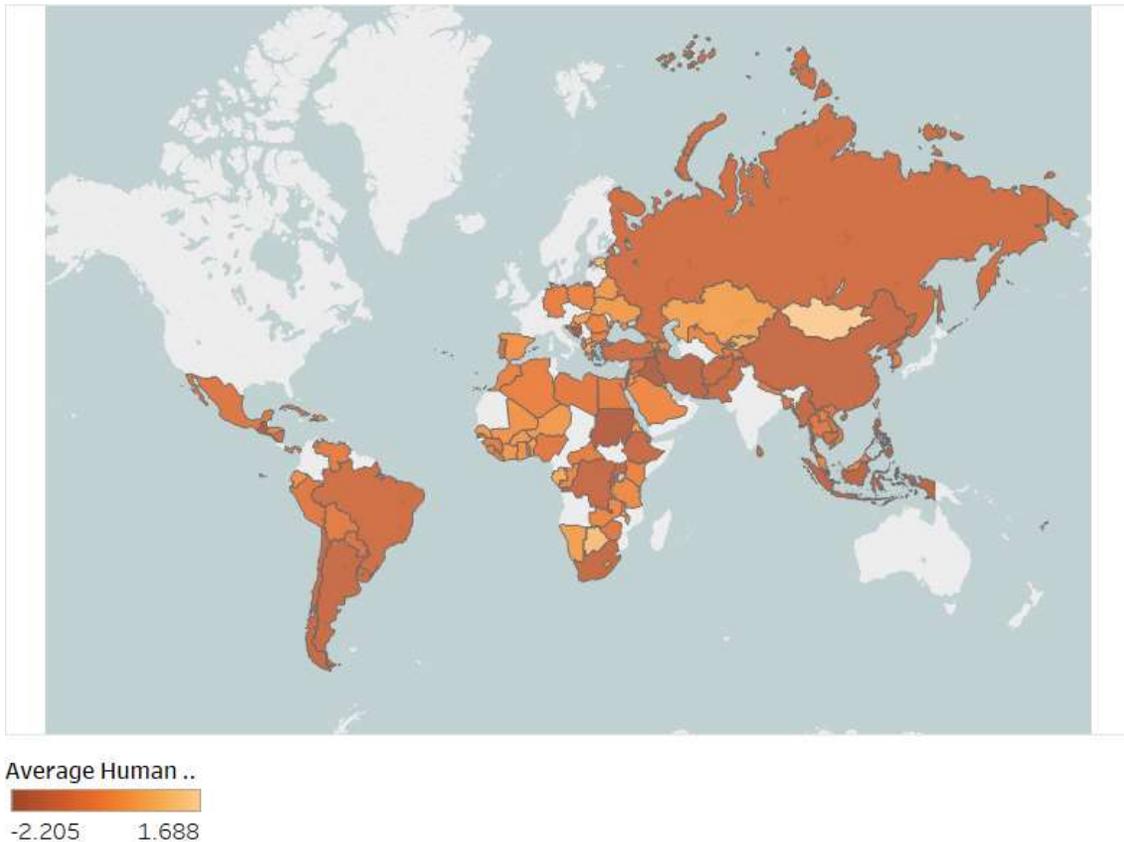
The dependent variable, respect for human rights, was measured using Christopher Fariss' Latent Human Rights Protection Scores. The variable is created using previous human rights datasets, for Fariss combines the CIRI Human Rights Dataset with datasets such as Hathaway Torture Data, Ill Treatment and Torture Data, and the Political Terror Scale. Because researchers both use different, absolute, standards to assess human rights now than in the past and because more information is available on human rights abuses, a high score on a human rights index—which indicates a poor human rights record—may mean a higher absolute level of human rights abuse in the 2000s than in the 1980s. Thus, the variable I use in this analysis is coded in such a way that the variable accounts “for systemic changes to the human rights country reports published annually by the U.S. Department of State and Amnesty International” (Fariss

2014). Therefore, it is different from other datasets because it takes the standard of accountability into consideration.

This variable is reliable in that it is possible to reconstruct Fariss' scores. Not only does he construct his score using commonly used datasets, he fully details how the variable is calculated. It is possible to access and collect the necessary information if one wanted to replicate Fariss' study. Additionally, this measure is valid, in that it is a good representation of respect for human rights. As human rights reporting has shifted over time, the fact that Fariss accounts for the standards shift is a critical feature. Unlike other datasets, Fariss combines standard-based repression variables with event-based repression variables (Fariss 2014). In accounting for previous inconsistencies and combining measures, Fariss aims to more accurately measure human rights. Thus, it is sufficiently valid (Fariss 2014).

The measure of human rights stems from Fariss' "latent mean" variable. The data from this variable is located in Figure 2, where the average human rights scores of non-democratic sanctioned countries are reported. The average human rights score of each country ranges from -2.205—the lowest average human rights score—to 1.688, which is the highest amongst non-democracies. The data show that the mean of the observations is -0.524.

Figure 2: Average Human Rights Score of Non-Democratic Sanctioned Countries (1970 – 2005)



Independent Variables: The Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions

The independent variables, the threat to sanction and imposed sanctions, are drawn from the Threat and Imposition of Sanctions (TIES) dataset, which includes a comprehensive list of sanctions implemented by the United States and international organizations between 1945 and 2005. The authors of the dataset found information on sanctions by collecting sanctions episodes, which were merged into cases to make the data more manageable. Thus, each case may contain one or more episodes. The sanctions information is collected from both primary and secondary sources, such as Lexis-Nexis, Facts on File, and Keesing's Record of Contemporary Events.

Additionally, more data were collected from the New York Times and London Times indexes (Morgan et al. 2014, 541-558).

Sanctions have the potential to occur in two stages: the sender’s decision to institute a threat, and the sender’s decision to implement sanctions. The Threat and Imposition of Sanctions Dataset (TIES) defines sanctions as “actions that one or more countries take to limit or end their economic relations with a target country in an effort to persuade that country to change one or more of its policies” (Morgan et al. 2014). At the time of the dataset’s original publication, no other datasets took both of these instances into consideration. As shown in Figures 3 and 4, both the threat and imposition of sanctions has been used to an increased degree in recent years, especially since 1992. Additionally, there are more cases in which sanctions were threatened rather than imposed.

Figure 3: Sanctions Threatened (1970 – 2005)

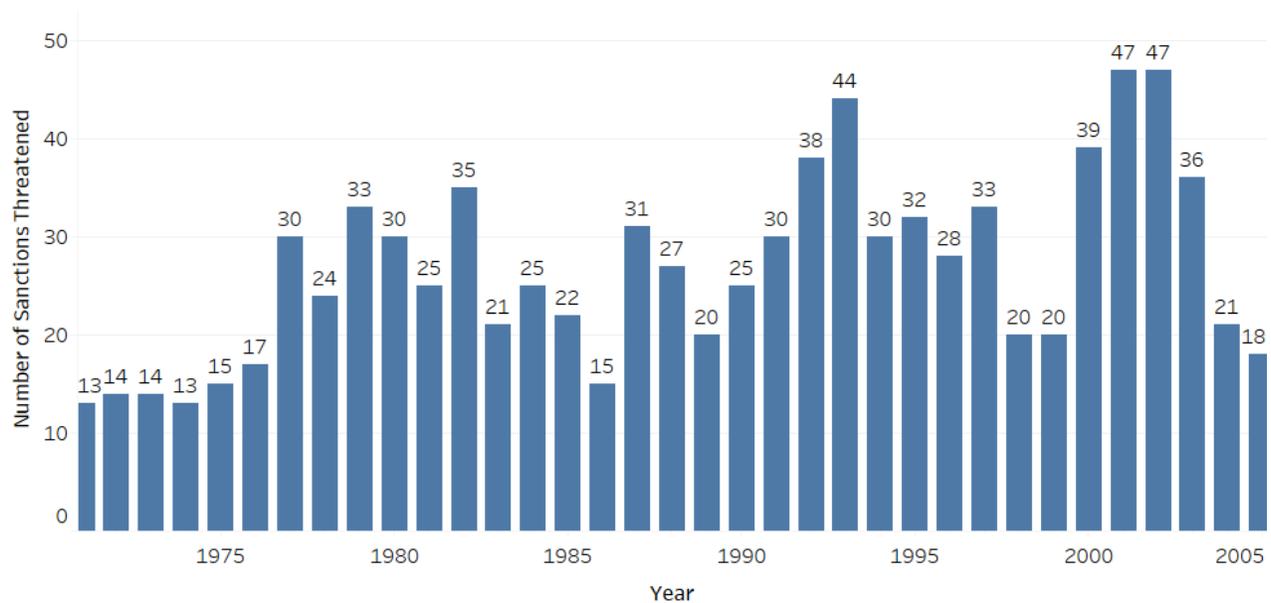
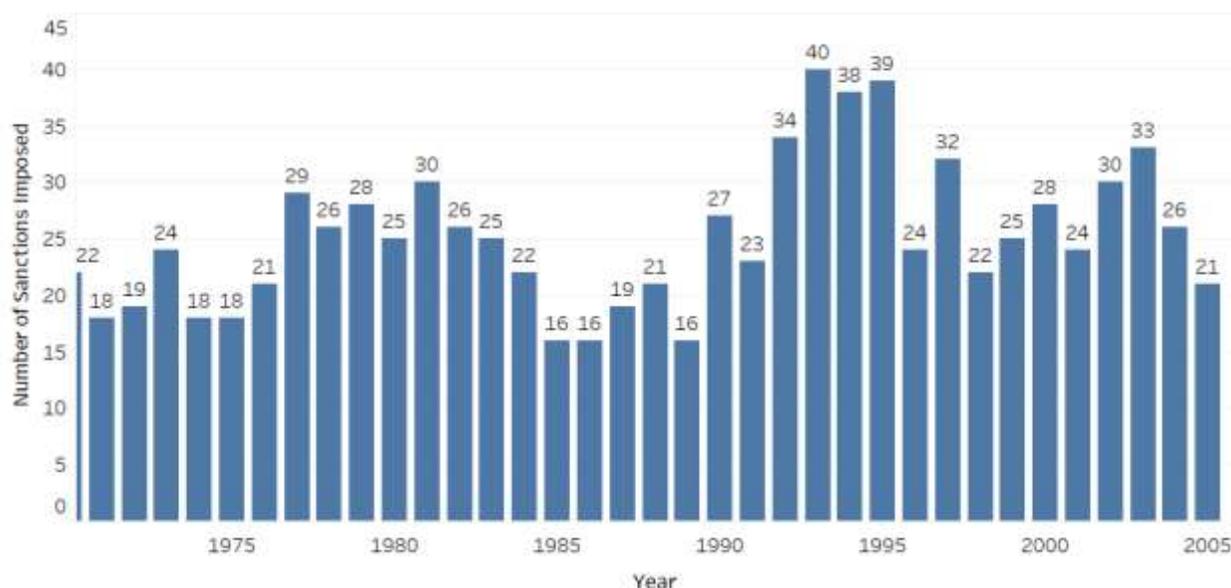


Figure 4: Sanctions Imposed (1970 – 2005)



The variable for economic sanctions is reliable in that it includes all instances of sanctions episodes, thus, in this sense, it is easy to replicate and gather this information. Additionally, it contains complete codebooks that provide information on how the sanctions cases are coded and where the information was drawn from. The TIES dataset is also a commonly cited dataset in the literature. (Morgan et al. 2014, 541-558). Additionally, the definition and collection of sanctions measures are valid as the definition of sanctions is closely followed throughout the sanctions' episodes. The definition of sanctions for this analysis is explicitly noted by the Threat and Imposition of Sanctions Dataset, which also adds to the validity of the dataset (Morgan et al. 2014, 541-558).

The variable pertaining to imposed sanctions indicates if there was a sanction in a given country-year. Therefore, it is coded 1 if there was a sanction, 0 if there was not a sanction. The same holds true for the variable regarding sanctions threats. Out of all country-years studied, a

sanction was threatened 23.7% of the time. Similarly, sanctions were actually imposed 23.0% of the time. It is important to understand that there are four possible outcomes: a sanction can be threatened but not imposed, threatened and imposed, or not threatened and imposed. Fourthly, there could be no threat or imposition in a given country-year.

Mediator Variables: Coups and Political Protest

As aforementioned, sanctions may produce two types of domestic unrest – military coup attempts and popular anti-government protests – that could elicit repressive backlash from the targeted government. To test these expectations, two potential mediating mechanisms are employed to examine whether sanctions increase coup risk and protest.

The first mediator variable employed is coup d'états. This information is drawn from Powell and Thyne's Global Instances of Coups Dataset, which sought to create a comprehensive dataset of coup instances from 1950 to 2010. Powell and Thyne define coups as "overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting head of state using unconstitutional means...there is no minimal death threshold for defining a coup. A coup attempt is defined as successful if the coup perpetrators seize and hold power for at least seven days" (2011). This dataset is constructed from compiling data from all existing historical data sets and coups, and then investigating whether information about the historical coup event can be verified using external historical and news sources. This process of data collection increases data validity because it draws on two independent sources of information to verify historical coup events.

The data is coded in such a way that 0 corresponds with no coup attempts in that country-year. The variable is coded 1 if there was any coup in the given country-year, regardless if it

failed or was successful. The specific definition, binary coding, and comprehensive list of applicable countries over an extended period of time indicate that it is valid.

The second mediator variable is political protest. In order to capture this variable, Chenoweth et al.'s (2014) measure of protest is utilized. This variable is a latent mean based on nine different datasets and measures of political protest. It is important to note that this dataset was created as a means to correct for inconsistencies such as “measurement error, subjective coding decisions, and operational specifications,” that may arise when using only one protest data set, and thus creates a new measure of political protest by combining information from multiple existing data sets (Chenoweth et al. 2014). This, in turn, adds to the validity of the data. The dataset is also reliable because it utilizes nine common sources of protest (Chenoweth et al. 2014). In this study, the protest variable ranges in value from -3.658, low levels of protest, to 3.524, which indicates high levels of protest. The mean of the observations is 0.067.

Control Variables

I have seven control variables, all of which are widely used by other scholars who study sanctions and human rights. Descriptive statistics for each of these variables can be found in Appendix A. *GDP per capita*, *population size*, and *total trade* are drawn from the World Bank Dataset (“World Bank Open Data” n.d.).

The necessary data for *level of democracy* is taken from Polity IV. Polity seeks to measure regime durability, and does so primarily through the analysis of institutions. The variable ranges from -10 to 10 for each respective country-year, and non-democracies receive scores of -10 to 6. Using Polity to measure democracy as a control variable is also consistent

with previous literature (Peksen 2009, 67; Wood 2008, 501; Guttman et al. 2016, 12). I lag this variable by one year because it codes information for December 31 of the observation calendar, such that without lagging the variable it would be a post-treatment effect.

Internal armed conflict and *internationalized internal armed conflict* were taken from the fourth version of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) / International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) Armed Conflict Dataset created by Gleditsch et al. This dataset codes for the type of conflict present in a given country-year. While internal armed conflict refers to occurrences “between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition groups,” without outside involvement, internationalized internal armed conflict involves another actor or secondary party from another state (Gleditsch 2002, 615-637). Each have binary coding, in that 1 indicates that the respective type of conflict occurred, and 0 indicates that it did not. Much like the source utilized to measure democracy, using this dataset is consistent with previous literature (Wood 2008, 501).

My two indicators of *foreign military intervention* are drawn from the International Military Intervention data set records. The variables reflect supportive military interventions and opposing military interventions (“The IMI Data Collection”).

Oil rents is controlled for using Oil and Gas Data compiled by Michael Ross and Paasha Mahdavi. Oil rents refer to the total production times the price of oil and gas, divided by the population for each country-year (Ross and Mahdavi 2015).

Methodology

A standard linear regression is utilized in order to examine how sanctions affect human rights across countries and over time, and a mediation analysis is also utilized to determine the role of coups and political protest in affecting human rights. Additionally, a one-year lag was employed to account for changes in government's respect for human rights and to help control for the potentially delayed effects of the sanctions.¹ This is consistent with previous literature, both in regards to the relationship between sanctions and human rights and with scholars who study human rights violations as a whole (Peksen 2009, 59-77; Wood 2008, 489-51; Guttman et al. 2016 1-46). The unit of analysis is country-year, and only non-democracies, or countries with a Polity score of less than seven, are included. The time period studied is 1970-2005. 1970 is the earliest year, largely due to the availability of comprehensive data. In order to best capture the effects of sanctions and their impact over time, it was critical to test as many years as possible. However, this can only occur within the boundaries of available data. The log of the variables trade, GDP, population, and oil were all utilized in order to reduce skew. Additionally, the data was clustered by country.

I test both standard linear regression models (OLS) as well as fixed-effects models (FE-OLS). The latter account for the possibility that differences across countries make them both more repressive and more likely to be sanctioned by major powers such as the United States and the European Union. For example, countries with weak governments in small states may be both more repressive and more likely to be targeted with sanctions. There may be cultural, geographic, and strategic reasons some countries are more likely to be targeted with sanctions.

¹ I implement the lag for all variables by testing models where the outcome variable is realized in year $t+1$.

The U.S., for example, is unlikely to sanction countries that are either geo-strategic allies, such as Egypt and Israel, or large trading partners, such as China. Knowing this, governments in these countries may be more likely to employ repression, with less fear of such repression resulting in costly economic sanctions. The FE-OLS tests mitigate this type of bias by making comparisons about the level of state-led repression during periods of sanctions to repression during periods not under sanctions within the same countries.

Chapter 5

Results and Discussion

In order to test the proposed hypotheses, I ran multiple models. The first includes both a fixed effects and ordinary least squared models to test the relationship between economic sanctions and respect for human rights. The subsequent tests include a mediation analysis to determine the role that a coups and political protests play in this relationship.

The first series of tests aims to test Hypothesis 1 and 1.1, and does not include protest or coups. The results from the standard regression with a one-year lag are shown in Table 1. Model 1 shows the results from the ordinary least squared (OLS) regression, whereas Model 2 illustrates the results from the FE-OLS Model. Both show the imposition of sanctions to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level and that it has a negative relationship, however, the results of the fixed effects model is half the size of the OLS Model.² The threat of sanctions was not shown to be statistically significant. As for the statistically significant control variables, in both models internal armed conflict, internationalized internal armed conflict, and supportive military intervention were statistically significant in both models, and all have a negative relationship. Level of democracy, trade, and population were only shown to be statistically significant in the OLS Model 1, whereas GDP per capita was statistically significant in Model 2, the FE-OLS Model.

² The size of the effects of civil conflict and military intervention are also substantially lower in the FE-OLS model than the OLS model.

This allows me to reject the null hypothesis. My findings support my first hypothesis, that sanctions cause a decrease in respect for human rights in targeted countries. It does not lend support to my second hypothesis (1.1), however, which stated that both the threat and imposition of sanctions play a role in decreasing respect for human rights.

Figure 5 demonstrates the effects that some of the statistically significant independent variables had on respect for human rights. These values are the coefficients in Model 1, and all have a negative relationship with respect for human rights. However, as Figure 5 shows, the magnitude of this change differs. Internal armed conflict leads to the greatest decrease in respect for human rights. While the effect of imposed sanctions are not as great as other independent variables (-0.237), it does have a proven effect as the coefficient presented in Model 1 and demonstrated in Figure 5 is different from 0.

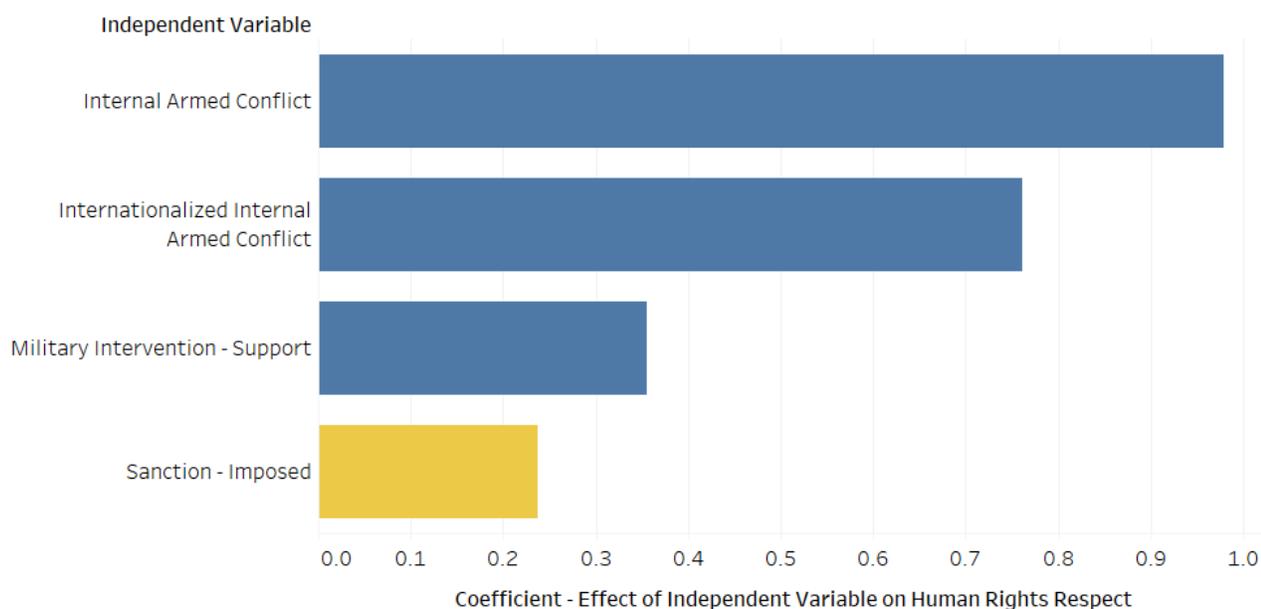
In order to best understand a 0.24 change in respect for human rights, which occurs following the imposition of a sanction, one can look to the case of Guatemala. Guatemala experienced high levels of repression between 1980-1982, and during those years had a human rights score of -2.5. This was a period in which the country faced genocide, civil war, and high levels of civilian abuses by state forces and military groups. However, two years later, between 1984-1985, Guatemala transitioned to civilian rule, as there were democratic elections and a new constitution was drafted ("Timeline" 2011). During this time, the country had average human rights scores of -2.1 and -2.3, respectively. Therefore, this change in human rights score is similar to the change demonstrated in Model 1, and provides context for what an approximate 0.24 change in human rights score entails in a given country.

Table 1: Models 1 and 2

	Model 1 (OLS)	Model 2 (FE-OLS)
Sanction – Imposed	-0.237* (0.07)	-0.106* (0.05)
Sanction – Threatened	-0.016 (0.06)	0.007 (0.04)
Level of Democracy (Polity)	0.020* (0.01)	0.015 (0.01)
Trade (Log)	0.320* (0.07)	0.04 (0.13)
GDP Per Capita (Log)	-0.033 (0.04)	0.415* (0.12)
Population (Log)	-0.156* (0.03)	0.06 (0.16)
Internal Armed Conflict	-0.979* (0.1)	-0.645* (0.09)
Internationalized Internal Armed Conflict	-0.761* (0.18)	-0.377* (0.16)
Oil (Log)	0.002 (0.02)	-0.056 (0.04)
Military Intervention – Support	-0.355* (0.1)	-0.282* (0.09)
Military Intervention – Oppose	-0.152 (-0.1)	-0.118 (-0.08)
Constant	1.374 (-0.78)	-4.111 (-2.72)
R²	0.498	0.266
N	2093	2093
N Clusters	100	100

*p ≤ 0.05, standard error denoted in parenthesis

Figure 5: Effect of Independent Variables on Respect for Human Rights



My second series of models aim to test Hypothesis 1.2, and analyze the role that sanctions play in motivating the citizens to engage in antigovernment behavior and/or the initiation of coups by the elite. The first mediator variable analyzed was political protest, and an OLS regression was employed. As demonstrated in Table 2 Model 3 below, protest is statistically significant in to the 0.05 level and has a negative relationship with respect for human rights. Consistent with my previous models, imposed sanctions are significant, however, the threat of sanctions is not. As demonstrated in the table, the other significant control variable includes level of democracy, trade, population, internal armed conflict, internationalized internal armed conflict, and supportive military intervention.

In order to conduct a mediation analysis, I then ran a second model. This is shown in Table 2 Model 4 and demonstrates the effect of sanctions on protest. In this model, protest was my dependent variable. The results indicate that imposed sanctions are significant, but the threat

of sanctions is not. The full results of the effects of the mediation analysis are demonstrated in Table 3. The percentage of the total mediated is 0.160, which shows that there is a partial mediation regarding political protests of 16%. This shows that political protest explains 16% of the decrease in respect for human rights respect that occurs following an imposed sanction.

Table 2: Models 3 and 4

	Model 3 (Human Rights)	Model 4 (Protest)
Sanction – Imposed	-0.199* (0.07)	0.295* (0.12)
Protest	-0.135* (0.04)	
Sanction – Threatened	-0.024 (0.06)	-0.073 (0.12)
Level of Democracy (Polity)	0.028* (0.01)	0.056* (0.01)
Trade (Log)	0.285* (0.07)	-0.263 (0.16)
GDP Per Capita (Log)	0.025 (0.04)	0.424* (0.08)
Population (Log)	-0.088* (0.04)	0.502* (0.06)
Internal Armed Conflict	-0.916* (0.09)	0.453* (0.13)
Internationalized Internal Armed Conflict	-0.681* (0.19)	0.604* (0.24)
Oil (Log)	-0.001 (0.02)	-0.025 (0.04)
Military Intervention – Support	-0.372* (0.11)	-0.11 (0.14)
Military Intervention – Oppose	-0.148 (0.1)	0.089 (0.16)
Constant	0.049 (0.92)	-9.763* (1.73)
R²	0.518	0.517
N	2093	2209
N Clusters	100	104

*p ≤ 0.05, standard error denoted in parenthesis

Table 3: Protest Mediation Analysis Results

Direct Effect	-0.198
Total Effect	-0.236
% of Total Mediated	0.160

The second mediator variable was coups. However, as shown in Table 4 Model 5 below, coups do not have a statistically significant relationship with respect for human rights, therefore, there are no grounds for mediation. I ran a second model, as shown in Table 4 Model 6, to demonstrate the effect of sanctions on coups, in which coups were my dependent variable. However, the results also showed that sanctions were not significant. Therefore, I cannot prove that respect for human rights decreases because the threat or imposition of sanctions leads to an initiation of a coup by the elite. Thus, my findings only partially support my third hypothesis (1.3).

In summation, the models employed demonstrate that imposed sanctions decrease respect for human rights, and support my main hypothesis. However, the threat to sanction does not play a role in this relationship—contrary to previous literature and my predictions. My results indicate that this decrease in respect for human rights is partially a result of political protest, but given that coups were not significant, they explain none of the decrease in respect for human rights.

Table 4: Models 5 and 6

	Model 5 (Human Rights)	Model 6 (Coups)
Sanction – Imposed	-0.238* (0.07)	-0.18 (0.28)
Coup	-0.07 (0.07)	
Sanction – Threatened	-0.015 (0.06)	0.319 (0.3)
Level of Democracy (Polity)	0.020* (0.01)	-0.021 (0.02)
Trade (Log)	0.315* (0.07)	-1.286* (0.3)
GDP Per Capita (Log)	-0.033 (0.04)	-0.129 (0.15)
Population (Log)	-0.157* (0.03)	-0.397* (0.14)
Internal Armed Conflict	-0.975* (0.1)	0.738* (0.23)
Internationalized Internal Armed Conflict	-0.761* (0.18)	-0.395 (0.91)
Oil (Log)	0.002 (0.02)	0.015 (0.08)
Military Intervention – Support	-0.353* (0.11)	0.261 (0.39)
Military Intervention – Oppose	-0.153 (0.1)	-0.061 (0.5)
Constant	1.425 (0.78)	9.192* (3.29)
R²	0.498	
N	2093	2209
N Clusters	100	104

*p ≤ 0.05, standard error denoted in parenthesis

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Overall, my research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role that sanctions play in targeted countries, and my results illustrate some important findings. First, the data and models employed show support for the theory that imposed economic sanctions affect respect for human rights. Secondly, however, my work does not support the work of other scholars that both the threat and imposition of sanctions are components that must be considered. None of my models yielded statistically significant results regarding the threat to sanction. Thirdly, while my research helps demonstrate that there is a decrease in respect for human rights, it also helps answer why or why not this decrease in respect occurs. The results indicate that political protest is a mediating mechanism for this change, however, given my findings, we cannot prove that coups play a role in this decrease in human rights respect.

However, it is important to note that the research and models employed have flaws and limitations. For instance, the models only consider *if* a sanction occurred in a given year. They do not consider *how many* sanctions occurred in the country-year. This lends room for future research as to how the number of sanctions in a given country-year affects this relationship. This limitation holds true for coups as well. In the model employed, coups were not statistically significant, however, the model only took into consideration if there was a coup in a given country year. It fails to consider the number of coups in a given country-year, or whether the coup failed or was successful. Thus, this is both a limitation of the model, but also provides room for future research regarding the effects of multiple sanctions and coups in given country-years.

There are also additional avenues for future research, specifically regarding a deeper investigation into other potential mediating mechanisms. This study only considers coups and political protest; however, protest is only a partial mediator. Therefore, there are other factors that allow for this change in human rights respect, and understanding these mechanisms can allow for a deeper understanding of the domestic effects of sanctions as a whole.

Therefore, in conclusion, I hope that my research provides a deeper understanding of economic sanctions and their effects on human rights. Through the various models employed, and the use of mediation analyses, this study not only shows that sanctions cause a decrease in respect for human rights, but demonstrates the role that casual mechanisms such as political coups or protest may or may not play in influencing this relationship.

Appendix A

Summary Statistics

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Human Rights Latent Mean	2,815	-0.524	0.900	-2.858	2.061
Sanction – Imposed	2,815	0.230	0.421	0	1
Sanction – Threatened	2,815	0.237	0.425	0	1
Protest	2,815	0.067	1.324	-3.658	3.524
Coup	2,815	0.059	0.235	0	1
Level of Democracy (Polity)	2,815	-3.93	5.066	-10	6
Trade	2,326	67.545	48.590	.309	422.331
Trade (Logged)	2,326	4.013	0.664	-1.175	6.046
GDP Per Capita	2,301	2527.311	4322.386	50.042	35185.93
GDP Per Capita (Logged)	2,301	6.986	1.241	3.913	10.468
Population	2,708	34,700,000	127,000,000	220,808	1,300,000,000
Population (Logged)	2,708	16.100	1.402	12.305	20.988
Oil	2,759	566.913	2,680.083	0	54,897.17
Oil (Logged)	2,759	2.252	2.830	0	10.913
Military Intervention – Support	2,815	0.078	0.268	0	1
Military Intervention – Oppose	2,815	0.107	0.310	0	1
Internal Armed Conflict	2,815	0.197	0.398	0	1
Internationalized Internal Armed Conflict	2,815	0.018	0.133	0	1

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ACADEMIC VITA

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Public Affairs Intern

- Worked with the strategic communications and content strategy teams in USAID's Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs to support external digital communications
- Managed social media accounts, drafted engagement plans, and edited content

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- Assisted with grant reporting, program development and promotion, social media, and press releases
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The Penn State International Affairs and Debate Association (PSIADA)

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