

Public Abstract

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Title:Sanctioning Smarter? The Impact of Smart Sanctions on Democracy and Human Rights

Broad economic sanctions such as trade embargoes or withdrawal of economic aid have been found to have devastating effects on the populations of the targeted countries. Besides worsened humanitarian conditions, broad sanctions also cause lower levels of democracy and increases in human rights violations in the targeted countries, even when they are implemented as a reaction to human rights violations. These unintended consequences have caused policy makers to increasingly prefer so-called smart sanctions in the last 15 years. Smart sanctions specifically aim at the targeted country's leadership to minimize the consequences for the population.

By using data gathered from analyzing sanctions between 1980 and 2007 this paper tests the impact of broad and smart sanctions on political repression. The notion that sanctions in general, as well as broad sanctions have a negative effect on human rights conditions is confirmed. Smart sanctions are also found to have a negative impact on human rights conditions; however, these results are not as consistent. The effects of sanctions and smart sanctions is also tested on two parameters of democracy, but these results are mostly insignificant and suggest that a methodological error has crept in.