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Evaluating the "Success" of International Economic Sanctions: Multiple Goals, Interpretive Methods and Critique

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Abstract

How do we determine whether international economic sanctions are "successful"? So far, the sanctions literature has held closely to the answer that they believe policymakers would give: they are successful insofar as they compel the target of sanctions to comply with the senders' stated demands. Yet in their haste to provide policy advice on whether sanctions work, scholars have neglected two critical points. First, even if the benchmark is "compliance", the assessment of sanctions' success rate has proceeded without the development of a robust methodology for doing so. The subfield exhibits a "reverse" development where methodological considerations are only debated after the success rate. Secondly, the fixation on compliance neglects ample evidence that sanctions are intended to secure many other goals unrelated to the target's behaviour, both domestically in the sender-states, and internationally. It makes no sense to evaluate these latter goals by reference to the target's compliance. This paper provides a critical overview of these shortcomings, then specifies a broad range of target-related, sender-related, and system-related goals that are sought through the use of sanctions, briefly suggesting ways in which an interpretive methodology might be developed to properly evaluate "success". It emphasises the need for critical reflection on the findings. Rather than being used to salvage the case for sanctions being "successful", success in sender- and system-related goals but failure in target-related ones is a cause for ethical concern, not celebration.

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Introduction

Research on international economic sanctions has been intensely focused on the question of whether they are successful in delivering the goals sought by their "senders". Opinion on this has evolved over time, from widespread pessimism prior to the mid-1980s, to a new optimism from around 1985 to the late 1990s, and then a period of more critical reflection, with more diverse strands of research emerging. The debate over whether sanctions "work" has exhibited a curiously backwards development. It has simply assumed that the purpose of sanctions is to compel target states to concede to senders' stated demands, and that measuring whether this occurs is a relatively unproblematic endeavour. The key methodological question – how can we *tell* whether sanctions work? – was not even debated until the late 1990s, when the battle lines were already entrenched. Even then, the discussion generated more heat than light and had scant influence over how scholars evaluated sanctions. The more fundamental definitional question – what are sanctions actually *for*? – has hardly been considered. Scholars persist in their view that sanctions are about eliciting compliance. This ignores research insights available for over four decades that sanctions are actually used to pursue a variety of objectives, including goals related to domestic politics and the international system, not just target states (Barber 1979; Lindsay 1986). Consequently, despite the gallons of ink spilled over the question of whether sanctions work, much of this work is fundamentally flawed, since it never specifies adequately what sanctions are meant to be doing, nor how we can assess whether they succeed in these objectives. It has not, therefore, told us very much about whether sanctions work.

This first section of this paper elaborates the foregoing critique of the mainstream sanctions literature and urges a return to the earlier, classical work on sanctions that emphasised the myriad purposes they serve. It also corrects some of the shortcomings of this early scholarship – particularly its unjustified assumption that target-related goals are "primary" for senders. The second section of the paper articulates three clusters of goals related to the target, the sender, and the international system. The full range of goals sought within each cluster are indicated at some length, followed by some brief suggestions of how interpretive methods could be used to identify these objectives and measure success. The importance of recognising the inter-related and dynamically evolving nature of the three clusters is also underscored. In conclusion, the paper insists that this broader definition of sanctions goals should also be accompanied by critical reflection on our findings. The definition of "success" should not be widened merely to salvage sanctions from criticism that they are ineffective. Instead, we should reflect critically upon the relative successes of different clusters of goals. If we find that target-related goals often fail and/or are entirely secondary to goals related to senders' domestic politics or international ambitions, this is a cause for concern, not celebration, since it implies that target states' populations are being instrumentalised for these ends.

Existing Approaches to "Success": A Critique

The Evolution of Sanctions Evaluation

The evolution of sanctions evaluation can be sketched in three main phases. In phase one (1960s-mid-1980s), sentiment was generally negative. In phase two (1985-1990s), the introduction of more rigorous methodologies led to more optimistic and activist scholarship. In phase three (late 1990s onwards), these methodologies came under heavy criticism – though with very limited impact – and the subfield fragmented into discrete strands of research.

In the first phase, studies were largely qualitative, case-study based and overwhelmingly negative in their assessments of the efficacy of sanctions. Sanctions research began with Galtung's (1967) examination of the effects of sanctions on Rhodesia. This article, which coined some of the terms that would pervade subsequent research, concluded that the embargo had not weakened the Rhodesian regime. Indeed, it identified some perverse effects that strengthened the Smith regime's grip on power. This negative judgement was echoed by other scholars, producing a consensus that sanctions were invariably ineffectual in compelling policy changes (Doxey 1972, Wallensteen 1968). This was ascribed to their inherently flawed logic, described by Galtung as the "naïve theory of sanctions". According to this theory, sanctions are expected to generate sufficient economic deprivation to galvanise the population against the leadership, thereby compelling them to concede to the demands of the sanctions "sender". Galtung's findings refuted such expectations: the economy adapts to new circumstances, individuals psychologically adjust to hardship or even enjoy sanctions-busting activities, and deprivation can be exploited by the rulers to rally the nation "around the flag" instead of mobilizing opposition against leaders. Given these "naïve" underpinnings, scholars expended little further intellectual effort in considering how, or whether, their effects could be measured - let alone optimised.

A second, far more optimistic phase began in the mid-1980s. Hufbauer, Schott and Elliot's (1985) pathbreaking, large-n, quantitative study claimed that 34 per cent of twentieth-century sanctions regimes had been successful, signalling a marked reappraisal of their efficacy. By challenging the conventional assessment that sanctions were invariably ineffectual, 'HSE' inaugurated a more optimistic strand of research, where scholars actively advocated the use of sanctions (Baldwin 1985; Elliot and Uimonen 1993; Cortright and Lopez 2000). HSE's dataset proved enormously influential, becoming the standard dataset for much future research, not least because it constituted the only extant database (e.g. Nooruddin 2002; Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010; Peksen and Drury 2010; Major 2012).

The third phase of research consisted of reaction to and debate around HSE, focusing heavily on the methodology used to assess the success of sanctions (Pape 1997, 1998; Elliot 1998b, Baldwin and Pape 1998; Drury 1998). Some contested HSE's validity by reverting to the traditional assessment that sanctions are invariably ineffectual, albeit in an increasingly sophisticated fashion (Tsebelis 1990). However, other researchers, admitting that sanctions are sometimes successful, developed more elaborate analyses that asked why sanctions succeeded in some cases but not others (Drezner 1999; Blanchard and Ripsman 2002). Scholars have increasingly focused on

differences in 'regime type' as an explanatory factor (Brooks 2002; McGillivray and Stam 2004; Lektzian and Souva 2007; Allen 2008a, 2008b; Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010; Escribà-Folch 2012). The need to examine the differential impact that sanctions have on societal groups in the target country has also been discussed by a few scholars (Kirshner 1997; Rowe 2001).

Sanctions research has therefore evolved in quite a peculiar fashion. Arguments about the success rate of sanctions (phase one and two) preceded any discussion of how or even whether their efficacy can actually be evaluated (phase three). Furthermore, both the success rate and the methodological question were studied before anyone questioned whether sanctions were actually *meant* to achieve their stated objectives (see Chesterman and Pouligny 2003). Thus, research on sanctions evolved in "reverse" order (Portela 2010). This is largely because the sanctions subfield has evolved in extraordinarily close connection to policy debates which are typically polarised between advocates and detractors of sanctions as policy tools. However, rather belatedly, leading sanctions scholars have conceded that measuring success on the basis of whether they "appeared to contribute to the achievement of stated policy goals" (Elliot 1998a:52) may be unsatisfactory in light of the multiple goals they appear to serve.

Identifying (Multiple) Goals

The subfield's "reverse" development is ironic given that some of the earliest work on sanctions was directly concerned with elucidating the multiple goals that sanctions served and the associated difficulty of evaluating their "success". This early research, largely overlooked by later scholarship, emphasised that sanctions fulfil *several* functions and that the accomplishment of stated goals is *only one* of them.

That sanctions pursue multiple goals, not merely their publicly stated one, has been recognised by a number of scholars (Galtung 1967, Barber 1979, Lindsay 1986). Galtung (1967: 409) posited that alongside formal goals, an intrinsic purpose of sanctions was "to punish the receivers by depriving them of some value and/or to make the receivers comply with certain norms". He therefore measured success against two criteria: the extent of deprivation to which the target is subjected (degree of "punishment"), and the modifications observed in its behaviour ("compliance" with the senders' formal goals). Barber (1979) went further, identifying a variety of possible roles beyond their immediately coercive purpose. He distinguished between primary, secondary and tertiary objectives, each of which related to different audiences. Primary objectives are concerned with the actions and behaviour of the target, and seek "compliance" with declared policy objectives. Secondary objectives relate to domestic audiences and a desire "to demonstrate the effectiveness of the imposing government… [to show] a willingness and capacity to act" or "to anticipate or deflect criticism" (Barber, 1979: 380). Tertiary objectives relate to wider international audiences and concerns, such a desire to maintain "a certain pattern of behaviour in international affairs", or "support for a particular international structure, such as the League of Nations" (Barber, 1979: 382). Lindsay (1986) later added the goals of "subversion" and

"deterrence" to Barber's three-fold distinction.[3] Barber provided little clarity on how these goals related to one another. However, he did argue that the fulfilment of secondary goals did not depend on the achievement of primary goals (Barber, 1979: 381). This implies that sanctions' efficacy cannot simply be read off the degree of "compliance" from the target state – precisely the approach taken by virtually all subsequent sanctions research.

Without even engaging with this early work, subsequent scholarship has generally focused exclusively on "primary" goals, i.e., the extent to which the target is forced to comply with the senders' publicly-stated goals. Yet if senders intend sanctions to serve multiple goals, this narrow focus does not in fact measure whether the instruments are indeed "successful" in the eyes of the policymakers who impose them. Furthermore, as Barber and Lindsay emphasised, the importance allocated by senders to the different objectives might vary over time (Barber 1979), and compliance might not be the most important goal of a sanctions regime, or it may not even feature among its objectives (Lindsay 1986). A notorious illustration in which compliance was not the main (or at least was not the only) objective of sanctions is the case of Iraq in 1991. The UN Security Council adopted sanctions to back its demand that Iraq ceased its occupation of Kuwait. Yet, after the war against Iraq had been concluded, British Prime Minister John Major declared that the UK would veto any Council resolution designed to weaken sanctions against Iraq as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power, a position also adopted by the US (Chesterman and Pouligny 2001: 508-9). As two UN officials therefore rightly complain,

> Most studies on the efficacy of sanctions ignore the fact that they may do more than simply seek to coerce states to change their behaviour. In fact the variety of goals, other than coercion, that the Security Council may pursue by imposing sanctions is considerable… Reviews of the utility of sanctions occasionally note these additional roles that sanctions may play, but almost never examine them in any detail (Mack and Kahn 2000:285-6).

Assessing "Success"

Occasionally, as Mack and Kahn note, scholars do gesture towards the multiplicity of goals, but they immediately constrain themselves to measuring "compliance" on the grounds that it is too difficult to assess efficacy in relation to the other goals. The apparent rigour of these efforts since HSE shifted the subfield's methodology decisively towards quantitative methods has apparently distracted scholars entirely from these wider goals. This has created a false sense of confidence that researchers really are "measuring success" *in toto*, rather than in a very limited fashion. Not only is this narrow definition of success unpersuasive, it is not even clear that success, defined in these terms, is adequately assessed .

Early scholarship did offer some limited methodological guidance on assessing multiple goals. Barber (1979) argued that because some (non-"primary") "functions" of

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[3] Lindsay (1986) also disputed Galtung's (1967) claim that punishment was a goal of sanctions, conceptualising it instead as a means to some other end. Cf. Nossal (1989).

sanctions could be fulfilled virtually automatically, their "success" could be assessed fairly straightforwardly. For example, the "secondary" and "tertiary" functions of enhancing a government's domestic popularity, upholding international norms and demonstrating resolve to allies may well be automatically fulfilled upon the announcement of the measures. However, for various other "secondary" and "tertiary" goals, Barber argued it was virtually impossible to assess efficacy. Conversely, while accepting that it is methodologically challenging, Lindsay (1986) saw no reason why these goals cannot be measured, and attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of all of the five goals he identifies. For example, he seeks to evaluate the deterrent effect of the grain embargo on the Soviet Union in 1980, and the increase in popularity of certain US presidential candidates in the aftermath of the imposition of sanctions. Yet with the dominance of the HSE study and dataset, the potential value of these finely-grained, qualitative judgements has been lost and remains underdeveloped.

The dominant narrow focus on "compliance" might seem to imply that measuring it is straightforward, or at least that a meaningful method for doing so has been elaborated over the 25 years since HSE was first published. Nothing is further from the truth. The debate between Elliot and Pape (Pape 1997, 1998; Elliot 1998b) and later between Pape and Baldwin (Baldwin and Pape 1998) was precisely concerned with methodological disagreements over the measurement of success of sanctions. The methodological misgivings expressed by researchers about HSE's methodology are manifold. They range from the definition of the dataset's universe, which excluded expropriation disputes, to the decision to calculate success by multiplying "scores" arbitrarily assigned to different variables (Pape 1997; Drury 1998). However, the key issue in the Elliot-Pape exchange is the establishment of causality between compliance and sanctions. If the target complied with the senders' objectives, how can we tell that it was the sanctions that compelled the target to comply? This question remains the core problem of research on sanctions efficacy: it is extremely difficult – if not impossible – to demonstrate conclusively that sanctions produced the decision to comply. This is particularly the case since sanctions are generally embedded in a broader strategy that involves the concurrent deployment of other instruments. Accordingly, Pape (1997) simply argued that most episodes had simply been miscoded by HSE, attributing the outcomes to other forces like military pressure instead. HSE were unable to rebut this criticism and in subsequent editions of their work simply ignored it (Elliot 1998; Hufbauer et al. 2007).

Although suggestions for a more rigorous methodology emerged from this debate, they have still not solved the problem. Pape (1998: 98) suggested that sanctions should be credited with success if they met three criteria:

(a) the target state concedes to a significant part of the coercer's demands;

(b) economic sanctions are threatened or applied before the target changes its behaviour; and

(c) no more-credible explanation exists for the target's change of behaviour. This third point is further specified by the timing of concessions in relation to specific military threats or economic sanctions, and the statements by the target state's decision makers.

Despite their apparent stringency, Pape's criteria are still unsatisfactory. Statements by targets (or senders) are not reliable sources, as both sides to the dispute have an

incentive to misrepresent the motivations behind any concessions. Because sanctions often co-exist with other external instruments, and also because of the existence of domestic forces which may influence target governments entirely independently, the claim can always be made that sanctions were not the main factor leading the target to concede, or even played no role at all. Conversely, the claim that sanctions do contribute to compliance in one way or another is also difficult to invalidate.

Part of the reason why it is so difficult to establish a conclusive causal link between sanctions and compliance is that the mechanisms through which sanctions are meant to "work" have barely been studied. From the wealth of case studies generated by sanctions scholars, it appears that sanctions can accomplish their aims, or contribute to bring about the target's compliance, in a variety of ways which has not yet been fully reckoned with. Galtung (1967), for example, delineated the "naive theory" of sanctions, which implies that economic deprivation caused by sanctions generates discontent which is then channelled to the ruling elite through a "societal transmission belt", pressuring them to conform to the sender's demands. Although the "naive theory" was quickly discredited, it nevertheless underlies HSE's methodology. However, this causal pathway is no longer regarded as the only way in which sanctions can induce compliance. As Baldwin observes, "there are many causal logics that could be used to construct a variety of theories of economic sanctions" (Baldwin and Pape 1998: 193). A handful of studies have identified some of these. Some believe that certain instances of regime change were facilitated when sanctions undermined the financial and political base of regimes and emboldened the opposition, such as with US-instigated regime change in the Dominican Republic in the early 1960s (Kirshner 2002). In the case of South Africa, they are said to have worked through a variety of mechanisms, including "compellance", "resource denial", "normative communication" and "political fracture", thereby "creating the conditions" that facilitated the end of apartheid (Crawford and Klotz 1999). Financial sanctions, for instance, "sharpened divisions between the while oligarchy", and thus "contributed significantly to the economic and political climate which fostered" de Klerk's reforms (quoted in Kirshner 2002: 177). These "indirect" modes of operation complicate the tasks of establishing or falsifying the causal link between sanctions and any given political outcome.

Wrong Debate?

In sum, the picture that emerges is one of inconclusiveness and uncertainty. What went wrong in sanctions evaluation? The abnormalities observable in the subfield's development can be ascribed to the scholars' desire to provide guidance to a policy community avid for straightforward advice to inform to their decisions.

Firstly, when investigating sanctions efficacy, scholars formulated the research question that (they felt) policymakers were interested in: *do sanctions work?* Baldwin wrote his article "The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice" precisely in order to "separate the question of whether sanctions work from that of whether they should be used" (Baldwin 1999: 81). However, as Kirshner (2002: 168) notes, throughout the development of sanctions research, scholars have consistently prioritised the first question while disregarding the second. The evaluation of the multiple functions of

sanction, with its potentially fruitful consequences for our knowledge of the utility of sanctions, remains uncharted territory.

Secondly, framing evaluation in these terms had major implications for research design, not least for the definition of the standards of "success" and its measurement. As Kirshner (2002: 168) observes, "the audience is policymakers, and the purpose is to guide policy – bottom line, practical stuff". The lack of separation between the research interests of scholars and the interests of policymakers is illustrated by Pape's statement that "the central policy purpose of economic sanctions...is behaviour modification. If the target state concedes to the coercer's demands, policymakers will normally consider that a success" (Baldwin and Pape 1998: 197). Pape apparently sees no difference between what the policymaker wants to know and what the scholar should investigate. He claims: "I doubt that most policymakers would feel well served by analyses that abandon this standard" (Baldwin and Pape 1998: 198). The UN sanctions officials' complaint that no studies have systematically examined the effectiveness of sanctions in realizing objectives other than coercing compliance clearly contradicts this perception (Mack and Kahn 2000: 280).

In the sections that follow, we seek to contribute to the expansion and reorientation of sanctions scholarship by reappraising the multiple goals implicit in sanctions regimes, considering their inter-relations, and proposing approaches to assess "success".

Re-Thinking Sanctions Goals

The specification of the goals of any sanctions regime and the assessment of how far they are achieved can only ever be an interpretive act. This is because attempts to "measure" success by focusing on "compliance" alone will never suffice, yet the other goals being pursued are rarely directly observable by scholars. As Doxey (2000: 214) notes,

> governments do not always articulate publicly the full range of their motives and objectives in imposing sanctions. Typically, they stress the unacceptable nature of the target's behaviour and their own dedication to international community values, but these claims do not give a wholly accurate reflection of their policy thinking.

Their "motives and objectives" must therefore be interpreted by scholars. This may discomfort those preferring apparently more "scientific" positivist, behaviouralist, quantitative methods, but to otherwise focus merely on the directly observable, "publicly-stated demands" is "to load the dice in favour of failure" (Baldwin, 1985: 132). It can only generate a distorted understanding of sanctions and poor policy prescriptions, despite mainstream scholars' concern to provide the opposite. Perhaps more importantly, an interpretive and critical approach is required to avoid overly-credulous acceptance of policymakers' explanations of their own behaviour. What follows, then, is a framework for interpreting and categorizing the goals of sanctions and assessing their fulfilment. These goals are described as target-related, sender-related and system-related, rather than as "primary", "secondary" and "tertiary", which wrongly implies that a target's "compliance" is always the principal ("primary") motive of senders (cf. Barber,

1979). As Doxey (2000: 211) rightly observes, "a fixed ranking of goals suggests a hierarchy not always borne out in practice".

Target-Related Goals

Although target-related goals are often assumed to be unproblematically specified, this is rarely the case. Senders' goals in relation to the target may reflect the publicly-stated aims that are the focus of the overwhelming majority of sanctions scholarship. However, they may also diverge considerably from these aims, being both more and less ambitious.

The mainstream view here is straightforward: "compliance ultimately determines effectiveness" (Cortright and Lopez, 2000: 209). Typically, scholars use behaviouralist methods, identifying the objectionable behaviour being sanctioned by senders, then observing whether the target modifies that behaviour in response to sanctions. The range of goals sought is broad, including specific policy changes, the destabilisation of governments, the impairment and military potential, and the disruption of military adventures (Hufbauer et al., 1985). Specific policy changes can relate to anything from non-proliferation to human rights to non-aggression (Fayazmanesh, 2004; Gordon, 2010). Sanctions can also be used to block the acquisition of sensitive or strategic assets (Baldwin, 1985; Shambaugh, 1999). However, care needs to be taken here to distinguish between primary and secondary sanctions. In secondary sanctions, the actual target is not the one being subjected to sanctions: one might, for instance, use sanctions against firms or third countries to prevent them proliferating technology to a particular state. Here the goal of sanctions is to prevent that state acquiring said technology, so their success is properly measured by how far they contribute to this end, not by the degree of firms' or third-parties' compliance as Shambaugh (1999) wrongly suggests.

Perhaps more importantly, senders' target-related goals frequently diverge from those they reveal publicly. In some cases, they actually seek far more dramatic changes. As noted above, the classic case here is Iraq in the 1990s: although the sanctions regime's formal goal was Iraq's disarmament, the end actually being sought by the principal senders, the US and UK governments, was regime change or Iraq's perpetual containment (Gordon, 2010). In other cases, senders' true goals are more modest than their publicly-announced ones. They may formally aim high, demanding regime change, but actually harbour a more realistic goal, e.g. imposing sufficient costs to elicit negotiations and some concessions (Cortright and Lopez, 2000). Alternatively they may be engaged in a form of socio-political engineering in the target state. Consider, for example, European Union (EU) sanctions against Cuba. While the EU's Common Position on Cuba formally declared that its goal is to promote "peaceful change" in Cuba's government (Council 1996), officials privately concede that their purpose is far more modest: to compel the Cuban authorities to release dissidents from prison and to deter them from harsher repression of pro-democracy activists, in the hope that they are able to take over when the Castro regime collapses (Portela 2010: 109). Similarly, the US Burma Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 lists the goals of American sanctions against Myanmar as follows: "to sanction the ruling Burmese military junta, to strengthen Myanmar's democratic forces, and recognise the National League for

Democracy as the legitimate representative of the Myanmar [sic] people" (cited in Thinan Myo Nyun 2008: 484). Here, sanctions are being used in part to manipulate the balance of power between domestic political forces: to "strengthen" the opposition. Consequently their success is not solely measured by the achievement of regime change, but by how far they bolster some groups' power and legitimacy, while weakening others.

Target-related goals are thus far more complex than is commonly admitted, and assessing the degree to which they are achieved requires an interpretive methodology. Even to *define* target-related goals is not straightforward but requires interpretation in the light of contradictory statements and other evidence besides formally-stated aims. Further, as noted above, given the variety of forces influencing any given state, a behaviouralist stimulus-response approach which seeks to correlate concessions to the imposition of sanctions will rarely convince sceptics that sanctions produced those concessions. The most persuasive accounts will instead trace the impact of sanctions through the agency of social forces operating on and within the target state, considering how they affect their interests, relationships and strategies, and how this filters through into political change (e.g. Kirshner, 1997; Crawford and Klotz, 1999; Blanchard and Ripsman, 2008; Jones 2012). This involves disaggregating the state and using insights from political sociology, comparative politics and political economy. These methods do not immediately lend themselves to large-n, quantitative studies but are necessary to acquire the basic knowledge of sanctions on which any such studies ought to be based.

Sender-Related Goals

One of the by-products of the current fixation on "compliance" – which has generated a consensus, even among optimists, that sanctions generally fail about two-thirds of the time – is scholarly puzzlement about why sanctions are still used despite this lacklustre record. Although Baldwin (1985) rightly insists that sanctions are used because the alternatives, like doing nothing or waging war, are either less effective or too costly, there is arguably more going on here. Many scholars have suggested that they are "only" intended to serve domestic, "expressive" purposes. Ironically, however, this has not led these scholars to measure "success" by the extent to which these domestic purposes are met (for a rare exception, see Drury 2001). Moreover, sanctions can actually serve far broader domestic purposes for sender states.

Several scholars have argued that the severity of sanctions regimes depends on the interplay of domestic interests in the sender state(s) (Kaempfner and Lowenberg, 1992; Letzkian and Souva, 2007). Relatedly, those who claim that sanctions "do not work" have often alleged that sanctions are only used for "feeling good", for appeasing constituencies hostile to the target state (Haas, 1999; Preeg, 1999; Thinan Myo Nyun, 2008). However, if this is so, then their success turns not on whether targets "comply", but how far sender-states' constituencies are actually appeased; it is illogical to claim that non-compliance means that sanctions "do not work". The appeasement of domestic constituencies can take various forms. Sanctions are often a response to direct campaigning and lobbying. This is particularly so since the end of the Cold War, when Western foreign policy has increasingly been used to express moral outrage. Ample evidence suggests that some sanctions regimes are imposed in response to powerful

domestic lobbies, electoral cycles, political fundraising requirements, and so on (Preeg, 1999; Drury, 2000; Fisk, 2000; Fayazmanesh, 2004; Gordon, 2010). Sanctions can also be used to create rents and other benefits for domestic businesses, particularly non-tradable sectors which lobby for protectionist measures (Van Bergeijk, 1995: 446; Kaempfner and Lowenburg, 1992; Helms, 1999: 4; Fayazmanesh, 2004). The oft-repeated claim that sanctions merely serve an "expressive" purpose is clearly false. They are "expressive" only insofar as they may lack clear "compliance" goals, but their domestic goals can often be clearly identified.

Beyond this, sanctions can also be used for the active management of domestic order by ruling groups in the sender state. Sanctions are often thought of as simply a rational policy "between war and words", chosen by states understood as unitary actors. They can, however, express efforts to manage internal divisions within a state apparatus, e.g. to balance between those favouring diplomacy and war (Gordon, 2010). More broadly, elites can use sanctions to mobilise societal support for their wider socio-political and ideological agendas. For example, a policy aimed at containing revolutionary regimes like Cuba is "rarely just a foreign policy... it is also directed inwards, a nationalist identification of certain programmes of domestic political change with a foreign threat" (Rosenberg, 1994: 35). Particularly in the US, sanctions are arguably used to help maintain a crusading spirit against "evil" regimes, to cultivate a sense of republican "virtue", self-righteousness and militarism which creates an environment favourable to the projection of power abroad (Drolet, 2007). As Christensen (1996) has shown, policymakers often take specific aggressive actions abroad that they would personally have preferred to avoid in order to sustain domestic support for a broader grand strategy. Sanctions are sometimes less about finding a route "between war and words" and more about preparing a population for war (Barber, 1979: 372; Gordon, 2010: 6).

Where any of these dynamics are at play, it is clearly insufficient to assess the success of sanctions by the degree of target-state "compliance". If sanctions are being used to appease domestic constituencies, we should pay more attention to opinion poll data and other indicators of political support emanating from the imposition of sanctions. If they are being used to generate rents, the economic payoffs to domestic business sectors need to be calculated and their degree of satisfaction with this ascertained by, for example, consulting peak representative bodies and observing their lobbying behaviour. If sanctions are being used to manage political order we again need to use interpretive methods from political sociology and allied disciplines to assess whether their purposes were achieved.

System-Related Goals

System-related goals are arguably central to the use of sanctions yet are least well-understood or explored. Sanctions are deeply implicated in the establishment and maintenance of international norms and the policing of "deviance" and in the "grand strategies" of major states as they seek to project their power and ideologies beyond their borders. From this perspective, sanctions are best understood as an emergent form of "global governance", an attempt to extend control over events in the absence of formal international government.

Sanctions are an important means through which international society is produced and maintained. "International society" is understood here as "a grouping established by the coercion of some states by others and… maintained, with a variety of ideological and military mechanisms, by the more powerful members" (Halliday, 1994: 102). Sanctions are an ideological-coercive mechanism used to sustain these arrangements. In a basic sense, sanctions can be used to help manage regional balances-of-power by containing or weakening target states (Barber, 1979; Lake, 1994; Fayazmanesh, 2004), or encouraging third-parties to attack target states – e.g. US sanctions are said to have deliberately signalled to Tanzania that an invasion of Uganda to topple Idi Amin would be welcomed in Washington (Miller, 1980). In a more sophisticated manner, sanctions are used to maintain hegemonic orders by creating norms, projecting power, and co-opting others into one's agenda.

Sanctions are frequently used to establish and enforce norms favoured by powerful states. They are always ultimately legitimized by reference to the defence of putative international norms, which usefully allows them to be presented as being in the general interest, rather than expressing the particular interests of sender-states (Doxey, 1980: 9, 127). Sanctions help to create norms by defining that which is "abnormal"; by, for instance, creating and fixing categories like "backlash states", "rogue states" and "outlaw states" (invariably non-Western) in opposition to supposedly "liberal", "law-abiding" and "peaceful" (invariably Western) states (Lake, 1994). Sanctions against Iraq, for example, were valued by US Secretary of State James Baker as an opportunity to set "standards for civilized behaviour" and to "solidify the ground rule of the new [world] order" (cited in Tang, 2005: 61). Despite the fact that sanctions frequently violate international law (see e.g. Gordon 2010: ch.11, Hurd 2005: 511), they position sender-states as virtuous law-givers and policemen and impose norms that can legitimise the pursuit of highly sectional interests. The power (re)produced in this way should not be underestimated. As Derrida (2003: 105) highlights, "the dominant power is the one that manages to impose and, thus, to legitimate, indeed to legalize… on a national or world stage, the terminology and thus the interpretation that best suits it in a given situation".

From this perspective, sanctions can be seen as an ideological-coercive mechanism used to set new normative, legal and political standards that advance the agenda of dominant powers, particularly the US. This can be seen in many domains. Sanctions are often a form of extra-territoriality, seeking to extend de facto legal sovereignty over territories, actors and issues, such as firms and the environment, that are ostensibly within the sovereign domain of other governments (Shambaugh, 1999; Van Bergeijk, 1995: 446-447). Sanctions are also used to force international organisations like the UN and the international financial institutions to comply with US agendas, e.g. by placing restrictions on the use of funds or by withholding them altogether (Rennack and Shuey, 1998; Gordon, 2010: 39, ch. 12). They are also used to extend a neoliberal economic policy agenda worldwide. One of the explicit goals of US sanctions against Cuba, for example, is to promote private property rights (Fisk, 2000: 71). Similarly, the British-inspired EU sanctions on Zimbabwe were initiated partly to protest the uncompensated expropriation of white farmers' land (Weiland 2004; Portela 2010: 140). Sanctions are also used to restrict lending by multilateral organisations to non-market states (Rennack and Shuey, 1998). These functions reflect the US's self-

proclaimed role as the linchpin of liberal-capitalist world order (Lake, 1994; Mercille and Jones, 2009).

Sanctions are also used to enforce and maintain norms once they have been established. They serve a "communicative function", "signalling" the unacceptability of behaviour which violates key norms (Doxey, 2000: 213). They "punish" violators by inflicting harm (Nossal, 1989). Furthermore, they maintain the "credibility" of threats of sanctions for other potential offenders. This threat of punishment is a constant background consideration for states and arguably explains much of the supposed "power" of norms, rather than simply the "logic of appropriateness" emphasised by constructivists. If threats suffice – as much sanctions research suggests (e.g. Dashti-Gibson et al., 1997; McGillivray and Smith, 2006; Letzkian and Souva, 2007) – then coercive power does not actually have to be deployed against potential offenders, a real signal of the hegemony attained by sender states. However, this hegemony is only maintained by coercively policing international order at the margins, including through the periodic use of sanctions against "outlaws". Maintaining this credibility can be a goal in its own right, quite distinct from concerns about "compliance" in specific cases. Deterrence theorists have long emphasised that credibility and reputation are ends in themselves, and however irrational some may think this (Tang, 2005), it is doubtless part of senders' considerations when imposing sanctions (Mercille and Jones, 2009).

Crucially, sanctions are not merely used against sender-states' enemies. Obviously, sanctions are often used to contain challengers pursuing different ideological, political, social and economic projects to the hegemonic power, to prevent their systems being seen as desirable or imitable elsewhere, to restrict their resources and thus their capacity for "subversion" of order elsewhere, and so on (Baldwin, 1985; Mercille and Jones, 2009). However, they are also used to police alliance systems and/or to co-opt other states into dominant powers' agendas. Indeed, financial sanctions emerged historically from the tradition of punishing defectors from alliance systems (Kirshner, 1997: 37). For example, Soviet sanctions against Yugoslavia were in important part about maintaining the unity of the Warsaw Pact (Barber, 1979: 371). US sanctions against the Dominican Republic were partly motivated by a desire to set a precedent for the Organisation of American States to take action against Cuba (Kirshner, 1997: 58). American sanctions against European firms in the 1980s were partly aimed at dissuading European states from continuing détente and instead to co-opt them into Reagan's confrontation of the "evil empire" (Shambaugh, 1999). Contemporary US sanctions against Iran seem similarly designed to push Europe and others into taking a more forceful stance towards Tehran, with some considerable success (Katzman, 2010: 4). As US Congressman Lee Hamilton puts it, the "ultimate goal" of the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanctions Act was "not to punish foreign firms, but to persuade other governments to adopt measures that squeeze the economies and Iran and Libya" (quoted in Shambaugh, 1999: 185). Sanctions can help lay the ground for further measures, including military action, by giving time for coalitions to form and solidify and creating the impression that peaceful means of dealing with the "wrongdoer" have been exhausted (Barber, 1979: 372; Gordon, 2010: 6).

In turn, this means that third countries may impose sanctions not out of a desire for "compliance" from their formal targets, but actually to appease others or show support for allies. For example, Russia and China have imposed some sanctions on

Iran and North Korea largely to appease or to create "bargaining chips" in their relations with the US (Taylor, 2010). Similarly, the European Economic Community imposed sanctions on Argentina during the Falklands War not principally in pursuit of "compliance" from Buenos Aires but to show support for Britain (Doxey, 2000: 218). Likewise, Britain imposed sanctions on Rhodesia not because it expected to effect a rapid transition to majority rule but in order to satisfy outraged African opinion and forestall possible Soviet involvement. "Viewed in this light, sanctions were immediately 'successful', although this could hardly be stated publicly" (Doxey, 2000: 214).

Sanctions can therefore be understood as a form of global governance, an attempt by powerful states to regulate the behaviour of actors outside their formal sphere of sovereignty. System-related goals can rarely if ever be confirmed in a positivist fashion. They must instead be deduced from what we know about senders' foreign policies, their relations with other states, and how sanctions are implicated in the ideological-coercive (re)production of world order. The measurement of "success" here is even more difficult. The extent to which a single sanctions regime contributes to the maintenance of a particular norm, for example, is impossible to verify absolutely; it is easier simply to suggest that this is why sanctions usage persists despite low compliance rates. We can only make counterfactual judgements about "success" here by asking what might happen (or what policymakers fear might happen) in the absence of sanctions regimes. We might also consider the reactions of other states and ask to what extent sanctions influenced decision-makers: were they, for example, co-opted into a new policy or deterred from adopting one by sanctions? Again, such investigation will likely involve detailed, historical case studies and the use of techniques like elite interviews, and will necessarily rely on interpretation.

Implications and Inter-relations

The objectives of sanctions thus go well beyond mere "compliance" from the target. Moreover, they can be highly complex and dynamically inter-related. The target-related goal of inflicting costs on a state can be a goal in its own right *and/or* a system-related means of enforcing norms and deterring others. The sender-related goal of preparing a population for war is clearly linked to a variety of system-maintenance goals. For any one sanctions regime, policymakers may thus entertain many goals at once. An advocate of US sanctions against Cuba, for example, lists at least five goals: halting US policy drift on Cuba; isolating the Castro regime; preparing the US (including the state apparatus) for a post-Castro transition; blocking foreign investment in Cuba; and promoting international property rights protection (Fisk, 2000). Until scholars consider each of these goals, they are simply not in a position to describe sanctions as a "failure" or a "success". However, scholars also need to consider the inter-relations between these goals and how they may change over time, not only to ensure that they are evaluating "success" correctly, but also to glean lessons about the likelihood of success.

For this purpose it is vital to analyse how sanctions' goals are articulated together. Baldwin (1985: 61) suggests that goals may be nested, so that one goal leads onto another, more ambitious goal, which itself leads to another, and so on, terminating in a hyper-ambitious, even transcendent goal. For instance, a tariffs policy could be a means to restrict Japanese car exports to the US, which in turn supports domestic car

manufacture, which in turn ensures industry survival, which in turn promotes the US "national interest", which in turn serves God's will by saving the world from the scourge of communism, which in turn secures policymakers' place in heaven (Baldwin 1985: 48)! While scholars cannot be expected to evaluate success based on policymakers' post-mortem destinations, a full understanding of policymakers' worldview and their expectations of the functions sanctions will serve is vital to appreciate why sanctions persist as a tool of statecraft. This persistence is far less "puzzling" if we grasp sender- and system-related objectives. Furthermore, a sense of how goals interrelate and evolve over time may be vital to estimating the longevity of sanctions and the likelihood of success. We can unpack this point by considering two sorts of interrelations.

First, although a given sanctions regime may primarily be intended to serve sender- or system-related goals, for politico-ideological reasons it is far more likely to be publicly justified with reference to some target-related issue (Taylor 2010). Consequently, the satisfaction of the sender- or system-related goals may in fact come to depend on their satisfaction of target-related goals that were initially largely irrelevant or of only secondary concern to policymakers. For instance, if sanctions are imposed largely to appease belligerent domestic constituents, and yet their (often quite unrealistic) publicly-stated goals involve demands about domestic change in a targeted state and that state fails to comply, the likelihood is that they will fail to satisfy those constituents. From this perspective, sender- or system-related goals may involve an inherently escalatory logic because it is notoriously difficult for hegemonic states to back down from domestic or international prestige-related sanctions (Barber, 1979: 380; Smith, 1996; Tang, 2005). For example, the domestic credibility of the Clinton administration was repeatedly questioned by Republicans and the neo-conservative Project for the New American Century due to Saddam Hussein's alleged failure to comply with US sanctions (by simply remaining in power). Rather than appeasing right-wing elements, sanctions became a lightning rod for escalatory pressure for military action (Gordon, 2010: ch. 8). Similarly, the reactionary US Congress is today blocking attempts to ease sanctions against Iran, despite moves by Tehran to negotiate an end to the nuclear standoff that is ostensibly the focus of the embargo. At the very least, such dynamics may preclude leaders moderating their stance, preventing the emergence of a "bargaining dynamic" between sender and target (Cortright and Lopez, 2000). This sort of dynamic interrelation between goals can also help explain why, as Barber (1979: 372-3, 384) pointed out, the balance of goals within a sanctions regime may shift over time. It can also explain why sanctions regimes can persist for so long, especially if reputations are seen to be at stake (Tang, 2005: 47).

Secondly, despite sanctions scholars' fixation on "compliance", it is often understood on both sides of a sanctions regime that the real objectives are quite different from those publicly announced, which obviously carries serious implications. For example, the target may suspect or know that the primary goal of a sanctions regime is sender- or system-related. If the target leadership thinks, for example, that they are being used to pander to domestic audiences or as a whipping boy for the "international community", they are unlikely to believe that compliance with the official goals will bring them any relief. They are more likely to believe that sanctions will persist until their unofficial goals are met, or that the formal goals will evolve until the real, underlying motives are satisfied. Given that Saddam Hussein understood that the real

goal of sanctions was not disarmament but regime change, the likelihood and indeed possibility of "compliance" with this goal was zero (Gordon, 2010: 12, 241-242). Likewise, the sender also knows that the formal goals are not necessarily the ones being pursued, or may not be the most important ones. For example, US sanctions against Cuba during the Cold War were more about American prestige and the containment of communism than about seeking regime change in Cuba (Baldwin 1985: 108).

The knowledge that senders and targets have about sanctions, and the dynamically interrelatedness of sanctions' goals, are not only important for thinking about how to accurately assess "success", but also for estimating how long sanctions may last and how successful they are likely to be. Refusing to take these factors into consideration by continuing to ask "do sanctions work?" solely in relation to target-related goals is indeed "apolitical and irrelevant" (Kirshner, 2002: 166).

Conclusions

Although the complexity, multiplicity and interrelatedness of policymakers' goals was identified in the first phase of research on international economic sanctions, the insights of these early studies has largely been lost and sorely need refreshing. This article has argued that the fixation with target-related goals has had a detrimental effect on the field. Today, even when scholars do identify multiple goals, they still tend to measure "success" solely in terms of whether the supposed targets complied with the official, target-related goals. Shambaugh (1999), for example, rightly notes that the real goal of secondary sanctions is not to coerce the firms being sanctioned but to deprive the state they would have traded with or invested in of technology or economic benefits; but he still measures success by the degree to which firms complied with sanctions. Similarly, Preeg (1999) convincingly argues that sanctions are imposed for domestic political purposes, but still evaluates success in relation to the concessions wrested from target states. Not only is there little agreement on how to properly measure even this narrow conception of "success", the fixation on target-related goals has impeded full understanding of the place sanctions have in the (re)production of domestic order in target and sender states and global order more broadly. More research is required to fully explore the multiplicity of motives behind sanctions. As part of this, the subfield needs to escape its current isolation in the literature on foreign policy analysis, security studies and applied economics, and engage with broader literatures on the regulation of interstate behaviour, international norms and the international political economy, to see how and where sanctions fit into these wider systems of governance.

However, broadening our understanding of goals should also involve taking an explicitly critical approach. Given the current technocratic practice of evaluating "success" against stated aims, the risk of widening our definition of "success" is that we uncritically endorse both sanctions as "effective", and the purposes for which sanctions regimes are created as legitimate. This risk is heightened by the activist bent of sanctions scholars, who seem naturally inclined to emphasise the multiple goals of sanctions only insofar as it reaffirms their faith that sanctions "work" (Giumelli 2013). This is a particular hazard with those goals which may appear to be "automatically" fulfilled by the mere imposition of sanctions, or where the threshold for success may be

low, such as the appeasement of domestic lobbies. Baldwin (1985), for example, insists that we assess success comparatively, by considering whether any other policy instrument could fulfil the goal in question: economic statecraft is successful, since it compares well to the alternatives, e.g. war or inaction. However, he is entirely uncritical about the goals being sought; indeed, he explicitly bills his work as a handbook to help "the prince to clarify his goals, identify his policy options, and assess the utility of various courses of action" (Baldwin 1985: 26).

We ought to be more critical. If we find, for example, that sanctions are successful in delivering sender-related goals like rallying populations for war and system-related goals like corralling allies into confrontational postures and branding weak states as "rogues" and "outlaws", but unsuccessful at delivering target-related goals except punishment, this ought to be cause for concern, not grist to the mill for sanctions optimists. It would imply that individual states are being singled out to enable militaristic and imperialistic strategies of global governance. At their worst, there is no doubt that sanctions have been used for this purpose, turning them into "weapons of mass destruction" (Mueller and Mueller, 1999) and their senders into de facto war criminals (Gordon, 2010: ch. 11), despite their posturing as the upholders of international right and justice. What the sanctions literature needs most of all, perhaps, is a healthy dose of scepticism about the high-minded motives of sender-states.

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