

**The London School of Economics and Political Science**

*European Sanctions Reconsidered: Regime Type,  
Strategic Bargaining, and the Imposition of EU Sanctions*

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## Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, the European Union (EU) has become a prominent sender of international sanctions. Most of its sanctions regimes have been imposed to address human rights violations and democratic shortcomings in autocratic regimes. While these developments have attracted an increased attention by academics and practitioners alike, not much is known about the underlying factors that trigger the EU's decision to impose sanctions in the very first place.

Using a new database of EU democratic sanctions between 1989 and 2010, this thesis develops a theoretical model that shows that the imposition of sanctions is the result of a strategic bargaining process between a sender and a target country. I argue that sanctions are only one possible outcome of this process, and claim that the likelihood that sanctions are imposed depends, to a large extent, on the target country's decision to comply with the sender before sanctions are imposed or, alternatively, on its determination to ignore the sender's threat of sanctions and resist its pressure. I show that the target's decision to comply or resist is the result of an endogenous policy-formation process, which is determined by the target regime's domestic institutional setting.

Different types of institutions (regime types) impose varying degrees of constraints on the ruler's margin of manoeuvre and shape her policy choices vis-à-vis the threat and imposition of sanctions. I demonstrate that regimes that face no domestic constraints and rely on a small winning coalition of supporters are likely to be strong and willing to resist the sender's pressure, thereby "self-selecting" themselves into sanctions. By the same token, regimes that face many domestic constraints are vulnerable to sanctions, and face incentives to comply with the sender before sanctions are imposed.

My thesis makes several contributions to the literature. First, it provides a theoretical explanation of how domestic institutions matter in the imposition of sanctions, and identifies a set of conditions under which sanctions are more likely (not) to be imposed. Second, it empirically demonstrates the presence of selection effects in the study of sanctions imposition, and shows that these are channelled through the target regime's domestic institutions. Finally, my findings have relevant policy implications, as they suggest that sanctions are more likely to be effective against certain types of targets. I show that sanctions are more likely to succeed against politically constrained regimes at the threat stage or early during a sanctions episode, whilst they are likely to fail against highly authoritarian regimes which rule free of domestic constraints.

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## Abbreviations

AMG	Advisory Monitoring Group
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
BSPP	Burmese Socialist Programme Party
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EDF	European Development Fund
EIB	European Investment Bank
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GSP	General System of Preferences
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara/Ncube
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLD	New League for Democracy
NUP	National Unity Party
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SADC	South African Development Community
SDL	Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
USDP	Union State and Development Party
W	Winning Coalition
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act

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*In memory of Francesc Morata i Tierra*

## CHAPTER 1. UNDERSTANDING THE IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS

### 1.1. Introduction

The European Union's (EU) use of sanctions to address human rights abuses and democratic shortcomings in third countries has increased systematically since the end of the Cold War (De Vries and Hazelzet, 2005; Elliott, 2005; Hufbauer and Oegg, 2003; Kreutz, 2005). Sanctions have been routinely imposed by the EU to respond to the deterioration of democracy and the rule of law in countries like Belarus, Myanmar and Zimbabwe; to restore the democratic order after coups d'état in Fiji, Honduras and Guinea; and to address blatant and systematic human rights violations in Liberia, Uzbekistan and Sudan. In the absence of more coercive instruments to alter a target<sup>1</sup> country's behaviour, sanctions<sup>2</sup> have become one the Union's most prominent foreign policy instrument to promote democracy and human rights abroad (Lehne, 2012; Smith, 1998, 2008).

However, the EU's growing activity in this field is at odds with the extended belief in policy and academic circles that economic sanctions do not work. Indeed, the empirical record of several cases in which sanctions were applied casts doubts about the effectiveness of these measures in influencing – let alone altering – the behaviour of a target country (Doxey, 1972; Doxey, 1971; Galtung, 1967; Green, 1983; Lindsay, 1986). As detractors of sanctions contend, sender states almost never attain their policy goals through the use of sanctions and, in the few cases where they do, other accompanying policies such as the threat or the actual use of military force are likely to be responsible for the success (Haas, 1997, 1998; Pape, 1997, 1998).

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the sanctions literature, I refer to a “sender” of sanctions as the country that initiates a coercion attempt, whereas a “target” is the addressee of this coercion attempt.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the thesis, I employ the terms sanction, democratic sanction, and economic statecraft interchangeably.

Critics also claim that sanctions have adverse side-effects. Sanctions generate important disruptions in the economic relations between countries, imposing a huge burden on the societies of both the sender and the targeted countries (Pape, 1997). Even worse, sanctions can contribute to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in a sanctioned country (Weiss, 1999), as the sanctions imposed against Iraq in the 1990s or the current sanctions in place against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria have evidenced (Allen and Lektzian, 2013; Moret, 2015; Seeberg, 2015).

At the heart of the criticism is the causal mechanism that is thought to operate when sanctions are imposed. Sender countries generally use sanctions with the expectation that the economic hardship inflicted on the target country will ultimately force the latter to alter its behaviour and make political concessions (Baldwin and Pape, 1998). Underlying this assumption is the reasoning that higher levels of economic hardship will push the population of the target country to increase pressure on its government, which in turn will be forced to concede and alter its policies. In this way, the society of the target country acts as a "transmission belt" that transforms the economic hardship caused by sanctions into political concessions by the targeted country (Galtung, 1967).

However, Galtung (1967) himself criticised this belief as inaccurate and naïve. Indeed, targeted countries often find ways to circumvent or evade sanctions, as the disruption of trade between a sender and a target generates great incentives for third countries to fill in the void left and reap the benefits (Andreas, 2005; Early, 2011). Moreover, sanctions might trigger a "rally-around-the-flag-effect", where target regimes increase their domestic support by using sanctions to flare up nationalistic feelings amongst the population and blame foreign powers for the economic woes of the country (Galtung, 1967; Selden, 1999). Also, sanctions can have other perverse effects when imposed against autocratic regimes, as ruling elites shield themselves from the impact of

sanctions and transfer the cost to the innocent population (Allen, 2008a, b; Brooks, 2002). If sanctions are doomed to fail, why do international actors like the EU still employ them to pursue their foreign policy goals?

This thesis advances an innovative theoretical approach to answer this “sanctions paradox”. In line with game theoretic approaches, I develop an argument which portrays the imposition of sanctions as the product of a complex strategic bargaining process – a “sanctions game” – between a sender and a target. I claim that, once a sender is determined to threaten the use of sanctions, the likelihood that these are imposed depends on the target’s willingness to comply with the sender – and avoid being sanctioned –, or on its willingness to resist the latter’s pressure – and be punished in return. Importantly, I argue that the incentives that drive a target’s response are determined by its domestic institutional setting, which constrain and shape the ruling elite’s margin of manoeuvre to respond to a sender’s threat and imposition of sanctions.

Following these premises, I define regimes that rely on small coalitions of individuals to rule – i.e. military and one-party regimes – as “strong” regimes, as they are able to shield themselves from the effects of sanctions and resist their pressure. As a consequence, these regimes face incentives to resist, and are therefore more likely to be sanctioned. On the contrary, I categorise regimes that are based on large coalitions – i.e. multi-party regimes – as “weak” regimes, as rulers face more challenges to maintain their coalition together when faced with external shocks. In this sense, sanctions generate incentives for members of the coalition to defect and create alternative coalitions to take office. Given that these regimes are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions, I show that they are also more inclined to comply with the sender when sanctions are threatened, and avoid thereby being punished.

## **1.2. Accounting for the imposition of sanctions**

### *1.2.1. Sanctions as a signalling or constraining tool*

For some scholars however, the answer to this “sanctions paradox” lies elsewhere. They claim that sanctions fulfil secondary functions other than seeking to alter a target country’s behaviour. For instance, sanctions can be employed to constrain a target country’s actions (Giumelli, 2011). Moreover, a sender might employ sanctions to signal to its domestic constituencies that it is doing something about the target’s behaviour (Barber, 1979; Giumelli, 2013a; Walldorf, 2010), or because certain pressure groups demand action from their government to protect their interests (Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 1988, 1992). In this sense, sanctions are frequently regarded as a cheap instrument that goes beyond issuing mere political declarations, but the economic effects of which are much more limited and less devastating than those of war (Dunne, 1998; Wallenstein and Staibano, 2005). Finally, sanctions might also be useful in inhibiting a target country from misbehaving in the future or to deter other countries from following the steps of the transgressing country (Barber, 1979; Lindsay, 1986; Peterson, 2013).

However, while these arguments are useful to understand why senders impose sanctions, they are less well suited to explain the variation that exists in the imposition of sanctions. Indeed, these explanations focus on the reasons that might trigger the use of sanctions, but they do not identify clearly the conditions under which negative measures are more likely to be imposed. For instance, in cases where sanctions are employed to promote generalizable and vague international norms like human rights or democratic principles, these arguments cannot explain why some countries that violate

these norms are sanctioned whilst others with similar or worse records of violations are not (Morgan and Miers, 1999).<sup>3</sup>

### *1.2.2. The “conditional” effectiveness of sanctions*

A different explanation to the sanctions paradox has been provided by scholars who believe that these measures are more effective than previously thought (Elliott, 1998). According to these “optimists”, the assumption that sanctions do not work is misleading because it is based solely on the analysis of a handful of sanctions episodes. To prove the point, Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott and Oegg (2007) – hereafter HSE – analyse over 200 cases where sanctions were imposed and conclude that sanctions worked almost a third of the times depending on the presence or absence of specific conditions.

The prominent work of Hufbauer et al. (2007) triggered a shift in the research agenda, increasing the academic interest on the specific attributes of the sender and the target countries that were supposed to facilitate the success of sanctions. For instance, some of the studies employing the new dataset found that sanctions were more likely to be effective if the economic asymmetry between the sender and the target was large (Krustev, 2007; McLean and Whang, 2010; Morgan and Schwebach, 1997) and if the previous relationship between a sender and a target was cordial (Drezner, 1998, 1999). Other studies showed that sanctions worked best when a target was undergoing a period of political or economic instability (Hufbauer et al., 2007; Jing, Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 2003; Lam, 1990) and when the sender’s demand was modest (Dashti-Gibson, Davis and Radcliff, 1997; Lektzian and Souva, 2007).

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, this inconsistency can trigger harsh criticism about double standards when imposing sanctions against sender governments.



Scholars also claimed that unilateral sanctions were more effective than multilateral ones due to collective action problems (Doxey, 1980, 1987; Doxey, 1971; Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 1999; Miers and Morgan, 2002). However, this result changed when an international organisation was present during a sanctions episode, as it reduced uncertainty and coordination problems between multiple senders (Bapat and Morgan, 2009; Drezner, 2000; Martin, 1992; Martin, 1993). Studies also found evidence that sanctions were more likely to succeed if a target was dependent on trade from the sender (Dashti-Gibson et al., 1997; Miyagawa, 1992; Van Bergeijk, 1994). Finally, some studies associated sanctions success to high cost to the target (Doxey, 1980; Lektzian and Souva, 2007), whereas others suggested that less harmful sanctions were more effective (Eaton and Engers, 1992).

However, a few caveats about the higher efficacy of sanctions are necessary. First, even if sanctions were to succeed more often than previously thought, Hufbauer et al. (2007) estimation that they work one-third of the times is, after all, a meagre rate of success.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, if sanctions are more efficient under specific circumstances, we should expect senders to refrain from using them in cases where success is unlikely, and witness instead a more selective use of sanctions. Paradoxically however, the empirical record shows an increase in the use of sanctions over time, suggesting that these measures are not necessarily employed in such a selective way as awaited (Morgan and Miers, 1999). Lastly, newer studies employing the HSE data have not been able to replicate some of the abovementioned findings despite using similar research designs (Bapat, Heinrich, Kobayashi and Morgan, 2013; Morgan, Bapat and Krustev, 2009).

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<sup>4</sup> Pape (1997, 1998) has even criticised this rate for being too optimistic. His recoding of the HSE database estimates the success rate of sanctions at 5%, a significantly lower figure.

The lack of consistent findings in the literature and the inability of these approaches to provide a convincing explanation for the sanctions paradox can be accounted for by two factors. First, until recently the HSE dataset was the only comprehensive dataset on economic sanctions available, leading researchers to rely excessively on it to test hypotheses about the effects of sanctions in large-n studies. One problem with this choice is that about 80% of the cases recorded in the dataset are cases where the United States (US) was the first or unique sender of sanctions. This renders it difficult for making generalisations about the effectiveness of sanctions imposed by other senders than the US.

A second and more problematic issue relates to the fact that most studies have reached conclusions about the effectiveness of sanctions based on cases where sanctions were actually imposed, but not on cases where sanctions were threatened but not enforced (Drezner, 2003; Nooruddin, 2002). This seemingly insignificant distinction between the threatening and the actual imposition of sanctions has gone relatively unnoticed in empirical studies assessing the effectiveness of sanctions. Yet this difference is likely to have important repercussions on how sanctions work and when they are more likely to be used to begin with.

### *1.2.3. Sanctions, target state calculations and selection effects*

As game theorists have posited, the imposition of sanctions can be viewed as the result of a complex bargaining process between a sender and a target state. In this process, the strategies pursued by the sender and the target are determined by the utility that each obtains from following one strategy over another. In this sense, the imposition of sanctions is only one possible outcome of this process that is likely to be attained when

both actors reach a point (equilibrium) from which none of them faces incentives to deviate. However, other outcomes are possible as well. For instance, a target might believe that it will be better off by complying with the sender at the threat stage, i.e. before sanctions are actually employed.<sup>5</sup> In this case, sanctions will not be imposed and the threat of sanctions will have sufficed to achieve a target's acquiescence. This example suggests that the incentives and policy preferences faced by a target country during a strategic bargaining process play an important role in predicting the outcome of this process and, specifically, in determining whether the sender will adopt sanctions or not (Allen, 2005; Eaton and Engers, 1992; Smith, 1995).

Indeed, a target country is likely to undertake a cost-benefit calculation regarding the utility that it obtains from conceding to the sender before sanctions are imposed against the utility that it gets from resisting its pressure. In other words, a target should be able to anticipate a sender's next move and choose a strategy according to the utility that it will receive from it. If a target prefers to comply with a sender before sanctions are enacted, then no sanctions should be observed and the threat of sanctions will have sufficed to obtain a target's compliance. On the contrary, if a target prefers to stick to its policy rather than to comply with a sender, then sanctions are likely to be imposed.

While game theoretic approaches provide an elegant answer to the sanctions paradox, they also point to the existence of an important empirical problem: the existence of selection bias (Morgan and Miers, 1999; Morgan and Schwebach, 1997; Nooruddin, 2002). As it can be derived from this line of reasoning, target countries that choose to defy the sender and resist its pressure are likely to do so because they know that they are better-off doing so and because they have privileged information regarding their

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<sup>5</sup> I develop this reasoning in more detail in Chapter 2.

capacity to withstand sanctions. In other words, these targets are likely to be “hard” cases that “self-select” themselves into sanctions. As a consequence, they will bias the estimates of the efficacy of sanctions downward (Marinov, 2005). In the same vein, weak targets are likely to be aware of their vulnerability to sanctions. Thus, they will be likely to comply with the sender at the threat stage, and avoid having to bear the cost of sanctions. Therefore, no sanctions will be observed and, somewhat paradoxically, sanctions will have succeeded before actually being imposed (Eaton and Engers, 1999).

If selection effects are indeed present, then most of the sanctions literature is likely to be affected from a severe selection bias problem (Blake and Klemm, 2006; Drezner, 2003; Morgan et al., 2009; Morgan and Schwebach, 1997; Nooruddin, 2002). This is a relevant issue that has important academic and policy implications, as it affects our understanding of when sanctions should work best. For instance, it is plausible that the low success rate reported in HSE’s work – and in successive studies that use the HSE dataset – is driven by the inclusion of many hard cases that “self-select” themselves into sanctions in the database (Whang, 2010). If this is true, then many studies might be grossly underestimating the effectiveness of sanctions, since most cases where sanctions should work best are not observed – and, therefore, not recorded in the HSE database. Yet most importantly, it also implies that selection effects need to be modelled in empirical research in order to explain the variation in the imposition of sanctions.

Yet when will sanctions be imposed? And under which circumstances will a target decide to resist the sender’s pressure or, alternatively, to comply with it before sanctions are imposed? Providing a conclusive answer to these questions is the main goal of this thesis. To account for selection effects in the imposition of sanctions, I develop a strategic bargaining model where policy preferences are formed endogenously and where a target country’s decision to comply or resist a sender’s pressure is determined

by its domestic institutions. I argue that different types of autocratic regimes are characterised by particular institutional settings, which impose different levels of constraints on them, and limit thereby their political leeway. Institutions influence the calculations of autocratic regimes about the utility that they obtain from accommodating the sender's demands versus the utility that they receive from resisting its pressure. Regimes that face a low level of constraints (i.e. "strong" regimes like military and one-party regimes) have incentives to withstand the sender's pressure, whilst regimes dealing with a high level of constraints (i.e. "weak" regimes like multi-party regimes) are more inclined to comply with the sender at the threat stage.

### **1.3. Strategic bargaining, domestic constraints, and the imposition of sanctions**

A widespread belief in the literature posits that economically troubled or dependent countries constitute easy targets for senders. As such, sanctions should destabilise them easily and force them to capitulate early during a sanctions episode (Hufbauer et al., 2007; Van Bergeijk, 1994). Thus, sanctions against these targets are often regarded as "cost-effective" measures that almost certainly guarantee a sender's success at a low cost (Soest and Wahman, 2015). Somewhat surprisingly however, some examples of economically vulnerable countries like Fiji, Togo or Zimbabwe seem to question the veracity of this claim, as they have shown a remarkable resilience towards sanctions despite suffering from long-term economic stagnation, hyperinflation and high rates of unemployment.

The problem with this "cost-effectiveness" assumption resembles that of the naïve theory of sanctions in that it places too much emphasis on the economic costs that sanctions impose on a target, whilst it forgets to acknowledge the political costs that

sanctions impose on a target (Blanchard and Ripsman, 1999). Given that political leaders want to remain in office (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow, 2003), the response of targets is likely to be motivated by the value that these place on the policy that the sender wants to redress (Smith, 1995), and how the policy choice affects their survival in office. If the utility that a target country obtains from the policy is lower than the cost of sanctions, then it should be willing to comply with the sender. However, if the utility that it receives from sticking to the policy is equal or higher than the cost of sanctions, then the target's incentive to resist the sender's pressure increases.

Therefore, the way in which target countries react to a sender's threat and imposition of sanctions is likely to be influenced by internal calculations regarding the regime's stability, its legitimacy and control over the state apparatus, its internal cohesion and, most importantly, the fate of its leaders if they leave office (Escribà-Folch, 2013; Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). These calculations vary enormously between presidential and parliamentary democracies (Cheibub and Limongi, 2002), but also between different types of authoritarian regimes (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson and Smith, 2002). The main reason for this variation – and therefore, for a target regime's decision to comply with a sender or to withstand sanctions – is likely to be found at the domestic institutional setting of the target country.

Political institutions are frequently described as the 'rules of the game in a society' (North, 1990: 3). They structure the interactions between the incumbent and the rest of society, 'providing information and enforcement mechanisms that reduce uncertainty about the corresponding behavior of others' (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 7). Institutions can be formal or informal, yet they are important inasmuch as they shape and channel power relations between different political factions, segments of society or, most importantly,

between the ruler and her domestic competitors (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). In other words, the institutional setting in a country determines to a large extent the power that a ruler has to impose her decisions on society and the ease with which she does so (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Roller, 2005).

This logic also applies to autocratic regimes. Indeed, institutions in authoritarian countries are far from being a mere façade or a simple window dressing (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Geddes, 1999, 2003). On the contrary, they are a reflection of the power relations between an autocrat and her challengers. Institutions serve the autocrat to divide or co-opt the opposition (Wright, 2008), yet they also limit and reduce the autocrat's leeway by imposing formal and informal constraints on her rule. As a consequence, regimes that face low or no domestic constraints have a large margin of manoeuvre, as they are accountable to few. At the same time, rulers that face many constraints or veto players have their leeway restricted and their power limited, as they need to satisfy the needs of a larger spectrum of actors to rule.

Importantly, the variation in the type of institutions and the constraints that these impose on different types of autocratic regimes is likely to have an important effect in the way these respond to the threat and imposition of sanctions. Indeed, just as domestic institutions affect a wide variety of political outcomes like conflict onset (Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, Siverson and Smith, 1999; Choi, 2010; Filson and Werner, 2004; Russett, 1994; Weeks, 2012), economic development (Gerring, Bond, Barndt and Moreno, 2005; Helliwell, 1994; Przeworski, 1991, 2000), or the quality of governance (Jensen, 2003; Jensen, Malesky and Weymouth, 2013; Lust-Okar and Jamal, 2002), domestic institutions are likely to shape an autocratic regime's policy choices towards the threat of sanctions by constraining or increasing the political leader's margin of manoeuvre (Allen, 2008b; Brooks, 2002). Regimes should be politically vulnerable to

external shocks like sanctions when they face large domestic constraints to their rule. On the contrary, regimes that face less constraints should be less exposed to sanctions, as their internal cohesion and concentration of power should allow them to shield the country's ruling elites from the effects of sanctions.

Thus, I expect politically constrained regimes (i.e. weak regimes) to be more likely to comply with the sender in the threat stage, while regimes that face small or no constraints (i.e. strong regimes) should be more likely to ignore the sender's threat (Hypothesis 1 or H1). Consequently, weak regimes should be less likely to be sanctioned, while the opposite should be true for strong regimes (Hypothesis 2 or H2).

However, it is still possible that weak targets miscalculate their ability to withstand sanctions and decide to resist the sender's pressure. In this case, weak targets should become aware of their mistake soon after sanctions have been imposed and comply with the sender in due course (Hovi, Huseby and Sprinz, 2005). Thus, I expect weak targets to be sanctioned for shorter spells than strong targets (Hypothesis 3 or H3). Finally, sanctions should also be more likely to destabilise weak regimes rather than strong ones (Hypothesis 4 or H4).

In sum, I expect selection effects to be present at the target regime's level and to be mediated by its domestic institutional setting. If my argument holds, we should observe variation in the response to sanctions amongst different types of autocratic regimes. Regimes that sustain their rule on a broad coalition that brings together various different societal actors – i.e. multi-party regimes – face more constraints in their response to the threat and imposition of sanctions. Therefore, they should be more likely to comply with the sender during the threat stage and avoid being sanctioned. Likewise, regimes facing lesser institutional constraints – i.e. military and one-party regimes – should be



more likely to resist the sender's pressure and, as a consequence, be more likely to be sanctioned.

#### **1.4. Research design and case selection**

To test my argument about the existence of selection effects at the target's domestic level, I employ a mixed methods approach that combines a statistical analysis on the imposition of EU sanctions with the qualitative analysis of several case studies where the EU imposed sanctions to redress an autocratic target regime's violation of human rights and/or democratic principles.<sup>6</sup> The use of a mixed methods approach suits the purpose of this thesis in two respects.

First, I attempt to capture the variation that exists in the way sanctions are imposed across different autocratic targets through the use of a statistical analysis. To capture this variation, I model two stages of the strategic bargaining process that are relevant to my model: first, the stage where a target country decides whether to comply with a sender or not (H1); and second, the stage where the sender decides whether to impose sanctions or to refrain thereof (H2). In addition, I also model the length of the sanctions spell (H3) and test whether sanctions are more likely to destabilise weak regimes more than strong ones (H4).

The quantitative analysis on the drivers of EU sanctions is then complemented by five case studies where sanctions were imposed by the EU. These cases are selected according to my theoretical model and to the results of my statistical analysis. One set of cases are typical cases that reflect situations where my model predicts the outcome

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<sup>6</sup> As a matter of fact, the EU has only imposed sanctions to address violations of human rights and democratic principles against non-democratic regimes.

well (i.e. cases that fall “on the regression line”). The other set of cases concerns instances where my model fails to predict the outcome correctly (i.e. cases that fall “off the line”). The first three cases that my model predicts correctly are the two sanctions episodes against Fiji – first between 2001 and 2003 (Fiji I), and again between 2006 and 2014 (Fiji II) –, and Myanmar, which are discussed in Chapter 5. The other two cases where my model performs poorly are Belarus and Zimbabwe, which I discuss in Chapter 6. As I show in Chapter 4, these cases are exceptional and can be considered to be clear outliers to my theoretical argument.

The case studies complement the large-n statistical analysis in two important ways. First, the typical cases of Fiji I, Fiji II, and Myanmar (Chapter 5) illustrate my argument empirically, and provide a more nuanced account of the dynamism that takes place during the strategic bargaining process and which is not entirely captured by the more static statistical analysis. By focusing on the micro-level dynamics that take place at the target country’s level i) before sanctions are imposed and ii) during the time that they are in place (Kirshner, 1997), these case studies allow me to identify small changes in the bargaining positions of the sender and the target during the sanctions episode. In this way, I am able to observe how domestic institutions at the target country shape its response to the threat and imposition of sanctions, and how this behaviour changes – if it does – throughout the sanctions episode. Thus, the cases of Fiji I, Fiji II, and Myanmar help me to trace the causal mechanisms that influence a target regime’s response to sanctions during the strategic bargaining process.

Second, the cases of Belarus and Zimbabwe (Chapter 6) are useful to examine the validity of my argument in light of the deviance of the two regimes, and to examine the extent to which additional factors that I did not include in the statistical analysis can help to explain these cases. For example, the case studies allow me to control for an

important variable that cannot be easily measured in the statistical analysis: the presence of the so-called “black knights” (Early, 2009, 2011; Galtung, 1967; Green, 1983; Hufbauer et al., 2007). This term is employed in the literature to refer to third parties that step up their diplomatic and economic support to a sanctioned country due to geopolitical and strategic considerations, or due to the more than profitable business opportunities that the disruption of trade and investment caused by sanctions generate. Since this assistance might allow a sanctioned country to circumvent and offset the impact of sanctions, I control for its relevance in the case studies.

Moreover, even though my strategic bargaining approach to the imposition of sanctions can theoretically be applied to any sender of sanctions, I focus on those sanctions imposed by the EU for several reasons. First of all, the EU has become one of the most prominent senders of international sanctions since the end of the Cold War, lagging only behind the US (Elliott, 2005). However, its growing use of sanctions has only recently attracted the attention of scholars, and remains largely unexplored. In fact, only three books and a handful of academic papers have been written on the topic (Eriksson, 2011; Giumelli, 2011, 2013a, b; Giumelli and Ivan, 2013; Kreutz, 2005; Portela, 2005, 2010), yet none of them controls for the existence of selection effects during the imposition of sanctions. Thus, my thesis is pioneering in empirically identifying the presence of selection effects in the study on the imposition of sanctions, and makes an important contribution to understanding the circumstances under which EU sanctions are more likely to be imposed – and eventually work.

Second, the EU is also an interesting case study as a sender because it employs many different tools that, due to their punitive logic, might be classified as sanctions. Indeed, although there is no common definition of sanction, different interpretations exist, from those that take a minimalist view and consider only those measures imposed under the

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) framework as sanctions (Eriksson, 2011; Giumelli, 2013b), to those that adopt a broader definition and catalogue CFSP measures, aid suspensions under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, trade related measures such as the General System of Preferences (GSP) suspension, and other informal measures as sanctions (Hazelzet, 2001; Portela, 2010). The last interpretation – to which this thesis subscribes –, is interesting because of the richness of the tools employed, but also due to the different legal and formal mechanisms that regulate the use of each set of measures.<sup>7</sup>

To test my hypotheses I develop an original dataset on EU sanctions. The need to create a new database stems from the fact that, unfortunately, most EU sanctions episodes are not included in the two most comprehensive datasets on economic sanctions – HSE’s “Economic Sanctions Reconsidered” and Morgan et al’s. (2009) “Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions” (TIES). Since the database constitutes in itself an original contribution to the literature, I devote Chapter 3 to a discussion of the data gathering process and the sources employed for the operationalisation and coding of the variables.

Finally, even though my model on the imposition of sanctions can be applied to different issue areas, I focus on “democratic sanctions” – i.e. those measures that the EU imposes to address human rights violations and democratic wrongdoing in third countries. The interest in this topic stems from the salience and contentiousness that it has generated in academic and policy circles, as the usefulness of sanctions in improving a target’s respect of democracy and human rights is often questioned (Grauvogel and von Soest, 2014; Lopez and Cortright, 1997; Peksen, 2009, 2011;

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<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as Portela (2010) shows in her book, the use of each of these measures varies depending on the distribution of competencies between EU institutions, but also on the majorities required to impose, change, extend, and eventually lift the sanctions.

Peksen and Drury, 2010; von Soest and Wahman, 2014). Therefore, my theoretical model can shed new light on this debate.

## **1.5. Findings**

My thesis confirms that selection effects are present at the target country's level and, most importantly, that these are mediated by the target's domestic institutions. The large-n empirical analysis in Chapter 4 evidences that an important variation exists in number of sanctions that are imposed by the EU against different types of autocratic regimes. The four hypotheses that I test are corroborated by my results, which show that regimes facing more domestic constraints (weak regimes) are more likely to comply with the sender's demands in the threat stage than those regimes whose power is less constrained by veto players (strong regimes) (H1). Likewise, my results confirm that weak regimes are less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes (H2). Noteworthy, the findings are consistent and robust across different model specifications, and they remain the same when I control for alternative explanations of sanctions impositions.<sup>8</sup>

The statistical analysis also confirms my expectation that weak regimes are sanctioned for shorter spells than strong regimes (H3). This finding supports my claim that weak regimes sometimes miscalculate their strength, but that they acknowledge their mistake soon after sanctions start to bite. Finally, my results also corroborate my expectation that weak regimes are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions than strong regimes (H4).

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<sup>8</sup> See section 2.7 in Chapter 2 for a full description of alternative explanations to the imposition of sanctions.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the case studies provide further insights into the strategic interaction process between the EU and the targeted countries during the threat and imposition of sanctions. I find that the institutional setup of the target country plays a very important role in the target's decision to comply or resist the sender's pressure. This is evidenced in the case of Fiji I (2001-2003), where the authorities displayed a clear predisposition to accommodate the EU's demands from the very beginning by establishing a roadmap to return to the democratic rule within a short period of time. The case study also shows that, when a ruling coalition is large, internal divisions are likely to appear and undermine the regime's capacity to withstand international and domestic pressures.

However, the case studies also demonstrate that sanctions are less likely to destabilise strong regimes that rely on a small coalition to rule. Indeed, the military regimes in Fiji II (2006-2014) and Myanmar (1990-ongoing) were able to survive in power for prolonged periods of time despite having to bear the economic burden of sanctions. As I show in Chapter 5, the Fijian military regime was able to eliminate all forms of domestic opposition and to tighten its control over the state apparatus thanks to the regime's internal cohesion around the figure of Commodore Frank Bainimarama. This, in turn, allowed it to ignore and resist the impact of sanctions, as no domestic opposition structures were able to transform the discontent with sanctions into political pressure against the regime. Similarly, the Myanmar military junta's cohesiveness and its targeted system of patronage allowed it to keep a firm grip on power despite suffering the impact of economic sanctions for more than two decades.

Finally, my case studies provide evidence about role of black knights in offsetting the effects of sanctions in Belarus and Zimbabwe. These cases show that Russia's support of Alexander Lukashenka's regime in Belarus, and South Africa's legitimization of

Mugabe's rule in Zimbabwe were necessary but insufficient conditions to explain why these regimes were able to survive in power despite facing international sanctions and profound economic crises. Indeed, besides the role of black knights, another factor that allowed Lukashenka and Mugabe to rule almost unrestrained was the failure of the opposition to organise a united front in Belarus, and the opposition's incapacity to maintain it after entering the Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe. In any case, the sanctions episodes against Belarus and Zimbabwe are quite exceptional and could be described as "outliers" to my theoretical account.

## **1.6. Structure of the thesis**

In Chapter 2 I introduce my theoretical framework on the strategic bargaining process that takes place between a sender and a target of sanctions. Borrowing from the game theoretic literature, I generate a "sanctions game" where a sender and a target interact, and where the result of their interaction leads to different outcomes or equilibria, including the imposition of sanctions. I develop my argument on the role of the domestic institutions in determining the target's response to sanctions, and argue that politically constrained regimes are more likely to comply with the sender and avoid being sanctioned, whilst regimes that are less constrained by their domestic institutions are more likely to defy the sender and be sanctioned. More specifically, I claim that the size of a regime's "winning coalition" (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003) – i.e. the number of individuals that guarantee the stability of an autocrat's rule –, determines whether an autocratic regime is able to withstand external pressures like sanctions.

Chapter 3 lays out the research design of the thesis. First, I describe in detail how my new dataset on EU sanctions has been developed. I discuss the operationalisation and

coding of the dependent and independent variables, and disclose the sources that I have employed for this purpose. The chapter also examines certain methodological problems that arise in the econometric analysis, and discusses the solutions that I have used to address these issues. Finally, the chapter concludes by explaining the criteria that have been employed to select the case studies of Chapter 5 and 6.

Chapter 4 then introduces the results of the statistical analysis. My first models present the results of the compliance and the sanctions stages and confirm i) that politically weak regimes are more likely to comply with the threat of sanctions; and ii) that they are less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes. These analyses are then complemented by two more models, which provide evidence i) that weak regimes face shorter sanctions spells; and ii) that they are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions than strong regimes.

In Chapters 5 and 6 I analyse the four case studies where EU sanctions were imposed. Chapter 5 first analyses the cases of Fij I (2001-2003) and Fiji II (2006-2014) and then proceeds to examine the sanctions regime against Myanmar since 1990. In Chapter 6 I analyse the EU's sanctions episodes against Belarus and Zimbabwe, two of the most notorious and longest-lived sanctions regimes ever imposed by the EU.

Finally, Chapter 7 wraps up the main findings of the thesis and discusses their value to the literature and to sanctions practice in general. First, I discuss the main strengths and limitations of my theoretical approach and of my empirical results, and review the generalizability and applicability of my model to other senders and issue areas. In addition, I suggest new lines of research that could help to advance our knowledge on selection effects and on the actual efficacy of sanctions. To conclude, I briefly discuss



the substantive meaning of my findings for practitioners, and examine ways in which the use of sanctions could be enhanced.

## **CHAPTER 2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: THE SANCTIONS GAME**

### **2.1. Introduction**

When do Western countries use sanctions to address human rights violations and democratic wrongdoing in autocratic regimes? And under which circumstances will they decide to impose sanctions? Economic statecraft has become an increasingly popular foreign policy tool since the end of the Cold War, as countries have made a growing use of it to deal with international crises (Cortright and Lopez, 2000; Haas, 1998; Jones, 2007). However, considering the widespread view that sanctions do not work (Pape, 1997), it is surprising that their increasing use in international politics has not been matched by a theoretical explanation of when and why countries resort to them at all. After all, sanctions are only one amongst many instruments available to a sender to attain foreign policy goals, and it is by no means clear that the use of economic coercion is necessarily the most efficient way to do so.

As a matter of fact, countries have a wide choice of tools at their disposal to influence a target's behaviour (Holsti, 1995). Amongst others, they can employ diplomacy, the use of positive and negative incentives or – at the other extreme – they can rely on military force (Baldwin, 1985). Furthermore, even when sanctions are considered, they are rarely the most imminent and direct reaction that senders employ when they feel uneasy about a target's behaviour. On the contrary, they tend to be preceded by the issuance of political statements, diplomatic consultations and, eventually, by threatening economic coercion.

Sanctions are often regarded as drastic measures (Council of the European Union, 2004a) that are only employed when a target is unwilling to change its behaviour and comply with the sender's demands. The recourse to economic statecraft thus conveys

the message that diplomatic means have failed to solve an international conflict and that a political stalemate has been reached. Consequently, sanctions become an attractive option for policy-makers when negotiations with a target stall and the sender has no room for manoeuvre left.

Portraying the use of economic coercion as the outcome of a failed negotiation is a promising starting point to understand why sanctions are imposed – and why they so often fail to achieve their goals (Lacy and Niou, 2004). For quite some time, game theorists have advocated that the imposition of sanctions can be regarded as a strategic bargaining game between two actors with diverging interests (Drezner, 1998; Tsebelis, 1990). The usefulness of this approach as an analytical tool resides in its focus on the *process* that leads ultimately to the imposition of sanctions, which can be viewed as an *outcome* of this process (Nooruddin, 2002: 66-67).

This chapter develops this argument and builds up the analytical framework of the thesis. Section 2.2 presents the argument that the imposition of sanctions needs to be regarded as a strategic bargaining game and discusses the potential of such an approach. Section 2.3 analyses the presence of selection bias in the study of sanctions and proposes ways to address it. In the following part, I introduce my argument that domestic institutions account to a large extent for target selection effects. I claim that strong regimes that rely on a small winning coalition to rule face little domestic constraints and therefore have incentives to resist the sender's threat of sanctions. As a consequence, they are also more likely to be sanctioned than weaker regimes with large ruling coalitions. This premise allows me to provide the causal mechanism that lead different types of autocratic regimes to respond in different ways to the threat and imposition of sanctions in section 2.4. The main hypotheses of this study are outlined in

sections 2.5 and 2.6, whilst alternative explanations are discussed thereafter. Finally, the last section summarises the main ideas of the chapter and concludes.

## **2.2. Sanctions as a strategic bargaining game**

Strategic bargaining approaches allow predicting the circumstances under which certain outcomes or equilibria might result from the interaction between two actors. Thus, depending on the individual strategies pursued by each actor individually, different equilibria will be reached (Fearon, 1998; McCarty and Meirowitz, 2007; Osborne, 2004). The strategic behaviour of two actors has important implications for the study of economic statecraft, as it allows understanding the imposition of sanctions as only one possible outcome (equilibrium) out of many. The relevant puzzle is therefore to understand how different strategies and policy choices lead the actors to reach a specific equilibrium over others and, in particular, the equilibrium where sanctions are imposed.

Conceiving of the imposition of sanctions as a strategic bargaining game has important analytical advantages, since a coercion attempt is only one possible way in which a sender may seek to alter a target's behaviour (Krustev, 2010). As I have argued above, the sender has various other options available to influence a target. But also, it is perfectly possible that a sender does not need to use sanctions at all to make a target change its behaviour. In fact, senders might achieve a target's compliance when the latter fears that sanctions will impose a huge burden on it. In these cases, the mere threat of sanctions can induce a target to modify its behaviour and sanctions will not be required.

Recall that what I have dubbed the cost-effectiveness approach assumes that economically and politically vulnerable countries are more likely to be sanctioned, since

the probability that they will suffer under sanctions – and thus concede to the sender’s demands – is much higher. While this line of reasoning underlines the sender’s rationale for using sanctions, the interactive dynamics highlighted by game theoretic approaches also attribute an important role in the bargaining process to the other player of the game – i.e. the target. In fact, the intuition behind strategic bargaining approaches is that it is ultimately in the target’s hands to decide whether sanctions will be imposed or not, since it is in its discretion to choose whether to comply with the sender or whether to defy it.

In game theory, actors select those strategies that maximise their pay-offs or utilities (McCarty and Meirowitz, 2007; Osborne, 2004). However, they do so by anticipating the moves of the other player. This means that the strategy chosen is conditional on the other player’s moves. Consequently, both actors anticipate each other’s’ actions and choose their best response to the other’s move. In the case of economic coercion attempts, a target should be able to anticipate whether a sender is determined to impose sanctions or not, and to choose its reaction correspondingly (Drezner, 1998, 1999).

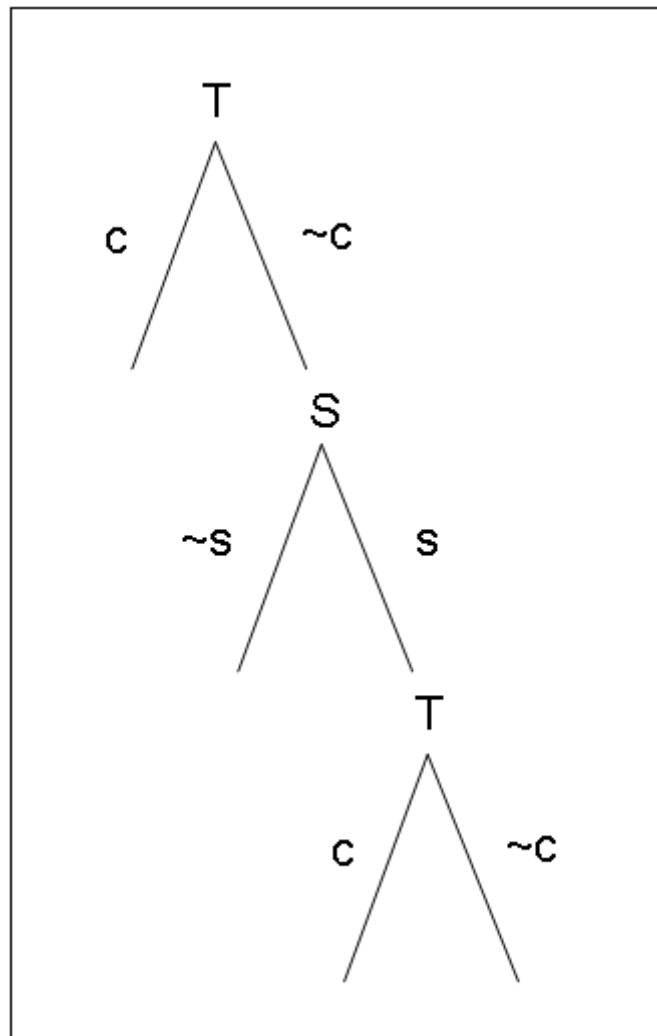
According to approaches based on the “cost-effectiveness” argument, senders should be more likely to sanction weak and unstable countries. In this sense, weak countries constitute easy targets, since they are more likely to capitulate to the pressure of sanctions (Hufbauer et al., 2007). Game theorists however claim that, by the same token as senders are likelier to target weak countries, weak targets should be able to anticipate that the imposition of sanctions would render them worse off than if they would comply with the sender (Morgan and Miers, 1999; Morgan and Schwebach, 1997). As Drezner (2003: 644) has succinctly put it, ‘if the target prefers conceding to incurring the cost of sanctions, it has an incentive to acquiesce before the imposition of sanctions’.

Crucially, this reasoning implies that sanctions will only be imposed under very specific circumstances: namely, when a target prefers to resist a sender's pressure. Such behaviour is what game theorists refer to as "self-selection", as it is entirely in the target's discretion to choose between defying the sender – and thus be sanctioned – or complying with it – and avoid bearing the cost of sanctions.

Game theorists assume that targets will self-select themselves into sanctions when the cost of compliance is higher or equal to the cost of resisting. Thus, targets that care about the policy that has upset the sender will face higher incentives to resist the latter's demands as long as doing so is cheap. At the same time, senders that are concerned about the target's misbehaviour and have already threatened sanctions will face higher incentives to respond coercively as long as doing so is less costly than backing down. In these circumstances, sanctions should be more likely to be imposed, as none of the players has incentives to compromise (Smith, 1995).

Following this argument, we can theorize about potential outcomes or equilibria that might be reached when two actors interact in a "sanctions game". Consider, for instance, a simplified game where a sender can impose sanctions or refrain thereof and a target can comply with the sender or resist its pressure. The possible options that the actors face are presented in graph 2.1.

**Graph 2.1. Game tree of a sanctions game**



Source: Own elaboration.

In this game, the target (T) makes the first move.<sup>9</sup> If it decides to comply (c) with the sender (S), it goes down the left branch of the tree and the game ends. In this scenario, the sender's threat has been sufficient to achieve a target's compliance. This scenario is likely to occur when targets are vulnerable to sanctions, which have the potential of

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<sup>9</sup> Note that I am not focusing on the reasons that might lead a sender to threaten sanctions. The "threat stage" could be modelled by adding an additional level on the top of the sanctions tree. In this case, the sender would face the options of threatening sanctions (t) or refraining thereof (~t). Modelling this stage is beyond the scope of this study. For examples of games where the threat of sanctions is studied, see Whang, McLean and Kuberski (2013), Peterson (2013) or Krustev (2010).

jeopardising the target's regime position. Consequently, T will be better off by complying with the sender.

However, if the target decides to resist ( $\sim c$ ), the game proceeds down the right branch of the tree. This can occur when T does not hold the sender's threat to be credible or when a target is determined to stick to its policy because it values it more than bearing the potential costs of sanctions. In the latter case, the target is willing to self-select itself into sanctions. However, this option only potentially leads to sanctions, as the sender has now to choose between imposing sanctions (s) or backing down ( $\sim s$ ). The latter case is likely to happen if S has miscalculated T's willingness to resist and S is not willing to incur any costs that might derive from the imposition of sanctions. Nonetheless, if the sender is committed to address the target's behaviour or wants to keep its threat credible, then the former case is more plausible and sanctions will be imposed.

Under this circumstance, T will have to reassess the sender's intentions and estimate whether it is able to withstand the cost of sanctions (Hovi et al., 2005). If T has misinterpreted the credibility of the threat, it will comply (c) and the game will end. Thus, even though sanctions are used, they will be short-lived as the target complies soon after their imposition. However, if T is unwilling to modify its behaviour and acquiesce with the sender's demands, it will choose to resist ( $\sim c$ ). In this scenario, S imposes sanctions but T does not comply. T thus self-select itself into sanctions and the sanctions episode is likely to last for a long period of time, as T has no incentives to alter its behaviour.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The length of the sanctions episode will also depend on the value that the sender ascribes to maintaining this policy. For instance, a sender can obtain political gains by signalling its commitment to alter the target's behaviour, even if sanctions are not expected to work (Barber, 1979)



As it can be observed from Graph 2.1, in this game sanctions are only imposed in two out of for scenarios: i) when a target miscalculates a sender's willingness to impose sanctions; and ii) when a target prefers to stick to its policy and defy a sender. Most importantly however, Graph 2.1 evidences something of great relevance to the study of sanctions: it shows that the study of economic statecraft is very likely to be flawed by the presence of selection bias (Blake and Klemm, 2006; Drezner, 2003; Morgan and Miers, 1999; Nooruddin, 2002).

Indeed, as the different outcomes of the "sanctions game" depicted in Graph 2.1 evidence, some countries will be more likely to be targeted than others. Who gets punished and who does not will therefore not be determined exogenously, but will instead be the result of endogenous decision-making processes (Drury, 2005: 158; Jing et al., 2003). In other words, the imposition of sanctions will not be determined by externally measurable factors; it will be the result of the strategic choices made by the actors. This implies that sanctions will form part of a dispute, and not be the direct result of it.

### **2.3. Addressing selection effects in the study of sanctions imposition**

If indeed selection bias is present in the study of sanctions, it becomes mandatory for researchers to find ways to account for it. However, only a few studies have taken the issue seriously – albeit mostly from a theoretical and not empirical perspective (Blake and Klemm, 2006; Drezner, 1999, 2003; Lacy and Niou, 2004; Nooruddin, 2002).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Most of these studies have developed theoretical games where two or more actors interact to show that selection effects are present in the study of sanctions imposition. Nooruddin (2002) and Blake and Klemm (2006) have also tested this argument empirically using the HSE data to show that selection bias

Selection bias tends to emerge when i) a subset of observations is systematically excluded from a sample due to a lack of available information, or ii) when a subset of observations is more likely to be part of a sample because it *self-select itself* into the sample. In the study of economic sanctions, this occurs in two different ways: ‘senders may pick out weak governments to target, or tough target governments may select themselves into sanctions’ (Marinov, 2005: 574).

### *2.3.1. Sender selection effects*

The first case is often referred to as “sender selection effects”, since senders choose their targets selectively following strategic considerations. For example, a sender might decide to impose sanctions if it believes that they will be effective in altering the target’s behaviour (Baldwin, 1999/2000; Nooruddin, 2002) or if doing so does not seriously affect its interests and is therefore a cheap option. In his analysis of EU sanctions Brummer (2009) contends that the EU only imposes sanctions when it is cheap. He argues that the EU only targets weak and politically isolated countries like Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Moldova, or Belarus, while it shuns sanctioning powerful countries like China and Russia where it holds important economic interests.

According to Marinov (2005: 574), this case of selection bias is not worrisome, as ‘any information the sender may have on the target’s stability is likely to be observable’ and ‘measurable by the researcher’, being thus easily ‘incorporated into the analysis’. Sender selection effects are thus an issue of omitted variable bias that can be easily addressed by adding new variables into the researcher’s model.

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is present in the study of sanctions effectiveness. However, these studies do not model the compliance stage prior to the actual imposition of sanctions.

Indeed, the motivations that might lead senders to impose sanctions can be controlled for by including additional covariates that provide objective information about the target state or its relationship to the sender. For instance, it is common in empirical analyses to control for factors such as a sender's leverage vis-à-vis a target (Drury, 1998; Hufbauer et al., 2007), a target's economic strength and political stability (Dashti-Gibson et al., 1997), the existence of alliances (Drezner, 1999), the prevailing political, cultural, and economic linkages between a sender and a target (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, 2008), a target's reserves of oil and gas (Ross, 2001), or whether a target country is immersed in an international or intra-state conflict (Brummer, 2009; Escribà-Folch, 2010; Rogers, 1996; Strandow, 2006).

All these factors certainly matter in a sender's calculation to use economic statecraft when dealing with a renegade target. However, once a sender is determined to cross the red line between threatening and imposing sanctions, two factors are believed to weigh more in its decision: its leverage vis-à-vis the target and the latter's political and economic stability (Drury, 1998; Hufbauer et al., 2007). When a sender's leverage is high and when a target is undergoing a period of economic or political instability, sanctions can quickly translate into economic and political cost for a target and force it to make concessions to alleviate its precarious position (Galtung, 1967). As mainstream sanctions theory proclaims, senders should use economic statecraft under these circumstances to maximise its effectiveness.

Following this "cost-effectiveness" argument, Soest and Wahman (2013a) assert that countries that share important economic and political links with a sender are more likely to be targeted. This claim is supported by Drury (1998) reassessment of the HSE dataset, which reveals that sanctions are more likely to be effective when the cost inflicted to the target is high. Similarly, Hafner-Burton and Montgomery argue that

‘when there is an asymmetry of market power between sender and target, sanctions become more likely’ (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, 2008: 118). In sum, conventional wisdom suggests that senders should be less likely to impose sanctions if they are economically dependent on a target; yet at the same time the reverse is also true and senders should be more likely to use economic statecraft if a target is economically dependent on them.

In sum, modelling sender selection effects should be a relatively straightforward task, as all potential factors that might influence a sender’s cost-benefit calculation when selecting its targets are observable and easily measurable. However, the second case where selection bias might emerge and which is commonly referred to as “target selection effects” is much more problematic to deal with.

### *2.3.2. Target selection effects*

As Marinov explains, ‘target governments are more likely to have private information on their prospects for surviving in office under pressure’ (Marinov, 2005: 574). Since ‘such information will not be measurable’, it becomes difficult to control for this type of bias. Target selection effects normally appear when i) strong regimes who are aware of their strength prefer to be sanctioned than to comply with a sender (self-selection scenario); and when ii) weak regimes who are aware of their vulnerability decide to comply with the sender at the threat stage, avoiding in this way being sanctioned (threat scenario).

This argument implies that cases where target countries self-select themselves into sanctions will be observed, whereas those cases where a target complies with the sender at the threat stage will be missing from the analysis because no sanctions will be

imposed (Drezner, 2003: 644). Moreover, in the unlikely case where threats are observed, it will still be problematic to trace the causal link between a threat being issued and a target's compliance being observed. Due to domestic audience costs, actors involved in a bargaining situation will not have incentives to make concessions in public, as this can be interpreted as a sign of political weakness and lead to a loss of reputation at home (Fearon, 1994). Diplomatic negotiations between two actors thus tend to be protected from the public eye, as secrecy offers policy-makers the necessary margin of manoeuvre to accommodate antagonistic positions and make policy concessions whilst sparing them from domestic political costs (Putnam, 1988).

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the study of target selection effects has recently received new attention. For example, Daniela Donno's (2012) study on the EU's use of political conditionality to enforce human rights standards shows that selection effects are indeed operating at the target's level. The author claims that 'countries that are highly dependent on EU aid or trade' and are subjected to the EU's human rights clause are more likely to respect human rights, since they fear losing the benefits of EU aid or trade (Donno, 2012:19). Thus, the *threat* of seeing this income cut that is enshrined in the EU's human rights clause is powerful enough to make dependent targets comply with human rights standards. In this regard, the threat of sanctions operates in a similar way to what the literature on EU conditionality has been arguing for some time: compliance depends largely on the credibility of the threat (Schimmelfennig, 2005; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005), which in the case of sanctions is contingent on the sender's capacity to jeopardise the target's position (Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Hufbauer et al., 2007; Marinov, 2005).

Hence, Donno (2012: 11) points in the right direction when she claims that it is necessary to move from the question of *whether* human rights provisions matter to that

of *for whom* they actually do. This logic also applies to the study of sanctions: the relevant question is to understand for which regimes sanctions are more costly than compliance and for which ones they are not. Thus, the level of threat that a sender's actions exert on a target will certainly be important to understand why some targets are induced to concede to the sender's demands before sanctions are imposed or, conversely, why some autocratic regimes are likely to withstand the economic and political disruption imposed by sanctions.

However, while Donno's (2012) line of reasoning is compelling, some empirical evidence seems to defy it. For instance, the record of EU sanctions between 1989 and 2015 shows that some economically vulnerable and dependent countries like Guinea, Togo, Myanmar, Fiji or Zimbabwe – to name a few – were targeted with sanctions. This is somewhat puzzling, since according to Donno's (2012) claim one would expect the opposite to happen. Indeed, vulnerable as these countries are to external economic pressure, the fact that they were sanctioned contradicts the author's argument. A quick glance at the empirical evidence thus seems to suggest that sender selection effects – and not target ones – operate in the EU's imposition of sanctions.

One way to interpret this contradictory result is to assume that these countries were sanctioned because doing so was cheap and likely to be effective, as the cost-effectiveness approach contends. Indeed, these countries are amongst the least developed countries in the world, and many of them are prone to political and economic instability. As such, they constitute "easy" targets. Nevertheless, one factor that is common to all these cases seems to point in a different direction. As a second look at these sanctions episodes evidences, all these countries were sanctioned for long spells of time. This is extremely puzzling, as long sanctions episodes reflect the ineffectiveness of economic statecraft in attaining the sender's goals.

Indeed, Guinea has endured the cost of sanctions for about five years, whereas Togo saw a much needed aid withheld by international donors like the EU for over 10 years. Furthermore, the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe has survived in office even after being under the strain of EU and US sanctions for more than a decade (Giumelli, 2013a). Finally, the military regime in Myanmar resisted international sanctions for over 20 years, whilst evidence seems to dismiss the idea that the undergoing liberalization of the political system might have been caused by the hardship generated by two decades of sanctions (Portela, 2014).

According to Hufbauer et al. (2007), an average sanctions episode lasts about 6.6 years, which remains a shorter period of time as compared to some of the episodes cited above. However, Morgan et al. (2009) claim that Hufbauer et al. (2007) dataset ‘severely underestimates the number of relatively short cases that are resolved within a couple of years’. Rather than 6.6 years, they argue that the average duration of an episode is closer to 2.7 years. If this is true, then the “cost-effectiveness” assumption that sanctions work best against economically weak and dependent countries fits very poorly with the empirical reality.

Consequently, these examples raise serious doubts about the efficacy of sanctions as a foreign policy tool. But most importantly, they also question the accuracy of the predictions made by the “cost-effectiveness” approach, as the failure of sanctions to alter the behaviour of these targets suggests that senders systematically miscalculated the formers’ strength. Indeed, the resistance demonstrated by these countries is particularly puzzling since one would expect them to comply quickly with the sender after sanctions were imposed. Hence, this paradox calls into question why targets preferred to resist the sender’s pressure even when – according to logic of the cost-effectiveness approach – they would have been better off by acquiescing with it (Lacy

and Niou, 2004). But also, this puzzle casts doubts upon the sender's decision to impose and maintain ineffective sanctions regimes.

Undoubtedly, an important element is missing in the calculations made by the "cost-effectiveness" approach: the political costs intrinsically associated to a target's compliance. As some analysts have pointed out, the assumption that the economic costs imposed on the target will automatically translate into political concessions is simply naïve (Galtung, 1967; Kirshner, 1997). Blanchard and Ripsman (1999: 220) contend that, 'even if extreme, (economic pain) is unlikely to result in changes in (a target's) behaviour if the right political conditions are not present'. Moreover, sanctions might not necessarily harm the perpetrators of the wrongdoing; rather, they might have negative externalities and affect the whole population instead. As Alastair Smith (1995: 230) puts it,

It is economically costly to be sanctioned. However, this does not necessarily mean that it is also politically costly. Sanctions have distributional effects. Sanctions lower the aggregate wealth of a nation. However, the economic effects of sanctions may fall disproportionately on political opposition rather than political leaders. Under these circumstances leaders may actually enjoy being sanctioned as it strengthens their position relative to domestic opposition.

This quote summarizes quite well why some targets prefer to be sanctioned than to comply with a sender: sometimes, conceding can be politically costlier than resisting the economic harm that sanctions impose (Blanchard and Ripsman, 2013). Thus, understanding a target's rationale to resist sanctions requires us to think beyond the naïve theory of sanctions and its assumption that economic pain automatically translates into political costs, and to pay attention instead to the strategic motivations or incentives that drive a target's behaviour.

Strategic motivations are highly likely to influence a target's decision to withstand the pressure of sanctions. On the one hand, conceding to the sender's pressure might



weaken a target's government position vis-à-vis its domestic competitors and jeopardize its rule. Consequently, it might face incentives to resist the pressure and bear the cost of sanctions. On the other hand however, a target regime might be able to capitalize on the economic and political hardship generated by sanctions to reinforce its position. Since restrictive measures have distributional effects, regimes are often able to shield themselves from them and pass the cost to other segments of the population. Finally, the economic hardship and social stigma created by sanctions is often used by target governments to flare up nationalistic sentiments and generate a "rally-around-the-flag" effect (Galtung, 1967), leading to enhanced political support for the regime and increased willingness from the population to resist sanctions.

If strategic considerations determine the likelihood that a target country is sanctioned, then they should be modelled and included in any study of sanctions imposition. However, the problem resides precisely in doing this. The formation of foreign policy preferences – in this case, to concede or to resist sanctions – is endogenous to the target leader's likelihood to survive in power (Marinov, 2005). Thus, before we can explain how target countries are likely to respond to the threat and imposition of sanctions – and by extension, to determine whether they are more or less likely to be targeted -, we need to account for the factors that underpin policy formation in the target countries and to determine how this relates to a regime's hold on power.

### *2.3.3. Bringing domestic institutions back in*

One way to address this issue is by looking at the domestic institutions present in those countries. As neo-institutionalist approaches in the social sciences contend, policy formation and the subsequent behaviour of political actors is 'endogenous and related to

the nature and type of domestic institutions' (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999: footnote 5; Smith and Vreeland, 2006). This implies that domestic institutions inform actors about their available policy choices and consequently shape policy outcomes (March and Olsen, 1996). Institutions in authoritarian regimes are thus much more than mere decorative façades. They are used by autocrats to pursue their own political agendas, but at the same time they constrain their available actions by the existence of rules and procedures and 'by the goals and actions of others' who operate within the same institutions (Gandhi, 2008: 180).

Institutions in autocratic regimes vary considerably in their type, their functions and the purpose they serve (Gandhi, 2008; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Geddes, 1999; Magaloni, 2008; Svobik, 2012). This variation is much more than a mere formality: differences between the institutions in military, one-party or multi-party regimes inform about varying power relationships between the ruling autocrat and its competitors. Most importantly, institutions play a central role in an autocrat's probability to survive in power (Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland, 2010). They account to a large degree for a dictator's response to internal and external threats, including the imposition of economic sanctions. By shaping and limiting her margin of manoeuvre, they affect her policy options to respond to and withstand external pressure.

Consequently, institutions determine whether a target regime will choose to resist external pressure or not and thus, whether it will self-select itself into sanctions or whether it will yield to the sender's pressure when coercive action is threatened. It is important to note that this assumption diverges considerably from that made by the cost-effectiveness approach. Against the latter's assumption that a target's vulnerability can be measured in purely economic terms, I contend that political considerations and, in

particular, the autocrat's strength vis-à-vis her domestic challengers accounts far better for a target's regime vulnerability.

Yet before we can generate a set of expectations and theoretically testable hypotheses about how autocrats are likely to respond to sanctions, it is necessary to understand why institutions are set up in autocratic regimes in the first place and how they restrict or enhance the autocrat's position in power. Indeed, legislatures, juntas, political parties, politburos or committees play a fundamental role in an autocrat's probability to survive in power. Military, one-party and multi-party regimes differ considerably in the extent to which each of these institutions is present. These differences suggest that the ways in which autocrats hold to power differ depending on the type of institutions that they rely on. Understanding the "logic of autocratic survival" thus becomes central to understand why some regimes will prefer to resist sanctions rather than comply with the sender.

## **2.4. Unpacking the "autocratic black-box": the logic of autocratic survival**

### *2.4.1. Political survival in autocratic regimes*

The ultimate goal of autocrats is to remain in power (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). Unlike democratic leaders, dictators confront uncertain fates when they lose office: most of them face jail, execution or exile. Thus, autocrats rarely leave power voluntarily, but tend to be ousted from office through irregular and often violent means like assassinations or coups d'état (Escribà-Folch, 2013; Geddes, 2003; Goemans, 2008). For example, Mubarak in Egypt ended his rule in house arrest after being deposed by a popular uprising, whilst others of the like of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya or President Viera in Guinea-Bissau were not as lucky and died as the result of armed attacks or assassination plots.

Dictators have therefore more reasons than democratic leaders to cling to power endlessly. To do so, they choose those policies that best guarantee their grip on power and avoid those that might jeopardise their position. Moreover, since autocratic leaders are not able to legitimise their rule through democratic means (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006), they have to rely on alternative methods instead. The “menu of manipulation” includes harassing and intimidating the opposition, media censorship, the clampdown of demonstrations and politically active groups, and fraudulent electoral practices (Schedler, 2002; Simpser, 2013).

However, more often than not autocrats rely on a combination of repression and patronage to survive in power (Wintrobe, 1998). In fact, politically motivated violence is not a systematic habit of most autocracies (Davenport, 2007), but is generally used in a selective way against those who reject the regime’s co-optation efforts and opt to defy it. Patronage and co-optation practices on the other hand allow autocratic regimes to differentiate between supporters and dissidents, making the identification and targeting of the latter easier (Frantz and Kendall-Taylor, 2014).

These practices normally entail the distribution of rents amongst a regime’s political challengers to sustain and legitimize its rule. For this reason, they are a more important mean for the survival and longevity of a regime. Given that most challenges to the leadership originate from the economic and political elites operating within the regime itself, autocrats employ different strategies to buy their loyalty and support. On the one hand, they use private payments and rewards such as positions in cabinet or in strategic sectors of the economy which bestow social prestige and political influence. On the other hand, they also grant public goods and distribute welfare to the population through the construction of hospitals, roads, schools and housing to avoid popular uprisings and demonstrations (Boix and Svobik, 2013; Magaloni, 2008).

In resource-rich countries, dictators keep the opposition at bay by directly distributing the rents and revenues generated by the exploitation of mineral resources or fossil fuels (Ross, 2001; Ulfelder, 2007; Wright, Frantz and Geddes, 2015). Authoritarian regimes are thereby able to justify the lack of political rights through the provision of economic and social goods to the population (Diamond, 2010: 98). However, most regimes lack such resources, and are consequently impelled to use alternative mechanisms to generate support and legitimacy for their rule. This is often achieved through the reliance on formal institutions like legislatures, political parties, committees or juntas, which fulfil patronage and co-optation functions by granting economic and political elites privileges and access to state resources (Boix and Svobik, 2013; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006; Magaloni, 2006). In this way, autocrats are able to weaken and divide challengers, who have to decide whether to participate and benefit from the system, or to challenge it from outside.

However, institutions also constrain the policy options of autocrats (Gandhi, 2008). Co-optation efforts often give way to power-sharing deals where the opposition gains access to positions of influence (Magaloni, 2008). While these agreements are necessary for weak autocrats to remain in power, they also condition and influence their policy choices (Vreeland, 2008). Institutions like legislatures, elections or party-systems within autocratic regimes can thus be regarded as concessions made by autocrats to their opposition (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). The weaker the autocrat, the more power it will have to share with the opposition to remain in office. Conversely, if the opposition is weak and divided, an autocrat will not need to establish formal institutions to rule.

The literature on authoritarian regimes tends to distinguish between four types of autocratic regimes: monarchies, military, single-party and multi-party.<sup>12</sup> Nominal differences between these regimes relate principally to the type of institutions they rely on. For instance, monarchies rely on the royal family, military regimes often govern through juntas or councils, one-party regimes rule through “the party” and electoral authoritarianisms build legislatures and allow political parties to compete in elections. Although this not a clear cut distinction, the differences are more than a matter of nuance. These institutions vary in size and form; but most importantly, they vary in the way decisions are taken and in the number of people who are able to take them (Cheibub et al., 2010). This group of people is what Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues call the ‘winning coalition’ (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003).

In democracies, the number of people that participate in the selection of leaders – i.e. the “selectorate” - tends to be quite large, and so is the size of the winning coalition (W). The W is formed by a subset of individuals from the selectorate whose support is necessary for an incumbent to remain in office. If an incumbent loses the support of the W, she loses office and is replaced. Therefore, leaders try to satisfy the W through the transfer of private and public goods. Given that the W is large in democracies, incumbents are inclined to use public goods to satisfy and maintain it. Leaders in democratic polities have therefore to convince a sizeable part of their electorate to vote for them in order to form the necessary W to govern.

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<sup>12</sup> This division follows Wahman, Teorell and Hadenius (2013) autocratic regime types classification, and is similar to Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014) classification. Other typologies also refer to hybrid regimes, competitive authoritarianisms (Levitsky and Way, 2010), electoral authoritarianisms, personalist regimes (Geddes et al. 2014), civilian dictatorships (Cheibub et al., 2010) As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, this classification suits better the research design of this thesis due to its focus on the institutional settings present in autocratic regimes.

In autocratic regimes however, the W is generally small. Although in some cases the selectorate can be relatively large – as, for instance, in competitive or electoral autocracies where large groups of people are allowed to vote in elections<sup>13</sup> (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Schedler, 2006) -, the W in authoritarian regimes is composed by the political and economic elites of the country. Indeed, dictators rely on a very small group of people to rule and thus use private goods to co-opt these elites and hold their W together. However, the relevance of the latter in the process of selecting and sustaining a leader in office varies between autocratic regimes. Consequently, the sizes of the selectorate and the W differ depending on the type of autocratic regime. For instance, ‘in monarchies and military juntas’ both the selectorate and the W tend to be small, whereas in autocratic multi-party regimes the selectorate is often large, but the W small (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 1999: 793).

#### *2.4.2. Coalition size and autocratic regimes*

The relevance of Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) theory of the selectorate resides in its assumption that an actor’s political behaviour is endogenous and related to its country’s domestic institutions. But most importantly, it resides in its claim that the real difference between policy outcomes depends ultimately on the size and configuration of forces that hold the regime together. The differences in the composition of these forces – or W – do not only account for the stability and strength of a regime; they also account for a wide variety of policy outcomes.

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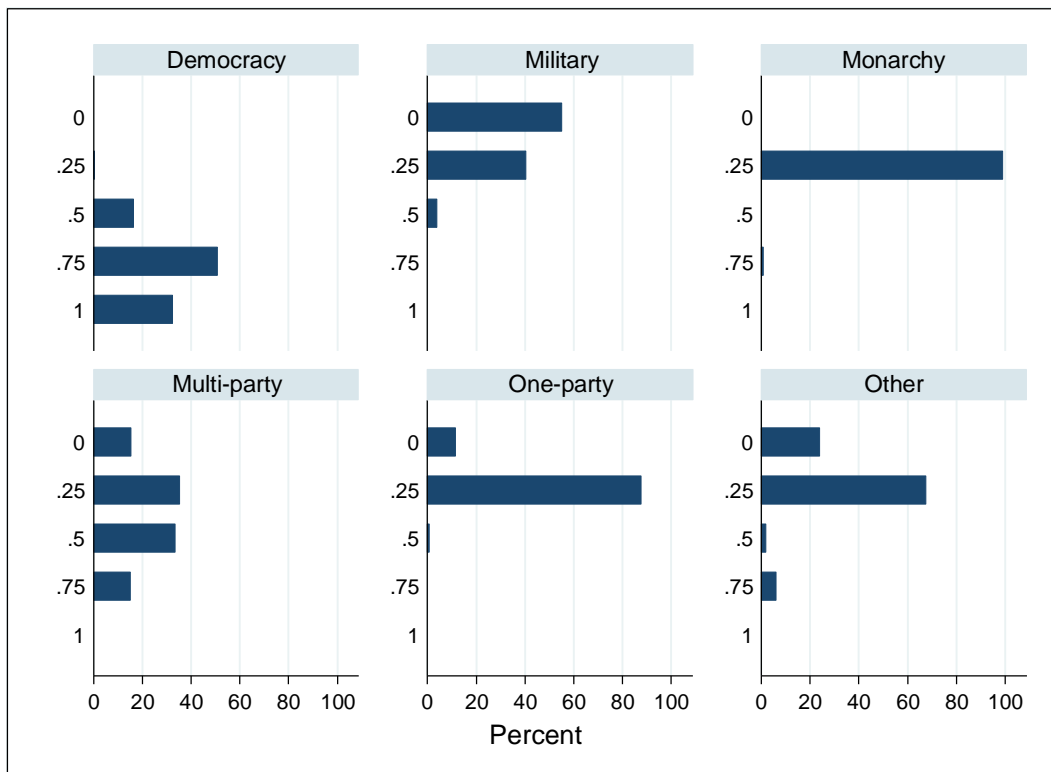
<sup>13</sup> These elections are not necessarily free and fair. On the contrary, elections in autocratic regimes serve many different purposes. For an overview of the functions that elections fulfil in these regimes, see (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009).

It is often claimed that military regimes have the smallest W of all autocratic regimes (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Wright, 2009). The degree of societal support that military regimes require to rule is often limited, as they can recur to the use of force to guarantee political order and stability (Davenport, 2007). Moreover, their degree of institutionalization tends to be relatively low, generally consisting of military juntas or councils to take decisions (Geddes, 1999). Occasionally however, they allow the existence of legislatures, but hold them under firm control as in Myanmar or Algeria. Alternatively, military officers accede to power in civilian clothes but are backed all along by the military, as the Egyptian case reflects.

Although military regimes have become an anomaly since the end of the Cold War, militaries around the world occasionally intervene in politics to overturn unpopular governments. Military regimes are then installed in power for a short period of time, until stability and order has been reinstated in the country. Sometimes though, military leaders remain in power for extended periods of time, as occurred in Algeria, Chile or Myanmar. Still, even when military leaders step down, they often compete in national elections as civilians, as the Egyptian case with Nasser first, Mubarak afterwards and now el-Sisi evidences. In sum, military regimes show a very high level of cohesiveness and rely on a very small W to rule, which allows them to remain relatively isolated from external or internal pressures.



**Graph 2.2. Size of the Winning Coalition by regime type**



Source: Own elaboration. Data for winning coalition from Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003); data for regime type from Wahman et al. (2013).

One-party regimes on the contrary ‘tend to have large distributional coalitions because they frequently build large patronage parties’ (Wright, 2009: 557). The level of institutionalization in these regimes is relatively high and vast resources are used to co-opt potential competitors and integrate them into the political system (Magaloni, 2006). However, while the selectorate of single-party regimes is relatively broad, *W* tends to be much smaller, encompassing only the most important figures of the party. Single-party regimes tend to generate ad hoc bodies such as political committees or politburos to take the most important decisions – and, amongst them, the decision on the continuity of the leader (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007).

The clearest examples of one-party regimes are those with a Communist past like Cuba or China, although the PRI’s rule in Mexico up to 2000 feats as another prominent case.

In these countries the selectorate is relatively large and has often the right to vote in local or national elections to elect the representatives of the party.<sup>14</sup> The party encompasses broad sectors of the society, including the military and the state bureaucracy. Most importantly, it acts as a platform to distribute the spoils of power and serves as a channel to promote the careers of potential challengers to the incumbent. In this way, the regime generates stability and reduces the potential of violent leadership change by offering peaceful means of succession in power (Magaloni and Kricheli, 2010). The degree of unity displayed by one-party regimes thus allows them to respond in a consistent way against threats to their stability.

Finally, the largest W are found in multi-party systems. These political systems differ from the former regime type categories in their allowance of ‘at least a minimal level’ of political participation and competition (Wahman et al., 2013). Definitions to capture the qualities of these regimes abound,<sup>15</sup> yet the most extended ones conceive of these regimes as “electoral” (Schedler, 2006) or “competitive” authoritarianisms (Levitsky and Way, 2010). Although the degree of competition and political participation varies enormously amongst multi-party regimes, elections are far away from being free and fair as in democratic regimes. Nevertheless, some level of political competition is present which poses a real threat to the survival of the dictator and her regime.

Elections in autocratic regimes can be seen as way to foster elite competition (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009), or as a mean to divide the opposition by forcing it to choose

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<sup>14</sup> This does not mean that elections are competitive though. For instance, in Mexico the President has been traditionally elected in a national presidential election, but up to 2000 these elections were a pure democratic façade. In China, people are allowed to vote in local elections with certain degree of freedom (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> For instance, scholars have talked of semi-democracies, pseudo-democracies, weak democracies, façade-democracies, competitive authoritarianisms, hybrid regimes, electoral authoritarianism etc. See Collier and Levitsky (1997), Diamond (2002) and Carothers (2002) for an overview.

between participating from the system – and eventually influencing politics – or combating it from outside (Magaloni, 2008). Still, the existence of legislatures and political parties is often regarded as a concession to the opposition or as a sign of the regime's incapacity to rule uncontested. As Kim (2012:10) argues, 'embracing multiparty elections runs the risk of creating opportunities for periodic challenges, even though electoral rules are usually rigged and electoral outcomes are manipulated'. Moreover, elections can also lead to surprising defeats of the incumbent when external observers are present and the opposition manages to organise a strong alternative (Bunce and Wolchik, 2011; Levitsky and Way, 2010), leading occasionally to a country's democratization (Donno, 2013; Hadenius and Teorell, 2007).

In sum, the need for autocrats in multi-party regimes to form larger W to remain in office leaves them relatively exposed to external shocks. Given that autocrats in competitive environments require as much support as possible to rule the country, they face more difficulties to co-ordinate a unified and coherent position when their rule is challenged.

## **2.5. Autocratic institutions and constrained response to economic sanctions**

The constraints that institutions impose on autocratic leaders affect the ways in which they respond to the imposition of economic sanctions. Autocratic regimes are more likely to be sanctioned than democracies (Cox and Drury, 2006; Lektzian and Souva, 2003), yet at the same time sanctions are likely to be ineffective against these regimes (Lektzian and Souva, 2007; Marinov, 2005). The low success of sanctions against autocracies is often attributed to the latter's ability to shield themselves from sanctions by transferring the costs to the rest of the population (Weiss, Cortright, Lopez and

Minear, 1997). Moreover, sanctions 'are counterproductive in authoritarian states in that they serve to strengthen constituencies allied with the regime, while weakening the middle class' (Brooks, 2002: 49). Lastly, sanctions can also flare up nationalistic feelings amongst the target's population, leading to rally-around-the-flag effects and increased support for dictators (Galtung, 1967).

While the use of economic statecraft deprives targets from the availability of public goods, it also generates rents by fostering the development of monopolies, black markets and illegal smuggling activities which end up benefiting non-democratic leaders (Cortright and Lopez, 2000; Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Lektzian and Souva, 2007). Moreover, since sanctions can also empower oppositional forces, autocrats are more likely to increase the level of repression to keep their grip on power (Davenport, 2007; Davenport and Armstrong, 2004; Peksen, 2009; Peksen and Drury, 2009; Wood, 2008). Repression 'is likely to be less costly and more readily available to authoritarian leaders than it is to democratic leaders' (Brooks, 2002: 17).

In sum, dictators are often portrayed as having a large margin of manoeuvre to react to economic pressure, being able to enact countermeasures and avoid the costs of sanctions without facing high audience costs. As Bolks and Al-Sowayel (2000: 246) concisely note,

target states characterized by institutionalized and competitive political processes are less likely to resist sanction pressure, thus sanctions applied against these targets are likely to be of shorter duration. An entrenched electoral process along with viable opposition impinges on the leadership's commitment to resist sanction pressure. Underlying this assertion is the notion that active political competition, regulated political processes and other constraints detract from the leadership's authority over and ownership of a resistance agenda. These institutions diffuse the leadership's ability to develop effective and expedient countermeasures. Instead, accountability to a competitive constituency weakens the leadership's course of action.

Notwithstanding this argument, the empirical record of sanctions against autocratic regimes suggests that substantial differences in the targeting of these regimes exist, both

in the frequency with which they are targeted and in the length that sanctions regimes last. This might be indicative of the fact that the impact of sanctions varies depending on the type of autocratic regime against which they are imposed, but it also suggests that different types of autocratic regimes respond differently to the threat and imposition of sanctions.

Allen (2008b) has attributed this variation to the constraints that domestic institutions impose on autocrats. According to the author, less constrained autocrats send noisier signals about their intentions and are able to resist the pressure of sanctions for a longer period of time. Conversely, those autocrats that are constrained by their domestic institutions are less capable of resisting external pressure and will thus be more vulnerable to sanctions.

Indeed, not all autocrats are able to shield themselves easily from sanctions or the threat thereof. Economic statecraft threatens dictators' grip on power by disrupting the availability of rents and resources used to feed their networks of patronage and co-optation (Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010). In this way, senders undermine the sources of support and legitimacy of autocrats, forcing them to make policy concessions.

The level of threat that sanctions pose on authoritarian regimes varies as a function of an autocrat's group of supporters. Autocratic regimes differ in the size of their core support group or winning coalition (Allen, 2008b; Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003): the smaller the  $W$ , the freer are autocrats to deal with external pressure and to resist sanctions for longer. Conversely, the bigger the group of supporters that an autocrat needs to rule a country is, the more rents, privileges, and favours the autocrat will have to grant in order to remain unchallenged.

The need for broader political support turns autocrats with large  $W$  into relatively vulnerable leaders when faced with external shocks (Hankla and Kuthy, 2013). Sanctions are likely to reduce an autocrat's availability of public goods, and former supporters might consider defecting from the autocrat's  $W$  and building an alternative coalition to seize power themselves (Boix and Svobik, 2013; Magaloni, 2008). As a consequence, relatively more open and competitive autocratic regimes are more likely to be destabilised by economic statecraft, as they will find it harder to keep their coalition together (Bolks and Al-Sowayel, 2000; Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Marinov, 2005).

Thus, I expect multi-party regimes to be more vulnerable to sanctions, followed by single-party and military regimes. Multi-party regimes however should anticipate their vulnerability and face incentives to comply with the sender at the threat stage, avoiding in this way bearing the cost of sanctions.

*H1: Target regimes with large winning coalitions (multi-party regimes) should be more likely to comply with the sender at the threat stage.*

Moreover, regimes with small winning coalitions face higher incentives to disdain EU demands and are therefore more likely to ignore the sanctions threat. In so doing, they will be more likely to self-select themselves into sanctions.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, multi-party regimes will be less likely to resist the cost of sanctions.

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<sup>16</sup> I exclude monarchies from my analysis due to a lack of variation in the data. As such, this category automatically drops from the statistical analysis. For more details see Chapter 3. Escribà-Folch and

*H2: Target regimes with large winning coalitions (multi-party regimes) are less likely to be sanctioned than regimes with small winning coalitions (military and one-party regimes).*

## **2.6. Complementary hypotheses**

So far I have claimed that target selection effects are likely to be present in the study of sanctions imposition, and that they will be mediated by the leader's capacity to survive in power. Moreover, I have argued that her ability to remain in office will be determined to a large extent by the political institutions present in her country, which enhance or constrain her margin of manoeuvre. This reasoning leads to the expectation that countries with larger  $W$  are more likely to concede to a sender's demands – and avoid sanctions – while countries with smaller  $W$  will prefer to resist the sender's pressure and, consequently, self-select themselves into sanctions.

It is important to note though that this equilibrium only represents one of various possible scenarios of a sanctions game, as depicted in Graph 2.1. Indeed, as it stands my argument does not account for other potential outcomes of the sanctions game which also depend on the target's strategic behaviour. For instance, it is possible that a target regime misinterprets a sender's sanctions threat and hence chooses to stick to its policy and not to acquiesce with the sender (Hovi et al., 2005). In this circumstance, we should expect vulnerable regimes (those with a large  $W$ ) to be worse off under sanctions than

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Wright (2010) claim that monarchies - which they group together with personalist regimes - are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions.

strong regimes (those with a small  $W$ ), as economic statecraft would jeopardise their stability. Therefore, once sanctions are imposed and the target becomes aware of its miscalculation, we should expect it to comply soon afterwards with the sender's demands.

An illustrative case of this situation is Honduras. When the opposition and the military ousted President Zelaya from office in a bloodless coup in June 2009, the US and the EU did not hesitate to impose sanctions and freeze all their aid programmes with the country. However, after an interim government had taken office for only seven months, elections were held and the democratic order was restored. The lifting of sanctions followed soon afterwards.

*H3: Target regimes with large winning coalitions (multi-party regimes) will be targeted for shorter periods of time than regimes with small winning coalitions (military and one-party regimes).*

Finally, if hypothesis 1 is correct and regimes with larger  $W$  are more vulnerable to sanctions than regimes with smaller  $W$  (Allen, 2008b; Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; Marinov, 2005), we should also expect sanctions to be more likely to destabilise the former. As McGillivray and Stam's (2004) study shows, the replacement of leaders in authoritarian regimes is correlated with shorter sanctions episodes. This suggests that senders are more likely to end sanctions whenever these affect the tenure of autocrats (Krustev and Morgan, 2011; Marinov, 2005).



However, elites in autocratic regimes only face incentives to defect and create their own winning coalition if an autocrat is no longer able to hold her coalition together (Boix and Svolik, 2013; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2006, 2007; Magaloni, 2008). Since defection is more likely to occur when the size of the winning coalition is large (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003), multi-party regimes that are targeted with sanctions should have a higher probability of being destabilised by sanctions, whilst one-party and military regimes should be more likely to remain in office.

*H4: Target regimes with large winning coalitions (multi-party regimes) are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions than regimes with small winning coalitions (military and one-party regimes).*

## **2.7. Alternative explanations**

Four other approaches can be enumerated as alternative or competing explanations to the imposition of sanctions. The first three derive from mainstream sanctions theory and focus on the sender's rationale for using economic statecraft. The fourth however focuses on the type and salience of the violation perpetrated as a trigger for the imposition of sanctions.

### *2.7.1. The sender's economic leverage*

A first competing explanation contends that, for sanctions to be more successful, an economic asymmetry needs to exist between a sender and a target (Hufbauer et al.,

2007; Krustev, 2007; McLean and Whang, 2010). Indeed, senders should be more likely to impose sanctions if a target regime is economically dependent on it, since a target's reliance on a sender's trade or development assistance makes it extremely vulnerable to the interruption of economic and financial flows by the sender (Cox and Drury, 2006; Crawford, 2013). This approach assumes that sanctions against economically targets are likely to have a higher on the target's finances by generating a large economic hardship that the target country will not be able to resist for long. Moreover, since higher levels of economic hardship correlate with sanctions' success (Allen, 2008b; Bapat et al., 2013; Lektzian and Souva, 2007), dependent countries should constitute easy targets for senders, as the latter should be able to impose their will easily without incurring into high economic costs (Soest and Wahman, 2013a).

*Hleverage: Sanctions are more likely to be imposed if the target is economically dependent on the sender.*

### *2.7.2. The cost of sanctions to the sender*

The second approach assumes that sender states undertake a cost-benefit calculation prior to using economic statecraft and only impose sanctions if the cost of doing so is low. By disrupting the normal economic and political activity between the sender and the target, sanctions generate a disutility for both sides (Drezner, 1999). Thus, scholars often assume that senders are unwilling to use economic statecraft if this will affect important economic interests. For instance, (Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 1992) well known public choice model posits that domestic organisations influence sender governments when their interests are at stake. These organisations – which mostly

represent lobbies from important economic sectors – are thought to lobby policy-makers in the sender states not to use sanctions, as these might harm their activities with the target country.

Indeed, many analysts have claimed that the EU's imposition of sanctions is guided by its member states' geostrategic and economic interests (Brummer, 2009; Hyde-Price, 2006; Warkotsch, 2008, 2010; Youngs, 2004). A recent example of such a behaviour could be observed in Germany's reluctance to proceed to the so called "tier three sanctions" against Russia during the Ukrainian crisis after the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, a German lobby that promotes economic relations with the former Soviet bloc had consistently warned about the negative economic effect these measures would have on the German economy. Consequently, this approach argues that sanctions will only be imposed when the cost to the sender is low or negligent. This leads to a second competing hypothesis:

*Hcost: Sanctions are more likely to be imposed if the cost to the sender is low.*

### *2.7.3. Target instability*

The third approach claims that sanctions are more likely to be imposed when the probability that these measures are effective is higher (Hufbauer et al., 2007; Soest and Wahman, 2013a). According to this view, senders undertake a pre-assessment on the likelihood that sanctions will succeed in altering a target's behaviour. If the assessment is positive, senders will be keen to use sanctions; conversely, they will refrain thereof if the prospects that sanctions contribute to change the target's behaviour are bleak.

Central to this claim is the assumption that sanctions are more likely to be effective when a target regime is undergoing a period of political unrest or economic instability. In these circumstances, sanctions can contribute to deteriorate a regime's delicate situation and destabilise it, thus pushing it to surrender to the sender's pressure. Consequently, scholars have talked about a target's level of 'distress' (Hufbauer et al., 2007) or internal conflict (Brummer, 2009) as an important factor in determining the effectiveness of sanctions. Moreover, others have claimed that political protests and quickly changing economic conditions generate a 'conducive environment' (Warkotsch, 2010) where sanctions can play an important role in fostering political change.

*Hinstability: Sanctions are more likely to be imposed if a target regime is undergoing a period of political and economic instability.*

#### *2.7.4. The salience of the target's violation*

However, a fourth competing approach exists that might help to explain why sanctions are imposed. This explanation focuses on the type and salience of the violation and argues that senders are more likely to impose sanctions in cases where gross human rights violations have occurred or where breaches of the democratic process are clearly visible. According to argument, some violations send noisier signals than others (Laakso, Kivimäki and Seppänen, 2006; Saltnes, 2013; Soest and Wahman, 2015). For instance, coups d'état constitute clear and visible interruptions of the democratic process. Thus, they send the noisiest of signals and senders face high pressure to impose sanctions when coups take place.

Flawed elections may also send a noisy signal about an autocrat's wrongdoing, yet this is likely to be conditional on the presence of international observers (Donno, 2010; Soest and Wahman, 2015). Finally, human rights violations are the least likely to trigger sanctions, as it becomes more difficult to identify and define when such a violation has taken place and to determine whether the authorities of a target state are directly responsible for it (Portela and Orbie, 2014). Summing up, this approach expects that noisier – or more salient violations – are more likely to be sanctioned than less salient ones.

*Hsalience: The EU is more likely to impose sanctions the more salient a violation is.*

## **2.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the theoretical framework of this thesis. Using a game theoretical approach to the imposition of sanctions, I have argued that the employment of economic statecraft can best be regarded as a strategic bargaining game between two actors with divergent interests. As such, sanctions constitute part of a negotiation process, and are viewed as one amongst many possible outcomes or equilibria.

I have also contended that the imposition of sanctions responds to a large extent to the target's cost-benefit calculations. Following the game tree of what I have dubbed a "sanctions game" (Graph 2.1), I show that whether sanctions are imposed or not depends largely on the actions of the target state. Indeed, I claim that it is in a target's hands to decide whether it prefers to resist the sender's pressure – and thereby self-select itself into sanctions – or whether it prefers to yield and acquiesce with the sender.

The target's decision will ultimately depend on its vulnerability and its capacity to resist the pressure of sanctions.

Most importantly, I diverge from mainstream sanctions theory in its assumption that a target's vulnerability can be measured in purely economic terms. Contrary to this approach, I argue that a target's vulnerability is mediated by an autocrat's capacity to survive in office, which is dependent on her ability to co-opt potential challengers and keep her coalition of supporters together. Moreover, I have claimed that institutions reflect quite accurately the existing power relationships in a country and determine the policy options that an autocrat can choose from. Consequently, different institutional settings should serve as a reliable proxy to measure a target's vulnerability vis-à-vis sanctions.

## **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS**

### **3.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter I have advanced my analytical framework and developed a set of four hypotheses that guide this thesis. The present chapter introduces the research design of the thesis and discusses the methodological choices made to conduct the empirical analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first section I expose the reasons that have led me to generate a new dataset on EU sanctions, and present the decisions that I have taken in this regard. First of all, I discuss how I operationalise and code the dependent variable SANCTION that I employ in the main models of Chapter 4. As I explain below, I use a broad definition of sanctions to encompass the wide range of economic and political instruments that the EU commonly wields to punish countries that violate human rights and democratic principles. Moreover, I describe the rules employed to code the dependent variable and disclose the primary and secondary sources used for this purpose.

Moreover, this section also introduces the main independent variable of my model, the domestic institutions of a target country. I examine different indicators that are commonly employed in the literature to measure the type and quality of institutions in a target regime, and explain my preference to use an adapted version of Wahman et al. (2013) autocratic regime types' classification as a proxy of domestic institutions. In addition, I present the other independent variables of my main regression models – the level of respect for human rights and the sudden change in the level of democracy in a target regime –, and a set of control variables that are thought to matter in the sanctions literature.

The second part of this chapter moves on to discuss the econometric strategy of the thesis. First, I describe the scope of my dataset, including the range of years covered and the number of observations included in my sample. I also expose the main reasons that induce me to use the country-year as the unit of analysis of my dataset, and explain why other sampling strategies are less appropriated for the purpose of this study since they risk incurring into selection bias. Lastly, I address certain methodological issues that arise with the employment of panel data and elucidate on the solutions that I adopt to tackle them.

Finally, the third section of this chapter advocates the use of a mixed-methods approach that combines the statistical analysis with qualitative case studies of EU sanctions episodes (Coppedge, 1999). Whilst the statistical analysis permits me to compare the validity of my approach across a large sample of autocratic regimes, the case studies provide a more nuanced or thick account of the underlying mechanisms that trigger the imposition of EU sanctions. Thus, I analyse qualitatively five episodes where the EU imposed sanctions against autocratic regimes to address violations of human rights or the deterioration of democracy. These cases are selected following the expectations of my theoretical approach and with the help of my statistical results. Three of these cases are “typical cases” that my theoretical model predicts correctly and that allow me to trace the causal mechanisms that trigger the imposition of sanctions in more detail. The remaining case studies examine the sanctions episodes imposed against Belarus and Zimbabwe – two outliers to my theoretical model. I show that the presence of “black knights” helps to account for the resilience of these “weak regimes” to the threat and imposition of sanctions.



### 3.2. Data

To explore the determinants of EU sanctions imposition I have built an original dataset on EU sanctions between 1989 and 2010. The need to do this arises from a lack of publicly available data on EU sanctions, as the two most comprehensive datasets on economic sanctions to date – the HSE and the TIES datasets – fail to include most of the measures imposed by the EU. In fact, about 80% of the sanctions recorded in the HSE dataset concern the US,<sup>17</sup> while the more recent TIES dataset only includes six episodes of democratic sanctions where the EU was the main or the secondary sender. Most worryingly however is the fact that some of the cases included in the TIES dataset are not corroborated by any other source consulted to determine whether EU sanctions were imposed.<sup>18</sup>

The lack of coverage of those sanctions imposed by the EU in the two most comprehensive datasets on economic sanctions is surprising. Particularly so, because the EU's activity in this area has increased substantially in the last two decades, to the extent that the EU has now become one of the most important senders of international sanctions (De Vries and Hazelzet, 2005; Hufbauer and Oegg, 2003). For this reason, I have opted to construct an original dataset on EU sanctions that seeks to fill in this gap. In the next section, I discuss the data gathering process, the rules employed to code the dependent variable of this thesis, and the sources used to operationalise it.

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<sup>17</sup> The HSE dataset records 21 sanctions episodes imposed by the EU since 1988.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, the TIES records a sanctions episode against the Maldives between 2004 and 2005. However, although the European Parliament urged the Commission to impose sanctions (European Parliament, 2004), to my knowledge no sanctions were levied. In fact, no official or academic record exists on the imposition of sanctions against Maldives.

### *3.2.1. Dependent Variable*

The main dependent variable of this study SANCTION measures whether the EU imposed sanctions against an autocratic regime to address the latter's abuses of human rights or democratic principles. Sanctions are commonly defined in the literature as a sender's use of economic means to achieve political goals (Baldwin, 1985; Doxey, 1971; Hufbauer et al., 2007; Nincic and Wallenstein, 1983). This includes measures as varied as comprehensive or partial trade embargoes, assets freezes, the withdrawal or withholding of development assistance, imports and exports controls or the withdrawal of trade preferences. Importantly, this definition excludes those measures of economic nature that are imposed for purely economic goals, such as trade warfare or anti-dumping measures.<sup>19</sup>

Still, political tools are also frequently employed by the EU to exert pressure on targeted regimes. Certain instruments like travel bans or visa restrictions, the suspension of technical, cultural, administrative or military cooperation, the cancellation of bilateral meetings, the withdrawal of diplomatic support, or the withdrawal of ambassadors are frequently used to punish a third country for its misbehaviour. Thus, like throughout this thesis I employ a broad definition of sanctions that encompasses a comprehensive range of political, economic, financial and military instruments that are commonly used by the EU to alter a target's behaviour.

A broad definition of sanctions is also helpful to ensure that no instrument that might qualify as such is left out because of the actor that initiates the sanctioning process,<sup>20</sup> the

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<sup>19</sup> The exclusion of those economic measures imposed to achieve economic goals is in line with most sanctions research. To my knowledge, only Morgan et al. (2009) and Baldwin (1985) include economic measures to achieve economic goals in their definition of sanctions.

<sup>20</sup> Commonly, the TIES and the HSE databases distinguish between primary and secondary sender of sanctions. For the purpose of my thesis, this distinction is not relevant inasmuch as it affects the EU's

instrument's name, its form, or the procedure in which it is adopted. This is relevant if one considers the different types of sanctions that are imposed by the EU, but also the origins of these acts, and the different actors – i.e. the United Nations, the European Institutions, and EU member states – that initiate and participate in the decision-making process.

Broadly speaking, there are three different types of sanctions imposed or enforced by the EU: i) those measures that implement resolutions adopted at the UNSC; ii) those measures enhancing UN sanctions; and lastly iii) those measures that are imposed by the EU autonomously in absence of a UN resolution (Biersteker and Portela, 2015). Whereas resolutions agreed upon in the UNSC are international law and, as such, the EU and its member states are obliged to implement and enforce them, autonomous EU sanctions are generally imposed when the UNSC has not discussed imposing sanctions or has been incapable of reaching an agreement between its members.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, an additional distinction can be made within the third category – i.e. the autonomous sanctions imposed by the EU. Indeed, the EU regularly employs measures that, despite their similarity, are referred to with different names in EU jargon. For instance, depending on the legal clause invoked to use certain instruments, the EU differentiates between “appropriate” and “restrictive” measures. This difference does not only underline a different legal basis for the use of sanctions; it also highlights distinct categories of instruments (Jünemann and Knodt, 2007; Knodt and Jünemann, 2007; Kotzian, Knodt and Urdze, 2011). Finally, the formal procedure to adopt sanctions also varies depending on the measure to be adopted, and depends largely on

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imposition of sanction. For instance, I do not distinguish between EU and UN sanctions, as the EU is legally bound to enforce UNSC resolutions. In these cases, the EU generally develops its own legislation in line with the UNSC resolution.

<sup>21</sup> Prominent cases where sanctions were discussed but never imposed include Zimbabwe and Belarus, as I will discuss in the respective case studies below.

which European institution or body is responsible for taking and implementing the decision.<sup>22</sup>

However, the use of a broad definition of sanctions is not unanimously shared in the literature. In fact, many scholars conceive of EU sanctions in a minimalist way, referring only to those measures that are imposed under the CFSP's umbrella as sanctions (Eriksson, 2011; Giumelli, 2011, 2013b). This minimalist definition leaves aside many instruments that the EU regularly employs to obtain a target country's compliance. Although these tools are referred to in different ways like "appropriate measures", "suspension" or "temporary withdrawal" in EU jargon, their punitive nature fits into my definition of sanctions. Moreover, sometimes these measures are also used in support of CFSP sanctions, as the GSP+ withdrawal in the cases of Belarus or Myanmar (Portela and Orbie, 2014), and the suspension of aid under Article 96 Cotonou in the case of Zimbabwe evidence (Bartels, 2008; Hazelzet, 2005; Portela, 2007a; Saltnes, 2013). Thus, I follow Hazelzet (2001) and Portela (2010) and employ a broad definition of sanctions to make sure that no instrument that qualifies as such is left aside. Table 3.1 below provides an overview of the measures commonly employed by the EU that fall within my definition of sanctions.

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<sup>22</sup> For an overview on how different measures are adopted, voted upon and implemented by the EU, see Portela (2010).

**Table 3.1. List of sanctions commonly employed by the EU**

<b>Economic and financial measures</b>	<b>Military measures</b>	<b>Political measures</b>
Freezing of funds, assets, and other economic resources	Suspension of military cooperation	Suspension of scientific, cultural and sportive cooperation
Comprehensive or sectoral trade embargoes	Arms embargo	Suspension of bilateral meetings
Imports and exports restrictions (i.e. on dual use goods)	Expulsion of military personnel attached to diplomatic offices	Withdrawal of political support (i.e. support for nominations to international organizations)
Suspension of development assistance (i.e. budget support)	Ban on exports of dual-use goods	Suspension of political agreements
Freezing and redirection of aid		Freezing or refusal to ratify political or economic agreements
Ban on the export of technology		Travel ban
Prohibition on granting of financial assistance		Visa restrictions
Prohibition to insure or reinsure cargos and vessels		Limitations on diplomatic and other exchanges
Ban on the import of strategic resources like oil and gas or conflict minerals		
Suspension of most favoured nation status/General Scheme of Preferences		
Ban on the export of spare parts		
Ban on the provision of grants, loans and other forms of financial assistance		

Source: Own elaboration. This table displays a list of measures that are commonly employed by the EU to achieve a target's compliance and that fit into my definition of sanctions. The use of these measures has been employed to operationalise and code the dependent variable of the thesis.

### *3.2.2. Operationalisation & coding of the dependent variable*

The previous section has provided a definition of the dependent variable SANCTION and identified several measures that fall within this definition and that are commonly employed by the EU to punish a third country's wrongdoing (see table 3.1.). This section goes one step further and develops an operational measure fit for the multivariate regression analyses that I undertake in Chapter 4 to test my hypotheses. In addition, this section also outlines the rules that I employ to code the dependent variable SANCTION.

As I have argued above, my definition of SANCTION is broad enough to encompass a wide range of economic, financial and political instruments that the EU employs on a regular basis to punish autocratic regimes. However, while finding a definition of the dependent variable that encapsulates all the relevant coercive measures is relatively straightforward, developing a measure that captures this definition with accuracy and that, at the same time, can be usefully employed for the purposes of the statistical analyses, is somewhat more complicated. The challenges to operationalise the dependent variable SANCTION are manifold.

First, as can be seen in table 3.1., the nature of the measures employed by the EU are different in their nature. Whilst some measures like travel bans or the cancellation of cooperation in areas such as culture, science or sports are political, others like imports or exports restrictions, the freezing of assets, or the ban on loans, grants and on providing third entities with financial assistance are economical and financial in nature. The problem with these categories or types of sanctions is more theoretical than methodological. Indeed, whilst it would be possible to employ categorical models like the multinomial logit regression models to distinguish between the different categories

of measures (see, for instance, Hazelzet 2001), this solution is ultimately artificial, since these tools are not necessarily exclusive and, in practice, measures like arms embargoes, visa bans and assets freezes are often employed by the EU at the same time. Thus, and even though operationalising the dependent variable in such a way would be methodologically feasible, constructing a categorical dependent variable that may take many different and exclusive values does not make sense in theoretical terms.

Second, sanctions do not only vary in terms of their economic, financial or political nature, but also in their scope and coerciveness. Indeed, the scope of sanctions ranges from comprehensive trade embargoes that do not discriminate between wrongdoers and innocent civilians to targeted or “smart” sanctions that seek to target only those individuals and entities that are responsible for the wrongdoing or that, through their actions, are directly or indirectly contributing to the wrongdoing. In fact, senders like the EU have refrained from using comprehensive sanctions like trade embargoes since the UN imposed a full commodities embargo against Iraq in the 1990s, and now only impose targeted sanctions. The move away from comprehensive to smart sanctions came after the grave humanitarian consequences of the UN sanctions regime in Iraq, which contributed to the spread of diseases, the lack of humanitarian goods and, ultimately, to the death of tens of thousands of civilians (Cortright and Lopez, 2000).

Targeted sanctions vary enormously in their scope and effects. While some sanctions like visa freezes and travel bans prohibit individuals to travel to EU territory, others have more far-reaching effects. For instance, financial sanctions that ban the provision of loans, bonds and grants, or any sort of financial assistance to targeted entities in a third country might have huge consequences. This is especially the case when banks in sanctioned countries are not allowed to borrow money or make payments or financial transactions, as sanctions undermine economic activity in the country by disrupting the

normal running of businesses, as businesses are unable to pay for their imports or receive payment for their exports. As a result, companies might run out of business, which, in turn, has indirect effects on the living standards of the population by reducing the availability of goods.

Different types of targeted sanctions are more comprehensive and discriminate less than others. As Biersteker, Eckert, Tourinho and Hudáková (2013) have noted, sanctions can be classified in a spectrum according to their degree of targetedness, where those sanctions that are more targeted and therefore more discriminating are placed on the one end, and comprehensive trade embargoes that do not discriminate between wrongdoers and innocent civilians are placed on the other end. However, while conceiving sanctions in a linear or ordinal way according to their level of targetedness – or their level of coerciveness – is a possible solution to overcome the problem of mutually exclusive categories outlined above – i.e. as in the case of a dependent variable with various different and mutually exclusive outcome values, generating such a measure is more problematic.

One practical issue that arises is how to determine the number of categories or levels of coerciveness/targetedness that the dependent variable should have and, more importantly, how the different instruments should be assigned to each of these categories respectively. Indeed, while it might be relatively easy to determine that a full trade embargo is much more coercive and less targeted than a travel ban, this distinction is less clear-cut for other tools like aid suspensions or assets freezes. Moreover, the degree to which these measures are more or less targeted – or more or less coercive – often depends on how vulnerable or exposed a targeted regime is to different types of sanctions. Thus, distinguishing between categories and degrees of targetedness or



coerciveness is often left to the choice of the researcher, and not necessarily to objectively defined criteria.

If determining different categories of the scale and how to distribute the measures is already difficult, generating a scale indicator also poses a methodological problem due to the low number of cases where sanctions were imposed. Indeed, the low number of sanctions in the sample ( $n=247$ ) makes it inappropriate to develop a measure with many categories, as some of these would be almost empty. Moreover, the added value of such an approach is also questionable, as the distinction between categories would not mean much in substantive terms.

Considering these challenges, it is not surprising that most studies in the sanctions literature employ a binomial indicator to measure the occurrence of sanctions. Admittedly, this choice implies making some trade-offs. For instance, a dichotomous variable does not distinguish between the different levels of coerciveness of the instruments, nor does it whether sanctions are more or less targeted. This is certainly a limitation if the researcher seeks to understand whether a sender increases the pressure on a target by broadening the sanctions regime or, alternatively, if the researcher wants to know whether a sender rewards the target for its compliance by lifting some of the provisions of the sanctions regime.

However, as I have argued above, developing a scale indicator that is both useful and meaningful to undertake empirical analyses on a large- $n$  dataset is theoretically and methodologically difficult. Moreover, while such issues are certainly relevant to understand whether sanctions are more or less likely to be effective, these issues are not so determinant to address the main goal of this thesis, which is to understand the circumstances under which autocratic regimes are more or less likely to be sanctioned

by the EU. Thus, in line with the literature, this thesis employs a dichotomous dependent variable to measure the occurrence of a sanctions event. However, to compensate for the lack of nuance on the type of sanctions employed or the specific impact that these measures had, I undertake an in-depth qualitative analysis in the case studies of Chapters 5 and 6.

In line with this reasoning, the dependent variable SANCTION is a binomial variable that takes the value 1 if the EU imposed sanctions against country<sub>i</sub> in year<sub>t</sub> and the value 0 if no sanctions were imposed. The following rules have been applied in the coding of SANCTION:

1) SANCTION is coded 1 if the reasons to impose sanctions were at least partly justified by the EU on human rights concerns or due to the deterioration of democracy in a target country; otherwise, SANCTION is coded 0. Examples where the dependent variable is coded 1 include instances of, *inter alia*:

- grave and systematic violations of human rights, including torture, political imprisonment, extrajudicial killings and disappearances;
- quick deterioration of democracy or the rule of law, including Presidential empowerment, the deposition of judges, or constitutional amendments that undermine the system of checks and balances;
- electoral manipulation and/or electoral violence;
- harassment and intimidation of the political opposition;
- restrictions of political rights, including media and association freedoms;
- and coups d'état.

- 2) Moreover, SANCTION is coded 1 irrespective of whether sanctions were initiated by the UN and then transposed into EU legislation or, alternatively, if EU measures were imposed first and were superseded by a UNSC resolution afterwards.
  
- 3) Similar to Portela and von Soest (2012), I code SANCTION 0 when:
  - a) Sanctions were imposed for other reasons than those outlined in section 1) above.
  - b) The targets of sanctions are non-state entities like terrorist or armed groups that exert no formal or internationally recognised control over a land or territory. Examples of cases where this rule applies include the UN sanctions against the UNITA organization in 1993 or the UN, and EU sanctions against the Al-Qaida terrorist organization.
  - c) The goals of sanctions have been fully/partially fulfilled and cooperation with the target government has been resumed (i.e. when the target regime has met the EU's demands or when it has reached an agreement that has satisfied the EU).
  - d) Sanctions expire or are not renewed.
  - e) Most sanctions are lifted by the EU except some measures targeting certain non-government related individuals and entities. Examples of this often include arms embargos, assets freezes or travel bans against individuals, businesses, rebel groups, or terrorist organizations responsible for the reprehensible behaviour (i.e. the violation of human rights).

- f) No information regarding the continuation of the sanctions regime is available. This rule applies to particular cases like Equatorial Guinea, where no political relationship between the EU and the regime exists.

Table 3.2 below provides a list of the countries that were targeted by the EU and the period in which they were sanctioned. A total of 39 countries were sanctioned, with some countries like Belarus, Burundi, Fiji, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Niger, Peru, Russia and Togo being sanctioned on more than one occasion.

**Table 3.2. EU sanctions episodes by country**

Country	Period
Algeria	1992-94
Belarus (I)	1997-99
Belarus (II)	2004-ongoing
Burundi (I)	1993-94
Burundi (II)	1997-99
Central African Republic	2003-05
China	1989-ongoing
Comoros	1999-2000
Cuba	2003-05
Democratic Republic of Congo	1992-2002
Equatorial Guinea	1992-2002
Fiji	2001-03
Fiji (II)	2007-2014
Gambia	1994-97
Guatemala	1993
Guinea	2009-2014
Guinea-Bissau	2010-2014
Haiti (I)	1991-94
Haiti (II)	2001-05
Honduras	2009
Indonesia	1999
Ivory Coast (I)	2000-02
Ivory Coast (II)	2004-2011
Kenya	1990-98
Liberia	1990-2006
Madagascar	2009-2014
Malawi	1992-93
Mauritania	2008-09
Myanmar	1991-ongoing
Niger (I)	1996
Niger (II)	2009-10
Nigeria	1993-99
Pakistan	1999-2001
Peru (I)	1992-93
Peru (II)	2000-01
Russia (I)	1995
Russia (II)	1999-2001
Rwanda	1994-96
Serbia and Montenegro	1998-2001
Sierra Leone	1997-2002
South Africa	1977-1994
Sri Lanka	2010
Sudan	1990-ongoing
Togo (I)	1992-95
Togo (II)	1998-2007
Turkey	1980-1995
Uzbekistan	2005-09
Zimbabwe	2002-ongoing

Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.2.3. Sources

To determine when sanctions were imposed by the EU to address human rights and democratic concerns – and for how long they were maintained – I employed a vast variety of sources, including primary and secondary material. First and foremost, I used EU official documents like EU Council Decisions, Council Common Positions, Council Regulations, and Commission Regulations to collect data about whether sanctions had been imposed against a specific country, which measures had been adopted, and how long they had been in place. Importantly, I scrutinised these sources for references that justified the imposition of sanctions on grounds of the human rights or the democratic situation in a target country. In addition, I employed other relevant official documents, including the European External Action Service’s list of Restrictive measures in force (European Union, 2015b), the Conclusions of the General Affairs Council meetings, press releases and statements, and speeches of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and other Commissioners.

To search for most of the above-mentioned documents I have employed the EU’s legal search engine EUR-LEX (European Union, 2015a), which provides access to European Union Law. I used different combinations of keyword searches, combining the name of every country in the dataset with words such as “restrictive measures”, “appropriate measures”, “aid freeze”, “aid suspension” or “sanction”. This strategy limited the number of results per country and yielded most of the relevant documents regarding the imposition of EU sanctions. For press releases, statements and speeches, I employed the European Commission’s Press Release Database (European Commission, 2015d). The documents obtained were then carefully analysed to extract all the relevant information regarding the imposition of sanctions, which was later used to code the dependent variable SANCTION.

Besides EUR-LEX, I also employed other search engines to find documents that were occasionally not available at the EU's legal database. Examples of additional sources employed include the University of Pittsburgh's Archive on European Integration (University of Pittsburgh, 2015) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) Arms Embargo database (SIPRI, 2015).

These sources proved quite effective to find information about those measures imposed under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. However, they were less useful in finding data about other types of sanctions, like the EU's suspension of development assistance under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement (or its predecessor, Article 366 of the Lomé Convention), or informal and ad hoc measures imposed during the 1990s. To fill in the gaps left by the searches in EUR-LEX, I used a wide range of secondary sources, including academic literature, datasets on economic sanctions, reports by NGOs, think tanks and IGOs, and newspaper articles.

Sources employed include Portela (2005, 2007a, 2010), Kreutz (2005), Hazelzet (2001), Brummer (2009), Warkotsch (2008, 2010), Crawford (1998, 2000), Smith (1998, 2008), Saltnes (2013), Del Biondo (2011) and Soest and Wahman (2011). Additionally, I used the two most comprehensive datasets on economic sanctions – Hufbauer et al.'s (2007) prominent work 'Economic Sanctions Reconsidered' and Morgan et al.'s (2009) more recent the 'Threat and Imposition of Sanctions Database' (TIES). To identify instances of *ad hoc* sanctions during the 1990s, I employed the European University Institute's annual publication, the European Union Foreign Policy Bulletin (1987, 1988a, b, c, 1989a, b, c, d, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996). These bulletins collect discussions, statements and questions placed by European Members of Parliament to the European Commission about issues related to the EU's external activities.

Second, this information was complemented with reports from think tanks, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations (IOs), including briefs and reports by Hazelzet (2005), Bradley (2005) and Mbangi (2005) for the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM); books and policy briefs on the EU's democracy promotion for the Centre of European Policy Studies (CEPS) and FRIDE (Youngs, 2001, 2006, 2008b, 2010); annual yearbooks (for instance, Anthony (2002) on the SIPRI annual yearbook); reports from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and reports by the European Institutions regarding the imposition of "restrictive" and "appropriate" measures (Laakso et al., 2006; Portela, 2007b).

Finally, I also employed newspapers and online news agencies like Reuters, BBC, the New York Times and others to find data on EU sanctions. Most importantly perhaps, the information obtained through different secondary sources was cross-checked to verify the quality and veracity of the data collected. A list of the sources employed for the construction of the dependent variable can be seen in Table 3.3.



**Table 3.3. Sources employed for the coding of the dependent variable**

Official documents	Council Decisions, Council Common Positions, Council Regulations, Commission Regulations, Communications from the Commission to the Council (various years)
Academic references	Brummer (2009), Portela (2005, 2007a, 2010); Portela and Orbie (2014), Crawford (1998, 2000), Del Biondo (2011), Eriksson (2011), European University Institute (1987, 1988a, b, c, 1989a, b, c, d, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996), Giumelli (2011), Kreutz (2005), Hazelzet (2001), Smith (1998, 2008), Saltnes (2013), Soest and Wahman (2013b; 2014), Warkotsch (2008, 2010)
Think tanks and other reports	Hazelzet (2005), Bradley (2005), Mbangi (2005), Anthony (2002), Laakso et al. (2006), Youngs (2001, 2006, 2008b, 2010)
Databases	Morgan et al. (2009), Hufbauer et al. (2007), SIPRI (2015), University of Pittsburgh (2015), European Union (2015a) EUR-Lex, European Commission (2015d)
Newspapers	Reuters, BBC, New York Times, El Pais (various years)

Source: Own elaboration.

### *3.2.4. Main independent variable*

#### *3.2.4.1. Domestic institutions of a target regime*

The main independent variable (IV) of this thesis is the domestic institutions (or regime type) of a target country. I distinguish between two main types of authoritarian regimes: those that rely on a broad coalition to rule (i.e. weak regimes like competitive or “multi-party” regimes) and those that rule with the support of smaller and cohesive coalitions (i.e. strong regimes like “military” and “one-party” regimes). Institutions are commonly defined in the literature as the rules of the game in a society. They devise ‘constraints that shape human interaction [...] and structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social, or economic’ (March and Olsen, 1996; North, 1990: 3). Institutions influence an autocrat’s survival in power (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2010; Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007; Pepinsky, 2014; Wright, 2008; Wright and Escribà-Folch, 2012)

and shape her response to external shocks like sanctions (Allen, 2008b; Escribà-Folch and Wright, 2010; McGillivray and Stam, 2004).

Empirical studies in comparative politics and international relations have commonly relied on the Polity IV (Marshall, Gurr and Jagers, 2014) and the Freedom House (Freedom House, 2014) scales as proxies for a country's domestic institutions.<sup>23</sup> However, these scales measure a country's freedom, and are therefore not accurate reflections of a country's domestic institutions (Beetham, Carvalho, Landman and Weir, 2008; Landman and Häusermann, 2003; Munck and Verkuilen, 2002). In recent years, new datasets have proliferated that classify countries according to their type of regime. Although these measures still correlate highly with the Freedom House and the Polity Scales and are therefore likely to be tapping into the same phenomenon (Collier and Adcock, 1999; Collier and Levitsky, 1997), the narrower focus of these new typologies allows us to develop more refined and empirically testable hypotheses on how domestic institutions shape political outcomes in different regimes.

Amongst the newly released datasets on autocratic regimes, Wahman et al.'s (2013) classification stands out due to the central role that the authors attribute to the domestic institutions in maintain regimes in power. As they summarise it, 'our approach [...] is to determine regime type not so much in terms of the characteristics or social origins of the elites in question, but instead based on the institutions on which these elites rely in order to regulate the access to and maintenance of public authority' (Wahman et al., 2013:

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<sup>23</sup> Using different thresholds of these scales, countries are often classified into three different categories as democratic, transitional or autocratic regimes in the Polity IV scale, and as free, partly free, or not free in the Freedom House scale.

21). In addition, a few other reasons make this classification appealing for my research project.<sup>24</sup>

First, compared to the Freedom House or the Polity Scales, Wahman et al.'s. (2013) autocratic regime type classification provides a much more nuanced and refined categorisation of regime types, distinguishing between multi-party, monarchic, one-party, no-party and military regimes.<sup>25</sup> Second, underlying this categorisation is an important theoretical consideration about the different historical modes in which autocrats access and maintain political power. These can be described as '1) hereditary succession, or lineage, 2) the actual or threatened use of military force and 3) popular elections' (Wahman et al., 2013: 20). Finally, this typology also captures the electoral dimension of the so-called competitive or hybrid regimes that appeared at the end of the Cold War, something which is overlooked by the other datasets on autocratic regimes.<sup>26</sup>

Using Wahman et al.'s (2013) measure of autocratic regimes, I create six dummy variables to classify autocratic regimes as 1) multi-party, 2) military, 3) one-party, 4) other, 5) no-party, or 6) monarchy. The remaining regimes are classified as democracies.

However, even though Wahman et al. (2013) point to the right direction in trying to account for the new electoral or competitive dimension of autocratic regimes, their typology remains slightly vague and imprecise. In particular, the category "multi-party

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<sup>24</sup> Since relatively similar measures might lead to substantive different results, some scholars advise to choose the measures according to the specific theoretical needs of the project (Cheibub et al., 2010; Collier and Adcock, 1999).

<sup>25</sup> It also includes a residual category "other" and a category for "democratic" regimes.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, Boix, Miller, and Rosato's (2012) dichotomous measure differentiates between democratic and autocratic regimes, Cheibub et al. (2010) classifies democracies as presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary, and dictatorships as civilian, military and royal dictatorships, and Geddes et al. differentiate between military, single-party, monarchic, and personalist regimes. However, none of these classifications captures the electoral dimension of "competitive" or "hybrid" authoritarianisms.

regimes” encompasses a great variety of countries (n=1046) that differ in many respects but one: the existence of more than one party that compete in the elections. This minimalist definition is problematic though, as very dissimilar regimes are included in the same category.

In fact, the existence of multiple parties does not necessarily imply that these constitute or even attempt to be an effective or organised opposition to the regime (Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009). On the contrary, it might even be the case that the regime itself creates and uses proxy political parties to fragment the opposition vote. Consider, for instance, the case of Belarus, where in the 1990s Alexander Lukashenka revived the old Communist party in to split the opposition. After the election, this party would not play any role in the legislature, but its members would benefit from the patronage of the regime (Wilson, 2011).

The existence of multiple parties within a political system tells us little about the actual distribution of power in the political system. In fact, some autocrats within the multi-party category might face less domestic constraints than others, even though they are indeed challenged to some extent. To account for this possibility, I use Henisz Political Constraint Index (Henisz, 2002) to create two new categories out of the “multi-party” regime category. This index measures the number of political constraints that a regime faces domestically (i.e. the number of veto players). I code a country as “dominant” if the index is 0, whereas I code it “multi-party” if the political constraint index is above 0. This threshold is chosen to make sure that the category “dominant” regime encompasses those countries that face no constraints at home.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> However, I have also run models with different thresholds and the results remain the same. Moreover, I have also employed Beck, Clarke, Groff, Keefer and Walsh’s (2001) database on veto players to generate two different categories of multi-party regimes, and the results are similar.

Finally, I also create a new category called “strong”, which combines “military” and “one-party” regimes into a single category. Since my theoretical expectation is that multi-party regimes should be less likely to be sanctioned than military or one-party regimes (i.e. “strong”), I use this category as the baseline category in all my models (see Chapter 4). Table 3.4 below compares the type and number of autocratic regimes of Wahman et al.’s (2013) typology with that of Geddes et al. (2014) and my adapted version of Wahman et al.’s (2013) classification.

**Table 3.4. Typologies of autocratic regimes**

<b>Dataset</b>	<b>Regime type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Wahman et al. (2013)	Democracy	1,652	44.02
	Military	365	9.73
	Monarchy	273	7.27
	Multi-party	1,046	27.87
	No-party	17	0.45
	One-party	243	6.47
	Other	157	4.18
Wahman et al. (adapted)	Democracy	1,652	44.09
	Multi-party	680	18.15
	Dominant	360	9.61
	Strong	608	16.23
	Monarchy	273	7.29
	Other	157	4.19
	No-party	17	0.45
Geddes et al. (2014)	Democracy	2,263	59.44
	Party-based	707	18.57
	Personalist	530	13.92
	Military	138	3.62
	Monarchy	169	4.44

Source: Own elaboration with data from Geddes et al. (2014) and Wahman et al (2013).

Admittedly, these categories are an analytical simplification that does not capture the entire variation that exists within each of these regimes or within each of the different

categories respectively. For instance, military or one-party regimes might vary according to their economic and political support base, political factionalism or ethnic and religious lines. Notwithstanding the limitation of my approach to capture this potential variation, my classification is useful for the purpose of this thesis in several respects.

First, the categories that I provide allow me to assess whether variation exists in the ways in which different types of autocratic regimes respond to the threat and imposition of EU sanctions. And to be able to do so in a meaningful way, grouping countries according to their type of regime seems a logical way to proceed. Although it is true that similar types of regimes might differ in many possible ways, I am interested in determining whether the domestic constraints that autocrats face determines whether they are more or less likely to be sanctioned. In this line, I have argued in Chapter 2 a key element that differentiates autocratic regimes is the size of their winning coalition, and I have shown that this is smallest in military regimes, followed by one-party, monarchic, and multi-party regimes respectively (see Graph 2.2).

Second, the suitability of these categories is not only a theoretical issue, but also an empirical one. Indeed, while I have argued that my regime type classification makes sense considering the institutional setup of the different regimes – i.e. whether it is ruled by the military, a single party, or by multiple parties –, ultimately the usefulness of these categories should be determined by whether the empirical evidence provides support to my argument or not. Indeed, if my empirical analyses do not identify any pattern that support my theoretical claim, then a different approach to understand why some regimes are sanctioned whilst others are not might be necessary.

Finally, although my categorisation of regime types might not be able to capture all of the variance that takes place within each category of regime type – and sometimes countries within a specific category might vary in many respects –, I employ other mechanisms and methodological techniques to control for this. For instance, and as I explain in more detail below, I include a set of control variables in the regression models and employ techniques such as clustering the error terms on countries to account for this variation.

### *3.2.5. Controls*

To make sure that other factors are not driving the imposition of EU sanctions, I include a battery of control variables to account for omitted variable bias or spurious correlation.

#### *3.2.5.1. Human rights*

A country's violation of human rights is likely to trigger EU sanctions (Hazelzet, 2001). To measure the level of respect of human rights displayed by third countries I use Gibney, Cornett, Wood, Peter and Arnon (2015) Political Terror Scale (PTS). The PTS is based on the annual reports on the state of human rights in the world of the United States' State Department Human Rights yearbook, and Amnesty International's annual report and consists of 5 categories, where 1 stands for the highest respect for human rights, and 5 represents countries where human rights violations are systematic and affect broad sectors of the population. The PTS captures violations of physical integrity rights, including torture, political imprisonment, disappearances and extrajudicial

killings. For ease of interpretation, I invert the five-point scale and create a variable called PTSINV.<sup>28</sup>

### *3.2.5.2. Change in democracy*

In addition to the respect of human rights, another factor that might trigger the imposition of EU sanctions is the quick deterioration of democracy and the rule of law in a target country. Moreover, it is also possible that the EU lifts sanctions if an improvement in the level of democracy in a target country has occurred. To control for these possibilities, I include an indicator that captures the change in the level of democracy between year<sub>t</sub> and year<sub>t-1</sub> (DEMCHANGE). This indicator is constructed using Wahman et al.'s (2013) measure “ifhpol”, which imputes the well-known scales of Polity IV and Freedom House to create a continuous variable of democracy that ranges from 0 (low level of democracy) to 10 (high level of democracy).<sup>29</sup>

### *3.2.5.3. Economic leverage*

An assumption often made in the sanctions literature is that, for sanctions to be effective, a sender needs to be able to exert some sort of leverage over the target regime (McLean and Whang, 2010). Thus, it is commonly accepted that the sender's leverage over the target is largest the more asymmetric the commercial relationship between the

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<sup>28</sup> In addition to this variable, I also employ the “physical integrity rights scale” (PHYSINT) of the CIRI Human Rights project (Cingranelli and Richards, 2010) as a robustness check. However, since PTSINV has less missing values than the PHYSINT scale, I primarily rely on the variable PTSINV for the main regression models and use PHYSINT as a robustness measure. The results are similar and are available from the author on request.

<sup>29</sup> I have also employed Pemstein, Meserve, and Melton's (2010) Unified Democracy Score as a robustness measure and the results are similar.



two actors is, as the cost of defiance increases exponentially for the target (Morgan and Schwebach, 1997). To measure the extent to which a target country is vulnerable to the disruption or interruption of trade flows with the sender, it is common to employ the ratio of the trade between the sender and the target's Gross Domestic Product. Following this practice, I construct three different variables that measure a target state's vulnerability to the disruption of trade with the sender. I create a measure that captures the overall trade-dependence (TRADERGDP) of a target regime from the EU, its dependence on imports (IMPRGDP) from the EU, and its reliance on exports (EXPRGDP) to the EU. Trade data are borrowed from the IMF's Direction of Trade Statistics (IMF, 2014) while GDP data are borrowed from (Gleditsch, 2002).

In addition to the EU's economic leverage regarding trade, I employ a second indicator that captures the target regime's reliance on EU aid. Together with its member states, the EU is the largest aid donor in the world (Carbone, 2011a) and, as a consequence, it is able to exert a large leverage over a target country. Similarly to the trade-dependence variables, I divide the level of EU aid that is allocated to a target by the latter's GDP (AID/GDP). All data on aid are borrowed from the OECD's statistical database (OECD, 2014).

#### *3.2.5.4. Political instability*

Another factor that might be driving the imposition of sanctions is political instability in a target country. I employ several indicators to measure whether a country is undergoing a period of political turmoil. First of all, I construct a variable that measures the number of riots, anti-government demonstrations and strikes that are taking place in a country (DEMONSTRATION) by adding the indicators "domestic 2", "domestic 6" and

“domestic 8” from the Banks and Wilson (2014) Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive. In addition, I use Powell and Thyne (2011) dataset on coups d’état to measure whether a putsch has taken place in country<sub>i</sub> at time<sub>t</sub>. I construct two binomial variables that measure 1) whether a coup has taken place (COUP) and 2) whether it has been successful (COUPSUCC). I also assess whether a country’s is undergoing a process of democratization. Since democratization processes tend to extend over long periods of time, I generate an indicator that captures the moving average in the level of democracy in the years comprised between year<sub>t</sub> and year<sub>t-5</sub>.

Moreover, I use the “National Elections Across Democracy and Autocracy” (NELDA) dataset (Hyde and Marinov, 2011) to measure political instability during electoral periods. Some scholars have argued that sanctions are more likely to be imposed if elections are contested and flawed (Laakso et al., 2006). Donno (2010), for instance, has claimed that sanctions are more likely to be used if Western monitors were present during an election and, especially, if elections were deemed flawed by these monitors. To account for this possibility, I generate a dummy variable that is coded 1 if international monitors were present during the holding of elections (N45). I also create a second dichotomous variable that is coded 1 if allegations of electoral fraud were made by Western monitors after the holding of elections (N47).

Finally, I also include a variable to measure the tenure of the incumbent regime in order to account for the regime’s strength and stability (TENURE). This measure counts the number of years that a regime has been in power under the existing institutional settings – i.e. it measures the number of years that a particular type of regime has been in place. Thus, if the institutions that underpin the regime have changed, the count is set back to 1. This adjustment is important because it underlines the role played by political institutions in constraining the autocrat’s possibilities.

#### *3.2.5.5. Target economic performance*

Another frequent claim in the literature concerns a country's economic performance. According to Hufbauer et al. (2007), sanctions are more likely to be effective against countries that are undergoing a period of "distress". To measure a country's economic performance I employ three different indicators. First, I estimate the overall performance of a country through its economic growth, measured as the variation of the country's GDP between year  $t$  and year  $t-1$  (GROWTH). I also use the country's yearly inflation (INFLATION) as an indicator of the health of its economy. Finally, I take the ratio between the stocks of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the country's GDP to measure a country's capability to attract foreign capital (FDI/GDP). Data for GDP growth, inflation and FDI are obtained from the World Bank Indicators (World Bank, 2014b).

#### *3.2.5.6. Additional controls*

Finally, I include a battery of commonly employed control variables to account for possible confounding effects. These include a country's GDP (or its population) to control for the size and strength of a country's economy, a country's GDP per capita to account for its level of development, and the distance between the EU and a target country to capture other types of linkages (Head, Mayer and Ries, 2010; Mayer and Zignago, 2011). Data for these variables is obtained from Gleditsch (2002), and the World Bank Indicators (World Bank, 2014b). Lastly, I also include a dichotomous variable to control for the existence of a human rights clause in the EU's agreements with third countries. Since this clause establishes legal commitments to respect human

rights and democracy, a target country might face sanctions if it breaches them (Donno, 2012; Hazelzet, 2005; Portela, 2007b; Zimelis, 2011). Data for this variable is extracted from Bartels (2005, 2008). Table 3.6 provides a list of the independent variables employed in this thesis and their data sources, whilst table 3.7 below presents descriptive statistics of all the variables used.

**Table 3.6. List of independent variables**

Indicator	Variable	Description	Source
Multi-party regime	mpweak	Weak multi-party regime. This variable is coded 1 if the variable regime1ny in Wahman et al. (2013) is coded “multi-party” and if the Henisz (2002) Index on Political Constraints is >0.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Dominant regime	mpdom	Dominant multi-party regime. This variable is coded 1 if the variable regime1ny in Wahman et al. (2013) is coded “multi-party” and if the Henisz (2002) Index on Political Constraints is =0.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Democratic regime	dem	Democratic regimes.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Military regime	mil	Military regimes.	Wahman et al. (2013)
One-party regime	op	One-party regimes.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Strong regime	strong	Combines the categories “one-party” and “military” regimes.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Other regimes	other	Residual category for regimes that do not fit any of the other categories.	Wahman et al. (2013)
No-party regime	np	No party-regimes.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Monarchic regime	mon	Monarchic regimes.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Human rights	ptsinv	Measures a country’s respect of human rights, where 1 stands for widespread abuses of human rights and 5 for no violations.	Gibney et al. (year)
Change in democracy	demchange	Change in the level of a country’s democracy. This measure calculates the difference between a country’s level of democracy in year <sub>t</sub> from its level of democracy in the previous year. I use Wahman et al.’s measure “ifhpol” to calculate the difference.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Level of democracy	ifhpol	Imputed measure of democracy ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 stands for completely autocratic regime and 10 stands for completely democratic regime.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Trade/GDP	tradergdp	A target country’s level of trade with the EU (\$) divided by its GDP.	IMF (2014), Gleditsch (2002)
Imports/GDP	imprgdp	A target country’s level of imports from the EU (\$) divided by its GDP.	IMF (2014), Gleditsch (2002)
Exports/GDP	exprgdp	A target country’s level of exports to the EU (\$) divided by its GDP.	IMF (2014), Gleditsch (2002)
Aid/GDP	aidrgdp	EU Institutions + EU member states official development assistance (\$) divided by GDP	OECD (2014), Gleditsch (2002)
Demonstration	demonstration		Banks and Wilson (2014)
Democratization	democ2	Measures the moving average of a country’s changes in the level of a country’s between year <sub>t</sub> and year <sub>t-5</sub>	Wahman et al. (2013)
Tenure	tenure5	This variable measures the years that a given type of regime has been in power.	Wahman et al. (2013)
Coup	coup	This variable measures whether a coup d’état has been staged.	
Successful coup	cousucc	Similar to coup, this variable measures whether a coup has been successful.	
Monitors	n45	This variable captures whether international monitors were deployed to observe an election.	Hyde and Marinov (2011)
Voter fraud	n47	This variable is coded 1 if Western observers alleged massive vote fraud in elections.	Hyde and Marinov (2011)
FDI/GDP	fdirgdp	FDI divided by GDP.	World Bank (2014), Gleditsch (2002)
GDP growth	growth	Measures a country’s inter-annual GDP growth.	World Bank (2014)
Inflation	inflation	Annual inflation.	World Bank (2014)
Oil	oil	Oil production in metric tons.	Ross (2011)
Gas	gas	Gas production. Marketed Natural Gas, million barrels oil equivalent.	Ross (2011)
Human rights clause	hrc3	This variable is coded 1 if the EU and the target country are bound by a human rights clause.	Bartels (2005, 2008)
GDP	rgdp	Measures a country’s annual GDP in real US\$	Gleditsch (2002)
GDP/cap	rgdpcap	Measures a country’s annual GDP per capita in real US\$	Gleditsch (2002)
Population	population	Measures a country’s population	World Bank (2014)
Distance	dist	Measures the distance between the capital of a target regime and Brussels in km.	Head et al. (2010), Mayer and Zignago (2011)

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 3.7. Descriptive statistics of the main variables**

VARIABLES	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sanction	3666	0.070	0.255	0	1
Multi-party	3654	0.186	0.389	0	1
Dominant	3654	0.099	0.298	0	1
Democracy	3753	0.440	0.496	0	1
Military	3753	0.097	0.296	0	1
One-party	3753	0.065	0.246	0	1
Strong	3753	0.162	0.369	0	1
Other	3753	0.042	0.200	0	1
No-party	3753	0.005	0.067	0	1
Monarchy	3753	0.073	0.260	0	1
Human rights	3566	3.256	1.179	1	5
Change in democracy	4635	0.076	0.688	-7.5	6.833333
Level of democracy	4818	5.548	3.347	0	10
Political constraints	3817	0.243	0.211	0	0.688
Trade/GDP	3663	0.126	0.264	0.000105	8.62348
Imports/GDP	3662	0.069	0.158	8.77E-05	5.484334
Exports/GDP	3662	0.056	0.115	1.37E-05	2.79045
Aid/GDP	3464	0.014	0.027	-0.02171	0.471883
Demonstration	3799	0.803	2.152	0	37
Democratization	5138	0.405	0.783	-1	1
Coup	3806	0.025	0.157	0	1
Monitors	3806	0.145	0.352	0	1
Vote fraud	3806	0.031	0.173	0	1
FDI/GDP	3596	0.027	0.117	-0.50286	3.827586
GDP growth (%)	3572	3.757	6.748	-51.0309	106.2798
Inflation	3160	43.821	497.865	-16.1173	23773.13
Oil	3392	21500000	61900000	0	4.83E+08
Gas	3392	111.671	470.013	0	5013.133
Human rights clause	3806	0.470	0.499	0	1
GDP (\$US)	3804	2.26E+11	9.98E+11	2.30E+07	1.30E+13
GDP/cap (\$US)	3804	7665.296	10699.720	132.82	102805
Distance (km)	3748	6749.999	3622.583	487.4555	19011.83
Tenure	3615	7.837	6.009	1	23
Population	3742	33900000	130000000	8949	1.34E+09

Source: Own elaboration.

### **3.3. Econometric strategy**

#### *3.3.1. Unit of analysis*

To test my argument empirically, I create a dataset that uses the country-year as the unit of analysis. My choice for the country-year as the unit of analysis is driven by several considerations, most notably the need to avoid potential selection effects. If my argument that selection bias is present in the sanctions literature is true (see Chapter 2), then I need to make sure that the way in which I select my sample allows me to i) test this argument empirically; and ii) avoid oversampling observations of regimes that self-select themselves into sanctions and thereby bias my estimates.

However, the main problem to generate a robust sample to test my argument empirically arises with the difficulty to identify and measure events where sanctions were threatened. Indeed, collecting observations on threats of sanctions is a task barred by serious practical challenges. As a matter of fact, threats of sanctions are rarely public and are often made behind closed doors (Drezner 1999). Moreover, although scholars like Morgan et al. (2009) have managed to collect some cases where sanctions were threatened in their Threat and Imposition of Sanctions dataset, these cases tend to relate to trade disputes and not to high-policy issues like security concerns or the deterioration of human rights and democracy in a country, where negotiations are generally undertaken in the most secretive circumstances.

The problem to identify and collect data regarding threats of sanctions highlights the need for an alternative approach to generate a sample. A commonly employed solution by scholars is to use a number of indicators to identify cases that could be interesting for their studies. The potential problem with these solution however, is that it risks oversampling cases of countries that self-select themselves into sanctions – and hence,

cases where the threat of sanctions was ineffective. Although the practice of selecting cases according to specific indicators is not necessarily flawed in itself, in the sanctions literature this has led to dubious samples where the cases analysed are “hard” cases (i.e. strong regimes) that have self-selected themselves into sanctions.

For instance, some scholars have constructed their samples by selecting some observations on the dependent variable – i.e. by sampling those countries that were sanctioned – and by complementing these cases with other cases that were selected according to some specific criteria or threshold of an independent variable – for example, according to a specific value of the Polity IV scale (Brummer, 2009; Warkotsch, 2008, 2010).

While the strategy of selecting cases on the dependent variable is not necessarily wrong, it is not suitable if the purpose of the study is to show the circumstances under which sanctions are imposed or when they are more effective, as weak regimes are likely to comply with the sender at the threat stage. This can lead to a situation where the cases where sanctions were successful are left out of the sample, thus leading to biased estimations. Unfortunately, this situation often takes place, and scholars make strong generalisations from biased samples.

This does not mean that only selecting cases where sanctions have been imposed might not be useful or interesting. For instance, Eriksson (2011) and (Biersteker et al., 2013) work has greatly advanced our understanding of how sanctions work by focusing specifically on cases where sanctions were imposed by the EU and the UN. In contrast to most of the sanctions literature, their approach employs the sanctions episode as the unit of analysis, which presents some very strong advantages over other approaches.



First of all, by focusing on episodes where sanctions were imposed, extended, upgraded, suspended, or lifted, the authors are able to collect a sizeable number of observations. Indeed, instead of one single observation – i.e. a sanctions regime –, the authors are able to multiply the number of observations within one single sanctions regime by identifying different stages that take place throughout the duration of the sanctions regime. For instance, in comparison to the country-year, their unit of analysis allows them to track the evolution of the sanctions regime, and to capture changes such as the expansion of sanctions, their lifting, or the renewal of the measures in place.

Second, this approach also allows the authors to trace the impact of sanctions between different stages that take place within a sanctions regime. Notably, the different episodes allow to trace the changes in the behaviour of the target regime, and to assess more precisely whether changes in the sanctions regime – i.e. the addition of more coercive sanctions – might have played in driving this change of attitude in the target regime.

Finally, compared to the country-year, the sanctions-episode provides much more nuance and flexibility. Indeed, rather than being a unit that is exogenously determined, the sanctions-episode is determined by the events that take place. Thus, it lasts as long as there is no alteration in the sanctions regime, or in the behaviour of the target or the sender which might lead, in turn, to a review of the sanctions regime. In this way, the sanctions-episode provides much valuable information that can shed more light into the processes of how sanctions work and the circumstances under which they have a specific impact on the target's behaviour.

However, despite the evident strengths displayed by the sanctions-episode as the unit of analysis, it too cannot solve some of the abovementioned problems either. First, by

choosing the observations according to values of the dependent variable – i.e. cases that were sanctioned –, this approach automatically neglects cases where the mere threat of sanctions might have succeeded in influencing the target’s behaviour. Thus, if anything, this approach further exacerbates the problem of oversampling regimes that self-select themselves into sanctions.

Second, using the sanctions-episode as the unit of analysis does not alter the problem of identifying threats of sanctions in the first place. Moreover, while such an approach might be suitable to gather more observations in small-n qualitative studies, using this approach for a large dataset would entail manually dividing each sanctions regime into potentially hundreds or thousands of new observations. Needless to say, this goes well beyond the scope, resources, and time constraints of this thesis.

Finally, the sanctions-episode approach might lead to a situation where potentially many observations are substantively meaningless. Indeed, some of the observations generated by this data-generation process might not provide new analytical information, but simply describe situations where sanctions are simply rolled-over or extended even though nothing substantially has changed in the behaviour of the target or the sender. Thus, occasionally, the sample might simply be collecting redundant observations rather than capturing dynamics triggered by the strategic interaction between the sender and the target (i.e. portraying a target’s move towards compliance).

Similarly, other sampling strategies such as selecting cases on an independent variable like the respect for human rights or the level of democracy is also problematic for identical reasons, as the degree to which a country violates human rights and democratic principles is likely to be endogenous to the repressive nature of the autocratic regime – i.e. more autocratic regimes are likely to commit worse atrocities than less autocratic

ones (Bueno de Mesquita, Cherif, Downs and Smith, 2005; Davenport, 2007; Davenport and Armstrong, 2004; Poe and Tate, 1994; Poe, Tate and Keith, 1999). Thus, by selecting on specific values of independent variables like the Freedom House or Polity scales, researchers might actually be oversampling cases that, according to my theoretical argument, would self-select themselves into sanctions.

Other approaches that have sampled observations according to events of violations reported in the news or in parliamentary debates might also face similar problems (see for instance, Hazelzet (2001)). Although such events-based approaches are generally considered the best option to trace the causal link between the occurrence of a violation and the event of interest (Landman, 2004), these approaches are also frequently affected by selection effects. Indeed, different studies have shown that Western media coverage of human rights abuses tends to be biased towards those countries that display higher levels of authoritarianism (Ramos, Ron and Thoms, 2007; Ron, Ramos and Rodgers, 2005; Ron, Ramos and Rodgers, 2006). This means that countries that are particularly sensitive to the Western public opinion are likely to be overrepresented in the news, whilst other countries with similar or worse records of abuses will be left out of the picture.

Since I am particularly interested in testing the presence of selection effects during the imposition of EU sanctions, it is paramount to avoid sampling bias. For this reason, I rely on the country-year as the unit of analysis, as it allows me to include all countries in the world, including those that have never been sanctioned and those that have been sanctioned - or might have been sanctioned but preferred to comply before it was too late. Although, admittedly, my choice for the country-year as the unit of analysis entails making some trade-offs, using other sampling strategies is less appropriate, as they might actually make the problem of selection bias worse (Collier, 1995; Collier and

Mahoney, 1996; Geddes, 1990). Finally, and as I explain in more detail below and in Chapter 4, I also employ a two-stage selection model in my main analysis to account for selection effects from the dependent variable SANCTION.

### *3.3.2. Scope of the dataset*

Using the country-year as the unit of analysis, I generate a dataset that includes all observations of autocratic regimes in the world between 1989 and 2010. First of all, the inclusion of all autocratic regimes in my dataset is driven by the need not to lose observations of autocratic regimes that might have been threatened with sanctions and that, due to their weakness, complied with the sender before sanctions were imposed. Although an events-based approach that collects all episodes where sanctions were threatened and/or imposed would be ideal to test my hypotheses, the difficulties to do this require an alternative sampling strategy that allows me to account for those instances where a threat might have been issued.

Thus, by including all autocratic regimes between 1989 and 2010 I ensure that no cases that might be important for my theory are left aside. Although this choice might collect observations of a number of autocratic regimes that might never have been threatened with sanctions, including them in my sample is relevant precisely to avoid oversampling regimes that, due to their domestic structure, might self-select themselves into sanctions. Given the practical limitations of measuring threats of sanctions and my thesis' goal to test the existence of selection effects in the imposition of EU sanctions, using a sample of all autocratic regimes allows me to avoid selection bias arising from other sampling strategies like selecting cases according to values on the dependent or an independent variable.

Second, since my thesis seeks to understand why and when EU sanctions are imposed to address human rights violations and democratic wrongdoing in autocratic regimes, all countries that are coded as a democracy in Wahman et al.'s (2013) dataset in time<sub>t</sub> are dropped. Also, small countries with a population of less than half a million are also excluded from the database due missing data in most of the independent variables. This leaves me with a sample of 2006 observations<sup>30</sup> of autocratic regimes that correspond to 126 countries over a period of 22 years (1989-2010).

The selection of this time period followed two considerations. First of all, the year 1989 has been chosen as the lower limit due to the effect that the end of the Cold War had on the EU as an international sender of sanctions. Indeed, the end of the political stalemate and the irruption of the third wave of democracy opened a window of opportunity for the promotion of liberal values like democracy and human rights (Huntington, 1993). Most importantly, the EU's promotion of human rights and democracy in the 1990s had a clear negative dimension to it, as the EU became increasingly willing to use sanctions against those regimes that did not respect human rights and democratic principles. Consequently, the end of the Cold War paved the way for the EU to become one of the most important senders of international sanctions to promote human rights and democracy worldwide (De Vries and Hazelzet, 2005; Taylor, 2010). Second, the choice for 2010 as the upper limit of the dataset is motivated by a lack of available data on the main independent variable, regime type. This time limit is unfortunate, as the EU has been very active imposing a new wave of sanctions since the unfolding of the Arab Spring in 2011.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The differences in n between Table 3.7 and this figure are due to the exclusion of democratic regimes in the latter.

<sup>31</sup> By the time of writing, all datasets on autocratic regimes only covered all autocratic regimes up to 2010.

### 3.3.3. Methodological issues

A few methodological issues need to be addressed to avoid certain problems that commonly arise with panel data. First of all, it is likely that my dataset is affected by serial correlation, as the residuals of one period ( $\epsilon_t$ ) are likely to be correlated with the residuals in previous periods ( $\epsilon_{t-1}$ ,  $\epsilon_{t-2}$ , etc.) (Baltagi, 2001; Beck, 2001; Beck, Katz and Tucker, 1998; Wooldridge, 2002). To address serial correlation, I follow Carter and Signorino (2010) and include cubic polynomials to control for the time passed since the last event (sanctions) occurred.

Secondly, the countries included in the dataset are likely to be very heterogeneous and likely to vary in many respects that I cannot control for with the inclusion of additional control variables. A common solution to this issue is to include country fixed effects. However, given the dichotomous nature of my dependent variable SANCTION, this strategy is problematic. Many countries in my sample are never sanctioned (i.e. they never fail) and, as a consequence, drop from the analysis. This results into a huge loss of observations (about 71 countries and 952 observations). To overcome this limitation, I use region fixed effects instead. Data for world regions are borrowed from the Correlates of War project (2014). Similarly, certain regime types like “monarchies” and “no-party” regimes are never sanctioned during the period of observation. Thus, these cases drop automatically due to no variation of the dependent variable.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to countries being heterogeneous, a third issue that needs to be addressed is potential selection effects arising from the dependent variable. Recall that my

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<sup>32</sup> This decision affects 281 observations and 14 countries. No-party regimes dropped are only the Maldives, whereas the monarchic regimes dropped are Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Swaziland Tonga and the United Arab Emirates.

theoretical argument suggests that some types of regimes will face incentives not to comply with the EU's demands. If this is true, then these regimes will also be willing to resist the economic burden that sanctions might impose on them, thereby self-selecting themselves into sanctions. To address selection effects emanating from the dependent variable, I employ a two-stage Heckman selection process (Heckman, 1976, 1979), where the first or selection stage models the likelihood that a target regime complies with the EU's threat and the second or outcome stage models the likelihood that a target regime is sanctioned (I develop this point further in Section 4.3.1. of Chapter 4).

Finally, I also need to address potential heterogeneity problems in the key independent variable, domestic institutions. Since weak regimes (treated units) and strong regimes (control units) are likely to differ in many characteristics, I try to balance these possible factors out with the use of matching methods. Matching methods are useful to control for the pre-existing differences between the groups to 'replicate, as closely as possible, the ideal of randomized experiments when using experimental data' in order to 'obtain approximately unbiased estimates of the effects of interest' (Ho, Imai, King and Stuart, 2007: 155; Stuart and Rubin, 2008). The strength of matching techniques derives from the fact that they do not impose any type of function or restriction on the data. On the contrary, 'inferences are based entirely on data [and] none of the results flow from arcane functional form assumptions or implausible arguments about valid instruments' (Gilligan and Sergenti, 2008:90).

Although different software programs for matching exist, yet the most well-known packages are Coarsened Exact Matching (Blackwell, Iacus, King and Porro, 2009; Iacus, King and Porro, 2011) and Propensity Score Matching (Rosenbaum and Rubin, 1983). These techniques are very sensitive to the addition of controls though, and observations that are not matched are lost or dropped. For a small dataset like mine, this

is problematic, as I lose many observations.<sup>33</sup> To avoid this, I use Jens Hainmueller's entropy balancing technique (Hainmueller, 2012; Hainmueller and Xu, 2013).<sup>34</sup> Compared to 'other preprocessing methods such as nearest neighbor matching [or coarsened exact matching] where units are either discarded or matched (weights of zero or one)', entropy balancing is much more flexible, since it 'reweights units appropriately to achieve balance, but at the same time keeps the weights as close as possible to the base weights to prevent loss of information and thereby retains efficiency for the subsequent analysis' (Hainmueller, 2012: 26).

In sum, this technique allows me to balance the covariates of the treated and the control groups without losing observations of the sample. The treatment for the balancing is my main independent variable, *multi-party (mpweak)*. To choose the variables that need to be balanced, I first undertake t-tests between the different variables used in the regression models and the treatment. If the t-test is statistically significant for a given variable, I balance it so that entropy weights are added and the balance between groups is achieved. Table 3.8 below displays the results before and after the use of entropy balancing.

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<sup>33</sup> In fact, the actual number of matched units tends to be quite small with both the Coarsened Exact Matching and the Propensity Score Matching techniques.

<sup>34</sup> As the author notes, 'entropy balancing a reweighting scheme that directly incorporates covariate balance into the weight function that is applied to the sample units. The researcher begins by imposing a potentially large set of balance constraints, which imply that the covariate distributions of the treatment and control group in the preprocessed data match exactly on all prespecified moments. After the researcher has prespecified her desired level of covariate balance, entropy balancing searches for the set of weights that satisfies the balance constraints but remains as close as possible (in an entropy sense) to a set of uniform base weights to retain information. This recalibration of the unit weights effectively adjusts for systematic and random inequalities in representation'.



**Table 3.8. Results of entropy balancing**

Treated units: 647 total of weights: 647

Control units: 2426 total of weights: 647

Before: without weighting

Variable	Treat			Control		
	Mean	Variance	Skewness	Mean	Variance	Skewness
Demonstration	1.255	7.930	5.316	0.849	4.674	4.480
GDP/cap (log)	7.881	1.063	0.212	8.251	1.473	0.004
Tenure	6.604	26.430	1.016	8.343	38.370	0.652
Monitors	0.209	0.165	1.434	0.162	0.136	1.831
Vote fraud	0.059	0.055	3.753	0.033	0.032	5.267
Human rights	2.807	0.868	-0.056	3.232	1.444	-0.197
GDP (log)	24.280	2.912	0.139	24.160	4.107	0.431
Human rights clause	0.592	0.242	-0.374	0.443	0.247	0.229

After: \_webal as the weighting variable

	Treat			Control		
	Mean	Variance	Skewness	Mean	Variance	Skewness
Demonstration	1.255	7.930	5.316	1.255	7.691	3.656
GDP/cap (log)	7.881	1.063	0.212	7.881	1.274	0.138
Tenure	6.604	26.430	1.016	6.605	28.600	1.004
Monitors	0.209	0.165	1.434	0.209	0.165	1.434
Vote fraud	0.059	0.055	3.753	0.059	0.055	3.754
Human rights	2.807	0.868	-0.056	2.807	1.307	0.078
GDP (log)	24.280	2.912	0.139	24.280	4.011	0.396
Human rights clause	0.592	0.242	-0.374	0.592	0.242	-0.374

Source: Own elaboration.

### **3.4. Case studies selection**

Finally, my statistical analyses are complemented by two chapters that analyse in depth several case studies of EU sanctions regimes. The selection of these case studies is done following my theoretical approach and the results of my statistical analyses. Chapter 5 focuses on three cases that my model predicts well, Fiji I (2001-2003), Fiji II (2006-2014), and Myanmar (1991-ongoing). In turn, Chapter 6 discusses the case studies of Belarus (2004-ongoing) and Zimbabwe (2002-ongoing), which my model fails to predict correctly. These cases constitute clear outliers to my theoretical approach, since they are weak regimes that self-select themselves into sanctions and remain in office despite continued sanctions over more than ten years.

The reason to include these case studies is driven by two main considerations. First, by tracing the strategic moves made by the EU and its targets during the sanctioning process, I am able to identify the causal mechanisms that take place at the target state level and which lead to the threatening and imposition of sanctions by the EU. Thus, the case studies allow me to assess the influence of the domestic institutional constraints faced by a target regime on its policy choices, and observe how these effectively affect the likelihood that the EU imposes sanctions. Put differently, the case studies allow me to 1) observe how the domestic institutional setting of a target regime is influenced by the threat and imposition of sanctions; and 2) how domestic institutions determine the outcome of the negotiation and the effects of sanctions.

Second, the case studies also allow me to control for a variable that is very difficult to measure quantitatively: the presence of black knights or sanctions busters. Indeed, the existence of third actors that provide assistance to a sanctioned country is often regarded as an important element of why sanctions fail (Galtung, 1967; Hufbauer et al., 2007).

However, generating an indicator that captures the assistance provided by black knights to a sanctioned country is a challenging task. Indeed, although some scholars have sought to measure this assistance by analysing drastic changes in the trade relations between two countries during a sanctions episode (Early, 2009, 2011), other forms of support tend to predominate nowadays. Indeed, the help granted by black knights might be diplomatic (i.e. vetoing UN resolutions at the UNSC, like China's veto against UN sanctions targeting Myanmar), military (i.e. by providing weapons to a sanctioned regime, like Russia's deployment of arms to Bashar al-Assad's regime), or financial (i.e. through the provision of aid, soft loans, and grants).

Finally, these activities are frequently undertaken with discretion, and hence no data are available to assess the extent to which black knights allow autocratic regimes to circumvent sanctions. An illustration of this secrecy is reflected in China's unwillingness to disclose the amount of aid it provided to the military regime in Fiji between 2006 and 2014 (Interview, 2015b). As a consequence of these difficulties, I employ the case studies to look inductively at the two outliers to my model – Belarus and Zimbabwe – to determine whether the assistance provided by black knights can explain the formers' resilience to sanctions.

### **3.5. Interview sampling strategy**

In order to complement the statistical analyses and provide more nuance to the qualitative case studies, I undertook 21 semi-structured elite interviews with officials from the European Commission, the European External Action Service, and EU member states. Given that the imposition of sanctions often follows secretive decision-

making procedures due to the sensitivity of the information that officials work with,<sup>35</sup> the interviews allowed me to obtain first-hand information about the process that led to the imposition of sanctions and about the negotiations and deliberations that took place between EU institutions, and between the EU and the sanctioned country. In addition, the interviews provided me with additional information and details of the challenges and obstacles that were found by decision-makers in the process of imposing, extending, and lifting sanctions.

The sampling rationale followed was guided by two main criteria: i) that the interviewees were officials involved in the design and implementation of sanctions at the European level; or, alternatively, ii) that the officials had worked or were working in relevant countries and regions where EU sanctions regimes had been imposed or were still in place. To identify potential interviewees, I employed several sampling strategies. First of all, I searched the web for references of EEAS officials working in the organizations' sanctions unit. Given the recent popularity of sanctions, it was relatively easy to track some of these officials, since they had participated in public events organised by think tanks and private foundations in Brussels. In addition, I also widened the scope of search to concepts such as "exports restrictions" to identify officials working on trade-related elements of those sanctions being implemented by the European Commission.

Second, I also employed a snowballing technique to obtain the contact details of other potential interviewees. Thus, after every interview, I kindly asked my interviewees for the contacting details of other officials who could provide additional and valuable

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<sup>35</sup> Since the information about potential targets of sanctions is often obtained by the intelligence services of EU member states, the latter are reluctant to share information that could risk the situation of their informants.

information for my research. In this way, I managed to arrange interviews with EU officials working in the geographical areas that I was covering in my case studies. A list of the interviewees and their positions can be seen below. The names of the interviewees are not disclosed due to confidentiality reasons.

**Table 3.9. List of interviewees**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Member state diplomat, Maghreb and Mashreq (MaMa) Working Group	Council of the European Union
Deputy head of unit, Sanctions Unit	EEAS
Policy officer, Sanctions Unit	EEAS
Desk officer, Ukraine	EEAS
Desk officer, Fiji (formerly)	EEAS
Desk officer, Fiji	EEAS
Policy officer, EaP-bilateral: Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and South Caucasus	EEAS
Desk officer, Myanmar	EEAS
Desk officer, Madagascar and Comoros (formerly Zimbabwe)	EEAS
Policy officer, Conflict Prevention and Mediation Instruments Division	EEAS
Desk officer, Syria	EEAS
Desk officer, Zimbabwe	EEAS
Desk officer, Guinea Conakry	EEAS
Policy officer, Foreign Policy Instrument II	European Commission
Desk officer, Belarus	European Commission
Desk officer, Fiji	European Commission
Desk officer, Myanmar	European Commission
Export Control Officer, (formerly sanctions coordinator)	European Commission
Desk officer, Syria	European Commission
Policy Officer, EU Delegation to Syria	European Commission
EU sanctions coordinator (formerly)	European Commission

### **3.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has laid down the research design and methods employed in this thesis. I have explained the reasons to generate an original dataset on EU sanctions, arguing that the two most comprehensive databases on sanctions underrepresent the measures imposed by the EU since the 1990s. I have also laid down the strategy followed during the data gathering process, and disclosed the primary and secondary sources employed for this purpose. Moreover, this chapter has also addressed the methodological choices taken to operationalise and codify the dependent variable SANCTION, as well as the main independent variable domestic institutions (i.e. autocratic regime type), and the remaining control variables used in this study. In addition, I have discussed certain methodological issues that might arise with the use of panel data, and explained the solutions that I have employed to tackle them. Finally, this chapter has raised the need to use a mixed-methods approach to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms that trigger the imposition of sanctions. Thus, I complement the statistical analysis with in depth case studies of EU sanctions episodes. I have selected a set of five case studies following the expectations of my theoretical approach, picking three typical cases that my model predicts well and two outliers that deviate from my predictions. In the next chapter I present the empirical results of my statistical analyses, discussing their implications for sanctions theory and research.

## **CHAPTER 4. EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

My theoretical argument (see Chapter 2) highlights the role of domestic institutions in determining the likelihood that a target regime is sanctioned. I argue that institutional settings at the target's level – and specifically, the size of the regime's  $W$  – provide ruling elites in different autocratic regimes with varying incentives to comply or defy a sender's threat of sanctions. Regimes that rely on smaller  $W$  to rule have a larger margin of manoeuvre to resist the threat and imposition of sanctions, as they are accountable to few people and face limited domestic challenges to their rule. By the same token, I claim that regimes with large  $W$  face many domestic constraints to resist the pressure of sanctions, and are therefore more inclined to find a negotiated settlement with a sender and comply. In brief, I expect that autocratic regimes with smaller  $W$  will be more inclined to resist the sender's threat and thus be sanctioned, whereas regimes with a larger  $W$  will be more likely to comply with the sender and avoid being sanctioned.

This chapter tests my argument empirically through the use of several regression analyses. The first section looks at the EU's imposition of democratic sanctions between 1989 and 2010 in a descriptive way. The second section presents the main models of the study, which address the two main hypotheses of the thesis. Specifically, I assess hypothesis 1 regarding the likelihood that weak regimes comply with the sender early, and then proceed to test hypothesis 2 regarding the probability that strong regimes are sanctioned more often than weaker regimes. The third section goes on to analyse the additional hypotheses of Chapter 2. First, it examines hypothesis 3 on the likelihood that countries with large  $W$  are more likely to face shorter spells of sanctions, since they should comply early with the sender. And second, it tests hypothesis 4 on the

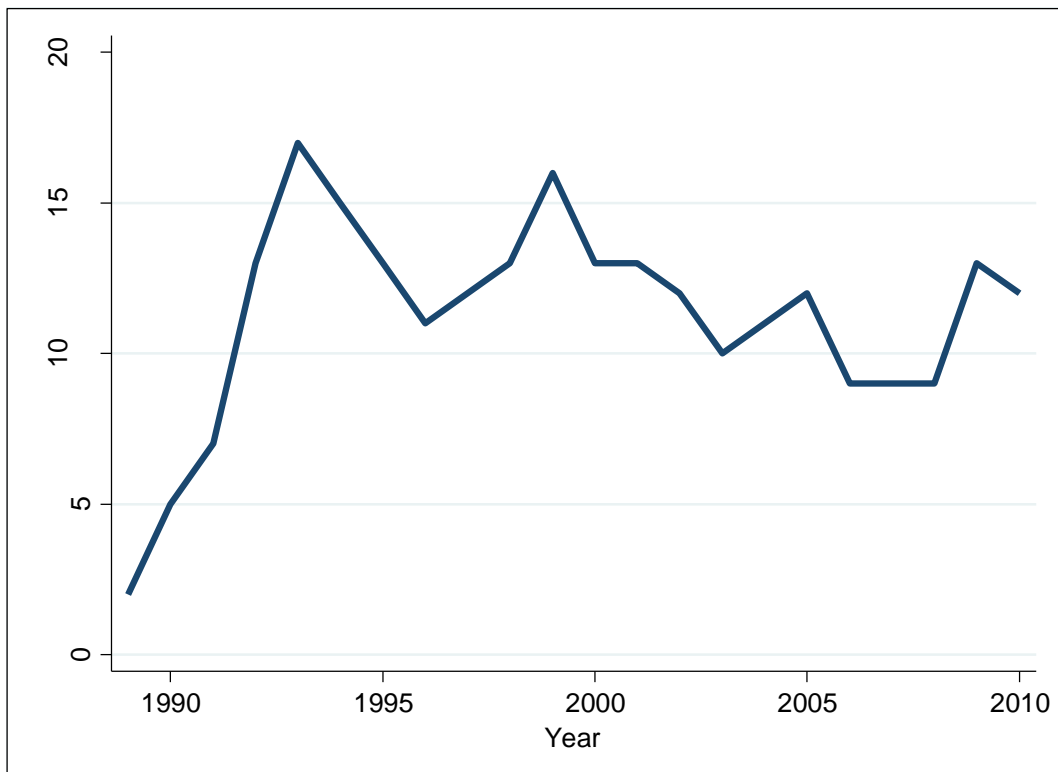
probability that multi-party regimes are more prone to be destabilized by sanctions than strong regimes. Finally, the last section concludes by discussing the findings of the statistical analyses and the implications that they have on the selection of the case studies that I analyse in Chapters 5 and 6.

#### **4.2. A descriptive look at the imposition of EU democratic sanctions**

The evolution of the EU as a sender of democratic sanctions has increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War (Jones, 2007). While prior to 1989 only one sanction regime had been imposed to address human rights and democratic concerns against the Apartheid regime in South Africa, the 1990s witnessed a quick and substantial increase in the use of democratic sanctions, reaching a peak of 17 sanctions regimes in place in 1993 (see Graph 4.1).



**Graph 4.1. Number of EU democratic sanctions**



Source: Own elaboration. The line represents the cumulative number of EU democratic sanctions regimes in place at any given year.

Although the 1990s opened a window of opportunity for the promotion of democracy and human rights (Burnell, 2000; Burnell and Calvert, 2005; Carothers, 1999; Huntington, 1993), the EU's sanctioning practice has not stopped with the new millennium. Rather, the EU has increasingly imposed sanctions autonomously in the absence of UN Security Council Resolutions (De Vries and Hazelzet, 2005). While a downward trend reaching a minimum of 9 sanctions regimes in force can be observed after 2005, the number of regimes in place has remained relatively stable during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, the EU's imposition of sanctions has increased again since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and, especially, since the

irruption of the Arab Spring in 2011.<sup>36</sup> Nowadays, the EU stands as one of the most active senders of sanctions alongside the US, as restrictive measures have become one of the most prominent instruments in the EU's foreign policy toolkit (Gebert, 2013; Lehne, 2012; Smith, 2008).

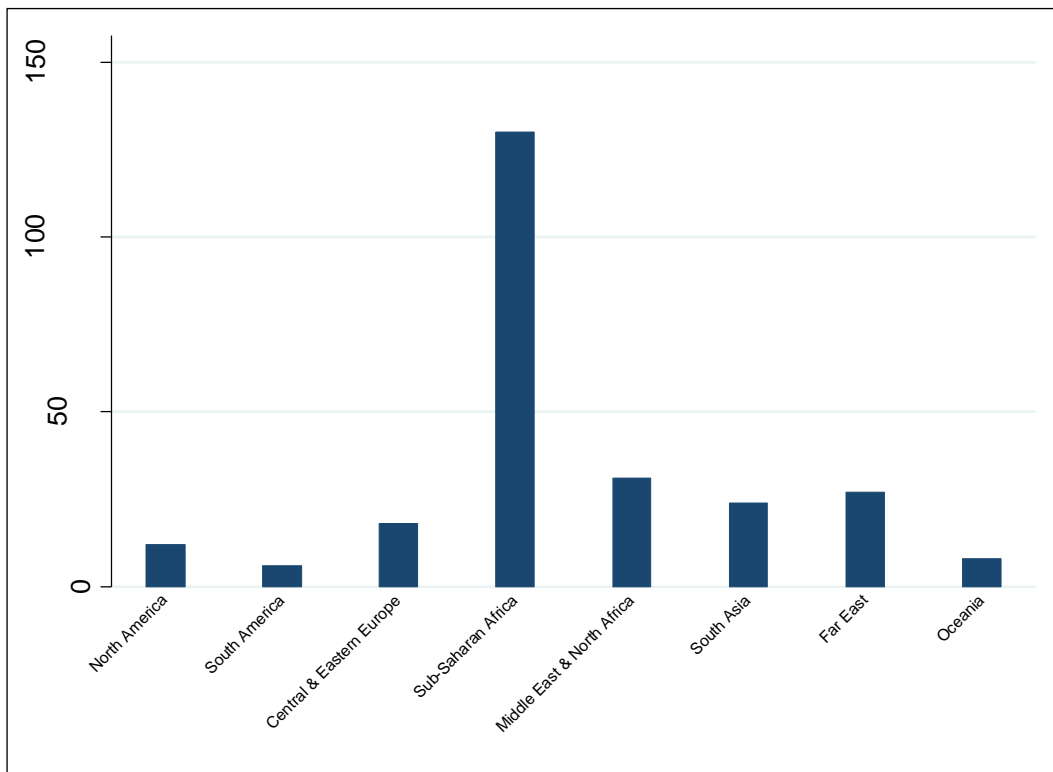
During the period 1989-2010, the EU imposed democratic sanctions on 39 different countries (see Table 3.2). This figure represents a total of 247 observations or 12.3% of the sample. However, the imposition of sanctions over the period under study also shows considerable variation across regions.<sup>37</sup> As Graph 4.2 illustrates, Sub-Saharan Africa stands out as the most sanctioned region, with 128 sanctions/years. This region alone accounts for half of the sample's sanctioned regimes (51.82%), followed in the distance by the Middle East & Northern Africa and the Far East (27 sanctions/years or 10.93% of the sanctioned observations in the sample respectively), South Asia (24 sanctions/years or 9.72%), and Central and Eastern Europe (17 sanctions/years or 6.88% of the sanctioned regimes). Finally, North America has been targeted 12 times (4.86%), Oceania 8 times (3.24%) and South America only 4 times (1.62% of the observations in the sample).

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<sup>36</sup>Although not shown in the graph, since 2011 the EU has imposed democratic sanctions against Libya, Syria, Iran, Ukraine, Indonesia, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.

<sup>37</sup> I use the categories provided by the Correlates of War (2014).

**Graph 4.2. Sanctions by region**



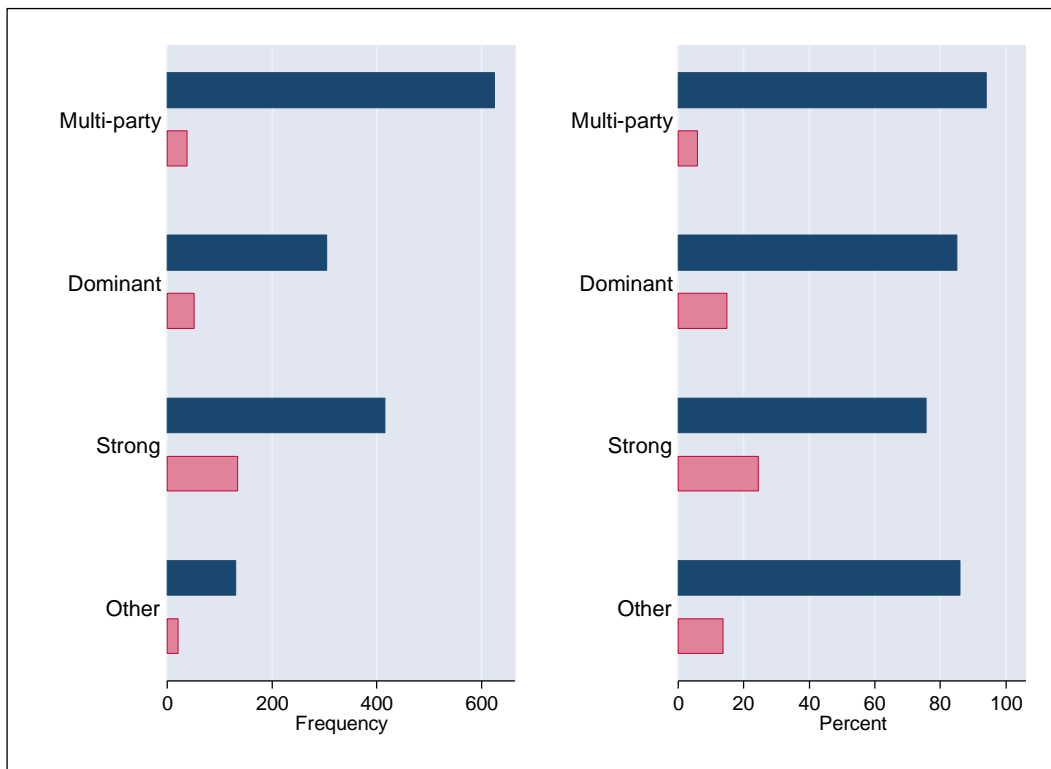
Source: Own elaboration. The graph employs the regions identified by the Correlates of War (2014).

A closer look at the sanctions regimes imposed in the period under study shows that sanctions have been applied unevenly amongst autocratic regimes. Graph 4.3 presents some descriptive figures on the number of sanctions imposed according to the type of autocratic regime. The left column of the graph displays frequencies of the number of sanctions imposed and shows that the EU has targeted "strong" regimes the most (134 times), followed in the distance by "dominant" (53 times) and "multi-party" regimes (39 times). Countries within the residual category "other" regimes were sanctioned a total of 21 times.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Note that "other" regimes is a residual category that groups together very different regime types like Iran, Libya, Somalia, or Angola. Unfortunately, these regimes are not easily classifiable within the other regime type categories.

**Graph 4.3. Sanctions by regime type**



Source: Own elaboration. Red bars represent regimes that were sanctioned, whilst blue bars represent non-sanctioned regimes.

The right hand side of the graph however provides a more revealing account. It shows the number of times that different regime types were targeted with sanctions as a percentage of the total number of countries within each regime type category respectively. The differences between the two sides of Graph 4.3 are revealing: as the right-hand side column evidences, less than 6% of the countries within the multi-party regime category were targeted with sanctions, being thus the least sanctioned regime type in relative terms. This contrasts with the category of strong regimes, as almost 25% of the observations within this category were sanctioned. Dominant regimes were targeted about 15% of the times, slightly more than countries within the residual category other regime types (13.82%).

This first descriptive evidence is in line with my expectations that regimes with a small W (i.e. strong regimes like military and one-party regimes) should be more likely to be sanctioned than regimes with a larger W (i.e. weak regimes like multi-party or dominant regimes). Nevertheless, while the evidence so far points to the right direction and constitutes a promising starting point to corroborate my hypotheses, descriptive statistics are not sufficient to confirm whether the difference in the EU's sanctioning behaviour is effectively due to different incentives generated by a target's domestic institutions. To control for the possibility that other factors might be driving the EU's response, I undertake more thorough multivariate analyses in the next sections.

### **4.3. Model specification**

In Chapter 2 I have developed a game-theoretic approach to the imposition of sanctions where two players, a sender and a target, interact. As shown in the "sanctions tree" (Graph 2.1), this interaction can lead to a variety of results where sanctions might eventually be imposed. Whether this outcome occurs or not depends fundamentally on the target's decision to comply with the sender (c) or not ( $\sim$ c). This is the first stage of the sanctions tree. If the target stands firm ( $\sim$ c), the sanctions tree proceeds to the second stage, where the sender has to decide whether to impose sanctions (s) or not ( $\sim$ s). Finally, if sanctions are imposed (s), the target has to re-assess its position in view of the new circumstances and decide whether it wants to redress its behaviour and comply (c) or not ( $\sim$ c). This is the third stage of the sanctions tree.

The differentiation between these stages is not trivial. Although the main focus of my study lies on the imposition of sanctions (stage 2), stages 1 and 2 are necessarily related, as the sender's decision to impose sanctions (s) is a function of the target's decision to

comply or resist. This suggests that strong autocratic regimes should have more incentives than their weaker counterparts to ignore the sender's threat and, as a consequence, should have a higher probability of being sanctioned than weak regimes. If this is true, target selection effects will be present, which will need to be modelled and incorporated into the model.

#### *4.3.1. A two-stage Heckman selection model*

To address the possibility that target selection effects might be present in the EU's decision to impose sanctions I employ a two-stage Heckman selection model (Heckman, 1976, 1979; Reed, 2000). This model controls for the likelihood that the two stages of the game tree – the compliance (selection) equation and the sanction (outcome) equation – are not independent from each other. More technically, the Heckman model assumes that the error terms of the selection and the outcome equations might be correlated, in which case they will bias the estimation of the outcome equation. The basic idea behind this model is that whilst the selection equation is completely observed – i.e. whether countries comply or not with the EU's threat –, we only have a selected or censored sample for the second equation – i.e. whether some regimes are sanctioned. This is because we only observe sanctions being imposed against those regimes that are willing to resist the sender's threat in the first stage, whereas we do not observe instances of sanctions against regimes that choose to comply with the sender (Drezner, 2003; Morgan and Miers, 1999; Smith, 1995).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In these instances, the mere threat of sanctions might have been enough to achieve a target's compliance.

The main focus of my thesis lies on the outcome equation of the two-stage Heckman selection model. This equation uses the imposition of sanctions as the dependent variable, where SANCTION is a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if sanctions are imposed against a country<sub>i</sub> in a given year<sub>t</sub>, and the value 0 if no sanctions are imposed. While measuring SANCTION is relatively straightforward, a more problematic scenario arises with the operationalization of COMPLIANCE as the dependent variable of the selection equation.

Measuring COMPLIANCE with a sender's threat is methodologically and empirically challenging (Kingsbury, 1997; Raustiala and Slaughter, 2002). Firstly, since complying is associated with weakness and thus entails domestic political costs for an acquiescing target (Dorussen and Mo, 2001; Fearon, 1994; Tomz, 2007; Weeks, 2008), it is generally difficult – if not impossible – to identify instances where a target regime openly backs down and agrees with the sender's terms (Drezner, 2003; Morgan and Miers, 1999). Even when compliance occurs, agreements between the sender and the target are likely to take place behind closed doors and hence, neither side might publicly acknowledge the target's compliance. Secondly, even in cases where a target publicly admits to have altered its behaviour, it remains complicated to track the causal link between a threat being made and a target's compliance being observed. In fact, targets rarely have incentives to back down publicly and are therefore likely to justify the change of behaviour on different reasons other than acquiescing with the sender's demands. Lastly, since the goals of sanctions are often multidimensional and might vary over time, it becomes difficult to confirm whether the original goals of sanctions have actually been achieved.

Bearing these limitations in mind, I construct a binary indicator of COMPLIANCE using the Political Terror Scale (Gibney et al., 2015; Wood and Gibney, 2010), a 5 level

scale that measures the level of political violence experienced in a country, where 1 stands for no politically motivated violence and 5 stands for widespread violence and violations of human rights. For easiness of interpretation, I invert the PTS scale and code an observation 0 (non-compliance) if a country scored 1 in a given year. Alternatively, a country scoring 2 or more in the inverted PTS in a given year is coded 1 (compliance).

A few remarks regarding this measure of “compliance” are necessary. First of all, although a regime’s level of respect for human rights does not directly reflect whether a target is complying with a sender’s demand or with the latter’s threat of sanctions, my decision to use this indicator as a proxy of compliance is driven by the difficulty to trace whether a target’s respect for human rights and democratic principles is a direct response to a sender’s demands or threat of sanctions. Indeed, by the same token that it is very difficult to identify instances where a sender issues a threat of sanctions (see above), it is challenging to identify instances where a target complies with a sender and improves its respect for human rights and democratic principles.

Thus, my choice to employ a country’s level of respect for human rights as a proxy of compliance is a partial – albeit imperfect – solution to address this empirical challenge. My decision to rely on the Political Terror Scale rather than on any other indicator is motivated by two considerations. First, as opposed to other indicators such as the Freedom House or the Polity IV Scale which measure a regime’s level of freedom or democracy, the Political Terror Scale is much more precise in its scope and in its accuracy, thereby reducing potential measurement error. Second, the latter two scales also correlate highly with the regime type dummies (the main independent variables of the thesis), thereby increasing the risk of multicollinearity in my analysis.



A second issue regarding my measure of compliance relates to the threshold that I choose to code a regime's compliance. Although, admittedly, my coding implies that only the worst violators of human rights will qualify as non-compliant, this threshold is chosen to make sure that my indicator captures a very restrictive notion of non-compliance that does not lump together cases that are very different from each other.<sup>40</sup> By only considering cases where target regimes show no respect for human rights, I can be sure that my measure divides countries between "clear violators" of human rights – and hence, non-compliant –, and the "rest" of regimes, which are more or less compliant. This strict dichotomous operationalization mitigates the measurement error, which in turn leads to better estimates (i.e. lower standard errors).

A third issue concerns the fact that my measure does not capture actual changes in the level of respect for human rights, but rather absolute levels of respect. Indeed, my measure does not capture whether a country has improved its respect of human rights with regard to the last year, which could arguably be seen as a sign of compliance. Although capturing the variation in a regime's level of respect for human rights between two years might be an appealing choice, my decision to use the absolute level of respect for human rights follows two considerations. First, the Political Terror Scale does not show much variation in regimes' respect of human rights between two years and, therefore, the cases that would qualify as compliant are relatively few in comparison to those that qualify as non-compliant. Using an alternative scale like the Physical Integrity Index does not solve this issue either, as it contains many missing observations that leads to a considerable loss of observations in my regression models.<sup>41</sup> Second, using the change in the level of respect of human rights is also problematic for the

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<sup>40</sup> I also test other thresholds coding COMPLIANCE 1 if a country scores above 2 in the PTS in a given year. The sensitivity of my measure is discussed in the Table 4.7 of the annex. Finally, I also employ the Physical Integrity Index (Cingranelli and Richards, 2010) as a robustness test, and the results are similar. The results are available from the author on request.

<sup>41</sup> Considering the relatively small size of my sample, this loss of observations can have an important effect on the results and bias my estimates.

models that I employ, as the iterations of my logarithmic models are not concave. It is for these reasons that I decide to rely on the absolute level of human rights respect.

In sum, my variable compliance is an imperfect but useful approximation to capture potential selection effects of targets that comply with the sender in the threat stage of my model. Although, admittedly, this option is suboptimal in several respects, and despite the practical and methodological problems that it faces, my approach is the first attempt in the literature to use a two-stage model to capture selection effects in the imposition of sanctions. Indeed, although the main concern of this thesis is to identify whether variation in the imposition of sanctions exists (i.e. in the second stage), I also make an effort to at least capture some of the variation that takes place in the first (or threat) stage of the sanctions game.

Due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variables of the two equations, I employ a heckprobit regression model (Agresti, 2013; Long and Freese 2014), where the selection stage models a target’s “compliance” with the EU’s threat and the outcome stage models the EU’s “imposition of sanctions”. Following conventional practice in the sanctions literature, I lag the independent variables by one year to reduce endogeneity problems. All models use entropy weights and robust standard errors clustered on country. Finally, to model time dependence I include cubic polynomials of the time elapsed since the last “compliance” or “sanctions” event occurred in the selection and the outcome equations respectively (Carter and Signorino, 2010). Formally, the first stage or selection equation can be written as

$$COMPLIANCE_{it} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 Multi - party_{it} + \beta_2 Dominant_{it} + \beta_3 Other_{it} + \beta_4 X_{1it} + \omega_j + t + t^2 + t^3 + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where COMPLIANCE is a dichotomous dependent variable that takes the values 0 or 1,  $\alpha_0$  is the intercept,  $\beta_1 - \beta_3$  are the regression coefficients of the main independent variables,  $\beta_4 X_{1it}$  are the coefficients of a group of covariates that appear in the selection equation but not in the outcome equation,  $\omega_j$  are region fixed effects,  $t - t^3$  are time polynomials to account for time dependence, and  $\varepsilon_{it}$  is the error term.

The specification of the second stage or outcome equation of the Heckprobit model is

$$SANCTION_{it} = \alpha_1 + \gamma_1 Multi - party_{it} + \gamma_2 Dominant_{it} + \gamma_3 Other_{it} + \gamma_4 X_{2it} + \omega_j + t + t^2 + t^3 + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where SANCTION is a dichotomous dependent variable that takes the values 0 and 1,  $\alpha_1$  is the intercept,  $\gamma_1 - \gamma_3$  are the regression coefficients of the main independent variables,  $\gamma_4 X_{2it}$  are the coefficients of a group of independent variables that only appear in the second stage of the model,  $\omega_j$  are region fixed effects,  $t - t^3$  are time polynomials to account for time dependence, and  $\varepsilon_{it}$  is the error term.

#### 4.4. Empirical results

The results of different specifications of the Heckman selection model are presented in Table 4.1. The table is divided into odd-numbered and even-numbered columns, where the former display the coefficients of the selection stage and the latter present those of the outcome stage. The main independent variable is “multi-party” regimes, while “strong” regimes are chosen as the baseline category. Columns 1 and 2 introduce the

most basic formulation of my model, where I test the likelihood that different types of regimes are sanctioned by the EU. I then compare the fit of my model with other explanations of the literature. First, I control for the sender's economic leverage vis-à-vis a target (model 2); then I account for the salience of the target regime's violation (model 3); the fourth model controls for the target's instability; the fifth model controls for the sender's costs; and, finally, the last model presents the full model with all the controls. As can be read from the p-values at the bottom the table, the selection and outcome equations are correlated at statistically significant levels in all models, thus confirming that the use of a Heckman two-stage selection model is indeed appropriate.<sup>42</sup>

#### *4.4.1. Compliance*

The results of the first stage of the Heckman selection model provide strong support for hypothesis 1 and confirm that weak autocratic regimes with large  $W$  are more likely to comply with the threat of sanctions than their stronger counterparts. As can be seen in the odd-numbered columns of Table 4.1, the coefficient for multi-party regimes is positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level and shows that multi-party regimes have a higher probability than strong regimes to acquiesce with the EU. This result confirms my expectation that multi-party regimes face incentives to reach a negotiated settlement with the sender during the threat stage in order to avoid being sanctioned.

The coefficient for dominant regimes is also positive, suggesting that these regimes are also more likely to comply with the EU than strong regimes. However, compared to multi-party regimes, the coefficient only reaches marginal statistical significance at the

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<sup>42</sup> I address the sensitivity of my results with regard to the measure of compliance in the robustness tests that I present in the annex.

10% level in the last model, even though it is close to statistical significance in all other models ( $p \approx 0.14$ ). Thus, this relationship provides some – albeit limited – evidence that these regimes are also more likely to comply with the EU at the threat stage.

Finally, other regimes are also positively related to COMPLIANCE, yet the coefficients never reach statistical significance in the different model specifications. Consequently, the evidence cannot confirm that other types of regimes are more likely to comply with the EU's threat than strong regimes.

Another noteworthy result is the positive coefficient of the variable Exports/GDP in the COMPLIANCE stages of all models, since the positive sign of the coefficient supports the game theoretic expectation that weak regimes that are highly dependent on the EU's common market are more likely to comply with the EU before sanctions are imposed. However, there is no empirical evidence to support this argument is weak, as the coefficient is never statistically significant,<sup>43</sup> although it comes close to statistical significance in some models ( $p \approx 0.12$ ). Nevertheless, this result indicates that a vague relationship between a target's exports-dependence from the EU and its COMPLIANCE exists. Substantially, this implies that commercially dependent countries are likely to calibrate their response to the EU's threat accordingly and that, as a consequence, they will be less likely to be sanctioned by the EU. Methodologically, this result shows the relevance of modelling selection bias and supports the use of a two-stage Heckman selection model.

On a different note, the results show that multi-party and dominant regimes that have signed a human rights clause with the EU are, on average, more likely to comply with

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<sup>43</sup> The results are similar if I use the variables Imports/GDP or Trade/GDP instead of Exports/GDP. The results also hold if I use alternative measures of COMPLIANCE (see Table 4.7 of the annex) or if I run the COMPLIANCE stage alone.

EU demands. The coefficient for this variable is statistically significant at conventional levels in all models. The result reflects the relevance of the legal elements enshrined in the human rights clause, which allow the EU to take ‘appropriate measures’ if the other part of the agreement fails to meet its commitment to respect human rights and democratic principles (Bartels, 2005). However, it also suggests that countries that are bound by the clause are fearful of the consequences that might be imposed on them if they do not respect these principles (Donno, 2012). In this sense, the political conditionality enshrined in the clause seems to exert a dissuasive effect on third countries.

Finally, the coefficient for GDP per capita is also positive but not statistically significant, implying that more developed countries are less likely to comply with the EU’s threat. Also, the coefficient for population is negative and statistically significant, suggesting that larger countries – probably because of their strength – are less likely to comply with the EU.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Due to serious multicollinearity between the variables GDP/capita and GDP, I control for the size of a country as a proxy for its economic strength.

**Table 4.1. Heckprobit selection model. Compliance and sanctions imposition**

VARIABLES	Base model		Sender leverage		Salience violation		Target instability		Sender costs		Full model	
	(1) Compliance	(2) Sanction	(3) Compliance	(4) Sanction	(5) Compliance	(6) Sanction	(7) Compliance	(8) Sanction	(9) Compliance	(10) Sanction	(11) Compliance	(12) Sanction
<b>Multi-party</b>	<b>0.465**</b> (0.150)	<b>-0.463*</b> (0.220)	<b>0.477**</b> (0.153)	<b>-0.512*</b> (0.221)	<b>0.466**</b> (0.151)	<b>-0.461*</b> (0.210)	<b>0.464**</b> (0.154)	<b>-0.427+</b> (0.220)	<b>0.500**</b> (0.155)	<b>-0.615*</b> (0.239)	<b>0.502**</b> (0.158)	<b>-0.572**</b> (0.221)
Dominant	0.293 (0.202)	-0.095 (0.257)	0.315 (0.201)	-0.208 (0.252)	0.293 (0.201)	-0.147 (0.274)	0.308 (0.205)	-0.125 (0.260)	0.329 (0.207)	-0.238 (0.256)	0.352+ (0.209)	-0.324 (0.266)
Other	0.077 (0.212)	-0.252 (0.370)	0.090 (0.212)	-0.284 (0.344)	0.078 (0.211)	-0.249 (0.375)	0.057 (0.244)	-0.325 (0.571)	0.030 (0.225)	-0.345 (0.407)	0.058 (0.248)	-0.627 (0.641)
Human rights		-0.561*** (0.087)		-0.595*** (0.086)		-0.552*** (0.088)		-0.568*** (0.095)		-0.615*** (0.096)		-0.628*** (0.106)
Δ Democracy		-0.201* (0.081)		-0.216** (0.079)		-0.190* (0.096)		-0.234* (0.094)		-0.198* (0.082)		-0.209* (0.102)
Exports/GDP (log)	0.075 (0.053)		0.066 (0.054)	0.081 (0.066)	0.075 (0.053)		0.079 (0.055)		0.095 (0.059)		0.093 (0.059)	0.054 (0.088)
Aid/GDP (log)				-0.168** (0.057)								
Coup d'état								0.220 (0.368)				0.267 (0.376)
Monitors								0.152 (0.188)				0.203 (0.192)
Vote fraud								0.050 (0.289)				-0.174 (0.291)
Tenure									0.037 (0.028)			0.031 (0.027)
Democratization									-0.122 (0.088)			-0.128 (0.089)
Demonstration									0.083*** (0.019)			0.090*** (0.022)
GDP growth (log)									-0.252* (0.107)			-0.278** (0.100)
Gas (log)										-0.091+ (0.054)		-0.078 (0.049)
FDI/GDP (log)										0.004 (0.068)		0.074 (0.071)
Trade volume (log)										0.136 (0.096)		
GDP (log)		0.012 (0.053)				0.016 (0.053)		-0.074 (0.063)				
Human rights clause	0.235* (0.105)		0.233* (0.110)		0.232* (0.105)		0.258* (0.109)		0.282** (0.107)		0.304** (0.112)	
GDP/cap (log)	0.108 (0.097)		0.079 (0.107)		0.108 (0.097)		0.126 (0.099)		0.124 (0.100)		0.144 (0.100)	
Population (log)	-0.109** (0.039)		-0.111** (0.040)	-0.073 (0.066)	-0.109** (0.039)		-0.097* (0.041)		-0.098** (0.037)	-0.046 (0.095)	-0.086* (0.039)	-0.030 (0.091)
Constant	3.460** (1.070)	2.150+ (1.282)	3.785** (1.174)	4.131** (1.542)	3.461** (1.071)	1.977 (1.290)	3.123** (1.173)	4.241** (1.524)	2.973** (1.066)	0.885 (1.677)	2.614* (1.155)	2.945+ (1.632)
Observations	1,604		1,584		1,604		1,558		1,519		1,481	
Countries	106		104		106		106		102		102	
Chi2	188.0		193.6		216.0		214.3		185.3		322.0	
Prob>chi2	0.0003		0.0006		0.0015		0.0017		0.0028		0.0393	
Log pseudolikelihood	-332.934		-326.976		-332.384		-317.714		-322.492		-307.337	
Time polynomials	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Region FE	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
 Note: Baseline: Strong regimes.

#### 4.4.2. *Imposition of sanctions*

The findings become more interesting in the second stage of the Heckman model, which tests hypothesis 2 regarding the likelihood that regimes with small *W* are sanctioned more often than those with large *W*. The models of Table 4.1 test different assumptions made in the literature. First, I present the base model in column 2. This model regresses the dependent variable *SANCTION* on the main independent variable autocratic regime type, whilst controlling for the respect of human rights, the quick deterioration or improvement of democracy, and the GDP of the target country.

The results of the outcome stage of the Heckman selection model provide strong support to my theoretical argument that multi-party regimes are less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes. As I expect, the coefficient for multi-party regimes is negative and statistically significant at the 5% level or better in all models.<sup>45</sup> Importantly, this result holds in all models regardless of the model specification, and even when I control for other possible explanations regarding the imposition of sanctions. Moreover, the strength of my results is corroborated by several robustness checks where I run different models and include additional controls.<sup>46</sup> Thus, this finding confirms my theoretical argument that selection effects are present at the target regime's level and that these are mediated by its domestic institutional setting. Most importantly, the use of a two-stage Heckman selection model shows that an important variation in the EU's sanctioning practice exists, and that weak regimes with large *W* like multi-party regimes are systematically less likely to be punished than their stronger counterparts with small *W* because the former comply with the EU during the threat stage, whereas the latter prefer to defy it.

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<sup>45</sup> The only exception is model 4, where the coefficient is almost significant at the 5% level ( $p \approx 0.053$ ).

<sup>46</sup> The results remain similar if I run the sanctions imposition stage alone. In addition, I have also run models with country fixed effects, year fixed effects, and country random effects. The results remain identical and are displayed in Table 4.8 in the annex. Finally, I have also run rare events logistic regressions (King and Zeng, 2001). The results are available from the author on request.



The results also show that dominant and other regimes are negatively related to SANCTION in all models, suggesting that they are also less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes. However, while the sign of the coefficients points to the predicted relationship, the coefficients of these regime type categories do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance in any of the models. Therefore, not enough statistical evidence exists to corroborate that these regimes are also less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes.

Besides the effect of regime type on the probability of being sanctioned, high levels of human rights are negatively and strongly related to the imposition of sanctions, reaching statistical significance at the 0.001 level in all models. Thus, countries that employ state-sponsored violence indiscriminately against their own population are sanctioned more often than regimes that do not violate human rights. The same is true for countries that have experienced a sudden change in the level of democracy. As the negative and statistically significant coefficient of  $\Delta$  Democracy evidences, countries that have improved their level of democracy in the last year are less likely to be sanctioned, whilst those where democracy has experienced a sudden deterioration are more likely to be targeted with EU sanctions.<sup>47</sup>

Turning to the second model regarding the sender's economic leverage, a target's commercial dependence on the EU does not seem to matter in the EU's decision to impose sanctions. Indeed, the coefficient for Exports/GDP is positive and not significant.<sup>48</sup> However, it is possible that this result is tempered by the inclusion of Exports/GDP in the first stage of the

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<sup>47</sup> To some extent, the statistically significant and strong relationship between SANCTION and Human rights and between SANCTION and  $\Delta$  Democracy could be anticipated, since my analysis focuses on those measures that the EU imposed to address human rights and democratic shortcomings in target countries.

<sup>48</sup> The results become statistically significant if I employ a target's imports (Imports/GDP) or overall trade dependence (Trade/GDP) on the EU. In those cases, the relationship is positive and significant, implying that countries that are commercially dependent on the EU are more likely to be sanctioned. However, the coefficients do not reach statistical significance when I drop Aid/GDP from the model, thus suggesting that the results might be driven by multicollinearity. The results are available from the author.

Heckman model and hence, that it is simply reflecting that commercially dependent targets are more prone to comply with the sender at the threat stage.

Also interesting is the negative and statistically significant coefficient for Aid/GDP.<sup>49</sup> This result shows that target regimes that are dependent on EU aid are less likely to be sanctioned. The finding is theoretically relevant, since the negative sign seems to suggest that EU leverage is indeed effective in achieving the compliance of autocratic regimes which are heavily dependent on its aid (Donno, 2012). However, this result does not hold if I include Aid/GDP in the compliance stage, as the coefficient is negative and not statistically significant.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the statistical significance of the coefficient needs to be interpreted differently. One possible explanation is that EU aid is allocated strategically and that countries that receive large amounts of development assistance are allies of the EU or of its member states or are of strategic importance to them (Alesina and Dollar, 2000; Carey, 2007; Crawford, 1997; Del Biondo, 2011; Neumeyer, 2003; Perkins and Neumayer, 2010). As a consequence, they are sanctioned less frequently than countries with which the sender has a hostile relation (Drezner, 1998, 1999; Nielsen, 2013). Unfortunately however, it is not possible to corroborate either of these arguments with my model, and additional research and data would be required to test this explanation.

The next model (Column 6) displays the result of controlling for the salience of a target's violation. As it can be seen, none of the variables reaches statistical significance. A surprising finding that contradicts other studies other studies which claim that Western countries are more likely to impose sanctions against salient violations like coups or flawed elections

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<sup>49</sup> Since GDP is highly correlated with Aid/GDP (-0.61), I use the variable population to control for the size of a country instead.

<sup>50</sup> The results are available from the author on request.

(Laakso et al., 2006; Saltnes, 2013) is that neither the staging of coups d'état,<sup>51</sup> nor the rigging of elections seem to predict the imposition of EU sanctions. Although both coefficients are positively related to SANCTION, they do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. This mismatch between my results and the findings of other studies might simply point precisely to the presence of selection bias in the study of sanctions imposition. Noteworthy, studies that find a correlation between the salience of a target's violation and the EU's imposition of sanctions tend to focus on cases where the outcome of the bargaining process led to the use of economic statecraft. Thus, it is likely that the cases analysed in these studies are strong regimes that self-select themselves into sanctions and that this correlation disappears when other control cases are included in the analysis.

Finally, the model also shows that the presence of international monitors during the holding of elections is positively related to SANCTION, but the result is not statistically significant. The positive sign suggests that the presence of monitors does not exert a dissuasive effect on the behaviour of autocrats, but that monitors provide senders with reliable information about the situation on the ground and increase thereby the likelihood that sanctions are imposed. However, the lack of conclusive evidence to corroborate this claim might simply imply that the presence of international observers only affects the enforcement of sanctions under specific scenarios. As Donno (2010) suggests, enforcement might be more likely when the geopolitical relevance of a target regime is not high for a sender, or when the monitoring mission's verdict about the quality of the elections is conclusive and provides overwhelming evidence about the target regime's wrongdoing. In any case, the inclusion of these control variables does not alter my results.

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<sup>51</sup> I also control for "successful coups d'état", but the coefficient does not reach statistical significance either.

Model 4 (column 8) controls for a target's domestic (in)stability. This model provides evidence that targets self-select themselves into sanctions, but also that senders pick their targets selectively. First, the model shows that regimes facing many anti-government demonstrations are more likely to be sanctioned. This finding can be interpreted in two different lights. On the one hand, senders might regard popular upheavals against a target regime as a sign of weakness and as an opportunity to push for regime change (Drury, 1998; Hufbauer et al., 2007; Soest and Wahman, 2015). For instance, some analysts have portrayed the imposition of sanctions against Viktor Yanukovich's brutal repression of the Maidan demonstrators in Ukraine in this light (Satell, 2014). On the other hand however, it is also possible that senders impose sanctions to signal their disapproval of the target regime's policies, and to increase the target's regime cost of non-compliance. In this regard, the EU's sanctions against Uzbekistan in 2005 following the regime's crackdown of the demonstrations are a good example of such a scenario.

The model also shows that countries that are growing economically are less likely to be sanctioned. Indeed, GDP growth is negatively related to SANCTION and statistically significant at the 5% level. Although it is difficult to make sense of this result, it might imply that a target's economic health dissuades the EU from initiating a coercion attempt. In this sense, the EU might regard the target's economic performance as a sign of the latter's strength, and therefore it might anticipate that the target will not yield even if sanctions are imposed.

The negative but not statistically significant coefficient for democratization is also relevant, as it implies that a country's long-term democratization process is unrelated to the EU's decision to impose sanctions.<sup>52</sup> Finally, the model also provides evidence that an autocratic

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<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the result comes close to statistical significance at  $p=0.16$ .

regime's tenure is positively related to SANCTION, but does not reach statistical significance ( $p \approx 0.12$ ). Although it cannot be confirmed, this result points to the existence of selection bias, as leaders who have been in power for many years are likely to exert a tighter control of their domestic political institutions and be in a powerful position vis-à-vis its domestic challengers. Thus, autocrats who have been in office for prolonged periods of time are well aware of their strength and ability to withstand sanctions, being thereby more likely to self-select themselves into sanctions.

Moving on to the fifth model (column 10) which controls for the costs to the sender, the results show that the existence of large reserves of gas is negatively related to SANCTION. The coefficient is statistically significant at the 10% level and provides some evidence that countries that possess large reserves of gas are less likely to be sanctioned. However, the weakness of this relation cannot fully corroborate the assumption that the EU is reluctant to use tough measures against countries it depends on for the import of fossil fuels (Warkotsch, 2006, 2011; Youngs, 2008a). The coefficient of oil (not shown here due to multicollinearity problems with the variable gas) is positive, but does not come close to conventional levels of statistical significance.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, large stocks of foreign direct investment (FDI) are not correlated with the EU's decision to impose sanction either, as the coefficient is positive but not even close to statistical significance. This result is somewhat counterintuitive as one would expect businesses to lobby against sanctions if these affect their interests (Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 1988, 1992). Nevertheless, it is possible to explain this result in two ways. First, the

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<sup>53</sup> This result is likely to be driven by missing observations, as most of the regimes in the Middle East who are important oil producers are monarchies and thus drop automatically from the models due to no variation of the dependent variable.

aggregate data employed<sup>54</sup> makes it difficult to ascertain whether countries that are sanctioned are net recipients of large amounts of EU FDI, or whether FDI originates mainly from non-EU countries. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether EU businesses are being negatively affected by sanctions or not.<sup>55</sup> Second, the positive effect might be explained by the behaviour of third countries in replacing the EU's investment in a targeted country. As Lektzian and Biglaiser (2013) have noted, third countries' investors behave opportunistically and are keen to replace the investment of sender countries quickly after sanctions have been imposed.

Finally, the EU's aggregate volume of trade with a target country is positively related to sanctions, but is not statistically significant. Thus, high levels of trade do not seem to matter in the EU's decision to impose sanctions, and my model cannot corroborate the claim made in qualitative studies that the EU is less likely to sanction countries where it has important commercial interests (Brummer, 2009; Hyde-Price, 2006; Youngs, 2004). However, this result might only be disguising the fact that trade relations matter at the member states' level, and not at the aggregate level. In other words, it is possible that commercial linkages count at the level of the EU's member states, as EU countries diverge in their geographical and cultural trade linkages and preferences. However, since controlling how the individual member states' commercial interests affects the EU's decision to impose sanctions goes far beyond the possibilities of my models, I will pay attention to this issue in the qualitative case studies of Chapters 5 and 6.

Finally, it is possible that sanctions imposed against one country might increase the probability that neighbouring countries will be sanctioned, too. As often occurs with

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<sup>54</sup> My model employs World Bank data, which measure the net inflows of FDI in current \$US in a country in a given year (World Bank, 2014b). Unfortunately, no reliable data on EU FDI in third countries was available at the time of writing.

<sup>55</sup> A different way to interpret this could be to think that the EU is willing to sanction a third country to protect the investment of its businesses.

democratization processes (Huntington, 1993; Whitehead, 2001), it is feasible that instability in one country spills over to neighbouring countries, and that as a consequence, the latter end up being targeted with sanctions as well. Examples of such scenarios include the Arab Spring, the conflicts in West Africa or the war in the Former Yugoslavia. To control for spatial interdependence and for the possibility that sanctions may cluster by region, I have run a model with a variable that controls for the cumulative number of sanctions imposed in a particular region over time. The coefficient of this variable however is negative and not significant, meaning that sanctions do not cluster by region and do not influence the EU's decision to employ sanctions.<sup>56</sup>

#### *4.4.3. Magnitude of the effect*

Table 4.2 shows the substantive effect of the independent variables on the imposition of sanctions. The results are obtained using Stata's program Clarify (King, Tomz and Wittenberg, 2000; Tomz, Wittenberg and King, 2003) and display the substantive effect of those independent variables that are statistically significant in the model and whose effect is also statistically significant. The second column of Table 4.2 shows the probability (percentage) of being sanctioned when moving from the minimum to the maximum value of each explanatory variable whilst holding all other variables of the model to their mean or

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<sup>56</sup> These results are available from the author. Since this variable is skewed to the right, I have also run models with the natural log of the cumulative number of sanctions by region. The results do not change. I also test whether the distance between a target regime's capital and Brussels matters in the EU's imposition of sanctions using the CEPII's dataset (Mayer and Zignago, 2011). This indicator is often employed to capture other types of linkages that might influence the sender's decision to impose sanctions (Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, 2008). However, the coefficient is negative and not statistically significant, implying that the distance between the EU and the target regime does not influence the EU's decision to impose sanctions.

modal values. All categorical variables are set to their mode, whilst all continuous variables are fixed at their means.<sup>57</sup>

**Table 4.2. Magnitude of the effect on the imposition of sanctions**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>[95% Conf. Interval]</b>	
Multi-party	<b>-25.34</b>	0.092	-0.433	-0.075
Demonstration	<b>16.61</b>	0.736	0.040	0.329
Aid/GDP (log)	<b>-29.27</b>	0.237	-0.714	0.194
$\Delta$ Democracy	<b>-49.29</b>	0.290	-0.880	0.202
Human rights	<b>-58.05</b>	0.125	-0.785	-0.304
GDP growth (log)	<b>-27.39</b>	0.182	-0.624	0.079

Source: Own elaboration. Categorical variables set to their modal value, continuous variables to their mean. Changes measure the effect of moving from the minimum to the maximum value of the explanatory variables. These variables are statistically significant in at least one of the model specifications. The baseline category is strong regimes.

First and foremost, the results show that multi-party regimes are 25% less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes when holding all other variables at their mean/mode. This effect is substantive and shows the importance of domestic institutions in determining the likelihood that autocratic regimes are sanctioned. In addition, countries facing 6 or more anti-government demonstrations a year have almost 34% more chances of being sanctioned than those countries without protests. Table 4.2 also shows that countries that are heavily dependent on EU aid are 29% less likely to be sanctioned than countries that are not aid dependent when holding all other variables constant. This strong effect suggests that selection effects are operating in the EU's imposition of sanctions, as countries on which the EU exerts a big leverage are more likely to comply in the threat stage and therefore are less prone to be punished. Moreover, countries that are experiencing economic growth are 27% less likely to be sanctioned than those countries whose economy is contracting.

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<sup>57</sup> The confidence intervals are relatively large as a consequence of the low number of observations of sanctioned countries in the dataset.



Finally, the results illustrate that countries that show higher respect for human rights are 58% less likely to be sanctioned than those regimes that systematically violate the rights of their citizens. Moreover, countries that have experienced a sudden improvement in the level of democracy are 49% less likely to be sanctioned than those countries where the level of democracy has deteriorated most.

The effect of sudden changes in the level of democracy is relatively large and needs further clarification, as it might be pointing to the fact that regimes with large W are more likely to be on the way of democratization. As a consequence, it is possible that the EU refrains from sanctioning these regimes to avoid any disruption in the process. In fact, the EU might be aware that sanctions can have a negative effect on democratizing countries' regimes and other instruments like positive conditionality, incentives and engagement might be a better strategy to foster political liberalization (Ethier, 2003; Levitsky and Way, 2005).

Moreover, some scholars have claimed that the electoral competition present in multi-party regimes makes them more likely to democratize than other types of autocratic regimes (Brownlee, 2009; Hadenius and Teorell, 2007). Although 'the assumption that hybrid regimes are (or should be) moving in a democratic direction lacks empirical foundation' (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 4), I carry out an additional robustness test to rule out this possibility. Table 4.3 below displays the bivariate correlation between one-year ( $\Delta$  Democracy) and five-year average changes in the level of democracy (Democratization) and the size of the W and/or the autocratic regime type categories respectively. As it can be read from the table, regimes with large W are positively correlated with sudden changes in democracy ( $\Delta$  Democracy) at statistically significant levels, even though the strength of the correlation is relatively weak ( $\beta=0.15$ ). Furthermore, the correlation between  $\Delta$  Democracy and multi-party is also positive, but the strength of the coefficient is even weaker ( $\beta=0.01$ ) and not statistically significant.

**Table 4.3. Bivariate correlation between democratization, regime type, and W**

	$\Delta$ Democracy	Democratization	W
W	0.148***	0.02	1
Multi-party	0.01	0.03	0.55***
Dominant	0.04	0.04	-0.13***
Strong	-0.04	-0.07**	-0.40***
Other	0.02	0.01	-0.09***

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Source: Own elaboration.  $\Delta$  Democracy measures sudden changes in the level of democracy between year<sub>t</sub> and year<sub>t-1</sub>, whereas Democratization measures the moving average of the level of democracy between year<sub>t</sub> and year<sub>t-5</sub>.

To control whether some regimes are more likely to democratize, I run additional regressions that interact multi-party with  $\Delta$  Democracy (Multi-party\* $\Delta$ Democracy) and democratization (Multi-party\*Democratization) respectively. If regimes with large W (i.e. multi-party regimes) are indeed more likely to be democratizing – and thus, less likely to be sanctioned –, we should expect the interaction terms to be negatively related to the imposition of sanctions at statistically significant levels. The results of these models<sup>58</sup> however show that the interaction terms are negative but never close to statistical significance. Thus, the assumption that multi-party regimes are less likely to be sanctioned by the EU because they are more prone to democratize does not hold the empirical test.<sup>59</sup>

Consequently, the large effect of  $\Delta$  Democracy needs to be explained differently. First, it is still feasible to believe that the EU might be reluctant to sanction democratizing countries, as sanctions may undermine rather than contribute to a target's process of political liberalization (Peksen and Drury, 2010). If this is the case however, the EU's decision will be unrelated to the type of autocratic regime. Second, the strong effect might also be the result of autocrats in

<sup>58</sup> The results are available from the author.

<sup>59</sup> I have also run models that interact the size of the W with democratization, but the results are not statistically significant either.

democratizing countries being weak leaders who have to provide public goods to remain in power. In the absence of natural resources or large amounts of foreign aid, autocrats can only increase the provision of public goods by democratizing (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2009; Wright, 2009). In fact, democratization processes are often led by new office holders who undertake reforms in order to provide public goods to a larger  $W$  and strengthen their position at home in return (Baccini and Urpelainen, 2014a, b; Mansfield and Pevehouse, 2006; Schimmelfennig, 2007; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005).

#### **4.5. Additional evidence**

So far, my results have confirmed the expectations of the first and the second stage of the sanctions tree by empirically corroborating hypotheses 1 and 2. This section deals with the third stage of the game tree and tests the additional hypotheses 3 and 4, which focus on the effect of sanctions on autocratic regimes once negative measures have been imposed.

##### *4.5.1. Duration of sanctions*

Recall that Hypothesis 3 states that autocratic regimes with large  $W$  should be targeted for shorter periods of time. On the one hand, dictators with large  $W$  should recognize that they have misinterpreted the credibility of the EU's threat and should, accordingly, rectify and acquiesce with the EU early after sanctions have been imposed. On the other hand, strong regimes with small  $W$  should be more likely to face longer spells of sanctions, as they are more willing to resist sanctions than to alter their behaviour and comply (Dorussen and Mo, 2001; Hovi et al., 2005). In brief, I expect sanctions to last shorter when imposed against multi-party regimes than when used against strong regimes.

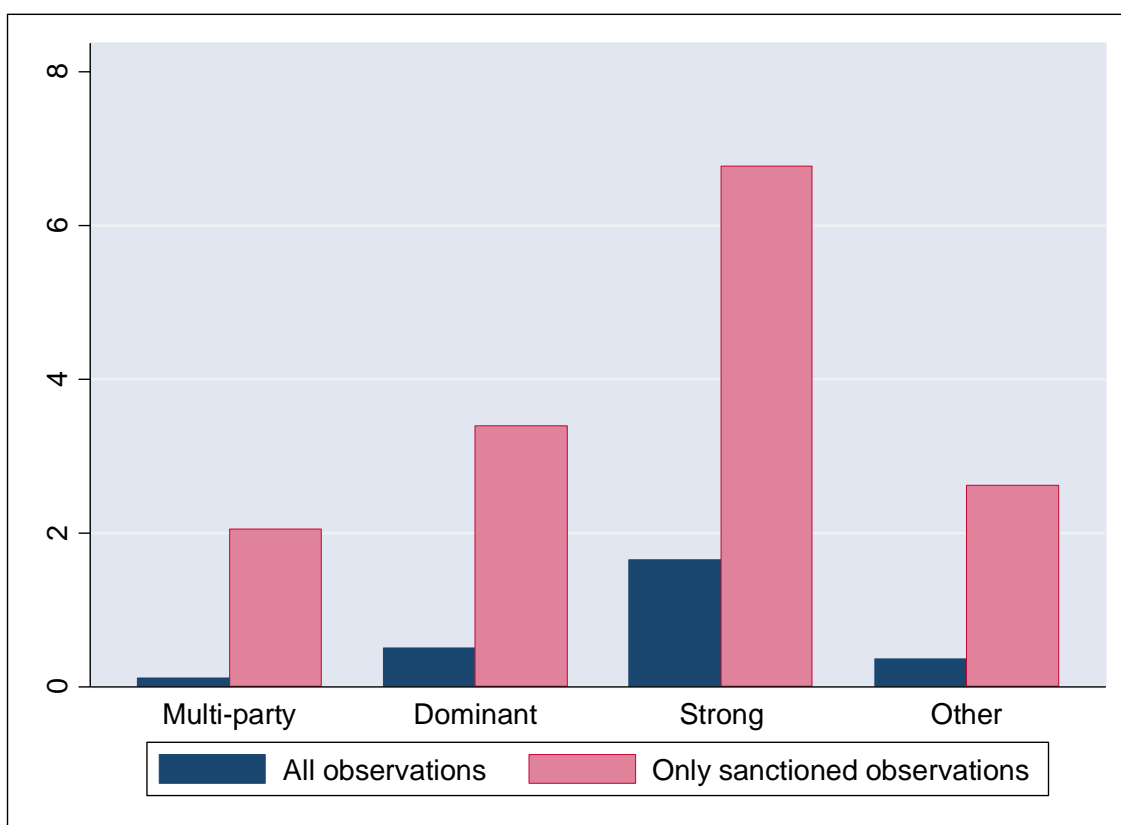
Graph 4.4 provides descriptive information about the duration of sanctions according to regime type. The blue bar of each regime type category (left) shows descriptive statistics about the duration of sanctions when non-sanctioned regimes are included, while the red bar (right) shows the duration of sanctions when the latter are excluded. As can be seen from the graph, the mean duration of sanctions is much lower for multi-party, dominant and other regime types when compared with strong regimes like military or one-party regimes.

While weak autocratic regimes like multi-party and dominant regimes are on average sanctioned 2.05 and 3.39 years respectively, strong regimes like one-party and military regimes face an average sanctions spell of over 6.78 years.<sup>60</sup> The differences between regime types are revealing. As Graph 4.4 neatly shows, the mean duration of sanctions is much higher for strong regimes than for any other regime type independently of whether non-sanctioned regimes (“zero” cases) are included or not. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the duration of sanctions is also higher for dominant than for multi-party regimes. Although this seems to suggest that dominant regimes do indeed differ in their strength towards sanctions as compared to their multi-party counterparts, this difference is not statistically significant.

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<sup>60</sup> It is difficult to make sense of the statistics for the category “other” regimes, as it encompasses regimes like Somalia, Libya, Iraq or Iran. These regimes are hardly similar in any respect and, as such, it is not possible to make inferences from this category.

**Graph 4.4. Average duration of sanctions (mean) by regime type**



Source: Own elaboration.

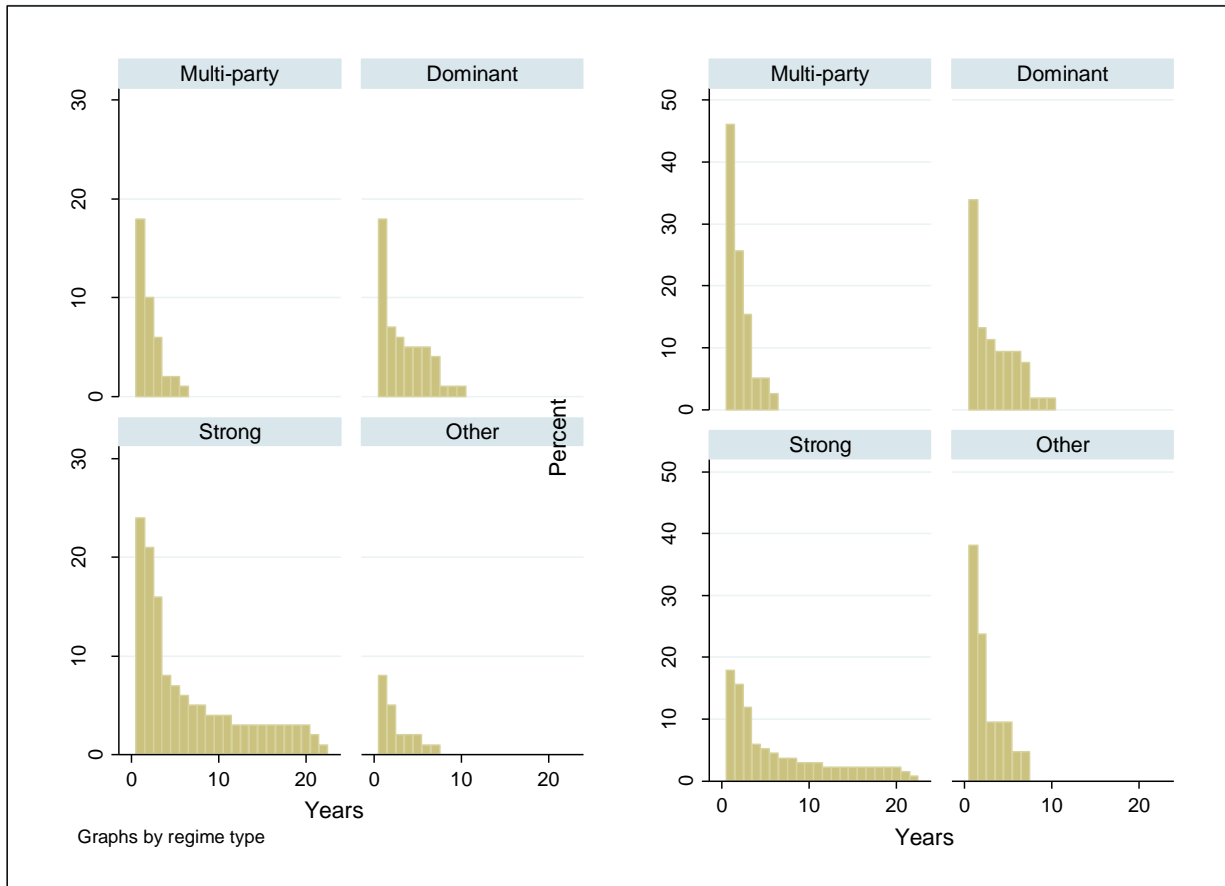
Further evidence showing that strong regimes face longer spells of sanctions is provided in Graph 4.5, which illustrates the duration of sanctions by regime type. As the left hand side of the graph shows, strong regimes are sanctioned for much longer spells than multi-party, dominant, or other regimes, with the longest case – China – being sanctioned for over 20 years.<sup>61</sup> The right hand-side of Graph 4.5 displays the duration of sanctions by regime type as a percentage of the number of regimes sanctioned within a regime type category. As can be clearly seen, most sanctions imposed against multi-party (46%) and dominant (almost 34%) regimes last only one year, whereas this percentage is much lower for strong regimes (18%).

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<sup>61</sup> Graph 4.5 excludes all zeros to make the graph easy to read (i.e. it only includes cases of regimes that were actually sanctioned).

This difference suggests that strong regimes are, on average, less likely to comply with the sender early during a sanctions episode than multi-party or dominant regimes.

**Graph 4.5. Duration of sanctions by regime type**



Source: Own elaboration. Graphs only include cases where sanctions were imposed.

To test hypothesis 3 I employ a zero inflated negative binomial (ZINB) regression. Using this model instead of an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression makes sense for three reasons. First, as shown in Graph 4.5, the dependent variable DURATION is a count that measures the number of years where sanctions are in place. Second, DURATION is also overdispersed and largely skewed to the right. And third, as Graph 4.8 (see annex) clearly evidences, the excess

of zeros in the variable DURATION can seriously bias the OLS estimate (Agresti, 2013; Long and Freese 2014).<sup>62</sup>

The results of the ZINB regressions are displayed in table 4.4 below. The DURATION of sanctions is the dependent variable in the different model specifications. As explained above, DURATION is a count that measures the number of years that sanctions are in place. Importantly, if a change in the type of regime has occurred in a country, the count is set to one again. This adjustment is necessary to take into account the domestic constraints that dictators face under different institutional settings. Finally, the models include region fixed effects to account for unobserved heterogeneity within regions and a lagged dependent variable to control for time dependence.

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<sup>62</sup> I have also run Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression models with the natural log of DURATION as the dependent variable, but the log transformation does not help to normalize the variable. In addition, I have run models using negative binomial regressions to make sure that my results are not model dependent. The results hold regardless of the model specification (see Table 4.9 of the annex). Finally, I have also run models only with sanctioned observations. Overall, the results hold, although the models are very sensitive to the loss of observations. The results of these models can be seen in Table 4.10 of the annex.

**Table 4.4. Duration of sanctions**

	Base model	Sender leverage	Salience	Target instability	Sender cost	Full model
VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration
<b>Multi-party</b>	<b>-0.679*</b>	<b>-0.920**</b>	<b>-0.684*</b>	<b>-0.984**</b>	<b>-0.870**</b>	<b>-1.146***</b>
	<b>(0.276)</b>	<b>(0.317)</b>	<b>(0.281)</b>	<b>(0.301)</b>	<b>(0.310)</b>	<b>(0.302)</b>
Dominant	-0.236	-0.413	-0.277	-0.444+	-0.332	-0.677*
	(0.282)	(0.272)	(0.297)	(0.255)	(0.306)	(0.301)
Other	-0.776+	-0.908*	-0.771+	-0.784*	-0.878*	-1.003***
	(0.412)	(0.406)	(0.410)	(0.350)	(0.387)	(0.288)
Human rights	-0.535*	-0.546**	-0.556**	-0.303	-0.444*	-0.294
	(0.235)	(0.201)	(0.214)	(0.187)	(0.225)	(0.276)
Δ Democracy	-0.219**	-0.237***	-0.178**	-0.180*	-0.208**	-0.170+
	(0.069)	(0.068)	(0.060)	(0.085)	(0.065)	(0.088)
Exports/GDP (log)		0.134				0.175
		(0.087)				(0.170)
Aid/GDP (log)		-0.272**				
		(0.088)				
Coup d'état			0.446			-0.180
			(0.334)			(0.416)
Monitors			0.017			0.098
			(0.249)			(0.242)
Vote fraud			0.369			0.408+
			(0.304)			(0.236)
Democratization				-0.279*		-0.281*
				(0.124)		(0.112)
Demonstration				0.026		0.019
				(0.035)		(0.036)
Tenure				-0.175***		-0.214***
				(0.052)		(0.054)
GDP growth (log)				-0.043		-0.035
				(0.107)		(0.108)
Gas (log)					-0.109	-0.036
					(0.085)	(0.089)
FDI/GDP (log)					-0.185	-0.106
					(0.115)	(0.106)
Trade volume (log)					0.328*	-0.014
					(0.130)	(0.268)
Population (log)		-0.134+				-0.071
		(0.081)				(0.287)
GDP (log)	-0.032		-0.027	-0.058	-0.278+	
	(0.076)		(0.077)	(0.075)	(0.149)	
LDV	0.518***	0.448***	0.526***	0.525***	0.484***	0.533***
	(0.147)	(0.122)	(0.147)	(0.124)	(0.127)	(0.129)
Constant	1.072	3.344+	0.940	2.483	0.942	1.416
	(1.888)	(1.795)	(1.906)	(1.792)	(2.431)	(2.282)
<b>Inflate</b>						
Human rights	1.855***	1.900***	1.867***	1.752*	2.076***	1.708+
	(0.518)	(0.528)	(0.505)	(0.732)	(0.609)	(1.022)
GDP (log)	0.141	0.173	0.171	0.014	0.162	0.018
	(0.267)	(0.167)	(0.418)	(0.234)	(0.204)	(0.297)
Constant	-11.908	-11.925*	-13.256	-6.606	-12.332*	-6.372
	(9.795)	(4.785)	(17.442)	(8.550)	(6.170)	(11.560)
Observations	1,598	1,547	1,598	1,493	1,475	1,376
Countries	115	108	115	111	106	103
Chi2	69.20	110.7	77.02	209.3	102.3	463.8
Log pseudolikelihood	-947.89	-905.747	-945.845	-860.838	-910.278	-808.641
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
Note: Baseline: strong regimes.



The results provide strong support for my argument and confirm hypothesis 3. In all models, the coefficient for multi-party regimes is negative and statistically significant at the 5% level or higher, confirming that multi-party regimes are sanctioned for shorter spells than strong regimes. This finding supports my claim that multi-party regimes are likely to have miscalculated the sender's willingness to impose sanctions and thus seek to comply with the latter soon after sanctions have been enacted. Moreover, dominant regimes are also negatively related to DURATION and statistically significant in models 4 and 6. The coefficients become more significant in all models if I drop Belarus and Zimbabwe from the analysis, as the results improve to become statistically significant in most models (see Table 4.11 in the annex). Dropping these two countries from the analysis makes sense, since they have been targeted by EU sanctions for many years. In fact, what the improvement of my results seems to suggest is that both Belarus and Zimbabwe are clear outliers as, according to my theoretical approach, they should have been more likely to comply with the EU. Importantly, this finding suggests that, when these two outliers are excluded from the analysis, dominant regimes also face shorter spells of sanctions. In addition, the coefficient of "other" regime types is also negative and significant at the 10% level or better in all models, indicating that these regimes face shorter spells of sanctions than strong regimes.

Also worth mentioning is the negative and statistically significant coefficient of human rights. The more respect governments show for human rights, the shorter sanctions will be.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, countries that experience a sudden improvement in the level of democracy are less likely to face long sanctions spells, providing further evidence that the EU seems to be wary about undermining processes of political liberalization through the use of punitive measures.

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<sup>63</sup> The coefficient is not statistically significant in models 4 and 6, although it is close to statistical significance in model 6 ( $p \approx .105$ ). The results are likely to be driven by the big loss of 222 observations or 12 countries. For the size of my dataset, this is a substantial loss of information.

Turning to model 2, the results show that countries that are heavily dependent on EU aid are less likely to face long spells of sanctions. This seems to indicate that countries that are highly dependent on EU aid are more willing to comply earlier when sanctions have been imposed, showing in this way that the EU might be able to exert some leverage with its allocation of aid (Donno, 2012; Holden, 2009). Moreover, although Exports/GDP is positively related to DURATION, this result is not statistically significant.

Model 3 controls for the salience of the violation and its incidence on the duration of sanctions. The results evidence that coups d'état and vote rigging are positively related to the length of sanctions, but their coefficients are not statistically significant. The positive sign of these coefficients seems to imply that regimes that are willing to commit fraud or break with the rule of law are likely to self-select themselves into sanctions and resist them for prolonged periods of time. The same is for regimes that allow international monitors to be present during the holding of elections in autocratic regimes. This coefficient is also positively related to DURATION but not statistically significant. However, not enough empirical evidence is available to sustain these claims.

More interesting, model 4 introduces control variables regarding the political and economic stability of a target regime. An autocratic regime's tenure is negatively related to DURATION and is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. This result could be interpreted as the EU's reluctance to enter into a protracted dispute with a politically stable government. In this regard, the EU might have miscalculated a target's resilience and opted to back down shortly after sanctions have been imposed.<sup>64</sup> However, this is an interesting result that deserves further empirical scrutiny. Similarly, the results show that countries that are growing economically are less likely to face long sanctions spells, even though the coefficient never

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<sup>64</sup> In the sanctions tree of chapter 2, this would eventually be the EU's move in a fourth stage following the target's willingness to resist (not shown in the tree).

reaches statistical significance.<sup>65</sup> Model 4 also provides evidence that countries that have been democratizing over the previous five years face shorter sanctions spells on average. Lastly, the number of anti-government demonstrations that a regime faces is positive but statistically unrelated to the length of sanctions.

Finally, model 5 controls for the cost of sanctions to the sender and provides some interesting findings. First and somewhat surprising, the absolute level of trade between the EU and a target state is positively related to DURATION and is statistically significant at the 1% level. This result is somewhat counterintuitive, as it suggests that countries that have higher levels of trade with the EU are more likely to face longer sanction spells. However, this result seems to be driven by the loss of observations and by its high collinearity with GDP. In fact, the coefficient for Trade volume is negative and not significant in model 6, and it is also not significant if I control for this variable in other model specifications.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, model 5 shows that FDI/GDP is negatively related to DURATION, but not statistically significant. Thus, while this result suggests that economically important countries are sanctioned for shorter periods of time, the evidence available cannot support this claim empirically. Similarly, the coefficient of a target's gas reserves is also negative but not statistically significant. The negative sign implies that countries with large reserves of natural resources like gas are sanctioned for short periods of time, as the EU might be wary of losing access to valuable energy resources. Yet again, there is not sufficient empirical evidence to validate this claim.

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<sup>65</sup> In an empirical analysis, Bolks and Al-Sowayel (2000) find that a target's economic health is negatively related to the duration of sanctions, yet their result is not statistically significant either.

<sup>66</sup> I have controlled for Trade volume in the other models, but it never reaches statistical significance. This robustness check seems to confirm that the statistical significance of Trade volume in model 5 is driven by missing data (about 13% observations and 10 countries less than model 1).

#### 4.5.2. *Destabilization of autocratic regimes*

While the results of table 4.4 corroborate my expectations that regimes with large *W* are more likely to be sanctioned for shorter spells than regimes with small *W*, it is possible that this might be caused by a sender's sanctions fatigue or because sanctions are seriously affecting the material or strategic interests of EU member states (Youngs, 2004). Consequently, the EU or some of its member states might be willing to lift sanctions to reduce the damage to their own businesses. Although all the evidence presented so far seems to suggest the opposite, I run a last analysis to cast away any remaining doubts. In this last section of the chapter I test hypothesis 4, which claims that sanctions should be more likely to destabilize autocratic regimes with large *W* than those with small *W*.

Table 4.5 presents some descriptive statistics on the length of a dictator's tenure<sup>67</sup> according to regime type. As the data shows, autocrats in multi-party regimes stay in office slightly less time than their counterparts, with an average length of 5.84 years in office. The median value of tenure is also lower (4 years in office) for multi-party regimes.<sup>68</sup> Dictators in strong regimes have the longest tenures (7.67 years in office), whilst autocrats in dominant regimes are lagging behind with an average of 6.15 years. Interestingly though, when no sanctions are in place the median is only one year higher for strong regimes than for multi-party and dominant regimes. At the same time, the mean of tenure increases for all regime types, whilst the median remains largely the same in all cases and increases slightly in all cases but dominant regimes.

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<sup>67</sup> I would like to thank Kristian Gleditsch and Henk Goemans for sharing a beta version of their updated Archigos (2009) dataset with me.

<sup>68</sup> The only exception to this case is the median for "other" regimes, which is 4 years. However, it is difficult to make sense of this difference, as "other" is a residual category that encompasses very different types of autocratic regimes. This caveat aside, the low median of "other" regime types when sanctions are in place might reflect the high political instability of these regimes, as the Somalian case exemplifies.

**Table 4.5. Tenure by regime type**

Regime type	Obs.	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Multi-party</b>						
All	680	5.84	4	4.678	1	23
No sanctions	625	6.14	5	4.731	1	23
Under sanctions	39	2.97	2	1.940	1	8
<b>Dominant</b>						
All	360	6.15	5	4.940	1	19
No sanctions	305	6.43	5	5.075	1	19
Under sanctions	53	4.75	4	3.797	1	15
Excl. Belarus	43	3.70	3	2.651	1	10
Excl. Equatorial Guinea	43	4.58	3	3.966	1	15
<b>Strong</b>						
All	608	7.67	5	6.337	1	23
No sanctions	415	8.04	6	6.260	1	23
Under sanctions	134	9.45	8.5	6.159	1	23
<b>Other</b>						
All	157	7.03	4	6.264	1	23
No sanctions	131	7.95	6	6.427	1	23
Under sanctions	21	2.71	2	1.821	1	7

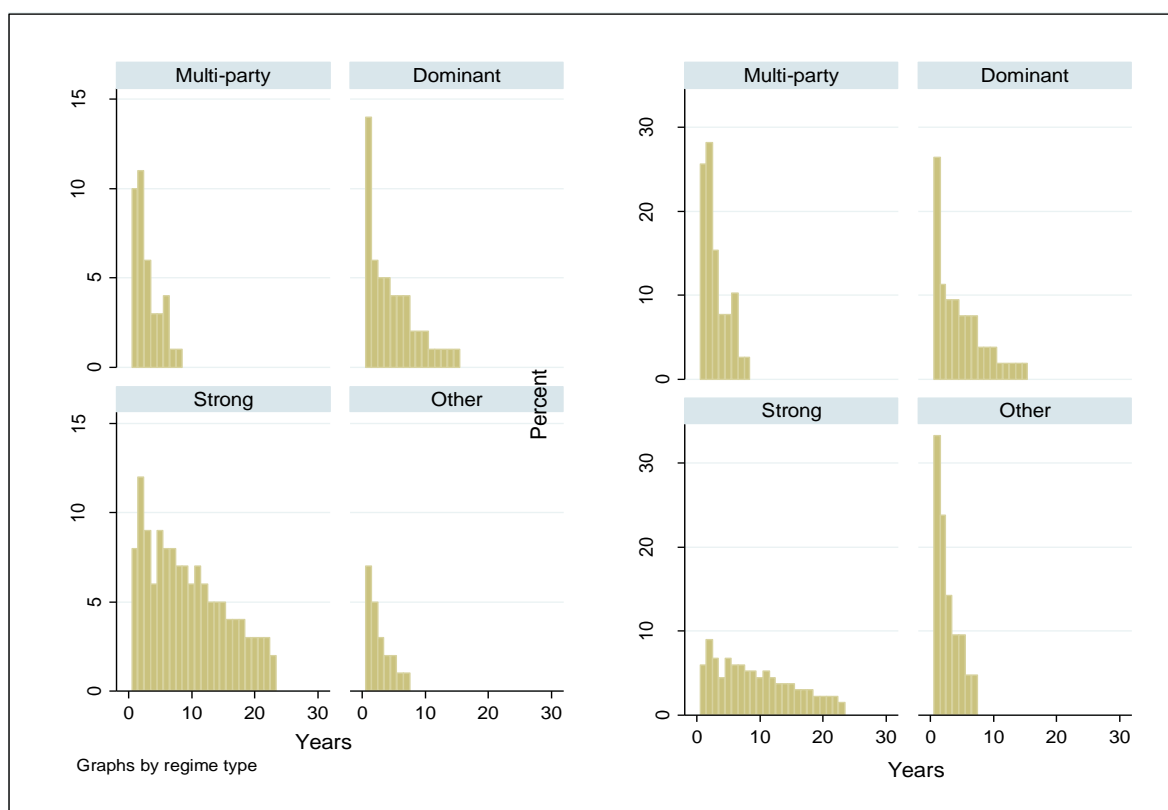
Source: Own elaboration. The first row displays the length of a regime's tenure. The higher number of observations in the first row is due to missing data in the variable SANCTION for the year 1988 in rows two and three.

Yet the most interesting results of table 4.5 are found in the third row of each regime type category, which displays the length of an autocrat's tenure under sanctions. Shockingly, the mean decreases in all regime type categories but for one, namely strong regimes. The decrease is dramatic in the case of multi-party regimes, from 6.14 years when no sanctions are in place to 2.79 years when sanctions are imposed. The mean for dominant regimes also decreases substantially from 6.43 years when no sanctions are in place to 4.75 years when sanctions are imposed. Finally, the mean for the category of strong regimes increases from 8.04 years when

no sanctions are in place to 9.45 years when sanctions are imposed, whilst the median increases from 6 to 8.5 years.

In other words, autocrats in strong regimes stay longer in power when sanctions are imposed than when no sanctions are enacted. This result is supportive of my argument, as it suggests that strong regimes are resilient and therefore likely to resist sanctions for longer periods of time than weaker ones like multi-party and dominant regimes. Indeed, the mean and median for multi-party and dominant regimes decrease when sanctions are in place. Thus, these results suggest that weak regimes are more often destabilized by sanctions than their strong counterparts.

**Graph 4.6. Tenure by regime type under sanctions**



Source: Own elaboration.

Graph 4.6 provides illustrative evidence on the length of a dictator’s tenure in different regime types when sanctions have been imposed. Clearly, the tenure of autocrats in multi-party regimes is shorter than that of dictators in strong or dominant regimes. Moreover, the right hand-side of the graph illustrates nicely that a large percentage of autocrats in multi-party, other and dominant regimes stay in office for very short periods of time when sanctions are in place. Indeed, slightly less than 30% of multi-party regimes stay in office after two years. This percentage is even higher for other regimes during the first year, allegedly due to armed conflicts in some of the countries that form part of this category. The percentage of strong regimes that lasts only a few years in power is quite small in comparison, with less

than 10% of strong regimes being destabilised by sanctions in the first two years that these measures are in place.

Finally, whilst a high percentage of dominant regimes seem to be destabilised by sanctions in the first years, I find that a small numbers of autocrats in dominant regimes stay in office for much longer than their peers, openly resisting the pressure of sanctions and defying the EU..

A closer look at the data reveals that two autocrats in dominant regimes have remained in power for very long spells even when facing EU sanctions for at least 10 years. Somewhat unsurprisingly, these dictators are Belarus' Alexander Lukashenko and Equatorial Guinea's Teodoro Obiang. When dropping Belarus, the mean for tenure in dominant regimes falls to 3.7 years, while it decreases to 4.6 years if I drop Equatorial Guinea. Moreover, the median for tenure also falls by one year if either of these countries is dropped from the analysis. In fact, it is quite significant that, together, Belarus and Equatorial Guinea account for 20 out of 53 sanctions in place against dominant regimes – that is, 38% of the sanctioned observations within the dominant category. Needless to say, this is a substantial drop. However, the important thing to keep in mind is that, together with Zimbabwe (see above), these cases are clear outliers to my theoretical argument. In fact, my different models work very well when these cases are dropped from the statistical analyses, thus suggesting that Belarus, Equatorial Guinea, and Zimbabwe are exceptional cases that require a separate analysis.

Now, do EU sanctions destabilize autocrats in regimes with larger  $W$ ? To test hypothesis 4 I use a poisson regression model (Agresti, 2013; Long and Freese 2014), where a regime's *TENURE* is the dependent variable. This model takes into account the nature of the dependent variable *TENURE* as a count that measures the years an autocratic regime remains in office. As with “duration” in Table 4.4, *TENURE* is sensitive to changes in the type of regime. Hence, if a regime change occurs in a country<sub>*i*</sub> and year<sub>*t*</sub>, *TENURE* is set to 1 again.



In this way, I control for domestic constraints to the leader's survival in office under different institutional settings.

The relationship of interest in this analysis lies on the interaction term between multi-party regimes and sanctions, as hypothesis 4 expects that autocratic regimes with large  $W$  will be more likely destabilised by the pressure of sanctions than strong regimes with small  $W$ . As in the duration models, I include region fixed effects to control for unobserved heterogeneity. Moreover, the independent variables are lagged one year and robust standard errors are clustered on country.<sup>69</sup> The results of the poisson regression models are displayed in Table 4.6. In addition, in Table 4.13 (see annex) I add an interaction term between dominant<sup>70</sup> regimes and sanctions to control for the possibility that dominant regimes might also be more likely to be destabilized by sanctions.

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<sup>69</sup> I have also run models with a lagged dependent variable to account for temporal dependence between observations. However, the strength of the coefficient is weak ( $\beta=0.1$ ) and the introduction of this variable affects the statistical significance of the other coefficients. For these reasons, I have opted to drop the lagged dependent variable.

<sup>70</sup> Since additional interaction terms can introduce multicollinearity in the right hand side of the equation, I run two separate regressions. However, running the two interaction terms simultaneously makes the coefficients significant at higher levels. Finally, since the category "other" is simply a residual category that I do not address theoretically, I have not included a third interaction term.

**Table 4.6. Poisson regression. Regime destabilization**

	Base model	Sender leverage	Saliency violation	Target instability	Sender costs	Full model
VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Tenure	Tenure	Tenure	Tenure	Tenure	Tenure
Sanction	-0.081 (0.104)	-0.112 (0.108)	-0.072 (0.097)	-0.004 (0.087)	-0.081 (0.127)	0.012 (0.102)
Multi-party	-0.282** (0.094)	-0.257* (0.103)	-0.297** (0.092)	-0.257** (0.092)	-0.290** (0.106)	-0.257** (0.092)
<b>Sanction*Multi-party</b>	<b>-0.529**</b> <b>(0.169)</b>	<b>-0.502*</b> <b>(0.208)</b>	<b>-0.503**</b> <b>(0.164)</b>	<b>-0.470**</b> <b>(0.161)</b>	<b>-0.470**</b> <b>(0.177)</b>	<b>-0.457**</b> <b>(0.163)</b>
Dominant	-0.165 (0.117)	-0.163 (0.113)	-0.175 (0.113)	-0.148 (0.114)	-0.204+ (0.117)	-0.158 (0.115)
Other	-0.137 (0.154)	-0.225 (0.147)	-0.143 (0.151)	-0.277 (0.207)	-0.177 (0.167)	-0.321+ (0.189)
Δ Democracy	-0.023 (0.023)	-0.016 (0.023)	-0.049* (0.025)	-0.011 (0.026)	-0.010 (0.023)	-0.035 (0.026)
Human rights	0.016 (0.046)	-0.035 (0.043)	0.013 (0.045)	0.043 (0.048)	-0.044 (0.042)	0.025 (0.045)
Exports/GDP (log)		0.033 (0.040)				0.097* (0.039)
Aid/GDP (log)		-0.091** (0.029)				
Coup d'état			-0.603*** (0.115)			-0.549*** (0.125)
Monitors			-0.123+ (0.063)			-0.072 (0.061)
Vote fraud			0.230+ (0.119)			0.207+ (0.107)
GDP growth (log)				0.088* (0.042)		0.086+ (0.045)
Demonstration				-0.054** (0.020)		-0.048** (0.018)
Democratization				-0.006 (0.038)		0.016 (0.036)
Gas (log)					0.019 (0.025)	
Trade volume (log)					0.105** (0.038)	
Population (log)		0.032 (0.029)			-0.028 (0.040)	
GDP (log)	0.118*** (0.024)		0.112*** (0.024)	0.147*** (0.026)		0.139*** (0.026)
Constant	-0.790 (0.728)	1.940** (0.726)	-0.602 (0.707)	-1.587* (0.706)	0.509 (0.676)	-1.997** (0.690)
Observations	1,609	1,560	1,609	1,507	1,549	1,490
Countries	112	106	112	109	105	107
Chi2	120.4	172.8	151.2	180.3	133.2	247.2
Log pseudolikelihood	-5563.498	-5359.572	-5495.068	-5057.339	-5304.469	-4867.986
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
Note: Baseline: Strong regimes

Overall, the results of Table 4.6 provide strong support for my argument and confirm my hypothesis 4, since multi-party regimes that have been sanctioned are more likely to be destabilised than strong regimes. Indeed, the interaction term “Sanction\*Multi-party” is negative and statistically significant in all models at the 5% level or higher, providing evidence that the tenure of autocrats in multi-party regimes are shorter. This result holds regardless of the model specification and of the control variables included in the models.<sup>71</sup> Thus, this last additional test throws further support to my theoretical argument that selection bias is present in the imposition of EU sanctions, as it shows that multi-party regimes are systematically more vulnerable to the threat and imposition of sanctions than strong regimes. Dominant and other regime types are also less likely to have a long tenure, yet the coefficients of each regime type only reach statistical significance at the 10% level in models 5 and 6 respectively.

Furthermore, the second interaction term between dominant regimes and sanctions is negative but not significant in the first model of Table 4.13 (see annex). However, once Belarus and Equatorial Guinea are dropped from the models, the interaction term becomes statistically significant at conventional levels. While the result confirms that Belarus and Equatorial Guinea are clear outliers in the category of dominant regimes, this finding warrants an explanation of why these cases deviate from my model. In the case of Equatorial Guinea, the answer is relatively straightforward. Since the early 1990s, Teodoro Obiang has been able to capitalise the rents from the country’s large oil reserves. Given the small country’s population,<sup>72</sup> Equatorial Guinea has one of the largest oil per capita reserves in the world, lagging just behind Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. However, most of the

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<sup>71</sup> To make sure that my results are not model dependent, I run the same models using negative binomial and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions. The results of these robustness tests are displayed in Table 4.12. The results are consistent with those of the poisson regressions in Table 4.6 and provide further support to Hypothesis 4.

<sup>72</sup> In 2010, the population was estimated to be around 700.000 by the World Bank (World Bank, 2014b).

income from these revenues goes to Obiang's winning coalition and patronage system, whilst the vast majority of the population is excluded from its benefits (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Finally, the oil and gas wealth of the country has allowed Obiang to limit external criticism from Western powers like the US or the EU's member states, who have become his customers since 1995 (Smolczyk, 2006).

The case of Belarus however is more complicated and puzzling. Indeed, compared with most of its neighbours, Belarus has neither integrated into the EU, nor sought a closer relation with it. Belarus is hardly a rich country and the existence of political competition and the holding of regular elections make it even more difficult to understand how Alexander Lukashenka has been able to remain in power despite being sanctioned by the EU for over 10 years. Since this case poses an interesting puzzle and a clear challenge to my theoretical account, I analyse it in depth in Chapter 6.

On a different note, the level of respect of human rights does not seem to matter in explaining the destabilization of autocratic regimes. The sign of its coefficient changes depending on the model, yet it never reaches statistical significance. Moreover, sudden changes in democracy do not seem to affect a regime's tenure either, as the coefficients are not significant in any of the models except in the case of model 3, where it is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Model 2 shows that the sender's leverage is related to autocratic regimes' tenure. Indeed, countries that are highly dependent on EU aid are negatively related to TENURE. This result is significant at the 1% level and indicates that aid-dependent countries are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions (Van de Walle, 2001; Wright, 2009).

Furthermore, the results of model 3 show that coups d'état are negatively and strongly related to tenure at the 0.001 level, indicating that autocrats who face a putsch are less likely to remain in office. This result is self-explanatory, as successful coups d'état automatically

bring about a change of regime. The same is true for countries where international monitors are present during the holding of elections. Indeed, the coefficient for the variable monitors is negatively related to TENURE and statistically significant at the 10% level. This result suggests that the presence of international observers restricts the ability of autocrats to manipulate or rig elections and that, as a consequence, autocrats are more likely to be ousted from office if observers are present during the electoral contest. However, the opposite is the case when autocrats commit vote fraud. Rigging elections is positively related to TENURE at the 10% level, indicating that regimes that do not play by the rules are more likely to remain in office.

Model 4 controls for a regime's economic and political stability. Not surprisingly, countries that are growing economically are more likely to stay in power for longer periods of time. This result is in line with most of the literature in economic and comparative politics, as a healthy and expanding economy increases a leader's tenure (Alesina, Özler, Roubini and Swagel, 1996; Burke, 2012). The same is true for countries that are economically strong, as shown by the positive and statistically significant coefficient of GDP. However, autocrats facing large anti-government protests are more likely to be ousted from power (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2010), as the negative and statistically significant coefficient of demonstrations illustrates.

Finally, model 5 shows that countries that have important commercial relations with the EU are more likely to stay in office for prolonged periods of time. This result is statistically significant at the 1% level and suggests that commercial relations with the EU have an important effect on the survival of a target regime. Moreover, the possession of natural resources like gas or oil does not seem to be correlated with an autocrat's tenure, although the sign of the coefficient is positive and suggests that regimes in resource-rich countries stay in office longer (Andersen and Aslaksen, 2013; Ross, 2001; Smith, 2004; Wright et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, the relationship between TENURE and natural resources is likely to depend on the quality of a target's domestic institutions (Robinson, Torvik and Verdier, 2006), as resources can also generate perverse political incentives – the so-called “resource curse” –, which render autocrats very vulnerable to external shocks like a fall in international commodity prices (Mehlum, Moene and Torvik, 2006; Robinson et al., 2006; Ross, 1999, 2011; Stevens, 2003).

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

The results of this chapter provide strong support to my theoretical argument about the presence of selection bias in the study of sanctions imposition. I have generated a vast amount of evidence that target selection effects take place, and that these are channelled through a target regime's domestic institutions. Indeed, my results show that an important variation in the imposition of EU sanctions against autocratic regimes exists, since weak regimes with large  $W$  like multi-party regimes are systematically less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes with small  $W$ . This finding has important implications to understand when sanctions are imposed, but also when they are more likely to work.

My models have shown that selection bias needs to be modelled appropriately in the study of sanctions imposition. I have demonstrated that the different stages of a sanctions process are intertwined and have therefore to be analysed together. In this regard, I have argued and empirically proven that the use of a two-stage Heckman selection model is a methodological improvement that can help to address the problem of selection effects in empirical work.

Second, the results of the Heckman selection model have confirmed that multi-party regimes are not only more likely to comply with the threat of EU sanctions than strong regimes; they

have also shown that they are less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes. Thus, my findings provide conclusive evidence that, when faced with the threat of sanctions, a target's strategic calculation determines to a large extent the likelihood that sanctions are imposed. Most importantly, I have shown that these calculations are not necessarily of economic nature, but also that they are politically motivated.

Third, the chapter has produced additional evidence for the presence of selection effects by modelling two additional stages of what I dubbed the "sanctions game" in Chapter 2. First of all, I have corroborated empirically that multi-party regimes face shorter spells of sanctions than strong regimes. I have demonstrated that weak regimes like multi-party regimes are more likely to comply early with the EU once sanctions have been imposed. Noteworthy, this result also holds for dominant regimes when two outliers – Belarus and Zimbabwe – are excluded from the analysis.

Fourth, I have also provided evidence that weak regimes are more likely to be destabilised by sanctions than strong ones. This result is strong and consistent across models and provides further evidence that targets display different levels of resilience towards sanctions. Importantly, I also find that dominant regimes are more likely to be destabilised than strong regimes when the cases of Belarus and Equatorial Guinea are excluded from the analysis.

Notably, the statistical analyses suggest that Belarus, Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe are clear outliers to my theoretical argument, as they display a resilience towards sanctions that is unusual for their regime type category. Indeed, my models testing the additional Hypotheses 3 and 4 perform very well when these three cases are dropped from the analyses. Importantly, my results hold regardless of the number of control variables added or the regression model employed, thus providing further evidence that these cases are very particular.

Paradoxically, the cases of Belarus, Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe have received extensive media and academic attention, being frequently used to make inferences about the effectiveness of EU sanctions. These practices are very problematic because my analyses suggest that these three countries are clear outliers. Indeed, according to my theory, these countries should be vulnerable to sanctions and should therefore have complied early with the EU. Although I will devote more time to analyse the cases of Belarus and Zimbabwe in Chapter 6, it should be stressed clearly that they are poorly suited to make any generalizations about the effects of sanctions.

In sum, this chapter has corroborated my theoretical argument through various statistical analyses that have addressed the issue of target selection effects from different angles. I have provided extensive evidence supporting my hypotheses, and I have run many additional robustness tests to rule out other plausible explanations that could be driving my results. Noteworthy, my results are robust to different model specifications and to the addition of a battery of control variables.

The next two chapters go one step further to analyse in depth several episodes of EU sanctions. Chapter 5 discusses three cases that my model predicts well. These cases are Fiji I (2001-2003), Fiji II (2006-2014), and Myanmar (1990-ongoing). Chapter 6 then analyses the cases of Belarus (1997-ongoing) and Zimbabwe (2002-ongoing), which are clear outliers to my model. Finally, Chapters 5 and 6 also control for the presence of black knights, a variable that is difficult to measure quantitatively.



#### 4.7. Annex to the Chapter and robustness tests

This section presents the results of several robustness checks. Table 4.7 displays the results of the two stage Heckman selection model with my alternative measure of COMPLIANCE. This new measure codes COMPLIANCE 1 if a target's level of respect of human rights was higher than 2, whereas COMPLIANCE is coded 0 if a country's respect for human rights is 2 or lower.<sup>73</sup> A few points merit to be commented. First of all, the p-values at the bottom of the table ( $\text{Prob} > \chi^2$ ) are not statistically significant. This implies that the two stages are not correlated at statistically significant levels and that the use of a two-stage Heckman selection model is not necessary.

Nevertheless, the coefficients of multi-party regimes are positive and statistically significant in all models of the COMPLIANCE or selection equation, just as I expect in H1. In addition, the coefficients for multi-party regimes in the outcome or SANCTION equation are negative, implying that multi-party regimes are systematically less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes. However, the coefficient for multi-party is not statistically significant in any of the models.

Although the second measure of COMPLIANCE performs relatively well, the results seem to suggest that this second proxy of COMPLIANCE is somewhat weaker than the first measure employed in Table 4.2. Indeed, while measuring COMPLIANCE is a methodologically daunting task, the advantage of my first measure is that it makes sure that those countries that are 100% non-compliant are included in a single category, whereas those other countries that are somewhere in between are lumped together in another category. Although my proxy is

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<sup>73</sup> Recall that "human rights" is a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 stands for no respect for human rights, and 5 represents the highest respect of human rights.

not very accurate in predicting the degree of a target regime's COMPLIANCE, it is a useful measure to differentiate between "no-compliance" vs. "some compliance".

**Table 4.7. Heckprobit selection model. Compliance and sanctions imposition**

VARIABLES	Base model		Sender leverage		Salience violation		Target instability		Sender cost		Full model	
	(1) Compliance	(2) Sanction	(3) Compliance	(4) Sanction	(5) Compliance	(6) Sanction	(7) Compliance	(8) Sanction	(9) Compliance	(10) Sanction	(11) Compliance	(12) Sanction
<b>Multi-party</b>	<b>0.429**</b> (0.134)	<b>-0.264</b> (0.226)	<b>0.455***</b> (0.137)	<b>-0.188</b> (0.220)	<b>0.427**</b> (0.134)	<b>-0.268</b> (0.219)	<b>0.413**</b> (0.132)	<b>-0.276</b> (0.251)	<b>0.458**</b> (0.141)	<b>-0.419</b> (0.269)	<b>0.442**</b> (0.140)	<b>-0.396</b> (0.312)
Dominant	0.297+ (0.165)	0.077 (0.341)	0.319+ (0.165)	-0.000 (0.328)	0.296+ (0.165)	-0.046 (0.369)	0.308+ (0.166)	0.009 (0.337)	0.321+ (0.168)	-0.118 (0.321)	0.339* (0.170)	-0.245 (0.347)
Other	-0.084 (0.231)	0.137 (0.483)	-0.060 (0.233)	0.109 (0.544)	-0.086 (0.230)	0.163 (0.530)	-0.113 (0.240)	0.087 (0.527)	-0.108 (0.241)	-0.012 (0.538)	-0.111 (0.245)	0.034 (0.583)
Human rights		-0.417+ (0.216)		-0.429+ (0.252)		-0.409+ (0.224)		-0.517* (0.214)		-0.487+ (0.253)		-0.620* (0.264)
Δ Democracy		-0.281** (0.107)		-0.296** (0.107)		-0.278** (0.104)		-0.242* (0.103)		-0.290** (0.111)		-0.249* (0.099)
Exports/GDP (log)	0.090+ (0.049)		0.089+ (0.049)	0.017 (0.073)	0.090+ (0.049)		0.088+ (0.049)		0.110* (0.053)		0.100+ (0.051)	-0.027 (0.085)
Aid/GDP (log)				-0.124+ (0.072)								
Coup d'état							0.068 (0.465)					-0.055 (0.423)
Monitors							0.358 (0.232)					0.330 (0.233)
Vote fraud							0.160 (0.319)					-0.085 (0.282)
Tenure								0.040 (0.039)				0.024 (0.041)
Democratization								-0.059 (0.098)				-0.078 (0.096)
Demonstration								0.085* (0.039)				0.072+ (0.037)
GDP growth (log)								-0.296* (0.151)				-0.299* (0.135)
Gas (log)										-0.118 (0.085)		-0.054 (0.074)
FDI/GDP (log)										0.057 (0.095)		0.108 (0.103)
Trade volume (log)										0.114 (0.119)		
GDP (log)		-0.160* (0.069)				-0.147* (0.070)		-0.215** (0.076)				
Human rights clause	-0.141 (0.120)		-0.141 (0.121)		-0.136 (0.121)		-0.102 (0.119)		-0.095 (0.126)		-0.047 (0.125)	
GDP/cap (log)	0.041 (0.071)		0.040 (0.071)		0.042 (0.071)		0.061 (0.073)		0.049 (0.073)		0.072 (0.075)	
Population (log)	-0.306*** (0.047)		-0.306*** (0.047)	-0.251* (0.098)	-0.306*** (0.047)		-0.294*** (0.047)		-0.297*** (0.048)	-0.209 (0.147)	-0.283*** (0.048)	-0.183 (0.117)
Constant	5.868*** (1.005)	5.567*** (1.687)	5.871*** (1.000)	6.377** (2.064)	5.847*** (1.000)	5.181** (1.638)	5.377*** (1.073)	7.539*** (1.910)	5.454*** (1.044)	3.256 (1.980)	4.918*** (1.098)	5.917** (1.861)
Observations	1,604		1,593		1,604		1,579		1,540		1,519	
Countries	106		104		106		106		104		104	
Chi2	2146		1330		2298		1168		1581		2240	
Prob>chi2	0.1964		0.3678		0.1770		0.2088		0.2760		0.3396	
Log psuedolikelihood	-393.66		-391.377		-392.602		-382.662		-383.174		-372.366	
Region FE	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
 Note: Baseline: Strong regimes.

**Table 4.8. Models with fixed and random effects**

	Country FE	Country and year FE	Country RE	Country RE	Weights
VARIABLES	(1) Sanction	(2) Sanction	(3) Sanction	(4) Sanction	(5) Sanction
<b>Multi-party</b>	<b>-1.216**</b> <b>(0.419)</b>	<b>-2.002***</b> <b>(0.535)</b>	<b>-0.973*</b> <b>(0.396)</b>	<b>-1.632***</b> <b>(0.468)</b>	<b>-1.148**</b> <b>(0.424)</b>
Dominant	-0.459 (0.439)	-1.366** (0.511)	-0.497 (0.413)	-1.321** (0.476)	-0.456 (0.495)
Other	0.792 (0.769)	-0.199 (0.860)	-0.070 (0.628)	-0.937 (0.666)	-1.140* (0.571)
Human rights	-1.131*** (0.198)	-1.055*** (0.252)	-1.243*** (0.182)	-0.968*** (0.212)	-0.699*** (0.149)
$\Delta$ Democracy	-0.272* (0.118)	-0.271* (0.135)	-0.258* (0.113)	-0.259* (0.124)	-0.264 (0.168)
GDP (log)	-0.346 (0.287)	-0.347 (0.397)	-0.072 (0.146)	-0.014 (0.149)	0.018 (0.090)
Constant			4.113 (3.541)	-0.803 (3.741)	4.584* (2.083)
Observations	669	669	1,687	1,687	1,682
Number of Countries	36	36	115	115	115
Pseudo-R2	0.350	0.494	.	.	0.516
Chi2	191.4	270.1	141.2	172.4	506.9
Time polynomials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Weights	No	No	No	No	Yes

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
 Note: Baseline: strong regimes.

Table 4.8 presents controls for country and year fixed effects. First, models 1 and 2 run country fixed effects regressions to control for unobserved variation within countries. Although the test drops many observations from the regression due to a lack of variation in the dependent variable (many countries are never sanctioned), the results confirm my expectations, as multi-party regimes are systematically less likely to be sanctioned in comparison to strong regimes. Moreover, the coefficient is statistically significant at the 0.001 level and the relationship is strong ( $\beta=-1.22$ ). The slope of the coefficient becomes even stronger ( $\beta=-2.00$ ) when I include year FE to control for temporal shocks.

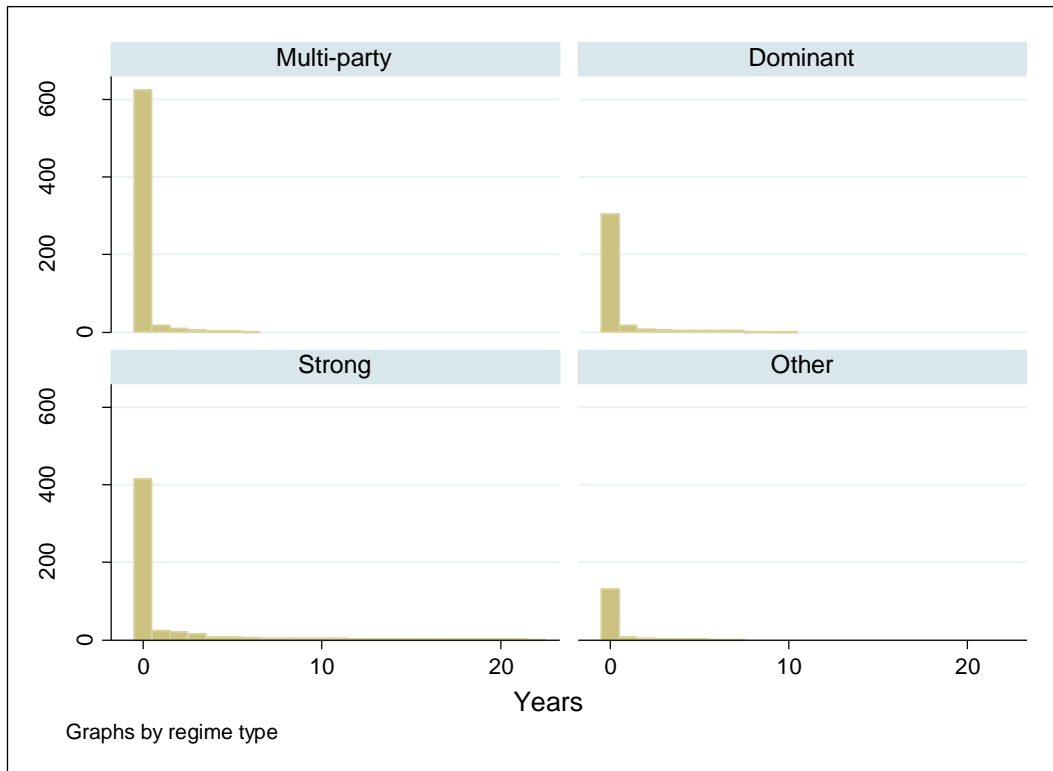
Columns 3 and 4 display the results of models with country random effects. Again, the results confirm hypothesis 2, as multi-party regimes are systematically less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes. If anything, the slope is less steep than in the first two models ( $\beta=-0.97$  and  $\beta=-1.63$  in models 3 and 4 respectively).

Finally, model 5 runs a logistic regression using entropy weights and year fixed effects. As with the previous four models, the coefficient for multi-party regimes is negative and statistically significant at the 1% level. Also interesting is the fact that dominant regimes are also less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes at statistically significant levels when we control for year fixed effects.<sup>74</sup> This is true for models 2 and 4, but not for model 5. In sum, overall the robustness checks provide additional support for hypothesis 2.

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<sup>74</sup> The only exception is model 5.

**Graph 4.8 Duration of sanctions**



Source: Own elaboration. This graph includes cases where no sanctions were imposed (i.e. it includes cases where the duration of sanctions in years was 0).

**Table 4.9. Duration of sanctions. Negative binomial regression with zeros**

	Base model	Sender leverage	Saliency violation	Target instability	Sender cost	Full model
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
VARIABLES	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration
<b>Multi-party</b>	<b>-0.694*</b>	<b>-0.948**</b>	<b>-0.694*</b>	<b>-0.975***</b>	<b>-0.884**</b>	<b>-1.170***</b>
	<b>(0.281)</b>	<b>(0.316)</b>	<b>(0.289)</b>	<b>(0.268)</b>	<b>(0.307)</b>	<b>(0.315)</b>
Dominant	-0.246	-0.433	-0.284	-0.418	-0.358	-0.700*
	(0.273)	(0.271)	(0.287)	(0.258)	(0.291)	(0.297)
Other	-0.806*	-0.954*	-0.789*	-0.803*	-0.944*	-1.085***
	(0.398)	(0.397)	(0.398)	(0.324)	(0.383)	(0.319)
Human rights	-0.594***	-0.658***	-0.591***	-0.546***	-0.573***	-0.588***
	(0.104)	(0.110)	(0.105)	(0.096)	(0.106)	(0.097)
Δ Democracy	-0.224***	-0.248***	-0.180**	-0.219***	-0.219***	-0.202**
	(0.057)	(0.058)	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.064)
Exports/GDP (log)		0.136				0.143
		(0.087)				(0.165)
Aid/GDP (log)		-0.259**				
		(0.088)				
Coup d'état			0.459			-0.043
			(0.302)			(0.316)
Monitors			0.022			0.142
			(0.251)			(0.275)
Vote fraud			0.373			0.457+
			(0.309)			(0.277)
Democratization				-0.280*		-0.293*
				(0.128)		(0.120)
Demonstration				0.028		0.022
				(0.032)		(0.032)
Tenure				-0.164***		-0.203***
				(0.048)		(0.050)
GDP growth (log)				-0.055		-0.057
				(0.114)		(0.110)
Gas (log)					-0.104	-0.044
					(0.084)	(0.085)
FDI/GDP (log)					-0.172	-0.073
					(0.113)	(0.106)
Trade volume (log)					0.327*	0.055
					(0.129)	(0.175)
Population (log)		-0.121				-0.116
		(0.081)				(0.181)
GDP (log)	-0.031		-0.026	-0.049	-0.279+	
	(0.078)		(0.078)	(0.077)	(0.153)	
LDV	0.529***	0.471***	0.532***	0.567***	0.504***	0.570***
	(0.120)	(0.106)	(0.123)	(0.095)	(0.111)	(0.085)
Constant	1.151	3.221+	0.988	2.617	1.206	1.492
	(1.930)	(1.786)	(1.941)	(1.798)	(2.487)	(2.170)
Observations	1,598	1,547	1,598	1,493	1,475	1,376
Countries	115	108	115	111	106	103
Chi2	196.5	236.1	214.9	355.8	190.7	551.2
Log pseudolikelihood	-948.123	-906.817	-945.953	-865.173	-911.242	-814.251
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
 Note: Baseline: Strong regimes.

**Table 4.10. Negative binomial regression: Duration of sanctions (excluding zeros)**

	Base model	Sender leverage	Saliency violation	Target instability	Sender cost	Full model
VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration	Duration
<b>Multi-party</b>	<b>-0.671*</b>	<b>-0.627*</b>	<b>-0.686**</b>	<b>-0.155</b>	<b>-0.631*</b>	<b>-0.065</b>
	<b>(0.263)</b>	<b>(0.274)</b>	<b>(0.249)</b>	<b>(0.235)</b>	<b>(0.279)</b>	<b>(0.242)</b>
Dominant	0.196	0.196	0.143	0.422**	0.027	0.511***
	(0.257)	(0.195)	(0.236)	(0.143)	(0.229)	(0.137)
Other	-0.076	-0.194	-0.094	0.207	-0.120	0.194
	(0.291)	(0.247)	(0.250)	(0.172)	(0.288)	(0.164)
Human rights	-0.151	-0.174+	-0.151	-0.138*	-0.185*	-0.064
	(0.102)	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.062)	(0.094)	(0.054)
Δ Democracy	0.077	0.084	0.018	0.013	0.068+	-0.027
	(0.051)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.039)	(0.040)	(0.039)
Exports/GDP (log)		0.031				0.052
		(0.073)				(0.067)
Aid/GDP (log)		-0.068				
		(0.085)				
Coup d'état			-0.614**			-0.321+
			(0.217)			(0.194)
Monitors			-0.245			-0.181
			(0.187)			(0.184)
Vote fraud			0.320			0.188
			(0.213)			(0.210)
Democratization				0.011		0.009
				(0.052)		(0.040)
Demonstration				-0.012		-0.008
				(0.007)		(0.007)
Tenure				0.105***		0.104***
				(0.012)		(0.010)
GDP growth (log)				0.082		0.075
				(0.061)		(0.058)
Gas (log)					-0.053	-0.062
					(0.063)	(0.045)
FDI/GDP (log)					0.230***	0.042
					(0.066)	(0.033)
Trade volume (log)					-0.037	-0.048
					(0.087)	(0.073)
Population (log)		0.038				0.150+
		(0.096)				(0.085)
GDP (log)	0.116+		0.105+	0.066	0.233**	
	(0.064)		(0.063)	(0.056)	(0.072)	
Constant	-1.585	0.772	-1.266	-1.683	-3.577**	-1.367
	(1.572)	(2.020)	(1.538)	(1.476)	(1.172)	(1.117)
Observations	240	232	240	233	236	225
Countries	38	37	38	38	37	36
Chi2	448.6	685.7	833.6	9786	.	.
Log pseudolikelihood	-553.229	-539.737	-546.872	-445.990	-523.744	-421.948
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
 Note: Baseline: Strong regimes.



Table 4.10 displays the results of the duration of sanctions when all the non-sanctioned countries are dropped. Overall, my results are consistent and robust in the different model specifications. The coefficient of multi-party regimes is negative in all models and is statistically significant at the 5% level or higher except in two models. The lack of statistical significance in models 4 and 6 seems to be driven by the loss of observations, as the model is very sensitive to the loss of information.

**Table 4.11. Zero inflated negative binomial. Duration of sanctions (excluding Belarus and Zimbabwe)**

	Base model	Sender leverage	Salience violation	Target instability	Sender cost	Full model
VARIABLES	(1) Duration	(2) Duration	(3) Duration	(4) Duration	(5) Duration	(6) Duration
Multi-party	-0.560* (0.263)	-0.810** (0.310)	-0.568* (0.270)	-0.943** (0.297)	-0.735* (0.307)	-0.951** (0.291)
<b>Dominant</b>	<b>-0.539</b> <b>(0.333)</b>	<b>-0.713*</b> <b>(0.324)</b>	<b>-0.579+</b> <b>(0.345)</b>	<b>-0.797**</b> <b>(0.298)</b>	<b>-0.681+</b> <b>(0.356)</b>	<b>-1.067**</b> <b>(0.394)</b>
Other	-0.896* (0.422)	-0.981* (0.408)	-0.882* (0.411)	-1.060** (0.390)	-1.071* (0.419)	-1.282*** (0.312)
Human rights	-0.615** (0.222)	-0.589* (0.230)	-0.642*** (0.154)	-0.367+ (0.215)	-0.561* (0.285)	-0.378 (0.325)
Δ Democracy	-0.207** (0.067)	-0.231*** (0.068)	-0.168** (0.059)	-0.146 (0.099)	-0.198** (0.068)	-0.156 (0.106)
Exports/GDP (log)		0.176+ (0.091)				0.250+ (0.151)
Aid/GDP (log)		-0.209* (0.093)				
Coup d'état			0.469 (0.330)			-0.328 (0.545)
Monitors			0.229 (0.251)			0.358 (0.227)
Vote fraud			0.118 (0.365)			0.132 (0.279)
Democratization				-0.203 (0.129)		-0.221+ (0.114)
Demonstration				0.033 (0.040)		0.023 (0.047)
Tenure				-0.208** (0.072)		-0.276*** (0.075)
GDP growth (log)				-0.003 (0.135)		-0.014 (0.146)
Gas (log)					-0.036 (0.089)	0.110 (0.087)
FDI/GDP (log)					-0.157 (0.117)	-0.065 (0.099)
Trade volume (log)					0.364** (0.133)	-0.185 (0.293)
Population (log)		-0.135 (0.087)				-0.028 (0.333)
GDP (log)	-0.084 (0.083)		-0.077 (0.085)	-0.102 (0.083)	-0.407* (0.162)	
LDV	0.511*** (0.139)	0.447*** (0.124)	0.521*** (0.136)	0.526*** (0.128)	0.488*** (0.130)	0.566*** (0.148)
Constant	2.490 (2.028)	2.854 (1.904)	2.318 (2.059)	3.871* (1.909)	3.447 (2.754)	3.788+ (2.249)
<b>Inflate</b>						
Human rights	1.865*** (0.502)	1.919*** (0.530)	2.008 (2.452)	1.663 (1.043)	2.016*** (0.510)	1.412 (1.198)
GDP (log)	0.200 (0.359)	0.224 (0.176)	0.272 (0.978)	0.025 (0.306)	0.243 (0.272)	-0.001 (0.359)
Constant	-13.857 (15.538)	-13.273* (5.337)	-17.280 (42.802)	-6.526 (11.746)	-14.591 (9.757)	-4.922 (14.152)
Observations	1,561	1,510	1,561	1,456	1,438	1,339
Countries	113	106	113	109	104	101
Chi2	61.09	110.5	91.68	201.2	104.6	427.9
Log pseudolikelihood	-880.474	-841.308	-878.255	-790.618	-845.787	-738.374
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
Note: Baseline: Strong regimes.

**Table 4.12. Negative binomial and OLS regressions. Regime destabilisation**

	Base model	Full model	Base model	Full model
	Negative binomial	Negative binomial	OLS	OLS
VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Tenure	Tenure	Tenure (log)	Tenure (log)
Sanction	-0.100 (0.096)	-0.016 (0.096)	-0.025 (0.111)	0.065 (0.106)
Multi-party	-0.288** (0.097)	-0.241* (0.096)	-0.210+ (0.109)	-0.167 (0.103)
<b>Sanction*Multi-party</b>	<b>-0.452** (0.170)</b>	<b>-0.380* (0.159)</b>	<b>-0.438* (0.184)</b>	<b>-0.350* (0.169)</b>
Dominant	-0.153 (0.125)	-0.131 (0.125)	-0.166 (0.139)	-0.126 (0.134)
Other	-0.160 (0.164)	-0.408* (0.179)	-0.205 (0.187)	-0.461* (0.199)
Δ Democracy	-0.055+ (0.033)	-0.045 (0.032)	-0.049 (0.032)	-0.049 (0.031)
Human rights	0.030 (0.044)	0.032 (0.044)	0.020 (0.048)	0.029 (0.046)
Exports/GDP (log)		0.087* (0.036)		0.083* (0.040)
Coup d'état		-0.064 (0.055)		-0.095 (0.066)
Monitors		0.176 (0.109)		0.181 (0.140)
Vote fraud		-0.487*** (0.105)		-0.487*** (0.112)
GDP growth (log)		0.090* (0.044)		0.112* (0.048)
Demonstration		-0.044*** (0.013)		-0.050*** (0.013)
Democratization		-0.007 (0.035)		-0.029 (0.036)
GDP (log)	0.124*** (0.026)	0.141*** (0.026)	0.118*** (0.028)	0.139*** (0.028)
Constant	-1.022 (0.754)	-2.076** (0.700)	-1.275 (0.840)	-2.342** (0.795)
Observations	1,609	1,490	1,609	1,490
R-squared	.	.	0.137	0.206
Countries	112	107	112	107
Chi2	107.1	238.1	.	.
Log pseudolikelihood	-4591.337	-4155.964	.	.
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
Note: Baseline: Strong regimes.

**Table 4.13. Poisson regression. Regime destabilization (excluding Belarus and Equatorial Guinea)**

	Base model (with outliers)	Base model	Sender leverage	Saliency violation	Target instability	Sender costs	Full model
VARIABLES	(1) tenure5	(2) Tenure	(3) Tenure	(4) Tenure	(5) Tenure	(6) Tenure	(7) Tenure
Sanction	-0.124 (0.109)	-0.125 (0.108)	-0.129 (0.111)	-0.110 (0.101)	-0.019 (0.088)	-0.169 (0.121)	-0.040 (0.095)
Dominant	-0.159 (0.124)	-0.188 (0.128)	-0.165 (0.127)	-0.192 (0.124)	-0.152 (0.125)	-0.216 (0.136)	-0.220+ (0.132)
<b>Sanction*Dominant</b>	<b>-0.097</b> <b>(0.222)</b>	<b>-0.531**</b> <b>(0.204)</b>	<b>-0.587**</b> <b>(0.202)</b>	<b>-0.517**</b> <b>(0.195)</b>	<b>-0.591**</b> <b>(0.198)</b>	<b>-0.467*</b> <b>(0.223)</b>	<b>-0.543**</b> <b>(0.206)</b>
Multi-party	-0.315*** (0.093)	-0.308*** (0.093)	-0.277** (0.100)	-0.321*** (0.091)	-0.275** (0.091)	-0.266** (0.095)	-0.300** (0.100)
Other	-0.142 (0.154)	-0.146 (0.153)	-0.215 (0.147)	-0.151 (0.150)	-0.277 (0.208)	-0.102 (0.172)	-0.321 (0.215)
Δ Democracy	-0.026 (0.023)	-0.029 (0.023)	-0.020 (0.023)	-0.056* (0.024)	-0.016 (0.026)	-0.006 (0.022)	-0.022 (0.024)
Human rights	0.017 (0.046)	0.013 (0.047)	-0.028 (0.042)	0.010 (0.045)	0.040 (0.048)	-0.050 (0.041)	-0.022 (0.044)
Exports/GDP (log)			0.032 (0.040)				-0.090 (0.062)
Aid/GDP (log)			-0.080** (0.028)				
Coup d'état				-0.604*** (0.118)			-0.533*** (0.133)
Monitors				-0.101 (0.063)			-0.073 (0.060)
Vote fraud				0.162 (0.128)			0.168 (0.108)
GDP growth (log)					0.086* (0.041)		0.067 (0.050)
Demonstration					-0.055** (0.020)		-0.032* (0.016)
Democratization					-0.004 (0.039)		0.005 (0.032)
Gas (log)						0.020 (0.025)	0.027 (0.022)
FDI/GDP (log)						0.173*** (0.031)	0.153*** (0.030)
Trade volume (log)						0.007 (0.039)	0.123* (0.053)
Population (log)			0.042 (0.030)			0.064 (0.043)	-0.019 (0.054)
GDP (log)	0.117*** (0.024)	0.114*** (0.025)		0.107*** (0.024)	0.142*** (0.026)		
Constant	-0.763 (0.730)	-0.681 (0.741)	1.705* (0.720)	-0.489 (0.719)	-1.462* (0.718)	0.176 (0.673)	-0.373 (0.658)
Observations	1,609	1,571	1,522	1,571	1,469	1,435	1,349
Countries	112	110	104	110	107	100	99
Chi2	115.2	148.8	209.7	197.2	229.9	236.3	478.8
Log pseudolikelihood	-5580.162	-5426.802	-5224.63	-5364.731	-4925.695	-4699.419	-4218.933
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Robust standard errors in parentheses  
\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1  
Note: Base: Strong regimes.

## **CHAPTER 5. SANCTIONS AGAINST MYANMAR AND FIJI**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In Chapter 4 I have shown that weak autocratic regimes (multi-party and personalist regimes) are more likely than strong regimes (military and one-party regimes) to comply with the EU before sanctions are imposed. As a consequence of these selection effects, I have demonstrated that multi-party regimes are less likely to be sanctioned than strong regimes like military or one-party regimes. Similarly, I have provided evidence that weak regimes that are targeted with sanctions are likely to have miscalculated their strength or the sender's resolve to impose sanctions. As a consequence, they are inclined to comply shortly after sanctions have been imposed. Finally, I have also demonstrated that weak regimes are more often destabilised by sanctions than their strong counterparts.

This chapter provides qualitative evidence of three cases of EU sanctions that support my theoretical argument. These cases are the sanctions regime imposed against Fiji between 2001 and 2003 (Fiji I), and again between 2006 and 2014 (Fiji II), and the sanctions regime imposed against Myanmar (1991-ongoing). The three episodes are chosen because they neatly reflect the ways in which the domestic political institutions of a target state – and in particular, the size of the winning coalition - shape the policy preferences of the ruling elite in a sanctions game.

The chapter proceeds in the following way. First, I analyse the EU's sanctions imposed against Myanmar. Then I examine the two sanctions episodes imposed against Fiji in 2001-2003 and 2006-2014. Fiji I is a good example of a multi-party regime (large winning coalition) that miscalculates its strength and ends up complying with the sender soon after sanctions have been imposed. The other two cases, Fiji II and Myanmar, are examples of

military regimes (small winning coalitions) that defy EU threats and withstand its sanctions for long periods of time.

Finally, this chapter introduces a new explanatory factor that due to measurement problems could not be included in the regression models of Chapter 4: the presence of “black knights”. A broad agreement exists in the sanctions literature that “black knights” – i.e. third countries that provide economic, financial and diplomatic assistance to a sanctioned country – frequently play an important role in offsetting the impact of sanctions (Early, 2011; Galtung, 1967). Thus, I control for this possibility to make sure that my results hold independently of the effects of this variable.

## **5.2. Burma/Myanmar:<sup>75</sup> 1991-ongoing**

In November 2010, the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) held the first multi-party elections in Myanmar after twenty years of military dictatorship. One year later, the SPDC dissolved, the military – officially known as the Tatmadaw – returned to the barracks, and a nominally civilian government headed by President Thein Sein took office. A transition towards a multi-party system unfolded and an ambitious programme of economic and political reforms was unveiled. The quick transformation from a ruthless military regime into a more liberalised multi-party system paved the way for a substantive modification in the EU’s relation with Myanmar.

After more than two decades of political confrontation with the military regime in Myanmar, the EU began lifting the sanctions that it had first imposed in 1991. Interestingly, neither the scope nor the length of the sanctions regime seemed to have mattered much in the regime’s

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<sup>75</sup> The names of Burma and Myanmar are used interchangeably in this chapter.

calculations to liberalise the political system. On the contrary, this process has been the result of a carefully planned and implemented strategy, where the SPDC marked the pace and nature of the reforms. In this regard, international sanctions have neither deterred nor undermined the military regime, which has shown a remarkable degree of internal cohesion to survive in power and a stunning capacity to resist external pressure. Myanmar is thus a particularly interesting case of a strong regime with a small winning coalition that self-selects itself into sanctions and resists their economic burden for a long period of time.

**Table 5.1. Coding summary: Myanmar.**

Episode	Myanmar: 1991-ongoing
Background	In 1988, the military staged a coup d'état to bring unrest in the country to an end. Since then, the military junta has increased and institutionalised its power. In 1990, elections were held, which were won by Aung San Suu Kyis' party, the New League for Democracy. However, the military ignored the result of the elections, clamped down on the opposition, and placed Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest. Since 2010, the regime has begun a slow liberalisation of the political system, leading to the holding of elections in 2012, which saw Aung San Suu Kyi win a seat in Parliament.
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	The military's regime refusal to recognise the 1990 elections results triggered EU sanctions against the military junta. Additional restrictive measures were imposed in the coming years and, especially, after the regime clamped down on the peaceful Buddhist "saffron revolution" in 2007. In 2012, the EU suspended most of its sanctions following the liberalisation of the military regime.
<b>Independent Variables</b>	
Regime type	Military (strong). After the 1988 coup and crackdown, the military took over power and institutionalised its rule through the creation of the SLORC/SPDC.
Winning coalition	Small: the most important decisions are taken by very few individuals of the military junta.
Human rights	Myanmar has a long record of human rights abuses. The military has systematically beaten, tortured, imprisoned, and undertaken extrajudicial executions of internal dissenters. Moreover, the use of forced and child labour in the country has led to international condemnation and the call for sanctions by the International Labour Organisation.
Democratization	After staging a coup d'état in 1988, the SLORC abolished the country's constitution, declared a state of emergency and ruled by decree. The rule of law ceased in the country, a tight censorship on the media was imposed and no political rights were granted. Since 2003, the military regime has pursued a "discipline-flourishing democracy". The junta presented a roadmap to democracy, convened a National Convention to draft a constitution, hold a referendum on it and hold elections in 2010 to form a new civilian government in 2011.
<i><b>Political instability</b></i>	
Protests	Low: the military regime has faced a low number of protests over its two-decade long rule. In 2007, the Buddhists monks' "saffron revolution" was forcefully suppressed.
Tenure	Long: the military junta has remained for over 20 years in office. In 2011, power was handed to a civilian government formed of former military officers. Nevertheless, the military remains strongly engaged in politics.
<i><b>Economic leverage</b></i>	
Trade dependence	Low: the EU is Myanmar's ninth largest trading partner, accounting for only 2.2% of Myanmar's trade with the world. The EU lags far behind China (39.6%), Thailand (20.1%), Singapore (12.1%) and India (3.8%).
Aid dependence	Low: EU aid to Myanmar has been very low (less than 2% of Myanmar's GDP). However, the EU has increased its development assistance to Myanmar following the liberalisation of the political system.
Black knights	Yes: China has been the major protector of Myanmar in the international community. Myanmar has also become economically dependent on its northern neighbour. Moreover, other ASEAN members have traditionally rejected sanctions and opted instead for an approach of "constructive engagement". Also, India has strengthened its economic and military ties with Myanmar.

Source: Own elaboration.



### *5.2.1. Dependent variables: resistance and sanctions*

When the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) collapsed in 1988, widespread anti-government protests demanding the democratisation of the country unravelled. In the face of a crumbling economy and ethnic insurgencies in Myanmar's borderlands, the military staged a coup d'état and clamped down on anti-government demonstrators to preserve the integrity of the country (Taylor, 2009). Thousands of demonstrators died during the military's repression in September 1988 and order was imposed through violence and fear.

Immediately after the clampdown, the military established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) – a military council formed of 19 members – to deal with the country's mounting challenges. The military also made it clear that it did not intend to stay in office for a prolonged period of time and promised to hold multi-party elections on 27 May 1990 (Tonkin, 2007). Still, in 1989 the SLORC declared martial law, arrested thousands of people, renamed the country Myanmar and set Aung San Suu Kyi – the leader of the pro-democracy party New League for Democracy (NLD) and daughter of the national hero and founder of Burma, Aung San – under house arrest (Stacey, 2006).

Despite the house arrest of Suu Kyi and other prominent NLD leaders, the NLD obtained a landslide victory in the 1990 elections, securing 59.87% of the votes and 392 out of 485 seats in Parliament (Tonkin, 2007). The elections portrayed the unpopularity of the regime and evidenced how badly the Tatmadaw had miscalculated its capacity to obtain the population's support. Following the NLD's victory, the EU and the US welcomed the result and urged the SLORC to free all political prisoners and cede power to a civilian government led by the NLD (Steinberg, 2001b).

However, the military regime postponed the date to convene a National Assembly and ignored the EU's and US' threat of sanctions if the junta did not comply with the latter's

demands. When the NLD and other opposition groups secretly met to convene a National Assembly in December 1990, the Tatmadaw dissolved the meeting by force, clamped down on the opposition, incarcerated many political activists, and pushed many others into exile or into joining resistance guerrillas in Myanmar's borderlands (Tonkin, 2007: 36).

The SLORC's resistance to the EU's threats of sanctions supports my Hypothesis 1 that regimes with small winning coalitions should be less likely to comply with the sender's demands. Indeed, over the years the SLORC has continually ignored EU demands on political change in Myanmar, leaving the EU with no other option than to impose sanctions or to back down.

On 4 January 1991, the EU Presidency issued a statement condemning the regime's repression of the opposition, the situation of human rights, and the violation of civil and democratic rights in Myanmar (EU Presidency, 1991). The EU also imposed a number of sanctions, including the suspension of non-humanitarian development aid programmes, the reduction of economic and trade relations, the expulsion of all military personnel attached to the diplomatic representations of Myanmar in the EU, and an embargo on the sale of arms (EU Presidency, 1991; Minsat, 2012). Parallel to EU efforts, the US imposed wide-ranging economic sanctions and vetoed Myanmar's access to aid, soft loans and credits from international organisations like the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (Human Rights Watch, 1992; Pedersen, 2008).

The imposition of sanctions following the regime's resistance to the EU's demands is in line with my expectation that military regimes with small winning coalitions are recalcitrant and prefer to resist external pressure rather than complying with the sender's requests (Hypothesis 2). Importantly, while the regime has often criticised and asked for the lifting of Western

sanctions, it has never shown the slightest intention to compromise or comply with EU requests.

In May and July 1996, the EU held meetings with the regime in New York and Jakarta where it renewed its demand to promote the democratization of the country ‘in light of the 1990 election result’ (EU Presidency, 1996a). Specifically, the EU expressed its concerns regarding widespread human rights abuses, the incarcerating of political prisoners, the existence of forced labour, the neglect of democratic and civil rights, and the lack of democratic progress in Myanmar. It also requested the junta to establish a dialogue with the Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD to promote national reconciliation and find a way out of the political deadlock. Finally, it urged the SLORC to cooperate in clarifying the death under military custody of Mr. James Nichols, the EU’s honorary consul in Myanmar (EU Presidency, 1996a).

The SLORC however refused to cooperate, and the EU issued a Common Position on 28 October 1996 confirming the measures already adopted and introducing additional sanctions. The new measures included a visa ban for senior members of the SLORC and their families, a visa ban for senior members of the military, and the suspension of high-level bilateral visits to Myanmar (Council of the European Union, 1996). Moreover, pursuing reports on the SLORC’s use of forced labour, further measures were considered. In particular, the EU discussed suspending Myanmar’s access to the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), a threat that would materialise in 1997 after the International Labour Organisation found widespread evidence on the use of forced labour by the regime (Houses of the Oireachtas, 1996). When the SLORC denied the allegations and refused to cooperate with the investigation by allowing a fact-finding mission into the country, the EU withdrew Myanmar’s access to the tariff preferences under the GSP framework (Council of the

European Union, 1997b; Portela and Orbie, 2014), whilst the US issued a prohibition on all new US investment in Myanmar (United States, 1997).

Over the years and in light of the lack of progress, sanctions were continuously extended and expanded by adding a freeze on the assets of blacklisted individuals (Council of the European Union, 2000). Myanmar triggered a major diplomatic rift between the EU and ASEAN when it officially became a member of ASEAN in 1997. As a consequence, several ASEAN-EU meetings were cancelled between 1997 and 2000 and tensions spilled over to EU-ASEM meetings (International Crisis Group, 2008a: 15; Petersson, 2006).

In April 2003 the EU opened again the possibility for engagement with the junta when it offered to suspend some of the measures until 29 October 2003 ‘if substantive progress towards national reconciliation’, the respect of human rights, and democratisation was undertaken by the SLORC/SPDC (Council of the European Union, 2003; Marchi, 2014: 67). However, this “carrot-and-sticks approach” suffered yet another blow when in May 2003 – a year after the SPDC had released Daw Aung Suu Kyi from house arrest –, the NLD leader and its motorcade were attacked while travelling through the country by members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), the regime’s civil society arm (International Crisis Group, 2004; Marchi, 2014; Seekins, 2005).

The US reacted harshly to these events by approving the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act (United States, 2003),<sup>76</sup> whereas the EU expanded its sanctions regime by prohibiting the granting of financial loans or credits to Myanmar state-owned enterprises and by banning the acquisition or extension of a participation in state-owned ventures (Council of the European

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<sup>76</sup> The measures imposed under the Burmese Freedom and Democracy act included ‘an extension of the visa ban on officials of the SPDC and the USDA; a freeze on the U.S. assets of Burmese officials; a ban on financial transactions between American parties and “entities of the Rangoon regime” (save for those that receive especial exemptions from the U.S. Treasury Department, such as non-governmental organizations [NGOs] working on humanitarian projects); and, most important, an embargo on all imports from Burma to the United States’ (Seekins, 2005: 439-40).

Union, 2004b, d). These measures caused important economic harm to the country's economy, but did not influence the regime's behaviour (Seekins, 2005; Steinberg, 2007). More sanctions were approved in October 2007, after the military regime cracked down on the peaceful demonstrations of Buddhist monks.<sup>77</sup> This time, EU ministers agreed to target important sources of revenue for the regime 'by adding trade, investment and financial bans on the logging and mining industries' to the sanctions regime (Council of the European Union, 2007a, 2008d; International Crisis Group, 2008a: 16).

However, the increasing coerciveness and scope of sanctions did not bring about change in the SLORC/SPDC's behaviour. According to critical voices, 'sanctions played into the hands of the military junta since they shield[ed] the country from external influence while contributing to its underdevelopment' (Will, 2003: 17). Thus, sanctions pushed the military rulers towards increased isolation, whilst engagement and contact with the outside world might have been more productive in influencing the SPDC's leadership (International Crisis Group, 2004: 21; Pedersen, 2008). In addition, they exacerbated the regime's suspicion 'that the West [aimed] to dominate and exploit Myanmar', strengthening thereby its 'resolve to resist' (International Crisis Group, 2004: ii).

The regime's persistent refusal to accept the EU's demands and resist sanctions for over 20 years supports my claim of Hypothesis 3 that military regimes with a small winning coalition are more likely to withstand the economic burden of sanctions for long periods of time. In fact, although the regime repeatedly demanded the suspension of sanctions, it never showed any intention or willingness to compromise with Western senders. On the contrary, 'the imposition of various economic sanctions that have periodically increased has not produced their intended effect [and] the vituperative language of much of the world has prompted a

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<sup>77</sup> These demonstrations have also been referred to as the "Saffron Revolution".

nationalistic response that on many occasions became strident and xenophobic' (Steinberg, 2010: 175).

Moreover, even though sanctions have been wide-ranging in scope and very severe in their effects, they have not destabilised the military regime. This is exactly what I expect in Hypothesis 4, where I claim that military regimes with small winning coalitions are less likely to be destabilised by external shocks like sanctions. On the contrary, albeit by 2011 the EU had included over a thousand individuals and state-controlled entities in its blacklist (European Commission, 2011), the effects of sanctions have been questionable.<sup>78</sup>

In 2010 events took an unexpected course when the SPDC held the first multi-party elections in the country in 20 years and promised to undertake further reforms of the political system. The EU and the US called these elections a sham, as the political party of the regime, the Union State and Development Party (USDP) obtained a decisive victory (BBC, 2010b). However, regional actors like Vietnam – the chair of ASEAN - praised the reforms as a step forward (Lunn, 2011). Moreover, the new scenario marked a clear liberalization of the political system, as state power was diffused and transferred from the junta to a new generation of military officers, technocrats, and to the newly designed institutions (International Crisis Group, 2011a, b). Together with a sense of sanctions fatigue, this process triggered a change of approach by the EU and the US (Portela, 2010), which reacted cautiously to the reforms, encouraging engagement with the regime and increasing support for the transitional process.

In December 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Myanmar and held talks with President Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi. After these meetings, the US started lifting

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<sup>78</sup> The cost of sanctions on Myanmar is difficult to estimate, as it is difficult to differentiate it from other factors like the country's bad economic performance due to the SPDC's mismanagement of the economy (House of Lords, 2007: 22, para. 57).

sanctions progressively and backed the regime's reforms. In 2012, President Obama lifted the US ban on investment in Myanmar and the ban on imports from Myanmar (BBC, 2012b; De Young, 2012; Mahtani, 2013). One year later, the US lifted 'a 1996 ban on granting U.S. entry visas to the former Burma's military rulers, their business partners and immediate families' (Eckert, 2013).

The EU responded to the progressive democratisation of the country by suspending the visa bans against high ranking officials in 2011 and lifting the suspension of high-level bilateral governmental visits to the country (Council of the European Union, 2011d). Although the decision to lift sanctions 'did not receive full support from the Council' (Giumelli, 2013a: 31), further reforms by the regime led the EU to suspend sanctions in 2012, and – with the exception of the arms embargo – to lift them completely in 2013 (Bünthe and Portela, 2012; Portela, 2014). In 2012, the EU increased its development aid, opened a delegation in Yangon, and prominent politicians like Lady Ashton – the High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy – and Commission President Barroso undertook official visits to the country (Euractiv, 2013a). Finally, Myanmar was reinstated into the GSP tariff preferences scheme in 2013, following a positive decision by the ILO (European Commission, 2013a).

To sum up, the Myanmar sanctions episode provides evidence that military regimes with small winning coalitions are prone to resist external threats, even if this comes at the cost of twenty years of economic sanctions. Despite the scope and coerciveness of the measures imposed, the SLORC/SPDC was able to remain in power for a very long period of time. Although some analysts have suggested that sanctions have played an indirect role in accompanying Myanmar's transition by establishing clear benchmarks for Myanmar to receive Western support and sanctions relief (Grant, 2012), this claim cannot be fully substantiated by the facts. Indeed, while the regime might have been willing to re-establish

relations with the West to balance the increasing economic penetration of China in the country (Interview, 2015c, h), Western pressure cannot explain the pace or extent of reforms undertaken. In fact, the West has remained a relatively passive spectator of the process, which has been dictated and shaped by the SPDC.

### *5.2.2. Independent variables*

#### *5.2.2.1. Regime type: military (strong)*

The military regime's capacity to survive in power for over twenty years is a remarkable feature considering the numerous challenges that it has faced, including the confrontation with political parties like the NLD, ethnic insurgencies in Myanmar's borderlands, and two decades of Western economic sanctions. The key to understand its survival resides in the institutionalisation of its rule through the establishment of the SLORC/SPDC and a wide system of patronage, the unity of strategy within the Tatmadaw, and its capacity to balance the interests of different factions to avoid a split within the armed forces.

After the 1988 coup, the military quickly established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), a military cabinet composed of 19 active-duty officers that ruled by decree without a constitution or legislature of any kind (Selth, 2002; Steinberg, 2001a). Although the SLORC openly claimed to have no desire to retain power for a long period of time and promised to hold multi-party elections in May 1990 (Tonkin, 2007), it quickly realised that 'transferring power immediately risked creating a weak state that could quickly collapse' and put the interests of the Tatmadaw in jeopardy (Jones, 2014a: 788). Thus, after its failure to secure a victory of the military-backed National Unity Party's (NUP), the



SLORC changed its approach and embarked on an ambitious state-building project (Bünthe, 2011).

Under the leadership of Senior General Than Shwe, the SLORC undertook several important reforms in the country. First, it abolished the BSPP's nationwide organisation, replacing it with Law and Order Restoration Councils, which essentially reproduced the hierarchical structure of the SLORC and which were directly under control of military officers (Selth, 2002). These efforts were accompanied in 1993 by the creation of the USDA, a mass organisation to promote local development and rally support for the regime when necessary (Steinberg, 2001a). The USDA was given control of several businesses in the country, which were employed in co-optation and patronage functions for the regime (Jones, 2014b). At the same time however, the USDA was used a powerful weapon to intimidate and harass the opposition.

Second, the SLORC undertook important reforms in the country's economy, fostering a transition from state socialism to state-mediated capitalism. The regime promoted a process of economic liberalisation, but 'exploited it to augment its own holdings' (Jones, 2014b: 149). It created two business conglomerates – the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings and Myanmar Economic Corporation – and 'deliberately cultivated "national entrepreneurs" [...] to support [the regime's] goals' (Jones, 2014b: 149). The SLORC also retained monopolies on trade and investment licences, and deliberately implemented arbitrary regulations to control the distribution of rents and the access to the state's resources to reward the loyalty of its supporters.

Third, the SLORC expanded and modernised the army to consolidate its power. Between 1988 and 2000, the military increased its manpower to over 400.000 soldiers and bought Chinese military technology and arms to intensify its efforts against the ethnic insurgencies in

the country's borderlands, thus strengthening the SLORC's position at home and forcing many ethnic insurgencies to negotiate ceasefire agreements (International Crisis Group, 2000a). Moreover, the SLORC made the Tatmadaw an attractive institution that offered its members and their families extensive business and wealth-accumulating opportunities (Callahan, 2007), and guaranteed privileged access to scarce resources like schools, medication, and supermarkets.

Finally, the regime's capacity to retain its grip on power for over twenty years was also the product of SLORC's relative cohesion and its consensus on basic strategy. Although factionalism within the SLORC certainly existed, 'the junta [...] managed to maintain its internal differences and disagreements under control' (Hlaing, 2009: 272; Min, 2008). This was achieved through regular purges, relocations, promotions and an effective surveillance apparatus. Most importantly however, the military stuck together 'because the members still recognize[d] that they need[ed] each other' to preserve the corporate and personal interests of the institution and its members (Steinberg, 2001a).

The regime's most important decisions were taken by the top five or top three of the SLORC leaders (International Crisis Group, 2000a), including decisions like the 1997 reorganisation of the SLORC into the SPDC. This helped the regime to get rid 'of the more obviously corrupt and incompetent members of the SLORC, and [allowed] younger officers [...] to play a greater role in running the country' (Selth, 2002: 60). However, this decision also evidenced a sense of continuity, as the top leaders remained the same (Steinberg, 2001a).

Nevertheless, the SLORC/SPDC also remained united despite prominent purges like that of the powerful Prime Minister Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt and several of his subordinates in 2004. While the purge evidenced the existence of a split within the top command of the SPDC, it did not alter the regime's course of action. On the contrary, the regime proceeded with

Nyunt's transitional roadmap towards a "discipline flourishing democracy", evidencing in this way the existence of a broad agreement on basic strategy within the SPDC (International Crisis Group, 2008a).

In fact, the regime's ability to proceed with this process underscores its resilience vis-à-vis international and domestic pressures. Indeed, the conclusion of the 2003-2007 National Convention's work on a draft constitution signalled the regime's strength inasmuch as the SPDC managed i) to conclude a process that had failed in the 1990s; ii) to include several ethnic insurgencies in the process; iii) to retain most of the elements that the opposition rejected during the 1993-1996 National Convention; and iv) to approve the Constitution in a nation-wide referendum in 2008 (Jones, 2014a). Moreover, the 2010 elections further proved the SDPC's strength and the undeniable fact that the roadmap was 'the only game in town', as a sector of the NLD splintered from the mother party and created the National Democratic Force to participate in the elections (Jones, 2014a: 795).

Thus, the liberalisation of the political system was neither the result of the regime's weakness, nor the product of Western economic pressure; on the contrary, it was the culmination of a long and slow process of political reforms where the SPDC pushed its policy agenda through (Jones, 2014a). Indeed, the regime completed its roadmap from a position of strength, having enshrined the military's corporate interests in the country's constitution (Jones, 2014b).<sup>79</sup> Indeed, only when the military considered that it was safe to do so, it proceeded to dissolve the SDPC and to hand power to a nominally civilian government on 30 March 2011 (Guardian, 2011). As Bünthe has succinctly put it, 'the military's withdrawal from power does not mean a retreat into the barracks, but rather a further institutionalization of

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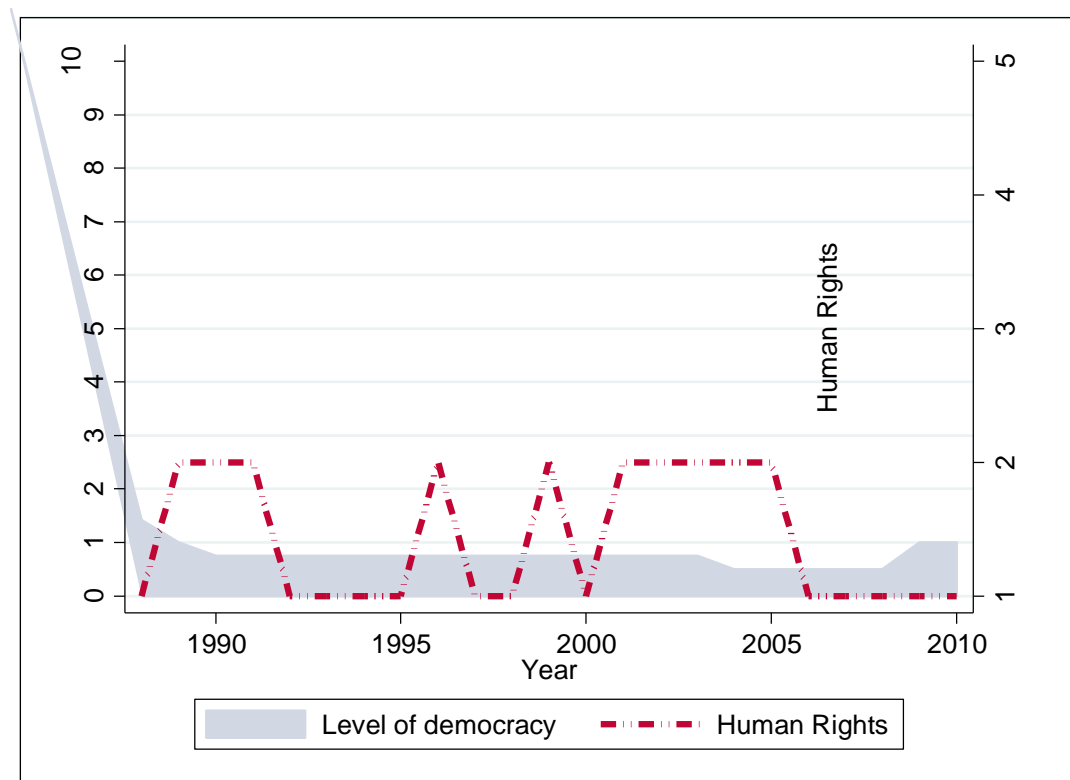
<sup>79</sup> As one interviewee pointed out, the junta has a de facto veto power on any modification of the constitution, which requires more than 75% of the votes in Parliament (Interview, 2015c). This has led Aung San Suu Kyi to as "one brave soldier" (Peel and Pilling, 2015) to vote with the opposition and overrun the military's veto.

military control' (Bünthe, 2011: 16-18). In this sense, Myanmar's political system can be accurately described as a "tutelary democracy" or a "democracy with adjectives" (Collier and Levitsky, 1997; Merkel, 2004), where the role of the military is still substantial behind the scenes. Finally, the transition and the elections can also be regarded as a strategic move by the SPDC to reward and promote younger cohorts of the Tatmadaw whilst easing generational pressures within the ruling military elite (Bünthe, 2011; Gandhi and Lust-Okar, 2009).

#### *5.2.2.2. Human rights and democracy*

Since 1988, the military regime in Myanmar has been one of the most repressive regimes in the world (Pedersen, 2008). The SLORC/SPDC has been widely criticised by Western governments and human rights organisations for its numerous human rights violations and the lack of civil and political freedoms in Myanmar. In 1988, the military did not hesitate to dissolve the anti-government protests that swept Rangoon by force, killing thousands of demonstrators and sending many others into exile. Moreover, the SLORC/SPDC has systematically tortured, harassed, and jailed domestic political activists during its rule. Continued international criticism has not affected the regime, which has defied Western powers by placing Aung San Suu Kyi and other prominent members of the NLD under house arrest for many years.

**Graph 5.1. Level of democracy and human rights in Myanmar, 1988-2010**



Source: Own elaboration. Data for democracy from Wahman et al. (2013); data for human rights from Gibney et al. (2015).

Although the SLORC's failure to honour its promise to cede power to a civilian government after the 1990 elections triggered EU and US sanctions, further events like the unexplained death of the EU's honorary consul in 1996, the regime's implication in the violent events against Suu Kyi's motorcade in 2003, the junta's crackdown on the Buddhist monks' protests in 2007, and the non-existence of the rule of law in the country contributed to the imposition of additional sanctions over the years (Freedom House, 1998).

However, the regime's liberalisation of the political system following the approval of a new constitution in 2008 and the holding of multi-party elections in 2010 and 2012 have led to the progressive suspension of sanctions. Despite the flaws and lack of real opposition that have surrounded the transition, the reforms were welcomed by the US and the EU, who hastened

to ease sanctions in 2011, suspend them in 2012, and lift most of the measures in place by 2013 (Bünthe and Portela, 2012; Portela, 2013).

### *5.2.2.3. Economic leverage*

Overall, the EU's economic leverage over Myanmar has been rather small. Although the trade relationship between the EU and Burma has increased over time, in 2013, the EU was only Myanmar's eight largest trading partner, trading commodities for a value of 533 million euros. The EU accounted for a scant 2.3% of Myanmar's total trade, lagging far behind other regional trading partners like China or Thailand, which accounted for 34.6% and 25.2% of Myanmar's trade respectively (European Commission, 2015b). The EU's low economic leverage cannot be attributed to its suspension of Myanmar from the GSP scheme in 1997, as this decision only affected a small number of areas of the latter's economy and did not alter the general increase in trade between the two parts (Zhou and Cuyvers, 2011).

A similar picture emerges with regard to development assistance, which has been very low since the EU suspended its disbursements in 1991.<sup>80</sup> Although EU leverage thus remained small between 1988 and 2010, in recent years the EU and its member states have considerably stepped up aid disbursements to Myanmar to deal with emergency situations caused by natural disasters like Cyclone Nargis in 2008 (Rieffel and Fox, 2013), and to support the transition process since 2013 (Council of the European Union, 2013a).

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<sup>80</sup> EU development assistance to Myanmar was relatively small before 1990.

#### 5.2.2.4. *Black knights*

Myanmar has benefitted from the patronage of strong regional and international allies to offset EU and US pressure. China has undoubtedly been the SLORC/SPDC's most important ally, supplying the military regime with weapons, grant aid, preferential loans and debt relief (Haacke, 2010a). This support has been critical to allow the regime to expand its army and force ethnic insurgent groups to the bargaining table (International Crisis Group, 2000a). China and Russia have also actively protected the military regime in the United Nations, watering down critical resolutions of the SLORC/SPDC. For instance, in January 2007 they protected the military junta with a historical double veto against a joint US/UK initiative that aimed to criticise the regime in the UN Security Council (Haacke, 2010b).

In addition, other regional actors have played an important role in mitigating the impact of sanctions against Burma. First, ASEAN has been a strong defender of Myanmar, advocating a constructive and flexible approach to deal with the SLORC/SPDC (Haacke, 1999, 2008). Its lack of criticism towards the regime in the 1990s tightened the relationship with Western partners and led to the suspension of several region-to-region meeting between ASEAN and the EU (Petersson, 2006). Tensions also spilled over to other interregional frameworks like the Asia Europe Meeting (Wilson, 2007: 92). Besides ASEAN's role, Thailand has strengthened trading links with Burma, allowing the Tatmadaw to circumvent EU and US sanctions against its business holdings in timber and gem stones (Grant, 2012; Jones, 2014b). Finally, India's increasing trade and investment in Myanmar has also helped 'the SLORC to evade the full impact of Western sanctions' (Haacke, 2006: 38).

However, a caveat regarding the importance of these actors in offsetting Western sanctions is necessary. First, even though Myanmar's trade with its regional neighbours has increased over the years, it 'remains one of the most closed countries in the world' (International Crisis

Group, 2004: 11-17). The country is ‘self-sufficient in food, and the domestic economy is large enough for the army to extract what it needs to function’. As a consequence, ‘the government ultimately does not depend on external economic linkages for its survival’ (International Crisis Group, 2004: 11-17). Second, the regime is extremely suspicious of any type of external interference in its domestic matters. This does not only apply to Western sanctions, but also to ASEAN, Chinese and UN efforts to promote change in Myanmar. Indeed, the regime’s defiance of external pressures to reform has frustrated Western powers and regional allies alike (Haacke, 2008). Hence, the presence of black knights can best be regarded as a necessary but insufficient condition to explain the regime’s capacity to hold onto power.

### **5.3. Fiji**

On 22 September 2014, former military chief Commodore “Frank” Bainimarama was sworn in as Prime Minister after Fiji’s first competitive elections in eight years. Having personally overthrown the former democratically elected premier in a bloodless coup in 2006, Bainimarama staged a state-controlled transition from a military regime to a new multi-party system, putting in this way end to one of the most turbulent periods of Fiji’s young history as an independent country. After the elections, the EU and other sender countries like Australia and New Zealand began to normalise their relations with Fiji, lifting the remaining economic sanctions that had been in place since the coup d’état.

Fiji is an interesting case because it has been sanctioned by the EU in two occasions: first during the period 2001-2003 (as a multi-party or weak regime, Fiji I) and then again after the coup d’état in 2006 (as a military or strong regime, Fiji II). Fiji’s response to the sanctions has been very different from one episode to the other: whilst the regime complied with the



EU and all other senders quickly after sanctions were imposed in 2000, it defied them after the coup of 2006, resisting their pressure for almost 8 years.

The selection of Fiji as a case study is driven by the rare opportunity to see a country being sanctioned twice under different institutional settings. Since regime type is a slow-varying variable, Fiji represents a unique opportunity to observe how the probability of being sanctioned varies depending on the size and cohesion of the domestic institutions of the target state. Moreover, it also allows witnessing how sanctions affect multi-party and military regimes differently: whilst sanctions were short-lived and destabilised the ruling elite in Fiji I, they lasted many years but did not undermine the cohesion of the military junta in Fiji II. In sum, the case study provides a good example of a multi-party regime that miscalculates its strength to remain in power on the one hand (Fiji I), and one of a strong regime that consciously self-selects itself into sanctions (Fiji II) on the other hand.

#### **5.4. Fiji (I): 2000-2003**

In May 2000, a group of armed civilians led by businessman George Speight stormed the Parliament building taking Prime Minister Chaudhry, most of his cabinet and other members of parliament hostage for 56 days. Through the coup, which overthrew the first ever Indo-Fijian prime minister of the country, Fijian nationalists sought to restrict the influence of Indo-Fijians in the country's politics, which they perceived as a threat to indigenous Fijians. Although the putsch had some domestic support in sectors of Fijian politics, police, and military, it was immediately condemned by the international community and domestic actors, including President Mara and, most importantly, the head of the military, Commodore Frank Bainimarama. The hostage crisis prompted Bainimarama to assume executive powers, impose martial law, and revoke the 1997 Constitution (European Commission, 2000).

In June 2000, whilst negotiations with the coup plotters to release the hostages were taking place, Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs appointed Iloilo as the country's new President, who in turn appointed Laisena Qarase - a former banker and indigenous Fijian - as the interim Prime Minister in July. In this way, a civil-military interim government of Indigenous Fijians was installed, ignoring the deposed Indo-Fijian government's legitimacy to return to office.

This announcement sparked harsh international criticism. Having threatened sanctions if Fiji did not return to the democratic path, Australia and New Zealand imposed travel restrictions on the members of the regime and suspended military cooperation with Fiji (Telegraph, 2000). Fiji had already been suspended from its membership in the Commonwealth and the Pacific Island Forum earlier that year. Finally, and though with some delay, the EU followed suit and imposed sanctions against Fiji in May 2001.

**Table 5.2. Coding summary: Fiji I.**

<b>Episode</b>	<b>Fiji (I): 2000-2003</b>
Background	After a coup d'état was staged in May 2000, the EU and other international senders threatened to impose sanctions.
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	
	The EU, Australia and New Zealand imposed aid and travel sanctions to restore the democratic order in Fiji. The interim government complied with most of the senders' demands and sanctions were lifted between 2001 and 2003, once free and fair elections had been held and all demands had been met.
<b>Independent Variables</b>	
Regime type	Multi-party (weak). Three months after the coup a civil-military interim government was formed to deal with the crises and establish a timetable to democratic elections.
Winning coalition	Medium/Large: Power was shared between a civil-military interim government. The Council of Great Chiefs also played a role in the nomination of the interim government, and the judiciary played an important role in the dissolution of the government.
Human rights	Low/Moderate: Arbitrary detentions and beatings of coup and military mutiny perpetrators were carried out by the military.
Democratization	After businessman Speight's coup d'état, democracy in Fiji deteriorated gravely. The head of the military Commodore Bainimarama assumed executive powers, revoked the 1997 Constitution and declared the state of emergency. A civil-military government was appointed shortly afterwards, yet this was declared illegal in a Court's ruling in April 2001. After the ruling, the interim government dissolved and democratic elections were held in September 2001.
<b><i>Political instability</i></b>	
Protests	Low: Although looting against the Indo-Fijian community took place, the interim government did not face serious protests.
Tenure	Short: the interim government lasted about 15 months
<b><i>Economic leverage</i></b>	
Trade dependence	Moderate: Fiji was very sensitive to the suspension of the EU's Sugar Protocol, under which the EU buys sugar to Fiji under subsidised prices. The sugar exports to the EU account for about 26% of Fiji's total export earnings.
Aid dependence	Low: Fiji is not an aid-dependent country, as development assistance making up less than 1% of the country's GDP.
Black knights	No

Source: Own elaboration.

#### *5.4.1. The dependent variables: threat of sanctions, sanctions and compliance*

In October 2000, the EU opened negotiations with Fiji under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Meeting in Brussels with a Fijian delegation, the Commission deplored the overthrow of the democratic government and the revocation of the 1997 constitution. It demanded the adoption of a new democratic constitution by December 2001 and the restoration of the democratic process through free and fair elections by June 2002. In addition, the Commission requested the interim government to undertake judiciary procedures against the coup plotters and its associates (European Commission, 2001b).

The Fijian delegation agreed to most of the conditions and presented a plan and a timetable to hold elections and return to the democratic path within 18 months' time. However, even though Fiji complied with most of the EU's (and the other senders') requests, the civil-military government ignored one key demand, namely the reinstatement of Chaudhry's deposed government (European Commission, 2001b). Instead, Fiji's political elites had installed an indigenous civil-military interim government to take the reins of the country during the transitional period, unleashing thereby a round of sanctions from Australia and New Zealand (Telegraph, 2000). Similarly, in March 2001 the European Commission proposed to the European Council the imposition of "appropriate measures"<sup>81</sup> to exert pressure on the Fijian regime to progress towards democracy.

However, developments in the country would have an unexpected impact on the stability of the interim government. In April, the Fijian Supreme Court ruled that the 1997 Constitution remained the supreme law in the atoll and that the civil-military government that had come out of the coup was illegal (Williams, 2001a). Following this judgement and after some

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<sup>81</sup> The Commission's proposal to the Council included some tough measures like the suspension of all investment projects under the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF), a conditional approach to the signing of financing agreements, and the delay of the announcement of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF amount.

hesitation by the interim government, the regime committed to respect the 1997 Constitution, the interim government dissolved, and the holding of elections in September 2001 was announced. These developments were welcomed by the EU Council (EU Presidency, 2001), who proceeded to conclude negotiations with Fiji and, following the Commission's suggestion, approved a series of appropriate measures to support the transition.

Due in great measure to the positive developments experienced in the country between March and April, the measures imposed by the Council were a watered-down version of the Commission's initial proposal.<sup>82</sup> The Council decided that the notification of the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) would be made 'once free and fair elections [had] taken place and a legitimate Government ha[d] assumed office' (Council of the European Union, 2001a). The same would apply to the financing and implementation of new programmes and projects under the 6th, 7th and 8th EDF National Indicative Programmes. Other projects of humanitarian nature would be maintained, whilst support for the transition to democracy was offered.

Although the EU's imposition of sanctions on Fiji contradicts my expectation that multi-party regimes should be less likely to be sanctioned (Hypothesis 2), this outcome needs to be read carefully. First, the EU's "appropriate measures" can be better described as "negative incentives" – rather than as a pure punishment – to guide Fiji in its return to democracy. Indeed, the EU took a proactive role in encouraging and supporting the country's transition to democracy, making its allocation of aid conditional on the achievement of the civil-military regime's timetable (Portela, 2010). In this regard, the measures approved were not aimed at punishing the regime, but at encouraging it to return to the democratic path.

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<sup>82</sup> See footnote 7.

Second, as I expect in Hypothesis 3, sanctions were short-lived. Having miscalculated its capacity of maintaining its winning coalition together to retain office, the Fijian interim government was forced to dissolve and to call elections before December 2001. After credible elections were won by Qarase's Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) coalition (Council of the European Union, 2001b; Freedom House, 2002), relations between Fiji and the sender countries were slowly restored, leading to the progressive lifting of sanctions. However, the EU only fully resumed cooperation with Fiji in November 2003, when the political deadlock regarding the allocation of government positions to the opposition was solved (Chandra and Wermester, 2003: 152; European Commission, 2003b).

Still, the EU's delay in lifting sanctions does not contradict my theoretical expectations or the empirical results of Chapter 4. In fact, the sanctions episode lasted about two and a half years, being relatively shorter than the mean duration of sanctions for multi-party regimes – which is slightly over three years. Consequently, this example reinforces my argument (see H1) that multi-party regimes are more likely to comply with the sender and that they are more likely to do so early after sanctions have been imposed (see H3).

Finally, sanctions exerted an important pressure on the target regime and contributed to its destabilisation (Portela, 2010). Although sanctions did not directly target the Fijian economy, they had severe collateral effects on tourism, businesses, investment, and trade (International Monetary Fund, 2003). They also signalled the senders' discontent with the situation and marked the way for the normalization of political and economic relations, making the latter conditional on political progress. In this regard, sanctions served as an external catalyst to induce the regime to acquiesce with the senders' demands, including the dissolution of the interim government, the holding of democratic elections in due time and the respect of the ethnical quotas in government as established by the country's constitution. Lastly, international pressure was also important in forcing the interim government to comply with

the Court of Appeal's March 2001 ruling, contributing thence to its dissolution and the holding of elections in September 2001 (Premdas, 2003). This is in line with my Hypothesis 4, which expects multi-party regimes to be more likely destabilized by sanctions.

#### *5.4.2. Independent variables*

##### *5.4.2.1. Regime type: "multi-party" regime (weak)*

As the case study evidences, Fiji's institutional structure and the power relations underlying it largely explain the country's reaction to the threat and imposition of sanctions. Fiji is coded as a "multi-party" regime between 2001 and 2003, which, according to my theoretical approach, implies that autocratic rulers need to maintain a large winning coalition to remain in office. Yet as the Fijian example evidences, this was not the case after the 2000 coup d'état.

First, the head of the military, Commodore Frank Bainimarama felt uneasy intervening in politics, as he would recall years later after staging a coup himself (United Nations, 2007). Fearing that the neutrality of the Armed Forces – which were mostly formed by Indigenous Fijians – would be jeopardised, Bainimarama only took power reluctantly to solve the crisis. But even when he did so, he appointed a civilian government after three months and proposed a timetable to return to democratic rule in a short period of time (BBC, 2000; European Commission, 2001b).

Thus, the creation of a civil-military interim government headed by Iloilo and Qarase reflected the need to build a strong consensus amongst the Fijian political elites to deal with the crisis situation and maintain the stability of the interim regime. The fragility of the winning coalition was also evidenced in November 2000 when a military mutiny instigated

by some of Speight's collaborators took place. On this occasion, Bainimarama only narrowly escaped death, but the image of the army as being 'infected by the dangerous virus of indiscipline, insubordination and provincialism' extended amongst Fiji's population, as some of these forces had been instrumental to the execution of the coup (Lal, 2006: 208).

Moreover, the interim government's weakness led it to the negotiation table and to accept all of the senders' demands but one: to reinstate Chaudhry and his government. Nevertheless, this refusal would put the regime's cohesion to a tough test. First, international sanctions were imposed by Australia, the EU and New Zealand. And second, when in March 2001 the Court of Appeals ruled that the interim government was illegal and that the 1997 Constitution that had been abrogated by Bainimarama was still the valid legal norm in the country (Head, 2001; Williams, 2001b), fractures started to emerge in the interim government.

Importantly, the Court argued that the interim government had not managed to obtain international recognition or domestic support, and pointed to the legitimacy of Chaudhry's deposed government (Williams, 2001a). Qarase initially refused to step down, but after consulting with Iloilo and the Great Council of Chiefs, he accepted to dissolve the interim government. Nevertheless, he managed to remain as interim prime minister to prepare the holding of elections (Tarte, 2002), a move that generated further tensions. While the international community accepted this solution as long as the timetable to hold elections was maintained, domestically it was questioned by parts of the military and, especially, by Chaudhry's Labour party.

Finally, to maintain his administration's stability, Qarase made important concessions to the ethnic Fijian population and, most prominently, to Speight and the nationalists. These concessions, together with his decision to run for Prime Minister in the September 2001 elections were disapproved of by Bainimarama, as 'Qarase's government was politically tied



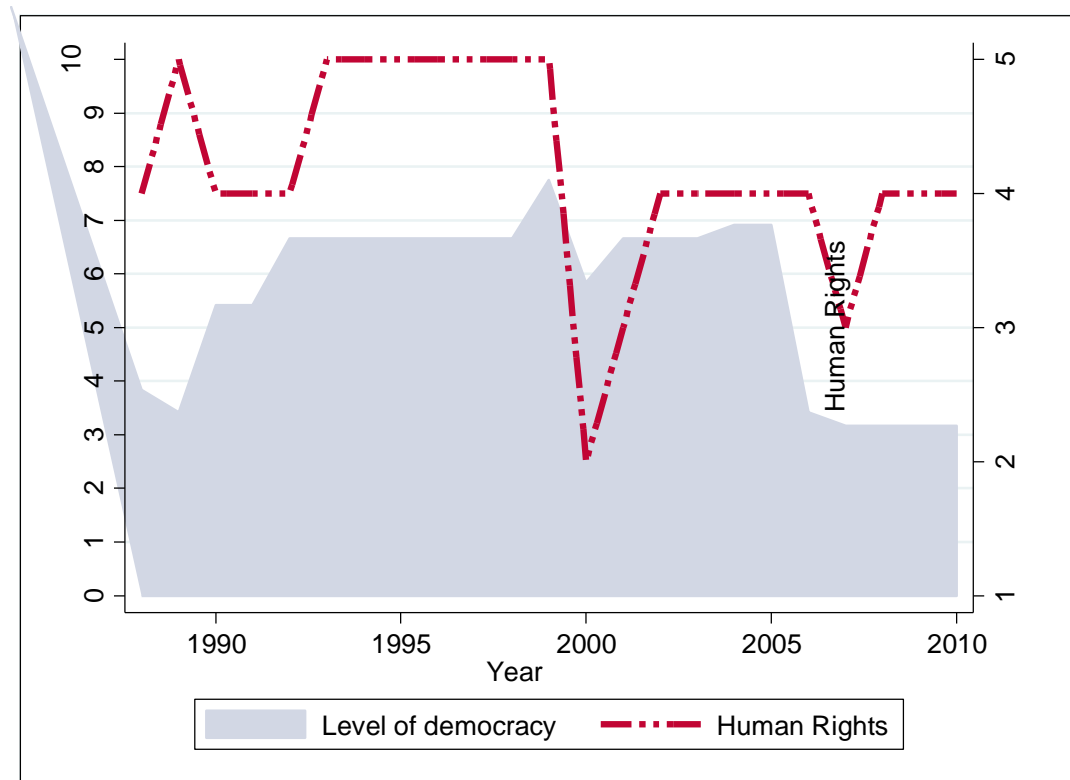
to reinforcing and elevating into office precisely those forces that the commander felt he had to suppress and bring to justice' (Firth and Fraenkel, 2009: 125). Bainimarama's hostility towards Qarase grew when, after winning the elections, the latter refused to comply with the constitution and include members of the Indo-Fijian opposition in his government. International condemnation, sanctions, and increasing domestic pressure finally subdued Qarase's resistance (Tran, 2000).

#### *5.4.2.2. Human rights and democracy*

After the coup d'état, the situation in the country was very tense. Businesses in the capital Suva closed after looting against the Indo-Fijian population began. In other parts of the country, indigenous Fijians illegally grabbed Indo-Fijian land, burned their houses and robbed their valuables, sometimes with the complicity of the security forces. Moreover, many skilled Indo-Fijians were internally displaced and, following the military mutiny in November 2000, extrajudicial killings, beatings and tortures by military personnel involved in the mutiny were reported (Amnesty International, 2001).

The democratic process was halted through Speight's coup and the curfew imposed by the military. This affected the Parliament's activity, which ceased until the composition of the new legislature after the September 2001 elections. Moreover, the legitimacy of the interim government was put into serious question after the Court of Appeals' ruling in March 2001, leaving the country close to a legal limbo. In this situation, President Iloilo proceeded to formally dissolve Parliament and call for elections.

**Graph 5.2. Level of democracy and human rights in Fiji, 1988-2010**



Source: Own elaboration. Data for democracy from Wahman et al. (2013); data for human rights from Gibney et al. (2015).

The coup and the following deterioration of the democratic process in the atoll had a very big influence on the senders' decision to use sanctions, especially after the interim government refused to reinstate Chaudhry and appointed Qarase instead. Nevertheless, most senders were satisfied with the transition to democracy and proceeded to lift their sanctions once elections had been held.

#### *5.4.2.3. Economic leverage*

The senders' economic leverage did not play a major role in forcing Fiji's leadership to comply, even though powerful instruments were available to Australia, New Zealand and the EU. On the one hand, Australia and New Zealand had an important commercial leverage,

accounting together for about 60% of Fiji's trade. On its side, the EU could suspend its Sugar Protocol, which was vital for Fiji's sugar export industry (Dearden, 2010). However, none of these countries was willing to impose commercial sanctions on Fiji, as these would have had detrimental effects on the population and the wider Pacific area (Dubecki, 2006).

As a consequence, the effect of sanctions was, at best, symbolic and the suspension of aid was not particularly threatening. As an upper middle income country, Fiji is not dependent on aid and hardly qualifies for official development assistance (Schmaljohann and Prizzon, 2014). However, sanctions had an indirect impact on the country's economy, signalling uncertainty to investors and tourists. The sugar sector was particularly affected by this, as it required large sums of investment for its modernisation. Finally, a boycott on the garment industry by Australian trade unions had devastating effects on the sector (Guardian, 2000).

#### *5.4.2.4. Black knights*

To offset the impact of sanctions and the bad economic situation in the country after the coup, the Qarase government initiated a "look North" policy to attract investment from Asian and other regional countries (Lal, 2006). For this purpose, Fiji backed Japan's ambition to become a member of the United Nation Security Council and China's candidacy to become a member of the World Trade Organisation (Tarte, 2010: 122). However, this policy was not very successful, as it only managed to obtain some financial help from China and Japan, but the quantities were negligible and temporary, and never managed to become a credible alternative to the revenues generated by trade with Fiji's main trading partners, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Yang, 2011).

### **5.5. Fiji (II): 2006-2014**

On 5th December 2006 the military under command of Commodore “Frank” Bainimarama overthrew the Government of Prime Minister Qarase and declared the state of emergency. This time, the coup ‘was neither unexpected nor secretive’ (Finin, 2007), as Bainimarama had been publicly threatening to overthrow the government if Qarase did not alter his nationalist policies and, eventually, step down (Guardian, 2006). Worryingly, the coup came after elections had been held in May 2006, which had seen Qarase winning a second term in office.

Since 2005, Bainimarama – who had been a key figure in subduing the rebels of the 2000 coup and steering the country back to the democratic path –, had become increasingly critical of Qarase and his nationalist politics, which he regarded as racist and playing against the idea of a multi-racial Fiji. In particular, Bainimarama disapproved the government’s soft hand against the 2000 coup perpetrators, its intention to give indigenous Fijians coastal ownership rights, and the rampant corruption in the country (Economist, 2006). In addition, Bainimarama grew wary about Qarase’s military budget cuts and his attempts to replace the Commodore as chief of the army (Finin, 2007; Fraenkel, 2009). All of this was aggravated by the personal hostility between Bainimarama and Qarase.

**Table 5.3. Coding summary: Fiji II.**

<b>Episode</b>	<b>Fiji (II): 2006-2014</b>
Background	Sanctions were imposed following the military's overthrow of Prime Minister Qarase and his elected government in December 2006.
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	
	Sanctions were imposed after the 2006 coup and tightened in 2009 after Bainimarama's postponement of democratic elections. The regime openly defied sanctions and never complied with the senders. Sanctions were lifted progressively from 2012 to 2014.
<b>Independent Variables</b>	
Regime type	Military (strong). The military took control of all strategic positions in government and society.
Winning coalition	Small: The military under Commodore Bainimarama controlled executive power in the country.
Human rights	Moderate: Arbitrary detentions, tortures and beatings were reported after the coup had been staged.
Democratization	Democracy in Fiji suffered a major blow through the 2006 coup d'état. A state of emergency was invoked after the coup. Moreover, extremely strict public order regulations were passed in 2009, censorship on the media was tightened and the political opposition was harassed, jailed, or sent into exile. Judges were deposed, intimidated, and irregularly replaced.
<i>Political instability</i>	
Protests	Low: During the first years of the coup, the regime faced a few strikes and passive resistance from the Church, the trade unions, and the media.
Tenure	Moderate/long: Bainimarama's military regime resisted over 8 years, until in 2014 elections were held which Bainimarama won.
<i>Economic leverage</i>	
Trade dependence	Moderate: Fiji was very sensitive to the suspension of the EU's Sugar Protocol, under which the EU buys sugar to Fiji under subsidised prices.
Aid dependence	Low: Fiji is not an aid-dependent country, with official development assistance accounting for less than 1% of the country's GDP.
Black knights	Yes: With its "look north" policy, Fiji attracted investment from China and other Asian countries

Source: Own elaboration.

### *5.5.1. Dependent variables: Resistance and sanctions*

The coup drew strong domestic and international condemnation and targeted sanctions were imposed by Australia and New Zealand (BBC, 2006; Clark, 2006). The regime's resistance and the subsequent imposition of sanctions are in line with my Hypotheses 1 and 2, where I predict that strong regimes are more likely to defy the threats of sanctions and, as a consequence, that they are more likely to be sanctioned. In fact, sanctions were not imposed simply as a direct reaction to the coup, but as the consequence of months of mounting tensions and failed negotiations with the military.

Until the end of November, negotiations to avert the coup had been taking place between Qarase, Australia and New Zealand on the one hand, and Bainimarama and the military on the other (Tait, 2006). Whilst Qarase had acceded to most of Bainimarama's demands,<sup>83</sup> the Commodore showed no desire to reduce the tensions and desist in his ambition to overthrow Qarase and his government (Lal, 2009a). Instead, Bainimarama had become increasingly self-assured of his actions by reaching out to the media to demand the resignation of Qarase. As someone who had been close to the events during the 1987 and 2000 coups in Fiji, the Commodore 'knew well the routine sanctions that would ensue once he took formal control' of the government (Finin, 2007) and was therefore well aware of the consequences his actions would have. Yet even on the eve of sanctions, Bainimarama's coup showed that he was determined not to back down.

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<sup>83</sup> The demands included a public declaration by the government that the 2000 coup events were illegal and that those associated with them should be removed from office; the withdrawal of three contentious bills, including one that would have granted amnesty to the coup perpetrators; dropping all investigations against Bainimarama and the Armed Forces; terminating the contract of Police Commissioner Hughes; assuring that no foreign military/policy intervention would take place; reviewing the role of the Police special unit; reviewing the commercial arm and role of the Native Lands Trust Board; addressing the military's concerns about the structure and organization of the armed forces; and the Government's commitment to address good governance issues.

Thus, international sanctions came as no surprise to anyone. While Australia and New Zealand took the lead, Fiji was barred from participating in the meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum and the Commonwealth in 2007, and suspended from its membership in 2009 (ABC, 2009; BBC, 2009b). In Europe, France and the UK suspended military co-operation with Fiji (European Commission, 2007a), whereas the EU itself condemned the coup on 11 December 2006 and opened negotiations with Fiji under article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement (Council of the European Union, 2006c).

During a meeting with a Fijian delegation in April 2007, the Commission demanded

(1) the urgent and peaceful return to democracy within the existing legality and in full respect of the Constitution; (2) establishing a government with a mandate from and a majority in Fiji's parliament, which was elected in free and fair elections in May 2006, or organising early free and fair elections, while avoiding a prolonged period with an "interim" government; (3) a plan with targets and benchmarks as well as a time-table for the above; (4) full respect for human rights, with special focus on the freedom of expression; (and) (5) full respect for the rule of law (European Commission, 2007a).

The Fijian delegation made a submission justifying the reasons for the coup and explaining the situation in the country. It also presented a plan for a transitional period to restore democratic rule and made a series of commitments to respect democratic principles, the rule of law, and human rights and fundamental freedoms (Council of the European Union, 2007b; European Commission, 2007b). Most importantly, the regime promised holding democratic elections by March 2009 the latest (Perry, 2007).

These commitments were welcomed by the Council, who decided to take appropriate measures to support the transition. Acknowledging that the implementation of the regime's commitments would be carried out during an extended period of time, the Council offered assistance to support the process and promised to monitor the developments in the country. Nevertheless, it decided to suspend Fiji's 2007 sugar allocation and made future allocations conditional on the progress towards democracy. Furthermore, the Council made aid

disbursements conditional on the fulfilment of the regime's commitments and offered additional financial incentives if these were met (Council of the European Union, 2007b).

However, as the regime increased its grip on power, it became clear that it had no intention to comply and hold elections anytime soon. Its attitude implied a unilateral break with the commitments made to the EU, which led the latter to extend the measures first every six months, then every year or more (Carbone, 2011b; Council of the European Union, 2007b, 2009c, 2012c, 2013d). Following the suspension of Fiji's sugar allocation in 2007, subsequent allocations were also lost or cancelled due to the lack of compliance of the Fijian regime. Unallocated amounts of aid were nonetheless disbursed for humanitarian needs through non-government channels, mainly by means of grassroots organizations and NGOs.

Although sanctions certainly caused 'significant inconvenience to members of the Fiji Government and military, [their] impact was not sufficiently damaging to induce any change in their thinking' (Hayward-Jones, 2014: 2). As years passed, the regime's dominance of Fiji's politics became manifest, while sanctions were proven ineffective in altering Bainimarama's policies. The regime's resistance over such long period of time confirms my Hypothesis 3 that military regimes are strong and more likely to resist sanctions for longer periods of time. The military regime in Fiji resisted sanctions for almost 8 years, clearly above the mean duration of sanctions in the case of strong regimes – which is only short of seven years.

As a consequence, the political deadlock between the senders and Fiji would over time give way to a more pragmatic approach on the senders' side. Slowly, developments in the country made a rapprochement between the sides feasible. The lifting of the Public Emergency Regulations on January 2012, the approval of a new constitution in 2013, and the call for



elections in September 2014 were welcomed by the EU (Council of the European Union, 2013d), who made preparations to support the electoral process and the transition.

At the same time, new governments in Australia and New Zealand showed a predisposition to restart their relationship with Fiji. With the political stalemate having prevailed for five years, the former opted to change course and modify their confrontational approach with Fiji, pursuing instead an open dialogue to re-engage with Bainimarama. Australia had started normalising the relationship in 2012, when it resumed diplomatic representation in Fiji at high commissioner level (Firth, 2013). From then on, it accelerated the process and in February 2014 foreign Minister Julie Bishop flew to Suva in the first official visit in eight years (Australian, 2014; Hayward-Jones, 2014). By March 2014, Australia and New Zealand began lifting the travel sanctions on senior Fijian officials, months before elections were held (ABC, 2014).

Thus, the lifting of sanctions cannot be regarded as signs of the regime's compliance. On the contrary, the regime followed its own agenda and systematically rejected any external inference or advice. In fact, sanctions only contributed to harden the regime's stance and their failure to coerce Bainimarama is the clear proof of the military's regime resilience. Revealingly, the fact that rapprochement was favoured despite the flawed constitutional process of 2013 and the strict limitations placed on the registration of political parties before the 2014 elections sums up the senders' inability to alter Fiji's behaviour by coercive means (European Commission, 2013b). Thus, sanctions were unable to destabilise Bainimarama and his (strong) military regime, just as I predict in Hypothesis 4.

The September 2014 elections were easily won by Bainimarama, who had previously stepped down as army commander and was running as a civilian (Firth, 2014; Reuters, 2014). The elections were hailed "credible" by international observers, clearly reflecting the

international's community predisposition to move on with the normalisation of relations whilst ignoring all the flaws of the process (Hayward-Jones, 2014). By October 2014, Australia and New Zealand had lifted all of their sanctions, while the EU welcomed the holding of elections and was ready to resume cooperation with Fiji (European Commission, 2014).

In sum, my theoretical approach predicts very well the military's decision to defy the threats of sanctions and to resist external pressure for a prolonged period of time. The regime's resilience stemmed from its small but cohesive winning coalition, which allowed Bainimarama to survive in power. In this regard, the senders' lifting of sanctions responds to the inefficacy of sanctions in altering Bainimarama's policies.<sup>84</sup>

### *5.5.2. Independent variables*

#### *5.5.2.1. Regime type: military regime (strong)*

The resilience of the military regime to domestic and international pressures can be largely accounted for by its internal cohesion and the small size of Bainimarama's winning coalition. The latter's absolute control over the military, together with patronage and the systematic elimination of opponents played a key role in assuring the regime's survival.

First, after staging the coup and once Bainimarama had assumed executive powers from President Iloilo,<sup>85</sup> he announced a state of emergency. The military proceeded to detain and intimidate important figures of the Fijian society, 'including notably the Vice President, the

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<sup>84</sup> In the sanctions tree (Graph 2.1), this would represent a fourth stage, where in light of the ineffectiveness of sanctions, the sender decides to back down and lift the measures.

<sup>85</sup> In a bizarre sequence of events, Bainimarama first reappointed Iloilo as President in January 2007, who then surprisingly altered his previous opposition to the coup, and appointed Bainimarama as interim Prime Minister in return (Fraenkel, 2008).

acting police commissioner, as well as the CEO for the Ministry of Finance, who [was] also [the] National Authorising Officer of the European Development Fund in Fiji' (European Commission, 2007a).

The Commodore solidified his position through the control of all strategic sectors of government by the military. As Firth and Fraenkel (2009: 128) note,

the 2006 coup entailed a considerable militarization of government. Military patronage gave senior officers a direct personal stake in the new order. With traditional officer-training in Australia and the USA barred because of the coup, the interim government sent officers to India and China. Bainimarama consolidated power by dismissing numerous public servants and heads of government boards and organizations, and giving the military direct control of the police, prisons, immigration, justice, the postal service and fisheries. He ensured that a military appointee was in charge of airports, and posted others to diplomatic.

To achieve this goal Bainimarama had begun purging the military ranks after the failed military mutiny of November 2000. By dismissing critical military officers and promoting his own men to key positions within the Fijian military, he achieved a greater cohesion and loyalty of the Armed Forces (Firth and Fraenkel, 2009). This led the Commodore to claim that the Armed Forces had 'never been as united as now' (Finin, 2007). Lastly, in 2007 Bainimarama granted himself and the military personnel involved in the putsch immunity from legal prosecution (AP, 2007).

Yet while Bainimarama's stability resided in the cohesion of the military, during the first years in power, the Commodore sought to obtain a broader legitimacy for his rule. Importantly, he co-opted members of the Labour party to take positions in his administration. These included, most notably, the former and deposed Prime Minister Chaudhry, who took the role of Finance Minister (New York Times, 2007). Bainimarama also weakened and divided the indigenous Fijian side, as some indigenous Fijians took key positions in his administration (Lal, 2009b). Noteworthy, part of the Fijian population implicitly supported the motives of the coup, as they saw Bainimarama's goals to reduce corruption and crime rates with good eyes (Finin, 2007). Even the Great Council of Chiefs – a traditional and

powerful organization in Fijian society that brought together the leaders of the different tribes – backed the regime after some initial hesitation.

However, while the governing coalition ‘might have been united by their desire to remain in power, [...] their various visions for Fiji’s future differed’ (Fraenkel and Firth, 2009: 15-16). In 2008, the Labour party abandoned the coalition and the economic situation in the country worsened. The regime was also facing growing domestic opposition, including trade union protests in 2007, criticism by the Methodist Church, and schisms in the military top command in 2010 (Economist, 2012a; Fraenkel, 2012). In addition, in a similar case than in the aftermath of the coup in 2000, in April 2009 the Court of Appeal ruled that the government that had come out of the 2006 coup was illegal (McClymont, 2009).

To deal with these challenges, the regime became increasingly coercive. Following the Court of Appeals’ ruling, Bainimarama clamped down on the judiciary, dismissed all judges and imposed new judges of the military’s own choice (BBC, 2009a). Moreover, he abrogated the 1997 Constitution and imposed draconian Public Order Regulations and a strict media censorship between 2009 and 2012 (Siegel, 2012). The Commodore’s promise to hold elections by March 2009 was initially postponed to 2010, and finally to 2014. At the same time, he disbanded the Great Council of Chiefs in 2012 (Pearlman, 2012) and sent former Prime Minister Qarase to jail on alleged corruption charges (Telegraph, 2012a). His former ally Chaudhry was also accused of mismanagement of the finances and risked jail. The balance of the regime’s suppression of dissent was appalling: by 2011 most of its critics had been silenced, were in exile, or were under arrest.

After 2011, when the economy recovered and Bainimarama started preparing the holding of elections, he began distributing public goods in the form of infrastructure, health services, clean water, electricity, and subsidised transport services (Marks, 2014). Moreover, the

military regime provided security and virtually eliminated ethnic tensions. These achievements increased the Commodore's winning coalition and popularity in the built-up to the elections and, together with the limitations placed on the opposition, propelled him to a landslide victory in the 2014 elections.

Still, the regime's resilience to external and domestic threats was only possible due to the cohesiveness of the military and the small size of the winning coalition. In effect, although Bainimarama sought to legitimise his rule by co-opting members of Fiji's political parties, his authority and the stability of his regime emanated from the armed forces. Moreover, he did not hesitate to use physical force to pursue his policies and eliminate any opposition. His landslide victory in the 2014 elections and the normalisation of relations with international senders of sanctions were therefore the consequence of the Commodore's domination of Fijian politics, and not a sign of weakness. In this regard, my strategic interaction model explains very well how the Fijian regime was able to survive and resist sanctions for so long.

#### *5.5.2.2. Human rights and democracy*

The coup d'état and the consequent deterioration of democracy in Fiji were the immediate trigger of international sanctions. While the senders made the lifting of sanctions conditional on Fiji's return to the democratic order, the situation in the country deteriorated seriously in the aftermath of the coup. Numerous abuses of human rights by the military were reported (Amnesty International, 2007) and the independence of the judiciary came under intense pressure. Moreover, although no strict censorship was initially imposed on the media, journalists and publications were intimidated and thwarted against publishing critical commentaries of the coup (Hunter, 2009).

Between 2009 and 2012 the military reintroduced the state of emergency and, although its lifting in 2012 was welcomed by the senders, the military regime passed draconian Public Order Regulations that limited the freedom of the country's citizens and the media (BBC, 2012a; Interview, 2015b). In addition, the military's interference in the drafting of a new Constitution and destruction of draft constitutions in December 2012 further signalled the country's clear shortcoming in respecting civil and political rights (Amnesty International, 2013). Finally, the military placed strict limitations on the registration of political parties for the September 2014 elections, thereby excluding any credible competition for Bainimarama. Strikingly, none of these clear violations of democratic and human rights principles seemed to trigger more than critical statements by the senders, which were more interested in normalising relations with Fiji after the elections.

#### *5.5.2.3. Economic leverage*

Fiji's resilience vis-à-vis Western economic sanctions is a good example of how economic leverage is often not enough to alter a target's policies. Although the country's economy is relatively vulnerable to external shocks, the regime managed to survive even under bad economic circumstances. In fact, sanctions and the bad state of the economy in the early years after the coup did not seem to preoccupy Bainimarama much, as he did 'not have to worry about votes' (Chand, 2009: 139).

First, the regime overpassed the ban on access to loans from the IMF and the Asian Development Bank by recurring to non-conventional aid from other Asian countries (Schmaljohann and Prizzon, 2014). Moreover, the regime invested heavily in strategic sectors that boosted economic growth like infrastructure, transport and tourism (Asian Development Bank, 2014). Finally, the regime did not tremble when the EU suspended Fiji's sugar

allocations under the Sugar Protocol. Although Fiji's sugar industry is particularly dependent on subsidised prices from the EU, it has the potential to be competitive in international markets (Dearden, 2010: 50). For this reason, the regime invested in technology to modernise this sector, which saw an increase in its production in 2013 (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Firth, 2007).

#### 5.5.2.4. *Black knights*

To offset the negative effects of sanctions, the Fijian regime invested new energy in pursuing Qarase's "look North policy" by sending new diplomatic delegations to other countries, most notably China, Taiwan, Russia and Malaysia. Particularly relevant, since 2006 China had increased its commitments of aid and loans to Fiji,<sup>86</sup> undertaking several infrastructure projects like the building of a hospital in Suva or the hydro-electric dam at Nadarivatu (Hayward-Jones, 2011; Schmaljohann and Prizzon, 2014; Yang, 2011). China's increasing involvement in the region and its 'sympathetic assistance to Fiji following the coups' (Henderson, 2003: 238; Henderson and Reilly, 2003) alarmed Australia and New Zealand which, in light of the inefficacy of sanctions and the deadlock of the political situation, started pursuing a more pragmatic approach to the regime (Craymer, 2014; Hayward-Jones, 2014). This led ultimately to the gradual lifting of travel sanctions and the restoration of contacts with the Fijian ministries in 2012 (Fraenkel, 2012).

However, while the support of China and other countries as "black knights" cannot be dismissed easily (Interview, 2015b), their role in keeping the regime alive was less important than might seem. First, while China's soft loans boosted oxygen into an asphyxiated

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<sup>86</sup> According to some estimates, China's financial assistance in terms of soft loans amounted to US\$253.4 between 2005 and 2009 (Hayward-Jones, 2011). Moreover, the actual size of China's assistance to Fiji remains unknown, as it has not made any figures publicly available (Interview, 2015b, g).

economy, its cooperation with Fiji – and other Pacific Islands – had already begun before the coup in 2006 and cannot therefore be read purely in geostrategic terms (Yang, 2011). Moreover, China's and Malaysia levels of aid – mainly soft loans for infrastructure projects – never reached the levels of assistance that the EU, Australia, or New Zealand had granted to Fiji prior to the coup (Schmaljohann and Prizzon, 2014).

A different story is Bainimarama's regional co-operation through the Melanesian Spearhead Group and his creation of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, which competes with the Pacific Island Forum and excluded Australia and New Zealand (Hayward-Jones, 2014; Poling, 2013). Bainimarama achieved a certain degree of legitimacy, as the Pacific island countries are very reluctant about other nations' interference in their sovereignty.

But overall, the role of black knights is limited in explaining the regime's survival or Fiji's economic recovery. In fact, the most important factors for Fiji's economic recovery from 2011 onwards were the boost of the tourist industry, the increase of public spending in infrastructure and basic services, an emerging industry of mineral exports, and the increasing level of remittances that entered the economy (Asian Development Bank, 2013).

## **5.6. Conclusion**

The case studies presented in this chapter have shed light into several important issues regarding the imposition and effects of economic sanctions. First, I have shown that what matters for a sender's decision to impose sanctions is the target's regime resolution to reject the sender's demands and resist. As the cases of Fiji I and Myanmar illustrate, sanctions were imposed after their ruling elites failed to comply with EU demands. This happened about a year after the coup in Fiji, and almost three years after the coup in Myanmar – or about six



months after the 1990 elections. Only in the case of Fiji II were sanctions imposed immediately following Commodore Bainimarama's coup. Yet even then, sanctions were preceded by months of intense negotiations between Bainimarama on the one hand, and Australia and New Zealand, on the other.

Second, the case studies illustrate very well how the domestic institutions at the target states provide the ruling elites with incentives to comply or resist EU pressure. In this regard, the multi-party regime in Fiji I relied on a relatively large winning coalition and was in a position of weakness to resist. Therefore, it was keen to negotiate with the EU and accept most of its demands. This however was not the case in Fiji II and Myanmar, where the military regimes depended for their survival on a small winning coalition and were therefore able to ignore the threats of sanctions. Thus, they consciously self-selected themselves into sanctions, just as I predict in Chapter 2.

Admittedly, while the regime in Fiji I was also sanctioned - thus contradicting my expectation that multi-party regimes should be less likely to be sanctioned -, four factors make this case qualitatively different from the former two. First, even though it failed to do so, the interim government in Fiji I sought to comply with the EU's demands. Thus, the regime's conciliatory behaviour was significantly different from the confrontational stance of the military juntas in Fiji II and Myanmar. Second, as a consequence of the regime's compliance after sanctions were imposed, these were short-lived. Quite the opposite was the case in Fiji II and Myanmar, where sanctions remained in place for many years. Finally, sanctions did contribute to destabilise the winning coalition in Fiji I, whereas they did not affect the military regimes in Fiji II and Myanmar. Indeed, sanctions undermined the regime's capacity to hold onto power in Fiji I and fostered internal divisions within the winning coalition.

The differences between Fiji I on the one hand, and Fiji II and Myanmar on the other, reside in the fact that the interim government in Fiji I starkly miscalculated its strength and internal cohesion, whereas the military juntas in latter cases did not. In essence, the multi-party regime in Fiji I was weak and unable of holding its winning coalition together, whereas the military regimes in Myanmar and Fiji II were aware of their cohesion and resilience, being therefore able to bear the cost of sanctions. As a consequence, the former ended up complying with the EU, whereas the latter resisted its pressure and endured economic sanctions for many years. In sum, the case studies exemplify well how the size of the winning coalition constraints and shapes a regime's policy options.

## **CHAPTER 6. SANCTIONS AGAINST BELARUS AND ZIMBABWE**

### **6.1. Introduction**

In the previous two chapters I have provided quantitative and qualitative evidence to prove that domestic institutions generate incentives for target regimes to comply or resist sanctions. I have demonstrated that autocratic regimes with small winning coalitions like the military regimes in Fiji II (2006–2014) and Myanmar (1991–ongoing) faced incentives to resist sanctions. As a consequence, they were willing to endure economic coercion for long periods of time. In the same vein, I have provided evidence that autocratic regimes with large winning coalitions like multi-party and dominant regimes were less likely to be sanctioned.

In addition, I have shown that, once sanctions have been imposed, the domestic institutions in targeted countries have also an important effect in determining the duration of sanctions. I have argued and proved that regimes with large winning coalitions are more likely to face shorter sanctions spells than those regimes with small winning coalitions. These results were confirmed by the statistical results of Chapter 4 and by the qualitative evidence provided by the case study of Fiji I (2001–2003) in Chapter 5.

However, recall that my statistical analyses in Chapter 4 improved substantially when a few observations were dropped out of the regression models. These observations belonged to the sanctions regimes imposed by the EU against Belarus and Zimbabwe. Interestingly, these two countries have relatively large winning coalitions and yet they have defied EU pressure for many years. Indeed, Alexander Lukashenka's dominant regime in Belarus and Robert Mugabe's multi-party regime in Zimbabwe have withstood economic sanctions for prolonged periods of time, yet they have not shown signs of being destabilised by them, nor have they demonstrated a need to compromise or accommodate the EU's demands. Since these two

cases challenge the validity of my argument, this chapter analyses these cases in depth to understand why they deviate from my expectation.

Noteworthy, I find evidence that these two cases constitute outliers to my theoretical argument. Most importantly however, my analysis shows that the resilience of Lukashenka and Mugabe does not stem from the cohesiveness of their winning coalitions. On the contrary, the survival of their regimes is largely explained by the presence of black knights or sanctions busters that have allowed these regimes to resist both external and domestic pressures for many years. Although it is difficult if not impossible to prove the counterfactual, it is likely that neither Lukashenka in Belarus nor Mugabe in Zimbabwe would have been capable of surviving in power for so long without the support Russia and South Africa respectively.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I analyse the EU's sanctions regime imposed against Belarus since 1997. The Belarusian case is interesting because Lukashenka has been able to resist the EU's pressure for a long spell despite the EU's relatively large leverage thanks to the economic and political backing that Russia has provided him. The chapter then proceeds to study the case of Zimbabwe. As with Belarus, the Zimbabwean case is interesting because the effect of sanctions has been largely mitigated by regional actors like South Africa, but also because these partners have shielded Mugabe from a very strong domestic opposition that has threatened the very survival of the regime.

## **6.2. Belarus (1997–ongoing)**

Belarus has the dubious honour of being the last dictatorship in Europe. Since Alexander Lukashenka became president in 1994, the country has drifted relentlessly towards authoritarianism. The regime has disrespected the rule of law and its continuous clampdown

on the political opposition has triggered several waves of EU sanctions since 1997. Almost twenty years later, sanctions are still in place, but nothing seems to have changed in Belarus. The relationship between Belarus and the EU has always been complicated, with prolonged phases of diplomatic stalemate being followed by spells of quick and intense re-engagement.

However, EU attempts to engage the regime in the area of human rights, democracy and the rule of law have been futile. Almost twenty years of economic coercion have not destabilised the regime's domestic position either. In fact, the crucial element that has determined the stability (and the instability) of the Belarusian regime has been the influence of Russia. Indeed, Moscow's political and economic sponsorship has been pivotal to the regime's capacity to withstand sanctions. Russia has systematically provided Belarus with economic subsidies, loans and credits worth billions of dollars that have allowed the economy to grow at relatively high levels and keep the support for the regime high. Yet at the same time, Belarus' increasing fear of Russia's growing assertiveness has periodically pushed Minsk to seek political rapprochement with the EU.

**Table 6.1. Coding summary: Belarus.**

Episode	Belarus: 1997–ongoing
Background	<p>Since Alexander Lukashenka’s electoral victory in 1994, a promising democratisation was thwarted and Belarus entered a negative spiral towards increased authoritarianism. From the very beginning, Lukashenka undermined the rule of law, violated human rights and repressed an incipient democratic opposition. After more than twenty years of rule that have been marked by confrontation with the West and almost two decades of sanctions, Belarus remains the most isolated and closed country in Europe.</p>
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<p>Following the increasing authoritarianism in the country and the regime’s unwillingness to comply with the EU’s demands, the latter imposed sanctions against Belarus for the first time in 1997, when it refused to ratify the Economic and Partnership Agreement and when it froze aid to the country. Since 2004 and especially since 2011, the EU has imposed more expansive and coercive measures that have directly targeted President Lukashenka and his inner circle. At the same time the EU has pursued a policy of “critical engagement” with the regime, combining sanctions with incentives to promote cooperation and the regime’s political liberalisation.</p>
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<p><b>Regime type</b> Dominant (weak). Since 1994, Lukashenka rules Belarus through the institutionalisation of power around the figure of the president. His decrees have the force of law and he appoints legislators and other institutional figures.</p> <p><b>Winning coalition</b> Medium. Lukashenka’s regime was initially based on the siloviki (security services) to repress domestic opposition and on Russian subsidies to feed his winning coalition. The modernisation of the economy has given rise to an incipient middle class and a larger winning coalition.</p> <p><b>Human rights</b> Before 2000, the regime’s use of violence and intimidation reached unprecedented levels with the disappearance and extrajudicial killing of four well-known individuals. The regime’s repression of the opposition tends to be targeted, and increases in the aftermath of elections.</p> <p><b>Democratization</b> Belarus has been dubbed “the last dictatorship in Europe” and “the Cuba of Europe”. Despite the liberalisation of its economy since 2006 and the reshuffle of the elites to include more liberal figures, it remains strongly authoritarian.</p> <p><b>Political instability</b></p> <p><b>Protests</b> Moderate. The country has witnessed anti-government demonstrations after the flawed elections of 2001, 2006 and 2010, yet these are systematically silenced or crashed by the regime.</p> <p><b>Tenure</b> Long: Lukashenko has ruled as Belarus’ president since 1994.</p> <p><b>Economic leverage</b></p> <p><b>Trade dependence</b> The EU’s trade leverage over Belarus was small in the 1990s, although it has increased steadily as Belarus has liberalised its economy.</p> <p><b>Aid dependence</b> Low: Belarus is not dependent on EU aid.</p> <p><b>Black knights</b> Yes: Russia has for many years offered a blank check to Belarus to maintain it in its orbit. Although relations have worsened in recent years, Russian assistance allows Lukashenka to offset the impact of Western sanctions.</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

### *6.2.1. Dependent variable: Resistance and sanctions*

Since 1996, the increasing authoritarianism displayed by President Alexander Lukashenka in Belarus became a growing concern in Brussels. Restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, demonstration and the media were accompanied by the approval of a new constitution in a national referendum that concentrated powers in the figure of the President (Council of Europe, 2000; Portela, 2010: 87-88). In December 1996, the Council of the EU expressed its concern over the deteriorating situation and warned the Belarusian authorities that the lack of progress in the areas of ‘internationally accepted democratic and constitutional principles and practices [...] would have a negative impact on relations between Belarus and the European Union and on Union support for Belarus’s accession to the Council of Europe’ (EU Presidency, 1996b).

By the end of 1997, no real progress had been made and the EU noted ‘its disappointment and displeasure at the clear absence of goodwill on the part of the [Belarusian] Presidency’ (Council of the European Union, 1997a). The regime’s non-constructive and even obstructive behaviour in its relations with the EU led the Council to impose a first round of sanctions to make Lukashenka reconsider his position. These initial measures included i) the EU’s withdrawal of support for Belarus’ membership of the Council of Europe; ii) the temporary suspension of the tripartite working party between the EU, the Belarusian government and members of the Belarusian parliament; iii) freezing the ratification of the interim agreement and the partnership and cooperation agreement with Belarus; iv) the suspension of bilateral ministerial meetings; and v) the suspension of technical assistance programmes ‘except in the case of humanitarian or regional projects or those which directly support the democratization process’ (Fierro, 2003: 369).

The relationship between the EU and Belarus deteriorated between June and July 1998, when Lukashenka cut off electricity and water to the European embassies in Minsk (BBC, 1998). The EU imposed targeted sanctions, but these measures were soon lifted after both sides reached an agreement in February 1999 (Portela, 2011). Moreover, most of the diplomatic sanctions that had been enacted in 1997 were also lifted after the OSCE sent an Advisory Monitoring Group (AMG) to Minsk in 1999. The situation escalated yet again when Lukashenka refused 'to extend the visas of the members of the AMG' after it published critical reports of the 2000 parliamentary and the 2001 presidential elections. All EU member states but Portugal imposed new travel bans on Belarusian officials but lifted them again in 2003 when Lukashenka allowed the OSCE to open a delegation in Minsk (Kreutz, 2005: 38).<sup>87</sup>

Noting the difficulties to deal with Minsk, the EU sought to engage the regime through a step-by-step approach that conditioned the removal of sanctions to the regime's fulfilment of four benchmarks set by the OSCE, including i) the return of substantial powers to the Parliament; ii) allowing the opposition to be represented in electoral commissions; iii) granting the opposition fair access to the state media; and iv) adopting electoral legislation in conformance with international standards (European Commission, 2003a; Zagorski, 2002). This offer however fell on deaf ears, and Lukashenka rigged the 2001 presidential elections to secure an overwhelming 75% of the vote (Silitski, 2005).

The EU's position hardened in May 2004 after a critical report of the Council of Europe pointed to the direct involvement of Belarusian authorities in the politically motivated disappearances of four prominent figures of Belarusian society between 1999 and 2000 (EU Presidency, 2004). After the regime ignored the EU's request to undertake a credible and

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<sup>87</sup> Portugal rejected to impose sanctions due to the negative effect that these measures would have on the upcoming summit (Eriksson, 2005).



independent investigation of the disappearances, the Council imposed in September 2004 a travel ban on four individuals suspected of having participated in the disappearances (Council of the European Union, 2004c).

More sanctions followed between October and December 2004 after Belarus held parliamentary elections and a national referendum to modify the 1996 constitution and allow Lukashenka to run for a third consecutive term (Council of the European Union, 2004e, f). The electoral process and the referendum fell short of OSCE standards and state-sponsored violence and arbitrary detentions of opposition members ensued in the aftermath of the election (OSCE, 2004).<sup>88</sup> At the same time, the Council excluded Belarus from participating in the EU's new regional initiative, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), although it left the door open to its participation if the situation improved (Vysotskaya, Vieira and Bosse, 2008).

However, the bilateral relationship between the EU and Belarus hit a new low after the presidential election of March 2006. Once again, the elections were deeply flawed and the regime violently cracked down on demonstrators in the aftermath of the elections (SPIEGEL, 2006). This time, the EU extended the scope of sanctions by imposing an assets freeze on those individuals responsible for the flawed elections and the crackdown on the opposition. It also added 31 new names to the travel ban and included President Lukashenka for the first time in the blacklist (Council of the European Union, 2006a, b).

Yet again, the regime ignored the EU's pressure and withstood sanctions. The Belarusian's regime defiance of the EU's threats thus contradicts my expectation that dominant regimes

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<sup>88</sup> The state-controlled Central Election Commission proclaimed that Lukashenka's referendum proposal had been backed by 88% of the voters, whereas the neutral Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS) estimated the yes-vote to be closer to 49%. According to this, Lukashenka's proposal should have failed, as it needed at least 50% of approval. After this, the IISEPS closed down in April 2005 and was forced to move to Lithuania (Wilson, 2011: 207).

should be more likely to comply with the sender before sanctions are imposed (H1). Moreover, the regime's willingness to resist sanctions also refutes my argument that dominant regimes should be less likely to be sanctioned (H2). Although in the late 1990s and beginning of the 2000s the regime accommodated some of the EU's requests by allowing the OSCE's AMG into the country, these actions were purely cosmetic and were soon afterwards followed by increasing deviation from EU demands elsewhere.

Since 2006 however, the EU's policy towards Belarus experienced a slow transformation. First, the EU started to acknowledge that the isolationist approach based on disengagement and sanctions had failed to produce any tangible results (Grant and Leonard, 2006). Moreover, the EU's enlargement of 2004 brought in new Eastern member states like Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, who had a big interest in a stable and well governed Belarus and who largely contributed to a change in the EU's policy towards their eastern neighbour (Hellmeyer, 2014; Wilson, 2008).

The change of course was first noticeable in December 2006, when the Commission issued a "Non-paper" outlining a series of vaguely defined incentives that it was willing to offer Belarus if the regime modified its behaviour with regard to human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Bosse, 2012; European Commission, 2006). At the same time, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania lobbied against new sanctions and vetoed for some time the EU's suspension of Belarus' GSP trade preferences (Rettman, 2006).<sup>89</sup>

Yet the main catalyst for the change of course was triggered by Russia's oil and gas wars with Belarus since December 2006. Although the relation between Russia and Belarus had started to deteriorate after Vladimir Putin gained access to the Kremlin in 2000, Moscow's unilateral decision to increase the price of Russian gas exports and to impose a duty on its oil

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<sup>89</sup> The suspension of the GSP preferences would be confirmed in June 2007 (Rettman, 2007).

exports took Lukashenka and his government by surprise (Wilson, 2011). The Kremlin's decision imposed a huge burden on Belarus' finances and pushed Lukashenka to look for new commercial partners in Venezuela, Iran and Azerbaijan (Korosteleva, 2011). However, when these efforts proved insufficient to reduce or substitute Russia's strategic position as a supplier of cheap energy, investment and diplomatic recognition, the Belarusian regime moved quickly to reengage with the EU to offset the impact of Russia's measures (Bosse and Korosteleva-Polglase, 2009; Dura, 2008).

Fortunately for Lukashenka, the EU was eager to normalise the bilateral relation and reengagement between the two sides quickly gained pace. In early 2007, a dialogue on energy was established between the EU and Belarus, which was followed by the opening of an EU delegation in Minsk in March 2008 (Bosse and Korosteleva-Polglase, 2009; Portela, 2011). The EU welcomed the reforms undertaken by the regime, including a privatisation programme to attract EU investment in April and the release of the last political prisoners in May 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2009b). Moreover, Poland and Sweden lobbied for a change of policy and 'held consultations on the [inclusion of Belarus in the EU's Eastern Partnership] with Belarusian government officials' (Bosse, 2012: 379).<sup>90</sup>

The EU also appreciated Belarus' non-recognition of the secessionist territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the war in Georgia in August 2008 (Lindner, 2008; Stewart, 2009). The EU's willingness to reengage was so strong that it celebrated the small 'positive developments' in the parliamentary elections of 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2008b), despite the many irregularities that had taken place and even ignored the fact that no opposition candidate had won a seat in the legislature (Silitski, 2009).

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<sup>90</sup> The Eastern Partnership was launched in Prague in 2009, but Belarus only participated in the multilateral sphere, not on the bilateral and more comprehensive one.

Most importantly, the Council temporarily suspended most of its sanctions in October 2008 to encourage reforms in the country (Council of the European Union, 2008a). The suspension was extended in 2009, and then again in October 2010 (Council of the European Union, 2010), despite clear indications that the reforms had stalled and that the situation of human rights, democracy and the rule of law had deteriorated again.

In fact, the lack of willingness of the Belarusian regime to cooperate with the EU in sensitive areas like human rights, democracy and the rule of law soon evidenced the limitations of rapprochement. Despite the release of political prisoners in 2008, the number of political prisoners increased again in 2009 and new restrictions were placed on the media and on the registration of political parties (Freedom House, 2010). The change of mood in Brussels was reflected in the Council Conclusions of November 2009, where the EU regretted the worsening of the situation of human rights in the country and in October 2010, when the EU decided to extend the restrictive measures that remained in place shortly before the December presidential elections (Council of the European Union, 2009a, 2010).

Still, in November 2010, shortly before the Belarusian presidential elections, the Polish and German foreign ministers attempted a last and desperate attempt to convince Lukashenka to remain on the reform path. The ministers flew to Minsk and offered the regime a big carrot of €3 billion in assistance if Lukashenka held free and fair elections (Rettman, 2010). However, Lukashenka ignored these requests and proceeded to rig the elections despite the large presence of OSCE observers (Economist, 2010).

Most worrisome, the regime clamped down violently on the demonstrators that gathered in Minsk's October square after the elections, putting many under police custody and imprisoning all the presidential candidates that had run against Lukashenka (Parfitt, 2010). The crackdown marked the breakdown of the EU's reengagement efforts and forced the

Council to re-impose the suspended sanctions and extend the scope of restrictive measures against the Lukashenka regime (Council of the European Union, 2011b). The Council reintroduced targeted travel bans and assets freezes, and added new individuals and entities to hit Lukashenka's inner circle of supporters (Council of the European Union, 2011f). In addition, the EU imposed an embargo on the sale of weapons that could be used for internal repression and froze the activities of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in Belarus (Council of the European Union, 2011a, e).

Since 2011, sanctions have been progressively expanded and modified, with more individuals and entities being added to the blacklist (Hellmeyer, 2014). At the same time however, the EU has fostered an approach of "critical engagement" with Belarus, promoting cooperation with Belarusian civil society whilst making broader bilateral development cooperation with the authorities conditional on progress in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Hellmeyer, 2014). The EU has promoted initiatives addressed to the Belarusian population and the civil society like the Dialogue of Modernisation, and since 2014 it has negotiated a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with the government for the benefit of the population (Interview, 2015f).

Moreover, it has praised Belarus's brokering of the Minsk Agreements during the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, which has generated expectations that the EU might reward Belarus for its role in the crisis with closer cooperation (Rettman, 2015).<sup>91</sup> In fact, the relationship with Belarus seems to have improved substantially in the last years, and Lukashenka was even invited to attend the Eastern Partnership Meeting in Riga in May 2015 (Kaža, 2015).

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<sup>91</sup> Although Member states like Germany have stated that the good offices of Belarus will not influence a change in the EU's policy, EU officials are less categorical about this. According to one interviewee, 'the EU is very grateful for Belarus' recognition of the territorial integrity of Ukraine', and Belarus has been rewarded accordingly by the EU with official visits to Minsk and the resumption of political dialogue (Interview, 2015a).

Thus, despite the increasing scope and severity of sanctions, their effect has been rather mild, as the regime has not made substantial concessions regarding human rights, democracy or the rule of law. Overall, Belarus has been under EU sanctions for about 17 years. This goes against my expectation that sanctions against dominant regimes should be short-lived (H3). Moreover, sanctions have not destabilised the regime, as I expect in H4. Although some authors have claimed that the release of a few political prisoners since 2011 can be attributed to sanctions (Korosteleva, 2012b), this claim is hard to prove and is not substantiated by the regime's actions.

A few factors help to account for the weakness of my model in predicting the Belarusian case correctly. First of all, the EU's leverage over Belarus in the 1990s was low, as the country remained relatively isolated internationally with low commercial linkages and people exchanges with the West (Levitsky and Way, 2010). Therefore, the effects of sanctions could only be limited.

Second, inconsistency in the EU's policy towards Belarus has increased over time. Some member states have been particularly keen to do business with Belarusian oligarchs, vetoing the inclusion of some names in the blacklist and lobbying their peers to delist others (Economist, 2012b; Rettman, 2011b, 2012a, b). Moreover, countries like Latvia and Lithuania have profited enormously as transit countries for Belarusian exports, whilst the Netherlands have benefited from rebranding and exporting Belarusian oil products from Rotterdam (Nielsen, 2012). Ironically, these practices have allowed the Belarusian regime to launder its exports of oil products and its derivatives and to circumvent EU and US sanctions (Nielsen, 2012; Zakharova, 2012). As one EU official bluntly put it, the 'Netherlands is the member state gaining the most trading with Belarus, but at the same time it screams at human rights violations' (Interview, 2015a). Predictably, these loopholes in the sanctions regime have reduced the efficacy of sanctions.

Notwithstanding this bleak picture about the little efficacy of sanctions in altering the Belarusian's regime behaviour, it is important to note that the Belarusian case does not completely deviate from the expectations of my model. In fact, the short 2006–2010 reengagement process illustrates well how EU sanctions had a certain destabilising impact on the regime. In the absence of Russian support, the EU's assistance and, especially, investment, was paramount for the Lukashenka regime to remain in power. Thus, sanctions – and the lack of investment that ensued as a consequence of the inexistent political relationship with the EU – had a very big destabilising impact (Portela, 2011). Since Russia's role as a black knight is crucial to understand the resilience of the Belarusian regime, I discuss it in more depth below.

### *6.2.2. Independent variables*

#### *6.2.2.1. Regime type: dominant (weak): medium to large winning coalition*

Alexander Lukashenka's survival in power for over 20 years has stunned many analysts who have underestimated his capacity to manoeuvre in difficult environments. To the surprise of those who have anticipated the end of his regime in every crisis with Moscow or in every small concession that he has made to the EU, Lukashenka has disappointed them with his remarkable capacity to adapt and protect his regime from every crisis with Europe and Russia.

Lukashenka has gained himself a reputation of being a chameleon and a political opportunist, someone who has known when and how to adapt to the changing political situation in Europe (Wilson, 2008). Indeed, whilst other presidents in his neighbourhood have been swept away by colour revolutions in the last twenty years, he has managed to withstand domestic and

external pressures, steering Belarus through the treacherous and changing political waters between Russia and the EU. Most importantly perhaps, Lukashenka has made out of every challenge to his rule an opportunity for the perpetuation of his regime.

After being elected in 1994, Lukashenka moved quickly to combat powerful oligarchs and to weaken the opposition to consolidate his power (Wilson, 2011). First, he limited the growing independence of the parliament by promoting a referendum to revise the 1994 constitution. This process ‘transfer[ed] many of the parliament’s functions [such as appointment of members of the Constitutional Court, the Central Election Commission, and even part of the newly created upper house of parliament] to the presidency, extend[ed] his term of office by two years, and, by breaking the system of checks and balances, eventually liquidate[d] the remaining democratic institutions in the country’ (Silitski, 2003: 45).

At the same time, Lukashenka initiated a campaign of attacks against the press and independent NGOs. He severely restricting their activities and their capacity to operate in the country by banning the publication of articles denouncing state corruption or being critical with the government, excluding mass media from state printing and distribution systems and arresting and intimidating independent journalists (Sahm, 2009: 50-1). Moreover, when political opposition shifted from parliament to the civil society, the regime tightened its control over NGOs, forcing them to re-register with the state and criminalising the activities of organisations that operated outside the state-controlled system (Sahm 2009).

Regularly, Lukashenka also held elections to strengthen his rule. These allowed him to send a clear signal to the opposition about the regime’s strength (Simpser, 2013), but also to identify the leaders of the opposition and decapitate the opposition movements from the beginning. This was the case after the 2001, 2006, and 2010 presidential elections, when presidential contenders faced sham trials and were sent to prison on petty criminal charges (Ash, 2015).



Finally, elections also sent a signal about the President's strength to his own ranks, discouraging internal splits and allowing Lukashenka to surround himself by loyalists (Burger and Minchuk, 2006).

Lukashenka's strategy to survive in power followed many old Soviet authoritarian practices. Firstly, when preparing for elections, Lukashenka created and revived old political parties like the Communist Party of Belarus, which were led by regime puppets to attract and divert a share of the opposition's vote (Wilson, 2011: 177). Secondly, he used referendums to sideline and impose his will over other institutions. For example, the 1996 referendum on a new constitution increased the President's power substantially: it extended his mandate by two additional years, it created a much weaker bicameral Parliament where 'the 110 members of the newly created House of Representatives were handpicked by the President', it gave Presidential decrees the force of law and it extended the President's powers over the appointment of institutional figures and government expenditure (Wilson, 2011: 184). Finally, Lukashenka bribed potential veto players with rewards and institutional appointments and, when this failed, he used the security services to intimidate those who resisted him (Silitski, 2005).

However, Lukashenka's electoral victories were also the consequence of his popularity amongst the Belarusian electorate. Indeed, despite the regime's consistent efforts at rigging the electoral results, independent polls estimated that, had the elections been free and fair, Lukashenka would still have won with around 30% to 50% of the votes (Silitski, 2005). The key to explain his electoral success resided in his capacity to respond to the preoccupations of a large part of the Belarusian population and, in particular, to concerns regarding the economic stability and the welfare of the population (Korosteleva, 2012a). Lukashenka's ability to respond to these needs proved pivotal in assuring the regime's survival by maintaining Lukashenka's approval rate high.

Indeed, despite Lukashenka's strategy to isolate the country from globalisation, Belarus' GDP grew constantly between 3.4% and 11.4% between 1997 and 2006 (World Bank, 2014b). The country's strong economic performance in the absence of economic liberalisation stunned many analysts, who dubbed this phenomenon the "Belarusian economic miracle" (Zlotnikov, 2009). The state's almost absolute control of the economy and the scarcity of private investment made Belarus a singular case of economic success in the region. GDP per capita advantaged that of neighbouring Lithuania and Latvia, which had implemented tight fiscal adjustment programmes as part of IMF and EU sponsored structural reform programmes. In addition, the regime's control of the economy allowed Lukashenka to provide a Soviet-style welfare state, keep unemployment low and grant generous pensions to the population (Wilson, 2011).

However, due to the international isolation of the country, the "Belarusian economic miracle" was only sustainable thanks to Russia's generous and unconditional economic and financial support (Portela, 2011). Between 1995 and 1999, Belarus and Russia signed a series of agreements to integrate their economies.<sup>92</sup> These agreements established open borders between the two countries, helping to revive and expand the Belarusian export sector (Wilson, 2011: 172). Moreover, they also allowed an opportunistic Lukashenka to foster smuggling activities across the border and to obtain millions of dollars to feed his patronage network at the expense of the Russian budget (Zlotnikov, 2009). Most importantly, Belarus obtained huge benefits from importing gas and crude oil at highly subsidised prices from

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<sup>92</sup> In 1995, Belarus and Russia signed the Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighborliness and Cooperation and founded the Union of Belarus and Russia in 1996. Finally, the two countries constituted a Union State in December 1999.

Russia. Belarus then refined the crude oil and exported at market prices to Europe (Grant and Leonard, 2006).<sup>93</sup>

Consequently, up to 2006 Lukashenka was able to maintain together his winning coalition thanks to the large source of revenue that Russian subsidies and trade preferences provided (Wilson, 2011). Yet this advantageous situation came to an abrupt end in December 2006, when Russian President Vladimir Putin flexed his muscle and started a gas and oil war with Belarus to increase his leverage vis-à-vis Lukashenka (Balmaceda, 2009). While Putin's decision came as a shock to the Belarusian regime, the former had already warned Lukashenka in several occasions that Russian subsidies could be halted if Lukashenka continued breaking the economic agreements that bound the two countries and failed to deliver on his promise to foster integration with Russia (Financial Times, 2007). Moreover, Putin's personal dislike for Lukashenka rendered it more a question of when – rather than whether – this would happen (Trenin, 2005).

The new scenario seriously threatened to undermine the regime's survival. Under the new conditions stipulated by Moscow, 'Gazprom acquired 50% of Beltransgaz – the national Belarusian pipeline network which supplies Europe and domestic consumers – for \$2.5 billion. It also set down a gradual increase of the gas price paid by Belarus to Gazprom over the coming years [jumping from] \$46.68 to \$100 per 1000 cubic meters [in January 2007 and then again] to \$119 per 1000 cubic meters, and [...] \$150 in the latter part of 2008 (Dura, 2008). The spike of gas prices also had 'an adverse impact on the profitability of enterprises affected by rising energy costs and the relatively high energy intensity of Belarusian industries [undermining] the competitiveness of export-oriented

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<sup>93</sup> According to some estimates, the benefit made accounted for 10 to 20% of the country's yearly GDP (Ditych, 2013). This was particularly the case since the increase in oil prices since 2003. For a resource-rich country like Russia this was a political price worth paying to keep Belarus within its orbit.

enterprises [and] widening the trade deficit' (Korosteleva, 2012b: 21). Finally, the agreement also imposed a duty on the export of Russian crude oil, forcing Belarus to 'transfer 70% of the tax revenues from refined oil products to Russia' (Dura, 2008; Grant and Leonard, 2006; Korosteleva, 2012b: 21).

The reduction of Russian subsidies – which accounted for nearly 60% of the Belarusian state budget – put the regime under an enormous strain (Wilson, 2011). Even worse, the economic crisis of 2007 further deteriorated the regime's situation, as demand for Belarusian products fell in Europe and Russia (Jarabik, 2009). Cornered by the new circumstances, Lukashenka was pushed to modernise the country's economy, improve its energy efficiency and attract foreign capital from other parts of the world to feed his large patronage system (Liakhovich, 2009).

These changes pushed the regime to undertake serious reforms of the country's economy. Lukashenka understood well that, was his regime to survive, he would need to make concessions to the EU to benefit from its assistance. Thus, the regime initiated dialogues in technical areas with the EU and launched a privatisation programme in 2008. Lukashenka also released the most prominent opposition leaders, initiated a human rights dialogue with the EU and – to the anger of Moscow –, refused to recognise the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia (Wilson, 2008).

Yet most importantly, Lukashenka understood that the political structure of his regime had to change if it were to deal effectively with the new challenges. Thus, since 2006 he initiated a slow but irreversible reshuffle of elites, pushing aside hard-liners and *siloviki* and replacing them with a new generation of well-educated technocrats. The loss of influence of the

security services was evident in the decline of Viktor Sheiman<sup>94</sup> and his cronies since 2006, when ‘private companies and other economic structures that had been sources of income for the members of this group were dissolved or expropriated, and some of their owners were arrested’ (Liakhovich, 2009: 41-2; 2012).

The replacement of the old guard by a younger and more qualified generation amongst which the son of the president, Viktor Lukashenka, stood out served the regime to achieve three goals: i) to modernise the economy in the eve of an exhausted economic model based on Russian subsidies; ii) to provide a new and more liberal image to appeal to a changing Belarusian society; and iii) to steer and control Belarus’ political opening to the West to counterbalance the influence of Moscow (Liakhovich, 2009: 45-6).

However, the scope and depth of Lukashenka’s reforms were ‘limited, as his endeavours were driven by the desire for his regime to survive’ (Boonstra and Shapovalova, 2010: 11). Indeed, although Minsk’s controlled liberalisation fostered cooperation in certain areas with the EU and even obtained a loan from the IMF in 2009 (Wagstyl, 2009), it also made sure not to go as far as to jeopardise the regime’s position. Thus, whilst the regime was eager to undertake privatisations and liberalise and modernise the economy, it failed to comply with key demands of the EU, such as the reform on the Electoral Code and the respect of OSCE electoral standards (Portela, 2011).

On the contrary, Minsk’s search for increased cooperation with Europe was not motivated by a genuine will to liberalise the country, but rather by Lukashenka’s strategic need to blackmail Russia in order to obtain larger concessions from Moscow (Hett, 2007; Jarabik and Silitski, 2008). Not surprisingly, after the crackdown and the imposition of new sanctions by

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<sup>94</sup> Sheiman had played a prominent role in the security of the regime, first as assistant to the president for defence and security issues and as Secretary of the Security Council until 2000, then as prosecutor-general between 2000-2004, as head of the presidential administration until 2006 and finally as Secretary of the Security Council until 2008 (Liakhovich, 2009).

the EU in 2011, the ailing Belarusian economy was once again saved by Russia. Indeed, despite Putin's hatred of Lukashenka and Russian growing assertiveness, Lukashenka's regime still remained a lesser evil for Putin than a colour revolution or a pro-West government just 400km away from Moscow (Economist, 2007; Jarabik and Rabagliati, 2007).

However, Russian assistance has come at an increasing cost for Lukashenka and with strings attached (Moshes and Rácz, 2015). Indeed, while Lukashenka managed to secure a \$3 billion bailout from Moscow in May 2011, he was also forced to undertake further privatisations in the oil and gas sectors (BBC, 2011). This has played into Russia's hands and has weakened Lukashenka's position. Finally, Lukashenka's margin of manoeuvre has shrunk since 2006, as Belarus has been pressed to join Russia and other CIS countries in the newly created Eurasian Union (Barbashin, 2015).

Ironically though, increased Russian penetration in Belarus has generated concerns in EU capitals about the counterproductive effects of sanctions and international isolation in pushing Belarus closer to Moscow (Interview, 2015a). As a consequence, the EU has become increasingly pragmatic and, despite the maintenance of restrictive measures, it has sought to engage the regime in a critical but cooperative spirit (Bosse, 2012).

Finally, since the outbreak of the Ukrainian conflict in March 2014, Lukashenka has been able to increase his political autonomy. His role in brokering the Minsk agreements between Ukraine, Russia and the EU have been greatly appreciated and rewarded accordingly by the EU, which has broken the regime's isolation and invited Lukashenka to the EaP summit in Riga (Interview, 2015a; Socor, 2015). Moreover, Lukashenka has taken advantage of Russia's ban on the import of EU food products by rebranding EU goods like cheese and meat and selling them through the open border with Russia as Belarusian goods (Euractiv,

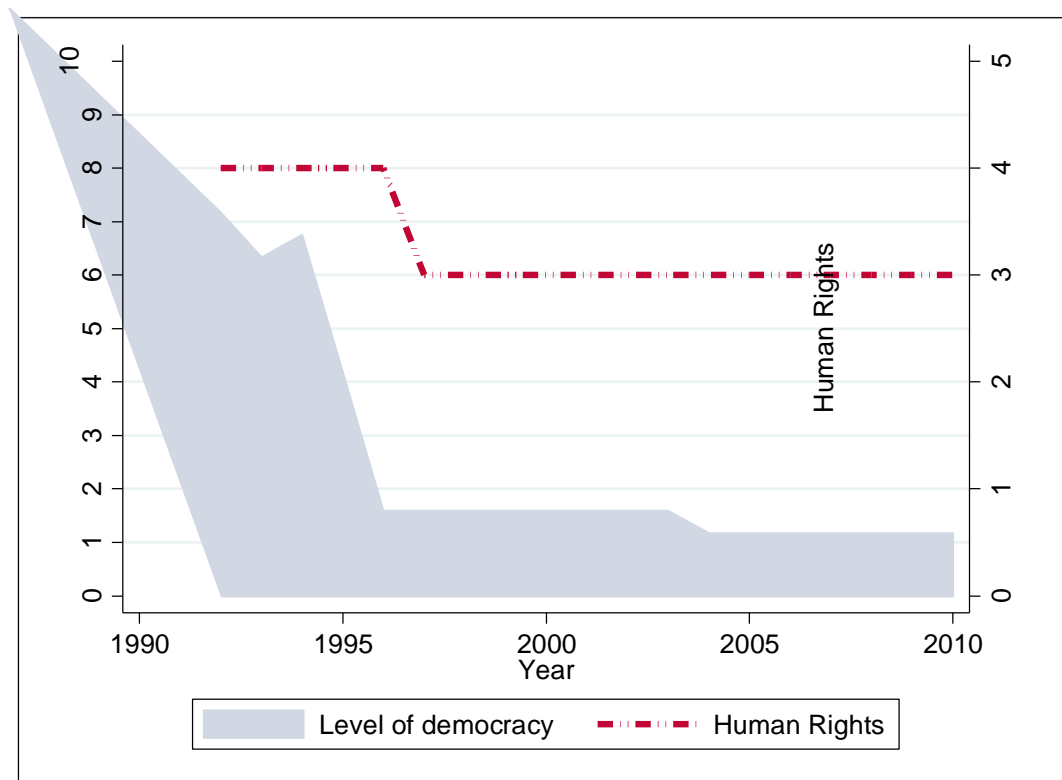
2014). While Lukashenka's opportunism has angered Russia, it is likely that Lukashenka will obtain something in return from Moscow if he falls back in line with the Kremlin (Interview, 2015a).

#### *6.2.2.2. Human rights and democracy*

Soon after Lukashenka's electoral victory in 1994, the country saw a worsening in the rule of law, the level of democracy, and the respect of human rights (see Graph 6.1 below). Already in 1996, Lukashenka won a flawed referendum to amend the country's constitution and increase his presidential powers. Another flawed plebiscite in 2004 saw him amending the 1996 constitution to further undermine the rule of law and democracy by allowing him to run for a consecutive third term (Simpser, 2013).

Lukashenka's flawed victories were accompanied by the targeted and systematic harassment and intimidation of the domestic opposition before, during, and after the elections. The level of intimidation reached a climax between 1999 and 2000, when four prominent Belarusian individuals disappeared with the alleged connivance of the authorities (BBC, 2001; EU Presidency, 2004). Torture, inhuman treatment and extrajudicial killings also contributed to a state of fear in the country, pushing many opposition figures to exile (Wilson, 2011).

**Graph 6.1. Level of democracy and human rights in Belarus, 1988–2010**



Source: Own elaboration. Data for democracy from Wahman et al. (2013); data for human rights from Gibney et al. (2015).

Undoubtedly, the increasing disrespect displayed by Lukashenka for the rule of law in Belarus, the disappearances of people and the imprisonment of opposition politicians had a clear impact on the EU’s decision to impose sanctions. Over the years, the EU deplored the regime’s restrictions on the registration of NGOs and its prohibition to allow them to receive external funding (Interview, 2015f). NGOs faced restrictive registration procedures, difficult tax regulations and intensive state supervision [forcing them to operate] under a constant threat of suspension’ (Sahm, 2009). As a consequence, the number of registered NGOs shrunk considerably and forced many of them to close down, operate from outside Belarus, or go underground.

The regime also maintained a tight censorship and control over the media, threatening and closing down independent publications (Sannikov and Kuley, 2006). Worse perhaps, Belarus



maintained the death penalty, something over which the EU has repeatedly expressed its concern about (Harding and Karmanau, 2012). Finally, although the short period of rapprochement between the EU and Belarus during 2007-2010 saw an improvement in the situation of human rights and the release of most political prisoners in 2008, the situation deteriorated again in 2009 and especially, after the 2010 post-electoral crackdown.

### *6.2.2.3. Economic leverage*

The EU's leverage over Belarus has been limited, although it has increased over the last years. The bilateral trade has more than doubled in the last decade, increasing from 5.344€ millions in 2004 to about 16.086€ millions in 2013 – or 26.2% of Belarus' trade with the world (European Commission, 2015a). However, even though the EU's economic penetration in Belarus has expanded its influence in Minsk remains eclipsed by Russia's omnipresence. Indeed, even though the EU is Belarus' second largest trading partner, it lags far behind Russia, who concentrates nearly 50% of Belarus' trade (European Commission, 2015a). As one EU official summed it up, 'Belarus is almost part of Russia' (Interview, 2015a).

The EU's influence has also been hampered for many years due to low levels of investment, aid, information flows and a lack of exchange and mobility opportunities for Belarusian citizens (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Potocki, 2011). However, this situation has changed considerably in the last decade, as Belarusian citizens travel abroad more frequently and are able to compare the life quality of their country with that of Russia and the EU ((Potocki, 2011). In addition, the EU's negotiation of a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with Belarus will increase the EU's leverage considerably. Belarus' willingness to push forward on this issue has surprised EU officials, who attribute this concession to Lukashenka's self-confidence (Interview, 2015f).

Finally, the EU's has repeatedly offered to assist Belarus financially through the granting of aid and loans, but these offers have been continuously rejected by Lukashenka due to the strings that come attached to them. This has also applied to Belarus' disinterest to be included in the ENP, as 'the price to be paid by the [Belarusian] political elite for strengthening ties with the EU is too high' (Dura, 2008: 6). Indeed, increased cooperation with the EU would force Lukashenka 'to democratise Belarusian politics and society' (Dura, 2008: 6), thereby seriously jeopardising the regime's grip on power. Finally, Lukashenka's disinterest for EU incentives is also a matter of substance, as the EU cannot match Russian subsidies and economic cooperation.

#### *6.2.2.4. Black knights*

Lukashenka's capacity to resist EU sanctions for such a long period of time is directly related to the support that his regime has received from Russia. Indeed, Moscow's economic and political backing can be considered a necessary and almost sufficient condition to explain the regime's resistance to external pressure (Portela, 2011). In fact, Belarus' economic and political integration with Russia is so important that, in many respects, it can be considered almost part of Russia (Interview, 2015a).

Belarus has benefitted enormously from a close relationship with Russia, first through the formation of the Union State in December 1999, then the Eurasian Customs Union in 2010, and more recently, with the creation of the Eurasian Union. Since 1995 Belarus has exported to Russia on very generous trade terms, as the latter imported certain products like sugar at highly subsidised prices (Wilson, 2011: 240). Moreover, as the result of the customs union created in 1995, 'Belarusian goods began to enter the Russian market duty-free [...] and the production and export of goods to Russia grew considerably (Zlotnikov, 2009: 67). Until

2000, Belarus also profited enormously from contraband across the Russian border. Some analysts estimate that the contribution of illegal flows of commodities like cigarettes and vodka contributed around 9-12% to the Belarusian GDP in 1999 (Zlotnikov, 2009: 69).

However, the most important source of revenue for the Belarusian regime was the import of heavily subsidised oil and gas. Cheap gas allowed Belarusian firms to remain competitive despite their energetic inefficiency, whilst cheap crude oil was refined at Belarusian refineries and then exported at much higher market prices to the EU and Russia. Some estimates claim that the benefits obtained by Belarus from Russian subsidised energy accounted for 10% to 20% of the country's GDP (Dura, 2008; Wilson, 2011; Zlotnikov, 2009). Although this situation changed since 2007 when Russia imposed duties on the export of crude oil and increased the prices of gas, it is obvious that Moscow's subsidies had a clear influence on the regime's capacity to withstand EU pressure and to remain relatively isolated from external economic and political dynamics (Korosteleva, 2012b).

However, Russia has been as much a source of stability as one of fear and insecurity for the survival of Lukashenka's regime. Although Lukashenka has certainly 'managed to obtain money from Russia every time he needed it' (Interview, 2015a), it is also true that this assistance has come at an increasingly higher cost since Putin rules in Russia. The 2006-7 oil and gas dispute or the 2013 potash wars with Moscow have forced Lukashenka to look for alternative sources of income, forcing him to open up the overregulated economic system of the country to foreign investment. The privatisation of entities that have ensued from these disputes have played into Russia's hands, which has increased its economic penetration in the country (Aslund, 2011).

Finally, Russia's increasing assertiveness after its military invasion of Georgia in 2008 and its role in Ukraine in 2014 have generated great anxiety in Minsk and tensed the bilateral

relationship. In a display of its political ambiguity, Lukashenka has distanced himself from Russia's economic warfare against Ukraine and has even threatened to abandon the Eurasian Union due to the high economic burden that the Russian economic crisis and the war in Ukraine are imposing on Belarus (Coyer, 2015). Lukashenka has also sought closer cooperation with the EU and has claimed that the presence of "green men" in Belarus would constitute a declaration of war (Radio Free Europe, 2015).<sup>95</sup>

### **6.3. Zimbabwe (2002–ongoing)**

Zimbabwe is one of the most puzzling cases of EU sanctions. After more than 13 years, it stands as one of the longest-lived sanctions regimes ever imposed by the EU. However, it also counts as one of the EU's most ineffective sanctions regimes. Zimbabwe poses a serious challenge to my argument since, according to my theoretical account, the regime is weak and should have surrendered to EU pressure very early during the sanctions episode. However, Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party have shown a perplexing and extraordinary resilience vis-à-vis sanctions over the last one and a half decades.

What is most striking about the Zimbabwean regime's defiance has been its capacity to survive in power despite the huge economic, political, and humanitarian problems that it has faced. Indeed, Mugabe's rule has not only been threatened by the dire economic situation in the country; it has also faced an increasingly confident and electorally successful domestic opposition in the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Since the empirical evidence seems to suggest that Mugabe and the ZANU-PF should have relinquished power under the

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<sup>95</sup> The notion of "green men" refers to the unidentified and allegedly Russian soldiers that have undertaken illegal military operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine since 2014.

weight of sanctions, I analyse here why this has not been the case and why Zimbabwe constitutes an outlier to my argument.

**Table 6.2. Coding summary: Zimbabwe.**

Episode	Zimbabwe: 2002–ongoing
Background	<p>In 2002, Mugabe’s ZANU-PF party won Zimbabwe’s Presidential elections by a small margin over the opposition party, the MDC. The election was rigged, Western media was denied access to the country, and the EU was not allowed to deploy an election observation mission. Since then, state-sponsored violence has been regularly employed against the opposition prior to elections and sanctions have been imposed and maintained for over 12 years. The last Presidential election of 2013, which saw Mugabe win a fifth consecutive term in office has led to a progressive change in the EU’s approach to Zimbabwe.</p>
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<p>In 2001, the EU opened negotiations with Zimbabwe under Articles 8 and 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. The EU threatened to terminate the consultation process and impose sanctions if Zimbabwe did not to comply with its demands. The deterioration of the situation on the ground and Mugabe’s defiance to comply with the EU led the latter to impose sanctions in February 2002. Since 2011, marginal progress in the country has led the EU to progressively delist individuals from its blacklist, and in November 2014 it resumed development cooperation with Zimbabwe.</p>
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<p>Multi-party (weak). Since the 2000 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe, Mugabe’s ZANU-PF party has faced an increasing domestic opposition to its rule by the MDC.</p>
Regime type	<p>Multi-party (weak). Since the 2000 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe, Mugabe’s ZANU-PF party has faced an increasing domestic opposition to its rule by the MDC.</p>
Winning coalition	<p>Moderate–Large: Robert Mugabe has ruled in Zimbabwe with the support of ample sections of the country’s society, including his political party ZANU-PF, the military, the police, the war veterans, and youth–militias.</p>
Human rights	<p>The situation of human rights has deteriorated considerably since the contested 2000 elections. The ruling ZANU-PF has been accomplice of the forceful land acquisitions by war veterans. Moreover, the ZANU-PF has used the war veterans, the army, the police and youth militias to harass and intimidate opposition leaders, especially before elections took place.</p>
Democratization	<p>Although the country holds multi-party elections, these are neither free nor fair. The situation of democracy has deteriorated gravely since 2002. The President has assumed increasing powers, a tight media censorship has been imposed, and the independence of the judiciary has been undermined by the regime.</p>
<i>Political instability</i>	<p>The MDC has generally refrained from staging mass demonstrations against the regime for fear of retaliation by the security forces. Moreover, the security services regularly impede meetings and electoral rallies from the opposition.</p>
Tenure	<p>Long: Mugabe has served as Zimbabwe’s Prime Minister from 1980 to 1987 and as President since 1987.</p>
<i>Economic leverage</i>	<p>Large: The EU is Zimbabwe’s second largest trading partner after South Africa. Although trade between the EU and Zimbabwe decreased up to 2009, it has continuously increased since.</p>
Trade dependence	<p>Large: The EU is Zimbabwe’s second largest trading partner after South Africa. Although trade between the EU and Zimbabwe decreased up to 2009, it has continuously increased since.</p>
Aid dependence	<p>Large: The EU has been one of the largest donors of Zimbabwe. However, since 2002 aid has been mainly channelled through NGOs, avoiding the participation of the government.</p>
Black knights	<p>Yes: African countries – and in particular South Africa – have openly defended Robert Mugabe and demanded the lifting of sanctions. In addition, China has increasingly aided Zimbabwe by providing financial assistance in exchange for access to the country’s mineral resources.</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

### *6.3.1. Dependent variables: Threat of sanctions, resistance and sanctions*

In June 2000, the ZANU-PF obtained a marginal victory over the newly formed MDC. The elections however had been deeply flawed, the rule of law had been systematically attacked by the regime, and state-sponsored violence against the opposition had been unravelled by the regime in the run-up to the election (International Crisis Group, 2000b). After the elections, EU member state delegations in Harare proposed the opening of a political dialogue with the government of Zimbabwe under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. Yet from the very beginning, the dialogue suffered from serious delays in the schedule, which the EU interpreted as ‘as a sign of [Zimbabwean] unwillingness to proceed’ with the process (Laakso et al., 2006: 69). Frustrated by the lack of cooperation, the Council decided to go one step further and instructed the Commission to open consultations with Zimbabwe under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement in October 2001 (Portela, 2007a).

In its letter to the Zimbabwean government, the Commission expressed its concern for the situation on the ground and asked the government to respect human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. In particular, it urged the latter to i) hold a credible Presidential election in 2002; ii) allow an EU observing mission to monitor the campaign and voting process; iii) put an end to political violence in the country; iv) respect the independence of the judiciary; and v) to protect the freedom of the mass media. Finally, the Commission requested Zimbabwe to commit to and implement swiftly the Abuja accord on land reform, a latent political issue contributing to the instability in the country (European Commission, 2001a).

However, as a last and unproductive meeting between EU and Zimbabwean delegations on 11 January 2002 evidenced, the Zimbabwean authorities showed no interest in cooperating with the EU. Disgruntled by Mugabe’s behaviour and with the March Presidential elections

fast approaching, the Council of the European Union issued on 28 January 2002 an unusually strong statement threatening to conclude the consultation process with Zimbabwe and impose targeted sanctions if i) the latter did not allow and EU observation mission to monitor the Presidential election; ii) there was a serious deterioration in the situation on the ground; or iii) the election was flawed (Council of the European Union, 2002a).

This threat did not dissuade Mugabe and the ZANU-PF, who in the build-up to the election ‘brutalised opposition [...] supporters into staying home, [scared] potential opposition supporters into voting ZANU-PF, [stole] hundreds of thousands of votes by manipulating voter rolls and eligibility rules, and [disenfranchised] hundreds of thousands of potential opposition supporters through myriad other legal and legislative moves’ (International Crisis Group, 2002c: 1). The government also passed new legislation to increase the control over the press, escalated state violence and intimidation against the MDC and broke with its commitment to the Abuja Agreement by tolerating new illegal farm invasions (International Crisis Group, 2002a, b).

On 18 February 2002, the Council backed its threat and adopted ‘appropriate measures’ by suspending development cooperation with the country (Council of the European Union, 2002d; Portela, 2007a). Moreover, and deviating from normal EU practice, the suspension of development assistance was accompanied by CFSP sanctions imposing an embargo on the sale of arms to Zimbabwe, and travel bans and assets freezes on over seventy individuals who were ‘engaged in activities that seriously undermine democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe’ (Council of the European Union, 2002b).

Mugabe defined the sanctions as “economic terrorism” and enacted counter-measures like the withdrawal of passports and the introduction of exit and entry visas on the domestic political opposition for its support of EU sanctions. Moreover, he reshuffled his government



to circumvent sanctions, but the EU replied by updating its blacklist, delisted those individuals that had been replaced from Zimbabwe's government, and added new names to the list (Council of the European Union, 2002c; Eriksson, 2007)<sup>96</sup>.

Other international actors also imposed sanctions against the Mugabe regime. In December 2001, the US enacted the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA), a piece of legislation instructing US representatives in international financial institutions 'to oppose credit and loan extensions (to Zimbabwe), except for basic human needs or good governance purposes' (International Crisis Group, 2012: 3). Zimbabwe was also suspended from the Commonwealth in March 2002 for violating the terms of the Harare Declaration (BBC, 2003; Marquez, 2006), which included the respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.<sup>97</sup>

The outcome of the negotiations between the EU and Zimbabwe does not support my expectations of Hypotheses 1 and 2. Mugabe's resistance to a very strong threat of sanctions refutes my expectation that multi-party regimes should be more likely to comply with the sender before sanctions are imposed. Although Zimbabwe certainly entered into negotiations with the EU, its predisposition to negotiate seemed to be driven more by a delaying and time-buying strategy than by a serious commitment to improve the situation. In fact, the empirical evidence seems to suggest that the regime anticipated sanctions and bought itself some time to move money in Europe to safe heavens by acceding to negotiate with the EU (Eriksson, 2005).

Similarly, the actual imposition of sanctions invalidates my Hypothesis 2 that multi-party regimes should be less likely to be sanctioned. Surprisingly, while sanctions have certainly

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<sup>96</sup> Notably, the Council added Mugabe's spouse, Grace, to the blacklist.

<sup>97</sup> In December 2003 the suspension was renewed for another year, after which Zimbabwe withdrew from the organisation altogether.

generated discomfort to the Zimbabwean ruling elite (Eriksson, 2011; Giumelli, 2013a), they have not changed Mugabe's behaviour. The regime's defiant attitude is especially puzzling if one takes into consideration the dire economic situation of the country.

After the first round of sanctions in 2002, the EU and Zimbabwe became entangled in a political deadlock. Sanctions were routinely extended and expanded over the years through the addition of new names to the blacklist, but Mugabe retaliated with measures of his own, like travel bans on UK officials visiting Zimbabwe (Eriksson, 2007). Moreover, the Zimbabwean regime skilfully used sanctions to its advantage, blaming Western countries for the economic problems of the country and portraying sanctions as an instrument of Western imperialism (Foley, 2011).

In 2008, a critical moment was reached when Mugabe lost the first round of the Presidential elections to the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai (BBC, 2008). However, Mugabe refused to concede defeat and unleashed a campaign of political violence and intimidation against the opposition (McGreal, 2008). Severely weakened by this attack, Tsvangirai abandoned the electoral race and Mugabe obtained an easy victory in the second round of the Presidential elections (Dugger and Bearak, 2008). Mugabe's flawed victory sparked international condemnation. The EU demanded him to step down and added more names to the sanctions blacklist (Reuters, 2008), whilst the increasing political and economic crisis in the country exacerbated the need for international action.

Although a consensus on the need for action grew, the international community was split on the course of action to be pursued. On the one hand, the South African Development Community (SADC) opted to sponsor a dialogue between the ZANU-PF and the opposition parties to address the situation in Zimbabwe; on the other, the EU and the US chose a more coercive approach and added more names to their sanctions blacklists (Alden, 2010; Council

of the European Union, 2008c; International Crisis Group, 2008b). Moreover, the UK and the US pushed in July 2008 for a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution to impose multilateral United Nations (UN) sanctions against the regime (International Crisis Group, 2008b), but this effort failed after China and Russia voted against it (United Nations, 2008).

By the end of 2008, the SADC brokered an agreement for the creation of a government of national unity (GNU) between the ZANU-PF and the opposition parties,<sup>98</sup> where Mugabe would retain the presidency and Tsvangirai would become the Prime Minister. In addition, a Global Political Agreement (GPA) was reached that outlined the basic aspects of the GNU and sketched an agenda of reforms for the country, which included the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of new elections (Darracq, 2010; International Crisis Group, 2009).

The SADC's brokered agreement included a reference to the lifting of sanctions, but the EU and the US contended that these would stay in place as long as nothing changed on the ground (CNN, 2009; Fleming, 2009). The deadlock seemed insurmountable: while the ZANU-PF accused the MDC to renege from its GPA commitments and support sanctions, Tsvangirai replied that he 'ha[d] no control over sanctions, and [that] there would be a stronger basis for their removal if GPA violations ended, and ZANU-PF did not block the reforms' (International Crisis Group, 2012: 1).

Nevertheless, for the first time in years MDC members begun lobbying the US and the EU to modify their approach and lift sanctions to show support to the GNU (Wikileaks, 2009). This change of attitude responded to the increasing perception amongst the Zimbabwean population that sanctions were having negative effects on the country's economy. Although

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<sup>98</sup> In 2005, the MDC split into two parties, the MDC-Tsvangirai and the MDC-Mutambara (see below).

unproven,<sup>99</sup> this claim was shared by other international actors like the SADC or the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights (Telegraph, 2012b). But most importantly perhaps, the MDC's request was primarily driven by the fact that, after seven years in place, sanctions had not only failed to destabilise Mugabe and his regime; they were also being used by the ZANU-PF to blame the MDC for the poor state of the economy and to rally political support for Mugabe.

The formation of the GNU opened a window of opportunity for the revision of the EU's sanctions based approach. In 2009, an EU delegation visited Zimbabwe for the first time in years (Lunn and Thomson, 2010), and in 2011 the sanctions regime was revised to encourage progress by granting exemptions to the travel ban on grounds of humanitarian need or to attend international conferences and EU political dialogues to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe (Council of the European Union, 2011c). Moreover, in 2012 the Council temporarily suspended the appropriate measures imposed under article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement to 'demonstrate the Union's continued commitment to the Global Political Agreement process' (Council of the European Union, 2012a).

Although progress under the GNU and the GPA was slow and barred by the ZANU-PF's resistance to implement reforms (Kriger, 2012; Raftopolos, 2013), the EU continued its re-engagement with the regime and hinted that the completion of a peaceful referendum on a new constitution in 2013 would represent an important step for the lifting of sanctions (Council of the European Union, 2012b). On 16 March 2013 the constitution was approved in a referendum that the EU considered "credible" (BBC, 2013a). This marked an important

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<sup>99</sup> While the sanctions imposed by the EU and the US were targeted in nature – and hence, not intended to inflict damage on the country's economy -, sanctions might have had indirect effects by internationally stigmatising the country and scaring away investment. However, while this argument might be partially true, the poor state of the economy has primarily been caused by the ZANU-PF's economic policies since the 1990s.

breakthrough in the relationship with Zimbabwe (Portela, 2014), as the Council proceeded to suspend the travel ban and the assets freeze of a majority of the blacklisted individuals (Council of the European Union, 2013b).

The EU paved the way for the complete removal of sanctions if the presidential election of July 2013 was peaceful, transparent and credible (Council of the European Union, 2013c, e). Although serious concerns about the freedom and fairness of the election were raised (Euractiv, 2013b), the SADC's and the African Union's reports hailing the election as 'free, peaceful and generally credible' left the EU in a political conundrum with little room to manoeuvre (International Crisis Group, 2013, 2014; Raftopoulos, 2013: 978). Consequently, on 18 February 2014 the Council took a step further in the normalisation of the relationship with Zimbabwe by suspending most of its sanctions. Moreover, it allowed the appropriate measures imposed under Article 96 of the Cotonou agreement to expire in November 2014 and resumed direct cooperation on development assistance with the government (Council of the European Union, 2014). At the same time though, it maintained the arms embargo, the travel ban and the assets freeze on Mugabe, his wife, and one entity<sup>100</sup> (Reuters, 2015).

Admittedly, the evidence of the Zimbabwean sanctions regime contradicts my predictions of the additional hypotheses 3 and 4. First, the longevity of sanctions goes against my expectation that multi-party regimes should be targeted for short periods of time (H3). At the time of writing, sanctions against Zimbabwe have been in place for over 13 years, a spell that is clearly above the average of three years in the case of multi-party regimes. Second, sanctions have not destabilised Mugabe or the ZANU-PF. This evidence also contradicts my Hypothesis 4. At the age of 91, Mugabe is one of the most long-standing leaders in Africa. He has survived in office for over 35 years, 13 of which have been under EU and US

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<sup>100</sup> This entity was the Zimbabwe Defence Industries.

sanctions. This period is clearly above the average survival rate of autocrats in multi-party regimes, which is close to three-and-a-half-years according to my data.

The failure of sanctions to alter Mugabe's behaviour can be partially accounted by several factors. First of all, the imposition of sanctions generated unexpected or perverse effects, the most important of which was a "rally-around-the-flag" effect. Thanks to the ZANU-PF's control of the media, the regime succeeded in portraying sanctions as an imperialist attack on Zimbabwe and blamed sanctions for the economic woes of the country. This boosted Zimbabwean nationalism and increased the support for the regime, whilst at the same time stigmatised the MDC as an anti-patriotic party for supporting sanctions (International Crisis Group, 2012; Marquez, 2006).

Second, sanctions were poorly implemented and enforced. Inconsistencies, exceptions and exemptions in the sanctions regime generated important legal loopholes that permitted targeted individuals to bypass them easily (Eriksson, 2007, 2011; Grebe, 2010). For instance, exceptions to the travel ban were allowed if the targeted individuals had to enter Europe to attend international conferences. Once in Europe, these individuals faced no constraints to pursue their private interests (Smith-Höhn, 2010). Furthermore, due to time lags between the imposition of sanctions and their implementation, the targets had enough time to move money to safe-havens (Eriksson, 2007, 2011). In fact, the amount of money frozen was so small that it questioned the entire effectiveness of 'assets freezes [...] as a means of inhibiting or changing the behaviour of those who are targeted' (House of Lords, 2007: 26, para. 68).<sup>101</sup> Lastly, the EU's arms embargo was easily circumvented by importing weapons from countries like China or Russia (Jeuck, 2011; Munnion, 2008).

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<sup>101</sup> According to the Foreign Office, the UK had only frozen £160,000 from Zimbabwean individuals and entities (House of Lords 2007, 26, para. 68).

Third, sanctions also generated tensions between EU member states. A row erupted between the UK and France in 2003, when the latter invited Mugabe to a Franco-African conference in Paris (Morris and Peta, 2003). Similarly, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown boycotted the EU-Africa meeting in Lisbon in 2007 due to Zimbabwe's presence (BBC, 2007). Moreover, Belgium's lobbying for the lifting of sanctions against the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation – Zimbabwe's largest diamond exporter and a source of patronage for the regime – generated a rift between Belgium and the UK (Blair and Laing, 2013; Rettman, 2013).

Finally, the lack of regional and international support for sanctions undermined their effectiveness by allowing Mugabe to see the EU's bet and raise the stakes of the confrontation. Indeed, regional actors like the SADC and, especially, South Africa, have continuously backed Mugabe in his confrontation with the West, branding EU and US sanctions as illegal and demanding their removal (Adelmann, 2004; Aljazeera, 2013).

### *6.3.2. Independent variables*

#### *6.3.2.1. Regime type: multi-party regime (weak), large winning coalition*

Zimbabwe is coded as a multi-party (or weak) regime in my dataset. According to my theory, this implies that Mugabe and the ZANU-PF should have complied with the EU's demands before sanctions were imposed. However, as I have shown above, Mugabe has not only ignored EU requests to respect the rule of law, democracy and human rights; he has also been able to resist sanctions for over 13 years. In fact, Mugabe has shown an outstanding resilience against an increasingly hostile domestic and international scenario. His capacity to survive in office for such a prolonged period of time puts the validity of my argument into question, despite strong evidence that would suggest otherwise.

Since the 1990s, Mugabe and the ZANU-PF have faced mounting challenges to their rule. First, the regime has had to deal with an adverse economic situation. Since 1999, the IMF and the World Bank suspended the provision of balance of payment support, soft loans and credits due to Zimbabwe's incapacity to pay back its arrears (International Crisis Group, 2001). Moreover, the government's economic mismanagement<sup>102</sup> has undermined the rule of law in Zimbabwe, generating a huge legal uncertainty that has scared investors away from the country (International Crisis Group, 2000b). Its policies have also led to the shrinking of the economy: up to 2008, the country's GDP systematically shrank between 3 to 17% a year (World Bank, 2014a). Inflation skyrocketed to 231 million % in 2008 (Economist, 2013b), and unemployment and interest rates have remained at extremely high levels. The economic woes of the country have forced almost 3 million Zimbabweans – amongst them highly qualified workers – to emigrate (Tevera and Crush, 2010).

Second, the ZANU-PF's position has been challenged by an increasingly confident domestic opposition. In 2000, despite major efforts to rig the general elections, the ZANU-PF only managed to obtain a marginal edge over the newly formed MDC (Simpser, 2013). The ZANU-PF's electoral weakness was further evidenced in February 2000, when it lost a referendum on a new constitution by a 55-45 margin. Over the years, the regime has proven incapable of securing electoral victories, despite making a systematic use of irregular means (Simpser, 2013). In fact, Mugabe's rule came close to an end after losing the first round of the 2008 Presidential election against Tsvangirai, yet he managed to remain in office after unleashing a campaign of violence and intimidation against the opposition (McGreal, 2008).

Nevertheless, the ZANU-PF was not strong enough to rule by itself, and the political

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<sup>102</sup> In August 1998, Mugabe decided to deploy Zimbabwean armed forces to the Democratic Republic of Congo, with an estimated cost to the public budget of 3\$ million a month. Moreover, in November 1997 he gave in to the demands of the war veterans by agreeing to meet their demands of compensation (Raftopoulos, 2003: 229). This decision imposed an excessive burden on an already fragile economy. Finally, Mugabe's decision to back the war veterans' farm invasions after February 2000 further 'shattered domestic and international confidence' in Zimbabwe.



deadlock of 2008 forced Mugabe to reach an agreement with the MDC to form a GNU between 2009 and 2013.

Finally, since 2002 the regime has faced a hostile international environment. The imposition of economic sanctions by the EU and the US has stigmatised the regime and made the life of ZANU-PF members difficult (Eriksson, 2007). According to one report, financial sanctions have generated discomfort within ZANU-PF ranks, leading some of its members to desire Mugabe's removal from office (International Crisis Group, 2007). Moreover, as Mugabe's power has eroded over time, splits within the ZANU-PF have proliferated. This has increased the price that Mugabe pays for staying in office, forcing him to make major concessions to powerful interests groups to sustain his rule – most notably, the war veterans and the military. As a consequence, rumours have spread that it is the military, and not Mugabe, who controls political power in Zimbabwe (BBC, 2010a). To make things worse, concerns about Mugabe's health and his 'unwillingness to identify a successor have fed the ongoing internecine battles' within the ZANU-PF, generating further uncertainty and instability in the country (International Crisis Group, 2014: 19).

Since these elements posed a serious challenge to ZANU-PF rule, it is necessary to explain why Mugabe has been able to survive in power for so long. Three factors help to account for it: i) the composition of Mugabe's winning coalition and the system of patronage that maintained it; ii) the incapacity of the MDC to form an alternative winning coalition to oust Mugabe; and iii) the uncertainty that surrounds the scenario of a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe.

In the 1990s, a series of droughts, the decline of exports, and the government's implementation of an IMF/World Bank Economic Structural Adjustment Programme impacted negatively on the country's economy (Muzondidya, 2009). As the crisis intensified, protests aroused and the government increasingly turned to the security services and the army

to repress the surges of discontent. Mugabe increasingly relied on the security services, the army, the war veterans and newly established youth militias to sustain his rule, signalling a clear shift in the balance of power within his winning coalition (International Crisis Group, 2000b, 2001; Muzondidya, 2009).

The “securitisation” of the state was achieved through the creation of a patronage system that co-opted relevant actors through direct cash payments, business concessions, and privileged access to state resources and positions (Tendi, 2013). In 1997, Mugabe obtained the loyalty of the war veterans by increasing the government’s compensation for their service in the liberation wars (International Crisis Group, 2001; Raftopoulos, 2003: 229) and, since 2000, by backing the war veterans’ illegal farms invasions. Moreover, Zimbabwe’s participation in the conflict of the Democratic Republic of the Congo helped Mugabe to establish new companies and contractual arrangements in the exploitation and trade of mineral resources and diamonds, which have been employed to fund the regime’s patronage system (International Crisis Group, 2014; United Nations, 2002).

Importantly, the vast benefits and privileges that Mugabe’s patronage system has granted to the armed forces and the war veterans has generated great incentives for these groups to defend the status quo (International Crisis Group, 2009; Tendi, 2013). These groups also fear a potential retribution by the opposition for their past crimes and actions. Therefore, they advised Mugabe not to step down after losing the 2008 elections, but to increase the level of repression against the opposition instead (Mail Online, 2008; Wines, 2008).

The second factor that has contributed to Mugabe’s survival in power has been the opposition’s inability to build a sufficiently large winning coalition to oust the ZANU-PF. Although the MDC has increased its electoral support since 2000, it has been unable to

transform this into a winning coalition (Interview, 2015d).<sup>103</sup> The MDC has proven too weak to generate mass rallies or demonstrations against the regime (Mair, 2008), and even when it came very close to victory in 2008, it was unable to resist the regime's repression and intimidation campaign. Critical in this respect has been the MDC's incapacity to gain control of – yet alone support – from the state's security apparatus (Interview, 2015d; Wikileaks, 2010).

MDC efforts to oust Mugabe from power have also been undermined by internal fights. During the 2005 Senate elections, the MDC split into two parties, the MDC-T and the MDC-M (BBC, 2005; Wines, 2007).<sup>104</sup> While the first remained the larger of the two, the presence of the MDC-M has played against the MDC-T in subsequent elections, thereby limiting the former's capacity to beat the ZANU-PF. Moreover, even though the 2008 GNU and GPA have often been regarded as a success of the opposition in curbing Mugabe's power, Mugabe managed to retain the upper hand in the negotiations by playing the MDC-M and the MDC-T against each other (Raftopoulos, 2013).

Finally, Mugabe's survival owes much to the uncertainty that surrounds his potential exit from the political scene. Since the ZANU-PF's tight victory in 2000, speculation has grown about who will replace Mugabe as the ZANU-PF's leader (Muleya and Ncube, 2015). However, factionalism and divisions within the ZANU-PF cast doubts about the party's capacity to remain united without its leader. Moreover, the role of the security services in a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe remains a great uncertainty. As the group that has benefited most from Mugabe's patronage, it is likely to lose most from the leader's departure (International

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<sup>103</sup> Some suggest that, were it not for the massive and systematic electoral manipulation performed by the ZANU-PF, the MDC would have won almost every election in Zimbabwe since 2002 (Simpser, 2013).

<sup>104</sup> The split was produced by the willingness of one sector of the party led by Mutambara to participate in the elections, while the section led by Tsvangirai opposed participating due to the regime's manipulation (Marquez, 2006: 185).

Crisis Group, 2010). Its dislike for the opposition and its fear of retribution for past actions against the opposition raises the question of how it would react were the MDC to gain control of the government (Chitiyo, 2009).

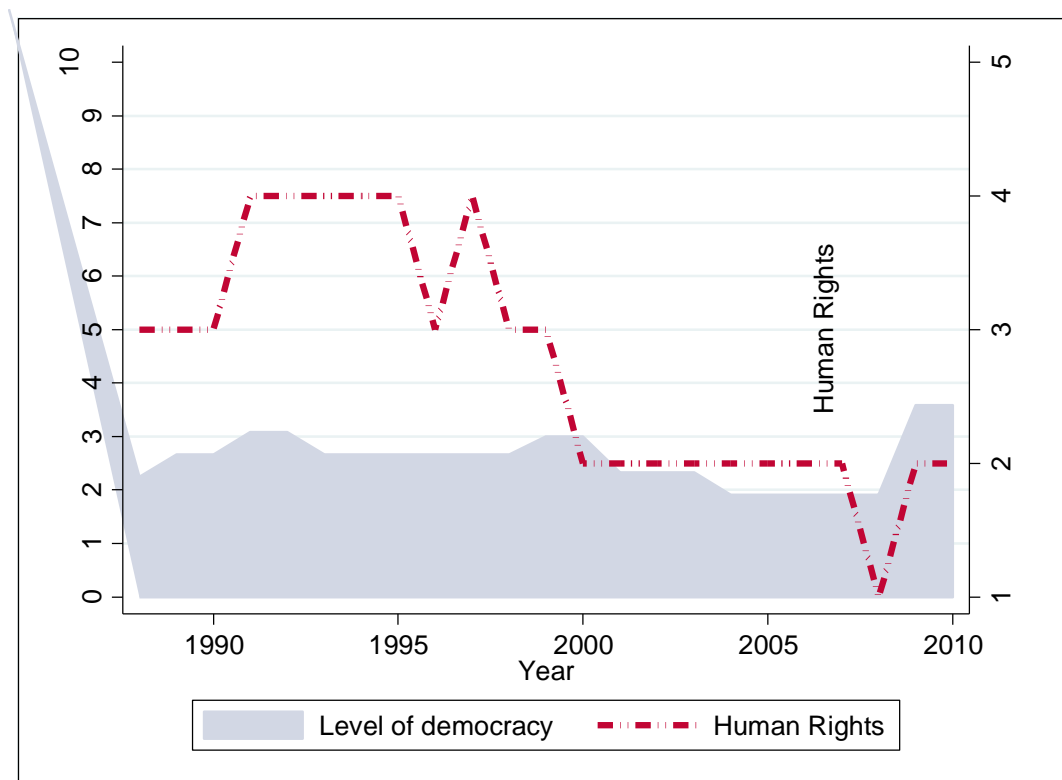
Recent concerns about Mugabe's health and his travels to Singapore for medical purposes have generated further tensions and uncertainty about the future (Chinaka, 2014). Although the regime has denied Mugabe's health problems, everyone in the ZANU-PF is making tactical movements whilst they wait for Mugabe to leave the political scene (Chidza and Mushava, 2015; International Crisis Group, 2014; Muleya and Ncube, 2015). Most worryingly, Mugabe's weakness has led to alleged assassination plots from within ZANU-PF ranks and to retaliatory purges of prominent members of the party (Phiri, 2014). Fears that the country could follow the path of Liberia, Sierra Leona or the Ivory Coast if Mugabe goes renders the old President the least worst option for the foreseeable future and explains why ZANU-PF party members often refer to Mugabe as the 'glue that keeps the country together' (International Crisis Group, 2001: 11).

#### *6.3.2.2. Human rights and democracy*

The deteriorating situation of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe since 2000 was decisive in the EU's decision to impose sanctions against Mugabe and the ZANU-PF. The regime became increasingly coercive after it came close to an electoral defeat against the newly created MDC in the 2000 elections (Kriger, 2005). Moreover, its failure to win the 2000 constitutional referendum led it to initiate a massive campaign of repression, intimidations, and violence against the opposition (Addison and Laakso, 2003).

In the early 2000s, Mugabe attacked the independence of the judiciary, harassing and purging individual Supreme Court and High Court judges, and appointing new judges from ZANU-PF ranks (Compagnon, 2011). The regime also passed a new draconian Public Order and Security Act to harass the MDC, and ignored the violence triggered by the war veterans' invasion of farms across the country (International Crisis Group, 2001). Mugabe also tightened the control over the independent media through the regulation of the accreditation of journalists and employed the war veterans in a campaign of harassment and violence against several independent publications (Freedom House, 2006).

**Graph 6.2. Level of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe, 1988–2010**



Source: Own elaboration. Data for democracy from Wahman et al. (2013); data for human rights from Gibney et al. (2015).

After the GNU was formed and the GPA signed, the EU reengaged with the country and initiated a progressive suspension of sanctions. The 2013 referendum marked a breakthrough in the reengagement process and, despite its concerns about the flaws of the 2013 Presidential

elections, in 2014 the EU noted that the situation of human rights and democracy in the country had not deteriorated and proceeded to lift most of its sanctions (Portela, 2014).

#### *6.3.2.3. Economic leverage*

The EU's economic leverage vis-à-vis Zimbabwe is quite large (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Portela, 2010). The EU is Zimbabwe's second largest trading partner after South Africa and, although bilateral trade decreased until 2009, it has since increased again to values of over 600€ million in 2014 (European Commission, 2015c). However, despite its large economic leverage, the EU has refrained from imposing tougher measures like trade embargoes to induce change in Zimbabwe for at least two reasons. Indeed, the EU has been wary that trade sanctions could further deteriorate the already dire economic situation on the ground and harm the innocent population (EU Commission Delegation to Zimbabwe, n.d.-b; Interview, 2015d).

Zimbabwe is also highly dependent on external aid. In 2008, official development assistance accounted for 15% of Zimbabwe's GDP (Lunn and Thomson, 2010). The EU has been Zimbabwe's second largest donor after the US and, though development assistance was suspended in 2002, the EU has redirected large amounts of aid to Zimbabwe via NGO's and grassroots organisations to address the critical humanitarian situation in the country (EU Commission Delegation to Zimbabwe, n.d.-a).

#### *6.3.2.4. Black knights*

External support for the regime has played a major role in Mugabe's ability to resist sanctions. Several African countries and regional organisations like the African Union and

the SADC have continuously voiced criticism against EU and US sanctions and demanded their lifting (Adolfo, 2009). Although Mugabe has been capable of gathering regional support to his defiant stance vis-à-vis the West by portraying sanctions as a form of neo-colonialism (Mutiga, 2013; Phimister and Raftopoulos, 2004), some more pragmatic considerations have motivated the support that these organisations have granted to Mugabe.

First, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe face similar domestic challenges with regard to the fulfilment of the liberation-era promises (Alden, 2010). As a consequence, these countries dislike the possibility of an MDC victory, as it would set a bad precedent of a labour-based movement defeating a hero of the liberation struggle against colonialism and apartheid (International Crisis Group, 2002c; Interview, 2015d). Second, since the economies of South Africa and Namibia are closely connected to that of Zimbabwe, the former have opposed sanctions due to the negative effects that these could have on their own economies (Alden, 2010). Lastly, SADC leaders have argued that sanctions could further destabilise the situation in Zimbabwe by triggering a civil conflict and increasing the already high refugee flows from the country (Wintour, Elliott and McGreal, 2008).

Finally, Russia and China have systematically shielded Mugabe and his regime from tougher UN sanctions. Indeed, both countries vetoed the West's push in the UN Security Council for tougher multilateral sanctions against Zimbabwe in 2008. At the same time, China has sold Mugabe weapons and, since the late 2000s, it has also offered increasing financial support to the Mugabe regime in exchange for access to Zimbabwe's mineral resources (Chun, 2014; Smith, 2011). This assistance has contributed to a booming of the Zimbabwean economy (Nelson, 2013). Moreover, China has provided Zimbabwe with much needed soft loans and credit lines that Zimbabwe could not obtain from international financial markets. Yet, in recent years China has become increasingly reluctant to provide additional loans to

Zimbabwe, as the latter has failed to pay back even modest arrears (Hornby and Hawkins, 2014).

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to explain why the case studies of Belarus and Zimbabwe pose such a tough challenge to my theoretical argument. The longstanding EU sanctions regimes imposed against Lukashenka's Belarus and Mugabe's Zimbabwe defy my expectation that regimes with large winning coalition should be less likely to be sanctioned. Moreover, they also challenge my assumption that regimes with large winning coalitions should be sanctioned for shorter spells. A few elements that have arisen throughout this chapter help to understand why my model performs so poorly to predict the outcome of the dependent variables correctly.

First of all, the case studies have shown that both regimes were much stronger than their large winning coalition would suggest. The regimes' resilience was based on an iron-fist control of the state apparatus and, in particular of the security services, who responded directly to each president. Indeed, Lukashenka relied on the *siloviki* and the KGB for many years to repress any green sprout of pro-democracy movements in the country. Mugabe also relied on the security services, the military, and the war veterans to harass and intimidate the opposition.

Nevertheless, the control of the security apparatuses was never sufficient for both leaders to rule. In fact, both regimes relied on a much larger winning coalition which needed to be fed and satisfied permanently. In fact, the effort that both dictatorships put into rigging elections is probably the clearest indicator that Mugabe and Lukashenka needed to legitimise their rule to a broader W. Consequently, Mugabe's and Lukashenka's hold on power required of huge



and permanent efforts to feed their W. Indeed, Mugabe encouraged the invasion of farms and relied on the exploitation of natural resources to keep his coalition together, whereas Lukashenka maintained a high popularity thanks to the provision of a Soviet-style welfare system. However, these practices were only possible thanks to the political and economic backing of powerful neighbours, which shielded the regimes against external criticism and sanctions.

In this regard, Russia and China played a determinant role in maintaining Lukashenka's rule in Belarus and Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe respectively. Russia was pivotal in ensuring the political, financial and economic stability of Lukashenka's regime through the granting of huge subsidies on the import of oil and gas, preferential access to the Russian market, and diplomatic support and protection for Lukashenka's policies. This support was crucial for Lukashenka to shield his regime from international economic dynamics and, especially, from EU sanctions. Similarly, South Africa played a decisive role in maintaining African unity to shield Mugabe and make a common front against "European colonialism". In addition, China and Russia also protected Zimbabwe in the UN's Security Council, whilst South Africa diffused external criticism against the critical humanitarian situation caused by Mugabe in Zimbabwe during its bilateral meetings with the EU. Finally, China provided Mugabe with weapons and lines of credit that Zimbabwe would not have otherwise obtained in international markets.

Finally, these two case studies also show that the efficacy of sanctions can be seriously undermined by the presence of perverse effects. In Zimbabwe, where the memories of British colonialism are still fresh, Mugabe was able to portray sanctions as a tool of British colonialism. He successfully portrayed the MDC as a fifth column within the country and managed to rally support for his rule. Similarly, Lukashenka also rallied nationalistic support for his regime by accusing the EU – and Poland and Lithuania in particular – of plotting to

destabilise Belarus. But even worse, EU sanctions have contributed to the country's international isolation, limiting the EU's leverage vis-à-vis Belarus and pushing the country further towards Russia.

## **CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis has been to develop a theoretical explanation about the imposition of sanctions, and to test this argument empirically against a newly designed dataset of EU sanctions. This chapter summarises the results of my thesis and discusses their academic and policy implications. First, I summarise the main findings of my study, showing that multi-party regimes are more likely to comply with the EU – and therefore, less likely to be sanctioned – than strong regimes. Moreover, I also review my evidence that sanctions against weak regimes last less than those imposed against strong regimes, and that the former are also more likely to be destabilised by sanctions than the latter.

The second part of this chapter discusses the relevance of my findings to the academic literature on sanctions. My results have relevant implications for the study of sanctions effectiveness, since they suggest that the conventional knowledge about the conditions under which sanctions are likely to work only applies to a subset of cases. In other words, my findings show that selection effects are present in the study of sanctions, and warn about the need of careful research designs. In this sense, my conclusions advise to look beyond cases where sanctions were imposed, and analyse cases where sanctions were threatened but not imposed as well. Lastly, I argue that selection bias needs to be modelled appropriately in empirical work, and suggest that the use of two-stage selection models where a target's compliance is controlled for can improve our results and allow us to overcome this problem.

In the third section of the chapter I debate the generalizability of my model by applying it to other prominent cases where sanctions were threatened or imposed on other grounds than human rights or democratic concerns. The chosen cases are 1) the sanctions threatened against the Yanukovich regime in Ukraine during the Maidan revolution in 2014; 2) the

stand-off with Russia for its invasion of Crimea and its destabilisation efforts in Eastern Ukraine since 2014; 3) the UN, EU, and US' sanctions regimes imposed against Iran's nuclear proliferation programme since 2007; and 4) the sanctions imposed by the West against Bashar Al-Assad's regime in Syria for its repression of demonstrators and to halt the civil conflict since 2011.

The fourth section then addresses the main limitations of my theoretical approach and sketches an agenda for future sanctions research. Finally, I discuss the substantive implications of my findings in the last section of the chapter, and conclude by providing some policy recommendations of when and how sanctions should be employed to increase their effectiveness.

## **7.2. Findings**

The main finding of this thesis has been to demonstrate empirically the existence of target selection effects in the study of sanctions imposition. Using a new dataset on EU sanctions, I have provided evidence that the EU's employment of sanctions varies considerably amongst different types of autocratic regimes. I have found that strong regimes like military and one-party regimes are sanctioned more often than their weaker counterparts, multi-party regimes. To account for this variation, I have shown that regimes with small  $W$  face lower constraints than regimes with large  $W$ , and therefore display a higher resilience vis-à-vis sanctions than the latter. My results demonstrate that the lack of domestic constraints increase the likelihood that strong regimes are sanctioned, as they are willing to defy the EU's threats of sanctions and thus self-select themselves into sanctions. Consequently, I have provided empirical evidence that selection effects are channelled through a target regime's domestic

institutions, which constrain the target regime's leeway and shape its policy choices when faced with the threat of sanctions.

The robustness of my results lies in the combination of various strategies to address and identify the presence of target selection effects. I have used different regression models to capture 1) the variation in the target's compliance with the threat of sanctions; 2) the likelihood that a target is sanctioned; 3) the duration of a sanctions regime across different types of autocratic regimes; and 4) whether sanctions destabilise some autocratic regimes more than others. Lastly, I have also corroborated the strength of my findings by running numerous robustness checks to control for other plausible explanations that could be driving the imposition of EU sanctions and by using different regression models to make sure that my results were not model-dependent.

First, I have shown that regimes with large  $W$  (multi-party regimes) are likelier to comply with the EU's threat of sanctions than those regimes with small  $W$  (strong regimes). This finding is of particular relevance, as it supports game theoretic approaches in their expectation that vulnerable regimes have larger incentives to comply with the sender country before sanctions are actually enacted (Drezner, 1999, 2003; Morgan et al., 2009; Morgan and Miers, 1999; Morgan and Schwebach, 1997; Smith, 1995). Most importantly however, my results suggest that strong regimes are less likely to comply with the EU's threat, thereby increasing the likelihood that they are targeted with EU sanctions. In other words, they confirm my argument that certain regimes feel sufficiently strong and confident to ignore the threat of sanctions, and thus choose to self-select themselves into sanctions.

Furthermore, I have demonstrated that the strong regimes like military and one-party regimes have a higher probability to be sanctioned than multi-party regimes. These results are robust in different model specifications and even when I control for other explanations of sanctions

imposition. Thus, they provide strong support for my claim that the domestic institutions in the target country determine to a large extent the probability that a regime is (not) sanctioned.

Moreover, I have provided further evidence of the presence of target selection effects by performing two additional tests. First, I have analysed the duration of sanctions episodes across different types of regimes, showing that strong regimes face much longer sanctions spells than multi-party regimes. This finding supports my claim that weak regimes are more likely to comply with the sender soon after sanctions have been imposed, acknowledging thereby that they have miscalculated the sender's threat and that sanctions are imposing a high burden on them. Second, I have also shown that, when faced with sanctions, weak regimes are more likely to be destabilised and lose office than strong regimes. This finding confirms that weak regimes are likely to lose the support of key elements of their Ws and, as a consequence, face a higher probability of losing office.

Finally, through the analysis of several case studies of EU sanctions episodes I have identified and traced the ways in which different domestic institutional settings in target regimes influence the latter's reactions to the threat and imposition of sanctions. In Chapter 5, I have found evidence that the autocratic regimes in Fiji II (2006-2014) and Myanmar (1990-ongoing) were able to ignore the threat of sanctions and resist their pressure thanks to the small size of the regimes' W, whereas the civil-military regime in Fiji I (2000-03) was incapable of maintaining a united front towards sanctions due to the large size of its W.

Indeed, the cohesiveness of the military regime in Fiji II allowed Bainimarama to resist the pressure of sanctions for many years. The unity and support of the Armed Forces proved vital for his survival in power, thwarting any opposition to his rule and allowing Bainimarama to undertake an ambitious process of reforms. Thus, international pressure and sanctions against the military regime were futile in influencing its policies and, after many years of political

deadlock, sanctions were lifted even though Bainimarama remained in power. However, the regime's response to sanctions was quite different in Fiji I, as Prime Minister Qarase could not smooth over the deep divisions that existed within his W. As a consequence of these divisions, the coalition crumbled when sanctions were imposed, paving the way for a quick return to democratic rule.

Similarly, the SLORC/SPDC's long rule in Myanmar was only possible due to the cohesion of the military junta and the small size of its W. Faced with economic sanctions for over twenty years, the junta systematically ignored Western demands for democratization and repressed the domestic opposition emboldened in the figure of Aung San Suu Kyi. Using the country's natural resources to feed a wide patronage system, the SPDC remained in power uncontested despite its nation-wide unpopularity, and it only agreed to a limited liberalization of the political system once it had assured that the interests of the armed forces within new emerging regime would be guaranteed.

In Chapter 6, I have analysed the cases of Belarus (1994-ongoing) and Zimbabwe (2002-ongoing). These cases are clear outliers to my theoretical approach, as dropping them from the statistical analyses leads to a significant improvement of the coefficients for the "dominant" regime type category. I have shown that Alexander Lukashenka's capacity to survive in power and resist the pressure of EU sanctions for over 10 years can be attributed to Russia's economic subsidies and diplomatic support, which have rendered Belarus almost completely dependent on Moscow. Thus, Russia's role as a black knight is determinant in explaining Belarus' resilience towards sanctions.

Lastly, in the case of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe's capacity to hold onto power despite facing a strong domestic opposition, over ten years of economic sanctions, and a mounting economic crisis in the country can be largely ascribed to three factors. First, notwithstanding

the West's demonization of Mugabe, he is still regarded as a hero of the national liberation wars in Zimbabwe and remains popular in the country. Second, he also obtained the support of several "black knights". On the one hand, Mugabe has received the diplomatic support of many African leaders, who see him as a peer and a symbol of the African struggle against colonialism (Alden, 2010). African countries and South Africa in particular have criticised EU sanctions and rallied around Mugabe. On the other hand, Mugabe has benefited from China's lines of credits, which has allowed Zimbabwe to circumvent the West's ban on IMF and World Bank funding. Finally, Mugabe has withstood the domestic electoral challenge posed by the MDC thanks to the loyalty of the security services, his party, and the war veterans. His W has remained together thanks to the large rents obtained from the exploitation of diamond fields in the DRC and the Marange area in Zimbabwe, and the expropriation and redistribution of farms amongst his supporters (Interview, 2015e).

### **7.3. Theoretical implications for the study of sanctions**

My findings have several implications for the study of sanctions and beyond. First of all, they confirm that selection effects are present during the imposition of sanctions and that the use of economic statecraft is most effective at the threat stage (Bapat et al., 2013; Morgan et al., 2009; Morgan and Miers, 1999; Morgan and Schwebach, 1997). Indeed, I have shown that multi-party regimes are more likely to comply with the EU when sanctions are threatened than strong regimes and, as a consequence, they are less likely to be sanctioned. Moreover, I have also demonstrated that, once sanctions have been imposed, multi-party regimes are more likely to be destabilised than strong regimes. The same is true of dominant regimes if we exclude the sanctions regimes imposed against the three hard cases of Belarus, Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe.



At the same time however, the evidence about selection effects implies a second thing: namely, that the conventional wisdom that sanctions are not very effective instruments only applies to a subset of cases that has not been randomly selected. Indeed, since I have shown that some regimes are more likely to be sanctioned than others, it is very likely that what we know about the effects of sanctions is only relevant to countries that fall within one of two scenarios of my model: 1) the outcome where regimes prefer to resist the threat of sanctions and are thus sanctioned (self-selection scenario); and 2) the outcome where weak countries miscalculate their strength and are sanctioned (miscalculation scenario). Consequently, my findings suggest that we should not only evaluate the effectiveness of these measures against a sample of “hard” cases where sanctions were actually imposed, but also against a sample of “control” cases where sanctions were threatened but not adopted. Careful research design should therefore be a primary consideration of researchers, and particular attention should be paid to the incentives structures that target regimes face to comply or resist the threat of sanctions.

Moreover, the existence of selection bias in the study of sanctions imposition requires to be addressed appropriately in empirical research. Indeed, as my results demonstrate, the compliance and the sanctions stages of my models are correlated at statistically significant levels, implying that the two stages of the strategic bargaining game are not analytically separable from each other. Thus, modelling selection bias is not a mere methodological choice for researchers; on the contrary, it is a critical issue that has substantive implications for our results – and hence, for our understanding of how and when sanctions are more likely to work. Whilst a first step in the right direction requires robust research designs, scholars should also make use of available methodological techniques to model these effects. In this regard, a two-stage Heckman selection model constitutes a helpful and well suited tool to capture and minimise the influence of selection effects.

Third, my findings highlight the role of target regimes in determining the outcome of the sanctioning process. I have shown that target regimes play an important role in a sender's determination to impose sanctions, since its decision to comply or resist the sender's threat determines to a very large extent the outcome of the negotiating process. Target regimes display an extraordinary dynamism and variation in their response to the threat and imposition of sanctions. Indeed, the extent to which sanctions impose political and economic costs on a target is contingent on its domestic institutional setting, which determines how the impact of external shocks like sanctions are distributed, absorbed, diffused, and eventually deflected (Allen, 2008a, b). As sanctions exert increasing economic pressure on weak regimes, they also raise the opportunity cost of non-compliance and empower the opposition, thereby jeopardising the stability of the ruling elites.

Finally, my findings have relevant implications for the way in which we assess a target country's vulnerability. While most of the literature assumes that a country's economic structure determines its exposure to sanctions (Hufbauer et al., 2007), I have demonstrated that political factors are at least as important if not more in accounting for a target country's vulnerability. Although this conclusion has been raised elsewhere before (Blanchard and Ripsman, 1999; Galtung, 1967), it is too often forgotten by scholars and practitioners who maintain the assumption that higher levels of economic pressure will automatically translate into political concessions by the target.

As examples of highly autocratic regimes like Syria evidence, dictators easily find ways to transfer the economic cost of sanctions to other segments of the society by increasing the levels of taxation or by forcefully appropriating goods and resources (Yazigi, 2014). Moreover, while sanctions have reduced the level of public goods that Bashar el-Assad employs to feed his patronage system, he has compensated for this loss by curtailing state spending in health and education to opposition controlled sectors of the Syrian society

(Hokayem, 2013). Thus, as this example evidences, autocrats are able to dilute the impact of sanctions by using scarce resources as carrots and sticks to reward loyalty and punish opposition to the regime.

#### **7.4. A generalizable approach to the imposition of sanctions**

In this thesis I have demonstrated that my analytical framework is able to explain the EU's imposition of sanctions against autocratic regimes that violate human rights and democratic principles. However, my framework is not necessarily limited to the EU as a sender of sanctions, or to a particular issue area like the promotion of human rights and democratic principles. In this section, I show the generalizability of my analytical model to other scenarios in which the EU imposed sanctions following other concerns. For this purpose, I briefly analyse four current and relevant sanctions episodes that demonstrate the generalizability of my argument beyond the promotion of human rights and democracy. These cases are 1) the crisis in Ukraine during early 2014 where the EU and the US threatened sanctions against President Yanukovich and his regime; 2) the sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Crimea and its destabilization of Eastern Ukraine since 2014; 3) the sanctions regime imposed against Iran for its nuclear programme since 2006; and 4) the measures adopted against the Syrian regime for its brutal crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in 2011 and its role in the country's civil war.

##### *7.4.1. Ukraine: the success of the threat of sanctions (2014)*

After Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich decided not to sign an association agreement with the EU in November 2013, protests against his rule sparked in Kiev and grew in

intensity during early 2014 (BBC, 2013b). Tensions increased after the regime passed “draconian” public laws to deal with a growing popular discontent and mass demonstrations, yet the crisis would reach its climax when Yanukovich incarcerated hundreds of protestors and over 70 demonstrators were killed in clashes with the police in late February (Traynor, 2014).

Following these developments, the EU and the US threatened sanctions – including travel bans and assets freezes – against Yanukovich and other individuals responsible for the state-sponsored violence and the killings of demonstrators in Kiev’s Independence Square (Lewis, Oltermann and Roberts, 2014). After late night negotiations on 20 February 2014, Yanukovich accepted an agreement brokered by the foreign ministers of France, Germany, and Poland. By the terms of this agreement, Yanukovich agreed to slash his Presidential powers, hold early elections, form a government of national unity, restore the 2004 constitution, and free renowned political prisoners like Yulia Timoshenko (BBC, 2014d).

The weak domestic position of Yanukovich in Ukraine (multi-party regime) was galvanised by the threat of EU and US sanctions. Indeed, external pressure and a weak and fragmented W forced him to comply with the senders’ demands and avoid sanctions (Bloomberg, 2014). However, Yanukovich’s weakness was evidenced one day later, when members of his own Party of the Regions joined the opposition in a vote to impeach him and forced him to flee to Russia overnight (BBC, 2014c; Friedman, 2014; International Business Times, 2014). Thus, overall my model predicts the outcome of the Ukrainian crisis well, as Yanukovich political weakness forced him to accommodate the Western demands when sanctions were threatened.

#### 7.4.2. *Russia (2014-ongoing)*

Following the Ukrainian crisis in early 2014, pro-Russian armed groups in Crimea seized official buildings and pressed on holding a referendum to gain independence from Ukraine and integrate into the Russian Federation (Yuhas and Jalabi, 2014). Although the West considered this referendum a sham given the climate of intimidation and the lack of preparation for holding a vote in fair conditions (BBC, 2014a), Russia threw its weight behind this plan amidst EU and US threats of sanctions against Crimean and Russian officials if the process were to go on (Gearin, 2014). On 16 March, the referendum on joining Russia was held, being backed by 97% of the population. Russia hastened to approve the annexation of Crimea into the federation, whilst the West refused to recognise the outcome and imposed a first round of assets freezes and travel bans against a few Russian and Crimean individuals (Croft and Strupczewski, 2014).

After this quick annexation of Crimea, “little green men”<sup>105</sup> dressed and heavy-armed like Russian soldiers, joined pro-Russian rebel groups in the Eastern Ukrainian regions of the Donbass and the city of Odessa. Once again, the EU and the West threatened new sanctions against Russia for its ambiguous tactics in destabilising the region (BBC, 2014b; European Council, 2014), yet it would only be after the downing of a commercial plane of Malaysian airlines by rebel forces with (allegedly) Russian supplied missile systems that the West would back its threat (Aljazeera, 2014). Thus, on 30 July the EU and the US adopted so-called tier

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<sup>105</sup> These groups of unmarked soldiers – called “little green men” by the local population – first appeared in Crimea before the holding of the referendum and then re-appeared in Eastern Ukraine to support local rebel efforts against the central government in Kiev.

three or sectoral sanctions, expanding the sanctions blacklist and targeting for the first time the Russian banking, energy, and military sectors<sup>106</sup> (Hille, 2014a).

The impact of sanctions, coupled with a stagnant Russian economy, the dramatic fall of oil prices, and the devaluation of the rouble have evidenced Putin's miscalculation and pushed him into a defensive position (Bond, Odendahl and Rankin, 2015; Financial Times, 2014; White and Troianovski, 2014). Although the crisis is far from being resolved, some evidence suggests that sanctions are affecting Putin's inner circle far more than the latter would have expected. In fact, the cost of sanctions has led Putin to compensate his core supporters for their sanctions-related losses in order to keep his W together (Hille, 2014b).

Although it is unclear how long sanctions will be in place and whether these will deter Russia from continuing its destabilization of Eastern Ukraine, the cost of pursuing its expansionist policy is coming at a high expense to the Russian treasury (Kolyandr, 2014). Moreover, even though it is too early to assess the effects of sanctions on Russia's behaviour, this episode shows that my model can also be useful to understand the Kremlin's actions during the crisis. Indeed, even though the regime did not buck to the threat of sanctions, some evidence seems to suggest that their actual imposition has led to a re-assessment of its policy preferences in Eastern Ukraine (Financial Times, 2014). However, it is also possible that, due to the absence of domestic institutional constraints, Russia preferred to self-select itself into sanctions and resist their pressure. At the time of writing, the cost of sanctions does not seem to have outweighed the utility that Putin obtains from resisting, as his high popularity ratings in Russia seem to suggest (Clark II and Elkin, 2015). In other words, the Kremlin's cost of non-

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<sup>106</sup> The EU's sectoral sanctions included restrictions on Russian banks' access to long-term loans, an embargo on the export of dual-use equipment for military use, and a prohibition to access services and technology related to the exploration and production in the oil industry.

compliance might still be lower for the Kremlin than the political cost of conceding to the West.

#### *7.4.3. Iran (2006-ongoing)*

In 2006, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) found Iran to be in violation of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The issue was elevated to the UNSC, which threatened to impose sanctions if Iran did not comply with its obligations and accepted to halt its clandestine nuclear programme (United Nations, 2006). However, the latter ignored the threat claiming that its nuclear programme was merely intended for civilian purposes. As a consequence of Iran's non-compliance, the UNSC imposed an embargo on the provision of goods and technology that could be used in the development of Iran's nuclear programme on 23 December 2006, and adopted an assets freeze and a travel ban on designated persons and entities (Gootman, 2006). These measures were reinforced by additional US and EU sanctions targeting Iran's oil and banking sectors in 2007 (Portela, 2014).

After years of political deadlock, on 14 July 2015 negotiations between Iran on the one hand, and France, the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, China, Russia and the US on the other hand – the EU3+3/P5+1<sup>107</sup> – agreed on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) (Gordon and Sanger, 2015; Keating, 2009). This agreement stipulates that Iran will halt its nuclear programme in exchange of sanctions relief, which will free billions of US\$ frozen in European and US bank accounts and, eventually, pave the way to the normalization of relations with Iran. While some analysts credit sanctions for succeeding in bringing Iran back

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<sup>107</sup> The term EU3+3 makes reference to the three European countries, the UK, France, and Germany (EU3), plus China, Russia, and the US (3). Similarly, the term P5+1 makes reference to the five permanent members of the UNSC – the US, UK, France, Russia and China – plus Germany.

to the negotiation table (Takeyh and Maloney, 2011), others contend that the ayatollahs' willingness to reach an agreement was motivated by the change in the regional and international context that led to a reassessment of Iran's preferences (Einhorn, 2015).

Indeed, Iran's willingness to compromise came at a turning point, when a new administration led by the moderate Rouhani took over and at a time when experts acknowledged that Iran had almost – if not already – developed the technology to create nuclear weapons if it wanted to do so (Economist, 2013a). Moreover, the agreement reached in Vienna seems to benefit Iran most, as it will obtain billions of frozen funds and might contribute to normalize a poisoned relation that, in turn, might lower the likelihood of pre-emptive US or Israeli military strikes to end the nuclear programme.<sup>108</sup>

Thus, Iran's strong regime (other/party-based regime)<sup>109</sup> was probably better off by resisting external pressures and seeking to develop the technology to build a bomb, as it felt threatened by an aggressive international and regional context (Khan, 2010). In line with my model, Iran's resistance led to the imposition of UNSC sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Sanctions however were ineffective in altering Teheran's policy, which continued enriching uranium despite the enormous economic cost that sanctions inflicted on the country's economy. Finally, Iran's strategic calculations changed after the Obama administration in the US took over and showed a willingness to reach a compromise after years of political deadlock (Einhorn, 2015). This new international atmosphere and the fact that Iran has achieved most of its goals help to account for the negotiated settlement.

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<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the agreement leaves many questions regarding the implementation of the Plan of Action unanswered. Importantly, the wording of the JCPA seems to grant Iran a central role in the implementation and monitoring of the agreement, something that has raised many alarms in conservative circles in the West and Israel (Ernst, 2015).

<sup>109</sup> Wahman et al. (2013) classify Iran as "other" regime, whilst Geddes et al. (2014) include it in the category "party-based" regimes. As a theocracy, Iran is a hard case that is difficult to classify. However, the domestic strength of the regime can also be seen in the small size of the regime's W (.25).



#### *7.4.4. Syria (2011-ongoing)*

In early 2011, the spark of the Arab Spring reached Syria. The regime's response to the first demonstrations was brutal, clamping down on protestors and imprisoning hundreds of them (Williams, 2011). By the end of April, the EU deplored the escalating crisis in the country and the toll in human lives that the regime's violent reaction was causing. In response to the deteriorating situation, the EU threatened to review its policies towards Syria and impose sanctions if Basher al Assad's regime did not put an end to state-sponsored violence against the demonstrators (Cody, 2011; Rettman, 2011a). However, the latter simply ignored Western requests, and the EU and the US imposed a first battery of smart sanctions against the regime, including travel bans and assets freezes against army leaders, business people, and government officials (Moret, 2014; Portela, 2012; Seeberg, 2015).

As the crisis escalated even further and became a fully-fledged conflict, the EU's and the US' sanctions regimes were adapted and expanded, adding more names to the blacklist and targeting Syria's oil and banking sectors (Portela, 2012). However, the increasing coerciveness of sanctions did not alter the Syrian's regime (military regime)<sup>110</sup> behaviour, since the conditions spelled out by the West to lift sanctions would have jeopardised the regime's position even more (Wilson and Warrick, 2011). At the time of writing, the Syrian conflict nears its fifth year, and the Assad regime continues fighting for its survival. Moreover, sanctions do not seem to have altered the regime's calculations, as no attempt at complying with the West has been observed.

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<sup>110</sup> While Wahman et al. (2013) classify Syria as a military regime, Geddes et al. (2014) catalogue it as a party-based regime.

On the contrary, sanctions and the civil war's threat to Assad's rule seem to have strengthened and brought the regime's W closer together (Hokayem, 2013). Thus, the threats that the regime face seem to have reduced its incentives to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict (Hudson, 2013). Moreover, the Syrian civil war has become a multi-faceted and complex regional conflict, as different regional powers have intervened financially and diplomatically to support the different factions involved. In this regard, the role of Iran, Russia and Hezbollah in providing arms, logistical and financial support to the regime have been pivotal, whilst Turkey, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia have played a major role backing the opposition to the Assad regime (Hokayem, 2013). Russia and Iran in particular have taken up the role of "black knights", as they have provided the regime with extensive diplomatic, financial and military support. This help has allowed the regime to circumvent Western sanctions, break its international isolation, and maintain the armed struggle against rebel forces for its survival (Seeberg, 2015).

In any case, my model provides a plausible explanation to account for the regime's reluctance to comply with Western demands. Indeed, the EU's and US' demand for Assad to resign has never been seriously contemplated by the regime. Thus, the Syrian regime ignored the West's threat and self-selected itself into sanctions, just as my model would predict.

## **7.5. Limitations and future research**

Although my analytical framework has a wide applicability to explain different aspects of the sanctions game, new questions and puzzles have arisen during the writing of this thesis that my approach cannot answer directly. In this section, I discuss some of the methodological and substantive issues that I have faced, and sketch a few lines for future research that could help us to enhance our knowledge on the usages and effects of sanctions.

First, I have portrayed the EU as a unitary sender of sanctions. However, even though sanctions are coordinated and agreed upon by EU member states at the Council of the European Union (Portela, 2010), the EU is a complex multi-level entity, where decisions are taken by many different actors and through different legal and voting procedures. Moreover, the decision to impose sanctions usually requires the consent of all EU member states, making it at times hard to reach agreements due to diverging commercial and strategic interests of its member states (Interview, 2015e). Finally, although the implementation of sanctions tends to be relatively consistent across EU countries, member states might have incentives to deviate and exploit the loopholes in the legislation (Bapat and Kwon, 2015; Gebert, 2013).

As a consequence, intra-EU disagreements might affect the credibility of the EU's threat of sanctions. This can be costly to the EU in terms of its reputation and policy coherence, sparking domestic criticism and sending a dangerous message about the existence of weak spots in its policy. Not surprisingly, during 2014 Russia's President Putin keenly exploited the frailness of the EU's unity on sanctions to push for the lifting of the sanctions regime in place against his country (Kaminski, 2014). Although scholars have recently begun to analyse the role of audience costs during (Hart, 2000) the threatening and imposition of sanctions (Krustev, 2010; Krustev and Morgan, 2011; Peterson, 2013), future research could assess how the policy preferences of EU member states affect the credibility of the EU's threats and, in turn, the consistency of its sanctions policy.

A second limitation that should be addressed in the future relates to the nature and quality of the data employed to operationalise certain variables in this study. For instance, I have shown that the aggregate volume of trade between the EU and a target country is not related to the EU's imposition of sanctions. Not surprisingly, given that the EU is one of the largest trading blocs in the world, its bilateral trade with many countries is relatively small in aggregated

terms. However, it is plausible that due to historical and cultural linkages, a large variation exists in the geographical spread of commercial links between EU member states and third countries. Although mapping these flows goes beyond the scope and possibilities of this thesis, it would be interesting to assess the extent to which commercial relationships between member states and third countries correlate with a regime's likelihood to be sanctioned. A similar approach could also be taken with regard to the disbursement of official development assistance, as some evidence suggests that the application of political conditionality varies between EU member states (Carbone, 2010, 2011a; Carey, 2007; De Felice, 2014).

Third, an important issue that needs to be addressed in the future relates to the measurement of "black knights" or sanctions busters. My case studies on Belarus and Zimbabwe have provided evidence that the presence of black knights allowed these regimes to withstand EU sanctions for a prolonged period of time. This finding suggests that the presence of external support is a variable that should be controlled for in statistical analyses. However, while identifying the presence of black knights is relatively straightforward in qualitative case studies, it is much harder to come up with a suitable measure of this concept for a cross-country comparison. An interesting attempt to capture the presence of black knights is Early's (2009, 2011) indicator that measures abrupt and sizeable changes in the levels of bilateral trade between a sanctioned country and a third country that previously had no important trade links.

Notwithstanding the merits of Early's (2007, 2011) work, trade is seldom the only way in which black knights provide assistance to sanctioned countries nowadays. More research could build up on Early's (2007, 2011) findings by focusing on how the provision of other types of assistance like loans, grants, or debt relief by third countries allow sanctioned regimes to offset the impact of sanctions. Moreover, research could also analyse the extent to which sanctioned countries develop "best-practices" on how to circumvent sanctions. Indeed,

countries like Iran that have lived under sanctions for many years have become specialists in evading sanctions, and have begun to share this knowledge with other sanctioned countries like Syria (Hokayem, 2013). Thus, the role in which black knights provide financial, economic, logistic, or diplomatic assistance to sanctioned countries constitutes a very promising and interesting area that future research could look into.

Finally, throughout the thesis I have made no analytical distinction regarding the types of sanctions imposed, or the degree of economic hardship that these measures cause to a target regime. Although this has not been the primary goal of this thesis, the differentiation between comprehensive and smart sanctions, and between different types of political, economic, and financial tools is important inasmuch as some of these measures are likely to inflict more harm on a target regime than others. For instance, scholars generally agree that comprehensive trade embargoes have devastating effects on a target's economy (Biersteker, Eckert and Tourinho, 2012; Cortright and Lopez, 2000; Hufbauer et al., 2007), whilst targeted sanctions limit that damage to those individuals or entities that are responsible for the violation that a sender seeks to redress (Biersteker and Eckert, 2004; Cortright and Lopez, 2002; Wallensteen, Staibano and Eriksson, 2003).

However, despite the relevance of this issue, constructing an indicator that captures these distinctions in a reliable way is a challenging task faced with serious theoretical and methodological problems. First, not all countries are necessarily affected in the same way by the imposition of sanctions, as the impact of the latter might largely depend on a target country's economic structure, its self-sufficiency, and its integration into the world economy. For instance, the current financial sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia are certainly causing more economic hardship nowadays than if they would have been imposed some 20 years ago, when Russia was much less exposed to the fluctuations of international financial markets. However, the same types of financial sanctions are unlikely to have any impact on

isolated regimes like Myanmar. Thus, the same instrument is not comparable across time or space in a systematic way.

Second, some scholars have sought to overcome this difficulty by dividing sanctions into different categories according to their degree of “comprehensiveness” (Biersteker et al., 2012). According to this classification, those measures that are tailored in such a way that they only affect a specific individual are catalogued as very targeted, whilst those instruments whose impact affects large segments of a target country are considered the least targeted sanctions. While this effort certainly constitutes a promising way forward to assess the impact of sanctions in terms of their scope, this classification does not necessarily overlap with the actual degree of coerciveness of specific types of sanctions.

Moreover, even though targeted sanctions are supposed to avoid harm to the population, they might still have side-effects that end up affecting it in different ways. First, targeted sanctions can put a stigma on an entire country by signalling the existence of political risks of doing business (Eriksson, 2011). This, in turn, can scare international investment away and affect the aggregate welfare of the population negatively. Moreover, sanctions can reduce the number of commercial activities and discourage investment in target countries by imposing legal requirements that businesses find difficult to comply with (British Bankers' Association, 2013). In fact, even though in many occasions senders like the EU and the US have included humanitarian exceptions to their sanctions regimes precisely to avoid causing harm to the innocent population, the complexity of these sanctions regimes is so high that many businesses – and especially financial institutions – have become weary of operating in certain countries out of fear of breaking the sanctions legislation and face enormous fines as a consequence (Johnston, 2015).

Finally, targeted sanctions practice has become increasingly “less targeted”, as senders like the EU have sanctioned entire sectors of a target’s economy. These “sectoral” or “tier three” sanctions affect key sectors like banking, energy, and technology, and constitute a new development in EU sanctions practice which deserves further scholarly scrutiny. Thus, future research should carefully assess this new category of “sectoral” sanctions is more effective in achieving the sender’s goals, and in particular, evaluate as precisely as possible whether its effects vary in comparison to its more targeted or comprehensive counterparts.

## **7.6. Policy implications and recommendations**

Although every sanctions episode is unique and presents its own particularities, the findings of my thesis have some policy ramifications that apply across different cases and which can be relevant to the general use, design, and implementation of sanctions. A first conclusion of my thesis is that sanctions (and in particular the threat thereof) are likely to be more effective when a structure of resonance exists inside a target country (Kotzian et al., 2011). Indeed, sanctions are more likely to obtain a target regime’s compliance when the target ruler faces powerful domestic challengers that are capable of capitalising on her weakness and build an alternative W to oust her from office. Therefore, a credible domestic threat to an autocrat’s rule acts as a magnifying lens that augments the effects of sanctions and puts additional pressure on the latter. However, if the challengers to the incumbent are atomized and unable to form a W, the imposition of sanctions might not hinder the continuity of the ruling regime.

Thus, senders should look at the domestic structure of a target regime carefully before imposing sanctions, and assess how the impact of sanctions is likely to be distributed within the domestic power structures of a target regime (Bunce and Wolchik, 2011). Indeed, as the case studies of Belarus and Zimbabwe illustrate, the challengers to Lukashenka and Mugabe

have continuously failed to build an alternative W, which in turn has contributed to continuous electoral defeats and factional splits within opposition forces. Therefore, senders should select their targets strategically to enhance the probability of success while avoiding entering into a protracted dispute with a resilient target.

Second, senders should be realistic about their expectations when using sanctions. As I have shown, many times sanctions are imposed because targets are better off by being punished than by complying with the sender. Hence, as long as the utility that targets obtain from resisting is equal or higher than the utility that they would obtain from acquiescing to the sender's demands, the political deadlock is likely to remain (Smith, 1995). This implies that, for this situation to change, something needs to happen that makes both the sender and the target better off than when sanctions are in place. For this reason, senders should anticipate and evaluate the extent to which sanctions can actually alter the target regime's utility function and make the cost of non-compliance more costly than the cost of compliance.<sup>111</sup>

Moreover, although a solution to a dispute might not always be easily reachable, senders should be flexible and ready to adapt to the needs of the circumstances. Indeed, even though sanctions are a useful instrument to increase the target's cost of non-compliance, they are not the only tools that senders can employ to alter a target regime's strategic calculations. For instance, senders can also induce a behavioural change of the target regime by reducing its compliance costs – and not simply by increasing a target's resistance costs. In this regard, senders can offer economic or political incentives to a target to make compliance a more desirable outcome. Thus, they should keep in mind that other tools like diplomacy and

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<sup>111</sup> Theoretically, two other scenarios are feasible, namely that the sender or the target back down. However, this is not necessarily a rational outcome (in game theoretic terms), as a defeat after having imposed sanctions would make either side worse off.



positive incentives can generate trust and change the logic of the game (Nincic, 2006; Wallensteen, 2005).

Similarly, senders should refrain from making disproportional demands that jeopardise the stability of target regimes. Indeed, if the goals of sanctions entail a high sacrifice for targets, then they are highly likely to fail (Bapat et al., 2013; Drezner, 2003; Hufbauer et al., 2007; Smith, 1995). For this reason, senders should develop coherent and reasonably sized demands that a target can accept and work with. This can facilitate a win-win scenario where both sides obtain some benefit from an agreement. Only in this way is an agreement likely to last, as it will allow both sides to reduce domestic audience costs.

Third, my findings have also relevant implications for the employment of targeted sanctions. Although many scholars have advocated the use of smart sanctions to avoid the negative effects that comprehensive trade embargoes have on the population (Brzoska, 2003; Cortright and Lopez, 2002; Weiss, 1999), senders should be aware that limited measures like travel bans or assets freezes are highly unlikely to influence target regimes, and especially strong ones. In fact, these measures tend to be highly symbolic if implemented unilaterally outside the framework of the UN, and there is no conclusive empirical evidence that suggests that targeted sanctions are more effective than other types of sanctions (Blanchard and Ripsman, 2013; Drezner, 2011; Ripsman, 2002; Tostensen and Bull, 2002).

Moreover, the debate about the design of sanctions has become relevant again after the EU's growing use of economic sanctions targeting entire sectors of a target country's economy. Although these sectoral or "tier three" sanctions have – at least in theory – the potential to generate very high costs to targets and push them to reassess their policy preferences, they are less targeted than selective arms embargoes, asset freezes or visa bans. Indeed, they affect the normal functioning of vital sectors of a target's economy like the oil and energy sectors in

Iran, Syria, and Russia. Moreover, while sectoral sanctions certainly inflict more harm to a target regime, they also have spill-over effects that affect the innocent population. Finally, tier three sanctions also impose high costs to the sender's economy, disrupting trade relations and investment with target countries. Thus, senders will inevitably face a trade-off between reducing the fallout of sanctions to the population and exerting real pressure on the target regime.

In sum, sender states should understand that sanctions are not a silver bullet that will automatically solve complex foreign policy crises. Policy makers should never expect sanctions to achieve what they cannot, and should therefore never use economic statecraft as a stand-alone measure. As I have shown in this thesis, the likelihood that sanctions might be more or less effective in altering a target country's policy preferences depends largely on the target's willingness to alter its policy course, which in turn will be contingent on its domestic political considerations. In this regard, policy makers should be aware that a stick might sometimes be ill-suited to deal with a non-compliant target, and that other policy tools like a carrot and diplomacy might achieve better results.

Finally, senders should always keep channels of communication open with a target regime and engage with it at all times. Indeed, sanctioning a target but offering no alternative proposal to find a common solution is likely to push the latter towards increased isolation and prologue the dispute. Thus, sanctions should be used wisely and responsibly as a way to solve a problem, and not to make it worse. In this sense, senders should think carefully why sanctions should be employed in the first instance, plan ahead of the expected and unexpected effects that their imposition might trigger, and design sanctions regimes accordingly to meet the needs of the situation (Biersteker et al., 2012; Biersteker et al., 2013; De Vries, Portela and Guijarro-Usobiaga, 2014; Wallensteen et al., 2003). This advice can enhance the prospect

of success of sanctions, turning sanctions into a useful tool to shape and solve international disputes.

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