

Legitimacy, repressions and cooptation: the keys to strengthening autocracy under the sanctions

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Introduction

Sanctions - one of the most popular foreign policy tool. We can easily agree with this statement having ability to observe all the “breaking news” about Russian-Ukrainian sanction regime or Iranian sanctions relief during last year. Nevertheless, we can also find a great number of research papers proving the ineffectiveness of sanctions. For example, a group of scholars from Peterson Institute for International Economics have found out that sanctions are effective only in one third of time (Hufbauer, Elliott, Cyrus, Winston, 2013). UN-team provides even the less promising results – only 22 % of observations performed effectiveness (Biersteker, Eckert, Tourinho, 2012). Furthermore, some of the papers claim even the opposite effect of sanctions. Thus, in many cases when the target of sanctions was to change the authoritarian regime of recipient country to a democratic system, the autocracies strengthened. Our research focuses exactly on such results (when sanctions unable to reach their main target of changing the autocratic regime). This way, the main research question is the following: If democratic sanctions really have an opposite effect, under what conditions we can observe such outcomes and why? Searching for the answers, we will turn to the main theoretical background of autocracies and then try to test some of them on certain cases using fsQCA method. The first paragraph of current paper is devoted to monitoring some basic points on effectiveness of sanctions, the second - provides us with fragmental theoretical background about autocracy, third - observes our empirical strategy and defines data and cases for current research, forth - presents results of analysis and its interpretation, and the last - performs concluding remarks and observations for further research.

Basic remarks on effectiveness of sanctions

As far as we speak about effectiveness of sanctions, firstly we should make some notes on this issue.

1. The evaluation and qualification of effectiveness. Traditionally, effectiveness of sanctions is defined as a function of a policy outcome and some estimate of the sanctions contribution to that outcome. The vast majority of work considered effective sanctions as those, which match the goal even without considering the final contribution of sanctions. The disadvantages of such an approach are rather obvious - the difficulties of measurements of such contribution, inability to define the independent effect of sanctions, etc. However, most of the researches were conducted in such a manner. That's why we have decided to avoid using some sophisticated view on effectiveness and define it as conformity of outcome to sanctions' target.

2. The opinion about effectiveness of sanctions is rather popular. As we have already noted in the introduction, most of researches on effectiveness proves that sanctions is a rather ineffective foreign policy tool and according to the most optimistic evaluations, they are successful in 30 % of cases. Nevertheless, the number of cases increases with every year. That is why recent researches concentrates not only on effectiveness of sanctions, but also on their different effects (political, economic, etc.) - both positive and negative for country-sender.

3. One of the negative effects observed is a strengthening of authoritarian regimes. Such a conclusion was made as a result of the analysis of cases with different targets. Cases with democratic sanctions demonstrate rising of autocracy level too. The recent researches, however, are not so pessimistic. They do show that sanctions are not always effective and even counterproductive, but on average democratic sanctions are, in fact, associated with higher levels of democracy in the targeted state (von Soest, Wahman, 2014). They also find out that even in cases when targets were not matched, some democratic attributions were developed and supported. In such cases, autocrats are more likely to change their basic political institutions, which could increase civilian rights or improve elections.

Having remarks these basic points on the effectiveness of sanctions, we outline the limitations of our research: 1) we understand and define the effectiveness of sanctions as achieving its target; 2) we concentrate only on the specific negative effect of democratic sanctions (which were targeted on democracy) - strengthening of autocratic tendency in targeted country; 3) we are interested only in cases where such effects were observed.

Autocracy: theoretical background

The general logic of authoritarian regime survival, hopefully, might help us to determine the purposes and reasons of its strengthening under the sanctions. There are far too many literature finding out the formula of dictatorship success, out of which we tried to select and to adopt the most convincing points.

Economic performance is the most popular point of view on explanation of regime success. The widespread opinion concludes that good economic outcomes and stable GDP guarantee regime's stability. Otherwise, negative economic shock could trigger change of authoritarian regime and even lead to democratization. We can find such conclusions in a set of researches on comparative political economy (see, for example: Geddes B., 1999; Bueno de Mesquita B. and Smith A., 2010).

The most popular approach in explanation of autocrat's survival connects with autocrat's strategy. Summarizing the literature on this matter, we can define three main strategies: legitimacy, cooptation and repressions. We review briefly some of the most interesting papers.

Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski present a wide list of papers in political regime study. We concentrate on their research puzzled by existence of democratic institutions even in purely autocracies. They explain such observations by developing the "model in which dictators may need cooperation to generate rents and may face a threat of rebellion" (Gandhi, Przeworski, 2006). According to this motivation, two main instruments of dictator's behavior are making policy concessions and sharing rents. The combination of such intensions causes creation of elections, parties, legislatures. Authors also have created some measurements for indication both cooptation strategies. They use the following factors (variables) to determine the autocracy's stability:

- resources could maintain dictator's power by sharing rents;
- type of ruler - military, civilian or monarch - defines the required level of cooperation;
- ethnical fractionalization indicates policy polarization;
- number of parties inherited by the particular dictator either from the previous democratic regime or his immediate predecessor reflects strength of opposition and difficulties for cooperation;
- the level of repressions of opposition movements defines dictatorship stability.

For Marianne Kneuer legitimacy is one of the main attributes securing stability and maintaining power of authoritarian rulers (Kneuer, 2011). Her argumentation is based on Fritz Scharpf's concept of legitimacy, which differentiates three kinds of legitimacy: input legitimacy, output legitimacy and collective identity. Input legitimacy is often connected with true democratic procedures of elections and can hardly be associated with autocracy. But the last two instruments could be easily applied to autocracy. Output legitimacy could be applied through the mechanism of defining the "outside danger" or enemy, for example, during war or military conflict. The last instrument of "collective identity" is working through national or religious identification of autocracy's population.

Repression is often thought to be the main instrument autocrats tend to use to retain power (Davenport, 2007; Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2010). There are two types of repressions: physical - the violation of physical integrity (with killings, torture and other brutal practices), and civil rights violations (restrictions on individuals' civil rights, aimed at limiting the coordination and mobilization capacity of groups and individuals).

Johannes Gerschewski proposes a conjunctural theory for the stability (and change) of autocratic regimes, that is based on legitimation, repression and co-optation - three interdependent "pillars", as he named them himself (Gerschewski J., 2010). It is argued that these three pillars provide an autocracy with vital functions to maintain stability over time and there is no single condition for autocratic survival, but only a combination of "pillars". Gerschewski defines cooptation through formal and informal institutions, legitimacy through economic social performance, and repressions through the level of inside conflicts.

Summarizing theory implications given above we find useful to provide our research with two theoretical aspects. The first one is about defining the type of autocrat leader as civilian, monarch and military. The second assumes that we determine basic factors of autocracy's (in-)stability and group them on clusters depending on dictator's strategy-legitimacy, cooptation and repressions.

Empirical strategy

Sanctions are always unique and anecdotal. This feature makes research on sanctions rather difficult for generalization or formulate some universal rules for achieving its goals.

It always needs a thorough case study with a deep analysis. Most of the research on sanctions effectiveness usually use large-N data quantitative analysis for aggregation information on more than 200 sanctioned episodes known from the beginning of 20th century. Our purpose is more concrete and we are interested in particular cases with limited outcomes. That's why we decided to use Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) for our research. QCA was constructed by Ragin C. as a mean of analysing the causal contribution of different conditions to an outcome of interest. QCA defines different configurations of conditions for each case of an observed outcome. The final purpose – to identify the simplest set of conditions that can take into account all the observed outcomes (or their absence). The method in its easiest configuration is based on Boolean algebra, where conditions and outcomes express in “0” and “1” signs. We should underline that the results obtained through formalized QCA analyses do not "prove" causal relations, they just. They reveal patterns of associations across sets of cases or observations, thereby providing support for the existence of such causal relations.

One of the advantages of such method is a possibility to work with a small number of cases (but no less than 10).

We choose QCA for the current research due to its advantages for qualitative researches. Nicolas Legewie in his handbook on QCA method named some of them (Legewie, 2013). The first is the possibility of systematic analysing of complex causality and logical relations between conditions and an outcome. Second, the approach is useful for researchers working with medium-N data sets (optimally - from 15 to 50 sets/cases). Third, it makes research more transparent and helps to find and resolve some problem aspects of comparison. The last - it's allows to identify patterns in the data that help to develop theory and provide it with detailed explanations of social phenomena. Nevertheless, such an “easy” approach requires strong connection with theory for all conditions and careful coding of quantitative data to the dichotomy expression with its reasonable argumentation.

Our empirical strategy consist of several steps. First - we should choose relevant cases for detailed observation. The main requirement for case - they should fit with our main condition - and the number of cases should be sufficient for using QCA. The second step - we should determine the outcome and variables (or conditions) for our further operations.

Then we should find relevant data source for every variable and an outcome. All data will be recoded into binary view for each indicator. On the third step, we aggregate all the data in truth table, and at the last step, we should find necessary conditions and other linkages sufficient for the outcome, which we interested.

Cases

According to our research question, we pointed out some cases, which proved the thesis about strengthened of authoritarian regimes under democratic sanctions. We have observed the cases with sanctions were targeted on democracy or regime changing and have chosen next countries during the particular sanctioning period: Algeria (1992-1994), Fiji (1987-2001) and (2006-2014), Gambia (1994-1998), Guinea (2005-2010), Guinea Bissau (2003-2004), Haiti (1991-1994), Nigeria (1993-1998), Pakistan (1991-2000), Sudan (1989-2014), Syria (2011-2013), Turkey (1981-1986), Zambia (1996-1998). There are some ongoing sanctions – for Fiji and Sudan, and for our purposes, we have marked here the end of sanctioned period as 2014 year. We should note here that we have also found a significant number of cases where democratic sanctions were extremely effective. We included few of them in our data set: Argentina (1976-1983), Indonesia (1999-2002), Romania (1990-1993).

Table 1. Cases for QCA: basic information

No	Target country	Years	Sender	Target
1.	Algeria	1992-1994	European Union	Democracy
2.	Argentina	1977-1983	United States	Human rights, democracy
3.	Fiji	2006-2014	Australia, New Zealand, European Union, United States	Coup, democracy
4.	Fiji	1987-2001	India	Restore democracy, modify constitution
5.	Gambia	1994-1998	United States	Democracy
6.	Guinea	2005-2010	European Union	Democracy, elections
7.	Guinea Bissau	2003-2004	United States	Coup, democracy
8.	Haiti	1991-1994	United Nations	Democracy
9.	Indonesia	1999-2002	United States	Human rights, democracy, Independence for East Timor
10.	Nigeria	1993-1998	United States	Human rights, democracy, narcotics
11.	Pakistan	1991-2000	United States	Coup, democracy
12.	Romania	1990-1993	United States	Democracy, elections
13.	Sudan	1989-2014	United States United Nations	Human rights, democracy

14.	Syria	2011-2013	United States, European Union	Human rights, democracy
15.	Turkey	1981-1986	European Community	Restore democracy
16.	Zambia	1996-1998	United States	Human rights, constitutional reform

Data

The main object of our research is the increasing authoritarian tendency for country under sanctions. According to this object and to the research hypothesis we ought to observe cases where the outcome of sanctions was autocracy strengthening. Defining our research outcome as *TARGET*, we use two indexes of democracy in the current research – Polity IV and Freedom in the World. We calculate separately for each of them the difference between points, on which country increase the level of autocracy (or fall down in index) and points of increasing the level of democracy (rise up in index). If the difference was positive at least in one of indexes, we code *TARGET* as “1”, and if not – as “0”. The hypothesis tested here concern several variables (or conditions). The first two, GDP growth (*GROWTH*) and export growth (*EXPORT*). Basic data for its calculation has been taken from World Bank database. For the first one we find average annual percentage growth rate of GDP at market prices based on constant local currency during the sanctions period. We code *GROWTH* as “0” if result was negative (below zero) and as “1” if it was above. The second condition has been calculated as an average percent change of exports of goods and services representing the value of all goods and other market services provided to the rest of the world during the sanctions period. We code *EXPORT* as “0” if result was negative (below zero) and as “1” if it was above. The next variable is “military conflicts during the sanctions” (*WAR*). We use The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) for the data. We code *WAR* as “1” if the country was marked in data set with “war & minor conflict” at least in one year during the sanctions. Otherwise – “0”. We have ignored here the information about non-state conflicts and one-state war. Another variable – the degree of repression in the country (*REPRESS*). Using the Political Terror Scale (PTS), we find average PTS Index during the sanctions’ period. We code *REPRESS* as “1” if average PTS index was more than 3.5 points (“hard terror” in terms of PTS), and “0” means “soft terror”, when average index was less than 3.5 points. The next two variables – ethnic fractionalization (*ETHNIC*) and religious fractionalization (*RELIG*) based on the data of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) data source - The World Factbook. We code

ETHNIC or *RELIG* as “0” if there is a dominant majority (more than 50 % of population) ethnical or religious group in the country, and code as “1” if every group in the country consists of less than 50% of population. Additional variable here is *MUSLIM*, which has been marked as “1” if the majority religious group is Muslim, and “0” if not. We use Authoritarian Regimes Data Set (ARDS) by Axel Hadenius, Jan Teorell, & Michael Wahman for the next three variables. The type of regime before sanctions *PREVREG* has been coded by “0” if there was a democratic regime, and as “1” for different types of authoritarian regime (military, one-party, multiparty or other). We also use the “type of leader” according to Geddes classification. There are no cases where we have a monarch leader, so we use only military/civilian types. We use *MILITARY* variable, where “1” indicates military leader, and “0” – civilian. We have coded as “1” all cases where we have both military and civilian leaders during the sanctions. The last variable has been transferred from ARDS – multiparty indicator (*MPARTY*). We code it as “1”, if there were multiparty system in the country during sanctions, and “0” if not. One more variable contains information about the history of country’s independence (*INDEP*). If country became independent earlier then the end of The World War II, we code it as “1”, if after – “0”. We use CIA Factbook again for these data. One more variable – leader’s turnover (*TURNOVER*) based on World Political Leaders dataset managed by Barcelona Centre for International Affairs. We have given it “1” if leader changed during the sanctions, and “0” if not. In addition, we include operational variable *MULTISAN* for marking the multilateral sanctions. According to the theoretical background, we group these variables associated with autocrat’s strategies. Legitimacy factors includes WAR, MUSLIM, ~ETHNIC and ~RELIG, cooptation: GROWTH, EXPORT, MPARTY, and repression strategy includes REPRESS.

The table # 2 – appendix # 1 contains information about variables and table # 3 – appendix # 2 contains starting data for our research.

Results

On the ground of the aggregated dataset, we have analysed through fsQCA software sixteen cases selected earlier. Using standard QCA operations we have got results for identifying conditions, which are necessary for strengthened of autocracy, some of them aggregated in Appendix # 3 and visualized at Appendix # 4.

We indicate as sufficient and relevant conditions with consistency more than 0,8 and coverage more than 0,5 points.

1. First of all, we identify separate conditions with high indicators of consistency (about 0,8) and coverage: (about 0,7) MUSLIM, GROWTH, ~ INDEP, REPRESS and MILITARY.

2. Farther we note double conditions, which attribute the highest level of consistency of outcome: MUSLIM+MILITARY, MILITARY+ ~INDEP, MILITARY+GROWTH, MILITARY+REPRESS, MILITARY+ ~ETHNIC.

It seems to be an evidence, that the military regime with applying of at least one dictatorship strategy could result in increasing of autocracy level.

Other dualistic tendencies connected with WAR+MILITARY, WAR+GROWTH, WAR+EXPORT guarantee “1” consistency. We can conclude that war combined with such variables is one of the major conditions for autocratic stability.

GROWTH +WAR, GROWTH+REPRESS, GROWTH +MILITARY provides high level of consistency and GROWTH +MUSLIM provides consistency on 0,8 and coverage more than 0,85. Such a stable results correspond with theories about extremely high importance of positive economic performance in stability of political regime. By the way, the major of cases with positive (for our purposes) outcome demonstrate GDP growth.

3. Composing more complex conditions, according to the scheme of combination of the main authoritarian strategies Legitimacy+Cooptation+Repression (mixing variables from particular strategic group), we constantly get high consistency and coverage level. It is not surprising in all combinations because most of them contain pairs of variables sufficient for the highest result. Anyway, our results prove the thesis mentioned before, posing the success of a combination of these different autocrat strategies in achieving autocracy stability.

Conclusion

Applying QCA we have tried to reveal some conditions and factors which provide the stable level of autocracy under the sanctions and (perhaps) even extremely increase it. Our results complement existing theories on autocratic survival and prove that such factors as good economic outcomes and combination of different autocratic strategies provide

strengthening of autocracy. However, identifying indicators of such strategies was a little different from commonly used. In addition, we find out that military regime combined with at least one strategic tool would target the same result.

However, our results, limited with purposes and size of our research, are in need of the additional approval and testing because of the use of the specific strategy of choosing the variables. The next research will aim to test these results with: 1) other group of cases: we can observe not only democratic targeted sanctions, but all another; 2) another method of analysis.

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Appendix # 1. Table # 2. Variables

Variable (condition)	Meaning	Group of variables	Data source	URL
TARGET	autocracy strengthening – rising of autocracy level (yes-1, no-0)	OUTCOME	Polity IV Freedom in the World	http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm http://www.freedomhouse.org/
GROWTH	GDP growth (yes-1, no-0)	COOPTATION	The World Bank	http://data.worldbank.org/
EXPORT	export growth (yes-1, no-0)	COOPTATION	The World Bank	http://data.worldbank.org/
WAR	war & minor conflicts (yes-1, no-0)	LEGITIMACY	The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)	http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpd/atabase/search.php
REPRES	level of PTS Index of repression (hard repressions – 1, soft-0)	REPRESSIONS	The Political Terror Scale (PTS)	http://www.politicalterrorcale.org/
ETHNIC	ethnic fractionalization (yes-1, no-0)	LEGITIMACY	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) data source - The World Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/Library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2075.html
RELIG	religious fractionalization (yes-1, no-0)	LEGITIMACY		
MUSLIM	majority religious group is Muslim (yes-1, no-0)	LEGITIMACY		
INDEP	year of independence (1 – before World War II, 0- after)	-		
TURNOVER	leader's turnover during the sanctions (yes-1, no-0)	-	World Political Leaders Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB)	http://zarate.eu/countries.htm
PREVREG	the type of regime before sanctions (1- autocracy, 0- democracy)	-	Authoritarian Regimes Data Set (ARDS) by Axel Hadenius, Jan Teorell, & Michael Wahman	https://sites.google.com/site/authoritarianregimedataset/home/data
MPARTY	multiparty indicator (1- multiparty, 0- no party, one party, etc.)	COOPTATION		
MILITARY	type of leader" according to Geddes classification (military -1 or civilian -0)	-		

Appendix # 2. Table # 3. Dataset

COUNTRY	YEARS	TARGET	WAR	ETHNIC	RELIG	EXPORT	GROWTH	REPRESS	MUSLIM	MULTISAN	MILITARY	MPARTY	INDEP	PREVREG	TURNOVER
Algeria	1992-1994	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Argentina	1977-1983	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Fiji	2006-2014	1	0	1	1		1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Fiji	1987-2001	1	0	1	1		1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
Gambia	1994-1998	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Guinea Bissau	2003-2004	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Guinea	2005-2010	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Haiti	1991-1994	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
Indonesia	1999-2002	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Nigeria	1993-1998	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Pakistan	1991-2000	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Romania	1990-1993	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Sudan	1989-2014	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Syria	2011-2013	1	1	0	0			1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Turkey	1981-1986	1	1	0	0		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Zambia	1996-1998	1	0	1	0		1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Appendix # 3. Selected results

Analysis of Necessary Conditions

Outcome variable: target

Conditions tested:

	Consistency	Coverage
military+war	1.000000	0.777778
military+growth	1.000000	0.777778
military+prevreg	0.857143	0.666667
military+repress	1.000000	0.777778
military+muslim	1.000000	0.777778
military+~ethnic	0.857143	0.750000
military+~indep	1.000000	0.777778
war+growth	1.000000	0.777778
war+repress	0.857143	0.750000
war+military	1.000000	0.777778
war+export	1.000000	0.700000
growth+war	1.000000	0.777778
growth+repress	1.000000	0.875000
growth+military	1.000000	0.777778
growth+muslim	0.857143	0.857143
war	0.714286	0.714286
growth	0.714286	0.833333
military	0.857143	0.857143
muslim	0.857143	0.857143
~indep	0.857143	0.857143
growth+muslim+repress	1.000000	0.875000
war+muslim+repress	1.000000	0.777778
growth+mparty+repress	1.000000	0.777778
war+military+muslim	1.000000	0.777778
war+military+mparty	1.000000	0.700000
war+muslim	0.769231	0.833333
~military+growth+mparty	0.833333	0.833333
~military+muslim+war	0.833333	0.769231

Appendix # 4. Results scheme

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & & & \text{GROWTH} & & \\
 & & & & \sim\text{INDEP} & & \\
 \text{MILITARY} & + & & \text{MUSLIM} & = & & \text{TARGET} \\
 & & & \text{REPRESS} & & & \\
 & & & \sim\text{ETHNIC} & & &
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & & & \text{MILITARY} & & \\
 \text{WAR} & + & & \text{GROWTH} & = & & \text{TARGET} \\
 & & & \text{EXPORT} & & &
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & & & \text{WAR} & & \\
 \text{GROWTH} & + & & \text{REPRESS} & = & & \text{TARGET} \\
 & & & \text{MILITARY} & & &
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \text{COOPTATION} & & \text{LEGITIMACY} & & \text{REPRESSIONS} & & \\
 \text{GROWTH} & & \text{WAR} & & & & \\
 \text{or} & & \text{or} & & & & \\
 \text{EXPORT} & + & \text{MUSLIM} & + & \text{REPRESS} & = & \text{TARGET} \\
 \text{or} & & \text{or} & & & & \\
 \text{MPARTY} & & \sim\text{ETHNIC}/\sim\text{RELIG} & & & &
 \end{array}$$