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**Claims to Legitimacy Matter:  
Why Sanctions Fail to Instigate Democratization in  
Authoritarian Regimes**

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## Abstract

International sanctions have been one of the most commonly used tools of Western foreign policy in the post-Cold War era to instigate democratization globally. However, despite long-term external pressure through sanctions imposed by the European Union, the United States and/or the United Nations, nondemocratic rule in cases such as Belarus, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea and Syria has proven to be extremely persistent. In this paper, we analyze a new global dataset on sanctions from 1990 to 2011 and assess which international and domestic factors account for the persistence of nondemocratic rule in targeted regimes. The results of a fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) of 120 episodes of sanctions provide new insights for the research on both sanctions and authoritarian regimes. Most significantly, sanctions strengthen nondemocratic rule if the regime manages to incorporate their existence into its legitimation strategy. Such a “rally-round-the-flag” effect occurs most often in cases where comprehensive sanctions targeting the entire population are imposed on regimes that enjoy strong claims to legitimacy and have only limited linkages to the sanction sender.

Keywords: sanctions, claims to legitimacy, authoritarian regimes, democratization

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# Claims to Legitimacy Matter: Why Sanctions Fail to Instigate Democratization in Authoritarian Regimes

Julia Grauvogel and Christian von Soest

## Article Outline

- 1 Introduction: Sanctions and the Persistence of Authoritarian Rule
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- 3 Method and Data
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- 5 Conclusion: Claims to Legitimacy as a Way to Differentiate between Authoritarian Regimes

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## 1 Introduction: Sanctions and the Persistence of Authoritarian Rule

International sanctions are one of the most commonly used tools of Western foreign policy in the post-Cold War era to instigate democratization globally (Cortright and Lopez 2000).<sup>1</sup> However, despite long-term external pressure through sanctions being imposed on them, countries like Belarus, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea and Syria have proven to be extremely persistent in their sustenance of authoritarian rule. What, then, accounts for this persistence?

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1 We thank André Bank, Matthias Basedau, Michael Brzoska, Clara Portela, Thomas Richter, Anna Sunik, Michael Wahman, the participants of the workshop “Autocratic Regimes and the Effects of International Sanctions” at the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies in June 2012 and the 2013 ECPR Joint Sessions workshop “International Dimensions of Authoritarian Rule” – and especially Jørgen Møller – for their invaluable comments. We are also grateful to Sinja Hantscher for her excellent research assistance.

Sanction scholars have found that the domestic characteristics of the targeted regimes mediate the effect of external sanctions (Allen 2005; Lektzian and Souva 2007). At the same time, the research on authoritarian regimes increasingly acknowledges that specific and diffuse international forms of pressure influence the fate of authoritarian rulers (such as Levitsky and Way 2010). However, despite notable exceptions (Escribà-Folch 2012; Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010), the fields of sanctions and autocracy research have not yet been brought together. By systematically integrating international and domestic factors, we provide new insights into how these factors' interaction determines the effects of sanctions on authoritarian rule in the targeted regimes. In those few instances where scholars have analyzed the interplay of sanctions and domestic factors they have focused on regime type and repression (Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010). Building on this research, we include the factor of claims to legitimacy, one that – despite being identified as crucial for authoritarian persistence (Gerschewski 2013; Kailitz 2013) – has been largely neglected in comparative sanctions research thus far.

We utilize a fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) (Ragin 2008; Schneider and Wagemann 2012) to analyze the persistence of authoritarian rule in regimes under sanctions. The method is particularly suitable for identifying different causal pathways which lead to the same outcome. This is of key relevance, as prior sanctions research suggests that it is the specific interplay of multiple conditions at both the domestic and the international level – rather than the presence or absence of a certain variable – that explains the varying effects of sanctions on autocracies (Allen 2005).

The contribution of this study is two-fold: First, it introduces new data on both economic and noneconomic sanctions issued by the European Union, United Nations and United States, thereby going beyond the commonly used Hufbauer et al. (2007) dataset with its exclusive focus on economic sanctions. Second and more importantly, this paper improves our knowledge of the specific conditions under which autocratic rule persists in spite of sanctions.

The paper proceeds in four steps: We first systematically integrate the relevant external and internal factors so as to analyze the persistence of authoritarian rule in regimes under sanctions and then, in the second section, sketch out the resulting assumptions to be tested. In the third section, we introduce fsQCA as the method of analysis and outline the operationalization of the outcome as well as of the conditions. The discussion of our results in the fourth section underscores the role of legitimation strategies in explaining the persistence of authoritarian regimes under sanctions. Following the discussion of the robustness checks, we conclude and recommend avenues for further research in the final section.

## **2 Accounting for the Persistence of Authoritarian Rule**

The research on sanctions and authoritarian regimes discusses the two key international and two key domestic conditions that – jointly with the type of sanctions – may explain the per-

sistence of authoritarian rule in regimes under sanctions. In our analysis, we focus on sanctions that are not only threatened but also those that are implemented. Despite contrasting theoretical expectations about the effectiveness of threatened sanctions (Drezner 2003; Morgan et al. 2009; Whang et al. 2013), authoritarian regimes rarely concede to sanction threats. Only 10 percent of sanctions related to democracy or human rights issues resulted in a concession by the target country already at the threat stage (von Soest and Wahman 2013). Authoritarian rulers “resist political openings for as long as possible and seek to manage the process of transition only after it has been forced on them” (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 83).

## 2.1 Outcome: Persistence of Authoritarian Rule

Our outcome is the persistence of authoritarian rule in nondemocratic regimes under sanctions; in other words, why sanctions fail to instigate democratization. We understand democratization – that is, the move towards democracy – as a continuum rather than as binary. In accordance with this view, our dependent variable measures changes in the level of democracy/autocracy in authoritarian regimes using the most recent version of the Hadenius, Teorell and Wahman dataset (2012). The alternative strategy of only measuring the actual transition to liberal democracy would seriously truncate the dependent variable, and hence entail the risk of missing the gradual democratic improvements that oftentimes occur in autocratic contexts (Elkins 2000; Verkuilen and Munck 2002).

## 2.2 International Factors

### 2.2.1 *Sanction Comprehensiveness*

According to traditional “punishment theory” (Lektzian and Souva 2007: 850), the economic harm caused by sanctions directly translates into domestic political pressure that forces rulers to comply with external demands. Scholars have indeed shown that sanctions are more likely to succeed if they are more economically costly to the target state (Doxey 1980; Morgan et al. 2009) and have hypothesized that a certain level of deprivation induces citizens to challenge the current regime (Kerr and Gaisford 1994). However, this understanding has been questioned from a number of different perspectives. Public choice scholars have found that the targeting of specific groups – rather than the overall economic costs – accounts for the success of sanctions (Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1992; van Bergeijk 1994). Stressing the discursive reactions to sanctions, others have argued that comprehensive sanctions create a siege mentality and thereby trigger what is termed a “rally-round-the-flag effect” (Allen 2005; Galtung 1967).

Consequently, sanction senders have increasingly applied so-called “targeted” or “smart” sanctions (Drezner 2011), which aim at singling out specific actors and directing tailored instruments at them (Major and McGann 2005). This requires knowledge about the strategically relevant actors and groups – or “winning coalitions” – as identified in the re-

search on authoritarian regimes (Boix and Svolik 2010; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). Generally, Brooks (2002) states that comprehensive sanctions are more effective when issued against democracies, while targeted sanctions work better against authoritarian regimes (see also Lektzian and Souva 2007). Moreover, comprehensive sanctions may ultimately strengthen authoritarian rulers instead of undermining them – because they can use this indiscriminate attack from an external “threat” to rally domestic support (on Iran, for example, see Amuzegar 1997; on Cuba, Schreiber 1973). Following these findings, we propose that comprehensive sanctions contribute to the persistence of authoritarian rule rather than to the intended instigation of democratization. Yet, whether the ruling elite can discursively exploit comprehensive sanctions depends on the latter’s interaction with other conditions, and especially the regime’s claims to legitimacy.

### 2.2.2 *Density of Ties and Vulnerability*

Earlier studies have described the process of democratization as being a predominantly domestic affair (O’Donnell et al. 1986: 5). Only more recently have scholars of democratization emphasized its international dimension and discussed different ways of exerting influence from the outside (Brinks and Coppedge 2006; Gleditsch and Ward 2006; for an early account, see Whitehead 1996). At the same time, sanction research has found that the international relations of targeted regimes mediate the effect of sanctions (Early 2011; Hufbauer et al. 2007; McLean and Whang 2010). This relationship between the initiator of sanctions and the targeted regime is characterized by two closely intertwined elements, namely the linkage between the entity imposing sanctions (“sender”) and the authoritarian regime (“target”) receiving them and the target’s vulnerability to external pressure.

Scholars dealing with the international dimension of authoritarianism and democratization have recurrently used the concept of “leverage” to assess the direct influence that a (Western) power has over the targeted regime (Levitsky and Way 2010). Likewise, sanctions research has found that economically and politically less healthy targets are more likely yield to sanctions (Drury 1998; Jing et al. 2003). Such vulnerability can be assuaged by third-party assistance, also referred to as “sanctions busting” (Early 2011) or “black knight” activity (Hufbauer et al. 2007: 8). For our concept of vulnerability, we hence use a combined measure of any target-specific sensitivity and third-party assistance potentially reducing the vulnerability of targets.

Sanction research has also revealed that the existence of amicable political and economic relations between states that impose sanctions and the targets of them increase the overall effectiveness of coercive measures (Allen 2005; Jing et al. 2003; for the opposite finding, see Nooruddin 2002). Likewise, Levitsky and Way (2010) demonstrate that linkages – understood as the density of ties and cross-border flows between two parties – increase the prospects of democratization. They have developed a theoretical framework to analyze how linkage and leverage condition the impact of external pressure on authoritarian regimes, and

furthermore suggest that international democratization pressure is most pronounced when both linkage and leverage are high (ibid.: 5).<sup>2</sup> Most significantly, high linkage can lead to democratization even in the absence of leverage, while in the reverse case external democratization pressure will only be partially effective (ibid.: 351).

In a nutshell, both weak sender–target ties and a lack of target vulnerability may negatively affect the ability of sanctions to induce democratization. Yet, research on democratization on the one hand and on sanctions on the other has actually supported contradicting assumptions. If Levitsky and Way (2010) are right, authoritarian rule can only persist in contexts with a low density of ties – while a low level of vulnerability alone would not prevent democratization from unfolding. If, however, sanctions researchers are correct, both weak sender–target ties and low vulnerability contribute to the persistence of authoritarian rule.

### 2.2.3 *Domestic Factors: Claims to Legitimacy and Repression*

In his seminal work, Wintrobe (1998) discusses how dictators balance two “input factors” in order to secure their rule – namely “loyalty” and “repression.” It is a well-established finding that a regime’s claim to legitimacy is important for explaining its means of rule and, ultimately, its persistence (Brady 2009; Easton 1965; Wintrobe 1998), because relying on sheer force alone is too costly as a way to maintain autocratic stability in the long term. Geddes (1999: 125) stresses that “even very coercive regimes cannot survive without some support.” It is crucial to distinguish legitimation – as the strategy of seeking legitimacy – from legitimacy itself. Researchers’ hitherto predominant focus on legitimacy has been criticized for reducing the more complex notion of legitimation to only empirically verifiable government acceptance among its citizens (Schaar 1989: 20–21).

Building on this, we focus on the different foundations on which various autocracies claim legitimacy. These different claims make authoritarian regimes more or less susceptible to internal and external pressures (Burnell 2006: 545). Most fundamentally, the sources of legitimation inherently influence structures of domination and dissent (Weber 1978). The grounds on which claims to legitimacy rely also set the limits within which actors can voice dissent (Alagappa 1995: 4; Thompson 2001). Moreover, authoritarian regimes may become self-entrapped in a certain legitimation strategy (Gerschewski 2013: 19). Hence, authoritarian regimes’ claims to legitimacy are no “cheap talk” but actually have fundamental political repercussions.

Beyond this ontological argument for taking the basis on which legitimacy is claimed more seriously, it is extremely difficult to assess a regime’s legitimacy – understood as the extent to which the population accepts the regime’s legitimation strategies in authoritarian contexts (Gerschewski 2013: 20–21; Gilley 2006) – not least because citizens have strong incentives for “preference falsification” in surveys and elections (Kuran 1995). Furthermore, even though it was difficult to distinguish claims to legitimacy from our outcome – that is,

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2 We use slightly different conceptualizations to these two authors in our paper, choosing instead the terms “density of ties” and “vulnerability.”



the persistence of authoritarian rule – we only found a low correlation of 0.39 between the factors, meaning that legitimacy claims do not overlap with the outcome.<sup>3</sup>

In the research on sanctions, differences between targeted regimes' claims to legitimacy are only discussed, if at all, on a conceptual or anecdotal basis. Galtung (1967: 393) and others (Lindsay 1986) highlight that sanctions are regularly used as symbols in the struggle for legitimation. This signaling function of sanctions has received attention both theoretically (Crawford and Klotz 1999; Giumelli 2011) and in country case studies (on Zimbabwe, see Grebe 2010; on South Africa, see Klotz 1995; on Myanmar, see Pedersen 2008). Cases such as those of Cuba, Iran and Zimbabwe suggest that sanctions may actually help to revive certain claims to legitimacy, rooted in the regime's anti-Western revolutionary legacy, but more comparative analyses of whether this is true or not remain to be done.

Autocratic regimes tend to compensate for their lack of persuasion or performance-based legitimacy through an overdeveloped security apparatus (Merkel 2010: 59–62), and, in turn, repression (Davenport 2007; Wintrobe 1998) – especially when they are faced with external pressure. Previous research has demonstrated that sanctions negatively affect the level of repression and human rights situation (Peksen 2009; Wood 2008) in targeted regimes, but it has nonetheless not used repression as an intervening variable that mediates the effect of sanctions on the persistence of authoritarian rule.

We distinguish between two different forms of repression. Similar to Levitsky and Way's (2010: 57) conceptualization, we understand hard repression as "high-visibility acts" such as violent police actions, detentions, torture or extrajudicial killings. In contrast, soft repression is less visible and includes surveillance, low-profile physical harassment or localized attacks, denial of employment or public services and the use of regulatory apparatuses. While the "law of coercive responsiveness" – in other words the fact that regimes increase repression when threatened – is by now well-established (Davenport 2007: 7), less is known about the success of such strategies. In the short term, repression might ensure the endurance of authoritarian rule by suppressing and deterring challenges to the regime; particularly severe repression, however, may sow the seeds of the authoritarian regime's own eventual instability (Davenport 2007; Wintrobe 1998), whereas soft repression might be more effective in avoiding this.

First, we expect that a regime's claim to legitimacy interacts with the degree of repression, so a combination of either soft repression and a strong claim to legitimacy or a weak claim to legitimacy and hard repression would explain the persistence of authoritarian rule in spite of the external pressure coming from sanctions. Second, we expect that authoritarian rule persists despite sanctions when strong claims to legitimacy combine with:

- a) a low density of ties between the sanction sender and the target or
- b) with comprehensive sanctions. This is because both reinforce the ability of the regime to rally support in the face of a common enemy (Galtung 1967; Lindsay 1986: 162).

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3 The finding is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

### 3 Method and Data

We use a set-theoretical approach, more precisely an fsQCA, to analyze how the outlined conditions affect the persistence of authoritarian rule. The sample consists of 120 episodes of sanctions enacted against authoritarian regimes over the twenty-year period of 1990 to 2010 (see Appendix A1). We apply here a broad understanding of authoritarian regimes, taken to mean all those that exhibit defects with regard to political participation, competition and/or the rule of law (Linz 2000; Merkel 2010). In doing so, we follow Hadenius and Teorell's (2012) dataset, which is based on a combined Freedom House and Polity IV measure. According to their classification, a country is regarded as authoritarian or nondemocratic in a certain year if its score is lower than 7.5 on their 10-point democracy index.

QCA – and especially its fuzzy set variant – is based on the idea that causal relations are better understood in terms of set-theoretic relations than of correlations (Grofman and Schneider 2009; Ragin 2000, 2008). Hence, fsQCA is well-suited to address the gaps in the research on sanctions and the promotion of democracy from outside. First, fsQCA allows for the study of complex causal relations and multiple interactions, including the identification of INUS<sup>4</sup> conditions – while linear regression cannot go beyond two- or three-way interactions, which are, moreover, also difficult to interpret (Fiss et al. 2013). Current research on sanctions indeed suggests that the comprehensiveness of sanctions not only has a specific effect depending on the regime type targeted, but that these institutional features also interact with additional domestic characteristics such as the level of repression carried out or the regime's claim to legitimacy (on regime type and repression, see Escribà-Folch 2012; on legitimacy discourses and sanctions in the case of South Africa, see Klotz 1996).

Second, fsQCA helps us to understand multilevel phenomena by allowing for the possibility that conditions on one level, for instance the domestic one, may have a unique effect depending on their interplay with conditions at another level, such as the international one; these factors “can only be truly understood in relation to each other” (Lacey and Fiss 2009: 25). For instance, the case of Iran suggests that rally-round-the-flag effects are more likely to occur when sanctions are comprehensive and imposed on targets that are politically and culturally distant from the sender, and where the recipient is characterized by having strong claims to legitimacy (Amuzegar 1997: 34–37); the rigorous comparative testing of these case-specific findings remains, however, to be done.

Third, fsQCA allows equifinality to be assessed, meaning investigating whether different possible configurations might lead to the outcome observed (Bennett and Elman 2006). In contrast, sanctions research has often focused on the identification of a single condition; a strategy that, according to Allen (2005: 135), has tended to “blind researchers and policymak-

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4 Conditions are INUS if they form an “insufficient but necessary part of a combination that is itself unnecessary but sufficient for explaining the outcome” (Mackie 1965: 246; Meyer et al. 1993: 1178).

ers to the possibility that there can be substitutable causal processes at work,” something which we unveil in our analysis.

Except for the calibration of repression, which directly followed the Political Terror Scale (PTS), we combined existing datasets and case-specific information for the calibration of the conditions. Hence, we calibrate the outcome and the conditions according to qualitative criteria rather than using the direct or indirect method of calibration that is included in the fsQCA 2.5 software package for determining membership scores (see Appendix A5).<sup>5</sup> The calibration was done according to the following rules:

**Persistence of authoritarian rule:** The analyzed sample consists of all authoritarian regimes that were targeted by EU, UN and US sanctions between 1990 and 2010. Each regime with stagnating or deteriorating political and civil rights as well as in terms of the rule of law is assigned the value “zero,” whereas “full” democratization towards a liberal democracy is calibrated as “one.” For further differentiation, changes in the level of democracy/autocracy are calibrated accordingly. These are assessed on the basis of the Hadenius, Teorell and Wahman dataset (2012), which ranges from 0 (lowest possible level) to 10 (highest possible level) using the year before the imposition of sanctions as the baseline.<sup>6</sup> These values are compared to the average values in the time period of sanctions and the following five years (if sanctions are ongoing, 2012 is taken as the endpoint). Including the five-year period after the end of sanctions represents a conservative measure, as it sets a high threshold for the outcome (lack of democratization) and avoids the classification of cases as “persistent” in which sanctions exerted a democratization effect with a time lag. An increase of 0.6 marks the cutoff point between the two clusters of targeted authoritarian regimes – those which showed only minimal increases, remained stagnated or showed a decreasing tendency towards democratization were clearly below this threshold, while the other grouping was distinctively above it.

**Sanction comprehensiveness:** The calibration distinguishes between comprehensive and targeted sanctions. Targeted sanctions comprise those measures that focus on a specific group of people or a specific economic sector, including all blacklist-based sanctions (visa bans, asset freezes), diplomatic sanctions and sanctions targeting the military sector (arms embargos, halting of military cooperation). In contrast, comprehensive sanctions target the economy and/or population as a whole, and consist of measures such as travel bans, financial sanctions, commodity and trade embargos as well as development aid sanctions. Only a few cases that the literature explicitly discussed as having a weak overall impact were calibrated as “targeted” (on Algeria, Azerbaijan, Guinea-Bissau, Pakistan and Turkey see Hufbauer et al. 2007; on Fiji, Guinea and Comoros see Portela 2010: 132–142).

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5 The dataset with all variables and their calibration is available from the authors upon request.

6 For episodes that began before the period of analysis – that is, in 1990 (Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria) – we took this year as the baseline value so as to avoid reflecting any general trends of authoritarian persistence and democratization.

**Vulnerability:** The target's vulnerability to outside pressure is calibrated on the basis of its military and economic strength as well as of third-party assistance. Military expenditure is calculated on the basis of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data. As sanctions themselves can affect the level of military spending in the targeted country, the year before their imposition is used. In addition, data on the capability to construct and use nuclear weapons from Jo and Gartzke (2007), and on economic strength (such as the country's GDP), is also included. In line with Levitsky and Way (2010: 373), we assume that a country's economic or military capabilities need to exceed a specific threshold (GDP of US\$ 50 billion and a military spending of US\$ 1 billion annually) in order to effectively lower its vulnerability. The presence of sanction busters is a dichotomous measure calibrated on the basis of the Hufbauer et al. dataset (2007) and on qualitative country literature for the missing cases.

**Density of ties:** Density of ties encompasses economic, social and geographic linkages. Economic ties are operationalized on the basis of the Correlates of War dyadic trade data (Gleditsch 2002). In line with the conceptualization of linkage as comprising trade ties with the West more generally (Levitsky and Way 2010), we use trade with the five economically most important EU member states and the US in the year before the implementation of sanctions for all types of senders included in the dataset. The data on geographic distance is taken from the dataset by Gleditsch (2001) on the distance between capital cities, always using therein the sender of sanctions that is geographically closest (if there is more than one) and Brussels for EU sanctions. For societal ties, we use potential cross-border communication – measured as the extent of internet access per 1000 inhabitants (World Bank 2011). For calibrating this condition, we composed a density of ties index that combines these three different factors.

**Claim to legitimacy:** Expanding Beetham's (1991) explanation of why people accept the authority of leaders, we maintain that authoritarian regimes may make reference to the following six legitimation strategies in order to secure their hold on power:

- 1) ideology;
- 2) foundational myth;
- 3) charisma of the incumbent head of state;
- 4) international activity;
- 5) procedural mechanisms; and,
- 6) performance – for instance, vis-à-vis satisfying social and economic needs.

Strategies 1, 2 3 and 4 are input-based strategies, wherein specific narratives are used to substantiate the legitimacy of authoritarian rule. References to performance and procedural mechanisms are, meanwhile, output-related discursive strategies, whereby rulers claim to provide specific goods to their citizens (see Beetham 1991; Bekkers et al. 2007 on procedures as an own type of legitimacy).

Based on this differentiation, we conducted an expert survey on legitimation strategies of autocratic rulers for 104 states in the period from 1991 to 2010. Building upon these experts' assessments, the calibration makes a fundamental distinction between weak and strong claims to legitimacy. Claims to legitimacy are strong either because they are firmly rooted in different input strategies (such as appealing to the revolutionary anti-Western foundational

myth that makes it easy to discredit EU or US sanctions) or because input and output strategies are combined. They can potentially substitute each other, especially when performance-related claims are strained due to the economic impact of sanctions.

**Repression:** The degree of repression is assessed on the basis of the PTS dataset, which focuses on state behavior (Wood and Gibney 2010: 368–370). Using both US State Department and Amnesty International reports, PTS levels 4 and 5 – which denote state murders, torture and other serious infringements of physical integrity – constitute “hard repression,” whereas PTS levels 1–3 characterize “soft repression.” The threshold at which to distinguish soft from hard repression is accordingly set at the value of 3.5 on the combined five-point scale, using therein the average time period during which the regime was under sanctions.

#### 4 Results and Discussion

In our analysis, five conditions lead to 32 possible configurations of conditions. The fact that variation also occurs across different episodes targeting the same countries confirms our decision to focus on occurrences of sanctions rather than country cases as the unit of analysis. Since the analysis only displays three logical remainders – that is, theoretically possible combinations for which no empirical cases exist (see the truth table in Appendix A2) – the difference between the complex and the parsimonious solution is so small that we only report the complex solution, which does not rely on counterfactual assumptions that are difficult to interpret (Schneider and Wagemann 2012: 162). Using a frequency cutoff of one empirical case and a minimum consistency level of 0.73,<sup>7</sup> five pathways constitute sufficient combinations of conditions for the outcome.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, we did not identify any condition that individually or as part of a “logical or” combination is necessary for the outcome.<sup>9</sup>

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7 Schneider and Wagemann (2012: 279) suggest consistency levels above 0.75, with higher number of cases decreasing the raw consistencies on average. Researchers are advised to look for gaps in the consistency of empirically observable configurations between two groups of rows that occurred at the consistency cutoff point of 0.73.

8 For a discussion of true logical contradictions, see the section below.

9 In fsQCA, a condition is considered necessary if its set membership is bigger or equal to the respective case membership in the outcome, whereas it is sufficient when the set membership is smaller or equal compared to the outcome assessed (Schneider and Wagemann 2012: 329, 333).

**Table 1: Results of a Test for Sufficiency for Nondemocratization of Authoritarian Regimes**

Model: ~democratization = f (comprehensiveness, density of ties, vulnerability, repression, claims to legitimacy)

	Sanction episodes <sup>10</sup>	Comprehensiveness	Leverage	Linkage	Claims to legitimacy	Repression	Number of episodes	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
Claims to legitimacy	US_AZE_92, EU_BLR_98, EU_BLR_00, US_BLR_04, US_CIV_99, EU_CIV_00, US_CUB_60, EU_CUB_03, EU_GNQ_92, UN_ERI_00, US_GMB_94, US_JOR_90, US_LBY_78, EU_LBY_86, UN_LBY_92, EU_MKD_91, UN_MKD_91, US_MRT_08, EU_MRT_08, US_NIC_92, EU_TGO_92, EU_TGO_98, EU_UZB_05, US_UZB_05, US_VEN_09, US_VNM_75, US_YEM_90				1	0	27	0.374301	0.036353	0.764857
	US_AZE_92, US_CHN_89, EU_CHN_89, US_CIV_99, EU_CUB_03, UN_ERI_00, US_ERI_06, UN_ERI_09, UN_ETH_00, US_FYROM_91, US_IRQ_82, EU_MDG_09, US_MDG_10, US_PRK_50, US_PRK_93, UN_PRK_06, EU_RWA_94, UN_RWA_94, US_LKA_08, US_SDN_93, EU_SDN_94, UN_SDN_96, UN_SDN_05, EU_UZB_05, US_UZB_05, US_VEN_09, US_VNM_75, US_YEM_90			0	1		28	0.444072	0.080397	0.794198
	US_BLR_04, US_COL_96, US_CIV_99, EU_CIV_00, UN_CIV_04, US_CUB_60, EU_GNQ_92, US_FYROM_91, UN_FYROM_91, US_GMB_94, EU_GMB_94, US_IRN_84, UN_IRN_06, UN_IRQ_90, UN_IRQ_91, US_JOR_90, US_LBY_78, UN_LBY_92, EU_MDG_09, US_MDG_10, US_MRT_08, EU_MRT_08, US_NIC_92, US_PRK_50, US_PRK_93, UN_PRK_06, US_PER_91, EU_RWA_94, US_SDN_93, EU_SDN_94, EU_TGO_92, EU_TGO_98, US_VNM_75, US_YEM_90, EU_ZMB_96, EU_ZWE_02, US_ZWE_02				1		37	0.510627	0.048238	0.787578

<sup>10</sup> Episodes are given a code that indicated: (1) the sender (abbreviated as EU, US or UN); (2) the identity of the target (abbreviated with the three letter country code derived from ISO alpha-3 (ISO 3166)); and, (3) the year of the imposition of sanctions (featuring the last two digits of it).

	Sanction episodes <sup>11</sup>	Comprehensiveness	Leverage	Linkage	Claims to legitimacy	Repression	Number of episodes	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
Lack of vulnerability	US_COL_96, US_IRN_84, UN_IRN_06, UN_IRQ_90, UN_IRQ_91, US_SYR_86, EU_SYR_87, EU_TUR_95	1	0	1			8	0.186661	0.009508	0.824074
	US_BLR_04, US_COL_96, US_GMB_94, US_IRN_84, UN_IRN_06, UN_IRQ_90 UN_IRQ_91, US_JOR_90, US_RUS_91, EU_RUS_91 US_SYR_86		0	1		1	11	0.208054	0.013982	0.845454

The solution formula in Boolean notation<sup>12</sup> is as follows:

Claims to legitimacy\*~repression+~claims to legitimacy\*density of ties+claims to legitimacy\* comprehensive-ness\*+~vulnerability\*density of ties\*comprehensiveness+~vulnerability\*density of ties\*repression → ~democratization

#### 4.1 Strong Claims to Legitimacy Account for Authoritarian Persistence

Our analysis systematically confirms the anecdotal evidence that strong claims to legitimacy help a regime to withstand external pressure exerted through sanctions, especially when these sanctions are comprehensive and can thus be depicted as an outside attack on the entire population. This is also true when socioeconomic ties with the sender are low, which also makes it easier to discredit sanctions as an unjust external intervention.

The first configuration (see Table 1) confirms our foremost expectation that if an authoritarian regime under sanctions draws on a strong claim to legitimacy it only needs to resort to soft repression to ensure authoritarian persistence. For instance, Alexander Lukashenko's rule in Belarus is characterized by a combination of soft repression and a strong claim to legitimacy. Rather than directly infringing on the physical wellbeing of its people, the regime regularly uses comparably soft means of repression – such as censorship of the opposition press and increasing the rent for the public buildings used by NGOs (Gaidelyté 2010: 60). After the imposition of sanctions, physical repression in the country even declined up until 2004 – as structures supporting the regime had been previously established, with stable economic welfare, comparatively low social inequality and a pronounced nationalism being the most important pillars of Lukashenko's enduring popularity (Gaidelyté 2010: 80).

Second, and in line with our expectations, the interaction of strong claims to legitimacy at the domestic level and a low density of ties to the sender at the international one explains the

11 Episodes are given a code that indicated: (1) the sender (abbreviated as EU, US or UN); (2) the identity of the target (abbreviated with the three letter country code derived from ISO alpha-3 (ISO 3166)); and, (3) the year of the imposition of sanctions (featuring the last two digits of it).

12 In Boolean algebra, the \* stands for the logical operator “and,” whereas the + represents the logical operator “or.”

persistence of authoritarian rule in spite of the external pressure stemming from sanctions, as shown by the second configuration. Little societal, economic and/or political integration with the sender makes it easier to incorporate *prima facie* any discrediting sanctions into the regime's narrative justifying its right to rule. This in turn reinforces the regime's claims to legitimacy, and ultimately its persistence. In cases of a low density of ties, the success or failure of authoritarianism depends to a greater extent on domestic factors – most important among them the strength of a regime's claim to legitimacy. For instance, the persistence of authoritarian rule in Uzbekistan is characterized by low linkages (Way and Levitsky 2007: 56) and a primary legitimacy claim rooted in ethnic nationalism, which is not susceptible to any pro-liberalization claims (Schatz 2006: 269).<sup>13</sup>

The third configuration confirms our expectation garnered from previous case studies that the indiscriminate impact that comprehensive (rather than targeted) sanctions have reinforces rally-round-the-flag effects, which in turn contributes to the persistence of authoritarian rule (Galtung 1967: 389; Lindsay 1986: 162) when operating in combination with strong claims to legitimacy. When authoritarian rulers base their power on strong legitimization strategies, externally imposed sanctions are regularly perceived as being an attack on the entire society by the domestic population and authoritarian regimes can thus successfully create a siege mentality. In the Cuban case, sanctions reinforced the anti-American sentiments that the Castro regime – which is characterized by a strong claim to legitimacy – used to consolidate its hold on power (Schreiber 1973: 405). In a similar manner, Khamenei used US sanctions against Iran as a means to boost self-reliance and increase popular mobilization (Amuzegar 1997: 34–37).

Interestingly, a lack of vulnerability on the part of the target country appears more significant for explaining the failure of comprehensive sanctions to induce democratization than a low density of ties does. This is indicated by the fifth configuration, which combines comprehensive sanctions and a high density of ties – in other words, the potential for strong external pressure with low vulnerability. This supports the previous findings in sanctions research regarding the importance of a regime's vulnerability, which counters Levitsky and Way's (2010: 351) emphasis on linkages.

Most fundamentally, however, while Zahrani (2008, 26) stresses the difficulty of assessing the role of legitimacy as a potential counterforce to economic sanctions, the first, second and third paths clearly demonstrate the crucial relevance of strong claims to legitimacy for securing authoritarian rule in more than two-thirds of all the cases of autocratic persistence.

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13 In contrast, in contexts of a high density of ties existing in combination with low vulnerability, authoritarian regimes revert to hard repression as the primary means of stabilizing their rule (fourth configuration). This configuration describes a regime that, subject to external pressure, resorts to internationally discredited ways of securing its rule, especially hard repression (on Iraq, for instance, see Cordesman 1999).



## 4.2 Robustness of Results

Our solution has a coverage of 0.714486, meaning that slightly more than 70 percent of the empirical cases are in line with the set-theoretical relations of the solution in accounting for the outcome. The consistency – which specifies the degree to which the empirical observations are in accordance with the postulated set relations (Schneider and Wagemann 2012: 324) – is 0.790287; in other words, the consistency is at 80 percent, thereby also reaching the increasingly accepted requirements for significant solutions (Ragin 2008).

61 of the 73 sanction episodes that are characterized by the persistence of authoritarian rule are covered by at least one of the five configurations. In 12 such episodes, authoritarian rule that should have remained persistent – due to membership in at least one configuration – actually democratized instead. Most of these cases are related to the sanctions that were imposed on the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FYROM), where military engagement explained democratization despite unfavorable conditions. 12 cases of nondemocratization are not explained. However, five of these episodes – with the target countries being Fiji, Myanmar and Syria – are still ongoing, so that the calibration of each of these episodes as an instance of nondemocratization will potentially, as in the case of Myanmar, change in the near future.

For large-N QCA with more than 100 cases, a number of robustness checks have increasingly been established as good practice. Our analysis passes four fundamental tests, which serves to strongly confirm the robustness of our results. First, Marx (2010) and Marx and Dusa (2011) developed a benchmark model specifying the desirable ratio of conditions to cases based on the probability of accepting a model that was generated from random data. For large-N QCA, Marx (2010) suggests a condition-to-case ratio of at most 0.2, with which we clearly realize with a ratio of 0.04.

Second, using a different frequency threshold to determine which configurations of conditions that were empirically observable are included in the minimization process helps to avoid potential deviant case errors. As mentioned above, in our analysis we used – following common practice – a frequency cutoff of one empirically existent case. For samples containing more than 50 cases, Maggetti and Levi-Faur (2013: 203) propose to use a frequency threshold of two cases (see also, Skaaning 2011: 402). In our analysis this leads to a very similar solution formula, in which the first three configurations are completely identical and the fifth only slightly altered – again confirming our findings (see Appendix A4).

Third, differences between the complex, the intermediate and the parsimonious solution allow us to distinguish core causal conditions – which are part of both the parsimonious and intermediate solution – from causally peripheral ones (Fiss 2011). In our study, the three configurations containing claims to legitimacy remain present in the parsimonious and intermediate solutions (see Appendix A4) and hence constitute such core elements, for which a strong relationship with the outcome exists. Moreover, the fifth configuration is reduced to the interplay of a low density of ties and high vulnerability in the parsimonious solution,

underlining our additional finding that a lack of vulnerability is more important than a low density of ties for the failure of sanctions to instigate democratization.

Finally and most importantly, changes in the sample strongly confirms the robustness of our results (Skaaning 2011). Using both the Democracy and Dictatorship dataset (Cheibub et al. 2009) and the one of Geddes et al. (2011) to compile the sample of persistent authoritarian rule in regimes under sanctions yields remarkably stable results. All configurations except for the last one remain identical;<sup>14</sup> coverage and consistency levels are also similar (see Appendix A3).

## 5 Conclusion: Claims to Legitimacy as a Way to Differentiate between Authoritarian Regimes

With the surge of the third wave of democratization, authoritarian rule among a certain crop of regimes – including those in Belarus, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea and Zimbabwe – has stubbornly resisted sanction-related pressure for the instigation of political reform. In these countries, it is the strong claims to legitimacy that have most significantly influenced sanctions' failure to undermine the persistence of authoritarian rule. If comprehensive sanctions – which affect the economy and/or the population as a whole – are imposed on regimes with compelling legitimation strategies, they regularly trigger unintended rally-round-the-flag effects. Such narratives are also easier to uphold when only weak ties to the entity that is the sender of sanctions exist. For sanctions senders, this constrains their ability to communicate the goals underlying sanctions and hence provides a readymade narrative depicting sanctions as an unjust outside intervention to the domestic population in the targeted regime.

Our findings strongly support earlier academic research (Galtung 1967; Lindsay 1986), and underscore the need to reconsider the signals that are conveyed by sanctions rather than focusing exclusively on their economic impact – as is currently common practice. While sanctions are generally discussed as constituting a signal of support to the opposition (Nossal 1989), our results suggest that under certain conditions they actually trigger a rally-round-the-flag effect instead, which can help strengthen authoritarian rule. Therefore, more fine-grained research is needed on how comprehensive and targeted sanctions are perceived by both members of the authoritarian elite and by the broader population so as to discover what the symbolic dimensions of sanctions are (Giumelli 2011).

Our results also demonstrate that distinguishing between the different claims to legitimacy is a promising route to take as a way of categorizing authoritarian regimes, one which goes beyond the established subdifferentiation in terms of their institutional characteristics (see also, Gerschewski 2013; Kailitz 2013). We find that the authoritarian subtypes in them-

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14 The last configuration, which was previously characterized by the interplay of a lack of vulnerability and strong repression, comprises one additional condition: weak claims to legitimacy.

selves vary in respect to their claims to legitimacy. As the persistence of authoritarian rule in regimes under sanctions is often explained by more than one fsQCA configuration, it is impossible to find a complete overlap of authoritarian regime subtypes and claims to legitimacy. Moreover, for configurations predominantly characterized by international conditions – sanction comprehensiveness, vulnerability and/or density of ties – the relationship to authoritarian regime types is inherently less consistent.

Nevertheless, two trends are discernible. First, of the 19 episodes that represent a combination of strong claims to legitimacy and soft repression, the majority are – following Hadenius et al. (2012) – “limited multiparty regimes.”<sup>15</sup> These electoral authoritarian regimes, which are constrained by the existence of some form of free elections and opposition parties, put strong emphasis on legitimation strategies that combine input- and output-based claims and use largely “invisible,” soft repression – rather than overt force – to control their citizens. Second, for the configuration of strong claims to legitimacy combined with a low density of ties we find herein a disproportionately high number of one-party regimes. The specific ideological base of such regimes – like China or Eritrea – may account for generally strong input claims to legitimacy and, in turn, low density of ties – which gives such regimes greater discursive leverage with which to withstand the signals emanating from Western senders.

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15 The result also holds true for Geddes’ “personalist regimes” and Cheibub et al.’s “civilian dictatorships.”

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## Appendix

### A 1 Episodes and Calibration of Outcome and Conditions

<i>Code</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Persistence of authoritarian rule</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Leverage</i>	<i>Linkage</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>
UN_AFG_99	UN	Afghanistan	1999–2002	0	0.8	1	0	0.66	1
EU_DZA_92	EU	Algeria	1992–1994	0.67	0.4	0.6	1	0.33	0.8
US_AZE_92	US	Azerbaijan	1992–2002	1	0.4	1	0.4	0.66	0.2
EU_BLR_98	EU	Belarus	1998–1999	1	0	0.4	0.8	0.66	0.2
EU_BLR_00	EU	Belarus	2000–ongoing	1	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.66	0.2
US_BLR_04	US	Belarus	2004–ongoing	1	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.66	0.2
EU_BIH_92	EU	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992–2006	0	0.2	1	1	0.33	0.4
UN_BIH_92	UN	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992–1996	0.67	0.2	1	1	0.33	1
US_BDI_96	US	Burundi	1996–2005	0	0.6	1	0.4	0.33	1
US_CMR_92	US	Cameroon	1992–1998	0.34	0.6	1	0	0.33	0.4
EU_CAF_03	EU	CAR	2003–2005	0.34	0.6	1	0	0	0.6
US_CAF_03	US	CAR	2003–2005	0.34	0	1	0	0	0.6
US_CHN_89	US	China	1989–ongoing	0.67	0.2	0	0.2	1	0.8
EU_CHN_89	EU	China	1989–ongoing	0.67	0.2	0	0.4	1	0.8
US_COL_96	US	Colombia	1996–1998	1	0.8	0.2	1	0.66	1
EU_COM_99	EU	Comoros, The	1999–2000	0	0.4	1	0.2	0	0
US_CIV_99	US	Côte d’Ivoire	1999–2002	0.67	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.66	0.4
EU_CIV_00	EU	Côte d’Ivoire	2000–2002	1	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.66	0.2
UN_CIV_04	UN	Côte d’Ivoire	2004–ongoing	1	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.66	0.6
EU_HRV_92	EU	Croatia	1992–2000	0	0.2	0.6	1	1	0.4

<i>Code</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Persistence of authoritarian rule</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Leverage</i>	<i>Linkage</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>
UN_HRV_92	UN	Croatia	1992–1996	0.34	0.2	0.6	1	1	0.8
US_CUB_60	US	Cuba	1960–ongoing	1	1	0.6	0.6	1	0.4
EU_CUB_03	EU	Cuba	2003–2005	1	0	0.6	0.4	1	0.2
US_COD_90	US	DRC	1990–1997	0	0.8	1	0	0	0.8
EU_COD_92	EU	DRC	1992–1997	0	0.8	1	0	0	1
EU_COD_97	EU	DRC	1997–2008	0.34	0.2	1	0	0	1
UN_COD_03	UN	DRC	2003–2008	0.34	0.2	1	0	0	1
EU_GNQ_92	EU	Equatorial Guinea	1992–ongoing	0.67	0.6	1	0.6	0.66	0.4
UN_ERI_00	UN	Eritrea	2000–2001	1	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.66	0.2
US_ERI_06	US	Eritrea	2006–ongoing	1	0.2	1	0	0.66	0.6
UN_ERI_09	UN	Eritrea	2009–ongoing	1	0.2	1	0.2	0.66	0.8
UN_ETH_00	UN	Ethiopia	2000–2001	1	0.2	0.8	0	1	0.6
EU_FJI_01	EU	Fiji	2001–2003	1	0.4	1	0.4	0.33	0
EU_FJI_06	EU	Fiji	2006–ongoing	1	0.6	1	0.2	0.33	0
US_FJI_06	US	Fiji	2006–ongoing	1	0.6	1	0.2	0.33	0
US_FYROM_91	US	FYROM	1991–1995	1	1	0.6	0.2	0.66	0.8
UN_FYROM_91	UN	FYROM	1991–1995	1	1	0.6	1	0.66	0.8
EU_FYROM_91	EU	FYROM	1991–1997	0.34	0.8	0.6	1	0.66	0.8
US_FYROM_95	US	FYROM	1995–1999	0	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.66	0.8
EU_FYROM_98	EU	FYROM	1998–2001	0	1	0.8	1	0.66	0.8
UN_FYROM_98	UN	FYROM	1998–2001	0	0.2	0.8	1	0.66	0.8
US_FYROM_98	US	FYROM	1998–2001	0	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.66	0.8
US_FYROM_99	US	FYROM	1999–2003	0	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.66	0.6
US_GMB_94	US	Gambia	1994–1998	0.67	0.8	0.4	0.8	1	0
EU_GMB_94	EU	Gambia	1994–2002	0.34	0.8	0.4	1	1	0

<i>Code</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Persistence of authoritarian rule</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Leverage</i>	<i>Linkage</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>
EU_GTM_93	EU	Guatemala	1993–1993	0.34	0.6	0.8	0.4	0	0.8
US_GTM_93	US	Guatemala	1993–1993	0.34	0.6	0.8	1	0	0.8
EU_GIN_02	EU	Guinea	2002–2006	1	0.4	1	0.6	0	0.4
EU_GIN_09	EU	Guinea	2009–ongoing	0	0.4	1	0.6	0	0.8
US_GIN_09	US	Guinea	2009–2010	0	0.2	1	0.4	0	0.8
US_GNB_03	US	Guinea-Bissau	2003–2004	0	0.4	1	0.8	0.33	0
US_HTI_91	US	Haiti	1991–1994	0	1	1	1	0	0.8
US_HTI_91	US	Haiti	1991–2006	0	0.2	1	1	0.33	0.6
UN_HTI_93	UN	Haiti	1993–1994	0	1	1	1	0	0.8
EU_HTI_01	EU	Haiti	2001–2005	0.34	0.6	1	0.6	0.33	0.6
US_HTI_02	US	Haiti	2002–2005	0.34	0.8	1	1	0.33	0.6
EU_HND_09	EU	Honduras	2009–2010	1	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.33	0.6
US_HND_09	US	Honduras	2009–2010	1	0.6	0.8	1	0.33	0.6
US_IDN_92	US	Indonesia	1992–2005	0	0.8	0.2	0	1	0.8
EU_IDN_98	EU	Indonesia	1998–1999	0	0.2	0.2	0	0.33	0.8
US_IRN_84	US	Iran	1984–ongoing	0.67	1	0	0.6	1	0.8
UN_IRN_06	UN	Iran	2006–ongoing	1	1	0	0.6	1	0.8
US_IRQ_82	US	Iraq	1982–2003	0.67	0.2	0.2	0.2	1	1
UN_IRQ_90	UN	Iraq	1990–1991	1	1	0.2	0.6	1	1
UN_IRQ_91	UN	Iraq	1991–2003	1	1	0.2	0.6	1	1
US_JOR_90	US	Jordan	1990–1997	0.67	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.66	0
US_KEN_90	US	Kenya	1990–1993	0.34	0.8	0.6	0	0.33	0.4
UN_LBR_92	UN	Liberia	1992–2001	0.34	0.2	1	0.2	0.33	0.8
EU_LBR_01	EU	Liberia	2001–2001	0.34	0.8	1	0.2	0.33	1
UN_LBR_01	UN	Liberia	2001–2003	0	0.8	1	0.2	0.33	1

<i>Code</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Persistence of authoritarian rule</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Leverage</i>	<i>Linkage</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>
US_LBY_78	US	Libya	1978–2004	1	0.8	0.8	0.8	1	0.4
EU_LBY_86	EU	Libya	1986–2004	1	0.4	0.8	1	1	0.4
UN_LBY_92	UN	Libya	1992–2003	1	1	0.8	1	1	0.4
EU_MDG_09	EU	Madagascar	2009–2011	1	0.6	1	0.2	0.66	0.6
US_MDG_10	US	Madagascar	2010–ongoing	1	0.6	1	0	0.66	0.6
EU_MKD_91	EU	Macedonia	1991–2000	0.67	0.2	1	0.8	0.66	0
UN_MKD_91	UN	Macedonia	1991–1996	0.67	0.2	1	0.8	0.66	0
EU_MWI_92	EU	Malawi	1992–1994	0	0.6	1	0.4	1	0
US_MWI_92	US	Malawi	1992–1994	0	0.6	1	0	1	0
US_MRT_08	US	Mauritania	2008–2009	0.67	0.8	1	0.6	0.66	0.4
EU_MRT_08	EU	Mauritania	2008–2009	0.67	0.6	1	0.8	0.66	0.4
US_MMR_88	US	Myanmar	1988–ongoing	0.67	1	1	0	0	0.8
EU_MMR_96	EU	Myanmar	1996–ongoing	1	0.8	1	0	0	0.8
US_NIC_92	US	Nicaragua	1992–1995	0.67	0.6	1	0.8	1	0.4
EU_NER_96	EU	Niger	1996–1999	0	0.6	1	0.6	0	0.2
US_NER_96	US	Niger	1996–2000	0	0.8	1	0	0	0.2
US_NER_09	US	Niger	2009–2011	0.34	0.8	1	0	0	0.4
US_NGA_93	US	Nigeria	1993–1998	0	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.33	0.6
EU_NGA_93	EU	Nigeria	1993–1999	0	0.8	0.8	1	0.33	0.6
US_PRK_50	US	North Korea	1950–ongoing	1	1	0	0	1	1
US_PRK_93	US	North Korea	1993–ongoing	1	0.6	0	0	1	1
UN_PRK_06	UN	North Korea	2006–ongoing	1	1	0	0	1	1
US_PSK_99	US	Pakistan	1999–2001	0.67	0.4	0	0	0	0.8
US_PER_91	US	Peru	1991–1995	1	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.66	0.8
US_PER_95	US	Peru	1995–1998	0	0	0.4	0.6	0.66	0.4

<i>Code</i>	<i>Sender</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Persistence of authoritarian rule</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Leverage</i>	<i>Linkage</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>
US_RUS_91	US	Russia	1991–1991	1	0.8	0	1	0	0.2
EU_PER_00	EU	Peru	2000–2001	0	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.33	0.2
EU_RUS_91	EU	Russia	1991–1991	1	0.6	0	1	0	0.2
EU_RWA_94	EU	Rwanda	1994–1995	0.67	0.6	1	0	0.66	1
UN_RWA_94	UN	Rwanda	1994–1995	0.67	0.2	1	0	0.66	1
US_LKA_08	US	Sri Lanka	2008–ongoing	1	0.2	0.4	0	1	1
US_SDN_93	US	Sudan	1993–ongoing	1	1	1	0	0.66	1
EU_SDN_94	EU	Sudan	1994–ongoing	1	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.66	1
UN_SDN_96	UN	Sudan	1996–ongoing	1	0.4	0.8	0	0.66	1
UN_SDN_05	UN	Sudan	2005–ongoing	1	0.2	0.8	0	0.66	1
US_SYR_86	US	Syria	1986–2003	1	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.33	0.6
EU_SYR_87	EU	Syria	1987–1994	1	0.2	0.4	1	0.33	0.6
US_SYR_04	US	Syria	2004–ongoing	1	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.33	0.6
US_THA_91	US	Thailand	1991–1992	0	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.33	0.2
EU_TGO_92	EU	Togo	1992–1995	0.67	0.6	1	0.8	0.66	0.4
EU_TGO_98	EU	Togo	1998–2004	1	0.6	1	0.8	0.66	0.2
EU_TUR_95	EU	Turkey	1995–1995	0.67	0.4	0.2	1	0.66	0.8
EU_UZB_05	EU	Uzbekistan	2005–2009	1	0.4	0.4	0.2	1	0.4
US_UZB_05	US	Uzbekistan	2005–ongoing	1	0	0.4	0	1	0.4
US_VEN_09	US	Venezuela	2006–ongoing	1	0.2	0	1	1	0.4
US_VNM_75	US	Vietnam	1975–1994	1	1	0.4	0	1	0.4
US_YEM_90	US	Yemen	1990–1997	0.67	0.6	0.4	0	1	0.2
EU_ZMB_96	EU	Zambia	1996–1999	0.34	0.4	1	0	0.33	0.2
EU_ZWE_02	EU	Zimbabwe	2002–ongoing	1	0.8	0.4	0.4	1	0.8
US_ZWE_02	US	Zimbabwe	2002–ongoing	1	0.8	0.4	0.2	1	0.8

Source: Authors' compilation.

## Appendix

### A 2 Truth Table

<i>Configuration</i>	<i>Sanction Episodes</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Density of ties</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Persistence</i>	<i>Raw consist.</i>
1	US_PRK_50, UN_PRK_06, US_IDN_92, EU_ZWE_02, US_ZWE_02, US_PRK_93	1	0	0	1	1	6	1	0.850725
2	US_IRN_84, UN_IRN_06, UN_IRQ_90, UN_IRQ_91, US_COL_96	1	0	1	1	1	5	1	0.828333
3	US_CUB_60, UN_LBY_92, US_LBY_78, US_MRT_08, EU_CIV_00, EU_GNQ_92, EU_MRT_08, US_NIC_92, EU_TGO_92, EU_TGO_98	1	1	1	1	0	10	1	0.798876
4	US_YEM_90	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0.793333
5	UN_SDN_05, UN_RWA_9, UN_ETH_00, UN_ERI_09, US_ERI_06, UN_SDN_96	0	1	0	1	1	6	1	0.792941
6	US_SYR_86	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0.776087
7	US_GMB_94, EU_GMB_94, US_BLR_04, US_JOR_90	1	0	1	1	0	4	1	0.772222

<i>Configuration</i>	<i>Sanction Episodes</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Density of ties</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Persistence</i>	<i>Raw consist.</i>
8	US_LKA_08, US_IRQ_82, EU_CHN_89, US_CHN_89	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	0.767925
9	US_RUS_91	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0.763462
10	UN_ERI_00, US_AZE_92, EU_CUB_03	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	0.757693
11	EU_SYR_87	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0.756098
12	US_FYROM_91, US_SDN_93, UN_AFG_99, US_FYROM_95, US_FYROM_98, US_FYROM_99, EU_SDN_94, EU_MDG_09, US_MDG_10, EU_RWA_94	1	1	0	1	1	10	1	0.748000
13	UN_MKD_91, EU_MKD_91, EU_LBY_86, EU_BIH_92	0	1	1	1	0	4	1	0.745679
14	US_CIV_99, EU_MWI_92, US_MWI_92	1	1	0	1	0	3	1	0.744304
15	US_UZB_05, EU_UZB_05	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0.744186
16	UN_FYROM_91, EU_FYROM_98, UN_CIV_04, EU_FYROM_91, US_PER_91	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	0.736145



<i>Configuration</i>	<i>Sanction Episodes</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Density of ties</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Persistence</i>	<i>Raw consist.</i>
17	EU_TUR_95	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0.732609
18	US_PER_95, EU_BLR_98, US_VEN_09, EU_BLR_00	0	0	1	1	0	4	1	0.730769
19	EU_IDN_98, US_SYR_04, US_PSK_99	0	0	0	0	1	3	not minimized	0.717949
20	EU_ZMB_96, EU_FJI_01, EU_COM_99	0	1	0	0	0	3	not minimized	0.716868
21	EU_NER_96	1	1	1	0	0	1	not minimized	0.701111
22	EU_BIH_92, US_GNB_03, EU_GIN_02	0	1	1	0	0	3	not minimized	0.700000
23	UN_FYROM_98, UN_HRV_92	0	1	1	1	1	2	not minimized	0.692537
24	US_KEN_90, US_NER_96, US_NER_09, US_CMR_92, EU_FJI_06, US_FJI_06	1	1	0	0	0	6	not minimized	0.686956
25	UN_BIH_92, EU_GIN_09, EU_DZA_92, US_HTI_91	0	1	1	0	1	4	not minimized	0.668125
26	EU_PER_00, US_THA_91	1	0	0	0	0	2	not minimized	0.667568
27	US_CAF_03, UN_LBR_92, US_GIN_09, UN_COD_03, EU_COD_97	0	1	0	0	1	5	not minimized	0.662365

<i>Configuration</i>	<i>Sanction Episodes</i>	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	<i>Vulnerability</i>	<i>Density of ties</i>	<i>Claims to legitimacy</i>	<i>Repression</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Persistence</i>	<i>Raw consist.</i>
28	US_MMR_88, US_COD_90, EU_COD_92, EU_LBR_01, UN_LBR_01, EU_MMR_96, US_BDI_96, EU_CAF_03, EU_GTM_93	1	1	0	0	1	9	not minimized	0.644495
29	US_HTI_91, UN_HTI_93, US_HTI_02, EU_HND_09, US_NGA_93, EU_NGA_93, US_GTM_93, EU_HTI_01, US_HND_09	1	1	1	0	1	9	not minimized	0.601010
30	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	not minimized	0.685714
31	?	0	0	1	0	0	0	not minimized	0.727273
32	?	1	0	0	0	1	0	not minimized	0.748649

Source: Authors' compilation.

## Appendix

### A 3 Robustness Checks using Different Datasets to Determine Sample of Nondemocratic Regimes

<i>Dataset used to determine nondemocratic regimes</i>	<i>Authoritarian Regimes (Hadenius et al. 2012)</i>	<i>Democracy–Dictatorship (Cheibub et al. 2009)</i>	<i>Global Political Regimes (Geddes et al. 2011)</i>
Coverage and consistency	solution coverage: 0.700224 solution consistency: 0.805145 frequency cutoff: 1.000000 raw consistency cutoff point 0.73	solution coverage: 0.713149 solution consistency: 0.747414 frequency cutoff: 1.000000 consistency cutoff: 0.694084	solution coverage: 0.729743 solution consistency: 0.779409 frequency cutoff: 1.000000 consistency cutoff: 0.694007
Configurations (differences in italics)	1) claims to legitimacy*~repression 2) claims to legitimacy *~density of ties* 3) claims to legitimacy comprehensiveness* 4) ~vulnerability*density of ties *comprehensiveness 5) ~ vulnerability*density of ties*repression	1) claims to legitimacy*~repression 2) claims to legitimacy *~density of ties* 3) claims to legitimacy *comprehensiveness* 4) ~vulnerability*density of ties *comprehensiveness 5) ~ vulnerability*density of ties*repression*~ <i>claims to legitimacy</i>	1) claims to legitimacy*~repression 2) claims to legitimacy *~density of ties* 3) claims to legitimacy *comprehensiveness* 4) ~vulnerability*density of ties *comprehensiveness 5) ~ vulnerability*density of ties*repression*~ <i>claims to legitimacy</i>

Source: Authors' compilation.

## Appendix

### A 4 Robustness Checks using Different Frequency Consistency Cutoffs

<i>Differences</i>	<i>Original model</i>	<i>Different frequency cutoff</i>	<i>Parsimonious solution</i>
Model specification	Frequency cutoff: 1.000000 raw consistency cutoff: 0.733209	Frequency cutoff: 2.000000 raw consistency cutoff: 0.733209	Frequency cutoff: 1.000000 raw consistency cutoff: 0.733209
Coverage and consistency	Solution coverage: 0.714486 solution consistency: 0.790287	Solution coverage: 0.699245 solution consistency: 0.789050	Solution coverage: 0.728468 solution consistency: 0.793481
Configurations (differences in italics)	1) claims to legitimacy*~repression 2) claims to legitimacy *~density of ties* 3) claims to legitimacy *comprehensiveness* 4) ~vulnerability*density of ties *comprehensiveness 5) ~ vulnerability*density of ties*repression	1) claims to legitimacy*~repression 2) claims to legitimacy *~density of ties* 3) claims to legitimacy *comprehensiveness* 4) ~vulnerability*density of ties *comprehensiveness ~repression 5) no configuration	1) claims to legitimacy*~repression 2) claims to legitimacy *~density of ties* 3) claims to legitimacy *comprehensiveness* 4) no configuration 5) ~ vulnerability*density of ties

Source: Authors' compilation.

## Appendix

### A 5 Calibration of Conditions and Outcome for fsQCA

Condition	Operationalization(s)	Calibration	Source
Outcome: PERSISTENCE OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE	<p>Baseline for assessment is the HTW value one year prior to sanctioning or the first year when sanctions were imposed – the lower value was taken respectively (for the 13 episodes that started before 1990, the year before the sanctions started was taken; for Cuba, the oldest sanction case, 1990 was taken as baseline year).</p> <p>Period of comparison: average sanction period (SP) + 5 years (PSP); for the 29 ongoing sanction cases the average SP was taken until 2012.</p>	<p>Four-point scale</p> <p>0 = Strong democratization (fully out)</p> <p>Increase of HTW value of at least 1.4 points</p> <p>0.33 = Significant democratization (mostly out)</p> <p>Increase of HTW value between 0.8–1.3 points</p> <p>0.66 = Slight democratization (mostly in)</p> <p>HTW value increased by 0.1–0.7 point max.</p> <p>1 = No democratization/positive development (fully in)</p> <p>HTW value is on the same level or lower than year before sanctions (one digit after the dot; e.g. 1.0)</p>	Hadenius, Teorell and Wahman (HTW) dataset (2012)
COMPREHENSIVENESS	<p>We assess the formal strength of measures and whether a specific sanction type goes together with other measures. (Formal) comprehensiveness in ascending order:</p> <p>(1) targeted sanctions, i.e. visa bans, freezing of individuals' assets (also diplomatic sanctions)</p> <p>(2) sanctions directed toward the military (arms embargo and interruption of military cooperation),</p> <p>(3) aid sanctions</p> <p>(4) commodity embargo, flight bans, selective financial sanctions (investment bans and bans on joint ventures),</p> <p>(5) comprehensive trade embargo</p>	<p>Six-point scale</p> <p>0 = all targeted sanctions (asset freeze (AF), diplomatic sanctions (DS), visa ban (VB)) or interruption of military cooperation (IM) (also with other 0 measures)</p> <p>0.2 = arms embargo (AE) without further measures</p> <p>0.4 = AE with further 0 measures or aid sanctions (AS) alone (checked whether weak; otherwise 0.6)</p> <p>0.6 = Strong AS</p> <p>Strong AS by one bilateral sender without further measures (basis: extra check in case literature); or</p> <p>AS with further unilateral measures below threshold from same sender; or</p> <p>AS with further AS from other bilateral sender (parallel episode; starts not earlier/later than two years)</p> <p>0.8 = Flight ban (FB), financial sanctions (FS), commodity embargo (CE) without further measures; or with further measures below threshold; or</p> <p>FB+FS combined or</p> <p>AS with further unilateral measures and further measures from other bilateral sender (parallel episode)</p> <p>AS with further multilateral measures (parallel episodes)</p> <p>1 = Comprehensive trade embargo (CT) or CE with FB or FS or with both</p>	Portela/von Soest Sanctions Dataset (2012)

Condition	Operationalization(s)	Calibration	Source
VULNERABILITY	<p>Index of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GDP of target</li> <li>Military power of target: nuclear weapons</li> <li>military expenditures</li> <li>Black knight assistance</li> </ul>	<p>Six-point scale</p> <p>0 = almost nonexistent vulnerability: GDP of more than US\$50 billion/capacity to use nuclear weapons/major military power = military spending more than US\$1 billion/black knight assistance: three of the criteria met</p> <p>0.2 = weak vulnerability: two of the abovementioned conditions are met</p> <p>0.4 = modest vulnerability: one of the conditions is met</p> <p>0.6 = significant vulnerability: GDP above US\$10 billion and military spending of above US\$0.5</p> <p>0.8 = significant vulnerability: GDP above US\$10 billion or military spending of above US\$0.5</p> <p>1 = high vulnerability: none of criteria existent</p>	<p>GDP: IMF (constant 2000 US\$) (2013)</p> <p>Military expenditure: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (2013)</p> <p>Nuclear weapons: Jo/Gartzke Dataset (2007)</p> <p>Black knight assistance: Hufbauer et al. (2007) and own coding of missing cases according to definition of Hufbauer et al.</p>
DENSITY OF TIES	<p>Different degrees of density of ties in three dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) economic,</li> <li>(2) geographic,</li> <li>(3) communicative (i.e. social)</li> </ul> <p>Own index building by converting all three dimensions of density of ties into scales ranging from 0–5.</p> <p>Data on trade density of ties were taken for the year before the imposition of sanctions (for cases with decade long sanction regimes, e. g. Cuba, data from beginning of 1990 was used)</p>	<p>Six-point scale</p> <p>0 = Almost nonexistent density of ties (0–5)</p> <p>0.2 = very low density of ties (6–7)</p> <p>0.4 = low density of ties (8)</p> <p>0.6 = medium density of ties (9)</p> <p>0.8 = high density of ties (10)</p> <p>1 = Close integration of sender/s and target (11–15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) COW bilateral trade data (Gleditsch 2002)</li> <li>(2) Data on distances between capitals (Gleditsch 2001)</li> <li>(3) Internet access (World Development Indicators; World Bank 2011)</li> </ul>
CLAIMS TO LEGITIMACY	<p>Expert assessment of different sources/dimensions of the strength of claims to legitimacy (rated on 0–5 scale).</p> <p>Dimensions 1, 2 and 3 are categorized as input/ideational dimensions, whereas 6 is identified as output dimension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundational myth</li> <li>Ideological foundation/societal model (religion, own socialism, nationalism)</li> <li>Personalism (via charisma etc.)</li> <li>International engagement</li> <li>Procedures (via elections, rule-based mechanisms)</li> <li>Performance</li> </ul> <p>Own index building by comparatively assessing all six dimensions of claims to legitimacy.</p>	<p>Four-point scale</p> <p>0 = Low assessment (= 3.4 and below in all legitimization dimensions)</p> <p>0.33 = Not more than one dimension rated above 3.4</p> <p>0.66 = At least high assessment (3.5 and above) for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) two input dimensions</li> <li>b) one input and one output dimension</li> </ul> <p>1 = Very high assessment (4 and above) for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) three input dimensions</li> <li>b) two input and one output dimensions</li> </ul>	<p>Grauvogel/von Soest Regime Legitimation Survey (2013)</p> <p>In addition, for the calibration, qualitative assessments/comments from the Regime Legitimation Survey were used.</p>

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Operationalization(s)</i>	<i>Calibration</i>	<i>Source</i>
REPRESSION	Differentiation between hard and soft repression: Hard repression: extent of physical integrity infringements Soft repression: extent of civil rights infringements We use the average data of the Political Terror Scale (Wood and Gibney 2010) which contains both aspects. Differentiation of hard and soft repression is done on the basis of verbalization of the PTS; data was used for the sanction period.	Six-point scale 0 = very little infringements of human rights (average value of Amnesty International and US State Department report coding during sanctioned period: 0–2.4) 0.2 = small extent of repression (2.5–2.9) 0.4 = some repression (3–3.4) 0.6 = regular use of repression (3.5–3.9) 0.8 = considerable repression (4–4.4) 1 = comprehensive system of repression (above 4.4)	Political Terror Scale 1976–2010 (Wood and Gibney 2010)

Source: Authors' compilation.

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