

**AN ANALYTICALLY ECLECTIC APPROACH
TO SANCTIONS AND NONPROLIFERATION**

Daniel W. Drezner
Tufts University
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INTRODUCTION

Nuclear nonproliferation has been the single-most important priority for U.S. national security for the past decade. The nonproliferation issue rated very highly in all three National Security Strategies published over the past decade. It is curious, then, that the current U.S. policy approach to the two most high-profile nonproliferation cases boils down to negotiations and “smart sanctions.” As the data in Reynolds and Wan’s chapter demonstrates, Iran and North Korea have been the target of multiple rounds of unilateral and multilateral economic statecraft for the past two decades.¹

There are many explanations for this policy outcome, but one contributing factor is the renewed faith in “smart sanctions” and financial sanctions as a coercive policy tool. Rachel Loeffler recently concluded that, “it is hard to imagine any serious foreign policy issue down the line in which financial tools would not be or should not be considered as part of a comprehensive strategy.”² U.S. policy journals have been replete with essays arguing in favor of financial statecraft as the best policy lever available to the United States.³

As political scientists and policy analysts develop more fine-grained analyses of the coalition politics in targeted countries, the intellectual appeal of smart sanctions made some intuitive sense. Ostensibly, smart or targeted sanctions are the precision-guided munitions of economic statecraft. They are designed to hurt elite supporters of the targeted regime, while imposing minimal hardship on the mass public. Targeted sanctions are only implemented through an enhanced understanding of the domestic political economy of target regime. By altering the material incentives of powerful supporters, the argument runs, these supporters will eventually pressure the targeted government into making concessions. As the coalition politics of targeted regimes are clearly mapped out, targeted sanctions should, in theory, yield greater bang for the buck.

This chapter argues that the theory of smart sanctions, while powerful, is also brittle. While the theory behind smart sanctions is both parsimonious and elegant, it relies on only one causal mechanism through which sanctions lead to policy concessions. As a result, targeted sanctions are too constrained to provide significant policy leverage. Using an approach based on “analytic eclecticism”⁴, this chapter argues that more comprehensive economic sanctions – or more wide-ranging inducements – will be more likely to lead to the desired policy change. Larger-scale influence attempts can work through multiple causal mechanisms that are not mutually exclusive. Once the causal complexity of economic statecraft and nonproliferation is better appreciated, smart sanctions lose their luster. Financial sanctions that are tailored to have narrow

¹ See also Chen 2010.

² Loeffler 2009.

³ Hufbauer and Oegg 2000; Bracken 2007; Liss 2007/08; Eckert 2008; Gottemoeller 2008; Loeffler 2009; Chen 2010; Zarate 2009.

⁴ Katzenstein and Okawara 2001/02; Katzenstein and Sil, 2010.

effects will be as ineffective as smart sanctions, whereas financial measures that have broad-based economic effects will have a greater likelihood of success.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The next section process-traces the emergence of smart sanctions as a policy tool for nonproliferation. The third section reviews the empirical literature, and finds that smart sanctions have a poor track record for success. The fourth section discusses analytical eclecticism and why that approach works well for understanding the interplay between sanctions and nonproliferation. The fifth section concludes by applying this framework to Iran and North Korea.

SMART SANCTIONS AS A FOCAL POINT⁵

Prior to the mid-1990s, most of the academic research treated the sender and target as rational unitary actors.⁶ Little attention was paid to the causal mechanisms through which sanctions were supposed to lead the target government into acquiescing. The Iraq case, however, spurred more attention to the causal logic through which sanctions were supposed to work. Both scholars and policymakers called for an opening up of the “black box” of the target state.

Intriguingly, research emanating from wildly disparate theoretical and methodological perspectives came to the same conclusion about the effect of comprehensive sanctions: they disproportionately hurt politically weak groups and benefited target regime sympathizers. Kaempfer and Lowenberg used a public choice framework to explain how sanctions had distributional effects on interest groups within the target country.⁷ If the sanctions enriched – or could be manipulated to enrich – key supporters of the target regime, then the aggregate cost of the sanctions would have minimal impact on the target government. Jonathan Kirshner proposed a microfoundations approach, arguing that, “instead of considering how those sanctions hurt the target state, this approach emphasizes how groups within the target are affected differently, and how these consequences change with the form of statecraft chosen.”⁸ He concluded that financial sanctions – aid cutoffs, asset freezes, and monetary pressures – were more likely to pressure key supporters of the target regime than broad-based trade sanctions. Buck, Gallant and Nossal used a feminist approach to argue that the costs of trade sanctions are disproportionately imposed on women, who are often the most powerless political actors in the target country.⁹ David Rowe’s research on the effects of the sanctions regime on the Rhodesian government

⁵ The next two sections are an expanded and updated version of Drezner 2010.

⁶ See Rowe 2010 for a historical survey of the literature.

⁷ Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1992; Kaempfer, Lowenberg and Mertens 2004.

⁸ Kirshner, 1997, p. 33.

⁹ Buck, Gallant and Nossal 1998.

demonstrated how the target regime could manipulate the effects of sanctions to reward supporters and weaken opponents of the government.¹⁰

In the last decade, the emphasis of sanctions research has focused primarily on the political economy of authoritarian countries. As Susan Allen observes, more than 78% of sanctions in the past three decades were imposed on non-democratic target states.¹¹ As the data in Reynolds and Wan's chapter suggests, nonproliferation sanctions cases during the post-Cold War period are even more concentrated among close authoritarian economies.¹² Wintrobe and Bueno de Mesquita et al developed political economy models that could explain the incentives for non-democratic leaders when sanctions are imposed.¹³ In authoritarian regimes, leaders had an incentive to create private and excludable goods for supporters, as opposed to public goods for the mass citizenry. Comprehensive sanctions created the opportunity for target governments to allocate rent-seeking opportunities to those supporters. This policy response, would, if anything, increase an authoritarian regime's grip on power. Relying on this theoretical framework, a number of sanctions scholars argued that broad-based economic sanctions would have minimal effect on authoritarian targets.¹⁴ Smart sanctions that hurt key elites, on the other hand, would have a better chance of success without hurting the target country's mass public.

This research trend dovetailed nicely with the evolution in policymaking on sanctions.¹⁵ Smart sanctions could raise the target regime's costs of noncompliance while avoiding the collateral damage that comes with comprehensive trade embargoes. The most prominent country-wide examples included targeted financial sanctions, asset freezes, travel bans, restrictions on luxury goods, and arms embargoes. Furthermore, instead of sanctioning an entire country, smart sanctions advocates advocated the targeting of individuals, restrictions corporations or holding companies associated with the target government's leadership. Targeted sanctions would hamper the ability of leaders to offer crucial supporters rent-seeking opportunities.

Smart sanctions were an idea that created a useful ideational focal point of agreement among key stakeholders in the international system.¹⁶ U.N. Security Council members Russia, China and France grew frustrated by their inability to alter the sanctions regime once the initial measures were approved. At the same time, the United States and United Kingdom wanted to keep sanctions in the policy tool kit. For recalcitrant members of the Security Council, smart sanctions offered the opportunity to cooperate with the hegemonic actor in the international

¹⁰ Rowe 2001.

¹¹ Allen 2008a, p. 269.

¹² Solingen's observation in the introductory chapter about the divergent preferences of internationalizing vs. inward-looking coalitions is salient for the broad spectrum of possible nonproliferation cases. For the cases of concern in this chapter, however, it is safe to assert that inward-looking coalitions dominate their national economies.

¹³ Wintrobe 1990; Bueno de Mesquita et al 1999, 2003.

¹⁴ Brooks 2002; Lektzian and Souva 2007; Allen 2005, 2008a, 2008b.

¹⁵ Cortright and Lopez 2002; Brzoska 2003.

¹⁶ Garrett and Weingast 1993.

system. At the same time, smart sanctions would not impose excessive humanitarian costs or threaten lucrative trading relationships with target countries. For the United States and the United Kingdom, the targeted sanctions framework seemed like a more precise policy tool. For humanitarian and human rights activists, smart sanctions seemed the best way to enforce norms in the global system without imposing needless costs on the most powerless members in target societies.

A two-track process emerged to improve the use of targeted sanctions. Within the United Nations machinery, an ongoing series of sanctions committees were formed to monitor and assess the effect of different Security Council resolutions authorizing sanctions. In 2006, for example, the Security Council formed the 1718 committee for North Korea and the 1737 committee after the imposing sanctions against Iran. These committees had little enforcement power, and therefore acted only as a minimal deterrent against private actors engaging in sanctions-busting activity. These committees did succeed, however, in explicitly naming and shaming countries that were violating existing sanctions resolutions.¹⁷ Given the powerful norms of diplomatic comity at the United Nations, this move in and of itself represented a significant break from past practices in Turtle Bay.

Outside the Security Council, a series of conferences were convened to figure out how to improve the implementation of sanctions. These conferences demonstrated the tight linkage between scholars and policymakers on this issue.¹⁸ In 1998, the Swiss government convened the “Interlaken Process,” a rolling series of meetings designed to improve the practice of financial sanctions. The Interlaken process brought together government officials, private sector experts, and academics to hammer out the technicalities of imposing of sanctions. In 2001 the Swiss commissioned sanctions experts at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies to prepare a “how-to” sanctions manual, including a model Security Council resolution for future cases.¹⁹ The German governments followed up Interlaken with the Bonn-Berlin Process to focus exclusively on arms embargoes and travel sanctions. The Swedish government subsequently convened the Stockholm Process to improve the sanctions machinery at the United Nations. Uppsala University’s Department of Peace and Conflict Research provided significant expertise for the Stockholm process. Scholars and other experts participated in all three of these processes, which led to significant buy-in from key stakeholders.

Bipartisan support for targeted sanctions also emerged in the United States – particularly for financial sanctions. The Clinton administration embraced the idea as part of the Treasury Department’s initiative to combat financial abuse.²⁰ Financial countermeasures were developed to punish states and jurisdictions with lax anti-money laundering statutes. These acts of financial

¹⁷ Brzoska 2003.

¹⁸ Biersteker et al 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 17.

²⁰ Weschsler 2001.

statecraft proved effective in forcing target countries to alter their policies.²¹ Because the United States was the epicenter of global finance, international bankers needed access to U.S. capital markets to conduct international transactions. An advisory warning from the Treasury Department was sufficient to get foreign bankers to stop doing business with terrorist entities, for fear of losing access to American banking services. After the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Bush administration also embraced the smart sanctions initiatives.²²

By 2010, both the United Nations and the United States had internalized the idea of targeted sanctions. The United Nations has not implemented comprehensive sanctions for the past 15 years. The sanctions reform effort had a manifest impact on the ways that the UNSC authorized economic coercion. Biersteker et al and Foot observe that concerns about the humanitarian and human rights effects of sanctions increased the degree of due process within existing UN sanctions committees over the past decade.²³ Even the 1267 Committee, authorized to sanction individuals working with Al Qaeda, grew more sensitive to minimizing the humanitarian impact of the sanctions. Hawkins and Lloyd argue that “a new norm against comprehensive sanctions has become part of the shared understanding among states.”²⁴

The bipartisan consensus within the U.S. foreign policy community in favor of targeted sanctions has also deepened over time. Rose Gottemoeller, now U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation, concluded in early 2008 that smart sanctions “had been honed through the ‘war on terror’, and sanctions are hitting their targets among corrupt elites more often.”²⁵ Juan Zarate, a deputy national security advisor in George W. Bush’s administration, argued that the tools of financial statecraft “provide the United States and its allies the best source of diplomatic leverage to affect regimes’ behavior and calculus.”²⁶

ASSESSING SMART SANCTIONS

There are two ways to evaluate the performance of the smart sanctions framework in world politics. First, have smart sanctions ameliorated the humanitarian costs that more comprehensive sanctions create? Second, have targeted sanctions improved target state compliance? The evidence provides moderate support for smart sanctions being more humane but less effective than more comprehensive measures.

²¹ Drezner 2007, pp. 142-5.

²² Zarate 2009.

²³ Biersteker et al 2005; Foot 2007. For a review of the legal due process issues raised by the sanctioning of individuals in the United Nations Security Council, see Bianchi 2006.

²⁴ Hawkins and Lloyd 2003, p. 441.

²⁵ Gottemoeller 2008, p. 109.

²⁶ Zarate 2008, p. 55.

Recent research on the impact of economic coercion in the target country would appear to support the humanitarian arguments in favor of smart sanctions. Shagabutdinova and Berejikian examined HSE's pre-1990 sanctions data and found that financial sanctions were of shorter duration, lessening the suffering from target populations.²⁷ Wood analyzed the effect of economic sanctions on state repression using data from 1976 to 2001.²⁸ He found that comprehensive sanctions were likely to increase repression in authoritarian countries. In bivariate tests, Drury and Peksen find that the implementation of sanctions triggers drops in democracy and human rights scores in target governments.²⁹ Peksen also shows sanctions lead to a decline in both press freedoms and the physical integrity rights of individuals in target countries.³⁰ Furthermore, the decline in both sets of rights is greater if comprehensive sanctions are imposed rather than targeted sanctions.

These results suggest that, all else equal, targeted sanctions are a more humane policy tool. However, not all else is equal. Paradoxically, there are a number of conditions under which comprehensive sanctions appear to be better at ameliorating suffering in the target country. As Solingen suggests in her introduction, and as the econometric literature of the past decade confirms, comprehensive sanctions are more likely to trigger quick concessions if the target state is a democracy.³¹ The goal of the sanctions episode also matters. If the sender's aim is regime change, then sanctions that impose larger costs have a greater likelihood of success.³² Nikolay Marinov found that sanctions of any stripe tended to reduce the staying power of the target government; military action, in contrast, increased the duration of the government in power.³³ Major and McGann argue that there might be instances when sanctioning the "innocent bystanders" in the target country will be more likely to produce target concessions.³⁴ Most intriguingly, comprehensive sanctions were most useful in bringing about a quicker end to civil wars. Both Gershenson and Escribà-Folch found that comprehensive embargoes were more effective than targeted sanctions at ending intrastate conflicts.³⁵

Smart sanctions are less promising in coercing the target government into making concessions. After reviewing the United Nations sanctions during the 1990s, Cortright and Lopez note that "the obvious conclusion is that comprehensive sanctions are more effective than targeted or selective measures. Where economic and social impact have been greatest, political effects have also been most significant."³⁶ Elliott arrived at a similar conclusion: "with the exception of

²⁷ Shagabutdinova and Jeffrey Berejikian 2007..

²⁸ Wood 2008.

²⁹ Peksen and Drury 2009.

³⁰ Peksen 2009, Peksen 2010.

³¹ Bolks and Al-Sowayel 2000; Brooks 2002; Bolks and Al-Sowayel 2000; Brooks 2002; Lektzian and Souva 2007; Allen 2005, 2008a.

³² Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997.

³³ Marinov 2005.

³⁴ Major and McGann 2005.

³⁵ Gershenson 2003; Escribà-Folch 2010.

³⁶ Cortright and Lopez 2002, p. 8.

Libya, the results of UN targeted sanctions have been disappointing.”³⁷ In their review essay, Tostensen and Bull concluded: “the optimism expressed in some academic circles and among decision makers at national and international levels appears largely unjustified.”³⁸ At a 2010 International Studies Association panel on the topic, many of the scholarly architects of the smart sanctions approach agreed that, compared to comprehensive sanctions, the policy results had been mixed at best.³⁹

There are case studies that demonstrate the utility of targeted sanctions, including one instance of nonproliferation. The exemplar case is the sanctions placed on Libya to renounce aiding terrorism, and, later, its weapons of mass destruction programs. That episode, however, also shows the limits of targeted sanctions. A welter of different policy tools were used to get Libya to alter course, including back-channel negotiations, the Proliferation Security Initiative, and the unspoken threat of invasion after Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was the combination of these policy tools – as well as Muhammad Khaddafi’s quixotic nature – that led to Libya’s acquiescence.⁴⁰

There have been more extensive investigations into the two most common forms of targeted sanctions – arms embargoes and financial statecraft.⁴¹ The results have been underwhelming. Tierney evaluates arms embargoes in civil wars across five criteria for success, including their symbolic impact. He concludes that “much of the impact of UN arms embargoes in civil wars can be summarized as irrelevance or malevolence.”⁴² Fruchart et al reach a similar conclusion.⁴³ Brzoska offers a slightly more hopeful assessment. He points to clear successes, such as the 1993-2003 arms embargo of Angola. He also argues that there has been an increasing amount of effectiveness over time in halting the transfer of weapons to armed combatants.⁴⁴ Qualifying this result as a “success,” however, is problematic. As both Damrosch and Tierney observe, arms embargoes can have malevolent distributional effects. They reward the actor possessing the largest *ex ante* cache of weapons – which is often the actor responsible for the most egregious war crimes.⁴⁵ Brzoska also acknowledges that, over time, arms embargoes have been less successful in altering the behavior of target countries, working less than 8% of the time.⁴⁶ Paradoxically, however, sender country satisfaction with arms embargoes has increased over time – suggesting that the political virtues of smart sanctions trump the policy virtues.

³⁷ Elliott 2002, p. 171.

³⁸ Tostensen and Bull 2002, p. 402.

³⁹ “UN Sanctions: A Model of Scholar/Practitioner Collaboration?” roundtable at the International Studies Association annual meeting, New Orleans, LA, February 2010.

⁴⁰ Jentleson and Christopher Whytock 2005/06.

⁴¹ The literature assessing travel bans is much more sparse. Cortright and Lopez 2002, pp. 133-148 provide a mixed assessment.

⁴² Tierney 2005, p. 661.

⁴³ Fruchart et al 2007.

⁴⁴ Brzoska 2008.

⁴⁵ Damrosch 1994; Tierney 2005.

⁴⁶ Brzoska 2008.

The literature on financial statecraft is somewhat more upbeat. Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott originally found in bivariate tests that financial sanctions had a better track record of success than trade sanctions.⁴⁷ Shagabudinova and Berejikian replicated that finding in multivariate tests, confirming that financial sanctions are more effective.⁴⁸ These results are based on pre-1990 episodes, however, and principally involve aid cutoffs – it is far from clear whether these results would carry over into modern financial sanctions.⁴⁹ There is evidence that financial sanctions have been useful in coercing countries into changing their anti-money laundering rules.⁵⁰

It is not clear, however, whether financial statecraft alone will be as successful on issues more highly valued by the target regime – such as a nuclear program.⁵¹ Steil and Litan surveyed recent efforts by the United States to use capital market access to force policy changes in Sudan, Russia and China. They found that all the targeted entities were able to find alternative sources of financing at minimal cost, concluding, “rarely has so powerful a force been harnessed by so many interests with such passion to so little effect.”⁵² A collaborative effort to examine efforts at monetary statecraft reached a similar conclusion: “among the central findings of our study are the substantial impediments to the efficient exercise of monetary power as a deliberate instrument of economic statecraft.... The tools of monetary statecraft... are often too blunt to be effective when they would most be desired and too diffuse to be directed at particular targets without incurring substantial damage.”⁵³

THINKING ABOUT SANCTIONS IN AN ECLECTIC MANNER

Targeted sanctions have led to, at best, uneven results. If one widens the definition of success to include goals like international and domestic symbolism,⁵⁴ then targeted sanctions have been a roaring success. If one keeps the definition of success focused on the concessions made by the target country, then smart sanctions have consistently underperformed more comprehensive efforts. This is particularly surprising given that targeted sanctions rest on strong theoretical foundations. Bueno de Mesquita *et al* represent the state of the art in terms of rational choice

⁴⁷ Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott 1990.

⁴⁸ Shagabudinova and Berejikian 2007.

⁴⁹ These results also suffer from omitted variable bias. Aid flows are strongly correlated with alliance relationships, which Shagabudinova and Berejikian did not include in their regression analysis.

⁵⁰ Drezner 2007 chapter 5.

⁵¹ Ang and Peksen 2007.

⁵² Steil and Litan 2006.

⁵³ Andrews 2005, p. 25.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Baldwin 1985 and Lindsay 1986.

analyses of coalition governments.⁵⁵ Given the heavy intellectual and theoretical artillery deployed in support of targeted sanctions, why have they worked so poorly?

An approach grounded in analytic eclecticism offers some possible guidance on this question. Analytic eclecticism defines itself in contradistinction to particular research traditions or theoretical paradigms. By focusing on empirical problems rather than puzzles that bedevil a particular paradigm, an eclectic approach can draw from multiple theoretical approaches to attack a policy problem.⁵⁶ Conventional research traditions generate useful theoretical and empirical work, but can also develop conceptual blinders about causal mechanisms that do not conform to their own model's internal logic.⁵⁷ An analytically eclectic approach emphasizes explanatory power over the value of parsimony. Analytical eclecticism stresses pragmatism over rigor, focuses on substantive policy problems over analytical puzzles, and – most importantly, for our concerns – concentrates on the role that complexity and the multiplicity of causal processes plays in determining outcomes. As Sil and Katzenstein put it:⁵⁸

[Specific research traditions], proceeding on the basis of particular ontological and epistemological assumptions, implicitly or explicitly focus attention on certain types of mechanisms while ignoring or defining away others. Analytic eclecticism, by contrast, offers complex causal stories that incorporate different types of mechanisms as defined and used in diverse research traditions. That is, rather than privilege any specific conception of causal mechanism, analytic eclecticism seeks to trace the problem-specific interactions among a wide range of mechanisms operating within or across different domains and levels of social reality.

An analytically eclectic approach to economic statecraft brings into stark relief the difference between targeted sanctions and more comprehensive sanctions. To be sure, multiple research traditions criticized the notion of comprehensive sanctions. The targeted sanctions approach, however, is firmly rooted within a particular model of the target government – a foreign policy leader that needs to placate at least a majority of the selectorate with material benefits in order to remain in power. The theory behind these measures assumes sanctions will have no effect unless an authoritarian government's elite supporters are economically disadvantaged. Causal mechanisms that do not affect the target state's elite supporters are summarily dismissed or ignored.

In contrast, consider the multiple causal pathways through which sanctions could lead to an authoritarian target government to alter an undesired policy:

⁵⁵ Bueno de Mesquita et al 1999, 2003. In a related vein, see Acemogly and Robinson 2005.

⁵⁶ Katzenstein and Okawara 2001/02, p. 183.

⁵⁷ Analytic eclecticism also has its drawbacks. Katzenstein and Okawara (2001/02, 184) acknowledge that, “this approach may be too flexible to define by itself a research program capable of mobilizing strong political preferences and enduring professional ties.”

⁵⁸ Sil and Katzenstein 2010, p. 419.

1. Sanctions harm a target country's elite supporters, forcing the government to acquiesce in order to stay in power;
2. Multilateral sanctions signal normative disapproval by the rest of the international community; the target government alters its policies so as to avoid being ostracized;
3. Sanctions imperils a country's strategic standing vis-à-vis its enduring rivals. Making a *realpolitik* cost-benefit decision, the target regime alters its policies;
4. Sanctions trigger popular unrest; the target regime, fearing domestic instability, alters its policies;
5. Sanctions trigger popular unrest, which leads to regime change. The new regime alters its policies;
6. Sanctions deny the target state the ability to implement its preferred policy;
7. The act of sanctions signals to a target's military that force will soon be used, leading them to force a change in policy.
8. A key ally signs onto a multilateral sanctions effort, signaling a worsening strategic position to the target leadership; it therefore concedes.

Some of these causal pathways share some of the same components, but they rest on different theoretical foundations. Some are realist, some rely on domestic coalitions, some are rational choice, some are constructivist, and some are based on theories of political mobilization. To use the language of Lakatos, each different theoretical tradition focuses on the causal mechanisms consistent with its own negative heuristic. An eclectic, problem-oriented approach posits that all of these pathways are *possible* causal mechanisms through which sanctions could influence target behavior. It then asks how the range of sanctions (from very targeted to very comprehensive) affects the probability of each causal mechanisms. An analytically eclectic approach asks *cui bono* (who benefits), but also asks *quo modo bono* (how do they benefit).

The central insight of the targeted sanctions framework has been to point out the ways in which comprehensive trade sanctions can enrich the selectorate of an authoritarian state. As Escribà-Folch and Wright observe, “much of the sanctions literature makes the strong assumption that dictators are able to capture the rents associated with economic sanctions and that the subsequent increase in resources available to payoff political supporters stabilizes their rule.”⁵⁹ It is therefore safe to assume that more comprehensive sanctions undercut the first causal mechanism listed above. If costly sanctions undercut multilateral cooperation, then the second causal mechanism would be circumscribed as well.

⁵⁹ Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010.

On the other hand, the greater the cost of the sanctions to the target state, the more likely the *other* six posited causal mechanisms would be expected to work. Sanctions that impose significant costs on the target economy are more likely to produce concessions.⁶⁰ Indeed, in almost all of the statistical work, the cost of sanctions to the target country is positively and significantly correlated with successful outcomes. Regardless of regime type, costly sanctions are also more likely to trigger regime change.⁶¹ Personalist authoritarian regimes are particularly vulnerable to serious sanctions.⁶² Smart sanctions can work via one or two causal mechanisms; comprehensive sanctions can work via four or five different causal mechanisms. It is certainly true that authoritarian regimes can use countermeasures, such as greater investments in repression and private goods for coalition supporters, to blunt the effect of sanctions. The more causal mechanisms that are in play, however, the more difficult it becomes for the target regime to block the intended effect of sanctions.

None of this is to argue that comprehensive sanctions should be used over targeted sanctions in all instances. There are two additional factors to consider. First, as Solingen points out in her introduction, the nature of domestic institutions affects the target regime's ability to effectively thwart each of these causal mechanisms. These institutions go beyond the simple dichotomy of democratic and authoritarian states. Different type of authoritarian states – one-party states, theocracies, military dictatorships, personalist regimes – might have different capabilities.⁶³ Personalist regimes are uniquely vulnerable to economic sanctions, while resource-rich regimes are better able to resist economic pressure.

The second factor to consider is the negative policy externalities associated with each kind of sanctions alternative. Nonproliferation is an important issue, but the initial advocates of smart sanctions were correct to point out the humanitarian costs of comprehensive sanctions. Focusing strictly on the effect of sanctions on nonproliferation outcomes leads to poliheuristic decision-making, in which one policy dimension is focused on to the exclusion of all others.⁶⁴ Beyond the humanitarian costs, comprehensive sanctions create other negative policy externalities. As Peter Andreas has demonstrated, trade sanctions encourage the creation of organized crime syndicates and transnational smuggling networks.⁶⁵ Sanctions do not just weaken the rule of law in the target country – they weaken the rule of law in bordering countries and monitoring organizations as well. This corruption has a path dependent quality, persisting long after sanctions have been lifted.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997; Morgan and Schwebach 1997; Drezner 1999.

⁶¹ Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997; Marinov 2005.

⁶² Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Redd 2002.

⁶⁵ Andreas 2005.

⁶⁶ For example, according to the Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index, the five most corrupt countries in the world were subject to trade sanctions in the 1990's.

An eclectic approach must therefore consider all of these criteria before considering the optimal statecraft approach towards potential proliferating states. The next section considers the salient facts with respect to Iran and North Korea.

USING AN ECLECTIC FRAMEWORK TO ASSESS IRAN AND NORTH KOREA

In thinking about Iran and North Korea, there are many arguments in favor of continuing a smart sanctions approach. The humanitarian disaster in North Korea appears to be worsening – sanctions of any kind will not help matters much.⁶⁷ As Alireza Nader's chapter in this volume demonstrates, Iran has a much more vibrant civil society. Ever since the June 2009 uprisings the leaders of the Green Movement have forsworn further sanctions, arguing that any further pain caused by economic coercion will be blamed on the West instead of the Ahmadinejad/Khamenei regime.

Most expert assessments place little faith in the ability of additional sanctions to end Iran's nuclear program or eliminate North Korea's nuclear stockpile. The Islamic Republic has been under some form of embargo for its entire existence, and the regime has gotten comfortable with them. Saeed Jalili, Iran's lead negotiator on the nuclear, bragged to *Der Spiegel* in September of 2009: "do you really believe there are sanctions that can hit us that hard? We've lived with sanctions for thirty years, and they can't bring a great nation like Iran to its knees. They do not frighten us. Quite the opposite – we welcome new sanctions."⁶⁸ While this is pure bluster, the sanctions have accelerated the IRGC's takeover of key sectors of the Iranian economy.⁶⁹

What applies to Iran applies to North Korea with even greater force. The DPRK has been one of the most heavily sanctioned regimes in history. They have been sanctioned far longer and far harsher than the Islamic Republic. Despite this economic pressure, the personalist regime of Kim Il Sung and his progeny have persisted for more than a half-century. The nonproliferation-specific sanctions appear to have zero effect on the regime's nuclear program.

Does this mean that more comprehensive sanctions would not work? That is unclear, because two shifts have taken place in both countries in recent years. First, both regimes have mismanaged their economies even more badly than usual. Indeed, the greatest weakness of the current regime in Iran has been their mismanagement of the economy. Despite an unprecedented oil boom, Iran's corruption and macroeconomic mismanagement have kept its economy in a sclerotic state.⁷⁰ Its inflation rate has climbed over 10%. According to *Foreign Policy's* Failed State Index, the income of Iran's top twenty percent rose more than four times as fast as that of

⁶⁷ See, for example, Sharon LaFraniere, "Views Show How North Korea Policy Spread Misery," *New York Times*, June 9, 2010.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Maloney 2010, p. 142.

⁶⁹ Ansari 2010.

⁷⁰ Data in this paragraph comes from Maloney 2010.

the bottom quintile between 2005 and 2007. The government is concerned about the popular backlash that will come from ending more than \$40 billion in consumer subsidies. Iran's regime is succeeding in making itself less dependent on foreign imports of gasoline, but more comprehensive sanctions that encompass the energy sector would raise the price of gasoline.

As for North Korea, the country's economic plight has only gotten worse in recent years. The data is incontrovertible: infant and maternal mortality rates jumped at more than 30 percent from 1993 to 2008. Life expectancy fell by three years during the same period.⁷¹ The UN's World Food Program says one in three North Korean children under the age of 5 goes malnourished.⁷² All of this took place before the November 2009 currency reform, which badly roiled the economy and managed to spark public protests.⁷³ It also took place before the sinking of the *Cheonan*, which triggered trade sanctions from South Korea and the United States. North Korean analysts now expect the DPRK's economy to contract in 2010. Even elite Party officials are taking second jobs and demanding bribes in order to maintain their income.⁷⁴ While North Korea has provided plenty of bluster in response to those sanctions, it also signaled a desire for Western tourism.⁷⁵ DPRK spokesmen have also stressed their desire to preserve the Kaesong special economic zone – located on DPRK soil, using North Korean workers and South Korean capital.

The worsening economies in both countries also highlight the political fragility of both regimes. In Iran, the Green Movement highlighted the internecine conflicts within Iran. Although the current leadership has temporarily succeeded in quelling that movement, long time Iran-watchers believe that the June protests revealed deep fissures in the Iranian regime. Since the crackdown, further discontent in the Majlis and among the bazaar have been revealed.⁷⁶ In protest of proposed tax hikes by the Ahmadinejad regime, for example, the bazaar merchants went on strike for two weeks in the summer of 2010. At a minimum, this suggests that the discontent with the Iranian regime is based as much on economics as politics.

This data suggests that both regimes might be vulnerable to enhanced economic pressure. That said, an analytically eclectic approach must ask additional questions of both countries. What kind of authoritarian regime type best characterizes Iran and North Korea? What would be the regional impact of additional sanctions?

⁷¹ LaFraniere, "Views Show How North Korea Policy Spread Misery."

⁷² See <http://www.wfp.org/countries/korea-democratic-peoples-republic-dprk>, accessed July 2010.

⁷³ Blaine Harden, "In N. Korea, a strong movement recoils at Kim Jong Il's attempt to limit wealth," *Washington Post*, December 27, 2009; John S. Park, "North Korea's Currency Redenomination: A Tipping Point?" U.S. Institute of Peace, December 3, 2009. Accessed at <http://www.usip.org/resources/north-korea-s-currency-revaluation-tipping-point>, July 2010.

⁷⁴ LaFraniere, "Views Show How North Korea Policy Spread Misery."

⁷⁵ Christian Oliver, "North Korea to allow more US visitors," *Financial Times*, January 14, 2010; .

⁷⁶ See, for example, Anderson 2010.

Neither regime is easy to characterize, but some distinctions can be made. North Korea now looks like a much more personalist regime than Iran. Numerous commentators have observed the extent to which Kim Il Sung and then Kim Jong Il have promoted their own cults of personality. This has affected Kim's current political strategy. Although North Korea is nominally a one-party state, in recent years Kim bolstered the power of the DPRK's military at the expense of the Korean Worker Party's power base.⁷⁷ Since his reported stroke in the fall of 2008, he has taken hasty measures to install his youngest son Kim Jong-Un as his successor.⁷⁸ In contrast to Kim's own rise to power, however, there have been minimal and belated efforts to burnish the younger Kim's credentials. While the 2010 Korean Workers Party Congress promoted Kim Jong-Un to a four-star general, observers in Pyongyang found a decided lack of enthusiasm for the younger Kim.⁷⁹ Powerful rivals have died recently, ostensibly due to accidents.⁸⁰ Daniel Bynam and Jennifer Lind conclude that, "the regime has not laid the groundwork for a smooth transition."⁸¹ They predict contestation among the selectorate if Kim Jong Il should pass away unexpectedly.

Iran's leadership is more decentralized than North Korea's. Clearly, multiple centers of power exist – Khamenei as Supreme Leader, Ahmadinejad as President, Ali Larijani as the head of the Iranian parliament. Although Khamenei's status as Supreme Leader suggests a personalist focus, the presence of more representative forms of government augment rather than undercut Khamenei's position in power. Iran is clearly a theocracy, and the leadership has relied increasingly on the coercive apparatus of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).⁸² The Islamic Republic is not a personalist regime, however.

The regional effect of more comprehensive sanctions is also different between the two cases. The negative policy externalities of comprehensive sanctions against Iran are greater than those involved with North Korea. Iran has borders with two very weak states – Iraq and Afghanistan. Comprehensive trade sanctions would encourage corruption in both of these countries, where large numbers of U.S. armed forces are located. At the same time, any sanctions that cut off Iran's oil supply would reverberate across global energy markets. Sympathizers with Iran's anti-American and anti-Israeli stance are scattered across the Arab Middle East. Despite the Sunni-Shia split, tighter sanctions could foment greater anti-Americanism across the region.

North Korea is far more isolated than Iran. It is surrounded by stronger states – China, Russia and South Korea. Tighter sanctions would not really discomfit anyone living outside of North

⁷⁷ McEachern 2008.

⁷⁸ Christian Oliver, "North Korea: Drastic Dynastics," *Financial Times*, July 6, 2010.

⁷⁹ "Spinning the Wrong 'Un,'" *Economist*, October 14, 2010.

⁸⁰ See Chico Harlan, "Kim Jong Il appoints Jang Song Taek caretaker for Kim Jong Eun," *Washington Post*, August 16, 2010.

⁸¹ Bynam and Lind 2010.

⁸² Ansari 2010.

Korea.⁸³ The DPRK produces little of value to the outside world, and they do not have a large enough consumer base to provoke significant amounts of sanctions-busting. Indeed, the negative externalities of squeezing Pyongyang are largely based on what would happen if the sanctions worked. China is fearful of a steady exodus of refugees. South Korea is worried about the costs of rebuilding North Korea. Every other country is worried about the prospect of a reunified Korea. Many commentators have observed the growth of illicit border trade between North Koreans and Chinese. This has little to do with existing sanctions, however – and is anyways illegal in the DPRK. It would appear, however, that this corruption has only weakened the North Korean state.⁸⁴ Officials in border areas appear to receive more in bribes than they receive from Pyongyang.

A nonproliferation approach grounded in analytical eclecticism would appear to support the ratcheting up of pressure against the North Korean state. As a personalist regime in the middle of a delicate succession crisis, the DPRK is vulnerable to more comprehensive economic sanctions. Any measures should exempt the cross-border trade between China and North Korea, as that exchange benefits the North Korean people at the expense of the government. The full spectrum of financial sanctions, a shutdown of Kaesong, and the robust enforcement of the interdiction regime to prevent the exchange of illicit arms have a greater likelihood of toppling the DPRK regime than smart sanctions alone. Furthermore, because North Korea already possesses nuclear weapons, regime change is more likely to lead to concessions than negotiating with the current leadership. The negative policy externalities are limited, and the rule of law in neighboring states is unlikely to be eroded. None of this is to guarantee the fall of Pyongyang's communist dictatorship if these sanctions are imposed. We are dealing in a world of contingent probabilities, and North Korea's repressive apparatus is formidable.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, more comprehensive represents the best of a bad set of probabilities.

More comprehensive sanctions against Iran are less likely to work. Such sanctions might impose greater hardships on the regime. Nevertheless, Iran's government retains far more popular support than North Korea's. Comprehensive sanctions would weaken the rule of law in neighboring states, most particularly Iraq and Afghanistan. These are already failed states – another opportunity for corruption in these countries would not advance the interests of either the United States or the international community. If not comprehensive sanctions, then what? Perhaps comprehensive engagement. Blanketing Iran with carrots could empower the groups necessary to advocate for policy change within the regime. Policymakers might believe that more targeted inducements would be better; a targeted approach would presumably be more likely to benefit the groups most sympathetic to policy change.

⁸³ Haggard and Noland 2008.

⁸⁴ Harden, "In N. Korea, a strong movement recoils at Kim Jong Il's attempt to limit wealth"; Park, "North Korea's Currency Redenomination."

⁸⁵ Haggard and Noland 2010.

Such an approach would be shortsighted and hubristic, however. The hubris would come from the west's belief that it can once again detect the key Iranian moderates necessary to foment change. If past history is any guide, it suggests that the United States and its allies have abjectly failed at determining which moderates are reliable and which are conning western policymakers. Such an approach would also be shortsighted. The Iranian leadership has already been able to identify and persecute internal adversaries by accusing them of receiving support from the United States. The Iranian leadership is extremely sensitive to the possibility of the United States triggering a "Velvet Revolution."⁸⁶ Now consider the implications of using a scattershot approach, benefiting both regime supporters and adversaries. It would be tougher for Iran's leadership to identify "enemies of the state" by their acceptance of western funds.

Advocates of targeted sanctions have been adroit in their rhetorical tropes. By definition, "smart sanctions" sounds better than the alternative. Furthermore, advocates of smart sanctions contrasted their theoretical model of how sanctions worked in the target country with the "naïve theory" of sanctions that assumed greater costs equaled greater concessions.⁸⁷ The obvious implication was that sanctions scholarship that assumed states to be unitary state actors were less sophisticated than work that allowed second image variables to play a causal role. Targeted sanctions have offered a solution for multiple political problems, without seeming to compromise the policy effectiveness of economic coercion.

The focus on smart sanctions also suggests the seductive danger of focusing excessively on precise causal mechanisms and process-tracing in the development of policy-relevant research.⁸⁸ Excessive attention to one causal process can blind researchers and policymakers to the possibility that there can be substitutable causal processes at work. Multiple pathways can exist through which an independent policy variable affects the outcome. Smart sanctions offer only one causal pathway to success – elite dissatisfaction. If that pathway is blocked by target countermeasures, then smart sanctions will not achieve their desired result. Sanctions that impose greater costs on the target state might offer multiple pathways – mass unrest, elite dissatisfaction, regime change – through which the target government must acquiesce. An approach grounded in analytical eclecticism would help sanctions scholars avoid the dangerous charge of policy naiveté.

⁸⁶ Anderson 2010.

⁸⁷ Brzoska 2003, p. 520.

⁸⁸ George and Bennett 2005.

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