





# The effect of economic sanctions on the severity of genocides or politicides

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## The effect of economic sanctions on the severity of genocides or politicides

Matthew Krain

### ABSTRACT


This study examines the effect of economic sanctions on the severity of ongoing instances of genocide or politicide. Research suggests that sanctions exacerbate human rights conditions, yet influential policymakers, human rights advocates and some scholars continue to call for economic sanctions to mitigate ongoing atrocities. Ordered logit analyses of genocides and politicides from 1976 to 2008 reveal that sanctions neither aggravate atrocities, as some of the academic literature expects, nor alleviate them, as assumed by many policymakers and advocates (and some researchers). These findings hold regardless of whether they are measured as the number or presence of sanctions, cost, level of comprehensiveness, duration or whether imposed or administered by an international organization. Threats of sanctions also have no effect on atrocity severity, either on their own or combined with other policy options.


### Introduction

Genocides and politicides have become regular occurrences in the international system.<sup>1</sup> Their persistence and savagery often yields simultaneous horror and ineptness from members of the international community. Given the chaos that results from atrocities and related state failure, the moral failure of allowing the slaughter of civilians targeted because of their identity, and the commitment by the international community to the norms of civilian protection and the doctrine of a Responsibility to Protect (R2P), it is incumbent upon scholars and policymakers to determine how best to respond in situations of ongoing systematic mass killing.

One approach that slows or stops the killing once it has begun is overt military intervention against perpetrators.<sup>2</sup> However, this approach may be politically untenable, or under certain circumstances may even cause more harm than good.<sup>3</sup> Naming and shaming by the media, and international governmental and non-governmental organizations may ameliorate human rights violations more generally, but its effectiveness is still debated.<sup>4</sup> Encouragingly, recent research suggests that naming and shaming can play a role in reducing the severity of campaigns of mass killing,<sup>5</sup> though not their duration.<sup>6</sup>

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There is a middle ground between these choices, one that policymakers frequently stake out. Leaders of states and international governmental organizations (IGOs) often employ economic sanctions to demonstrate displeasure with or try to change other actors' policies, and routinely call for sanctions in the face of ongoing atrocities. While economic sanctions are popular policy options with policymakers and may be useful in shortening the duration of atrocities,<sup>7</sup> the evidence seems to suggest that sanctions are tools ill-suited to reducing the severity of the mass murder of targeted groups. Are economic sanctions effective tools for alleviating the slaughter in ongoing instances of mass killings?

This study tests the effectiveness of economic sanctions in reducing the severity of ongoing instances of genocide or politicide. I begin by reviewing the arguments and evidence regarding the relationship between economic sanctions and the severity of ongoing atrocities. I then test whether any of these arguments find support. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings for policy.

## The arguments

### *Why economic sanctions might mitigate genocide/politicide severity*

Genocides are mass killings in which the victims are defined by association with a particular communal group, while in politicides victims are defined primarily in terms of their hierarchical position or political opposition to the regime and dominant groups.<sup>8</sup> Both are lethal policies carried out by a sovereign entity against civilians, where there is intent on the part of the perpetrator to destroy the target group 'in whole or in part'. They are rare but regularly occurring horrific events that the international community has committed to stopping, but which persist nonetheless.<sup>9</sup>

In the face of ongoing atrocities, influential policymakers<sup>10</sup> and some scholars and human rights advocates have been vocal in calling for the use, or threat, of economic sanctions against perpetrators.<sup>11</sup> Laws such as the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006, in which US lawmakers acted to 'impose sanctions against individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity',<sup>12</sup> are fairly common responses by policymakers in the face of killing that they have neither the wherewithal nor the stomach to try to address in other ways. Assuming that these actions are not just 'cheap talk',<sup>13</sup> the primary logic of imposing sanctions to stop ongoing atrocities seems to be that sanctions will impose sufficient costs to make perpetrators rethink the utility of the atrocities.

Genocides and politicides are murderous strategies devised and implemented by perpetrators to counter threats to power and solve their most difficult problems. Perpetrators make rational but horrific calculations about whether to employ such atrocities, and choose mass murder if targeting populations for elimination reaps benefits without incurring significant countervailing costs.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, international actors interested in reducing the severity of targeted mass killing should focus on raising the costs of such murderous policies.<sup>15</sup>

An occasionally effective approach involves challenging the perpetrators of atrocities, whether by military intervention or naming and shaming.<sup>16</sup> Policymakers clearly expect similar results in instances in which states and international organizations impose economic sanctions against states engaging in atrocities, challenging perpetrators' actions

and framing them as norm violators and untrustworthy partners or allies. Directly challenging the perpetrator via economic sanctions might change perpetrator perceptions of the costs of continuing the slaughter, and thus should lead to a change in the severity of the ongoing killing.

For this strategy to be successful, actors employing it must first signal a shift in the global context from permissive to prohibitive, and also make any current or future threat of action against perpetrators credible. If the killing has already begun, the perpetrators have evaluated the international context and decided that there is a degree of permissiveness sufficient to allow them to commit atrocities without consequence.<sup>17</sup> They have not been deterred at least in part because they view the credibility or resolve of potential interveners as low, or that the costs likely to be imposed are minimal. Yet perpetrators may not have accurately assessed the level of scrutiny and condemnation that their actions would incur,<sup>18</sup> nor how destabilizing sanctions actually are to leadership. Both domestically and internationally, the imposition of sanctions leads to a more destabilized political situation, which imposes further costs on perpetrators.<sup>19</sup>

If perpetrators had correctly calculated these effects, then the costs associated with actually implemented sanctions would have been factored in to the original decision to kill, and we might expect to see no change in their murderous behaviour. On the other hand, in some cases 'the potency of sanctions [becomes] clear only after they are imposed'.<sup>20</sup> In such situations, the move from threats to the imposition of sanctions (and the maintenance of sanctions for sufficient time) may change perpetrator perceptions of the sender's determination or the degree of permissiveness of the international environment, and we should expect to see a change in behaviour.<sup>21</sup>

A secondary logic behind why policymakers or advocates might call for sanctions in the face of atrocities is that such action labels perpetrators as norm violators, which in turn will lead to costs imposed by others in the international community. Like naming and shaming, sanctions against human rights violations bring atrocities to light, and create common understandings of the actions of perpetrators across the international community. Perpetrators' actions are no longer 'unseen', hidden from scrutiny.<sup>22</sup> Now acting publicly, perpetrators may change their behaviour, especially if they believe that relevant actors will continue to pay attention and to impose further costs if the killing continues unabated. Since implemented sanctions actually impose tangible costs to the sender, they are costly signals of disapproval suggesting to perpetrators that future sanctions, be they diplomatic, economic or military, are likely.<sup>23</sup>

Economic sanctions also affect the relationship between perpetrators and their (potential) allies or partners. Framing perpetrators as international pariahs makes it harder for others to support or do business with them without being similarly labelled.<sup>24</sup> States with problematic human rights records receive less foreign direct investment (FDI), less portfolio investment and fewer arms exports, than states with better rights records.<sup>25</sup> Sanctioned states face reductions in FDI,<sup>26</sup> and developing states explicitly framed as human rights violators by human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) see reductions in FDI by multinational corporations.<sup>27</sup> Perpetrators have much to lose in terms of reputation and standing from sanctions when they are imposed effectively.

Public condemnation lends credibility to victims' claims, and suggests that perpetrators are beyond the bounds of acceptability with regard to the human rights norms of the international community. This has the effect of framing perpetrator states as 'rogues' or

'pariahs'.<sup>28</sup> Bystanders can then be pressured to act in order to distance their own identities from those of the perpetrators or become accessories. This also enhances the credibility of any threats made by potential challengers, as they will require a sustained commitment to the threatened sanction in order to sustain both this identification within the international society and their reputation within the international system. Sanctions damage their reputations with potential allies, partners or donors, and signal to other actors that they, too, can legitimately sanction perpetrator states at will.<sup>29</sup>

Those who choose to act can use sanctions to impose real material or political costs on perpetrators. Sanctions may push other states to place political or economic sanctions on the target states or on the perpetrators themselves.<sup>30</sup> Labelling a state a pariah lowers prohibitions on challenging perpetrators, and makes targeting perpetrators with further political or economic sanctions or with military action more likely.<sup>31</sup> These actions impose additional domestic political costs on perpetrators, beyond reputation effects, such as the loss of future aid or trade.<sup>32</sup> Sanctions suggest a weakened government to potential international and domestic challengers, even in autocratic regimes.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, while perpetrators often attempt to hide behind sovereignty, '[s]anctions are another indicator that sovereignty is no longer sacrosanct'.<sup>34</sup> Even if they do not yield change directly, 'sanctions may still be worth pursuing as a means to catalyze international action'.<sup>35</sup>

States may not wish to sanction human rights infractions directly for a variety of political or economic reasons, but might use multilateral organizations to send the same message without incurring these costs.<sup>36</sup> Unlike international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) or the media, states and IGOs can increase real costs to perpetrators directly by sanctioning them, politically or economically.<sup>37</sup>

In sum, sanctions: create common knowledge about human rights abuses; frame perpetrators as violating international norms and as untrustworthy partners in future interactions; publicly signal international disapproval to perpetrators, their allies, partners or donors, and to domestic challengers; pressure other states and/or IGOs to act upon the information rather than remaining as bystanders; and ultimately may make continuing the rights violations in question a more costly strategy, both domestically and internationally. Perpetrators may change their behaviour if they cannot risk the loss of power, resources, allies or legitimacy that inaction in the face of such condemnation would bring. Assuming that they legitimately believe that sanctions will be effective, advocates of the use of sanctions to mitigate atrocities may expect that sanctions will force perpetrators to reduce the severity of ongoing targeted killing campaigns in order to shift the spotlight, save their reputation, reframe their identity, maintain international legitimacy and domestic viability and ease pressure placed on them by states or international organizations.

*Hypothesis 1: Economic sanctions vs. perpetrators of ongoing genocides or politicides reduce their severity.*

### ***Why economic sanctions should be ineffective at mitigating genocide/politicide severity***

Despite the logic described above, there is ample reason to expect that economic sanctions will have no impact on the severity of ongoing atrocities. The primary assumption

in the extensive literature on sanctions is that the logic of sanctions is 'to generate costs for a state that is judged to be in violation of international law and, thereby, to induce policy change'.<sup>38</sup> While still debated, the preponderance of the evidence seems to indicate that more often than not sanctions do not accomplish that goal. On the whole, research with varying definitions of success finds that sanctions work, at best, roughly one third of the time, and at worst only five per cent of the time.<sup>39</sup> Explanations of ineffectiveness include: the target's ability to shift or avoid the costs of sanctions to the sender's inability or unwillingness to impose them; the type of regime imposing or receiving the sanction; the strength of the sanctions regime itself; and the sender's ability to monitor and enforce the sanctions.<sup>40</sup>

Of course, sanctions may be ineffective in no small part because policymakers use sanctions for political or strategic reasons—as 'cheap talk'—so as to be able to claim that they acted without actually having to do anything, or for other domestic political reasons.<sup>41</sup> This familiar pattern of behaviour by the international community in the face of ongoing mass murder is illustrated all too powerfully by the less than adequate response by potential sanctioning bodies in the face of atrocities in Rwanda and Darfur.<sup>42</sup>

Additionally, a target's domestic political institutions affect how likely sanctions are to work against perpetrator states. Sanctions can compel leaders to change behaviour by raising the economic and political costs they face, often by encouraging rifts among elites or domestic political dissent.<sup>43</sup> Closed regimes with more centralized control are better able to resist sanctions as a result.<sup>44</sup> As democracies rarely engage in genocide or political mass murder, most sanctions against perpetrators target authoritarian states or mixed political systems, or those most likely to be insulated from extensive domestic political challenges. Against such perpetrators, 'political costs needed to alter behavior must be generated internationally, rather than domestically'.<sup>45</sup> Yet scholars suggest that such pressure is not typically costly enough to generate policy shifts from rights-abusing target states more generally, or atrocity-committing ones specifically.<sup>46</sup>

It is also possible that even if perpetrators choose to scale back or terminate their campaign of genocide or politicide as a result of pressure from economic sanctions, the principals may be unable to control the agents actually doing the killing sufficiently to slow or stop ongoing atrocities.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, sanctions take time to yield discernable costs, meaning that it would be surprising to find sanctions imposed or threatened leading to changes in severity, even a year after implementation. And of course the costs imposed would be unlikely to be sufficient to counterbalance the benefits that perpetrators might accrue from employing atrocities against domestic political threats. However, while severity should not be likely to change from year to year, sanctions can put enough pressure on perpetrators to stop the episode of mass killing earlier than might otherwise be expected absent economic sanctions.<sup>48</sup>

Sanctions not only have little ameliorative effect on a state's human rights conditions and behaviour, they may actually make things worse. Weiss and his colleagues detail the extensive harm to civilians in cases such as Haiti and Iraq as a result of sanctions.<sup>49</sup> Both Reed Wood and Peksen and Drury find that sanctions lead to a significant increase in the use of repression and political terror by target regimes in order to stabilize the political environment and suppress dissent.<sup>50</sup> Sanctions lead to a decrease in overall physical integrity rights, increased economic and political discrimination against minority ethnic groups and a deterioration of public health conditions in target states.<sup>51</sup> While economic

sanctions may be a popular policy tool amongst policymakers facing an ongoing atrocity, this tool is not likely to be effective in mitigating the killing once it has begun.

*Hypothesis 2: Economic sanctions vs. perpetrators of ongoing genocides or politicides will not reduce their severity.*

### **Why economic sanctions may mitigate genocide/politicide severity under some circumstances**

It is also possible that economic sanctions may reduce the severity of ongoing atrocities, but only under very particular circumstances. For instance, the above discussion suggests that sanctions will only be effective if they raise the costs of a murderous policy significantly. Policymakers and scholars have lobbied for stronger, costlier sanctions policies in the face of atrocities, most notably in the Albright and Cohen report:

Eschew the common approach of successively imposing gradually harsher sanctions over a long period of time. The regime in question is unlikely to be deterred by minor, symbolic measures (usually the first step); sanctions generally only succeed when they really bite.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, Susan Rice argued for more costly and extensive sanctions to be placed on Sudan.<sup>53</sup> In addition, noted sanctions expert George A. Lopez argued that only ‘strong, coercive’ and ‘harsh’ multilateral sanctions were likely to be effective at mitigating ongoing atrocities in Syria. Lopez suggested that such an approach:

aims to generate greater financial hardship deeper into Assad’s support network. They would constrain his ability to pay and reward those engaged in the attacks, and disrupt the flow of ammunition and weapons available to his security forces. Such sanctions have led to severe constraints on Muammar Qaddafi’s firepower and to defections of Libyan elites. They also have helped to protect some civilians in internal wars in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.<sup>54</sup>

*Hypothesis 3: Economic sanctions that impose greater costs on perpetrators of ongoing genocides or politicides will have a negative effect on their severity; those that impose fewer costs will have lesser ameliorative effects.*

Although sanctions need to be costly, they need not be comprehensive. Perhaps ‘smart’ sanctions are more likely to be successful at mitigating atrocities.<sup>55</sup> While the evidence is mixed regarding the effectiveness of ‘smart’ sanctions,<sup>56</sup> policymakers have embraced this approach, often calling for sanctions that target perpetrating elites, their agents and their sources of support.<sup>57</sup> Imposing financial sanctions on Serbian leaders in the 1990s, travel bans and financial sanctions on Sudanese officials and *Janjaweed* leaders, freezing assets of Colonel Qaddafi and his supporters, targeting oil revenues of Bashar al Assad’s regime and suspending military arms sales to such murderous regimes are just a few recent examples.<sup>58</sup> Even human rights NGOs and civil society groups have mobilized around strong and targeted ‘smart’ sanctions. For instance, a group of leading European intellectuals published an open letter urging that European leaders impose ‘the most stringent sanctions upon the leaders of the Sudanese regime’.<sup>59</sup> In the US, the Enough Project similarly advocated for targeted sanctions against the government in Khartoum.<sup>60</sup> And Human Rights Watch called for the Obama administration to impose targeted sanctions against key figures in the Assad regime in Syria.<sup>61</sup>

Hypothesis 4: *Targeted economic sanctions will have a greater negative effect on the severity of an ongoing genocide or politicide than will comprehensive sanctions.*

Scholars and policymakers have also underscored the importance of multilateral efforts, preferably coordinated through an IGO.<sup>62</sup> Multilateral sanctions are no more likely to be successful than unilateral efforts unless they are led by IGOs because IGO-led efforts are much more likely to avoid defection problems, be able to sustain economic pressure and therefore be successful.<sup>63</sup> While policymakers may be willing to ‘go it alone’ to send a message, most understand that their efforts will be more effective if done in conjunction with a broader global coalition led by an actor that can guard against defection.<sup>64</sup>

Hypothesis 5: *Economic sanctions imposed by international governmental organizations will have a greater negative effect on the severity of an ongoing genocide or politicide than sanctions imposed by states.*

Sanctions may also need to be in place for some time to have an effect.<sup>65</sup> They are only likely to affect the behaviour of perpetrators of atrocities if they believe that sanctioners are committed to seeing sanctions through, which will not likely occur until some time has passed. Moreover, sanctions work by raising the cost of behaviour; if the costs have not had time yet to mount, there will be little effect on behaviour. Davenport and Appel found that imposed economic sanctions shorten the duration of ongoing genocides and politicides, but only after they have been in place for a few years. Sanctions in place for less time had no effect.<sup>66</sup> The same may hold true for genocide/politicide severity, even controlling for atrocity duration.

Hypothesis 6: *The longer that economic sanctions have been in place, the greater the negative effect on the severity of an ongoing genocide or politicide.*

### ***Why threats of economic sanctions may (or may not) mitigate genocide/politicide severity***

Some have argued that even if sanctions themselves are problematic, it is the *threat* of sanctions that works to change the behaviour of perpetrators. Heightened international scrutiny combined with threats of sanctions ‘should reduce the attractiveness of the domestic diversionary [attacks on ethnic minorities] by increasing its costs for the leader.’<sup>67</sup> Moreover, threats of sanctions may actually be *more* effective than their implementation. If economic statecraft is conceived of as a strategic interaction between sender and target, then threats provide senders with leverage, while the need to follow through suggests that such leverage has been unsuccessful. Threats that have not been carried out are often more effective at yielding policy changes in the target than are sanctions that have been implemented.<sup>68</sup> This logic might apply to instances where senders are targeting massive human rights abuses such as genocide or politicide as well—an argument embraced by influential members of the National Security team of two of the last three US presidents.<sup>69</sup>

Hypothesis 7: *Threats of economic sanctions vs. perpetrators of ongoing genocides or politicides will reduce their severity.*

Alternatively, some studies have demonstrated that threats of sanctions may be less effective in achieving policy goals,<sup>70</sup> and more specifically in changing a target’s human rights



behaviour.<sup>71</sup> In part this may be because threats alone may be viewed by perpetrators of atrocities as ‘cheap talk’, and thus less than credible, since they are not costly signals of disapproval by the sender.<sup>72</sup> This should apply to situations of mass atrocity as well. For example, Scott Straus highlights a United Nations Security Council resolution aimed at stopping the killing in Darfur that ‘vaguely threatened economic sanctions against Sudan’s oil industry (although it gave no concrete deadline for when sanctions would be imposed) ... Despite its weak wording, the resolution almost failed to pass’.<sup>73</sup> Weak support for a weak threat suggests no credibility of commitment or of disapproval. Regarding a range of UN efforts to sanction Sudan, Samuel Totten writes:

Time and again (from summer 2004 through fall 2006), the UN threatened to impose sanctions against Sudan for its—and the *Janjaweed*’s—attacks against Darfur’s black African population, but the threats did little to nothing to staunch the killing. This was largely due to the fact that the threats were never acted upon.<sup>74</sup>

Deadlines for policy change were missed, and the weak threat proved ineffective.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Davenport and Appel found that threats of sanctions have no effect on the duration of ongoing genocides or politicides.<sup>76</sup> It also seems likely that, even controlling for duration, they should be similarly ineffective in reducing severity of these atrocities. Leaders will have already factored the likelihood that potential sanctioners will not carry out their threats effectively into their decisions regarding whether or not to engage in campaigns of mass killing. As noted earlier, if atrocities have already begun, the perpetrators have evaluated the international context and decided that there is a degree of permissiveness sufficient to allow them to commit genocide or politicide without consequence. They have not been deterred at least in part because they view the credibility or resolve of potential interveners as low.

*Hypothesis 8: Threats of economic sanctions vs. perpetrators of ongoing genocides or politicides will not reduce their severity.*

## Methodology

### *Unit of analysis*

In this study I examine country-years already experiencing an ongoing genocide or politicide.<sup>77</sup> Sanctions data must be lagged to ensure the ability to determine temporal ordering, so I also include the year immediately following the end of that instance of state-sponsored mass murder. This allows me to examine the effects of sanctions in the final year of the genocide or politicide.

### *Dependent variable: genocide/politicide severity*

The Political Instability Task Force (PITF) has developed a list of all genocides and politicides from 1955–2008.<sup>78</sup> This data has been used as the basis for a number of comparative empirical studies examining genocide and politicide.<sup>79</sup> This study examines cases from 1976 to 2008, as the earliest data available for some key control variables is 1975. Since these independent variables must be lagged one year prior to the case-year observation of the dependent variable, I can examine the effects of economic sanctions in 1975 on

genocide/politicide severity in 1976. The list of cases examined appears in the online Appendix in [Table OA1](#) (supplemental material), and includes location and start and end years of the atrocities. The data set also includes information about the magnitude of severity of the genocide or politicide. I adopt Marshall, Gurr and Harff's severity scale (see online Appendix, [Table OA2](#)) as the dependent variable in this study.<sup>80</sup> The eleven-point scale is recoded to range from zero to ten, rather than zero to five, eliminating half-point changes in magnitudes to make interpretation more intuitive. The dependent variable is an ordinal categorical variable, suggesting the necessity of an appropriate statistical method—in this case, ordered logit.

### ***Independent variables: economic sanctions***

I operationalize the economic sanctions independent variables by using the Threat and Imposition of Economic Sanctions (TIES) dataset, developed by Cliff Morgan and his colleagues.<sup>81</sup> For the purposes of this study, TIES is more useful than the data compiled by Gary Hufbauer and his colleagues.<sup>82</sup> Although the Hufbauer et al. dataset is often used in research on the effects of sanctions, it does not code instances of threats of sanctions. Morgan et al. define economic sanctions as 'actions that one or more countries take to limit or end their economic relations with a target country in an effort to persuade that country to change its policies'.<sup>83</sup>

TIES includes both multilateral and bilateral sanctions, with sanctions or threats against each individual target coded as separate events. TIES codes actions related to a wide variety of sender demands, but given the nature of this study I follow Davenport and Appel's approach<sup>84</sup>—I include only threats or imposition of sanctions related to human rights violations or modifying target government coercive behaviour. This captures a large number of sanctions in the period of observation, as since the 1970s human rights-related sanctions have made up over forty per cent of all economic sanctions.<sup>85</sup> TIES data is only available for sanction threats and actions from 1971–2000, so I employed their coding scheme to extend the data through 2008 (to the Angola and Sudan/Darfur cases).<sup>86</sup> I checked my results through 2006 with the Hufbauer et al. data as well to confirm their accuracy.<sup>87</sup>

I then coded the *Number of Imposed Economic Sanctions* and the *Number of Threatened Economic Sanctions* in order to capture the effects of mounting numbers of (threats of) sanctions. I also created a variable that included both the *Number of Threatened and Imposed Economic Sanctions*. All are lagged one year to ensure temporal ordering. To account for the possibility that the mere presence of sanctions or sanction threats is sufficient to affect atrocity severity, I also code the *Presence of Sanctions*, a lagged dummy variable that indicates whether any (rather than how many) sanctions were imposed on the target in a given year. In addition, I code *Sanction Duration* to capture possible longer term and cumulative effects, which some suggest likely differ from short-term effects.<sup>88</sup> In practice, this is coded by counting consecutive years of an ongoing set of sanctions, with the first year of the sanctions coded as one.

The TIES 'Anticipated Target Economic Costs' variable captures the *Cost of Sanctions*, coded as one for minor, two for major and three for severe impact on the target. Missing data was coded as one, since as a minimum some impact should be expected, albeit minor. I coded *Comprehensiveness of Sanctions* as one (low) if the TIES indicator 'Sanction Type' was targeted, three (high) if total or comprehensive and two (medium)

if more than targeted but less than comprehensive. I also employed the TIES dummy variable that codes whether the sanctions were conducted through an *International Organization*.

### **Control variables**

To control for the effects of military action by international actors,<sup>89</sup> and the possibility that sanctions' effects are a function of accompanying military action,<sup>90</sup> I employ measures from the International Military Interventions (IMI) data set.<sup>91</sup> IMI codes all overt military interventions from 1946 to 2005, and records on whose behalf the intervener acts. I code all interventions that are explicitly anti-perpetrator, as well as those that are pro-target, as *Anti-Perpetrator Interventions*. I code as *Pro-Perpetrator Interventions* all interventions that are explicitly pro-perpetrator, as well as those that are anti-target. Those that support neither side explicitly or are expressly impartial are coded as *Impartial Interventions*. I employ this data, plus Krain's extension of the data to all cases of genocide or politicide between 2005 and 2008 (Sudan/Darfur).<sup>92</sup>

To control for naming and shaming activities against perpetrators I employ James Ron et al.'s measure of the number of *Amnesty International background reports* produced per country/year.<sup>93</sup> These have been shown to have a negative effect on subsequent mass killing magnitude specifically.<sup>94</sup> Ron et al. code all background reports and press releases found in the *Amnesty International cumulative guide 1962–2000*. They provide cross-national longitudinal data for the 1986–2000 period. I employ this data, plus Krain's extension of the data backwards to 1975 and forwards to 2008 for all cases of ongoing genocides and politicides.<sup>95</sup>

Sanctions shorten the duration of civil conflicts more generally,<sup>96</sup> and genocides and politicides specifically.<sup>97</sup> Duration affects the severity of ongoing atrocities.<sup>98</sup> In order to control for these effects, I code in which year of the genocide or politicide the observation occurs. For example, the first year of the genocide or politicide is coded as 'one', the second year as 'two' and so on. I also lag the dependent variable by one year to enable me to control for the effects of *Prior Severity of Genocide or Politicide* on current genocide or politicide severity. This helps to control for the effects of autocorrelation, and for the finding that previous levels affect current or future levels of atrocities.<sup>99</sup>

I also control for the possibility that the sheer number of people available to kill, and the pressures that large populations place on regimes and their resources, may affect severity of atrocities.<sup>100</sup> I take the natural log of the *Population* data to account for the skewed nature of such data. I lag population data from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators* one year to ensure that population affected this year's atrocity observation rather than that this year's killings depleted the population being observed.<sup>101</sup>

State failures promote domestic instability, and open windows of opportunity during which murderous policies become more likely.<sup>102</sup> Recent state failure also increases the death toll in campaigns of mass killing.<sup>103</sup> *State Failure* is a dummy variable measuring whether the state experiencing genocide or politicide is also experiencing another kind of state failure (revolutionary wars, ethnic civil wars, genocides or politicides and disruptive regime transitions) in the prior year. I use the PITF list of state failures from 1955 to 2008, excluding the ongoing genocides or politicide from the state failure variable to avoid perfect colinearity.<sup>104</sup>

Serious political and existential threats to leaders often trigger genocide and politicide, and increase the severity of ongoing mass killings.<sup>105</sup> As Wright and Escribà-Folch argue, 'an increased risk of irregular exit may therefore provide leaders with an incentive to increase repression in an effort to remain in power and forestall a particularly nasty post-exit fate'.<sup>106</sup> Given its predictive power regarding severity of ongoing atrocities, and its possible confounding effects on the utility of sanctions, such threats need to be accounted for explicitly. I employ Marshall and Marshall's data on the number of successful, attempted, plotted or alleged *Coups* experienced in the prior year to capture direct internal threats to leadership and (the possibility of) extraconstitutional changes.<sup>107</sup>

*Regime Type* may play a direct role in affecting the likelihood of mass killing and an indirect role via conditioning how naming and shaming impacts regime choices to improve human rights compliance, even among non-democracies.<sup>108</sup> Regime type and institutional makeup either directly determine sanction success or failure, or condition the effects of sanctions.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, I control for regime type employing the Polity IV data's composite measure of *Regime Type*. The regime type score ranges from negative ten to positive ten, with lower scores denoting more autocratic states and higher scores more democratic states. I employ recommended coding rules for transitional states (interpolation) and those in a state of interregnum (set at zero).<sup>110</sup>

States that are less open to trade, and thereby less connected to the global economic system, are more likely to experience instances of state-sponsored mass murder.<sup>111</sup> While not a significant determinant of genocide or politicide severity,<sup>112</sup> economic marginalization may affect the presence or intensity of international pressures faced by perpetrators<sup>113</sup> or the degree to which regimes are sensitive to those pressures.<sup>114</sup> I control for the level of international economic interconnectedness, measured as the degree of *Marginalization within the World Economy*. This is operationalized as a function of that country's percentage of world trade. Low scores indicate greater centrality within the world economy; high scores indicate greater marginalization. The data was collected from the IMF's *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook*.<sup>115</sup>

On the other hand, trade dependence has little effect on the success of sanctions once implemented.<sup>116</sup> Controlling for economic factors that might condition the effect of sanctions on severity of state-sponsored atrocities might require alternative measures of economic interconnectedness. Foreign aid seems like a good candidate, as aid and sanctions are often seen as complementary tools of economic statecraft.<sup>117</sup> Countries heavily dependent upon aid may be loath to risk losing valuable capital as a result of sanctions.<sup>118</sup> Work by Risse and Sikkink suggests that 'countries receiving large military and economic aid flows will be more vulnerable to human rights pressures than those not receiving such flows'.<sup>119</sup> And DeMeritt finds that perpetrators are less willing to kill and thus risk foreign financial support the more dependent they become on it.<sup>120</sup> Therefore I control for *Official Development Assistance* (ODA), using World Development Indicators data. I use the natural log of ODA to account for skewness, and lag the data by a year to ensure that I am not accidentally picking up changes to ODA resulting from reaction to prior geno/politicial activity.

Finally, the end of the Cold War changed the geopolitical realities in the international system, and placed international organizations and NGOs in a position of greater influence than they had during the prior era. This momentous change saw greater emphasis on global human rights norms, greater need to conform to liberal standards of rights and

the removal of Cold War strategic or ideological limitations on condemning in words or in policy changes the human rights behaviour of other states.<sup>121</sup> It also led to an escalation in the use of economic sanctions to achieve a variety of ends, not the least of which was affecting states' respect for human rights.<sup>122</sup> To account for the potential temporal differences caused by changes in the structure of the international system and the resulting effect on actor behaviour I created a dummy variable for *The Cold War*, with the years 1975–1989 coded as 'one' and the years 1990–2008 coded as 'zero'.<sup>123</sup>

## Results of statistical analyses

Below I present the results of ordered logit models of factors affecting the severity of ongoing instances of state-sponsored mass murder.<sup>124</sup> I test expectations regarding the effects that economic sanctions on the magnitude of severity of an ongoing genocide or politicide. All models, shown here in Tables 1 and 2, employ the same set of control variables, but each includes different independent variables—different ways of thinking about how sanctions might impact atrocity severity. All models are estimated using STATA, version 11.2, using the White estimator of robust standard errors to correct for heteroskedasticity.<sup>125</sup>

Table 1 depicts four models that examine the possible effects of economic sanctions on atrocity severity. The first two models test arguments that sanctions should make atrocities worse (Argument 1), or less severe (Argument 2). Model 1 tests whether the number of economic sanctions in the prior year have effects on the severity of ongoing genocides or politicides in the next year, holding other variables constant, while Model 2 tests the same relationship, this time using a dummy variable for the presence of sanctions instead of a count. Regardless of which measure is used, the results suggest that there is no effect of sanctions on the severity of slaughter. The next two models test whether accounting for the threat of sanctions changes the effects on atrocity severity (Argument 4). Model 3 tests whether the number of sanction threats in the prior year have effects on the severity of ongoing genocides or politicides in the next year, holding other variables constant, while Model 4 tests the same relationship, this time using a variable that accounts for the sum of both threatened and imposed sanctions instead of a count of just threats. Again, regardless of which measure is used, the results suggest that there is no effect of sanction threats on the severity of slaughter. Across all four of these models, the magnitude of severity in the prior year, the atrocity's duration and attempts at challenging interventions and naming and shaming all have significant effects on genocide or politicide severity in the expected directions. In two of the four models, economic marginalization has a significant, negative effect on severity.

Table 2 depicts four models that examine the possible conditional effects of economic sanctions on genocide or politicide severity (Argument 3). Model 5 tests whether the costs of economic sanctions in the prior year have effects on the severity of ongoing genocides or politicides in the next year, holding other variables constant, while Model 6 tests whether the comprehensiveness of sanctions has an effect. Model 7 tests whether international organizations as sanction senders make sanctions more effective at reducing atrocity severity, while Model 8 examines whether how long the sanctions have been in place has a significant impact on severity of the ongoing genocide or politicide. Again, none of these factors—cost, comprehensiveness, sender or duration—appear to have an effect on

**Table 1.** The effects of economic sanctions on genocide/politicide severity.

Ordered logit models	Model 1 Number of sanctions $t_{-1}$	Model 2 Presence of sanctions $t_{-1}$ (dummy variable)	Model 3 Number of threats of sanctions $t_{-1}$	Model 4 Number of threats + imposed sanctions $t_{-1}$
Sanctions variable	-0.240 (0.306)	-0.173 (0.330)	0.0939 (0.898)	-0.210 (0.303)
Magnitude of severity $t_{-1}$	0.553*** (0.087)	0.551*** (0.087)	0.544*** (0.087)	0.554*** (0.087)
Duration of genocide/politicide	-0.064* (0.031)	-0.064* (0.031)	-0.062* (0.031)	-0.065* (0.031)
State failures $t_{-1}$	0.060 (0.410)	0.088 (0.410)	0.149 (0.410)	0.062 (0.410)
Coups $t_{-1}$	0.239 (0.296)	0.228 (0.296)	0.216 (0.296)	0.227 (0.296)
Regime type	-0.028 (0.033)	-0.028 (0.033)	-0.028 (0.033)	-0.029 (0.033)
Economic marginalization	-0.005* (0.002)	-0.005 (0.002)	-0.005 (0.002)	-0.005* (0.002)
Population (ln) $t_{-1}$	-0.179 (0.188)	-0.184 (0.188)	-0.196 (0.188)	-0.180 (0.188)
Naming & shaming $t_{-1}$	-0.051* (0.021)	-0.052* (0.021)	-0.054* (0.021)	-0.050* (0.021)
Pro-perpetrator interventions $t_{-1}$	-0.138 (0.185)	-0.136 (0.185)	-0.122 (0.185)	-0.138 (0.185)
Anti-perpetrator interventions $t_{-1}$	-0.379** (0.130)	-0.386** (0.130)	-0.395** (0.130)	-0.382** (0.130)
Impartial interventions $t_{-1}$	-0.171 (0.354)	-0.186 (0.354)	-0.186 (0.354)	-0.180 (0.354)
Official development assistance (ln) $t_{-1}$	-0.125 (0.101)	-0.126 (0.101)	-0.113 (0.101)	-0.126 (0.101)
Cold War (dummy)	-0.588 (0.381)	-0.585 (0.381)	-0.552 (0.381)	-0.589 (0.381)
Cut 1	-6.968* (3.057)	-7.022* (3.057)	-6.887* (3.057)	-6.993* (3.057)
Cut 2	-6.153* (3.025)	-6.207* (3.025)	-6.074* (3.025)	-6.176* (3.025)
Cut 3	-5.506 (3.012)	-5.559 (3.012)	-5.427 (3.012)	-5.527 (3.012)
Cut 4	-4.984 (3.010)	-5.035 (3.010)	-4.902 (3.010)	-5.004 (3.010)
Cut 5	-4.604 (2.997)	-4.654 (2.997)	-4.519 (2.997)	-4.624 (2.997)
Cut 6	-3.852 (2.991)	-3.901 (2.991)	-3.765 (2.991)	-3.872 (2.991)
Cut 7	-2.788 (2.988)	-2.841 (2.988)	-2.711 (2.988)	-2.811 (2.988)
Cut 8	-1.561 (2.971)	-1.624 (2.971)	-1.501 (2.971)	-1.590 (2.971)
Cut 9	-0.237 (2.927)	-0.305 (2.927)	-0.188 (2.927)	-0.268 (2.927)
Cut 10	1.222 (2.881)	1.157 (2.881)	1.274 (2.881)	1.194 (2.881)
Observations	201	201	201	201
Wald $\chi^2$	73.21***	74.71***	78.94***	74.46***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13
Log likelihood	-397.08	-397.28	-397.41	-397.15

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 2.** The effects of cost, comprehensiveness, sender type, and duration of economic sanctions on genocide/politicide severity.

Ordered logit models	Model 5 Cost of sanctions $t_{-1}$	Model 6 Comprehensiveness of sanctions $t_{-1}$	Model 7 Sender is an IO $t_{-1}$	Model 8 Sanction duration
Sanctions variable	0.039 (0.275)	0.063 (0.237)	0.120 (0.528)	0.040 (0.0702)
Magnitude of severity $t_{-1}$	0.878*** (0.113)	0.878*** (0.110)	0.877*** (0.111)	0.539*** (0.088)
Duration of genocide/politicide	0.014 (0.034)	0.014 (0.034)	0.012 (0.034)	-0.063* (0.031)
State failures $t_{-1}$	0.509 (0.442)	0.534 (0.471)	0.532 (0.480)	0.188 (0.405)
Coups $t_{-1}$	-0.053 (0.349)	-0.056 (0.348)	-0.043 (0.339)	0.204 (0.296)
Regime type	-0.000 (0.039)	-0.000 (0.039)	-0.001 (0.039)	-0.028 (0.033)
Economic marginalization	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.005 (0.003)
Population (ln) $t_{-1}$	-0.034 (0.254)	-0.037 (0.254)	-0.032 (0.257)	-0.203 (0.190)
Naming & shaming $t_{-1}$	-0.008 (0.024)	-0.008 (0.024)	-0.006 (0.024)	-0.055** (0.021)
Pro-perpetrator interventions $t_{-1}$	-0.060 (0.250)	-0.057 (0.252)	-0.058 (0.254)	-0.109 (0.194)
Anti-perpetrator interventions $t_{-1}$	-0.490*** (0.145)	-0.488** (0.150)	-0.492** (0.153)	-0.398** (0.133)
Impartial interventions $t_{-1}$	-0.414 (0.391)	-0.429 (0.394)	-0.410 (0.374)	-0.223 (0.367)
Official development assistance (ln) $t_{-1}$	-0.307* (0.127)	-0.303* (0.127)	-0.308* (0.127)	-0.104 (0.105)
Cold War (dummy)	-0.192 (0.384)	-0.191 (0.381)	-0.188 (0.379)	-0.553 (0.377)
Cut 1	-5.362 (4.211)	-5.295 (4.260)	-5.321 (4.233)	-6.796* (3.094)
Cut 2	-4.434 (4.180)	-4.366 (4.228)	-4.392 (4.200)	-5.981 (3.062)
Cut 3	-3.694 (4.169)	-3.626 (4.217)	-3.651 (4.190)	-5.331 (3.046)
Cut 4	-3.076 (4.189)	-3.007 (4.239)	-3.033 (4.210)	-4.801 (3.043)
Cut 5	-2.600 (4.174)	-2.529 (4.225)	-2.557 (4.195)	-4.416 (3.028)
Cut 6	-1.645 (4.168)	-1.574 (4.219)	-1.600 (4.191)	-3.661 (3.021)
Cut 7	-0.470 (4.172)	-0.400 (4.221)	-0.425 (4.197)	-2.614 (3.013)
Cut 8	1.045 (4.166)	1.113 (4.213)	1.090 (4.192)	-1.413 (2.994)
Cut 9	2.609 (4.132)	2.675 (4.179)	2.655 (4.160)	-0.103 (2.949)
Cut 10	4.507 (4.132)	4.569 (4.176)	4.547 (4.161)	1.362 (2.904)
Observations	181	181	181	201
Wald $\chi^2$	114.6***	112.8***	115.7***	74.63***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.13
Log likelihood	-323.83	-323.79	-323.81	-397.25

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

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

the severity of ongoing genocides or politicides. This time the magnitude of severity in the prior year and attempts at challenging interventions are the only variables that are consistently significant across all four models. Official Development Assistance has a statistically significant negative effect on severity in the first three models, while atrocity duration and naming and shaming both have significant effects on severity in the sanction duration model (#8).

Of course, it is possible that the above tests showed no effect of sanctions on the severity of atrocities because sanctions may only have an effect when used in combination with other policies.<sup>126</sup> As Albright and Cohen note, ‘sanctions are a tool, not a strategy—and the strategy to prevent imminent genocide should embody multiple tools aimed at collectively changing the calculation of the regime in question’.<sup>127</sup> In particular, scholars have noted the effectiveness of sanctions when coupled with the use of force. Stremmler identifies the coupling of economic sanctions and the threat and use of military force as critical in mitigating some of the atrocities resulting from the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.<sup>128</sup> Lopez notes a similar role for sanctions in the case of international reaction to the imminent slaughter in Libya in 2011.<sup>129</sup>

To test for this possibility, I conducted tests of the effect of sanctions or threats of sanctions interacted with intervention or naming and shaming on the severity of atrocities. These tests show that even when combined with other policies previously shown to have an effect, sanctions or the threat of sanctions do not significantly affect severity on ongoing atrocities. Due to space considerations, a discussion of these tests and their outcomes is available in the [online Appendix](#) (supplemental material).

In sum, regardless of how sanctions are measured—as the number or the presence of sanctions, the use or the threat of sanctions, the cost, comprehensiveness, duration or identity of the sender—their effects on atrocity severity are all statistically indistinguishable from zero. But how confident can we be that sanctions have no meaningful effect on atrocity severity? To answer this question, I employ Rainey’s suggested approach of selecting the ‘smallest substantive meaningful effect’ (*m*) that would be considered meaningfully significant and then observe whether that effect lies within or outside a ninety per cent confidence interval around the estimated coefficient.<sup>130</sup> I decided *a priori* that a unit change of 0.85 in the log odds was a minimum meaningful effect. That would correspond to a bit more than a two to one odds of an effect of sanctions on genocide or politicide severity. As [Table 3](#) demonstrates, given this minimum level of meaningful effect, I can confidently conclude that sanctions have at best negligible effects on atrocity severity, with two exceptions—I am unable to rule out an effect (either positive or negative) of threats of sanctions on atrocity severity, and unable to rule out the positive effect of an international organization as sanction sender on atrocity severity, although there is still no evidence for these effects.<sup>131</sup>

Across all models, the results are consistent, and clear. There is little to no support for the argument that sanctions are useful tools to mitigate mass murder. However, there is also little to no support in this study for the argument that economic sanctions will make the killing in ongoing genocides or politicides worse. Making sanctions more costly has no impact, nor does deploying more targeted sanctions. Sanctions run by international organizations are not more effective at mitigating atrocities. The duration that sanctions are in place has no effect. The lone caveat is that it is impossible at this time to rule out an effect of threats of sanctions on perpetrators’ escalation or de-escalation



**Table 3.** Meaningful effects of economic sanctions variables on genocide/politicide severity.

	Model 1 <sup>a</sup> Number of sanctions <sub>t-1</sub>	Model 2 <sup>a</sup> Presence of sanctions <sub>t-1</sub> (Dummy variable)	Model 3 <sup>a</sup> Number of threats of sanctions <sub>t-1</sub>	Model 4 <sup>a</sup> Number of threats + imposed sanctions <sub>t-1</sub>
Ordered logit coefficient (standard error) [90% confidence interval]	-0.240 (0.306) [-0.839, 0.359]	-0.173 (0.330) [-0.821, 0.474]	0.094 (0.898) [-1.666, 1.854]	-0.210 (0.303) [-0.804, 0.385]
	Model 5 <sup>b</sup> Cost of sanctions <sub>t-1</sub>	Model 6 <sup>b</sup> Comprehensiveness of sanctions <sub>t-1</sub>	Model 7 <sup>b</sup> Sender is an IO <sub>t-1</sub>	Model 8 <sup>b</sup> Sanction duration
Ordered logit coefficient (standard error) [90% confidence interval]	0.039 (0.275) [-0.413, 0.492]	0.063 (0.237) [-0.326, 0.452]	0.120 (0.528) [-0.750, 0.989]	0.040 (0.070) [-0.075, 0.156]

<sup>a</sup> See Table 1 for full models.

<sup>b</sup> See Table 2 for full models.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

\*  $p < 0.05$ .

of the killing. The balance of the evidence suggests that economic sanctions have little to no meaningful effect on the severity of ongoing genocides and politicides.

## Conclusion

This study examined whether and how economic sanctions could affect the severity of ongoing instances of genocide or politicide. I was unable to reject the hypothesis that sanctions have no effect on atrocity severity. They appear to neither aggravate the severity of atrocities for the targets, as much of the academic literature expects (though other human rights abuses against other groups may result), nor alleviate them, as argued by many policymakers. These findings hold, regardless of whether they are measured as the number or mere presence of sanctions, their cost, level of comprehensiveness, duration or whether they are imposed or administered by an international organization. I was also unable to reject the hypothesis that threats of sanctions have no effect on genocide or politicide severity, either on their own or when combined with other policy options, similarly contrary to much of the literature.

These results suggest the need for policymakers or advocates who routinely call for economic sanctions to reconsider their utility in the face of ongoing atrocities. Sanctions, alone or together, threatened or implemented, targeted or comprehensively applied, have little impact on the magnitude of the killing. Raising the costs of genocide or politicide can be effective in mitigating mass murder, but clearly economic sanctions do not raise the costs sufficiently to make perpetrators abandon this lethal policy. Moreover, given the research that ties sanctions to worsening human rights and public health outcomes, sanctions may complicate the situation on the ground for other civilians not being targeted by the perpetrating regime, creating an even wider humanitarian disaster. That alone should be enough to give pause to those who will point to evidence in this article that sanctions don't make things worse for the targets of mass atrocities. However, while economic sanctions do little to reduce the number of people killed from year to year in an ongoing atrocity, other research suggests that they reduce the duration of the killing, albeit only after having been in place for a few years.<sup>132</sup>

Policymakers and advocates need to carefully consider their goals in using economic sanctions in the face of ongoing atrocities. If policymakers want sanctions to have short- to medium-term impacts on the severity of the atrocities then these results suggest that their policy will be ineffective and their goals will go unmet. If policymakers intend to use sanctions as part of a long-term strategy to end the spell of targeted mass killing, then work by Davenport and Appel suggests that they may be effective.<sup>133</sup> Sadly, many suspect that policymakers merely to use sanctions as ‘cheap talk’, and in particular as a way of responding to pressure to ‘do *something*’ in the face of atrocities.<sup>134</sup> If that is true, then this article suggests that the outcome of that ‘*something*’ is *nothing*—no discernible effect on the severity of genocide or political mass murder.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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  20. Hovi, Huseby and Sprinz, 'When do (imposed) economic sanctions work?', p. 488.
  21. Hovi, Huseby and Sprinz, 'When do (imposed) economic sanctions work?'.
  22. Power, 'A problem from hell', p. 230.
  23. David A. Baldwin, *Economic statecraft* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); David J. Lektzian and Christopher M. Sprecher, 'Sanctions, signals, and militarized conflict', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51, No. 2, 2007, pp. 415–431; Wendy H. Wong, 'Centralizing principles: how Amnesty International shaped human rights politics through its transnational network' (PhD thesis, University of California, San Diego, 2008); Peterson and Drury, 'Sanctioning violence'.
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30. Risse and Sikink, 'The socialization of international human rights norms'; Wright and Escribà-Folch, 'Are dictators immune to human rights shaming?'; Lebovic and Voeten, 'The cost of shame'.
31. Peterson and Drury, 'Sanctioning violence'.
32. Lebovic and Voeten, 'The cost of shame'; Wright and Escribà-Folch, 'Are dictators immune to human rights shaming?'.
33. Wright and Escribà-Folch, 'Are dictators immune to human rights shaming?', p. 3.
34. Weiss, 'Sanctions as a foreign policy tool', p. 500.
35. Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*, p. 70.
36. Lebovic and Voeten, 'The politics of shame'; Lebovic and Voeten, 'The cost of shame'; Wright and Escribà-Folch, 'Are dictators immune to human rights shaming?'.
37. Lebovic and Voeten, 'The cost of shame'.
38. Martin Binder, 'Humanitarian crises and the international politics of selectivity', *Human Rights Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2009, p. 339. Sanctions have also been analysed as a result of states' desire to satisfy demands of domestic constituents and as signals that states send regarding their preferences, the degree to which they disapprove of the target's behaviour and the current and future costs senders are willing to impose. Regardless, the goal is to yield policy change by the target regime. Baldwin, *Economic statecraft*; Dorussen and Mo, 'Ending economic sanctions'; Lektzian and Sprecher, 'Sanctions, signals, and militarized conflict'; Peterson and Drury, 'Sanctioning violence'.
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44. Allen, 'The domestic political effects of economic sanctions'.
45. Allen, 'The domestic political effects of economic sanctions', p. 916; See also Escribà-Folch and Wright, 'Dealing with tyranny'.
46. Lopez, 'Economic sanctions and genocide'; Straus and Valentino, 'Between bombs and bystanding', p. 8.
47. Hafner-Burton, 'Sticks and stones'.
48. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again'.
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52. Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*, p. 70.
53. Rice, 'Dithering on Darfur'; Rice, 'The genocide in Darfur'.
54. Lopez, 'Seize the sanctions moment in Syria'.
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56. Cortright and Lopez, *Smart sanctions*; Daniel W. Drezner, 'Sanctions sometimes smart: targeted sanctions in theory and practice', *International Studies Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, pp. 96–108.
57. Corzine and Brownback, 'Stop the genocide'; Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*; United Nations, 'World not fulfilling "never again" vow'.
58. John J. Strem lau, *Sharpening international sanctions: toward a stronger role for the United Nations*, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1996); Goldstone, 'The role of economic sanctions'; George A. Lopez, 'Tools, tasks and tough thinking: sanctions and R2P', Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 3 October 2013, available at: <http://www.globalr2p.org/publications/263> (accessed 4 November 2013).
59. 'Darfur: a letter from Europe's leading writers', *Independent*, 24 March 2007, p. 44.
60. Norris, 'Getting it right'.
61. Human Rights Watch, 'Statement on possible intervention in Syria'.
62. Strem lau, *Sharpening international sanctions*; Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*; Goldstone, 'The role of economic sanctions'; Lopez, 'Tools, tasks and tough thinking'.
63. Daniel W. Drezner, 'The hidden hand of economic coercion', *International Organization*, Vol. 57, No. 3, 2003, pp. 643–659; Lopez, 'Tools, tasks and tough thinking'.
64. Rice, 'The genocide in Darfur'; Lantos, 'Fight the genocide with sanctions'.
65. Lopez, 'Seize the sanctions moment in Syria'.
66. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again'.
67. Tir and Jasinski, 'Domestic-level diversionary theory of war', p. 659.
68. Drezner, 'The hidden hand of economic coercion'; Dean Lacy and Emerson M. S. Niou, 'A theory of economic sanctions and issue linkage: the roles of preferences, information, and threats', *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 1, 2004, pp. 25–42.
69. Rice, 'Dithering on Darfur', p. 3; Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*, p. 70.
70. Valentin L. Krustev, 'Strategic demands, credible threats, and economic coercion outcomes', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1, 2010, pp. 147–174.
71. Li and Drury, 'Threatening sanctions'.
72. Peterson and Drury, 'Sanctioning violence', p. 584.
73. Scott Straus, 'Darfur and the genocide debate', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 1, 2005, p. 131.
74. Totten, 'The intervention of genocide', p. 174.
75. Straus, 'Darfur and the genocide debate', p. 124.
76. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again', fn. 19.
77. I examine only *ongoing* cases of state-sponsored mass murder because I am interested in the international community's ability to affect cases that have already begun. Clearly, an analysis of pre-emption is crucial, but must be done with equal care, and in the context of very different theoretical arguments. As a result, I defer this question to a future study.
78. Marshall, Gurr and Harff, 'Political instability task force'.

79. Harff, 'No lessons learned from the Holocaust?'; Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Krain, 'International intervention'; Kathman and Wood, 'Managing threat, cost, and incentive to kill'; Krain, '*J'accuse!*'.
80. Marshall, Gurr and Harff, 'Political instability task force'.
81. Clifford T. Morgan, Navin Bapat and Valentin Krustev, 'The threat and imposition of economic sanctions, 1971–2000', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2009, pp. 92–110.
82. Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott and Oegg, *Economic sanctions reconsidered*.
83. Morgan, Bapat and Krustev, 'The threat and imposition of economic sanctions', p. 94.
84. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again', p. 20.
85. Wong, 'Centralizing principles'.
86. Even with the extension to 2008, it should be noted that, as one anonymous reviewer suggested, this data is now close to a decade old, and does not take account of recent developments in more sophisticated targeted sanctions. However, extending the data further would only yield one or two additional cases of ongoing genocides or politicides in a period where such sophisticated targeted sanctions proliferated, leaving not enough variation to adequately test whether more sophisticated targeted sanctions have different effects. I leave this important question for future research.
87. Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott and Oegg, *Economic sanctions reconsidered*.
88. Lopez, 'Economic sanctions and genocide'; Davenport and Appel, 'Never again'.
89. Krain, 'International intervention'; DeMeritt, 'International organizations and government killing'.
90. Pape, 'Why economic sanctions do not work'; Abel Escribà-Folch, 'Economic sanctions and the duration of civil conflicts', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 2010, pp. 129–141.
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92. Krain, 'International intervention'.
93. James Ron, Howard Ramos and Kathleen Rodgers, 'Transnational information politics: human rights NGO reporting, 1986–2000', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 3, 2005, pp. 557–587.
94. DeMeritt, 'International organizations and government killing'; Krain, '*J'accuse!*'. The results were remarkably similar and are therefore not included. To test the robustness of the model, I substituted an updated version of Ron, Ramos and Rodgers's measure of Average Media Coverage of human rights abuses for the Amnesty International Background Reports. Ron, Ramos and Rodgers, 'Transnational information politics'. This alternative measure of naming and shaming has also been found to negatively affect ongoing mass killing severity.
95. Krain, '*J'accuse!*'.
96. Escribà-Folch, 'Economic sanctions and the duration of civil conflicts'.
97. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again'.
98. Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Krain, 'International intervention'; Straus and Valentino, 'Between bombs and bystanders'.
99. Ted R. Gurr, 'The political origins of state violence and terror: a theoretical analysis', in Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez (eds.), *Government violence and repression* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 45–72; Christian Davenport, 'The promise of democratic pacification: an empirical assessment', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 3, 2004, p. 550; see also: Steven C. Poe and C. Neal Tate, 'Repression of human rights to personal integrity in the 1980s: a global analysis', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4, 1994, pp. 853–872; Krain, 'International intervention'; Krain, '*J'accuse!*'; DeMeritt, 'International organizations and government killing'; DeMeritt, 'Delegating death'.
100. Poe and Tate, 'Repression of human rights'.
101. World Bank, *World development indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 1976–2008).
102. Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Harff, 'Genocide as state terrorism'; Harff, 'No lessons learned from the Holocaust?'.
103. Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Krain, 'International intervention'; DeMeritt, 'International organizations and government killing'; DeMeritt, 'Delegating death'.

104. Marshall, Gurr and Harff, 'Political instability task force'. See this source as well for data on previous state failures, and other Political Instability Task Force data.
105. Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Tir and Jasinski, 'Domestic-level diversionary theory of war'.
106. Wright and Escribà-Folch, 'Are dictators immune to human rights shaming?', p. 8.
107. Monty G. Marshal and Donna Ramsey Marshall, *Coup d'etat events, 1946–2008—codebook*, Center for Systemic Peace, 2009, available at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm> (accessed 16 March 2010).
108. Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Wright and Escribà-Folch, 'Are dictators immune to human rights shaming?'.
109. Lektzian and Souva, 'An institutional theory of sanctions onset and success'; Allen, 'The domestic political effects of economic sanctions'.
110. Monty G. Marshal and Keith Jagers, 'Polity IV project: political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800–2007', *Dataset users' manual*, Center for Systemic Peace, 2009, available at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm> (accessed 16 March 2010).
111. Gurr, 'The political origins of state violence and terror'; Harff, 'No lessons learned from the Holocaust?'.
112. Krain, 'State-sponsored mass murder'; Valentino, *Final solutions*.
113. Gurr, 'The political origins of state violence and terror'; Harff, 'Genocide as state terrorism'.
114. Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*; Franklin, 'Shame on you'; Goldstone, 'The role of economic sanctions'.
115. During the Cold War, economic data for Eastern Bloc nations was typically reported only every five or ten years. Some missing data for these countries was interpolated whenever possible.
116. Lektzian and Souva, 'An institutional theory of sanctions onset and success'.
117. Baldwin, *Economic statecraft*.
118. Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*, p. 60; Escribà-Folch and Wright, 'Dealing with tyranny'.
119. Risse and Sikkink, 'The socialization of international human rights norms', p. 24.
120. DeMeritt, 'Delegating death'.
121. Lebovic and Voeten, 'The politics of shame'.
122. David Cortright and George A. Lopez (eds.), *The sanctions decade: assessing UN strategies in the 1990s* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000); Goldstone, 'The role of economic sanctions'.
123. It is possible that the development and diffusion of the norms associated with the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) initiative had an effect on the relationship between sanctions and the severity of mass killing. To control for this possibility, I re-ran the analyses, excluding cases after 2005, when the R2P doctrine was adopted. The results do not substantively change, and are thus not reported here.
124. Descriptive statistics for each variable are available in the online Appendix (supplemental material), in [Table OA3](#).
125. White's estimators of variance are particularly useful when estimating ordered logit models using unbalanced panel data (each panel has a different number of observations because each genocide or politicide lasts a different number of years). See Halbert White, 'A heteroskedasticity consistent covariance matrix estimator and a direct test for heteroskedasticity', *Econometrica*, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1980, pp. 817–838. White's robust standard errors help to produce estimates that account for the fact that 'observations are likely to be independent across countries but not within them'. Davenport, 'The promise of democratic pacification', p. 550; see also: Poe and Tate, 'Repression of human rights'.
126. Goldstone, 'The role of economic sanctions', p. 171; Lopez, 'Tools, tasks and tough thinking'.
127. Albright and Cohen, *Preventing genocide*, p. 70.
128. Stremmlau, *Sharpening international sanctions*, p. 62.
129. Lopez, 'Tools, tasks and tough thinking'.
130. Carlisle Rainey, 'Arguing for a negligible effect', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 2014, p. 1085.
131. Of course, as Rainey points out, readers may reach different conclusions if they identify the minimal value necessary to indicate meaningful effects ( $m$ ) to be different. Rainey, 'Arguing



for a negligible effect'. For example, if  $m$  were set even more conservatively at 0.5 instead of at 1.0, then one could not rule out the possibility of a negative effect of the use or threat of sanctions. Similarly, one could also not rule out either negative or positive effects of international organizations as sanction senders on atrocity severity. Recall, however, that in all of these instances there is still no evidence *for* such an effect.

132. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again'.

133. Davenport and Appel, 'Never again'.

134. Weiss, 'Sanctions as a foreign policy tool'; Dorussen and Mo, 'Ending economic sanctions'; Power, *'A problem from hell'*.