Abstract

In this thesis I look at economic statecraft and try to examine why sanctions continue when they are failing, and why countries continue to use them despite debatable claims for success. For example, Hufbauer et. al.’s 2009 analysis shows sanctions only work 34% of the time, Pape (1997) estimates only 5%. Despite this economic statecraft is having a resurgence under the name “geoeconomics”. This thesis builds off Kaempfer and Lowenberg’s 1988 “Public Choice” theory of international economic sanctions. It hypothesises that in certain cases the domestic interests will be the primary goal of sanctions and therefore should be the primary focus of judging the success or failure of sanctions. Russia’s 2014 food import ban is analysed to show that, despite failure to achieve any international goals, it is being successful at achieving the domestic goal of supporting Russian agriculture. The implications being that all current quantitative analysis of economic sanctions have potentially incorrectly measured sanctions as failures by not measuring them against the actual goals of the policies. Further research into this area to establish just how often sanctions are used primarily for domestic reasons, but even sanctions where domestic goals are only of secondary importance, their existence still needs to be reflected upon.