

Can Sports Sanctions Work?

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ABSTRACT. Can the international community get certain countries to change their behavior by banning them from international sports? If so, sports sanctions could provide a valuable tool for encouraging positive change in world politics. However, sports sanctions could also provoke backlash in the target country. It is therefore important for IR scholars to understand when and where sports sanctions are most likely to achieve their goals. In this study, we theorize the conditions that could make sports sanctions effective. We then analyze nine major cases of sports sanctions. Our results suggest that sports sanctions can work, but several factors appear to matter greatly for their likelihood of success. We conclude that sports sanctions may be a limited but occasionally valuable tool in international politics.

Sports sanctions have attracted great interest from policymakers and the general public in recent years. In 2014, John McCain and other Congressional leaders tried to convince FIFA to punish Russia for its foreign aggression by moving the 2018 World Cup to another country (Reis 2015). Many have also argued that Iran should be banned from the Olympics for human rights violations and their refusal to allow their athletes to compete against Israelis (Riddle 2021). The possibility of banning North Korea has also been raised given the country's terrible human rights record and treatment of athletes (Chiasson 2018).

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However, could banning certain countries from international sports really cause them to change their behavior? If so, sports sanctions might be able to promote positive change in the world, such as by curbing racial discrimination and advancing women's rights. However, it is also possible that sports sanctions might instead create resentment in the target country and potentially make that country less likely to change its behavior.

Scholarly research on sports sanctions has remained limited, particularly in political science. A tremendous amount of work has gone into analyzing economic sanctions (e.g., Hufbauer, Schott and Elliott 1990; Pape 1997; Drezner 1999; Marinov 2005; Allen 2005; Whang 2010; Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010; Miller 2014). However, little research exists on sports sanctions and whether they might offer a complement or alternative to economic sanctions in certain cases.

In this paper, we attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of sports sanctions by investigating every major case in history where they have been implemented. We conclude that sports sanctions can be very effective, but several factors seem to matter for whether they work. First, sports sanctions appear to be much more likely to succeed when their objectives are related to the sporting realm. Second, when target countries have the capabilities and resolve to resist the sports sanctions, it seems that sports sanctions are unlikely to work. Third, the government in a target country might actually welcome the sports sanctions because they can make it easier to undertake beneficial reforms. When the government is an ally in the fight for change, it can greatly increase the chances that sports sanctions will succeed.

This paper proceeds as follows. In Section 1, we build on some findings about economic sanctions to theorize about when sports sanctions will work. In Section 2, we outline the existing empirical research on sports sanctions. In Section 3, we explain our research

methodology. In Section 4, we evaluate the effectiveness of sports sanctions by investigating nine major cases where they were employed. In Section 5, we qualify our findings and consider some of the broader complications that could arise if sports sanctions were used on a more regular basis. The final section concludes and discusses some avenues for future research.

Section 1: Theorizing About When Sports Sanctions Will Work

In the international relations literature, sanctions are defined as punishments that come with conditions that the target countries must meet for the punishments to be lifted (Pape 1997; Allen 2008; Krustev 2010; Lektzian and Patterson 2015). The most common type of sanctions are economic, which can be comprehensive or targeted. Comprehensive sanctions impose costs on the country's entire society across a wide range of sectors, and they can lead to major economic depressions that impact the general public. On the other hand, targeted sanctions focus on specific industries or key government decision-makers, and thus try to avoid causing any unnecessary human suffering.

Defining Sanctions as Successful. International relations scholars typically define sanctions as successful if they compel the target country to change its behavior and comply with the demands of the sanctions (e.g., Pape 1997; Allen 2008). There are other ways one could define success. For example, even if the target country resists, the sanctions might still be considered successful (or partially successful) if they weaken the target country or prevent it from achieving certain goals.

For the purpose of this paper, we use the standard definition of success in the international relations literature. Therefore, when we ask whether sanctions “worked” or “succeeded”, we are asking if they played an important causal role in compelling the target

country to comply with the demands of the sanctions. This definition is useful for analytical clarity and to keep this study consistent with past research. However, readers should keep in mind that we are referring to success in this particular sense and not in others.

The Logic of Sanctions. To work, sanctions must be so costly that they cause the target country to cave to the pressure. This can happen because the leaders themselves want the sanctions to be lifted, because the leaders' supporters demand that reforms be made so that the sanctions will be removed, or because the leaders lose power and new politicians make the necessary changes (Pape 1997; Marinov 2005).

Much research has explored when economic sanctions are most likely to work (e.g., Pape 1997; Pape 1998; Baldwin 1999; Drezner 2011). In this section, we outline some of the main findings from this literature, and then we use them to theorize about the potential effectiveness of sports sanctions.

When Economic Sanctions Are More Likely to Work. Existing research points to several conditions that appear to impact the likelihood that economic sanctions will achieve their goals.

Perceived Legitimacy. A number of studies conclude that states are more likely to follow international norms or demands when they view them as legitimate (Hurd 1999; Cortell and Davis Jr. 2000; Zwingel 2012; Terman 2017). These finding suggests that sanctions can succeed or fail based on whether they fit with established rules in international relations. This factor by no means alone guarantees the success of economic sanctions. After all, the target country could try to reframe the sanctions as unjustified outside interference. Nonetheless, the idea is that all else equal, having clear rules that underpin the sanctions

could presumably increase their moral authority and make the difference between success and failure.

Target Country Strength. A powerful target country can sometimes offset the effects of the economic sanctions. For example, when Nazi Germany imposed sanctions and a naval blockade against Britain during World War II, cutting it off from its critical food imports, the British government made remarkable domestic reforms to increase the country's agricultural output. By the end of the war, it had converted over four million acres into farmland and nearly doubled the amount of food it produced domestically (Weir 2003).

Other Factors. Existing research shows that economic sanctions appear more likely to work if the target country is an ally of the sanctioning country, if its economy is dependent on the sanctioning country, if it is a democracy, and if it is a personalist regime or monarchy (Allen 2005; Whang 2010; Escribà-Folch and Wright 2010). These factors are not as important for our study as perceived legitimacy and target country strength. However, we report them here in an effort to provide a richer account of the findings about when economic sanctions appear most likely to work.

Concerns Regarding Economic Sanctions. Past research also identifies some potential issues with economic sanctions that might undermine their effectiveness.

Sanctions Can Provoke Nationalism. Sanctions can create resentment among the people of the target country, which can make them even less willing to give in to international pressure (Pape 1997). Even targeted sanctions, which try to limit the costs to the general population, can sometimes incite public outrage (Levada Center 2015; Simmons, Stokes, and Poushter 2015). This resentment might give the leaders of target countries a way to blame their domestic problems on foreign actors. In Cuba, for example, Fidel Castro tried

to blame practically every problem in the country on the sanctions regime that started in 1960 (Daniel 2011). Similarly, the Russian government has tried to pin much of the blame for the country's recent recession on the West, despite the fact that Russia's economic turmoil was primarily caused by declining oil prices (Simmons, Stokes, and Poushter 2015).

Sanctions Can Sometimes Have Undesirable Effects on Third-Parties. Another important concern that comes with sanctions, especially comprehensive sanctions, is how the sanctions could affect third parties (Pape 1997; Peksen 2009; Drury and Peksen 2014). For example, harsh comprehensive sanctions could cripple a country's economy, leading to starvation. This possibility could not only result in human suffering, but it could also make the sanctions less effective by jeopardizing their legitimacy. These considerations have been a central motivation for shifting to targeted sanctions that aim to punish specific actors (Drezner 2011).

Sports Sanctions. The existing research on economic sanctions provides an excellent foundation for theorizing about sports sanctions. It raises several important questions about whether sports sanctions might be effective, and if so, when.

Are Sports Sanctions Costly Enough? As mentioned before, economic sanctions work by making the leaders in the target country decide that the costs of the sanctions outweigh the costs of the necessary reforms. The leaders can reach this decision on their own, or they can be pressured by their supporters.

This discussion suggests two important points about when sports sanctions may be most likely to work. First, for sports sanctions to bring about meaningful social change, they probably need to involve really important sports that many people watch. Banning a country from a sport that few people care about would not impose much of a cost for that

country. Second, the degree to which countries care about international sports could matter greatly for whether they prove effective. Most countries do care a great deal about participating in sports (Baker 2016), so this condition is likely to hold in most cases.

Research by Markovits and Rensmenn (2010) demonstrates this last point well. As they detail, history has shown that government leaders often take international sports very seriously. This pattern seems to hold especially true for non-democracies, where the government may be more closely linked to the national sports teams. Cases range from Mussolini and Hitler's great interest in sports in the 1930s to Kim Jong-un's passion for sports today.

Why do government leaders tend to care about sports so much? For some, it may be genuine interest in watching their teams compete at these tournaments. The North Korean regime stands out in this respect. Kim Jong-il displayed a passionate admiration for sports, especially basketball, that carried over to his son. In fact, Dennis Rodman was one of the first individuals to get access to the country after Kim Jong-un came to power in 2011.

Beyond genuine interest, government leaders might also benefit from the sentiments that international sports evoke. For example, international sports are closely linked to nationalism (Gift and Miner 2017; Bertoli 2017; Rosenzweig and Zhou 2021). There is also the potential for international sports to distract the public from the country's problems. It is not surprising, therefore, that world leaders tend to take international sports so seriously.

When Would Sports Sanctions Be More Likely to be Perceived As Legitimate? International sports organizations are responsible for the governance of the sporting realm. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that sports sanctions would likely be perceived as most legitimate when they address issues related to sports. If they try to tackle issues that go well beyond sports, the target country might view the international sports organization as

stepping outside its lane. Of course, even if the sanctions focus solely on sports, the target government might still not perceive them as legitimate. For example, they might conflict with cultural norms in the target country. However, all else equal, it seems reasonable to think that sports sanctions will be more likely to succeed when they focus on the sports realm.

Could Powerful Countries Evade Sports Sanctions? Two possibilities stand out for how leaders of powerful countries might mitigate the effects of sports sanctions. First, they might gain undue influence over international sports organizations through bribes or other means. Second, if they are banned, they might be able to stage their own sporting events with their allies as an alternative. Therefore, there is good reason to suspect that applying sports sanctions to powerful countries will be much more difficult than instituting them on relatively weaker countries.

What About the Other Factors? Of the other factors that seem to influence the effectiveness of economic sanctions, the finding about democracies is probably the most relevant for this study. At first glance, it suggests that sports sanctions may be more likely to work against democracies than non-democracies. However, leaders in non-democracies often take international sports far more seriously than their democratic counterparts. In addition, it is very hard to imagine the international community using sports sanctions against democracies unless it is in coordination with the democracy's government. Of the nine cases of major sports sanctions that we discuss later, only one targeted a democracy, and the government in that democracy supported the sports sanctions. Therefore, the democracy/non-democracy distinction does have important implications for how we think about sports sanctions, but in a way that deviates from the economic sanctions literature.

Could Sports Sanctions Provoke Nationalism? No doubt, they would likely generate a significant amount of resentment in the target country. Its citizens might feel they were being treated unfairly by the international community, and the government could stoke these feelings. This possibility means that sports sanctions could potentially make matters worse in some cases. They could cause countries to resist making reforms rather than encourage them to change their behavior.

Could Sports Sanctions Have Negative Consequences on Third Parties? Athletes probably pose the greatest concern when it comes to third party costs. Some might not care much about an athlete's opportunity to compete in a major international tournament, especially when important social issues are at stake. However, many athletes devote their lives to reaching these international sporting events, so scholars should be careful not to trivialize their interests.

Fortunately, when it comes to individual sports, athletes from a banned country could still compete under a neutral flag, provided that they comply with all necessary regulations. Team sports present a more difficult matter. It may not be possible to protect athletes in this situation, meaning that sports sanctions might impose undesirable costs on third parties. In addition, the government in a target country might try to use this inequity to delegitimize sports sanctions, which could make them less effective.

Section 2: Existing Research on Sports Sanctions

The existing literature features many historical articles that describe sport sanctions but that do not analyze their effectiveness. For instance, in the case of Yugoslavia, Mills (2009) gives a rich historical overview of the decline in Serbian sport following the sport sanctions of the early 1990s. However, he does not analyse whether the sanctions achieved

their goal of bringing about political change. Similarly, Novak (2021) recounts Rhodesia's suspension from FIFA in 1970 and describes the subsequent changes that took place in Rhodesian football. Nevertheless, the article does not attempt to determine whether the sanctions brought about these changes.

Some articles do try to analyze the effectiveness of sport sanctions in specific cases. For example, Keech and Houlihan (1999) attempt to analyze the effectiveness of sport sanctions on South Africa. The authors argue that the sport sanctions contributed to the anti-apartheid movement by incentivising states and international organizations to impose other forms of sanctions. Furthermore, Little (2011) assesses the effectiveness of sport sanctions in Rhodesia. Specifically, he examines the role that sport sanctions played in the overall policy of the United Kingdom towards Rhodesia. Both articles move away from pure historical description as they try to assess the causal contribution of sport sanctions to changes in government behavior by examining their role in broader political campaigns. Nonetheless, by focusing on specific historical cases, the authors limit their ability to draw broader conclusions about the factors that make sports sanctions more or less likely to work.

Indeed, attempts to draw lessons about sports sanctions through comparative research across different historical cases has been scarce. MacLean (2014) compiles a list of factors that he believes influence the effectiveness of sport sanctions, but his historical analysis focuses mainly on South Africa. Rosner and Low (2014) examine several Olympic boycotts and bans, with their most notable cases probably being the South Africa and Afghanistan bans. They conclude that Olympic boycotts are futile and that Olympic bans are unlikely to work except if the country broke International Olympic Committee rules. This finding is

an important one that accords with the results that we present later in this paper. However, focusing on a narrow set of Olympic cases inherently limits the scope of their study.

This paper seeks to move beyond past work by analyzing every major case of sports sanctions in history. We believe that such an approach is necessary to reach the most reliable and complete set of conclusions as possible. We provide a detailed explanation of how we carry out this analysis in the next section.

Section 3: Methodology

Case Selection. For this study, we attempted to identify every major case of sports sanctions in history. We define major cases as those that involve countries being banned entirely from the world's most visible sporting events: the Olympics and/or soccer tournaments. We do not, for instance, consider bans that only involved less visible sporting events, because these bans presumably receive far less attention. Thus, we believe that these bans are unlikely to have much of a meaningful impact in world politics. For similar reasons, we also leave out bans from single events at the Olympics, like weightlifting, which happen regularly due to doping allegations.

We also consider two borderline cases that did not rise to the level of particularly strong sports sanctions, but nonetheless seemed important to us to consider. The first involved the pressure that the International Olympic Committee put on Saudi Arabia to send female athletes to the Olympics. According to the public record, Saudi Arabia was not threatened with a ban, but they were told that they would not be able to host the Olympics if they did not allow female athletes to participate. The second borderline case was the 1980 boycott of the Moscow Olympics. Although the Olympics did take place, this boycott was notable

because it involved a very large number of countries. It was therefore a rather visible attempt to pressure the Soviet Union by punishing it in the sporting realm.

Past studies have noted that focusing on examples where sanctions actually occurred could lead to selection bias because the target governments are likely to be more resolved in these cases (e.g., Lacy and Niou 2004). In other words, if a target country did not change its behavior due to the possibility or threat of sanctions, it was probably quite resistant to making the reforms. This observation had very important implications for the economic sanctions literature. Some influential prior research had found that economic sanctions rarely achieved their goals (e.g., Pape 1997; Pape 1998), and this selection bias issue could help explain the low success rate.

In the context of our study, we do not believe that this type of selection bias presents a major concern. The reason is that we find that sports sanctions do have a high success rate when addressing sports-related issues. Therefore, the fact that we are looking at hard cases should strengthen confidence in this result, not weaken it. We also think that this type of selection bias does not pose a problem for our finding that sports sanctions tend to be ineffective for issues outside the sporting realm. The selection bias would only cause a problem if some governments factored the possibility of a sports ban into their decision-making when they considered important political issues that went beyond sports. This is hard to imagine. Part of the reason is that sports bans for purely political reasons have been rare. Therefore, the concern about selection bias that has been important in the literature on economic sanctions should not pose a major issue for our study.

Defining Sports Sanctions as Successful or Unsuccessful. In this paper, we consider sports sanctions to be successful if they played an important role in encouraging the target country to change its behavior in the desired way. Under this definition, sports sanctions

would clearly be unsuccessful if the target country did not reform its behavior. The sanctions would also be unsuccessful if the target country did change its behavior, but for reasons other than the sports sanctions (e.g., economic sanctions, civil unrest). In other words, we consider sports sanctions to be unsuccessful if they appeared to play no role at all in the government's decision making process. Below, we elaborate on our methodology for evaluating the causal role that sports sanctions played in each case.

Assessing Causality. In this paper, we adopt a degrees of causation approach to causal inference. Rather than looking at whether or not a factor is critical in achieving a desired goal or outcome, a degrees of causation approach looks to what extent a specific factor helped attain a certain goal. To illustrate this, imagine that three companies are simultaneously polluting a river but are emitting different amounts of the polluting toxin. A degrees of causation approach takes into account this asymmetry in causal contribution by acknowledging that the companies contributed to the destruction of the river to different degrees depending on the amount of toxins they emitted. A degrees of causation approach therefore allows one to understand the relative importance of each causal factor in bringing about the outcome (Braham and Hees 2009).

In the context of sports sanctions, the degrees of causation approach to causality offers important advantages over the traditional counterfactual framework. The main limitation of the counterfactual framework is that it struggles to address cases of overdetermination (Brady 2013). Going back to the pollution example, no company would be responsible for killing the wildlife in the river unless its independent contribution was alone pivotal in bringing about the outcome. This means that under the counterfactual framework none of

the companies might be liable for the destruction of the wildlife. In sum, the counterfactual approach to causal inference is inadequate for addressing the causal contributions of factors in cases where the outcome is overdetermined.

The main drawback of the degrees of causation approach is that it can be difficult for researchers to measure the relative importance of different causal factors. To address this challenge, we use a process tracing methodology. Specifically, we focus on the timeline of the events of each historical case, along with causal process observations (CPOs). CPOs are pieces of evidence that one would expect to find in the real world if a given hypothesis is true (Collier 2011). Thus, by applying process tracing, we can analyse whether the details of each historical case support the notion that the sport sanctions in the case were effective. We explain this in more detail in the following two sections.

Timeline. Process tracing is not easy to do well. Collier (2011) advises to first start by describing in detail the key moments or events in the narrative from which one wishes to draw causal inferences. He writes, “grasping [the unfolding of events or situations over time] is impossible if one cannot adequately describe an event or situation at one point in time. . . . To characterize a process, we must be able to characterize key steps in the process, which in turn permits good analysis of change and sequence” (Collier 2011). A detailed timeline is therefore important for identifying potential causal links in a series of events.

Causal Process Observations. After examining the timeline, it is necessary to corroborate possible causal links with other forms of evidence, namely CPOs. In the context of sport sanctions, we expect to observe several specific CPOs if sport sanctions played an important causal role in the case. These include:

- the target country complied with the specific demands related to the sport sanctions;
- government officials in the target country expressed concerns about the sports sanctions in public statements;
- the target country attempted to find alternatives to the sporting events that they were banned from but were unable to do so;
- during negotiations the officials of the target country tried to get the athletes back into sports as soon as possible by pushing for the removal of sanctions or at least attempting to secure better terms for the athletes;
- the sports sanctions created domestic discontent that put pressure on government officials to have them lifted;
- the sports sanctions had a costly impact on the athletes and teams in the target country that the target government attempted to mitigate.

On the other hand, if sport sanctions played little causal role in the case we would expect to observe different CPOs:

- the target country seemed uninterested in finding alternatives to the sporting events it was banned from, or it was able to find satisfactory alternatives;
- The target country was able to largely mitigate the negative effect of the sport sanctions on their athletes and sports teams or expressed concerns about its athletes;
- The population in the target country seemed uninterested in the sports sanctions.

Finally, it is also possible that the sport sanctions could provoke nationalism and resentment in the target country and thereby make it less willing to change its behaviour. In such a case we would expect to observe the following CPOs:

- the target country moved farther away from witnessing the desired changes;

- the popularity of the target country's regime increased, lifting the blame off of target country officials for any problems in the country;
- the popularity of the sanctioners decreased, hindering their efforts to encourage reforms.

Section 4: Historical Cases

In this section, we attempt to evaluate every serious instance of sports sanctions, along with two borderline cases. Our cases include: (1) the banning of Rhodesia from international sports after it declared independence from Britain (1966-1979), (2) the sports sanctions against South Africa to combat its government's racist policies (1959-1991), (3) the banning of English teams from European soccer due to fan violence (1985-1991), (4) the sports sanctions against Yugoslavia during its civil war (1992-1995), (5) the banning of Afghanistan from the Olympics for not having female athletes (1999-2002), (6) Iraq's temporary Olympic ban for government interference in its National Olympic Committee (2008), (7) the banning of Kuwait from the Olympics for government interference in its National Olympic Committee (2010-2018), (8) India's temporary Olympic ban for corruption in its National Olympic Committee (2012-2014), (9) the sports sanctions against Russia for its doping program (2018-present), (10) the pressure on Saudi Arabia to include female athletes in the Olympics, and (11) the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

The Illegitimate Government in Rhodesia. In the British colony of Rhodesia (modern-day Zimbabwe), whites held extensive power. Even though they made up less than 10% of

the colony's population, they controlled the colonial government. In the early 1960s, the British government wanted to establish democracy in Rhodesia, which would shift power to the black population. However, the whites refused to go along with this plan. They claimed that the blacks were not yet civilized enough to run the country. In 1965, they declared independence from Britain, and they formed a new government that protected their elevated status.

This new Rhodesian government faced intense resistance from the international community. Nearly all African countries condemned it, along with the United States. Obviously, Britain would not tolerate the situation either, since it was a rebellion against the English Crown. The Soviet Union and its communist allies also sympathized with the black population. While none of these countries wanted to send troops to fight in Rhodesia, they all agreed that something needed to be done.

Starting in 1965, they instituted sanctions against the Rhodesian government, some of which targeted the sporting realm. Rhodesia was banned from the Commonwealth Games starting in 1966, the Olympics starting in 1968, and major soccer competitions beginning in 1970. The international community also threatened to punish any country that arranged a game against a Rhodesian sports team. As a result, Rhodesia found itself almost entirely cut off from the world of international sports by the early 1970s. Its isolation continued until a new government agreed to make wide-ranging democratic reforms in the late 1970s.

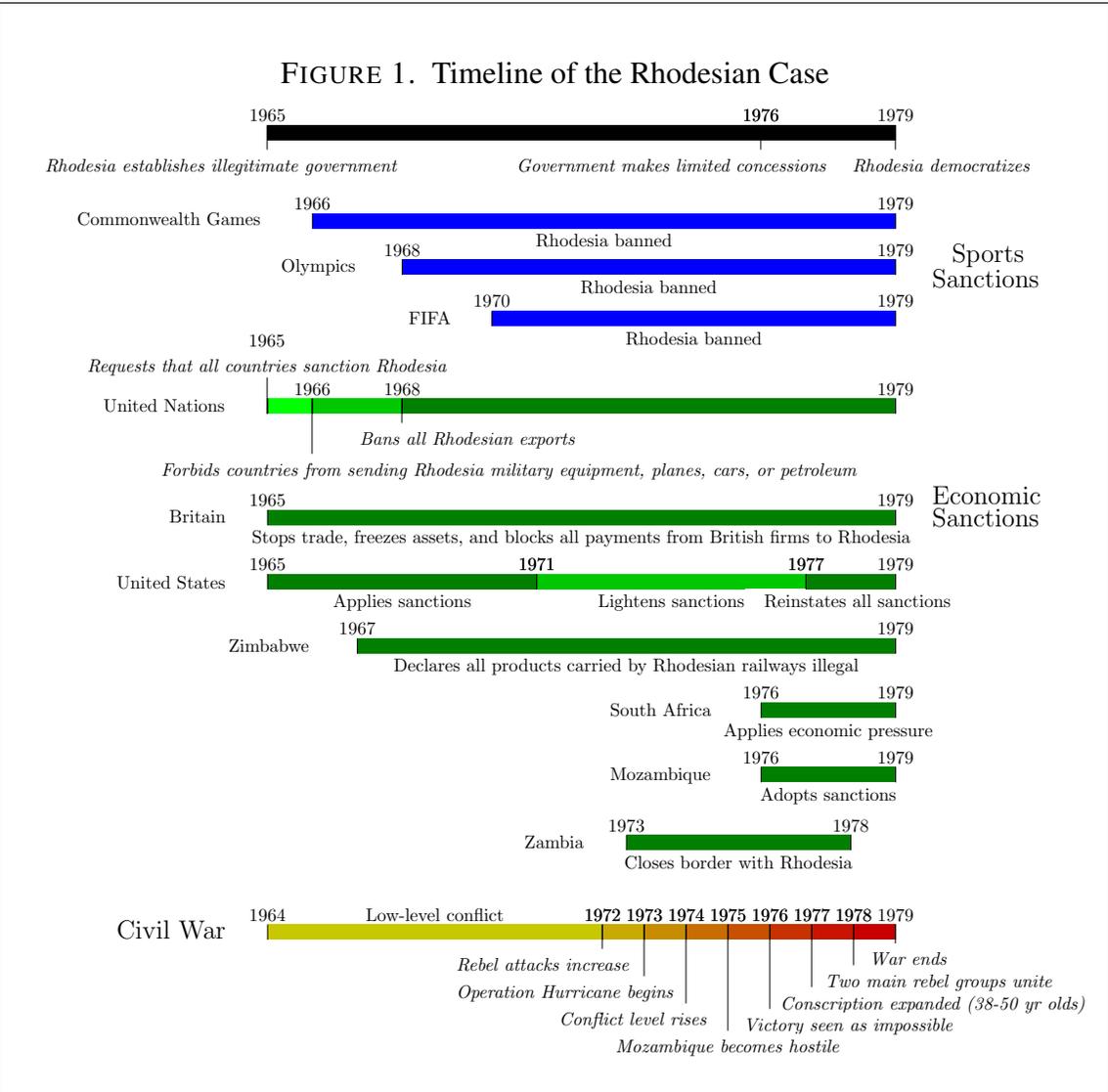
Evaluating the Sanctions: Although the Rhodesian government eventually became democratic, sports sanctions do not appear to have played a pivotal role. In fact, scholarly work on Rhodesia comes to the conclusion that two other factors were far more important than sports sanctions. The first was the economic sanctions, which intensified in the years just

prior to Rhodesia's capitulation. The second was the inability of the Rhodesian military to defeat the African nationalist forces, who staged an insurgency in the country that escalated in the late 1970s.

Figure 1 depicts the timeline of events. The major sports sanctions leveled against Rhodesia were all in place by the early 1970s. However, by themselves, they achieved no results. As the historian Charles Little (2011) describes, "there are no indications that sporting sanctions changed the policies of the state in any way." He continues,

Perhaps the strongest evidence to support this viewpoint can be seen in the election campaign leading up to the 1969 referendum on the adoption of a new constitution and declaration of a republic. The (white) opposition highlighted the impact of the sports boycott as one of their reasons for urging a no vote... but despite this the constitution was endorsed by a sweeping majority of the electorate. If anything, sporting sanctions may even have contributed to the 'siege mentality' prevalent amongst the bulk of the white Rhodesian population, whilst also earning them some degree of international sympathy (Little 2011).

On the other hand, the economic sanctions and civil war both intensified in the late 1970s, making them much more plausible explanations for the capitulation of the Rhodesian government. The economic sanctions had been in place since 1965, but it took nearly a decade before Rhodesia felt any major effects. The reason is that many of Rhodesia's main trading partners and allies ignored the sanctions. For example, South Africa and Mozambique only started putting trade restrictions on Rhodesia in 1976. The U.S. also acted as an important trade partner for Rhodesia. Although it initially adhered to the sanctions, it passed legislation in 1971 that reopened trade in several important sectors. This legislation was repealed in 1977.



By themselves, the economic sanctions might not have caused Rhodesia's government to cave. However, they proved effective because they weakened its capacity to combat the insurgency that had been taking place in its country since 1964. Up until 1972, this rebel movement remained a low-level conflict and did not pose a serious threat to the

regime. However, it became increasingly violent as the 1970s proceeded. From 1972-1979, it resulted in 30,000 dead and 275,000 wounded, and it consumed nearly one-third of Rhodesia's national budget (Evans 2007). By 1977, the Rhodesian government position had grown so desperate that it began drafting 38-50 year olds into the military. Whites in Rhodesia eventually came to see victory as impossible, and many fled the country in the latter half of the 1970s. The Rhodesian government eventually agreed to full-scale democratic reforms in 1979.

Thus, the sports sanctions played little role in bringing democracy to Rhodesia. Although this conclusion is discouraging, we should remember that these sports sanctions aimed to achieve an extremely ambitious goal that was unrelated to sports. They sought to get a minority ethnic group to give up political power. Moreover, many white Rhodesians proved that they were willing to die or flee the country before they would concede power to the black population. Therefore, sports sanctions would need to be incredibly powerful to work in a case like this. The next example that we will look at had much more modest goals, at least initially, and provides more promising evidence that sports sanctions can work.

Apartheid in South Africa. Up until the early 1990s, South Africa was racially segregated. This social system was known as "Aparthness", a word pronounced as "Apartheid" by South African whites. Every citizen in South Africa was put into one of four racial categories—"white", "black", "colored" (mixed-race), or "Indian". These categories determined where people could travel and live, what types of jobs they could take, who they could marry, and what schools they could attend.

Under this system, the opportunities afforded to whites were far better than they were for non-whites. Non-whites were often forced to live in slums and take on the lowest-paying

jobs in society. Thus, it was not so much a system of “Aparthness” as it was a system of repression.

These racist policies also spilled over into the sporting realm. Domestically, all sports leagues were segregated by race. When it came to international sports, non-whites were forbidden from playing on the South African national teams, and often could not even attend the games. In cases where they were permitted to go, they had to use different entrances than whites, sit in different parts of the stadium, and use separate bathrooms (Corrigall 1971). The South African government also kept its all-white national teams from playing games against African teams, instead setting up games against predominantly white nations like England and Australia (Corrigall 1971).

The obvious impact that these racist policies had on international sports made it impossible for other countries to look the other way. They also conflicted with one of the key principles set out in the Olympic charter—that no athlete should be discriminated against on the basis of race. By the early 1960s, many countries favored banning South Africa from international sports until it changed its policies.

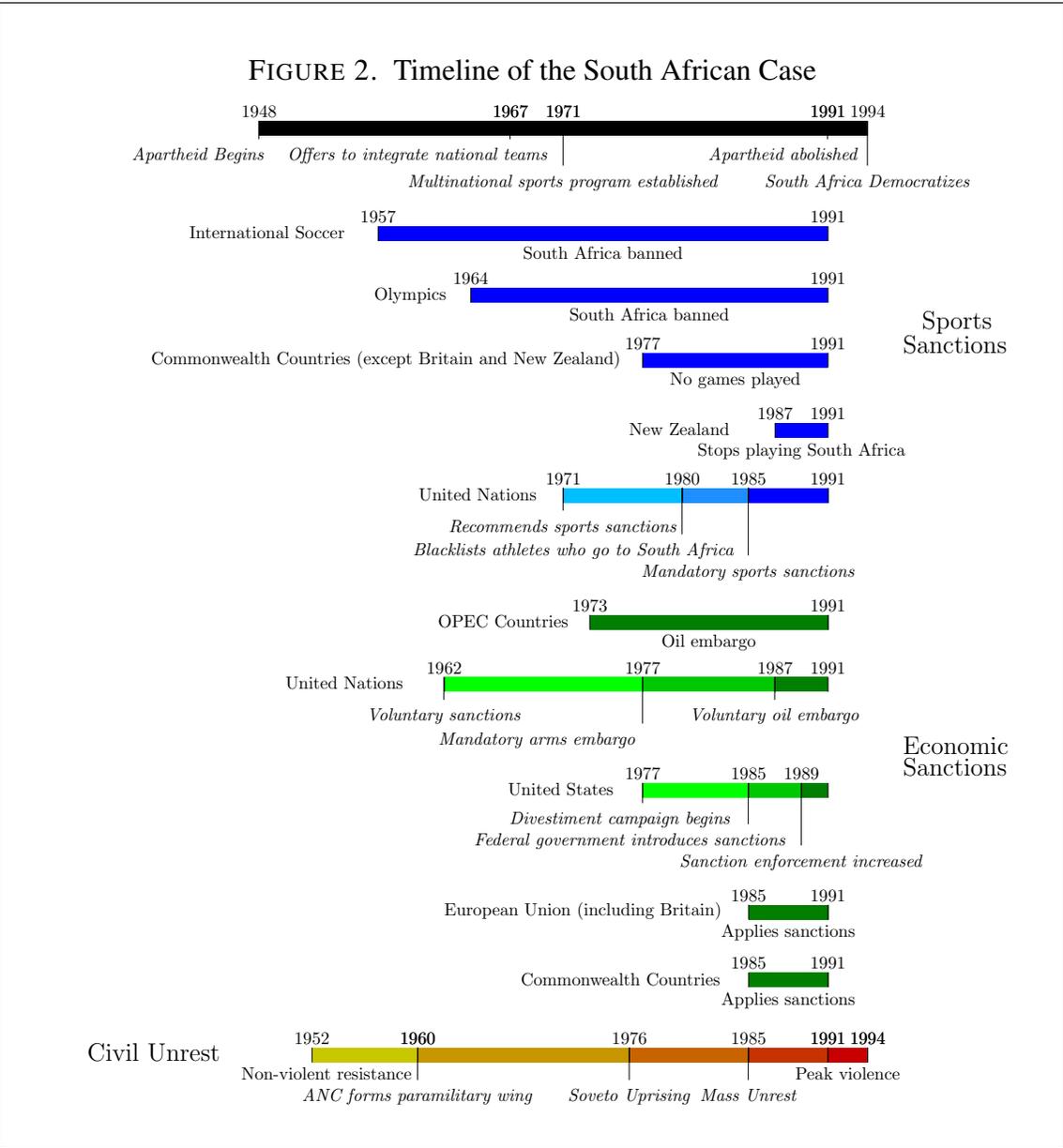
These countries initially focused on changing sports policy in South Africa. However, as the international campaign against South Africa progressed, the goal expanded to getting the South African government to abolish all of its racist policies. It had become clear that non-whites in South Africa would always be disadvantaged in sports as long as their society treated them as inferiors and denied them the educational, financial, and civic benefits afforded to whites. As the saying went, “There could not be normal sports in an abnormal society” (Rademeyer 2000). The entire political structure of South Africa needed to be changed. It eventually would when the government abolished Apartheid in

1991. Democratic elections were finally held in 1994 and Nelson Mandela was elected president.

Evaluating the Sanctions: To some extent, the sports sanctions proved successful. South Africa made major reforms to its domestic sports policies in the hopes of appeasing the international community (Klee 2012). They began in 1967, when the South African Prime Minister B.J. Vorster announced that he would allow all races to participate on many of the national sports teams, as well as represent South Africa at the Olympics. However, he refused to desegregate sports within South Africa, so these concessions were not enough to satisfy the international community. In 1971, he finally gave in and established a multi-national sports program that allowed for mixed sports competition. Although non-whites continued to face various forms of overt discrimination in sports over the next decade, by 1981 the situation improved enough to deem the sanctions as successful in at least partially achieving their initial goal.

Nevertheless, the clear economic disparity between the racial groups in South Africa undermined the notion that the whites and non-whites were on equal footing when it came to sports. Whites could practice at better facilities, purchase better equipment, eat better food, and go home to nicer houses. While inequality of this sort is present in many countries, what made it unacceptable in the case of South Africa is that the government explicitly discriminated against people based on their race. Thus, the international community refused to remove the sanctions based on the changes that had been made in the sporting realm. It demanded a new political system in South Africa that gave every citizen equal rights, regardless of race.

The sports sanctions alone failed to bring about this type of political change in South Africa. Like in the Rhodesian case, economic sanctions and internal instability turned



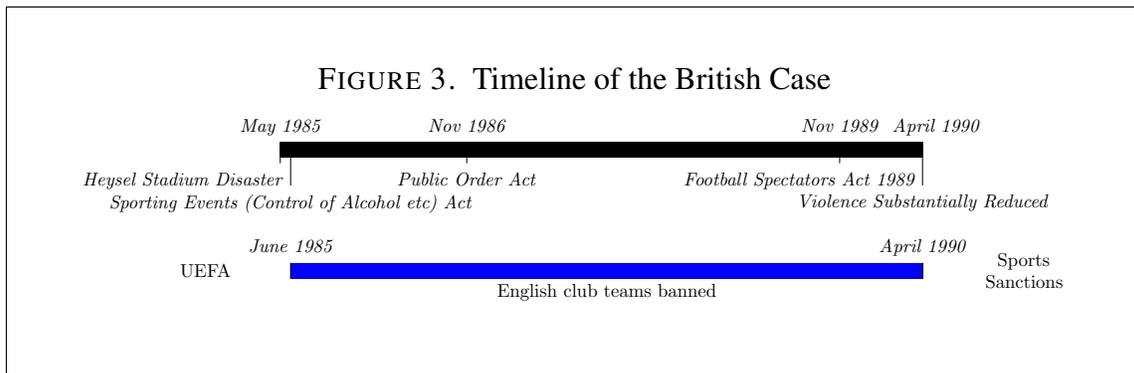
out to be the key factors. Figure 2 shows the timeline of events. The United Nations had recommended sanctions going as far back as 1962, but most of South Africa’s major trading partners only put them in effect starting in 1985. This delay occurred because many

of these countries viewed the major anti-Apartheid group in South Africa, the African National Congress, as a communist organization. However, as the Cold War wound down, fears that South Africa might join the communist block abated. As a result, South Africa felt increasing economic and diplomatic pressure to reform in the second half of the 1980s.

Levels of civil unrest had also been steadily rising since the 1960s. By the mid-1980s, the government faced mass riots across the country. This instability intensified after the Cold War. More people died between 1991 and 1994 than in the previous 30 years of the conflict. Even though the international community had allowed South Africa to participate in international sports after it abolished Apartheid in 1991, it was during this period of civil unrest that the white population made the major political concessions, like the extension of voting rights to non-whites, that turned South Africa into a real democracy.

Therefore, the sports sanctions against South Africa managed to encourage positive change in the sporting realm, but they fell short of ending Apartheid. The country had been all but banished from international sports by 1977. However, it was not until external economic pressure and internal conflict increased in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the government began to make serious political reforms that changed the social landscape. Therefore, the case suggests that sports sanctions are capable of achieving important concessions that are related to sports, but that they are unable to bring about broader political change.

British Spectator Violence. Beginning in the 1960s, Britain developed a soccer violence problem that became so serious that it earned the name the “English Disease.” Its unruly fans frequently attacked spectators and players from other countries. Over the next couple decades, the violence grew progressively worse, eventually culminating in a massive riot



at the 1985 European Cup Final game in Belgium between Liverpool and Juventus (from Italy). Thirty-nine people were killed and over 600 were injured.

In response to this incident, the main soccer governing body of Europe, UEFA, banned all English club teams from participation in the European league. The English national team could still participate in international competitions, but teams like Manchester United, Arsenal, and Liverpool were banned from European competition. Importantly, the British government supported the ban, which would stay in place until a series of reforms got the spectators under control. The sanctions were eventually lifted in 1991.

Evaluating the Sanctions: The sports sanctions in the British case were largely successful. Following the 1985 ban, the country instituted a number of major reforms to combat spectator violence. These included:

1. Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) Act 1985: Banned alcohol at sporting events, gave police the authority to arrest drunk spectators, and banned fireworks.
2. Public Order Act 1986: Allowed authorities to ban troublemakers from soccer games for up to three months, banned actions intended to provoke disorder, and outlawed provocations of violence, including racial and religious hatred (spoken or written).

3. Football Spectators Act 1989: Allowed authorities to make troublemakers report to police stations during games for up to five years and prevented troublemakers from attending games outside the country. It also coincided with the creation of the National Football Intelligence Unit to keep track of troublemakers.

Figure 3 shows the timeline of events. Since Britain did not face economic sanctions or mass civil unrest over this period, we can safely attribute the improved situation to the sports sanctions and the government's willingness to comply. There was one other major factor that contributed to reforms in Britain—the Hillsborough disaster of 1989, where an mass influx of spectators into a stadium resulted in 96 fans being crushed to death and over 800 injuries. This tragedy led to the Football Spectators Act of 1989. However, although this tragedy did play a major role in the creation of that particular act, the British government passed the two prior pieces of legislation before the Hillsborough disaster. There were also similar incidents before 1985 that did not prompt major government reforms. Therefore, we can conclude that the sports sanctions played a major role in bringing about change in British society.

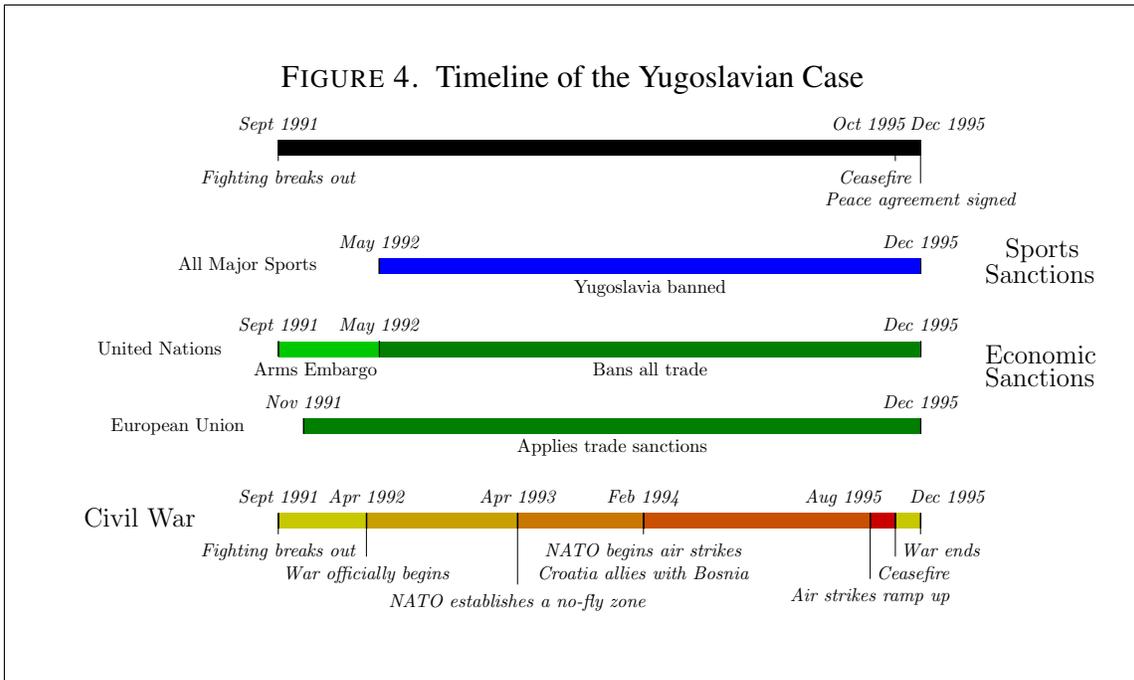
The Civil War in Yugoslavia. In 1992, the Yugoslavia military began carrying out major military operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In response, the international community leveled sanctions against the country, which included a ban on international sports. Between 1992 and 1995, Yugoslavia was excluded from almost all international sporting events, including the Olympics and World Cup. Its major club soccer team, Red Star Belgrade, was also banned from playing in the European league. The team was one of the best in the world, and had won both the European Cup and Intercontinental Cup the previous year.

The war waged on for three-and-a-half years. During this period, the economic sanctions against Yugoslavia caused significant damage to the economy, shrinking its GDP by over 50%. In 1994, NATO began air operations against Yugoslavian military targets in Bosnia. In 1995, the Yugoslavian military agreed to withdraw from Bosnia when it signed the Dayton Accords, which were brokered by the United States.

Evaluating the Sanctions: The sports sanctions had a devastating effect on Yugoslavian teams, particularly when it came to soccer. Although they were only in place for two-and-a-half years, they resulted in Yugoslavia missing the 1992 European Championship, the 1994 World Cup, and the 1996 European Championship (which they were unable to qualify for because of the sanctions). In addition, many of the nation's elite players left to play soccer for clubs in other countries and never returned after the sanctions were lifted. This flight of players was a major setback for the national team and Red Star Belgrade.

Given the centrality of soccer in Yugoslavia, the impact of these sanctions cannot be understated. As the historian Richard Mills (2009) explains, "For many Serbs involved with football, the most damaging aspect of the civil war was the implementation of sanctions on Serbia's teams." The British reporter Louise Branson wrote, "It is the one sanction that really hurts. Stoics in the face of petrol shortages, hyper-inflation and international opprobrium, football-mad Serbs are in despair at the damage wrought to the once-glorious Red Star Belgrade" (Mills 2009).

Nevertheless, there is little evidence that the sports sanctions caused Yugoslavia's government to end its military operations. Figure 4 shows the timeline of events. The sports sanctions were initially imposed in May of 1992. However, Yugoslavia only suspended its activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the latter half of 1995, specifically after NATO escalated its bombing campaign and threatened a ground invasion. Therefore, the timing



of Yugoslavia's capitulation suggests that the military situation was the driving factor in this case.

The negotiation process also suggests that sports sanctions were not a key factor. In November 1995, the U.S. government brought the warring parties together for a conference in Dayton, Ohio. The key issues discussed at the meeting were the delineation of territory, the status of the government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the role that international organizations would play in managing security in the future. In contrast, sports received little consideration. Yugoslavian representatives never asked for a guarantee that the sports sanctions would be lifted. They also did not try to get their national soccer team the chance to earn a spot at the 1996 European Championship. They could have requested that their team be allowed to participate in the qualification process provided that they made the

necessary political concessions. However, this issue was not a priority for Yugoslavian leaders.

In sum, the sports sanctions had an important impact on the Yugoslavian athletes, teams, and fans, but they appear not to have played a significant role in ending the war.

Women's Rights in Afghanistan. Under Taliban rule, women in Afghanistan were strictly prohibited from participating in sport. Men's sport was also restricted. Men could only compete under very strict rules, which regulated everything down to the length of their shirt sleeves and the trimming of their beards. Following decades of repressive Taliban rule that banned women from all sport, the IOC suspended Afghanistan in 1999. Despite not being the official UN-recognized government of the country, the IOC was able to conclude that the Taliban had sufficient enough control over sport in Afghanistan to warrant suspension over their actions toward women and women's rights. This meant Afghanistan could not compete in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The ban on Afghanistan was not lifted until 2002, following the fall of the Taliban and the lifting of the ban on women's sport. Afghanistan sent two women to the Olympics in Athens in 2004.

Evaluating the Sanctions: We code this case as a qualified success. Had Afghanistan not been banned from the Olympics, increasing gender equality in sports and sending female athletes to the Olympics might not have been viewed as priorities for the new government. However, the case is complicated. Had the regime not fallen in 2001, the sports sanctions would almost certainly have been entirely ineffective in their pursuit of gender equality in sports. Therefore, even though we code this case as a success, we believe that the regime change was a necessary component. Without the regime change, the case would likely have been a failure.

Also, we stress that significant barriers continued to limit female sport in Afghanistan after 2001. Afghan society is still extremely gender-divided, and this applies to the public and sporting facilities used by its citizens. For example, training in a mixed-gender gym would be unacceptable to many families and parents, barring their daughters from being able to train. Therefore, the lifting of the Olympic ban on Afghanistan should not be taken as evidence of female equality in sports. It only marked an improvement over the prior situation.

Government Interference with Sports in Iraq. In May of 2008, the Iraqi government suspended its National Olympic Committee and replaced it with a new committee that had close ties to the government. This type of action is strictly prohibited under the International Olympic Committee charter. The National Olympic Committees are supposed to advance the Olympic movement, not the agendas of their national governments. In response to this development, the International Olympic Committee decided to ban Iraq from the 2008 Olympics.

Following the decision, Iraq promised to hold free and fair elections for a new National Olympic Committee. This concession satisfied the International Olympic Committee, who lifted the ban five days after it was initially put in place. Iraq was allowed to compete in the 2008 Olympics. However, the temporary ban caused several Iraqi athletes to miss their deadlines to register, and most of these individuals were not able to compete.

Evaluating the Sanctions. The sports sanctions clearly succeeded in this case. Iraq had fallen out of compliance with the International Committee Rules, but they were able to reach a deal that got them reinstated to the 2008 Olympics under the condition that they

make the necessary reforms. The case reinforces the point that sports sanctions can be effective when they address issues related to the sports realm.

Government Interference with Sports in Kuwait. In 2010, the Kuwaiti parliament passed new national sport laws that limited the autonomy of national sporting organizations, including the Kuwait National Olympic Committee (KNOC). The laws allowed the government to interfere in the elections of sports organizations in the country. As we discussed in the Iraq case, this type of political interference is prohibited in the Olympic Charter.

Not only did the new legislation infringe upon the independence of the sporting bodies, but it also failed to appropriately acknowledge the requirement for Kuwaiti national sporting organizations to comply with international agencies like the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the Court of Arbitration for Sport. This led to WADA naming Kuwait as non-compliant, causing the IOC to suspend the country's right to compete. Similar accusations of interference brought further sporting suspensions upon Kuwait's national teams and athletes by FIFA.

Kuwait was excluded from international sports competitions intermittently between 2010 and 2018, costing them participation at the 2010 Youth Olympic Games, the 2010 Asian Games, and the 2011 Asian Winter Games. While the suspension was lifted in time for the 2012 London Olympics, it was reinstated in October of 2015, due to government interference in the autonomy of sport in Kuwait. This meant Kuwait was banned from the 2016 Rio Olympics, with their athletes only permitted to participate independently, under the IOC flag.

The IOC's ban on Kuwait remained until the Kuwaiti Parliament amended the sports law which infringed upon the Olympic Charter in the first place. After new legislation allowed for the restructuring of Kuwaiti national sports organizations, the IOC lifted the

ban, in time for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Going forward, in order to remain eligible for Olympic competition, Kuwaiti sports law must continue to uphold the integrity of sporting entities like the KNOC, so that their internal functions and operations may continue to be carried out without interference from the government.

Evaluating the Sanctions: The sanctions against Kuwait proved successful, and had a clear, significant impact on Kuwaiti sport law: each time Kuwait was suspended from international competition because of laws which permitted government interference in national sport organizations' elections, parliament moved to pass the necessary amendments to lift the ban. This happened in 2012, when the ban on Kuwait was lifted the first time, after Kuwait made sufficient amendments to the law in question. Law changes in 2015 led to the return of IOC sanctions. The Kuwaiti parliament once again was able to create the necessary amendments to the law which infringed upon the Olympic Charter, in order for the suspension to again be lifted in 2018. The suspension clearly incentivized law changes in favour of the IOC sanctions, and proved successful on more than one occasion.

This case quite clearly fits the pattern established by previous cases, indicating that sport sanctions can and do succeed when imposed in relation to issues of sport. The case further demonstrates the ability for international sporting bans to place pressure upon domestic and national sporting law, but not necessarily upon non-sport related national policies.

Government Interference with Sports in India. In May of 2012, India was banned from the Olympics because of corruption in its National Olympic Committee. Its government initially resisted the sanctions, but it reversed course after about a year and made the necessary reforms. It was able to enter the 2014 Olympics, although it missed the first few days of competition. During that period, its athletes had to compete under the Olympic

flag. Therefore, similar to the Iraq (2008) case, India was banned temporarily, but it did not actually miss an Olympics because of the ban.

Evaluating the Sanctions. The case was clearly a success. Although initially obstinate, the Indian government made the necessary reforms, including holding fair elections to choose new members of the National Olympic Committee. The case represents another clear example of sports sanctions to stop undue government influence in sports, and it did not require India or its athletes to miss an Olympic games.

Russian Doping Program: In 2010, Russia did not perform as well as it would have liked at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. For the first time in history, Russia had not competed for an Olympic medal in hockey, having lost to Canada in the quarterfinals. Moreover, Russia ranked eleventh, a small success for a country that is usually among the top four. Russian officials were determined to reassert Russian leadership in the realm of sport especially ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympics that were going to be held in Russia (Ioffe 2017). The state sponsored doping campaign is believed to have begun in late 2011 and to have continued during the Sochi Olympic Games until August 2015 (McLaren 2016).

Following allegations of widespread doping in Russia, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) set up an independent commission to conduct an investigation into the matter. In November 2015 the commission published its findings claiming that the Russian Sports Ministry had overseen a system whereby positive doping samples would go missing. Such a finding entailed that Russia had clearly violated anti doping rules according to the World Anti-Doping Code. WADA later suggested, following the publication of the McLaren

Investigation Report, that Russia be banned from the 2016 Summer Olympics (WADA 2016).

Nevertheless, the International Olympic Committee chose not to ban the Russian Olympic team. Instead it stated that it would be up to each individual sporting federation to decide for itself which athletes should be allowed to participate based on reliable international tests and the athletes' anti-doping records (IOC 2016). In most sports Russian athletes that passed these examinations were allowed to participate in the Olympics. The only exception was athletics where Russia was banned.

Following new findings of institutionalized cheating by the IOC's Disciplinary Commission, the Russian Olympic Committee was suspended and Russian athletes allowed to participate in the 2018 Winter Games as neutral "Olympic Athletes from Russia (OARs)". This meant that they competed under the Olympic instead of the Russian flag (IOC 2017).

Finally, after Russia provided WADA with incomplete and manipulated doping data, WADA recommended in November 2019 that Russia again be banned from international sports for a period of four years. Later, upon appeal before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), this period was reduced to two years. As a result, Russian athletes will have to compete as the Russian Olympic Committee's athletes in the 2021 Summer Olympics and 2022 Winter Olympics and World Cup (BBC 2020).

Evaluating the Sanctions: The sanctions imposed by the international community against Russia were ineffective. They were intended to punish Russia for its state-sponsored doping program and bring RUSADA into compliance with the World Anti-Doping Code. Nevertheless, despite sanctions, Russia gave WADA manipulated and incomplete data. According to WADA's President, this showed a continued stance of deception and denial (WADA 2019).

The ineffectiveness of the sanctions can be attributed to the fact that they were limited. Namely, the IOC's decision to allow Russian athletes to compete in Rio meant that Russia could still maintain its leadership in the world of sports. In fact, in the 2016 Summer Olympics the Russian federation won 19 gold medals and ranked fourth (*CBS* 2016). Therefore, international sanctions were not too costly for Russia. Had Russia's punishment been more severe perhaps it would have been pressured into compliance.

The IOC's decision not to ban Russia from the Olympic Games in 2016 and to later allow Russian athletes to compete as OARs came as a surprise given the severity of Russia's violations. Indeed, maybe a complete ban would have been imposed if another country had committed the same breaches. As one Canadian athlete expressed after the IOC's decision in 2016, "I ask myself if we were not dealing with Russia would this decision to ban a nation been an easier one? I fear the answer is yes" (Maese 2016). In short, Russia is a strong state that has leverage over international sporting organizations. This leverage stems from Russia's cyberattacks and its political influence.

In 2018, Russian military spies are believed to have hacked hundreds of computers used by authorities at the Winter Olympic Games. This allowed them to extract intelligence and publish confidential medical information about US athletes. Had they wanted to, they could also have conducted network attacks (Nakashima 2018). Fear of Russia doing either of these things in the future may influence the decision making of international sports organizations.

Moreover, Russia is believed to have influence over the IOC via its President Thomas Bach. It is speculated that Putin helped Bach secure the post by influencing IOC members that elect the President. Moreover, indicative of Bach's close ties with Russia was his soft stance towards the country prior to the doping scandal. For instance in 2014, Bach

praised Putin's great commitment to the Olympic Games and described the Sochi Winter Olympics as a "real special experience" despite criticism in the media that the games were too expensive and that there may have been corruption involved (Gibson 2016). In sum, the Russian case suggests that the effectiveness of sports sanctions is largely influenced by the leverage of the target country over its sanctioners.

Partial Case: Women's Rights in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has long maintained discriminatory policies towards women. In the area of sport, women were not given physical education in state schools and were not encouraged to practice sport in public. As a result, they were forced to play underground leagues, women's gyms were not granted authorisations and women were not supported to participate in international sporting events (*Human Rights Watch* 2012).

Saudi Arabia's treatment of women in sports contravened the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) charter which states that sport is a right for everyone and bans gender discrimination in practicing sports. As a result, the IOC began pressuring Saudi Arabia in 2012 to include female athletes on its Olympic team. Saudi Arabia granted a place to two female athletes on its Olympic team for the 2012 London Summer Olympics (Peralta 2012).

Furthermore, in 2014, the IOC introduced a set of reforms called Olympic Agenda 2020, which has made gender equality one of the key goals of the Olympic movement. Moreover, in 2015 IOC President Thomas Bach stated, "a commitment to 'non-discrimination' will be mandatory for all countries hoping to bid for the Olympics in the future . . . countries like Saudi Arabia must really work to allow female athletes to freely participate." As a result, the President rejected a suggestion by Saudi Arabia to co-host sex segregated Olympics with Bahrain (*Human Rights Watch* 2016).

Saudi Arabia has since taken further steps to reduce gender discrimination in the realm of sports. Since August 1st 2016, the General Authority for Sports of Saudi Arabia has introduced a new female department and appointed a female (Princess Reema Bint Bandar Al Saud) as the head. Female spectators are also allowed to attend sports events in stadiums since 2018 and a women's football league was created in 2020.

Evaluating the Pressure Campaign: It should first be noted that the IOC's efforts to persuade Saudi Arabia to have women on their Olympic team did not amount to a major case of sport sanctions as the IOC did not hinder Saudi Arabia's participation in international sporting events. For example, the IOC did not condition Saudi Arabia's participation in the Summer Olympics of 2012 on including female athletes on the Olympic team. Nevertheless, the IOC did make the removal of gender discrimination in sport a prerequisite for any future bids to host the Olympics. These actions did constitute sport sanctions as they hindered Saudi Arabia's ability to host an international sporting event.

Furthermore, the sequence of events would suggest that the IOC sanctions were effective. Following the IOC's rejection of Saudi Arabia's bid to co-host the Olympic Games in 2015, Saudi Arabia took several important steps to reduce gender discrimination in sport (as laid out in the previous section). Moreover, although Saudi Arabia claims to have begun to provide men and women with equal opportunities to participate in sports and physical education in 2003, it had also taken discriminatory measures since then. For instance, in 2009 and 2010 Saudi Arabia closed several women's gyms. In addition, many promises that had been made since 2003 had not been turned into concrete measures until after 2015. For example, in 2011 Saudi Arabia announced plans to introduce physical education for girls in state schools. However, only in 2017 did the plan turn into tangible action and Saudi Arabia allowed girls to play sports in public schools (*Human Rights*

Watch 2012). It can thus be hypothesised that the IOC's sanctions played a significant role in pushing for reforms in sport.

However, this hypothesis is not supported by too many CPOs. Namely, while Saudi Arabia did carry out reforms to reduce gender discrimination in sport, it did not do so through cooperation with the IOC. While the IOC expressed that countries that wanted to host the Olympics needed to comply with rules banning gender discrimination, it did not specify the reforms that Saudi Arabia needed to implement nor assist it in ending discrimination as soon as possible (*Human Rights Watch* 2016). Cooperation with the IOC would have suggested that the sport reforms were primarily intended to remove IOC sanctions, a conclusion that is now difficult to support especially taking into account other possible explanations.

Indeed, Saudi Arabia's reforms in sport seem to form part of an initiative to socially and economically transform the kingdom, called Saudi Vision 2030. The framework states that it seeks to unlock the "talent, potential and dedication of . . . young men and women." Vision 2030 seeks to increase female participation in all aspects of life. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, who is believed to be the de facto ruler of the kingdom, has pursued this goal by granting Saudi women more rights at an accelerated pace. Since the Crown Prince came to power in 2017, women have been allowed to drive and participate more in the workforce. The relaxation of the male guardianship law has also made women more independent (Hubbard and Yee 2019).

That sports reforms are part of a wider reform initiative is also evidenced by official statements. When Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education announced that public girls' schools would offer physical education programs starting in the fall of 2017, it stated that the decision was made in fulfilment of the Global Goals of Saudi Vision 2030 (*Beyond*

Sport 2017). In sum, while the IOC's sport sanctions seem to have causally contributed to reducing gender discrimination in sport, they may have done so to a lesser degree than other factors such as the broader socio-political context.

Partial Case: 1980 Boycott of the Moscow Olympics. In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, beginning a nine year occupation that featured numerous war crimes and human rights abuses. In response, 65 countries refused to participate in the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow. These countries included the United States, China, Japan, and West Germany.

This boycott did not rise to the level of systematic sports sanctions where a country is banned from most or all international sporting events. However, the case is still worth exploring because it involved the collective effort of about half of the international community to delegitimize the Soviet's Olympic Games. Therefore, this case can still shed some light about when sports sanctions are likely to work.

Evaluating the Boycott. The 1980 Boycott clearly did not compel the Soviet Union to leave Afghanistan. In fact, the Soviets continued occupying the country until 1989. Given that previous cases suggest that sports sanctions cannot directly bring about major political changes unrelated to sports, this result is not too surprising. In fact, it seemed obvious to some observers at the time that the boycott had little chance of making the Soviets leave Afghanistan (e.g., Nafziger 1980; Grehl 1980).

However, the boycott did clearly lead to an anti-Western backlash within the Soviet Union. First, the government refused to acknowledge that the boycott movement had resulted from its war in Afghanistan. It instead blamed the boycott on President Carter trying to boost his domestic support and the United States not wanting to see Moscow

stage a successful Olympics (Guttman 1988). Four years later, the Soviets boycotted the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. They accused the United States government of spreading anti-Soviet propaganda and failing to provide a safe environment for athletes. However, it is widely acknowledged that the 1984 boycott was a direct retaliation for the 1980 boycott (Guttman 1988).

In conclusion, the boycott clearly failed to cause the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan. Instead, it appears to have intensified hostilities between the Soviets and the West.

Summary of the Results. Table 1 lays out the main findings of our analysis. The clearest pattern is that sports sanctions seem more likely to work when they address issues related to sports. Whether the issue was segregated domestic sports leagues in South Africa, fan violence in Britain, the lack of female athletes in Afghanistan, or government interference in Kuwait, sports sanctions appeared capable of achieving their goals. On the other hand, when the objectives of the sports sanctions extended beyond the sporting realm, the results look quite different. Sports sanctions could not bring regime change to Rhodesia or South Africa, pressure the Soviets to leave Afghanistan, or end the war in Yugoslavia.

Our analysis also suggests that when powerful countries want to evade or offset the sanctions, they may be able to do so. The case of Russia (2018-Present) is the only one where we found that sports sanctions failed to achieve a purely sports-related objective. In addition, even though the Moscow Boycott (1980) had an ambitious geopolitical objective, the Soviet Union was able to blunt the punishment, holding a sporting event with many of its allies. It therefore seems that a state's capacity to undermine the sanctions is a critical determinant of whether they will prove successful.

Lastly, the interesting case of Britain (1985-1991) demonstrates that a government might actually welcome sports sanctions. Many government leaders work hard to make

Table 1: Summarizing the Results

	Goals	Outcome
Rhodesia (1966-1979)	Regime Change	Failure
South Africa (1959-1981)	Desegregate Sports Leagues	Qualified Success
South Africa (1982-1991)	Regime Change	Failure
Britain (1985-1991)	Reduce Spectator Violence	Success
Yugoslavia (1992-1995)	End War	Failure
Afghanistan (1999-2002)	Women's Inclusion at the Olympics	Qualified Success
Iraq (2008)	End Government Interference in NOC	Success
Kuwait (2010-2018)	End Government Interference in NOC	Success
India (2012-2014)	End Government Interference in NOC	Success
Russia (2018-Present)	Stop Doping Program	Largely Evaded
Saudi Arabia (2012-Present)	Women's Inclusion at the Olympics	Qualified Success
Moscow Boycott (1980)	End War	Failure

Notes: Reported outcomes are based on our own evaluations of the cases. We define cases as successful if the sports sanctions appeared to play an important role in causing the target country to comply with the stated demands of the sanctions.

their countries safer and improve the well-being of their citizens. If a temporary ban from a sporting event could help them achieve these goals, some governments might view sports sanctions as a valuable tool for facilitating important reforms. When a situation like this arises, sports sanctions could be a promising policy instrument for bringing about positive change in the world.

Section 5: Discussion

Although our results suggest that sports sanctions can be very effective in certain contexts, several additional considerations should qualify our findings. First, we defined success of sports sanctions as whether they played an important causal role in compelling the target country to comply with the stated demands. Defining success in this way is useful for analytical clarity, but it might also be a narrow way to think about success. For example, even if the target country refuses to go along with the demands, sports sanctions might nevertheless be effective in deterring other countries from engaging in the same behavior (Miller 2014).

Saudi Arabia, for instance, announced that it would work toward including women on its Olympic team following the ban of Afghanistan in 1999. This suggests that the Afghan case may have been an important early catalyst for Saudi reform. We discussed earlier that we believe that this type of anticipation effect is unlikely for issues outside the sporting realm, but it may be present for sports-related issues. If so, the impact of sports sanctions on state behavior might go beyond what we found in this study, at least when it comes to the sporting realm.

Sports sanctions might also be effective in drawing attention to certain problems in the world, which could lead to more comprehensive efforts to tackle them. The sports sanctions against South Africa might have worked according to this logic. If so, our analysis may have understated their importance in this respect. Still, thinking about success in this way is a little questionable, especially in the degrees of causation framework. The reason is that the sports sanctions themselves would not be doing much of the causal work. Therefore, studies that define success in this way should be clear that they are referring to the success specifically in terms of acting as an important signal. In sum, how scholars define the success of sports sanctions is an important decision, and it should be carefully considered in future research on this topic.

A second limitation of our analysis is our small sample size. Since we divide the South Africa case into two cases and also include two borderline cases, our total sample size is 12. While we still think our analysis provides valuable insights, particularly when it comes to the effectiveness of sports sanctions when they address sports-related issues, we should nevertheless be cautious given our small number of cases. In particular, only two of our cases involved obstinate great powers—Russia (2018-Present) and the 1980 Moscow Boycott. Similarly, Britain (1985-1991) was the only case where a government was welcoming of the sanctions, and future cases like it might be quite rare. Therefore, our results regarding these specific cases should be interpreted with caution.

Third, we believe that it may be very difficult to use sports sanctions in a way that is both effective and morally consistent. The key challenge is that the cases where governments break the rules most egregiously (e.g., North Korea) may not be the cases where sports sanctions are most likely to work. Therefore, an approach to sports sanctions that prioritizes effectiveness may lead the international community to ban countries that are

not the most serious offenders. Meanwhile, an approach that prioritized moral consistency might be completely counterproductive, because it would involve using sports sanctions in cases where they are very unlikely to succeed.

This potential effectiveness/consistency trade-off could make it very difficult to use sports sanctions in practice. Prioritizing effectiveness may be the best option. However, being inconsistent could reduce effectiveness if it made the sanctions seem less legitimate. There is some empirical evidence that this can happen. When Russia was banned from the Olympics in 2018, one Canadian journalist pointed out that it seemed inconsistent to ban them but not North Korea (Chaisson 2018). Of course, we do not believe that questions of consistency completely undermine effectiveness. If they did, all past cases of sports sanctions would have proved unsuccessful. However, the effectiveness/consistency trade-off is still an important concern, and it deserves careful attention from scholars who write about this subject.

Fourth, if sports sanctions become a more common feature of international relations, some countries might actively try to get their adversaries banned. This could result in negative publicity campaigns that heighten tensions between rival countries. Some nations might also spread propaganda and misinformation about their enemies, which could result in a wide range of negative consequences. Thus, opening up a new source of controversy in international relations could cause more problems than it solves. To mitigate this issue, it may be best to ensure that the decisions about whether to ban certain countries are left up to strong, trustworthy institutions, rather than allowing them to be influenced by public sentiment.

Fifth, it is worth stressing again that sports sanctions probably hurt the athletes more than anyone, which in some cases could be unfair. Fortunately, for individual sports,

athletes can compete under a neutral flag, as we discussed earlier. However, there simply may be no good solution for team sports. We encourage scholars who write about this topic in the future to keep the interests of these individuals in mind. Competing at an event like the World Cup could be a dream that they have spent years or decades working towards, and this can be an easy thing for academics to overlook. It is not the only issue to consider, but it is certainly part of the equation.

Conclusion

The analysis in this paper suggests that sports sanctions can achieve their goals under certain circumstances. The most important factors seem to be whether the demands of the sports sanctions are related to sports, the capacity of the target country to resist the sanctions, and the willingness of the government of the target country to undertake the reforms. To our knowledge, no study in political science has carried out a similar analysis before us, despite the importance of this topic for the endeavour of encouraging positive change in the world.

In addition, we have identified several potential concerns with sports sanctions that we believe warrant more attention from the academic community. In fact, it appears to us that the topic of sports sanctions is far from simple. While this paper contributes to our understanding of when sports sanctions seem to work, it cannot answer all the complex and challenging questions about when and how sports sanctions should be used. We do hope, however, that our research in this paper can serve as a starting point for making more progress on this topic in future studies.

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