The Unintended Consequences of African Union Sanctions of Member States: Myths and Realities

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Abstract
Sanctions have been a popular tool of economic statecraft. Sanctions on sub-Saharan African countries have come from states and different international bodies such as the United Nations (UN), the United States (US), and the European Union (EU), as well as regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC). This chapter examines the unintended consequences of sanctions in targeted countries, with a focus on sanctions imposed by the AU on its member states. The chapter contains a collection of AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) sanction episodes since 2002 and an examination of humanitarian crises in selected countries. This chapter argues that most sanctions in Africa fail to achieve the main goals for which they were imposed and that it is the ordinary citizens and not targeted state officials who suffer the most. Furthermore, sanctions in Africa have resulted in weak economic growth, rising inflation due to a shortage of basic goods, a reduction in trade (exports and imports) and increased unemployment. The rising extreme poverty in Africa in conjunction with the pressure on economic resources initiated by sanctions magnifies the woes of ordinary Africans.

Keywords: Africa, African Union, Economic Sanction, History of Sanctions, Humanitarian Crisis, Sanctions and Poverty

Introduction

Sanctions have been a popular tool of economic statecraft. Sanctions on sub-Saharan African countries are imposed by different states, such as the United States (US), and international bodies, such as the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU) as well as regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC). Although sanctions are thought to be more humane than military intervention, they seldom achieve their desired goals but adversely affect human rights, health and basic living conditions. This chapter argues that most sanctions in Africa fail to achieve the main goals for which they were imposed and that it is the ordinary citizens and not targeted state officials who suffer the most. Furthermore, sanctions in Africa have resulted in weak economic growth, rising inflation due to a shortage of basic goods, reduction in trade (exports and imports) and increased unemployment. The rising extreme poverty in Africa in conjunction with the pressure on economic resources initiated by sanctions magnifies the woes of ordinary Africans.

Africa is the most sanctioned continent, with the EU and the AU issuing the majority of these sanctions. The Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Libya, Zimbabwe and Guinea have all been sanctioned by the EU. Almost all of the sanctions imposed by the AU are directed at its own members (Afriyie and Jian, 2018; Hellquist, 2021). However, little attention has been paid to the confluence of these sanction regimes and the continent's rising poverty and other humanitarian crises. This chapter examines the unintended consequences of sanctions in targeted countries, with a focus on sanctions imposed by the AU and other African regional bodies such as ECOWAS, SADC, and the EAC. The chapter goes beyond the political perspectives of sanctions to discuss the humanitarian crises that have accompanied them. The goal is not to assess AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) sanctions records, but rather to examine the humanitarian costs of sanctions. The chapter contains a collection of AU's PSC sanction episodes since 2002 and an examination of humanitarian crises in selected countries. This period was chosen because, prior to 2001, the OAU/AU rarely sanctioned its members, preferring to support them against external/western interference in domestic affairs.

Many sanctions studies have shown that the goal of sanctions against a target state is to cause as much economic damage as possible in order to force/coerce the target country to comply or change policies in accordance with the sender states (Bergeijk, 1989; Kaempfer and Lowenberg, 2000; Elliott, Hufbauer and Oegg, 2008; Nathan, 2017). The effectiveness of sanctions has been documented by many, including Bergeijk (1989), Hufbauer and Oegg (2007), Morgan, Bapat and Krustev (2009), Vines, (2012), Charron (2013) and Afriyie and Jian (2018), with the general conclusion that economic sanctions are of limited relevance if used to pressure target states to change policy in favour of the sender. Indeed, Dizaji and Van Bergeijk (2013), Peksen and Son, (2015), and Neuenkirch and Neumeier (2016) have investigated how these sanction episodes affect the target countries' GDP, infant mortality, government consumption, trade, poverty, exchange rates, and employment.

This chapter advances this argument by examining the impact of AU sanctions on humanitarian situations in Africa. This is critical because fulfilling UN Sustainable Development Goals, which the majority of African nations are currently falling short of, will suffer severely if sanctions interrupt economic progress, deepen income disparity, and increase poverty. In many poor countries, according to Alvaredo and Gasparini (2015), poverty and inequality are worse than they were thirty years ago. Most of these rising poverty rates are in the states that have been sanctioned.

Sanctions Procedures at the AU

The African Union has 55 member states on the continent, and its constitution gives it the authority to sanction members who violate agreed-upon laws, such as failure to make financial contributions, an unconstitutional change of government, and failure to comply with decisions and policies. Members of the AU benefit from access to growing internal markets and domestic demand, access to African financial markets, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which help stimulate growth and prosperity. Before the formation of the AU in July 2002, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963, was the continent's main regulatory body. Since the colonial invasion of Africa and the experience of living under the perpetual dilemma of external interference, the OAU was born out of opposition to colonial oppression and the celebration of self-determination (Hellquist 2015). As a result, the OAU was preoccupied with member-state security against external actors. With the exception of anti-apartheid sanctions, the use of sanctions against member states was unthinkable (Ibid.). Apartheid South Africa, on the other hand, was not a true member of the OAU because it lacked the organisation's requirement of being an independent and sovereign nation. The organisation did not intervene in the unconstitutional overthrow of governments on the grounds that it does not interfere in the domestic affairs of member states. This non-interference policy was based upon the principles of international law in the first decades after World War II.

Following the transition from the OAU to the AU, the regulatory body's structure and operations were transformed. Unlike its predecessor, peace and security on the continent became the primary goal, rather than decolonisation and liberation from foreign dominance and settlers' political power. In terms of dealing with crises on the continent, the AU has become more interventionist. The Lomé Declaration empowers the PSC to punish member states that change their government in an unconstitutional manner. The AU has sanctioned more of its members than any other regional organisation since 2002. By November 2022, 15 member countries had been sanctioned 23 times. According to Hellquist (2021), AU's active intervention exemplifies the shift in African regionalism from sovereignty preservation to active involvement in issues previously defined as internal affairs/matters.

Article 23 (1) of the AU Constitutive Act authorises the Union to sanction member states for failure to pay their budgetary contributions. The AU has recently strengthened its sanctions regimes to encourage members to make their budgetary contributions on time. The new sanction directive specifies the short and long-term measures that defaulting members will face for delaying their payment. Punishments are classified into three categories: cautionary, intermediate, and comprehensive. Members who fail to pay 50% of their assessed contribution within six months face a cautionary sanction and will be barred from participating in AU meetings. Member states that are in arrears for a year will be deprived of serving on a bureau of any organ of the union, as well as from being appointed as staff members, consultants, volunteers, and interns at the AU. Members who are in default for more than two years face cautionary and intermediate sanctions, as well as a suspension from participating in union meetings (African Union, 2022). Although these sanctions may have consequences for member states, the humanitarian costs for members are minimal.

Article 30 of the AU Constitutive Act prohibits unconstitutional change of government or refusal of an incumbent government to hand over power after a free and fair election, and thus any government that comes to power through a coup or other unconstitutional means will be barred from participating in the union's activities (African Union, 2022). The AU is not the only regional organisation that responds to unconstitutional changes in government. Other regional organisations, such as ECOWAS, SADC, and the EAC, as well as non-regional actors such as the US, the UK, the EU, and the UN, impose sanctions that frequently coexist with the AU.

This chapter focuses on article 30 violations because the punishments have humanitarian consequences. Suspension of membership is the most common form of AU sanctions, and it includes the closure of members' land and air borders with the sanctioned state, the suspension of non-essential financial transactions, which limits the target's access to regional financial markets, the freezing of state assets held in other AU central and commercial banks, trade restrictions, and the inability to participate in any AU decision-making bodies. Table 1 presents AU sanctions episodes between 2003 and 2022.

Table 1: African Union Sanction Cases 2003-2022

AU Sanction Cases 2003- 2022			
		Sanction Date	
Member State	**Region**	**From**	**To**
Burkina Faso	West Africa	September 2015	September 2015
		January 2022	
		September 2022	Ongoing
Burundi	Central Africa	October 2015	June 2020
Central African Republic	Central Africa	March 2003	June 2005
		March 2013	April 2016
Comoros	East Africa	October 2007	March 2008
Côte d'Ivoire	West Africa	December 2010	April 2011
Egypt	North Africa	July 2013	June 2014
Guinea	West Africa	December 2008	December 2010
		September 2021	Ongoing
Libya	North Africa	August 2011	October 2011
Madagascar	East Africa	March 2009	January 2014
Mali	West Africa	March 2012	October 2012
		August 2020	Ongoing
Mauritania	North Africa	August 2005	April 2007
		August 2008	June 2009
Niger	West Africa	August 2009	March 2011
Guinea-Bissau	West Africa	March 2009	
		April 2012	June2014
Sudan	East Africa	June 2019	September 2019
		October 2021	Ongoing
Togo	West Africa	February 2005	May 2005

Source: own elaboration

Table 1 shows which member states have received sanctions for violating Article 30 of the AU Constitutive Act. It is important to acknowledge that in some cases, regional bodies such as ECOWAS impose sanctions on members before the AU. The Central African Republic (CAR) was the first member state to breach Article 30 when the military took power in March 2003. The AU PSC suggested suspending CAR after the coup but did not implement it (Nathan, 2017). Many member states have been sanctioned since then for unconstitutional changes in government. It is now widely expected that the AU's PSC will intervene with sanctions following coups within member states. In his response to conflicts in Africa, Charron (2013) observes that the AU practices what it preaches by imposing sanctions on member states that have undergone an unconstitutional change of government via a coup. However, Bankole Adeoye, the head of the AU's PSC, has condemned the recent - 2021-2022 waves of coups on the continent, which has resulted in an unprecedented number of member states being suspended from the Union. Burkina Faso joined the long list of suspended member states less than two weeks before the 35th AU Summit (February 6, 2022) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Guinea, Mali, and Sudan have all been suspended in less than a year. This is unprecedented because four member states have never been suspended in a single calendar year in the Union's history (African Union, 2022).

However, critics contend that PSC should be more proactive in preventing punches. Others prefer that the Union escort coup leaders out of power rather than sanctioning them, as sanctions have unintended consequences for ordinary civilians (Oechslin, 2014; Hufbauer and Jung, 2021). For instance, Mali experienced an unconstitutional government change in August 2020, followed by Guinea in September 2021 and Burkina Faso in January 2022. Burkina Faso experienced another coup on September 30, 2022, to depose the military leader who ceased power in January - the country's second coup in nine months. Even though the new military chief promised to honour the previous leader's (Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba) pledge to return to civilian government/rule within two years, ECOWAS strengthened its sanction on the country.

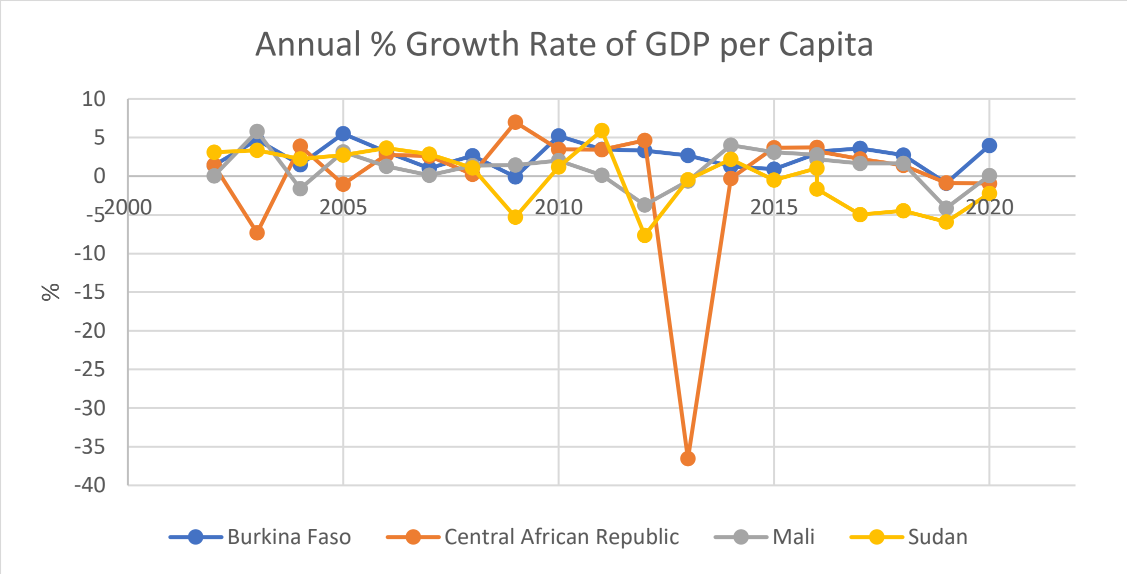
It is important to note that AU's automatic sanction regime for unconstitutional change of government has not necessarily put an end to coups or silenced the gun on the continent. Nathan (2017) argues that between 2000 and 2014, all coups ended democratically, either through a presidential election (93%) or, in the case of Sao Tomé and Principe, through the reinstatement of the ousted president. Seventy-one percent of coups ended within two years, with the average crisis lasting 20.4 months. However, in most cases, some of the coup members remained in power as constitutional governments.

Economic Effects of sanctions

This section investigates the overall effects of sanctions on economic growth and prosperity The literature pays little attention to the economic cost of sanctions and whether the estimated costs are concentrated/limited on the proposed targets. Ahn and Ludema (2020) argue that there is a wealth of literature on the impact of sanctions on the politics of the targeted state, with the economic impact only seen as an explanatory variable. This chapter highlights the detrimental effects of sanctions on the general population in five key areas.

First, sanctions have an impact on economic growth as measured by GDP, and according to an IMF (2015) study, they reduce a country's GDP by about 1% to 1.5% of GDP due to reduced investment and consumption in the targeted country. In a related study published in 2015, the World Bank found that sanctions had a detrimental effect on a nation's capacity to attract the capital required to foster growth and development. A diminishing GDP has an impact on firms and workers, which can result in pay freezes, job losses, and a decline in state tax receipts. The GDP per capita of a nation is another key metric of its economic health.

Figure 1.1: Annual Percentage Growth Rate of GDP per Capita (Selected Countries)



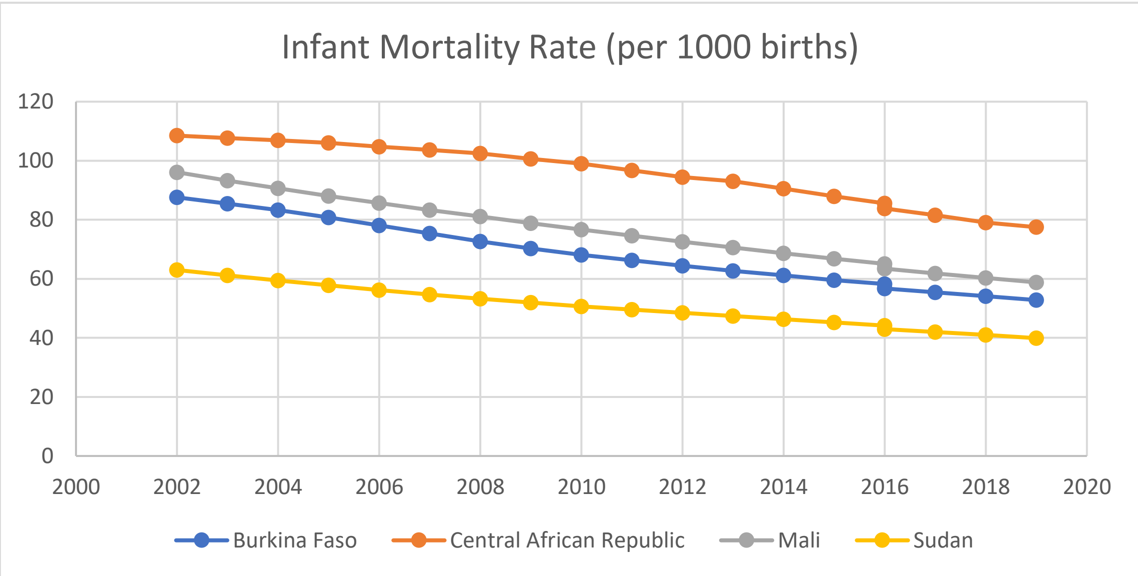
Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank and OECD (2022)

Figure 1.1 shows the annual percentage growth rate of GDP per capita, which represents the share of a country's output per person of the population. Rising GDP per capita benefits a nation as a whole as this could lead to more tax revenues that will stimulate government spending on public services such as education and health. This can lead to improved standard of living and rising life expectancy and literacy rates which contributes to greater knowledge and understanding of civic and political issues of a country. As shown in figure 1.1, the annual percentage growth rates of GDP per capita in the selected countries have been abysmal for the 20 years under review. The figures indicate that periods of sanction have led to worsening GDP per capita in most cases. For instance, Burkina Faso's first sanction was in September 2015 and the nation's annual GDP per capita only increased by 0.9% from the previous year's 1.2%. Likewise, CAR's annual growth of GDP per capita fell from 1.4% in 2002 to -7.3% in 2003 and also in 2013 the rate fell to -36.6% following AU’s sanction. The trend is almost the same for all sanctioned states under review. Mali and Sudan’s GDP per capita growth reduced after the countries were sanctioned by the AU. Shrinking GDP and GDP per capita affect every citizen of a nation especially those on the low-income threshold. It leads to rising unemployment, falling tax revenues and hence declining government expenditure on essential services with severe consequences for the future generation. Mwainyekule and Frimpong (2020) argue that declining GDP per capita will increase the incidence of poverty in Africa where most of the population is employed in the informal sector. According to the World Bank (2022), estimates for sub-Saharan Africa reveal that the number of people living in poverty has increased from 420 million in 2018 to 424 million in 2019, despite a continued decline in the headcount rate of poverty from 38.9 to 38.3 between 2018 and 2019. The vast majority of these poor individuals are in sanctioned states struggling with lives and livelihoods.

Second, although economic sanctions do not involve the destruction of infrastructure and human capital as in the case of armed conflicts (Afesorgbor and Mahadevan (2016), they nevertheless have similar effects on the welfare of the populace in the target economy (Allen and Lektzian, 2013). For instance, Kaempfer and Lowenberg (2007) and Van Wyk (2018) emphasise that sanctions are unfair since they frequently cause hardship to innocent citizens as well as businesses that would otherwise be allowed to conduct worldwide business. Hufbauer and Oegg (2007) and Charron and Portela (2015), on the other hand, estimated that economic sanctions in the form of reduced foreign aid could result in a welfare loss equal to the value of the aid. As a result, some people are directly worse off than the leaders of the target countries. Petrescu (2016) observed in his study that development aid per capita decreases every year after the imposition of sanctions.

Moreover, politicians in sender states acknowledge the unfavourable externalities of human suffering caused by sanctions. Madeleine Albright, the former US Secretary of State, suggests that even though the UN or the US sanctions do not intend to cause hardship for innocent people, particularly children and infants, good intentions do not always translate into good outcomes (Albright, 2000). The negative impacts of sanctions in terms of the humanitarian problems and collective punishment they cause are impossible to overstate. Sanctions affect the most vulnerable and defenceless members of societies, threatening their very survival. For instance, a study by Petrescu (2016) who examined child-level data from 69 countries around the world showed that sanction exposure leads to lower infant weight and a higher risk of death before a child reaches the age of three. These findings support the unintended consequences of sanctions on the most vulnerable citizens in a targeted country. Albright (2000) comments that she has always been concerned as a policymaker that sanctions, like force, might be an ineffective tool but the outcomes can intensify the suffering of the target states.

Figure 1.2: Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 births) Selected countries



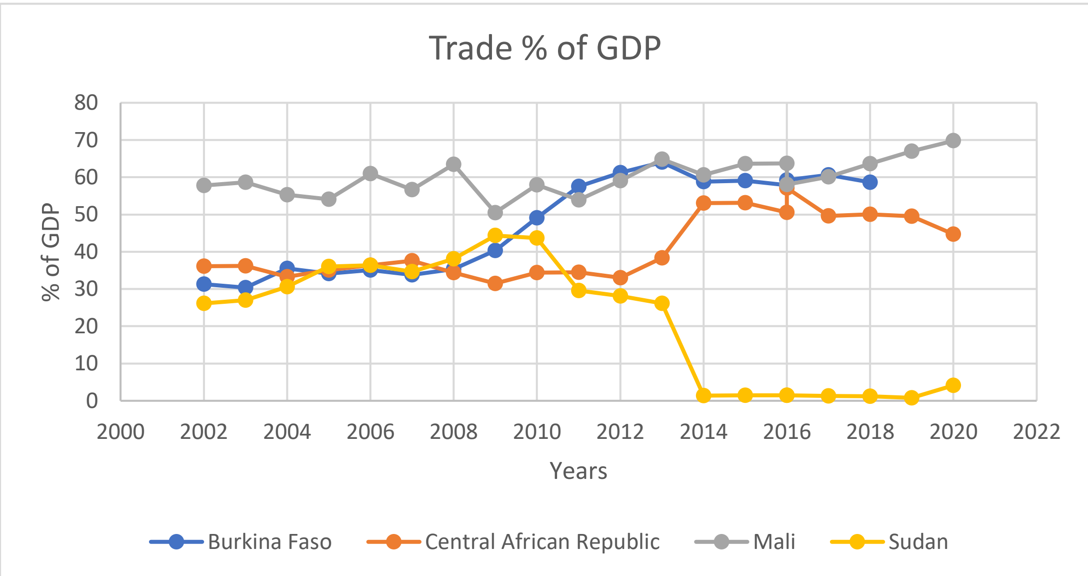
Source: own elaboration with data from the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UN DESA Population Division) (2022)

Third, sanctions aggravate different forms of inequalities in Africa, including health inequalities. Health disparities between and within nations can be measured using infant mortality. Reducing infant mortality is Millennium Development Goal number 4, and undernutrition has historically been the leading contributor to child mortality (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2022). Despite a global decline in neonatal deaths from 5 million in 1990 to 2.4 million in 2020, a more than 50% decrease, the average decline for the selected countries is only 38%. This means that a child's chances of survival are heavily influenced by the country of birth. Sub-Saharan Africa's infant mortality rate in 2020 was 27 (25–32) deaths per 1,000 live births, accounting for 43% of global newborn deaths (WHO, 2022). Figure 1.2 shows that child mortality is gradually decreasing in these selected countries; however, when compared to other low-income countries, the rate is high. CAR infant mortality rates ranged from 108.5 deaths per 1000 births in 2002 to 77.5 deaths per 1000 births in 2019. Although Sudan has the lowest mortality rate among the countries studied, it has recently plateaued. As a result, an infant born in one of these nations has a 10 times greater chance of dying before their first birthday than a child born in a different country. Although internal causes may have played a role in the lack of improvement in the infant mortality rate, sanctions against these nations only serve to exacerbate the problem. The average infant mortality rates for these countries are Burkina Faso (68), CAR (95), Mali (76) and Sudan (50) deaths per 1000 live births for the period under review.

Fourth, economic sanctions have an impact on targeted countries' development aid, loans, financial assets and trade (imports and exports). Import restrictions affect ordinary citizens, particularly children and vulnerable groups, in a variety of ways in these countries. One way to assess the impact is through health and lack of proper nutrition. Restrictions/cuts on essential imports such as food and medicine affect calorie intake, which can lead to malnutrition, making children vulnerable to diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, and infectious diseases. As poor nutrition harms unborn children, Gibbons and Garfield (1999) contend that rising food prices have an influence on pregnant women. Children drinking contaminated water as a result of a lack of materials and substances to clean it has resulted in the spread of waterborne illnesses like cholera, typhoid, and worm infections in sanctioned countries such as Burkina Faso, CAR and Mali. Although drugs and essential foods are frequently exempted from the sanctioned list, there is significant uncertainty and ambiguity about the details, resulting in a decrease in approved drugs and an increase in counterfeit medicine that is ineffective and causes severe side effects (Petrescu, 2016; Afriyie and Jian, 2018). The negative effects on a nation's healthcare system have far-reaching consequences for citizens. A lack of vaccines resulted in an outbreak of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis in CAR and Sudan. Power outages and water shortages have hampered emergency medical services at hospitals. Early death, a rise in maternal mortality, and problems during childbirth are all results of poor health conditions in the sanctioned nations. This points to the fact that sanctions harm the community's health and general well-being in the target countries.

Trade is essential to a country's development because it fosters economic expansion and gives its population access to rewarding employment opportunities. Rising trade levels may result in higher incomes for families, allowing them to purchase goods and services and thus improve their standard of living. Trade allows for lower consumer prices, which also improves a nation's capacity to produce the necessary foreign currency for its economy.

Figure 1.3: Trade (sum of Exports and Imports) as a share of Gross Domestic Product

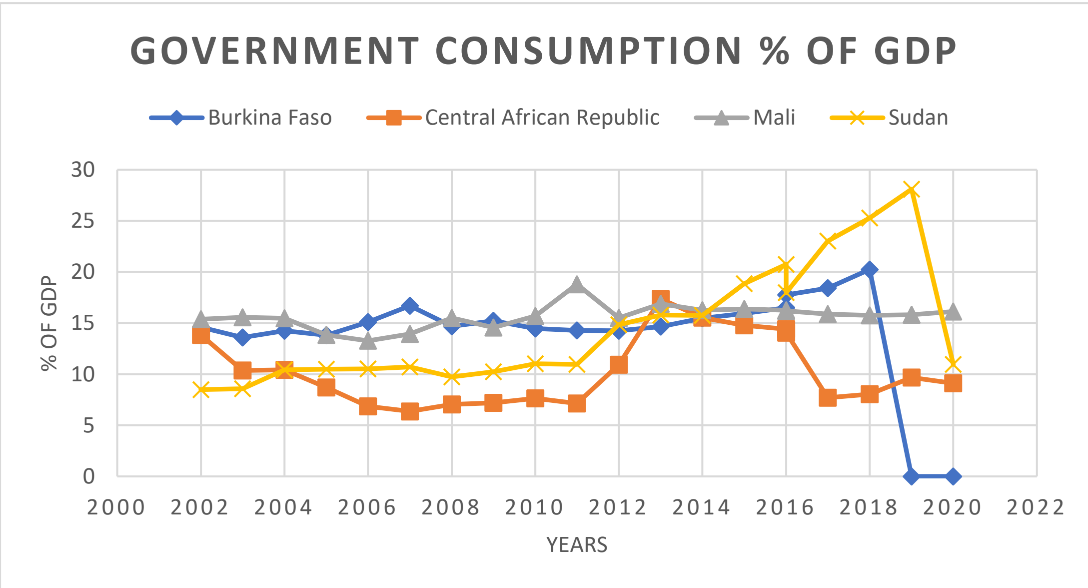


Sources: own elaboration with data from the World Bank and OECD National Account Data (2022)

Figure 1.3 demonstrates how these countries' total imports and exports as a percentage of GDP have been low. For instance, Sudan's overall trade contribution to GDP decreased from 26% in 2002 to 4% in 2020. Trade restrictions are imposed on member nations under AU sanction regimes. This lowers the nation's ability to import necessary items to support its economy, which lowers the standard of living for average citizens. These nations are already struggling with economic recovery after years of civil war and political instability. Further punishments intensify the suffering of the ordinary citizen who has no power to influence the affairs of the targeted elites. Sanctions affect neighbouring countries as well as regional integration and development. For instance, sanctions on Burundi impacted negatively on the regional oil pipeline with neighbouring countries Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda as well as the electricity extension project between Burundi and Rwanda. The declining foreign investment and aid flows are all too visible in all sectors of the economy, especially agriculture, which employs many low-income households. Falling export revenues affect foreign exchange (Peksen and Son, 2015). Furthermore, Afesorgbor and Mahadevan (2016) argue that imposing sanctions has a negative impact on income inequality in their study of 68 target states around the world from 1960 to 2008. They argue that financial and trade sanctions have more severe and diverse effects on income inequality and that the longer the sanction period, the more detrimental the impact on the poor. Moreover, Øygarden (2017) examines the effects of sanctions on human rights violations in targeted countries from 1981 to 2005 and concludes that economic sanctions harm physical integrity in sanctioned states. He also argues that sanctions have a negative impact on a subset of civil and political rights and that the scale of the effects is comparable to that of physical integrity rights. These countries are some of the poorest in the world, sanctions are a further punishment to the citizens.

Fifth, the general government final consumption expenditure includes all government current expenditures on purchases of goods and services, including employee compensation. An increase in government consumption expenditure stimulates aggregate demand, which expands a country's growth prospects as well as employment opportunities.

Figure 1.4: General Government Final Consumption Expenditure Percentage of GDP



Source: own elaboration with figures from the World Bank World Development Indicators (2022)

The average government consumption expenditures for the selected countries are Burkina Faso (15.5%), CAR (10.4%), Mali (15.6%), and Sudan (14.6%) over the 20 years. Figure 1.4 shows that Sudan's government's final consumption expenditure increased year on year with minor variations, from 8.49% in 2002 to 28.08% in 2019. There is evidence, however, that AU sanctions on Sudan in 2019 caused the government's final consumption expenditure to fall to 10.95% in 2020. Reduced government consumption spending significantly lowers the standard of living for its citizens, increases inequality and poverty rates, deteriorates public services, and prolongs economic recessions.

Concluding remarks: perpetual poverty in Africa

There is no question that Africa is the world's poorest continent and that it has been the target of the majority of global sanctions (Hellquist, 2019; Frimpong, 2021). According to Neuenkirch and Neumeier's (2016) examination of US sanctions between 1982 and 2011, sanctions have a detrimental impact on the poor and result in an average 3.8% increase in the poverty gap, which measures the percentage by which the poor's mean income falls below a country's poverty line. Worryingly, they argue that only a few sanctions have been successful, with approximately 65% to 95% of sanction episodes failing to meet their objectives. However, the impact on the poor is significant in both successes and failures.

Target countries experience a faster decline in GDP per capita, a drop in international trade, a drop in FDI, and rising inflation, which affect the general public rather than the elites targeted by sanctions. Sanctions raise the risk of further deterioration of the targets' already fragile economies, resulting in further economic shock and impoverishment. The rising extreme poverty in Africa, combined with the pressure on economic resources caused by sanctions, exacerbates the plight of ordinary Africans. Target states are more likely to reduce public services and social services to lower-income groups. The rural-urban divide also increases. With many people living in rural areas in Africa, diverting resources away to the urban centres affect the poor in the hinterlands. According to Lee (2018), sanctions do not change regime behaviour but rather increase inequality at the expense of already impoverished rural dwellers. When target countries rely more on limited natural resources for production and trade, administrative cities, manufacturing hubs, and mining centres attract/gain economic activities at the expense of the hinterlands as scarce resources are reallocated.

In his analysis of Zimbabwe's economy, Nyoni (2019) argues that the country is battling for life due to sanctions. He contends that sanctioned countries suffer from "the devil-may-care" syndrome whereby domestic bad economic policies and outcomes are blamed on sanctions. Obviously, not all socio-economic woes in sanctioned states are due to the imposition of these punishments. However, it gives governments the obvious enemy to blame for the calamities of their economic performance. Nevertheless, the argument in this chapter is that the cost of sanctions is not solely borne by the targeted individuals and institutions but spills over to the general population, especially the vulnerable. As argued by Neuenkirch and Neumeier (2016), the main culprits of sanctions are the poor in the country. Sanctions on a country weaken the economy's ability to meet the needs of families with disastrous consequences for the poor. Furthermore, sanctions do not only affect the targeted countries, or governments and companies but also impact neighbouring countries in diverse ways including a reduction in economic activities between them, an influx of refugees and smuggling on the border. The recent hardship in Burkina Faso partly due to the ECOWAS and AU sanctions has led to the influx of refugees in the neighbouring countries, especially in northern Ghana cities that share a border with Burkina Faso.

Sanctions senders have defended themselves by claiming that they only target particular people and businesses connected to a regime, not the entire nation. They attribute the poor state of the target economy to mismanagement and corruption (Garfield, 2002; Van Wyk, 2018). Advocates of sanctions, however, fail to acknowledge that the targeted people and businesses are the country's key economic drivers and that any restrictions on their operations will hurt the entire nation. That is, separating sanctioned parties from the economy is pointless. Sanctions on authoritarian and undemocratic regimes are less effective in the view of Van Wyk (2018) but bring pains to the whole economy. The negative stigma attached to economic sanctions affects FDI flows to the targeted economies. It creates a bad reputation and drives investors away (Afriyie and Jian, 2018). As capital inflows to the country fall, capital flight rises due to damage to the economy, both of which weaken the exchange rate of the currency and impact inflation, economic prosperity and living standards.

The vision of AU is an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. The aim of the Union is to promote peace, security and stability on the continent to help prevent, manage and settle crises in Africa. Member states that fail to comply with the laws set out by the Union are subject to sanctions. The outcomes of these punishments have been mixed but limited progress has been made to silence the gun on the continent. The unintended consequences of this have been devastating for the vulnerable group of society. This chapter provides strong evidence that sanctions have unanticipated effects on civilian populations, which affect ordinary people more than the leaders of the targeted nation. As a result, senders/AU must be made aware that their actions may have unintended or unfairly harmful consequences. Although most coups that have resulted in sanctions in member states have ended by democratic means, it will be erroneous to assume that sanctions have been successful in forcing coup makers to hand over power to civilian governments. The fact is that in a vast majority of cases, the coup makers/leaders remained in power through presidential elections, either in a free and fair election or otherwise, despite the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance explicitly forbidding it. The AU should therefore be actively involved in investigating the causes of coups on the continent and also escort coup makers out of power. The argument presented in this chapter is that although other internal factors might have contributed to the rising humanitarian crises in these targeted states, the sanctions imposed by the AU and other regional bodies only exacerbate the suffering of ordinary citizens.

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