The Consequences of IO Membership Suspension for Exiting States

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** This is a draft chapter of our forthcoming book, *Exit from International Organizations*. All comments are welcome. **

Abstract: When a state violates its international commitments, international organizations (IOs) may suspend their membership. Indeed, suspension after a state's political backsliding is the most common type of IO suspension across time. But do IO suspensions have consequences for backsliding states in terms of their reputations or actually returning them to domestic political standards? We argue that IO membership suspension has reputational consequences because it stigmatizes violator states. Since IOs are credible commitment devices and can provide a seal of approval when states join, suspension can act as a seal of disapproval when states politically backslide and break their IO commitments. This may diminish states' reputations. Suspension can also endorse other international actors in imposing economic sanctions because suspension shows that the state's self-chosen community has ruled it a violator. Nonetheless, we argue that suspension is unlikely to change domestic political institutions because governments tend to value holding onto power more than rejoining IOs. We test our hypotheses using a comprehensive dataset of suspensions across all states and IOs between 1914 and 2022 and find empirical support for our argument. Empirical results show that suspension has reputational consequences, as indicated by worsened political risk scores, drops in investor confidence in the suspended state, and a lower chance of becoming a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council. These reputational consequences are higher for states with more uncertain reputations and also higher from IOs with stronger reputations. We also find that IO suspensions facilitate follow-on economic sanctions by other international actors. Our findings stand in contrast to scholarship which implies that IO membership (and thus its removal) is inconsequential. Nevertheless, we show that IO suspension has limited effects on improving the state's domestic political institutions including its level of democracy, human rights, or time to the next election, reinforcing the understanding that IOs are weak commitment devices.

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Chapter 6 examined the conditions under which member states are suspended from IOs. It documented that most IO suspensions occur after domestic political backsliding and argues that suspension is used to punish violators and negotiate institutional change. In this Chapter 7, we move from the drivers of suspension to their consequences. Do IO membership suspensions have consequences for violator states? If so, what are the consequences and under what conditions do they occur? And do suspended states change their domestic institutions in response to IO suspensions, perhaps to regain IO membership?

Consider the case of Guinea in 2021, which was suspended from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) because of a military coup d'état that ousted Guinea's first freely elected president, Alpha Condé. On behalf of its 15-member states, ECOWAS said that Guinea's membership would not be reinstated until it returned to constitutional order and the military released President Condé. As a result of the suspension, Guinea lost its voting rights in and access to ECOWAS meetings. Guinea's coup leaders tried to counter the stigmatization of IO suspension by presenting the coup d'état as resistance to an armed plot, and said they refused to be dictated to by outsiders. ECOWAS' suspension of Guinea's membership created reputational consequences for Guinea. International investors referenced the ECOWAS suspension of Guinea's membership. A geopolitical risk report said "the political uncertainty poses risks for investors in the crucial mining sector, including the possibility that the interim government or a future elected administration might move to revise the mining code and/or renegotiate contracts concluded under Condé."[3] The ECOWAS suspension also facilitated other sanctions: three days later, the African Union and the Organisation de la Francophonie (OIF) also suspended Guinea; and the UN Secretary General condemned Guinea at ECOWAS' request. Still, Guinea only made marginal domestic institutional changes: some rudimentary reforms, including presenting a timeline for transitioning to civilian rule. Deeper domestic institutional changes have not occurred (as of the time of writing, in summer 2024). In sum, Guinea suffered reputational consequences and follow-on sanctions after its 2021 suspension from ECOWAS but did not engage in deep domestic reforms. Is this case generalizable? Do these insights about Guinea also transfer to other suspension cases?

In this chapter, we investigate the consequences of IO suspensions systematically. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 6, we argue that IO suspension signals disapproval from a state's self-chosen community. IO suspension often serves as a negotiating strategy to push the violator state to make domestic institutional changes. IO suspension imposes punishment costs on suspendees, which we argue can result in suspendees engaging in stigma management, incurring reputational consequences, and follow-on sanctions. Despite these potential international costs, however, we expect that suspendees likely only engage in *shallow* domestic institutional changes because the domestic political benefits of staying in power through coups and repression (the most frequent triggers of suspension) often outweigh the costs of international opprobrium.

We test our expectations in several ways. First, we provide examples of suspendees engaging in stigma management; showing how states push back and attempt to reframe the narrative of suspension is prima facie evidence that suspension is consequential for exiting states. We then use multivariate analyses to estimate the consequences of suspension on three outcomes: 1) states'

[3] Political Risk Services, Guinea 2022:3.

reputations (using geopolitical risk scores and election to the UN Security Council), 2) follow-on economic sanctions from other international actors, and 3) domestic institutional change (i.e. in the state's level of democracy, human rights, and time until the next election). For suspension data, we draw on the IO Exit dataset, which is a comprehensive collection of suspensions from all states and IOs between 1945 and 2022. We subset the data to evaluate suspensions *after political backsliding*[4] because they are the most common type of suspensions; analyzing like-types of suspensions allows for better internal validity and also allows us to better control for the factors that cause suspension in the first place.[5]

Our research design aims to address the difficulty of assessing the effects of IO suspensions given that they usually occur close to the backsliding events, making it challenging to single out the effect of suspensions. We address this in three ways. First, by including control variables for political backsliding and its causes (see Chapter 6) which helps to distinguish it from suspension as a *response* to backsliding. Second, we use matching models to generate a more balanced dataset of counterfactuals (comparing to similar states that also backslid but did not get suspended). Third, we use two-stage models (modeling separately the sample of backsliding states and conditional on that sample, the effect of suspension on outcomes).

The empirical results support our arguments. We show that states suspended for political backsliding incur significant drops in their reputation, as measured by political risk scores and the likelihood of being elected as a Non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council. These reputational consequences vary by types of states and IO. Reputational consequences tend to be higher for states with more uncertain reputations (e.g. states whose UNGA voting patterns are most erratic) where the suspension heuristic could be most meaningful in updating international actors' beliefs about a state's expected future policy behavior. The reputational consequences of suspension are also more influential from IOs with stronger reputations, as measured by how densely democratic their membership is or the degree of collective political stability. In addition, IO suspension acts as a multilateral diplomatic sanction that facilitates follow-on economic sanctions from other actors. Despite these reputational consequences and follow-on sanctions, however, we do not find robust evidence that suspensions generate significant domestic institutional improvements such as increases in democracy or human rights, or quicker elections. Instead, as the case studies in Chapter 8 detail, domestic institutional changes following IO suspensions remain shallow.

Thus, the issue of whether IO suspensions are effective in negotiating domestic institutional change is quite nuanced. The reputational consequences of suspension appear to be real, and may have knock-on effects (i.e. follow-on sanctions) that affect the country more broadly in its international relations. But metrics related to the level of democracy or human rights ratings – ultimately the kinds of domestic changes that suspensions often aim to evoke – rarely budge after IO suspension. We return to discuss these findings in the conclusion and subsequent Chapter 8.

[4] We use the term political backsliding rather than democratic backsliding because a country may not start out as an advanced democracy, but its political reversion may be recognized as backsliding that violates the spirit and letter of the IO charter (e.g. a military coup in an anocracy).

[5] See Chapter 6 for more details on the drivers of suspension and why this kind of suspension is the most frequent.

Overall, this chapter contributes to literature on the effects of IOs, the reputational costs of non-compliance, the consequences of political backsliding, and the effects of sanctions. Our argument—and findings—that IO suspension has reputational consequences stands in contrast to realist literature which argues that IOs have little effect on states, implying that IO membership suspension should not have consequences. We also contribute to the sanctions literature by expanding beyond the usual focus of *economic*[6] sanctions to include the reputational consequences of multilateral *diplomatic* sanctions which have been largely neglected. By quantifying reputational consequences, we enrich and complement our current understanding of a concept that has long been theorized but heretofore been difficult to measure. We also address the limits of suspension as a sanctioning tool; while IO suspension can be part of a layered punishment strategy, triggering other international sanctions, it rarely pushes states to overhaul domestic political institutions. This reinforces previous literature on the limits that IOs have in enforcing rules and overhauling domestic political behavior. IOs operate as weak commitment devices.[7]

7.1 Theorizing Potential Costs from IO Suspension

Membership suspension from an international organization occurs when a share of an IO's member states (a rule that may be denoted in the IO's charter) temporarily remove some or all of a violator state's membership benefits. Of all 534 international organizations,[8] 18 percent have charter clauses on suspension, delineating the conditions under which remaining member states can suspend one of their own from the organization. Nonetheless, the practice of suspension differs from what legal scholars and IO design scholars might assume: IOs can and do suspend states even when suspension rules have *not* been specified in the IO charter.[9] About 36 percent of IOs are what we call "democratically committed" because their charter references a commitment to democracy, human rights, or the rule of law in their country.[10]

Since 1939, IOs have suspended member states 102 times.[11] As Chapter 6 illustrates, over 58 percent of these IO suspensions occurred *due to political backsliding*, which includes events such as coups d'états, serious election irregularities, and regressions in democracy and human rights. Suspensions for political backsliding increased after 1990 when states and international organizations increasingly paid more attention to states' levels of democracy. IOs that suspend states for political backsliding usually aim to get the violator state back on track with respect to

[6] Peksen 2019.
[7] Martin 2017, 30.
[8] As in previous chapters, we use the Correlates of War IO dataset.
[9] von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019.
[10] IOs that reference an international environment for democracy without relating that to domestic commitments are not what we call "democratically committed" because the reference may be window-dressing. For example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's charter says it will "promote multisectoral cooperation for the purposes of maintaining and consolidating peace, security, and stability in the region and the establishment of a new order international politics and economics that is democratic, just, and rational."
[11] As explained in Chapter 1, this excludes suspensions for financial arrears.

domestic political standards. In other words, suspension serves as a multilateral diplomatic sanction to try to negotiate domestic institutional change in the violator state.

Chapter 6 argues that IO suspensions are a form of multilateral diplomatic sanction. What do we know, then, about the effects of IO sanctions? Since there is almost no research on the effects of multilateral *diplomatic* sanctions[12] (which use soft power[13] to push states away from undesired actions), we build on research about the effects of multilateral *economic* sanctions[14] (such as financial asset freezes and trade/aid cuts) to theorize the potential consequences of IO suspensions. Economists tend to examine the consequences of sanctions in terms of economic damage. Broadly, they have found that economic sanctions are associated with reductions in trade, foreign direct investment, growth, and political stability in the sanctioned state.[15] Political scientists, on the other hand, tend to examine the consequences of sanctions in terms of whether they achieve declared political objectives (i.e. whether they lead to changes in state behavior or institutions). This latter research has shown that economic sanctions are effective in about 25 percent of cases;[16] as sanctions have become more targeted in recent years, their effectiveness has improved. Research shows that the effects of sanctions can be long-lasting but also heterogeneous depending on whether they are imposed unilaterally or multilaterally.[17] Multilateral economic sanctions are more likely to be successful than unilateral sanctions, especially when an international organization is involved.[18] Research also shows that sanctions can have some negative or even unintended consequences: sanctions are associated with increased poverty,[19] human rights violations, repression,[20] and consolidated authoritarian rule.[21] In general, then, economic sanctions are not perceived as particularly successful policy tools.[22] One explanation for the limited success of economic sanctions is that states mitigate the expected adverse effects of sanctions by redirecting their international trade and investment flows toward third countries, shielding certain economic agents, forming alliances with "friendly" third countries, and retaliating against their sanctioners.[23]

These findings regarding economic sanctions contextualize our understanding and make us circumspect about the potential consequences of IO suspensions (multilateral *diplomatic* sanctions). For example, since suspension means losing the right to vote and be present at IO

[12] Examples of other kinds of diplomatic sanctions are the cessation of formal diplomatic contact such as recalling an ambassador or closing an embassy (Maller 2010: 62).
[13] Nye 1990.
[14] Galtung 1967; Nincic and Wallensteen 1983; Doxey 1987; Nossal 1989.
[15] Morgan et al. 2023.
[16] Morgan et al. 2023. This may seem low but is higher than the alternative of no sanction. Also, the costs of economic sanctions may be substantially lower than the costs of alternative policies like overt military interventions, meaning that the consequences of sanctions might be high relative to the costs (Sedelmeier 2017; Peksen 2019).
[17] Morgan et al. 2023.
[18] Martin 1992; Bapat and Morgan 2009; Early 2021.
[19] Neuenkirch and Neumeier 2015.
[20] Wood 2008.
[21] Peksen and Drury 2010.
[22] Morgan et al. 2023.
[23] Morgan et al. 2023.

meetings, but not usually IOs directly cutting foreign aid or investment, we do not expect robust economic consequences on foreign direct investment (FDI), economic growth, and GDP (which have been the primary economic outcomes in the literature). While FDI might be affected by the perception of a state's reputation, it usually is affected by longer-term contracts with sunk costs that have been negotiated with significant lead-time. FDI is therefore not quick to change and may not be affected by IO suspensions. Metrics like economic growth and GDP are also unlikely to be affected by IO suspensions. They are affected by many variables such that isolating the effect of an IO suspension is challenging. Instead of these economic outcomes, we focus on the mechanisms that we outline in Chapter 6 that specify IO suspension being aimed at domestic change, which can work through stigmatizing violator states. This leads us to focus on three types of potential consequences from IO suspensions: 1) states' reputations 2) follow-on economic sanctions, and 3) domestic institutional change (including the level of democracy, human rights, and proximity to next election). Before theorizing these expectations, we begin by documenting that suspensions are a punishment and are indeed costly for targeted states.

7.1.1 Punishment costs

As explained in Chapters 2 and 6, suspension is intended to impose costs on the target state by casting it out of a self-chosen club. When suspended, states lose influence in the organization, including their right to speak, participate in collective decisions, and vote for policies.[24] Suspended states also lose access to regular high-level IO meetings,[25] which indicate status in the club, allow information exchange, and influence on IO policy. While the benefits of membership differ across IOs, we know that states are advantaged by IO membership or they would not have joined, nor worked to fulfill IO accession criteria in the first place.[26]

If IO suspension indeed imposes punishment costs, then we should see suspended states pushing back to try to mitigate these costs. Given that IO suspension is a form of stigmatization (as explained in Chapters 2 and 6), we expect that suspended states react to the punishment costs of suspension through "stigma management"[27] (observable implication #6). Suspended states can reject or counter the stigma of suspension by rhetorically casting the suspension as ill-informed or the IO as unfair or biased. Suspended states can also preemptively (or immediately) withdraw from the IO, which is an effort to save face by reframing their exit as voluntary. Such reactions by suspended states would suggest that suspension is costly – otherwise states would not be incentivized to react and expend these efforts. This leads to our first hypothesis.

> *Hypothesis 7.1 (from observable implication #6): Suspended states may try to manage the stigma of IO suspensions.*

Our argument that the costs of suspension make suspension a punishment strategy and a tool for negotiation builds from previous scholars' work. Snidal (1985: 938), for example, argues that the

[24] Helfer 2005; Slapin 2009; Pevehouse 2002.
[25] Haftel 2007.
[26] Allee and Scalera 2012; Dreher and Voigt 2011; Dreher, Mikosch, and Voigt 2015; Mansfield and Pevehouse 2008.
[27] Adler-Nissen 2014; Morse and Pratt 2022.

"threat of exclusion, if credible, may be an important device for ensuring that states behave cooperatively." Similarly, Pevehouse (2002:522) argues that "regional IOs can apply pressure in a variety of ways [including] expulsion from the organization." IO suspension acts as a brinksmanship strategy to exert concessions from violator states.[28] Suspension threatens states with an ultimatum: a decrease in the value of the status quo of international cooperation (i.e. losing IO membership) unless the rule-violating behavior is remedied. Our core argument is that suspension is thus a means to try to negotiate domestic institutional change. IO exit helps the sender signal their resolve and displeasure with the state's violation of IO rules. It also has potency as a punishment strategy because of how other policies may unravel from the suspension. One suspension may lead other actors (including further IOs) to further punish violator states. We unpack these ideas next.

7.1.2 Reputational consequences

We argue that IO exit can generate negative reputational consequences for the violator state (observable implication #5). Suspension hurts the reputation of the violator state in the eyes of other actors in the international community. International actors can include international investors, foreign governments, and other institutions that form reputations about a country's likelihood of adhering to international agreements (which might affect their future probability of following through). We do not make predictions about the mass public's attitudes about a foreign country's reputation because these perceptions may be affected more by social factors (such as cultural affinity, culinary, or tourism-related activities) rather than a government's credibility in foreign policy commitments.

The argument that suspension may generate negative reputational effects among international actors is based on two premises: that IOs are credible commitment devices and that IOs are signaling mechanisms/information providers. First, IO theory has routinely referred to IO membership as a mechanism that makes a state's commitments "credible."[29] As explained in Chapter 6, this is because joining an IO imposes *ex ante* costs while reneging on those commitments can impose *ex post* costs. This *ex post* cost means that reneging on IO commitments after becoming a member can result in the state losing membership and the benefits that came with membership. The *ex post* aspect has been largely assumed so far but rarely been tested.[30] When countries gain membership, it makes their commitments more credible.[31] When countries lose membership, it should thus make their commitments less credible. Suspension should be

[28] Brinksmanship is a term coined by Schelling (1966) for a strategy of escalating threats in bargaining so far as to risk active conflict, and thus incentivizing the opponent to back down. In grappling with potential withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Pretorius and Sauer (2022) similarly argue that exit can be a political option for non-nuclear weapon states to exercise some kind of leverage over other member states.

[29] Fearon 1997; Genna and Hiroi 2014; Mansfield and Pevehouse 2006; 2008; Martin 2017; Pevehouse 2002a; 2002b; 2005; Poast and Urpelainen 2013.

[30] For an exception, see von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019a.

[31] Fang and Owen 2011; Karreth and Tir 2013; Martin and Simmons 2013; Pevehouse 2002; Simmons and Danner 2010.

reputationally harmful because it removes the benefits of membership and casts doubt on the country's credibility to honor its commitments.

Second, IOs can serve as information providers,[32] sharing information about the behavior of member states including their compliance with international agreements, and this can affect a member state's reputation. Information from IOs is helpful because there are often competing interpretations of a country in the media. This uncertainty means that international actors value and often rely on cognitive shortcuts (such as the IO accession or suspension heuristic)[33] to make assessments about a country's reputation.[34] Here, assessments from peers (from the same geographic or cultural background) can be an important signal in an otherwise noisy environment. And international actors increasingly care about the perception of domestic adherence to international norms and rules as they seek to make decisions (e.g. overseas investments) in uncertain environments.[35] Research has shown that IO accession acts as a signaling device to provide a "seal of approval" of the country's policies. IO accession has also been linked to an increase in investors' confidence in doing business in that country.[36] In other words, states receive reputational benefits when they *join* IOs. Suspension provides information to the international community that the state has instead been given a "seal of disapproval" for violating rules. We thus expect that suspension should harm a state's reputation.

Another way of understanding the signaling role of suspension is that it casts the violator state out of a social club (the IO). Suspension signals that the suspended state has violated an IO commitment and thus it serves as a form of peer punishment. This aspect—that it is from a self-chosen community—makes the signal of suspension difficult to reject, which contrasts with punishments that come from 'the outside' (and can even be discounted as illegitimate meddling). States enter IOs voluntarily, pay membership dues, and value their standing in the group. If like-minded peers cast them out, this is an important signal.

Together, the two logics of IOs as credible commitment devices and IOs as signaling mechanisms/information providers suggest that IO suspension can harm the state's reputation by confirming that domestic experiences are egregious regressions. If IO accession enhances a state's reputation, then IO suspension (i.e. membership removal) should *harm* a state's reputation. We

[32] See Keohane 1984; Abbott and Snidal 1998 for the way in which IOs serve as information providers.

[33] While investors have incentives to use mental shortcuts, those heuristics may not necessarily track real "material" things. The reputational consequences of suspension then are less about "hand tying" and more about "Keynesian beauty contests" (where investors can profit more from investing in countries they *think* other investors will also buy, rather than the countries that have fundamentally the best value, because when other people buy into that country, they bid up the price, allowing an earlier investor to cash out with a higher profit, regardless of whether the price increases are supported by market fundamentals). The clarity of IO suspension can thus serve as an important, authoritative label that can affect how the international community reacts.

[34] Brooks, Cunha, and Mosley 2015; Cormier and Naqvi 2023.

[35] Barry, Clay and Flynn 2013; Orenlichter and Gelatt 1993.

[36] Baccini and Urpelainen 2014; Dreher and Voigt 2011; Gray 2009; Tomashevskiy and Kono 2015.

argue that suspension from an IO can hurt a state's reputation by removing its status (membership) in the club and instead relegating it to an out-group. Suspension indicates that a state has not upheld its commitments to IO rules and that other IO member states have found the violation sufficiently bad to punish the country. Suspension should therefore cause international actors to downgrade the state's reputation. As one example, Klotz (1999) shows that South Africa's global and regional reputation was curtailed after being excluded from several international organizations during apartheid rule. In sum, we theorize that IO suspensions can have negative reputational consequences for the violator state.

> *Hypothesis 7.2 (from observable implication #5): IO suspension harms the target state's reputation.*

In contrast to these hypotheses about suspension being reputationally consequential (a punishment tool to negotiate change), some may expect that suspension is *not* reputationally harmful for states. This alternative hypothesis comes from realist counterarguments regarding the importance of international organizations and literature on the effects of norm contestation.

First, a body of realist research challenges whether IOs have effects on world politics, arguing that IOs simply reflect the distributions of power and preferences among states.[37] They argue that IOs do not do anything that states would not have done in their absence. The extension of this realist logic is that if IOs have no independent effect on world politics, then non-membership in these IOs or their multilateral diplomatic sanctions should not have any effect on states either.

Second, another strand of research highlights an "increase in norm contestation" and violations of IO rules.[38] This body of work wonders whether states' norm contestations (e.g., political backsliding while a member of an IO with rules on democracy) weakens international standards.[39] If states keep challenging IO rules, they wonder if the rules still matter.[40] In this line of thinking, rule violations are prolific, implying that clamping down on them through suspension may be unlikely to have an effect. We test the consequences empirically.

7.1.3 Heterogeneity in reputational consequences

While we argue that suspended states will face reputational consequences, we align with previous research showing the nuances and complexity of states' reputations.[41] The reputational consequences of IO suspension likely vary with characteristics of the state and IO (observable implication #5a).

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[37] Mearsheimer 1994.
[38] Rakner 2018.
[39] Heller, Kahl, and Pisoiu 2012, 283; Kelemen 2017; McKeown 2009; Panke and Petersohn 2012, 721; Staton, Reenock, and Holsinger 2022.
[40] Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2019.
[41] Jervis, Yarhi-Milo, and Casler 2019; Tomz 2012.

States vary in how malleable their reputations are, and therefore, how much IO suspension might affect their reputation. For example, the US can engage in detrimental behavior and its reputation may not be hurt much because international actors may expect that strong democratic institutions will limit the lasting effects of this behavior (or that a relatively quick "reversion to the mean" might take place after a rare incident). On the other hand, countries like North Korea or Iran may also be able to engage in detrimental behavior without their reputation being harmed, but the mechanism might be different. Observers may simply expect these sorts of pariah states to violate multilateral rules. In both of these examples—the US and North Korea/Iran—the label of suspension may therefore not provide much new information about how international actors should perceive their reputation. It is in countries where *uncertainty about a state's rule-following* and what to expect about their future behavior is high where heuristics (like the label of IO suspension) are important. We therefore predict heterogeneity around reputational consequences based on the uncertainty of the country.

> *Hypothesis 7.2a (from observable implication #5a): IO suspension harms the exiting state's reputation particularly when the state's reputation is more uncertain.*

The reputational consequences of suspension also likely vary based on the membership composition of the IO itself. In particular, Gray (2009) shows that the reputational effects of IOs depend on the "company states keep" meaning that which states are IO members has an influence on the IO's reputation. Hooghe, Lenz, and Marks (2019) also explain that IOs are inherently social contracts. States agree to cooperate with one another, so IO accession can legitimate states into a community of belonging. We argue that suspension severs that social connection which may be more or less important depending on the states that comprise the IO. Being suspended from the Council of Europe, for example, is likely to have more bite than being suspended from the OIF due to their different reputations. Much of the literature on credible commitments therefore argues that an IO's ability to tie states' hands to domestic reforms depends on the reputation of the IO. We turn this logic on its head in the case of suspension. We expect that suspension from IOs with higher reputations is likely to have higher reputational consequences.

> *Hypothesis 7.2b (from observable implication #5a): IO suspension harms the exiting state's reputation particularly when the IO has a strong reputation.*

An interesting alternative hypothesis is that suspension from *lower* reputation IOs or politically risky IOs might have stronger effects. Here, the logic would be that if an IO without a strong reputation thinks the state's political backsliding is sufficiently egregious to warrant suspension, it must be truly bad. We assess this possibility empirically in this Chapter.

7.1.4 Follow-on sanctions

IO suspensions can also facilitate subsequent sanctions by other actors in the international community (observable implication #7) by signaling that the state's (self-chosen) community (IO) regards the state's behavior as noncompliant, undesirable, and worthy of punishment. IO suspension serves as an endorsement for further punishment by other actors for several reasons. First, suspension is binary in nature and thus helps simplify some of the noise that might complicate a contextual understanding of the violation. Second, suspension signals that the

violator's own peer community has already determined that its behavior was non-compliant. This may empower outside actors who also want to punish the violator but be sensitive to local nuances and regional norms. IO suspensions may help larger or more heterogeneous organizations overcome collective action challenges and provide cover.[42] Suspension signals to other actors that they may legitimately sanction the violator state. For example, when the Arab League suspended Syria in 2011, this cleared "the way for a significant escalation of international pressure against President Bashar al-Assad and deepening the isolation of his increasingly embattled government."[43] It was called a "diplomatic gamechanger" foretelling "greater international isolation and pressure on the Assad regime."[44] This is similar to regional economic sanctions, which have been shown to facilitate UNSC sanctions; even sanctions-skeptic members are more likely to back UN sanctions when neighboring states are united in their condemnation.[45] When members of the UNSC gathered to discuss the unconstitutional change of Government in Burkina Faso on 24 January 2022, they released a statement stating that "members of the Security Council took note of the decision by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union to suspend Burkina Faso from their respective institutions and activities until there is swift and effective restoration of constitutional order by the military authorities, and expressed their support for regional mediation efforts."[46] International actors pay attention to IO suspensions and they can facilitate further punishments. This leads to the third hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 7.3 (from observable implication #7): Suspended states are more likely to be subsequently targeted with sanctions by other international actors.*

7.1.5 Domestic institutional change

IO suspensions are aimed at negotiating domestic institutional change, as evidenced by suspension announcements. Chapter 6 shows that they usually stipulate what the state's violation is and what is needed for its re-admission to the IO. For suspensions due to political backsliding, these changes might include an array of domestic institutional changes such as the country presenting a timetable for elections, transferring power to a transitional government, revising the constitution, or passing domestic legislation.[47] But despite IO suspension usually being *aimed* at pushing domestic institutional change and despite the reputational consequences that suspension may facilitate, we expect that IO suspensions after political backsliding only have limited effects on domestic institutional change.

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[42] Drezner 2000: 83; Lebovic and Voeten 2006, 2009; Martin 1993, 1992; Murdie and Davis 2012.

[43] https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syria-suspended-from-arab-league/2011/11/12/gIQAvqGxEN_story.html

[44] https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/syria-suspended-from-arab-league/2011/11/12/gIQAvqGxEN_story.html

[45] von Borzyskowski and Portela 2023.

[46] https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14790.doc.htm

[47] See for example Van de Walle (2002) or Schedler (2002) on the menu of manipulation that authoritarian governments might use to appear democratic.

We argue that domestic change is difficult to achieve due to IO suspension alone (observable implication #9). This is because state actors may have gained large personal or electoral benefits from violating IO rules. Many backsliding incidents – coups, election manipulation, regressions in democracy and human rights– are thinly veiled attempts at staying in or gaining political power.[48] International consequences (such as IO suspension) may therefore not change a violators' calculus on its behavior, since the benefits of being in power are high. Further, since we have argued that reputational consequences are the main mechanism at work in multilateral diplomatic sanctions, these consequences probably do not have the same "bite" as economic sanctions (which materially harm states) to incentivize change.

As a result, some violator states may halt or superficially change their egregious behavior to regain their membership privileges, but we expect that the most likely domestic institutional changes are rudimentary actions to gain readmittance without engaging in fundamental domestic reform. These window-dressing activities are aimed at shallow image management that can help the regime try to shift the narrative with sympathetic audiences, but suspension alone is unlikely to cause fundamental changes.

This expectation is in line with work on reputational damage via naming and shaming and its effects on state behavior. Hafner-Burton (2008) notes a distinction between a state's "reluctant change of conduct" and an "authentic change of heart:" target states may improve with some shallow actions but trade-off improvements in one area for worsening in other areas, and do not engage in comprehensive reform.[49] Overall, though, states that are suspended should be *somewhat* more likely to change their domestic institutions and behavior (even if only marginally) versus states that are not suspended for the same rule violations. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 7.4 (from observable implication #9): IO suspension has limited effects on domestic institutional change.*

We summarize our expectations about the consequences of suspension in Figure 7.1. This illustrates that suspension is likely to have reputational consequences in the eyes of international actors and trigger sanctions by other international actors. Suspensions may also trigger the target state to engage in stigma management and marginally adjust some domestic political institutions.

Figure 7.1: How IO Suspension can lead to Consequences and Domestic Institutional Change

[48] Singh 2014; Simpser 2013.
[49] Hafner-Burton 2008. See also Hendrix and Wong 2013 who highlight that naming and shaming human rights violators only works in some circumstances.

7.2 States' Stigma Management in response to Suspension: Descriptive Examples

We begin by addressing Hypothesis 7.1 that suspended states often react to the punishment costs of IO suspensions, which underscores their costliness in the first place. Here we use descriptive case examples to show states' stigma management techniques in words and actions: countering rhetorically to degrade the label of suspension and withdrawing pre-emptively to save face. We start with the latter.

7.2.1 Examples of State Stigma Management via Face-Saving Withdrawals

States often counter the punishment costs of suspension by withdrawing (or threatening to) from the IO. States can do this either *pre-emptively* when they think suspension is imminent (perhaps because IO member states have threatened action) or *retro-actively* (after suspension) to attempt to reframe the narrative. We discuss three examples.

One example of a face-saving withdrawal and stigma management is Greece in 1967. On 21 April 1967, a military junta toppled the Greek government in a coup d'état. The colonels abolished democracy. This violated the charter of the Council of Europe (CoE). In September 1967, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands challenged the junta's ongoing human rights abuses in Greece through an interstate application to the CoE Committee of Ministers. The Commission drew up a 1,100-page report which documented torture and ill treatment.[50] In January 1968, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe decided to "recommend to the Committee of Ministers, at the latest in the spring of 1969, the suspension or expulsion of Greece from the Council of Europe if by then an acceptable parliamentary democracy has not been restored in that country, or to do so even before that time if it appears that the undertakings given by the Greek regime have not been respected."[51] That deadline passed, but the Committee's April 1969 case report was leaked, which ruled that Greece had violated the IO's rules.[52]

Greece withdrew from the Council of Europe pre-emptively (on 12 December 1969), before the Council could vote on the suspension. Greece's official withdrawal announcement puts the blame squarely on the CoE and notes "the failure of the Council of Europe to achieve European unity and to promote the aims for which it has been established and for the attainment of which the European nations have based their hopes for a better world to live in, denounces the Statute of the Council of Europe, and withdraws from this Organisation."[53] Afterwards, the Council of Ministers released a resolution that they would no longer need to suspend Greece since Greece had preemptively withdrawn.[54] After the fall of the junta, Greece re-joined the Council of Europe on 28 November 1974.

The second example of pre-emptive withdrawal and stigma management after a suspension threat is the Maldives in October 2016. The Commonwealth had warned the Maldives that it would face

[50] Risini and Forde 2022.
[51] Council of Europe 1968.
[52] Council of Europe 1969.
[53] Pipinelis 1970.
[54] Committee of Ministers 1969.

suspension if it failed to show progress on democracy. The Maldives had experienced political backsliding in terms of freedom of speech, the detention of opponents, and the independence of the judiciary. The Maldives responded by withdrawing from the Commonwealth, accusing it of interfering in domestic affairs and "unfair and unjust" treatment.[55] It went on to say that "regrettably, the Commonwealth has not recognized progress and achievements that the Maldives accomplished in cultivating a culture of democracy in the country and in building and strengthening democratic institutions." It also accused the Commonwealth of overstepping its mandate, saying the IO had "sought to become an active participant in the domestic political discourse in the Maldives, which is contrary to the principles of the charters of the UN and the Commonwealth."[56]

In addition to these cases of (threatened) suspension triggering voluntary withdrawal of the violator state, actual suspension has also caused threats of withdrawal. For instance, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) threatened to suspend Zimbabwe in 2013 if President Robert Mugabe did not postpone elections to allow time for reforms to the electoral roll and to limit the military's role in politics.[57] In response, Mugabe tried to counter the SADC's stigma by accusing SADC of being an ineffective organization, making it seem as though the SADC was the rule violator and not him. At an election rally on July 5, Mugabe said "Let it be known that we are in SADC voluntarily. If SADC decides to do stupid things, let it be known that we can withdraw from SADC."[58] In other words, instead of waiting to be suspended, Zimbabwe *threatened* to withdraw, trying to communicate that the state neither needed nor wanted its membership in the SADC. In the end, SADC did not suspend Zimbabwe, and Zimbabwe did not withdraw.

7.2.2 Examples of State Stigma Management via Rhetoric

The second way that states can push back against suspension (and thus show that suspension is costly, Hypothesis 7.1) is by rejecting or countering the stigma of suspension rhetorically. We document two main forms this rhetorical pushback takes:[59] 1) stigma rejection, i.e. complaining about IO interference in sovereign domestic affairs; and 2) counter stigmatization, i.e. painting the IO as biased, unfair, and badly informed about local context. Both of these strategies already surfaced as rhetoric during the face-saving withdrawal (threats) from Zimbabwe and Maldives we noted above. But here we show that state leaders can also engage in rhetorical pushback absent a withdrawal (threat).

One example of *counter-stigmatization* is Cuba, which was suspended from the OAS in 1962 over its "incompatible" adherence to Marxism-Leninism.[60] In response to the suspension, Cuba said "it has no interest in rejoining the group" which Fidel Castro described as a "Trojan horse" for

[55] BBC 2016.
[56] Ibid.
[57] News24 2013.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Concepts of counter-stigmatization and stigma rejection are adopted from Adler-Nissen 2014.
[60] BBC 2009.

American interference in the region.[61] Another and more recent example of counter-stigmatization is Venezuela, which was suspended from Mercosur in 2016 for violating the group's democratic principles. Mercosur said that President Nicolas Maduro had not incorporated key rules on trade and human rights into national law, and he had caused widespread food shortages, looting, and human rights abuses. Venezuela's Foreign Minister countered the stigma by describing the suspension as a coup attempt and rejected the notion that Venezuela had failed to conform to the trade group's rules. Further, she stated that "Venezuela does not recognize the null action carried out under the law of the jungle taken by the officials who are destroying Mercosur."[62]

An example of stigma *rejection* is Pakistan, which was suspended from the Commonwealth in 1999 for political backsliding after Pervez Musharraf seized power in a military coup d'état. The head of Pakistan's secret service described the suspension as "very unfair to the people of Pakistan and rather short-sighted and heavily biased towards India."[63] Another example of stigma rejection is Honduras, which was suspended from the OAS in 2009 after a coup d'état toppled President Manuel Zelaya. Ahead of the expected suspension, the interim government remained defiant and said it would renounce the OAS charter.[64] It rallied supporters on the streets of the capital and other cities in a sign of support. The caretaker president said that "It is better to pay this high price... than live undignified and bow our heads to the demands of foreign governments."[65]

These and other examples of state pushback against suspension indicate that suspension is indeed costly – otherwise states would not expend effort to counter this policy. This supports Hypothesis 7.1. The remainder of this chapter examines the consequences of suspension (i.e. reputational consequences, follow-on sanctions, and domestic institutional change) with multivariate methods, while Chapter 8 illustrates suspension dynamics with case studies.

7.3 Consequences of IO Suspension: Multivariate Tests

In the remainder of this chapter, we test Hypotheses 7.2-7.4 about the consequences of suspension using multivariate regression analyses. We proceed in three steps, assessing suspension consequences on 1) states' reputations as perceived by other governments and foreign investors (Hypothesis 7.2); 2) subsequent sanctions by other international actors (Hypothesis 7.3); and 3) domestic institutional change in the target state (Hypothesis 7.4).

To preview the results of the next three sections, our empirical analyses show that suspended states often suffer reputational consequences as indicated by worsened political stability metrics and lower chances of being elected to the United Nations Security Council as a Non-Permanent Member (Section 7.3). In examining heterogeneity, we find, as expected, that most of the reputational effects occur in states with more uncertainty and from IOs with stronger reputations. We also find strong evidence that suspensions play an endorsement role in facilitating subsequent

[61] Ibid.
[62] Al Jazeera 2016.
[63] Tran 1999.
[64] Wolf 2009.
[65] Ibid.

economic sanctions by other actors (Section 7.4). Last, we do not find robust evidence of significant domestic institutional change in the target state as a result of IO suspension (Section 7.5).

Independent variable

Our key independent variable for all three analyses (Hypotheses 7.2-7.4 which are covered across Sections 7.3-7.5) is IO *suspension for political backsliding*. It is coded 1 for the state-year in which suspension happens and 0 otherwise. For example, Mauritania was suspended from the OIF from 2008 to 2009. In this case, *suspension* is coded 1 only in 2008 and 0 otherwise. We source data from the IO Exit dataset. As explained in previous chapters, the IO Exit database derives information from IO websites and news reports using the Factiva international news database. There are 102 cases where IOs suspended states between 1939-2022.[66] Of these, there are 70 cases of suspensions for political backsliding.

Given the focus on IO suspensions after political backsliding, we limit the scope of our analyses to suspensions from IOs that have charters in which states commit to democracy, human rights, or the rule of law. It would not make sense to include IOs that have nothing to do with these issue areas.[67] Almost all (61 of 70) suspensions for political backsliding are imposed by IOs that have charter commitments to democracy, human rights, or the rule of law.[68] It is rare that suspensions for political backsliding occur from IOs without such charter commitments. Still, this shows that politics can trump law – if state violations are egregious, member states may come together to punish a violator without explicit charter authority. There are 63 IOs that have charters with commitments to democracy, human rights, or the rule of law (20% of the 311 IOs in existence today). We list these IOs with their first year of charter commitments in the Appendix.

Depending on the outcome we are predicting, we use alternate versions of the suspension variable: a contemporaneous measure *(suspension for political backsliding)* and a one-year lag *(suspension for political backsliding, lagged)*. We explain the choice below in the relevant sections. For robustness checks, we also generate a count measure; a few states get suspended from several organizations in the same year for the same violation, so we construct a variable called *number of suspensions for political backsliding*, which is the logged count.

Inference challenges

Assessing the consequences of suspension is challenging because we need to distinguish the effects of suspension from the effects of political backsliding that precede and give rise to them: a state's

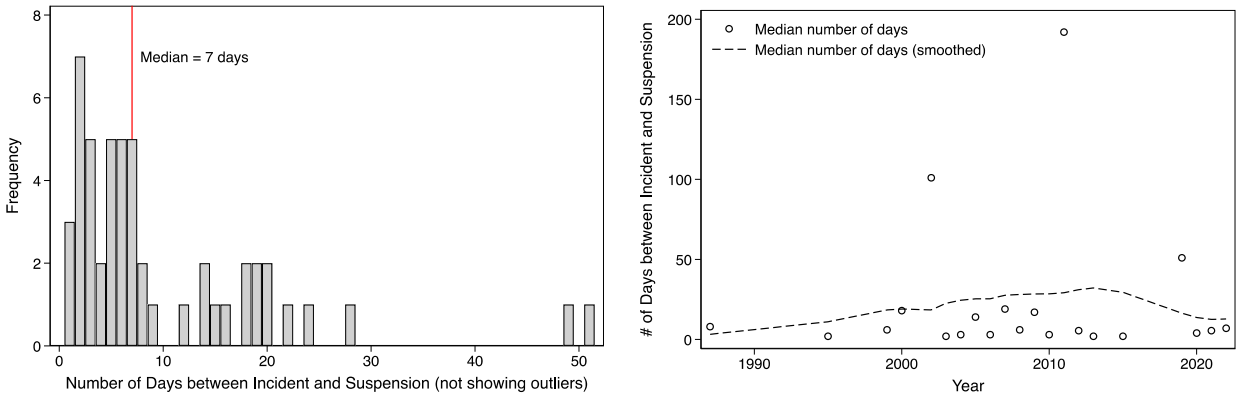
[66] We do not include suspensions for financial arrears which are out of scope for analysis.
[67] For more on this, see von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019.
[68] 9 of 70 suspensions for political backsliding occur from IOs without such charter commitments. These cases affect 4 countries: Spain's suspension from ICAO in 1946, South Africa's suspension for apartheid from WHO and UPU in 1964, ICAO in 1974, WMO in 1975; Libya's suspension from the Arab League in 2011; and Syria's suspension for government-sponsored violence from the Arab League and Arab Fund for Social/Economic Development in 2011, and the Islamic Development Bank in 2013.

reputation may already be on the decline before suspension happens and efficient markets[69] may factor in the political risk of downward trending behavior. Bad behavior alone (a coup d'état, for example), might shake the country's economic stability, affecting the country's political and economic risk *even without a suspension*.

To make matters more complicated, suspension usually happens shortly after (in the same month) as the backsliding behavior. The median time between the incident and suspension for political backsliding from democratically committed IOs is 7 days, meaning that half of all suspensions happen within a week of the political backsliding event. We illustrate this in Figure 7.2a. This timing varies widely; the shortest time between incident and suspension was 1 day, and the longest was 3 years – in the case of Cuba's revolution in 1959 and its suspension from the OAS in 1962. We omit outliers like this (over 6 months) from Figure 7.2a to better show patterns. The time between incident and suspension has also shortened over the last decade, as shown in Figure 7.2b (not showing the 1962 suspension). In 2020-2022, the median time between incident and suspension has been 5-7 days.

Figure 7.2: Number of days between Incident and Suspension for Political Backsliding

(a) Frequency distribution (b) Distribution over years



We do not want to attribute the effect of the backsliding (e.g. a coup d'état) to the effect of IO suspension. Instead, we aim to test whether suspension affects outcomes, e.g. whether international actors react specifically to the IO suspension above and beyond reactions to the IO rule violation itself. That is, we seek to estimate the marginal effect of suspension on outcomes, beyond the underlying violation.

We address this inference challenge in three alternative ways. First, we control for variables that capture state violations which trigger suspensions for political backsliding. To capture political backsliding, we measure (1) reductions in human rights and (2) non-democratic events in the form of coups d'états, serious election irregularities, and reductions in democracy scores. *Political backsliding* is a binary indicator coded 1 if any of the following apply: a one-point or larger worsening in human rights scores compared to the previous year,[70] a two-point or larger worsening

[69] Malkiel 1989.

[70] Political terror scale data range from 1 to 5 (Gibney et al. 2021).

in Polity2 scores compared to the previous year,[71] a successful coup d'état,[72] or serious election irregularities (government harassment of the opposition or low election quality)[73] and 0 otherwise.

As a second way of addressing the inference problem, we use matching models. These are designed to prune the dataset and generate a smaller but more balanced dataset that allows us to compare more like cases. In particular, we use coarsened exact matching (CEM) to pair cases that match on key variables of interest but differ on whether or not suspension occurred. This allows us to attribute any difference in reputational consequences more clearly to the suspension rather than the backsliding event. We always match on backsliding and the country itself; we add other variables (e.g. lagged dependent variables) depending on the outcome, as explained below.

Third, we estimate two-stage models. Here, the second stage predicts the effect of suspension on outcomes, while the first stage considers which states experience political backsliding – and thus qualify for suspension – in the first place. In other words, conditional on the sample of backsliding states, we then assess the effect of suspension on outcomes. We use this for the analyses of the second outcome of interest (subsequent sanctions) to address the sample selection issue that sanction is coded 1 only for states that (sanction senders perceived to) have committed violations, such as political backsliding. Without political backsliding, sanctions for political backsliding would be unlikely.

7.3.1 Consequences of IO Suspensions for State's Reputation: Political Stability and Investment Profile

Hypothesis 7.2 states that suspensions harm a state's reputation. The reputation we seek to capture is about a country's adherence to IO rules because this might affect international actors' political or economic decisions towards that country. It would therefore not be appropriate to use *citizens'* perceptions of other states' (which may evaluate a country for its vacation potential or pop culture); we therefore do not rely on citizens' surveys such as Gallup's Perceptions of Foreign Countries data to evaluate a state's reputation.[74] Instead, we are interested in perceptions by international actors, such as states and financial investors.

We use two proxies for state reputation by international actors. Our first proxy of state reputation/credibility relies on assessments by international market actors (i.e. geopolitical risk analysis companies such as Eurasia Group, Political Risk Services, and Lazard). These firms are well known for providing globalized businesses with metrics that assess the confluence of political risk and investment potential.

[71] Polity2 data ranges from −10 to +10 (Marshall and Gurr 2018).
[72] Marshall and Marshall 2022.
[73] Hyde and Marinov 2011 (Nelda6); Coppedge et al. 2022.

Using this proxy aligns with previous work examining how a state's credibility/reputation changes as it joins an IO.[75] We use two indicators: a state's *political stability* (i.e. the inverse of a state's political risk score) and a state's *investment profile*. Both are sourced from Political Risk Services' (PRS) International Country Risk Guide (ICRG). PRS data "are used by the world's largest and most prominent institutional investors, transnational companies (from resource extraction companies to the largest technology firms globally), multilateral organizations, central banks and sovereign wealth funds, and universities of all disciplinary stripes… data allows asset managers to adopt a more selective approach to country exposure, as political factors (among other idiosyncratic influences) play an increasingly important role in trading selections for portfolio and tactical decisions."[76] ICRG ratings are only available since 1984 and not for all states; some states do not finance themselves in international bond markets and are thus not rated. We follow previous studies for the model specification but with updated data until 2022.

The first reputational measure, *political stability*, is an aggregate index (originally called political risk score) that ranges from 0 to 100 points. It is based on 12 weighted variables covering political, economic, and social attributes including government stability (12 points), socioeconomic conditions (12 points), investment profile (12 points), internal and external conflict (each 12 points), corruption (6 points), military in politics (6 points), religious and ethnic tensions (each 6 points), law and order (6 points), democratic accountability (6 points), and bureaucracy quality (4 points). The higher this political risk score, the more secure/less risky is the country. We thus label the variable *political stability* for ease of interpretation.

The second reputational measure, *investment profile*, is one of the components of this aggregate index. This measures risk to investment with three sub-components: contract viability/expropriation, profits repatriation, and payment delays. Again, higher scores indicate that the state's investment environment is more secure (i.e., less risky).

When analyzing these two outcomes, we do not lag *suspension* (or backsliding) because suspension (and backsliding) is likely to have an immediate effect on geopolitical risk firms' perceptions of political stability and how businesses think about countries' investment profile. Markets are usually quick to respond and incorporate beliefs into metrics. Moreover, the geopolitical risk scores are generated monthly and averaged at the end of the year across the previous 12 months, making it unlikely for reputational effects to manifest in the *following* year. One limitation of the yearly data we use is that it is more difficult to pick up changes that may happen within a 12-month period (because monthly data are averaged over that period). In that sense, the results here may be conservative estimates.

Indeed, many geopolitical risk reports reference suspension in the month when the suspension happens, showing that they consider the issue of IO suspension when they assess states' stability and investment potential. We provide several examples below of how Political Risk Services' (PRS) geopolitical risk reports discuss IO suspension:

[75] Gray 2009; Dreher and Voigt 2011; Dreher, Mikosch and Voigt 2015; Baccini and Urpelainen 2014; Tomashevskiy and Kono 2015.
[76] https://www.prsgroup.com/about-us/clients-testimonials/

- Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth in 1995 was documented in the PRS reports as "The Commonwealth suspended Abacha for two years and told him that within that time he must make real moves toward democracy and an improvement in human rights."[77]
- Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth in 2002 appeared in the PRS report: "the international community regarded the election process as fraudulent, and on March 19 the Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe for one year with immediate effect."[78]
- Guinea's suspension from the African Union and ECOWAS in 2009 was documented in the PRS reports as "The African Union (AU) suspended Guinea's membership in the organization pending the restoration of constitutional order, a step later taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well."[79]
- Madagascar's suspension from both the South African Development Community and the African Union in 2009 was included in the PRS report: "Both the South African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) refused to recognize the newly-appointed leader and suspended Madagascar's membership in their respective bodies."[80]
- Paraguay's suspension from Mercosur in 2012 was listed in the PRS reports: "members (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay) did suspend Paraguay's voting rights within the organization, pending the election of a new president."[81]
- Syria's suspension from the Arab League in 2012 was included in the PRS reports: "the Arab League, of which Syria has been a core member, decried the regime's actions against the Syrian people. The League successively suspended Syria's membership, called for political and security reforms and negotiations with the opposition, and carried out a monitoring mission to assess the regime's response."[82]
- Venezuela's suspension from Mercosur in 2017 made its way to the PRS reports: "the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) has already suspended Venezuela's membership, and the government in Caracas has pre-empted a similar move by the Organization of American States (OAS) by announcing the initiation of a two-year process of exiting from membership in the hemispheric body."[83]
- Sudan's suspension from the African Union in 2019[84] and again in 2021 was detailed in the PRS reports: "The AU suspended Sudan's membership pending the creation of a power-sharing regime, and the US asked Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE to put pressure on the junta to pursue a peaceful resolution."[85]

Markets are quick to respond to suspension in the month of the suspension. It is thus theoretically possible that perceptions of a state's political stability and investor confidence may still be deflated

[77] Nigeria PRS report 1995.
[78] Zimbabwe PRS report 2002.
[79] Guinea PRS report 2009:11.
[80] Madagascar PRS report 2009.
[81] Paraguay PRS report 2012:12.
[82] Syria PRS report 2012:21.
[83] Venezuela PRS report 2017:U4.
[84] Syria PRS report 2021:12.
[85] Syria PRS report 2021:21.

a year after a suspension (or backsliding), but it would be difficult to tie these dips in credibility directly back to the suspension a year earlier. Much may have happened in between. Also, state stability and investor confidence could have improved a year later if the regime reformed (and several other things could have happened in the meantime), which might remove the immediate effect of suspension in our analysis. We thus do not lag suspension or political backsliding when estimating their effect on reputational outcomes.

We control for variables that might confound the relationship between an IO suspension and its consequences. Models 1-6 focus on the state's political stability, while models 7-12 focus on the state's investment profile. In the baseline specification (models 1 and 7), we include a measure of *political backsliding*, the lagged dependent variable of each outcome, and country fixed effects. Country fixed effects allow us to control for time-invariant differences between countries; we focus on over-time changes within a given state, and then average estimates across states. Since we include lagged dependent variables for the respective outcome variables, we interpret estimates as changes in the outcomes.

In subsequent models of Table 7.1, we adopt more conservative model specifications to check the robustness of the results, adding other control variables and then year fixed effects. In models 2 and 8, we add control variables to account for alternative drivers of the dependent variables. Here, we follow previous studies[86] of *political stability* and *investment profile* and control for a country's *democracy, GDP growth,* (logged) *GDP per capita* and *trade share.* In models 3 and 9, we add control variables to account for potential confounders, i.e. drivers of political backsliding and suspension from Chapter 6 which may also influence perceptions of political stability and investment profile: *oil and gas value per capita, age of democracy, number of parties,* and *political system*.[87] All control variables are lagged by one year. All descriptive statistics are in the Appendix. In models 4 and 10, we use year fixed effects instead of country fixed effects, essentially accounting for temporal shocks that influence all states; here we compare the effect of suspension *across* countries instead of *within* countries over time. Models 5-6 and 11-12 include both country and year fixed effects (i.e. two-way fixed effects). In models 6 and 12, we omit the lagged outcome variable. We use OLS models and estimate it with fixed effects as noted above and with robust standard errors clustered on the state to account for the lack of independence of observations within the same state.

Results are in Table 1 and support Hypothesis 7.2 that suspension has negative reputational consequences for the suspended state. Suspension is associated with a drop (i.e. a worsening) in both the perception of the state's political stability and investor confidence, key metrics that relate to the country's reputation. The coefficients on *suspension* in all twelve columns are negative and statistically significant, indicating that suspension is associated with lower state reputation across a range of different modeling specifications. Note that these analyses control for political backsliding. But even when controlling for backsliding and other country characteristics,

[86] These controls follow Dreher and Voigt 2011; Cosset and Roy 1991. Inflation and interest rates have higher missingness (lowering the sample size), so we only use them in robustness check, yielding similar results.

[87] We omit *allied with regional power* because it is unlikely to influence these outcomes and thus not a confounder.

suspension is significantly linked to a diminished reputation in the eyes of international analysts (i.e. geopolitical risk firms). In terms of the substantive size, IO suspension is associated with a 3-point lower assessment of the suspended state's political stability, meaning it is perceived to have a riskier environment. This is 20 percent of a standard deviation change, which is substantively notable. The effect of IO suspension on the state's investment profiles are similar. Here, suspension is associated with a 0.4-point drop in investor confidence which represents 16 percent of a standard deviation change. Political backsliding itself is also associated with a worse investment profile, but it is usually not statistically significant. This suggests that the effects come from suspension, not the underlying backsliding behavior.

Table 7.1: Effect of IO Suspensions for Political Backsliding on Political Stability and Investment Profile (1984-2022)

	Dependent variable: Political stability						Dependent variable: Investment profile					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(12)	(12)
Suspension for political backsliding	-3.020	-3.339	-3.929	-3.748	-3.744	-4.765	-0.356	-0.450	-0.540	-0.458	-0.476	-0.908
	(0.580)***	(0.719)***	(0.754)***	(0.703)***	(0.740)***	(1.370)***	(0.081)***	(0.092)***	(0.082)***	(0.097)***	(0.093)***	(0.296)***
Political Backsliding	-0.138	0.079	0.080	-0.042	0.100	-0.255	-0.110	-0.057	-0.084	-0.066	-0.065	-0.097
	(0.143)	(0.164)	(0.194)	(0.158)	(0.188)	(0.588)	(0.036)***	(0.041)	(0.050)*	(0.036)*	(0.046)	(0.129)
Political stability, lagged	0.882	0.859	0.864	0.918	0.831							
	(0.006)***	(0.008)***	(0.009)***	(0.007)***	(0.010)***							
Investment profile, lagged							0.889	0.850	0.846	0.872	0.802	
							(0.006)***	(0.008)***	(0.009)***	(0.010)***	(0.012)***	
Democracy, lagged		0.079	0.087	0.041	0.047	0.224		0.016	0.012	0.005	-0.000	0.014
		(0.023)***	(0.029)***	(0.012)***	(0.025)*	(0.115)*		(0.005)***	(0.006)**	(0.003)*	(0.006)	(0.020)
GDP per capita, lagged and logged		-0.547	-0.964	0.441	-0.389	4.876		0.238	0.172	0.097	0.040	0.980
		(0.232)**	(0.347)***	(0.058)***	(0.402)	(1.869)**		(0.061)***	(0.085)**	(0.013)***	(0.098)	(0.495)*
GDP growth in percent, lagged		0.020	0.023	0.012	0.023	0.124		0.012	0.012	0.010	0.011	0.026
		(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.049)**		(0.006)**	(0.006)**	(0.005)**	(0.005)**	(0.010)***
Trade as share of GDP, lagged		0.005	0.008	0.003	0.008	0.006		0.002	0.002	0.000	0.000	-0.000
		(0.003)*	(0.004)**	(0.001)***	(0.003)**	(0.013)		(0.001)**	(0.001)*	(0.000)*	(0.001)	(0.003)
Oil and gas value per capita, lagged and logged			0.005	-0.014	0.046	0.091			0.008	-0.003	0.012	0.003
			(0.051)	(0.009)*	(0.038)	(0.183)			(0.015)	(0.003)	(0.011)	(0.033)
Age of democracy, lagged and logged			-0.164	-0.072	-0.082	1.004			0.030	-0.023	-0.052	0.078
			(0.106)	(0.053)	(0.086)	(0.405)**			(0.029)	(0.016)	(0.027)*	(0.071)
Number of parties, lagged and logged			0.419	0.069	0.272	1.043			0.156	0.045	0.084	0.152
			(0.289)	(0.177)	(0.263)	(1.019)			(0.084)*	(0.047)	(0.076)	(0.195)
Political system			0.135	0.006	0.103	-0.202			-0.132	0.002	0.010	0.284
			(0.330)	(0.060)	(0.299)	(1.024)			(0.074)*	(0.016)	(0.056)	(0.168)*
Observations	5008	4003	3362	3362	3362	3467	5008	4003	3362	3362	3362	3467
R-squared	0.965	0.963	0.960	0.963	0.966	0.863	0.896	0.890	0.886	0.906	0.910	0.734
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓

Results of OLS models estimating the effect of suspension for political backsliding from democratically committed IOs on political stability and investment profile. Coefficient estimates are displayed with robust standard errors clustered on countries in parentheses. Country and year fixed effects are included as indicated but not shown. Statistical significance is denoted by * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

To check the robustness of these results, we use an alternate independent variable, an alternate dependent variable, and matching analysis. When we replace the independent variable (a binary measure of suspension) with a count (the logged number of suspensions for political backsliding in that year), the results are almost identical (see Appendix). We next replace the PRS metrics with sovereign bond spreads (i.e. *risk premiums*). This is another proxy for international market actors' perception of a state's reputation, capturing government credibility as it relates to sovereign borrowing.[88] We detail these results in the Appendix, which are weakly supportive. Finally, we

[88] Chapman, Fang, Li and Stone 2017; Eichengreen, Gupta, Mody 2006; Gehring and Lang 2020; Reinsburg, Stubbs, and Kentikelenis 2022. We do not use this measure as a dependent variable in our main analyses because sovereign bond spreads theoretically only relate to a small share of IOs (i.e. economic IOs involved with loans). It is difficult to imagine, for example, that suspension from an IO like UNESCO would affect a state's bond yields given the unrelated issue areas. Studies have also shown that the number of factors affecting sovereign bond spreads are

run matching analyses, which first prune the dataset. We use coarsened exact matching, which divide the data into strata for each matching variable and only retain those strata which have cases of both suspension and not suspension. This ensures common support. We match on the variables from the baseline specification (i.e. columns 1 and 7): country, backsliding, and the respective lagged dependent variable; we also use a more conservative approach by matching on more variables (from columns 2 and 8). In each case, we replicate the models from Table 7.1 on that more balanced and pruned/smaller dataset. This ensures we compare the reputational consequences in similar backsliding cases but compare those cases with IO suspensions to those without suspensions. The results (in both cases, see Appendix) are again similar: countries with an IO suspension are significantly associated with worsened reputations, as measured by investors' perception of their political stability and investment profile.

We next investigate heterogeneity in effects for different types of states and IOs, replicating the main analyses (Table 7.1, models 2 and 8). As noted in Hypotheses 2a, the reputational consequences of IO suspension should be stronger for states with high uncertainty about their future policies or behavior.

There are several ways we can think about uncertainty regarding state behavior. Here, we use proxies for uncertainty in terms of a) the state's political regime type and b) regularity in their UN General Assembly voting patterns. For political regime type, uncertainty tends to be highest in anocracies, i.e. middling regimes between democracy and autocracy where there is more instability. Weaker institutions in anocracies often mean less predictable policies. This stands in contrast to more predictable policies in democracies (due to more veto players) and in autocracies (due to longer leader tenure). Also, weaker institutions in anocracies present opportunities for citizens to make demands on the anocratic state and rebel.[89] Furthermore, research shows that the transitional characteristics of anocracies can increase the risk of civil war onset, another indicator of uncertainty.[90] The confluence of these processes can lead to uncertainty about what to expect from the state's future policies and behavior. We therefore expect that suspension is most influential on updating international actors' perception of anocratic states' reputations, while in democracies and autocracies, suspension may be less influential. We use the polity2 variable to measure regime type,[91] which ranges from 10 to 10 and where higher values indicate more democracy. Anocracies are in the middle range.

Another way to proxy for uncertainty about state behavior is by using the regularity of a state's voting patterns at the UNGA, i.e. preferences over foreign policy.[92] We follow recent advances by using ideal point estimates on a single dimension that reflects state positions toward the US-led liberal order. The variable ranges from approximately -2 to +3, and higher values reflect a state's UNGA voting being more aligned with the US-led liberal order. For example, many Western states regularly have values above 1, while Iran, Syria, Cuba, Venezuela often have values smaller than

complex and vast, and often include countervailing predictions. And empirically, data on risk premium are available for much fewer countries.

[89] Reagan and Bell 2010.

[90] Reagan and Bell 2010.

[91] Marshall and Gurr 2020.

[92] Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten 2017.

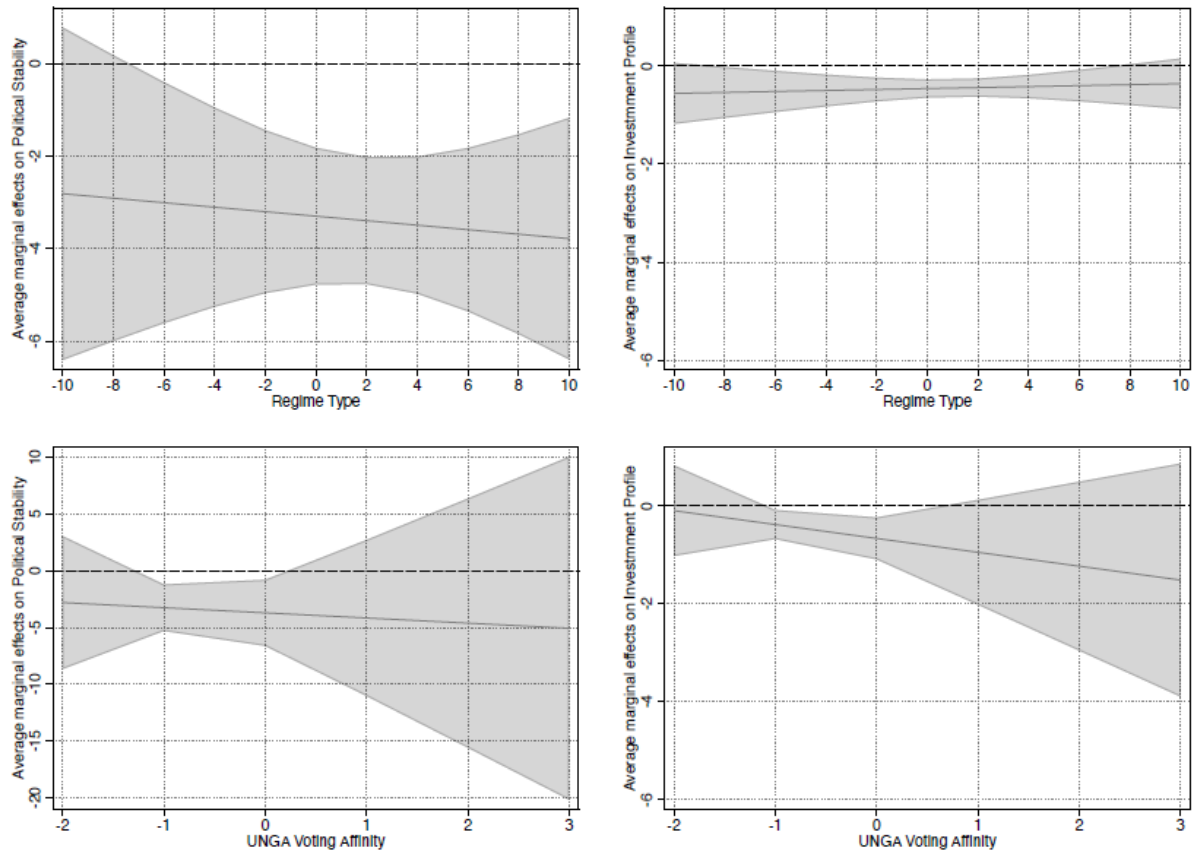
-1. On both ends of the spectrum, states' UNGA voting on this dimension is relatedly predictable. We assume again that middling states – those with ideal points in the mid-range (around 0) have the least predictable foreign policy preferences, sometimes voting in support of the US voting patterns and sometimes voting against it. It is for these states with the most uncertainty that suspension may provide the clearest information to update international actors' perceptions of their reputation. We lag these two conditioning variables and include them as interactions with suspension (one by one in separate models) replicating model 2 and 8 of Table 7.1.

The results of these heterogeneity tests are in Figure 7.3a and broadly support Hypothesis 7.2a that the reputational effects of suspension are stronger in states with more uncertainty. The figure shows point estimates of the suspension coefficient (the solid line) with 95% confidence intervals (the gray bands). The dashed line indicates zero. The left panel shows estimates for the reputational outcome of political stability (model 2), while the right column shows estimates for the reputational outcome of investment profile (model 8). Row 1 shows coefficient estimates of suspension conditioned by regime type while row 2 shows estimates of suspension conditioned by UNGA voting affinity. The coefficient on suspension is always negative but varies in statistical significance, broadly in line with our expectations.

The results are mostly supportive of the idea that the effect of suspension on reputation is largest in middling states, where uncertainty about future behavior is greatest. This interaction effect is most pronounced when conditioning on a state's regularity of UNGA voting patterns. Here, the coefficient on suspension only becomes statistically significant in the middle range; it is not significant in the upper and lower ranges of the UNGA voting. This holds for both predicting an effect of suspension on political stability and on investment profile (as measures of that state's reputation). Since this measure captures voting alignment with the US-led liberal order, we interpret this as meaning that states which neither always nor never vote this way in the UNGA (but instead are wild card voters) are those that see reputational harm from suspension because they are the most uncertain (or hard to predict). The suspension heuristic is therefore useful here to update prior beliefs. For political regime type, the effect of suspension is only significant in the middle range of regime type when predicting investment profile; this supports our intuition. However, conditioning on regime type when predicting stability (the top left graph) does not support this idea. On the whole, though, results are consistent with the notion that states with higher uncertainty are more affected by suspension in their reputation.

Figure 7.3a: Effect of IO Suspensions on Political Stability and Investment Profile – by State Characteristics

(a) Outcome: Political stability (b) Outcome: Investment profile



We also test the second heterogeneity hypothesis that the effect of suspension may vary across different kinds of IOs. Hypothesis 7.3b stated that the consequences of IO suspension are stronger from IOs that have stronger reputations. We can think of operationalizing an IO's reputation and the "company states keep" in IOs (the membership makeup) in (at least) two ways that are relevant in this context: an IO membership's aggregate democratic density and its membership's aggregate political stability density. First, the IO's democratic density has been identified as an important conditioning factor in research on IOs as credible commitment devices for democratization: when more IO members themselves are strong democracies, they are more likely to hold other members to account on democracy-related rules.[93] The democratic density of the IO can also affect the IO's perceived legitimacy in world politics[94] where being a member of a low-density democracy club can even have detrimental effects on the country. Second, an IO's reputation in terms of its collective political stability can be important, which is directly tied to its perceived reputation. Thus, we expect that suspension from an IO with many democracies or many countries that are politically stable has a larger effect on a state's reputation.

[93] Pevehouse 2005, 2003, 2002a, 2002b.
[94] Scharpf 1999; Dellmuth, Scholte, and Tallberg 2019.

We thus interact the suspension variable with a measure of *IO democratic density* and, alternatively, a measure of *IO political stability*. We move to the IO-member-year unit of analysis in order to directly link the IO characteristics listed above to the outcomes of interest. Without doing this, we would have to use IO measures averaged across *all* IOs that a state is a member of in a given year, which would obscure the link between specific IOs and our outcome variables. However, the results do not depend on this; analyses at the state-year level (averaging over all IOs) yield similar results. The first variable captures the democratic density of a given member-IO-year observation. Following prior research,[95] we average the level of democracy (i.e. regime score) of all other state members in a given IO that state *m* is a member of in year *t* (excluding the violator/member state). The original polity scale ranges from -10 (autocracies) to +10 (democracies). Values in the middle range (from -6 to +6) usually indicate middling regimes (anocracies). Averaging over all other members in a given IO in that year results in a scale from -4 to 8. That is, there are no observations where IOs have only highly autocratic or highly democratic members. Most IOs have a mix of state members. Similarly, the IO stability measure captures the average political stability score of all other state members in a given IO that state *m* is a member of in year *t* (excluding the violator/member state). As noted above, the original state measure varies from 0 to 100 (where higher values mean more stability. Averaging across state members within a given IO leads to a scale from 27 to 67. We again replicate models 2 and 8 of Table 7.1 (but on the IO-member-year level).

The results of these heterogeneity tests are illustrated in Figure 7.3b. In these coefficient plots, the left panel again shows estimates for reputation proxied by political stability while the right panel shows estimates for reputation proxied by investment profile. The upper panel conditions on *IO democratic density*, while the lower panel conditions on *IO political stability*.

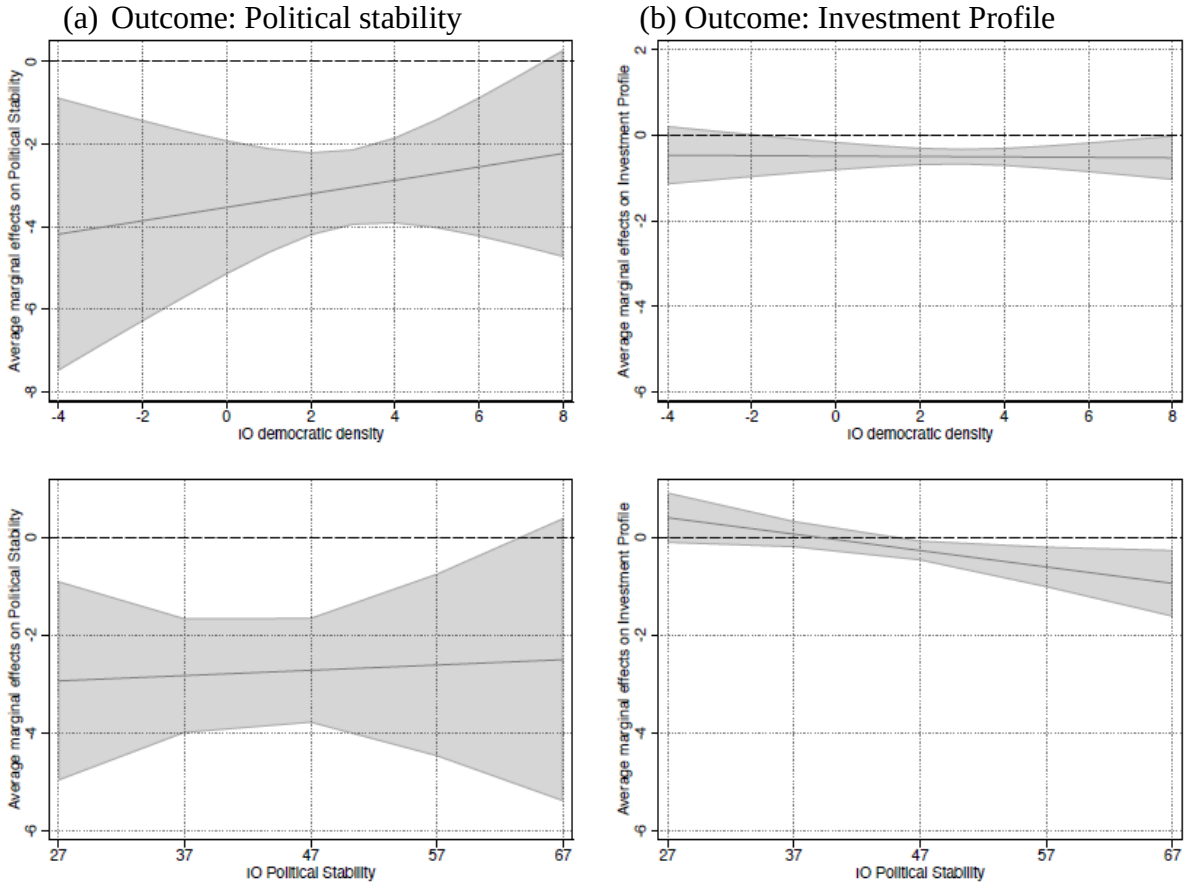
Figure 7.2b indicates mixed support for our expectations about heterogeneity across IOs. Hypothesis 7.2b states that suspension is more consequential from IOs with stronger reputations: this idea is empirically supported when using a state's investment profile as an outcome, but not when using a state's political stability. For the outcome of political stability (left panel), the coefficient on *suspension* does not change much across the range of IO reputations; it is always negative and statistically significant except for the highest value of reputation. This is not in line with our expectation.

For the outcome of investment profile (the right panel), the results suggest that suspension only changes investor perceptions when they occur from more reputable IOs. The coefficient on *suspension* is not significant in the lower ranges of IO reputation. It only becomes statistically significant (different from zero) at middling and higher levels of an IO's democratic density and IO stability density. For example, in the top right panel, for IOs with low levels of democratic density (when the IO is dominated by autocratic states), suspension for political backsliding has no effect on a state's investment profile. But the effect becomes statistically significant as the has more democratic states. The effect is similar when conditioning on IO political stability: it is only statistically significant in the higher ranges, whereas suspension from IOs with many or mostly

[95] The calculation follows Pevehouse (2002a; 2002b) and uses polity2 data (Marshall and Gurr 2020).

unstable states has no effect on states' reputations. We thus find mixed support for heterogeneity by IO characteristics.

Figure 7.3b: Effect of IO Suspension on Political Stability and Investment Profile – by IO reputation



7.3.2 Consequences of IO Suspensions for State's Reputation: UN Security Council elections

As a second way of measuring a state's reputation in the international community, and more specifically addressing perceptions by other governments (rather than investors), we use *election* to be a Non-Permanent Member (NPM) on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the year after suspension. NPM election matters because being on the UNSC comes with status, and influence, and thus a higher reputation.

As a short background, the UNSC includes 15 members: five Permanent Members and ten Non-Permanent Members who must win election to serve two-year terms. NPMs matter in UNSC decisions because at least four NPMs must vote in favor of a resolution for it to pass, giving these members a central role on the world stage. The open ballot nature of UNSC voting gives elected members a global voice in central matters of international security. In choosing NPMs, the UN Charter calls on government representatives to consider "the contribution of members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of

the Organization." But in practice, "UN Ambassadors appear to consider factors beyond contributions to peacekeeping: political affiliations, economic strength, and foreign aid may all play a role."[96]

Election is decided in a first step by the geographic regions which nominate states from among their geographic group, before the UNGA votes on nominees with two-thirds majority (for contested seats). If suspension induces reputational consequences, we expect that the surrounding region and overall world community of states would be less likely to "reward" a state with such a prominent role. We thus use election to the UNSC NPM as a proxy for a state's reputation, arguing that if suspension has reputational costs (controlling for the event that triggered the suspension), then the likelihood of that country being elected in the aftermath of the suspension should be reduced. In analyzing UNSC elections, we replicate part of a seminal book by Vreeland and Dreher (2014, chapter 4), but add lagged indicators for suspension and political backsliding. The data cover UNSC elections from 1970 to 2005. As in the original analysis, we use one-year lagged values of all independent variables to match the timing of the election process.

In their analysis, Dreher and Vreeland (2014:125) predict election to the UNSC based on five sets of factors: a norm of turn-taking (rotating memberships through eligible candidate countries), a commitment to peace (measures of war, peacekeeping troops, democracy), foreign aid (US development and military aid, IMF and WB projects, debt service), power (population and territorial size, GNI per capita, voting in line with the US or Russia in the UNGA, pariah state/economic sanctions target, membership in the G77, NAM, or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), and cultural traits (former British or French colony, shared regional ideology, percent Muslim or Catholic, and control of corruption). They also control for the role of an Arab swing state, which comes out of the Africa or Asia group. We use the same data and control variables.[97]

The data include 180 UNSC elections between 1970 and 2005 using a sample of 189 countries for a total of 5,330 country-year observations. We restrict attention to the three models for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, omitting output for Eastern Europe, Western Europe and others (WEOG), and the UNGA. Results are more reliable[98] and also of greater interest in these regions given the greater variation in suspension there.

Following Dreher and Vreeland (2014), the statistical model is a multiple discrete-choice model which closely emulates the two-stage selection process: regional nominations followed by UNGA elections (when seats are contested). The model also addresses non-independence of observations

[96] Dreher, Gould, Rablen, and Vreeland 2014; Vreeland and Dreher 2014.
[97] We omit the drivers of suspension and backsliding which could be confounders because several (e.g. *democracy, GDP per capita, alliances*) are collinear with the control variables already in the Dreher/Vreeland model and the model is already quite complex.
[98] For Eastern Europe and the UNGA, Dreher and Vreeland (2014: 125) caution about the results in these two samples because of the limited number of observations that these groups include, and also report model convergence issues for Eastern Europe and WEOG (Dreher and Vreeland (2014: 123). Indeed, including our two variables of interest (lagged suspension and lagged backsliding) means that models for these samples also do not converge.

(one country winning a seat for a region means other counties not being elected).[99] Like the authors of the original study, we focus on the direction of correlation (positive or negative) and its statistical significance (rather than substantive effect sizes) because calculating marginal effects from this model is complex.

The results are in Table 7.3 and show support for Hypothesis 7.2 that IO suspension harms a state's international reputation.[100] The coefficient on the lagged suspension variable is negative and statistically significant throughout. This indicates that a country being suspended from an international organization has a lower probability of being elected to the UN Security Council as an NPM. Interestingly, it is the suspension itself that is associated with lower odds of becoming a UNSC temporary member. The underlying violation, political backsliding, does not have a significant effect on the UNSC elections. Thus, backsliding itself does not seem to matter much but the signal of suspension is what triggers a downgrade in a country's reputation. This is perhaps because backsliding is quite common (and thus noisy) but suspension is rare and thus an important signal influencing a state's reputation. This is also noteworthy since results for informal institutions – G77 and NAM – are inconsistent in whether and how they matter. Coefficients on these indicators of informal institutions are not consistently significant and vary in both positive and negative directions. However, being suspended from a formal IO sends a strong signal to the international community.

Results for other variables are very similar to those from the original analysis in Dreher and Vreeland (2014: 124). For example, the turn-taking norm matters in Africa and Asia, but not in Latin America and the Caribbean. Being an Arab swing state is important in both Africa and Asia, increasing the odds of election.

[99] The model includes year fixed effects and robust standard errors, adjusted for multiple imputation, which are clustered on region × year.

[100] We are unable to run the same heterogeneity analyses on this dependent variable given the shorter time frame, which results in a smaller sample size.

Table 7.2: Effect of IO Suspensions on United Nations Security Council Election as Non-Permanent Member, 1970-2005

	(1) Africa	(2) Asia	(3) Latin America and Caribbean (GRULAC)
Suspension for political backsliding, lagged	-15.547	-17.179	-14.341
	(1.297)***	(1.472)***	(1.492)***
Political backsliding, lagged	0.349	0.822	-0.598
	(0.394)	(0.683)	(0.489)
Turn-taking norm	3.159	2.589	0.471
	(0.681)***	(0.843)***	(0.577)
War	-1.220	-1.861	0.674
	(0.783)	(1.039)*	(0.829)
Peacekeeping troops (log)	0.156	0.275	0.215
	(0.095)	(0.129)**	(0.120)*
Democracy	-0.023	0.952	-0.363
	(0.662)	(0.879)	(0.492)
U.S. development aid (log)	0.010	0.023	0.030
	(0.039)	(0.046)	(0.053)
U.S. military assistance (log)	-0.034	0.047	-0.046
	(0.034)	(0.044)	(0.028)
IMF program participation	0.357	0.191	0.319
	(0.451)	(0.697)	(0.542)
New World Bank projects	0.121	0.061	0.062
	(0.098)	(0.104)	(0.083)
Debt service (% GNI)	0.521	0.128	0.948
	(0.308)*	(0.505)	(0.466)**
Population (log)	0.275	1.669	0.258
	(0.198)	(0.485)***	(0.351)***
GNI per capita (log)	0.378	0.873	1.307
	(0.239)	(0.381)*	(0.378)***
Territory (log)	-0.009	-0.454	0.185
	(0.155)	(0.219)**	(0.211)
USA voting in the UNGA	-6.716	6.501	-2.948
	(3.367)*	(5.514)	(6.609)
Russia voting in the UNGA	3.416	2.210	6.795
	(3.569)	(5.859)	(6.197)
Pariah state	-0.981	1.190	0.784
	(1.243)	(1.287)	(1.639)
G77 and NAM		-0.831	4.052
		(1.006)	(1.407)***
G77 only, not in NAM		-12.604	3.785
		(1.939)***	(1.325)***
OIC	-0.239		
	(0.610)		
Former British colony	0.573	1.752	1.674
	(0.490)	(0.754)**	(1.017)
Former French colony	0.463		
	(0.518)		
Shared regional ideology	0.007	-2.004	2.093
	(1.165)	(2.989)	(1.346)
Muslim (%)	0.079	1.357	14.142
	(0.749)	(1.514)	(8.102)*
Catholic (%)	-0.053	1.987	3.424
	(0.819)	(1.747)	(2.077)*
Control of corruption	-0.690	-0.041	-0.577
	(0.314)**	(0.608)	(0.381)
Arab swing seat	1.833	19.147	
	(0.370)***	(1.012)***	

Results of multiple-discrete-choice models estimating the effect of suspension for political backsliding from democratically committed IOs on election to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member. Replicating Vreeland and Dreher (2014: 124), showing models 1, 2, 4. Total number of observations is 5,319. Robust standard errors clustered on region*year in parentheses. Statistical significance is denoted y * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

7.4 Consequences of IO Suspension for Subsequent Sanctions

Moving on from the reputational consequences of IO suspension, we now test whether IO suspensions play an endorsement role for other international punishments. In particular, do IO suspensions makes subsequent economic sanctions by other actors in the international community more likely (Hypothesis 7.3)? Many actors have imposed sanctions in the last seven decades, ranging from individual countries to regional organizations[101] all the way up to the United Nations Security Council.[102]

We capture these different types of sanction senders by using the Global Sanctions Database (GSDB),[103] which provides information from 1950 onwards. We subset the GSDB in a few ways to get a cleaner estimate of our quantity of interest. We only include sanctions which have the stated objective of pushing changes in democracy or human rights to make sure the subsequent sanction is imposed for the same underlying violation as the suspension and not a completely different issue (e.g. war, terrorism, or other policy change). We also remove diplomatic sanctions from the outcome variable since we are trying to capture follow-on economic sanctions that might have material "bite" and thus show the costliness of IO suspensions through their knock-on effects. We also want to ensure that IO suspensions (diplomatic sanctions) are not inadvertently on both sides of the equation. That leaves a range of economic sanctions that are included (such as trade and financial sanctions, travel bans, reductions or bans in military assistance and arms flows). Finally, we remove economic sanctions imposed by the *same* multilateral organization that imposed the diplomatic suspension because we are testing the signaling/endorsement potential to *other* actors. When IOs impose both diplomatic and economic sanctions for the same violation, they may have the same data generating process.

The cleaning of this dataset leaves us with 283 economic sanctions that were applied against 81 countries between 1950 and 2022 for the objective of democracy or human rights, as coded in GSDB. The first such sanction in GSDB was in 1954 by the US against Guatemala (in conjunction with a US-led coup against the democratically elected President after Guatemala's expropriation of US businesses). The most recent sanctions (in 2022) included US sanctions against Afghanistan, sanctions by Denmark against Burkina Faso (which was previously suspended by ECOWAS for its coup), and by the EU against Poland and Hungary (which have not been suspended for their political backsliding from any IOs).

We measure a sanction's onset, i.e. the first year of the sanction's imposition, because we are interested in whether the international community is more likely to sanction a suspended country, not how long the economic sanction lasts. Thus, we code *sanction* 1 when a third country or IO imposes a sanction against state *s* in year *t*. It is coded 0 in the years before and after the imposition

[101] Whitehead 2021; Whitehead 2024.
[102] Bapat and Morgan 2009; Biersteker, Eckert, and Tourinho 2016; Donno 2010; Hufbauer and Oegg 2000; Maller 2010; Martin 1993; Morgan, Bapat, and Kobayashi 2014; Nooruddin 2002; Nossal 1989; von Soest and Wahman 2015; Lektzian and Regan 2016; von Borzyskowski and Portela 2023.
[103] Syropoulos, Felbermayr, Kirilakha, Yalcin, Yotov 2024.

of economic sanctions. We again use OLS models estimated with country fixed effects and robust standard errors clustered on the state to account for the lack of independence of observations within the same state. We also account for time dependence;[104] all models include cubic polynomials for time since the last economic sanction.

While the GSDB provides wide coverage across years, sanction senders, and targets, one downside of the GSDB is that it does not record the start date of sanctions. This is relevant because the timing of an IO suspension versus other subsequent sanctions is important to our argument. Since it is not possible to clean the sanctions data for timing based on information in the GSDB, we address this by using the lagged explanatory variable (*suspension for political backsliding, lagged*) as an alternative to the contemporaneous *suspension* indicator. The lagged measure is more appropriate and conservative here, as a significant correlation would indicate that suspension influences sanctions imposition in the next year, and it may indeed take third countries and other international organizations a few months to impose their own sanctions.

We include various control variables. The baseline specification (columns 1 and 5) includes the explanatory variable of interest (a suspension measure as noted above), the indicator of *political backsliding*, and country fixed effects. In the next specification (columns 2 and 6), we add common drivers of sanctions:[105] *civil conflict intensity*, *international conflict intensity*, *democracy*, *trade dependence*, *allied with P5* (one of the five permanent members in the UN Security Council), and *UNGA voting affinity with the US*.[106] These factors can variously motivate more sanctions on targets, or insulate potential targets from international pressure. For example, alliances with UNSC members or affinity with the US capture geopolitical interests of potential sanction senders, who may be less likely to target a country if they are also allied with it. The next models (columns 3 and 7) add drivers of suspension and backsliding that may also influence economic sanctions for violations of democracy/human rights (including *oil and gas value per capita*, *allied with regional power*, *age of democracy*, *number of parties*, and *political system*). Again, all control variables are lagged by one year. Finally, models in columns 4 and 8 add year fixed effects to account for common temporal shocks on all countries.

The results are in Table 7.2 and support Hypothesis 7.3 that ceteris paribus, IO suspensions make follow-on economic sanctions by other actors in the international community more likely. The estimates in Table 7.2 show that the coefficients on suspension are consistently positive and statistically significant, regardless of whether the contemporaneous or the lagged suspension variable is used as a predictor. That is, being suspended this year or having been suspended in the

[104] Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998; Carter and Signorino 2010. We choose this specification and do not include a lagged dependent variable because sanction (like election to the UNSC) is a binary indicator and thus unlike PRS or human rights scores that have levels/continuous values each year that are best predicted by last year's value. Modeling time dependence is a common approach in sanctions research (see, e.g. Murdie and Peksen 2013; Peksen and Peterson 2016).
[105] UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, version 23.1.
[106] Adapted from von Borzyskowski and Portela 2023. See also Beardsley and Schmidt 2012; Allen 2005, 2008; Brooks 2002; Drezner 2011: 104; Kaempfer, Lowenberg, and Mertens 2004; Lektzian and Souva 2007; Major 2012; Peksen 2019; Peksen and Petersen 2016.

previous year are associated with a higher likelihood of economic sanctions being doled out by other actors.

Table 7.3: Effect of IO Suspensions on Economic Sanctions by other Actors for Democracy and Human Rights, 1950-2022

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Suspension for political backsliding	0.567	0.594	0.588	0.590				
	(0.076)***	(0.108)***	(0.109)***	(0.098)***				
Political Backsliding	0.016	0.013	0.017	0.018				
	(0.006)***	(0.008)*	(0.010)*	(0.008)**				
Suspension for political backsliding, lagged					0.234	0.205	0.193	0.190
					(0.063)***	(0.091)**	(0.092)**	(0.092)**
Political backsliding, lagged					0.019	0.018	0.023	0.025
					(0.006)***	(0.008)**	(0.011)**	(0.011)**
Civil war intensity		0.029	0.024	0.025		0.029	0.025	0.026
		(0.007)***	(0.008)***	(0.008)***		(0.008)***	(0.008)***	(0.008)***
Int'l conflict intensity		0.001	-0.001	-0.001		0.002	0.000	0.001
		(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Trade dependence, lagged and logged		-0.011	-0.011	-0.012		-0.012	-0.013	-0.014
		(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.012)		(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Democracy, lagged		-0.002	-0.003	-0.003		-0.001	-0.002	-0.002
		(0.001)**	(0.001)***	(0.001)***		(0.001)*	(0.001)**	(0.001)**
Allied with P5, lagged		-0.002	0.002	0.004		-0.004	0.004	0.005
		(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.012)		(0.007)	(0.014)	(0.014)
UNGA voting affinity with US		-0.002	0.010	0.009		-0.003	0.008	0.006
		(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.007)		(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Oil and gas value per capita, lagged and logged			0.002	0.002			0.002	0.002
			(0.001)	(0.001)			(0.002)	(0.001)
Allied with regional power, lagged			-0.003	-0.007			-0.007	-0.011
			(0.009)	(0.010)			(0.009)	(0.010)
Age of democracy, lagged and logged			0.003	0.003			0.003	0.004
			(0.004)	(0.004)			(0.005)	(0.005)
Number of parties, lagged and logged			0.002	0.005			0.004	0.008
			(0.009)	(0.009)			(0.010)	(0.010)
Political system			-0.001	-0.000			-0.001	-0.001
			(0.011)	(0.009)			(0.012)	(0.012)
Observations	11138	6010	4909	4909	10992	6010	4909	4909
R-squared	0.124	0.169	0.192	0.202	0.083	0.111	0.129	0.139
Cubic polynomials of time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country fixed effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year fixed effects	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓

Results of OLS models estimating the effect of suspension for political backsliding from democratically committed IOs on Democracy/Human Rights Sanctions. Coefficient estimates are displayed with robust standard errors clustered on countries in parentheses. Country and year fixed effects, and measures for time dependence are included as indicated but not shown. Statistical significance is denoted * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

For robustness, we replicate these models in a number of ways. For an alternate independent variable, we use the (logged) number of suspensions for backsliding (lagged depending on the model); this yields substantively quite similar insights. For model specification, we alternatively use logit models to better account for the binary nature of sanctions imposition, matching analyses for a more balanced dataset, and two-stage sample selection (Heckman) models to account for the non-random targeting of certain countries. For matching analyses, we use two variants: either matching on the variables from the baseline specification (i.e. columns 1 and 5: country, backsliding, and years since last sanction) or matching on the variables from columns 2 and 6 (adding drivers of sanctions). Then we replicate the models from Table 7.3 on the more balanced

and pruned/smaller datasets. These checks leave the substantive interpretation of results unaffected (see Appendix).

For the Heckman models, the model specification for predicting political backsliding in the first stage is identical to Chapter 6 Table 6.1 stage 1 (and also similar to our earlier work).[107] Here, the aggregate measure *Political backsliding* is the outcome in the first stage (sample selection). Then, conditional on that sample, we estimate in the second stage the effect of IO suspension on economic sanctions. In this second stage, we again replicate the models from Table 7.3.[108] These model estimates (see Appendix) indicate that single stage models (as presented in Table 7.3) are sufficient.[109]

An example of an IO suspension triggering economic sanctions by other IOs is evidenced in the case of Mauritania in 2008-9. On 6 August 2008, soldiers deposed Mauritania's President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi in a coup d'état after he announced the dismissal of four army generals.[110] The coup was swiftly condemned by the African Union which called for a "return to constitutional order and the re-establishment without delay of the institutions that the Mauritanian people have democratically chosen."[111] On 9 August, the African Union suspended Mauritania's membership with the chair of the AU stating that the suspension would last until a constitutional government was restored. On 15 September 2008 the European Union opened consultations with Mauritania because the coup had violated Article 96 of the revised Cotonou Agreement (which institutionalizes EU relations with African countries).[112]

As talks progressed, the EU was not satisfied with Mauritania's progress but "in a spirit of openness to dialogue, and being aware of the complexity of the political situation in Mauritania," the EU kept consultations open. It was clear that the EU wanted to take local and cultural factors into consideration as it escalated its punishments. AU representatives continued to visit Mauritania several times in the months ahead, but witnessed little progress. As a result, they set up an International Consultative Group on Mauritania to allow the international community to coordinate and take harmonized positions on Mauritania's return to constitutional order. This AU-led Consultative Group was comprised of all the major external partners of Mauritania including the AU, EU, the United Nations, the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

[107] von Borzyskowski and Vabulas 2019a. From the first stage in Chapter 6, we omit the three indicators of backlash (nationalism, globalization, globalization change). From the second stage, we omit the drivers for backsliding since these are already included in the first stage. However, results do not depend on this decision.
[108] We omit year fixed effects (columns 4 and 8) and some of the controls from columns 3 and 7 which were not influential, which eases model convergence issues in this more complex two-stage setup.
[109] Wald tests of the correlation coefficient (that is, the probability that rho = 0) are not significant, indicating that the error terms of the first- and second-stage equations are not related.
[110] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/06/1
[111] https://www.france24.com/en/20080810-african-union-suspends-mauritania-mauritania-au
[112] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eudn/2009/472/annexes/2009-04-06

and the Organization of Francophone States (OIF).[113] These other international partners clearly looked to the AU for leadership, what some observers of this particular case called the AU's "norm entrepreneurship."[114]

In December 2008, after little progress in Mauritania, the AU's Peace and Security Council said that it would "impose targeted sanctions against all those, both civilian and military, whose activities are designed to maintain the unconstitutional status quo in Mauritania, if, by 5 February 2009, constitutional order is not restored, and to seize the UN Security Council to confer a universal character on these measures."[115] The AU recognized the role of its suspension and subsequent actions in possibly triggering further IO sanctions. As international pressure mounted, the military junta released the ousted President from house arrest and by early January 2009 the junta and its civilian supporters agreed to hold new presidential elections by June 2009. Nonetheless, they did not prohibit members of the junta from running in the election[116] and following a January 2009 meeting, the AU and its partners in the International Consultative Group on Mauritania agreed that the political forces in Mauritania "did not meet the requirements of the international community regarding the return to constitutional order through a consensual process."[117] On 6 February 2009, the AU proceeded to impose sanctions which included the denial of visas, travel restrictions, and the freezing of assets.[118]

Following the AU's suspension and sanctions, the EU ruled on 24 February 2009 that consultations with Mauritania had failed to achieve results, and that they would also invoke sanctions. It is important to note that these "EU measures happened within the framework of the International Contact Group (ICG) set up by the AU on both countries, as a measure to complement its own efforts."[119] Analysts go on to say that "This is not to say that the EU could not have imposed these sanctions unilaterally. Indeed, it could have and this would have had an impact, but combined with the stance of the AU and that of the region gave the sanctions greater weight."[120] In research on the role of regional suspensions/sanctions triggering broader international punishments, Souaré remarks that "while national, regional and international partners play an important role in pressurizing unconstitutional regimes, AU's policy gives a legitimating cover….Western countries…are often encouraged in this stance when they are on the same page with the AU or other African organizations. This helps them avoid any accusation of 'neocolonialism' by targeted African countries."[121] We see here an example of how an initial regional IO suspension facilitated broader economic sanctions by other international actors.

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[113] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/mauritania-what-way-out-of-the-political-crisis-in-the-country
[114] Souaré 2014.
[115] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/mauritania-what-way-out-of-the-political-crisis-in-the-country
[116] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/mauritania-what-way-out-of-the-political-crisis-in-the-country
[117] https://issafrica.org/iss-today/mauritania-what-way-out-of-the-political-crisis-in-the-country
[118] https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL6035155/
[119] Souaré 2014:90.
[120] Souaré 2014:90.
[121] Souaré 2014:90.

This supports the argument that IO suspensions facilitate subsequent economic sanctions by other international actors. IO suspension serves as a signal of stigmatization by peers which can legitimate and endorse further action in the international community, increasing the collective response (and costs) on violators. In other words, suspension can play a role in a layered kind of punishment by the international community, including through their catalyzing role on economic sanctions.

7.5 Consequences of IO Suspensions for Domestic Institutional Change

In this section, we test the last kind of potential consequence of IO suspensions: whether suspension makes it more likely that a violator state halts or changes its domestic political behavior. Chapter 2 argued that suspension is a punishment strategy to negotiate domestic institutional change. Is it effective in this regard?

Recall that Hypothesis 7.4 stated that IO suspension should increase the chance that a violator state halts or marginally changes its egregious domestic behavior but that the state's efforts likely focus on shallow actions, not fundamental changes. This is mostly because while there are reputational and follow-on consequences (as detailed above), there are also strong incentives for leaders to maintain their hold on power.

Unfortunately, no comprehensive data exist across most states and years for some of the shallow actions we may expect, such as installing a transitional government, lifting curfews/emergency rule, promising to revise the constitution, or passing domestic legislation. We are therefore not able to systematically test whether shallow changes occur in quantitative ways, but we do investigate these sorts of "window-dressing" techniques in the case studies in Chapter 8.

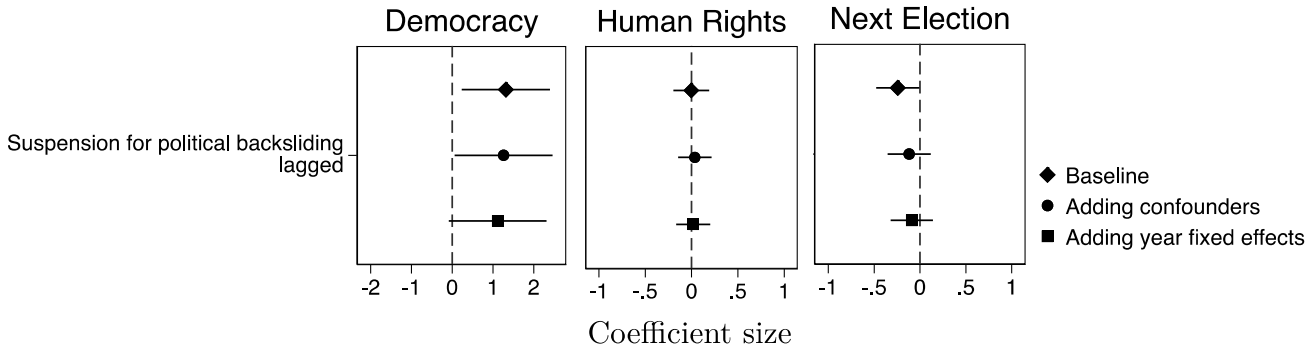
We are, however, able to quantitatively test whether fundamental domestic reforms take place. Because our focus is on suspension after political backsliding, we measure three domestic institutional outcomes here: *democracy* (coded -10 to +10 using polity2 data), *human rights* (coded 1-5 using PTS data, and reversing the original scale so that higher values mean more respect for human rights), and *years until the next election* (VDem data, logged). The limitation of these data are that they are recorded yearly, often capturing 12-month period averages. This makes it less likely for us to pick up small changes that do happen during the year.

For each outcome of interest, we use the baseline specification and also account for potential confounders (variables that may affect both suspension and the outcomes). For the baseline, we control (as before) for the respective lagged dependent variable (i.e. of *democracy*, *human rights*, or *years since the next election*), political backsliding, and include country fixed effects. For potential confounders, we include *oil and gas per capita*, *GDP per capita* and *GDP growth*, *age of democracy*, *number of parties*, and *political system*.[122] All control variables are lagged by a year.

[122] We omit alliances here since there is strong evidence on regime type influencing alliance choices, but not that alliances drive regime type.

The explanatory variable is the lagged suspension indicator. Our reading of cases suggests that it not realistic for domestic institutional changes to happen within a short time after suspension; democracy and human rights improvements usually take some time to take hold. Thus, the *suspension lagged* should be more informative. If suspension is associated with improvements in democracy and human rights, we would expect a positive coefficient on the suspension indicator in democracy and human rights models, and a negative coefficient in models of election timeframes, i.e. shortening the time until the next election in the country.

Figure 7.4: Effect of Suspension on Domestic Institutional Change, 1945/76-2022



The results in Figure 7.4 show no robust evidence that fundamental changes in domestic political institutions (as measured here) manifest in the ways intended by the suspending IO. The estimates are quite mixed with no one consistently robust result. For the outcome of democracy, the coefficient on lagged *suspension* is consistently positive, and statistically significant in two of the models. This suggests that suspension is associated with improved democracy in the year after suspension but the coefficient is only borderline statistically significant ($p<0.10$) when adding year fixed effects. Human rights seem un-changed by suspension, as the coefficient is small and not significant in any model. When predicting the proximity of the next election, the coefficient on IO suspension is consistently negative (as predicted), but it is only significant in the baseline specification (model 1). In the robustness checks with matched data, results are quite similar. Detailed results for Figure 7.4 and for matching are in the Appendix. We also use the (logged and lagged) count of suspensions as an alternative explanatory variable, which results in quite similar – and in the case of election proximity slightly stronger – results. Overall, we thus do not find robust evidence that IO suspension facilitates fundamental domestic reforms, even if this is the purported aim of an IO suspension. The case studies in Chapter 8 shed more light on these dynamics, examining more nuanced developments and some of the "window-dressing" activities that occur in some countries.

Again, we do not find this to be particularly surprising given the many factors that affect a country's level of democracy and human rights and the benefits of holding onto political power domestically. If this diplomatic sanction was highly effective, we might expect it to be used more. Nonetheless, we underscore that this does not mean that suspensions are not effective in nudging governments to reconsider their actions. We can also envision that the suspension might help deter further egregious behavior from occurring, either in that country or neighboring countries by showing that the state is "on watch." Without the suspension, member states might interpret non-

action as a permissive environment for non-compliance. At the very least, then, suspension makes clear the IO's interpretation of the state's behavior.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we theorize and document the consequences of IO suspension for violator states. We build from our foundational theory in Chapter 2 which argues that suspension is a punishment strategy that IOs use to negotiate institutional change. IO member states use suspension as a multilateral diplomatic sanction which can be costly for suspended states because it originates from the member state's chosen community. Based on our theory in Chapter 2, we derive the expectation that suspension will have reputational consequences for the violator state based on two arguments: that IOs act as credible commitment devices and that their information-provision helps provide a seal of approval to outside actors when states join. This means that IO membership can help improve a state's reputation. Conversely, *reneging* on an IO commitment and receiving a seal of *dis*approval in the form of an IO suspension (which can act as a heuristic to outside actors) should diminish a state's reputation. As Chapter 6 argues, suspension can stigmatize a violator state by using the IO's soft power to *label* its egregious behavior, *separate* it from the "in group" of the club, and trigger *status loss*.

Empirically, we provide examples of suspended states' stigma management strategies as evidence that IO suspensions are costly, else states would not engage in these actions. In addition, some suspended states preemptively withdraw from IOs before they can be suspended, in an effort to save face. Suspended states also rhetorically reject and counter IO suspensions as being unfair or based on biased foreign interference.

We also document the consequences of IO suspensions in terms of reputational consequences for the violator state, follow-on economic sanctions by other actors, and domestic institutional changes. Three sets of empirical results support our arguments. The first set of multivariate analyses show that suspension indeed has reputational consequences as indicated by worsened political stability scores and drops in investor confidence. These reputational consequences are stronger for states with more uncertainty (e.g. in anocracies or countries that only sometimes vote with the US in the UNGA), which supports the idea that the heuristic of suspension is a valuable information device to update geopolitical risk analysts' perceptions of a state's reputation. States also face reputational consequences as perceived by foreign governments: the chance of a state being elected as a UNSC NPM decreases the year after an IO suspension.

In the second set of analyses, we show that IO suspensions after political backsliding legitimize and facilitate follow-on economic sanctions from others actors in the international community. Suspension can thus act as an endorsement for further sanctions, creating a layered penalty for political backsliding. This means that even if a suspension in isolation does not necessarily cause economic harm for the suspended state, it can facilitate other multilateral punishments that have more "bite."

The third set of analyses do not find robust evidence that suspended states are more likely to change domestic political institutions such as their level of democracy, human rights ratings, or time to

next election. IO suspension (and the consequences listed above) may not be sufficient to get a state to adjust their domestic political institutions since the benefits of violating rules are likely high; backsliding and repression is often used as a tool to gain power or stay in power. In other words, while the IO may use suspension to push for change (or to clearly communicate that IO rules/expectations have been broken), suspension may fall short in accomplishing these goals. As we show in the case studies in Chapter 8, the domestic changes that follow suspension are instead quite shallow and not fundamental democratic or liberal institutional reforms. These findings align with previous research showing that leaders may engage in "window dressing" strategies to court IO members and regain membership even when deep change has not occurred.

The reputational consequences of suspension that do occur confirm the importance of multilateral diplomatic sanctions, a heretofore underappreciated punishment strategy. While previous scholars have noted the reputational importance of membership in IOs, we are some of the first to quantify what it means to lose the reputational benefit of belonging. Moreover, the findings in this chapter underscore the importance of the signaling mechanism of sanctions and the need for scholars to assess more than just the material (economic) consequences of sanctions.[123]

The chapter also underscores how IO suspension can play a role in defending international norms. This directly ties to a key overarching argument of the book: that IO exit is not necessarily a sign of a collapsing international order but is instead a negotiating tactic to (perhaps counterintuitively) strengthen that order. Indeed, the counterfactual to suspension from a reputational perspective is that violator states may stay in the IO and obstruct its objectives, undermining the key values of the club. Allowing violator states to remain in could also affect the reputations of other member states or the IO itself because of a similar logic regarding "the company states keep."[124]

While we have made the case that IO suspensions can contribute to norm defense by (somewhat) holding violators accountable, it is worth considering the possibility that under some conditions, IO suspensions may instead contribute to norm erosion if an IO suspends a country then lets it back in without significant domestic institutional change. We reiterate then, that at best, the consequences of membership suspension show that IOs are weak commitment devices.

Future research should therefore go beyond analyzing the reputational consequences of the suspended states to also look at the effects of suspension on the *IO's* reputation and its perceived legitimacy.[125] Future research could also evaluate other country-level reputational metrics to assess

[123] Klotz (1999) makes a similar case in her work on South Africa's diplomatic sanctions during apartheid rule.
[124] Gray 2009.
[125] The empirical challenge is assembling a large-scale dataset on IO legitimacy across IOs, states, and time, capturing perceptions of IOs. The World Values Survey (WVS) poses survey questions to citizens about their trust, or confidence, in international organizations. The downside to these data is that citizens may not be the right evaluator of IO legitimacy. Moreover, the WVS offers little continuity in the coverage of IOs and only includes a limited number of IOs in each survey. See Sommerer et al. (2022) and Agné, Sommerer and Angeler (2020) for emerging IO legitimacy data that captures media coverage on critical statements by governmental representatives, civil society, and other IOs.

the robustness of the consequences of IO suspensions. Anecdotal evidence, for example, suggests that suspended countries may find it more difficult to obtain their country accreditation from the UN, another measure of a country's perceived credibility/reputation.[126] Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that suspended countries may be more likely to suffer little embarrassments that are indicative of their squashed reputations, like not being invited to diplomatic side meetings at the UN. A systematic examination of these conjectures would be informative for an even broader understanding of the consequences of IO suspensions.

[126] Authors' interview with ECOWAS official, February 2024.