



BACHELOR THESIS

The Crimean Crisis: A Case Study of the role of EU's sanctions in International Relations

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Abstract

This thesis offers a critical analysis of the effectiveness of European Union's (EU) sanctions, especially "smart" sanctions, in relation to the alternative use of diplomatic measures on the extreme case *the Crimean crisis*. It is still poorly understood which underlying reason might lead to sanctions in the EU context. Thus, it raises the question to what extent the EU's goals achieve their second goals during the implementation of sanctions – to contain threat against Russia. At the same time, they try to maintain their power on the international stage. Considering the given context, the following research question arises: *To what extent are EU's sanctions a more effective instrument compared to diplomatic instruments to achieve the articulated goals in international relations? – Case Crimean crisis*. In order to make an analysis, the theory of sanction, their typology and characteristics will be explored first, the EU sanction's goal will be mentioned, and consequently, the effects of those sanctions. For this study, a systematic literature review (SLR) will be conducted in the databases JSTOR, and Web of Science. This review includes publications from the years 2014 to 2019. Surely, the quality of those articles will be critically analyzed. This study should contribute to the already existing findings on the effects of sanctions, especially in comparison to diplomacy and to motivate and prepare for similar future studies.

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List of Abbreviations

AA	<i>Association Agreement</i>
CFSP	<i>Common Foreign and Security Policy</i>
DPR	<i>Donetsk People's Republic</i>
EEAS	<i>European External Action Service</i>
ENI	<i>European Neighborhood Instrument</i>
EU	<i>European Union</i>
G8	<i>Group of Eight</i>
G7	<i>Group of Seven</i>
GDP	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
HR	<i>High Representatives of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</i>
IR	<i>International Relations</i>
JSTOR	<i>Journal Storage</i>
LPR	<i>Luhansk People's Republic</i>
Minsk I	<i>Minsk Agreement (2014)</i>
Minsk II	<i>Minsk Agreement (2015, Revised)</i>
MS	<i>Member States</i>
NATO	<i>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</i>
OECD	<i>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</i>
SLR	<i>Systematic Literature Review</i>
SWIFT	<i>Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
US	<i>United States of America</i>

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1. Introduction

In the field of conflicts within the international context, sanctions represent a middle ground between mere diplomatic appeasement and open combat. The use of sanctions is gaining importance, especially since the Crimean crisis sparked one of the most controversial events in the current global diplomatic debate. This continuing crisis has influenced the EU's as well as the Western and Russian foreign and security policies. Historically, Ukraine's national identity has been questioned because this country was torn always between East and West. However, the origin of the current crisis can be traced to the year 2013, when the conflict erupted after the Ukrainian government decided to cancel its Association Agreement (AA) with the EU. This led to serious consequences for the former Ukrainian President Yanukovich and his government but also for the balance of power in Eastern Europe. This action triggered political tensions between the West (EU and US) and Russia. The EU and the US subsequently have accused Russia of supporting Ukrainian separatists, actively participating in hostilities and annexing¹ Crimea (see appendix). Since March 2014, they responded with a variety of sanctions directed against Russia and vice versa. After the Ukrainian revolution in Kyiv, Russia annexed the southeastern province of Crimea. In response, the EU imposed "smart" sanctions on businesspeople, politicians, and various financial institutions from Russia. Russia retaliated in August 2014 by banning the lion's share of agriculture imports from the EU and the US (Oxenstierna, 2018, 8f.).

This crisis has rapidly become a geopolitical space for a power struggle between the great powers of our time. This led to a complex two-level struggle in Ukraine, in which the regional distinctions (West- pro-Western, East- pro-Russian) were established on the national and international level the power struggles of the EU, the US and Russia were grounded (Figes, 2013, 59f.). Under these circumstances, many scientists could think of a new Cold War scenario, which has the danger of changing the world order completely (Legvold, 2014).

The EU's main goal is to create united Europe, in particular, including the Eastern states, specifically demonstrated by the enlargement of Eastern states in 2004 (Asmus, 2008, 96 ff.). Therefore, it is necessary to examine why the EU has decided to act in this way during the crisis. To be precise, it is essential to determine to what extent the EU did respond correctly by

¹ According to the international law, an "annexation" means the violent appropriation of land against the will of one country by another state. The extent to which this was the case in Crimea is not entirely clear since many different scientists have been classified this action as a "secession" because independence is confirmed by a referendum (Bittner, 2018, 37). Thus, the correct use of this action is uncontroversial. But since the term "annexation" is mostly used in the majority of scientific literature within this context, I will use it in this work.

imposing economic sanctions on Russia, or are there other alternatives, for instance, the organization of negotiating forums that were not taken deeply into account. After several years of ongoing crisis when a variety of actors got involved throughout the crisis, it becomes relevant to focus on the EU's role in the conflict, since this international organization serves as a mediator between the geopolitical power struggle between Russia and the US. At the same time, the EU must keep its position in the international power context and its political interests in mind to achieve an effective tool to achieve Russia's behavior change. The research which will be conducted is built upon analyzing these circumstances, and the effectiveness of sanctions compared to EU diplomacy.

The research question can be read as follows: *To what extent are EU's sanctions a more effective instrument compared to diplomatic instruments to achieve the articulated goals in international relations? – Case Crimean crisis*

In answering this question, this thesis examines the extent to which the following propositions are reflected in the literature.

Proposition 1: The EU increasingly uses smart sanctions due to the balance of power motives.

Proposition 2: The EU decreases its use of diplomacy due to it sees the opportunity for a quick and effective increase in power only in the use of smart sanctions.

Sanctions are an important tool that aims toward a change of behavior in the target countries. However, the question remains whether sanctions fulfill their objectives and are, therefore, a sensible option in foreign policy. Important to emphasize is that the EU's sanctions were installed in forms of waves. The primary imposition of sanctions from the European Union came with the Crimean referendum and acquisition of Ukrainian territory. On 17 March 2014, the EU Council adopted the first wave of sanctions that considered restriction for Crimean politicians to visit EU countries and the freezing of assets that were controlled by these. It follows a stop list to which the EU added Russian state officials and military personnel. The next wave occurred in July 2014, which includes wider economic sanctions against Russian companies specializing in the oil and financial industry, prohibited infrastructural investments in Crimea, and any forms of economic cooperation with the region. Sanctions are annually prolonged, and the list of companies and people is increasing. Although sectoral sanctions bear certain positive effects in the national economy and agricultural sphere of Russia, it harmed the

financial sphere and banking, technologies, and energy sphere. The role of sanctions is being questioned and compared to a better alternative, which is diplomacy.

This thesis deals with a current topic in the geopolitical debate that is still an ongoing conflict that has potentially been lasting consequences for geopolitics. According to Cohen, a fear has occurred within this global context, by threatening the imagination that Russia could become once again a strong power as it was the case during its Soviet time (Cohen, 2014). If this might happen the change in global power distribution can lead to a serious conflict between Russia and the EU and, thus, affect various state's positions within the international system, similar to the Cold-War scenario (Diyarbakirlioglu. Simsons, 2019, 7f.). Finally, it remains uncertain whether the sanctions will achieve their initial goal: the change in Russian politics as the conflict over Ukraine. Additionally, the global networking of this conflict probably has an impact on processes that may affect world events for many months, if not years. Thus, it is important to gain knowledge of the individual interests and goals of the opponents of the conflict and allies to get the best possible understanding of the assessment of the current situation. Hence, it is crucial to understand the adversary aims towards other states in general because by observing if there is an existence of an underlying reason for the EU to decide to use economic sanctions, another precaution measure for similar conflicts can emerge in the future.

2. Background on the Crimean crisis

The Crimean crisis had its origin many centuries ago. First, it is important to note that as early as the 18th century, Crimea was conquered by Catherine the Great, who replaced the original population by Russian farmers, but Ukrainians had not been part of this colonization process (Jobst, 2007). In 1944, Stalin took the collaboration with the German occupiers as an excuse to initiate large-scale ethnic cleansing, to downgrade Crimea to a normal administrative area. As a result of the Stalinist terror, this region became an exclusively populated by Russian (Baberowski, 2012, 449 f.). After Stalin's death, the Kremlin "gave as a kind of a present" Crimea to Ukraine in 1954, in a time when the De-Stalinization begins initiated by the former Russian President Nikita Khrushchev, originally from Ukraine (Yekelchyk, 2007, 154 ff.). Unfortunately, this did not make the peninsula more Ukrainian than it was before since the majority of its population remained Russian. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and the previously 15 connected states got the status of an independent state. A year later, Crimea was declared as the autonomous Republic within Ukraine with its own administrative, financial, and rule of law principles. On May 31, 1997, Russia and Ukraine signed a friendship agreement in

which the recognition of the borders was agreed upon. This was linked to the stationing of the Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol in Crimea, which was contractually regulated on May 28, 1997 (Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet 1997).

The Euromaidan-movement

This protest movement, known as Euromaidan, took place from November 21, 2013, until February 27, 2014, and was a response to the decision to cancel the plan to enter the AA with the EU. These events led to a deep division in the country. In Western Ukraine, protestors favored an alliance with the EU and the West in general. Citizens demanded an improvement in the economic situation, as well as, an improvement in the civil rights situation, a fairer justice system, and a basic understanding of democracy. They hoped to achieve these goals by moving closer to the EU. In the East of the country and especially in Crimea, the predominantly Russian-born population favored the partnership with Russia. Borders were sealed off and checked. The many Western States accused Russia's behavior contrary to international law since a Western review of this event claims that there has been no credible justification for such an action. This deliberate scientists, policymakers, and many other international actors to speak about Russia in the role of aggression for Ukraine (Allison, 2017, 525).

A referendum on the 16th March 2014 in the Crimea was supposed to clarify how the autonomous Republic should proceed. Residents could choose between two options: a) reunification with Russia, or b) restoration of the 1992 constitution and the status of Crimea as part of Ukraine. A majority of 97% chose the first option (CBS, 2014). Even so, the EU and the other Western states have so far not recognized this result. They allege the referendum results were manipulated by the aggressive military presence, lack of reporting, and donations from Russia. The autonomy of the Crimea was violated by Russia. After the annexation of the Crimea region, sanctions were called for and introduced to protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine in the case of the Western nations or to respond to sanctions against oneself in the case of Russia. In an escalation time when separatists proclaiming the founding of independent nations, sanctions were used to de-escalate through economic pressure. However, it leaves open whether the use of economic sanctions and later smart sanctions implemented from the EU showed a more effective result than it could be achieved by diplomatic acts.

Status of the Crimean crisis

Sanctions seem to have become a permanent tool in the relationship between the EU, the US, and Russia. Sanctions are an expression of the most acute crisis between Russia and the West

since the end of the Cold War and reveal the disruption of the European security order. Initially, they should help to contain the war in the Donbass region but did not prove suitable to force the return of Crimea to Ukraine and the implementation of the Minsk agreements (Hofer, 2020,4). They are also blocking part of the peace attempts in Ukraine. In the six years of the implementation of sanctions, the measures have had only a broad impact on the crisis.

3. About Sanctions

To differentiate sanctions from other measures, it is necessary to define the concept of sanctions. However, this turns out to be more difficult than expected because there is no consensus in the literature. Depending on the focus of the work and the views of the authors, different definitions are formulated and boundaries are made. The original translation of the word, the Latin word “sancire”- punish, determine, suggests that the subject is the use of the coercive measure. Even such measures are characterized by conceptual vagueness; they can be found at almost every level of the use of the scientific language. Therefore, sociologists assume a very broad definition: sanctions are “social responses to behavior that deviates from the norm.” In political science, the concept of sanctions is very inductively and narrowly defined by the classification of the various types, like economic sanctions, trade embargoes. Due to the not commonly agreed definition of this term, International Relations (IR) scholars assume that sanctions are a “deliberate, government-inspired withdrawal” (Hufbauer et al., 2007, 3).

In the EU jargon, sanctions are also called “restrictive measures”, within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). According to Haass (1998) and Galtung (1967), sanctions can be described as the following. Sanctions are economic or political measures initiated by one or more state(s) (senders) that are directed against one or more state(s) (tender/target) and withdraw certain values from them. The aim is to persuade the target (s) to follow particular governmental norms.

In the European Union context, sanctions can be equated with the term *restrictive measures* and are defined as follows:

“Sanctions are one of the EU’s tools to promote the objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): peace, democracy, and the respect for the rule of law, human rights, and international law. They are always part of a comprehensive policy approach involving political dialogue and complementary efforts.” (Council of the European Union, 2020)

However, sanctions are means, not an end product of foreign policy (Groves, 2007, 1). They should not replace the strategy, thus, incentivizing behavior should only serve as a part of an overall claim (Dolizde, 2015, 14).

3.1 Characteristics of sanctions

Sanctions can also occur in various forms (Caruso 2003). These characteristics are presented in Table 1 below. As is evident in Table 1, sanctions need a sender – a state or organization implementing the sanctions and a tender or target – a state or organization that is sanctioned by another state or another organization. This instrument using economic measures and diplomatic pressure to achieve a political goal: coerce a target state into changing its behavior (Tostensen, Bull 2002, 380).

Table 1: Characteristics of sanctions

Characteristic	Description
Unilateral and multilateral sanction	If sanctions come from a single sender country, they are referred to be unilateral. If there are several sender countries, the sanctions are described as multilateral.
Individual and collective sanctions	Collective sanctions are aimed at the target nation as a whole. This also includes groups and people who are not explicitly politically accountable. Individual sanctions, on the other hand, are aimed specifically at responsible individuals from the target nation.
Internal and external sanctions	Internal sanctions are triggered by changes occurring within the target nation. External sanctions arise in connection with the behavior pattern of the target country when interacting with other nations.
Negative and positive sanctions	Negative sanctions are based on the principle of harming the target country and thus forcing them to cooperate. The

	opposite, positive sanctions are based on the prospect of possible donations to promote cooperation.
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3.2 Sanctions- A typology

Sanctions can be divided into three different types that are shown in Table 2 below. When differentiating among types of sanctions, a distinction is made between what value should be withheld from the target and which groups sectors of the economy are affected. This thesis focuses mainly on smart sanctions since with the concrete comparison to diplomatic instruments, because I expect to find clear differences that might not be recognizable if I would choose economic sanctions as a subject of comparison.

Table 2: Types of sanctions

Sanction type	Operation	Goal
economic sanctions	Economic sanctions impose import duties on goods, block the export of certain goods from the target country, as well as block specified imported goods. Financial sanctions and trade sanctions are subordinate to economic sanctions.	The goal is to bring political change through the general damage to the economy of the recipient country (Lektzian et al., 2003)
<i>trade sanctions</i>	Since trade sanctions are a subcategory of economic sanctions, it is directly to services or goods (Galtung 1967) but also to change trading conditions (Haass 1998). Thus, it ranges from an increase in tariffs to a partial	The purpose is to reduce the demand for a product from the target and thus, to minimize the target's income (Caruso 2003). In practice, certain technologies (e.g. dual-use goods) or fuels are often

	blocking of trade and occurs in different levels, scopes, and forms. Relevant terms are <i>embargoes</i> that contain restrictions on the export of one or more goods and <i>boycotts</i> that block on the import of one or more goods from the target state (Pape 1997).	the targets of import or export restrictions (Hufbauer et al. 1990, Haass 2003).
<i>financial sanctions</i>	The second subcategory of economic sanctions is directed against the fiscal system, assets of the target state, and thus the currency (Lektzian et al. 2003). Financial sanctions can ban on investments, freeze bank accounts, and stop development aid as well as subsidies (Hufbauer et al. 1990, Haass 1998, Caruso 2003).	Financial sanctions focuses against the flow of capital to the target country.
diplomatic sanctions	This type mostly focuses on non-recognition (e.g. non-recognition of the political affiliation of the Crimea to Russia). Additionally, diplomatic sanctions can result in the interruption of diplomatic relations and the expulsion of ambassadors (Galtung, 1967).	The aim is to demonstrate a clear attitude, on an international level to take a position in a crisis by using the signal power of this type of sanctions to stigmatize the target internationally (Kaemepfer et al. 2007).
“smart” sanctions	This type was developed because an increasing ineffectiveness has been noticed in the two types above.	The goal is to target individuals such as the target’s political elite while protecting the target civil

	It consists of three groups of measures: first, diplomatic sanctions; second, individual sanctions such as travel restrictions; and third, selective economic sanctions that affect selected sectors, and thus, it is classified as the most modern option in the sanctions variation selection.	population (Kaemepfer et al. 2007, Lektzian et al. 2003).
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3.3 Literature review

The political science literature on sanctions can roughly differentiate between an application-oriented and a quantitative-analytical standpoint. While the application-oriented scientists are attempting, among other things, using case studies and strategy papers to improve the effectiveness of the instrument for the actors, the analysts rely on the success rate, sanction frequency, and general interaction patterns (Poeschke, 2003, 4).

The main concern in the sanction's literature is to investigate the question of whether the sanctions work at all. Opinions regarding the pros and cons of their effectiveness have a wide range: from supporters of sanctions, who despite some reservations do not doubt the potential success of this instrument (Hufbauer et. al, 1990) up to opponents who assess the potential for success of the sanctioning agent more negatively (Barber, 1979, 368 f.). Successful sanctions are commonly measured in terms of the degree to which the sanctioned country has implemented the desired policy changes. In this context, several qualitative studies emerged, particularly between the 1960s and the 1990s (Barber, 1979, 370f., Doxey, 1987). Barber (1979 and Doxey (1987) considered scientific pioneers on the question of the political importance of sanctions. Hence, Doxey (1987) takes a pessimistic stance on the question of its effectiveness and thus doubts the targeted success of this instrument while underlying that any assessment of the efficacy of sanctions needs to be linked to their purposes, no matter if these purposes are publicly expressed or not.

James Barber (1979) ignores the last two objectives, however, concerning the initial goals, he concludes that "sanctions have not been successful in achieving their primary

objectives". Thus, there is a division between different forms of objections. First, there are primary goals that correlate positively with the behavior of the recipient of the sanction, and that involves changing the behavior of the country concerned. The secondary goals are related to the behavior of the sanctioned user and are aimed at reducing domestic political pressure and satisfying interest groups in his state. Finally, the tertiary goals, which focus on the structures of the international system, its norm, and behavior, should be mentioned. They are supposed to be influenced by the constitution of deterrent examples.

Sanctions may also backfire. In addition to the economic aspects, sanctions research puts forward that economic isolation does not lead, as desired, to strengthen the opposition, which could contribute to policy changes in the target country. On the contrary, it is even weakened. The tense situation in the sanctioned state isolates the opposition forces and increases the cohesion of the rest of the population in favor of the leadership. This chain of effects is known as the "*rally 'round the flag-effect*" (Poeschke, 2003, 106). Solidarity with their government stands in the foreground, in that form that the society of the target country supports its position according to the crisis. Such political integration stylizes the sanctioned country as a victim of an outside world hostile to it, which in turn strengthens the government's resistance to the sanction.

Hufbauer et al. attempt to measure the impact of several decisive political and economic variables on the success of the sanctions and to separate the effective from the failed economic sanctions using a success score. The team of authors analyzes a data collection from the years 1914 to 1990 consisting of 120 sanction cases. They differentiate between five important foreign policy goals that are pursued by sanctions and against which their success is to be measured. The success of the sanctions also depends on the scope of the measure, the degree of international participation, and the economic situation of the target country. The results presented here make it clear, in sum, that measuring the success of sanctions is fraught with numerous difficulties, which are mainly caused by the countless influencing factors that are relevant for the assessment of sanctions. This points to the second deficit of sanctions research: *Political science has so far been able to develop little generally accepted criteria for treating and assessing the question of the effectiveness of a sanction's regime.* Hence, it is necessary to have a method of assessing the effectiveness of sanctions as a means of foreign policy.

3.3.1 Literature review on previous studies

Since this research is not the first of this kind, this section deals with existing studies and its results that have been taken. First of all, it should be noted that most of the studies examine the effectiveness of economic sanctions in light of the target's economic vulnerability. The recent study of Kholodilin and Netšunajev (2018) examines the impact of sanctions on the real side of the Russian and Euro area economies using a structural vector author regression and adding an intensity-index. Their main finding is that there is weak evidence that GDP in both areas has declined due to sanctions. Thus, the effects of the sanctions are small for the actual effective exchange rate, too.

Alexseev and Hale (2019) go a step further by questioning to what extent economic sanctions may hit back politically and how this situation can lead to increased support of the target regime (*rally 'round the flag-effect*). Indeed, researchers have only recently begun systematically studying sanctions impact on target-state, thus, not all existing backfire mechanisms are known, yet. In their analysis of testing five hypotheses using an experimental design and pooled survey data, they had no evidence of broad sanctions backfire. But there is evidence that sanctions positively impact Russia's president according to his reputation. Nevertheless, the political price that Wladimir Putin had to pay was low compared to the massive political benefits that arise due to the Crimea annexation. Besides, they speculate about signs of a 'backlash of the better-off' since "smart" sanctions can turn economic well-being from a predictor of opposition into regime support.

Through her studies Oxenstierna contributes an essential achievement to the state of research in this case. In cooperation with Olsson (2015), she analyzes the US sanction, as well as, the EU sanctions against Russia on a qualitative basis. They aim to compare the ideal vision of their goals vis-à-vis how sanctions performed in reality. The main result was that the economic sanctions of both the EU and the US have an impact on the Russian economy in combination with other external factors, however, they have so far not achieved its primary goal – to change Russia's behavior. The study described the following points that pressure Russia: the falling oil price, depreciation of the ruble and weakened terms of trade, and the politicized economic system. Anti-Western propaganda by the authoritarian political system was used to describe sanctions as a threat while making the government less exposed to the full effects of the economic decline. Oxenstierna and Olsson suggest that an exit strategy has to be established to minimize the loss of face, which applies to Russia and to the West.

Thus, there is already a respectable number of studies investigating this case. However, reference is often made to the economic impact and rarely the role of smart sanctions and even less frequently that of diplomacy. Therefore, this again underlines the relevance of this study in this thesis.

3.4 EU diplomacy

This thesis adopts the following working definition for diplomacy:

“...diplomacy highlight ‘the process of dialogue and negotiation by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war’, establishing a tight linkage between diplomacy and state institutions.” (Adler-Nissen, 2014, 660)

Compared to sanctions and military, diplomacy can be classified as the softest foreign policy instrument for achieving the EU’s goal towards third countries (Groves, 2007,7). Since this tool is in line with the EU’s normative values (e.g. human rights, freedom, democracy, rule of law, equality, Merkl, 2018), the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), who is also the Vice- President of the European Commission plays a central role as the person who encourages the protection of these values (Kleistra, van Willigen 2015, 58). Another important institution is the European External Action Service (EEAS) which exists of Council and of Commission officials that support the purpose of the HR. Moreover, the EEAS presents itself as the diplomatic service of the EU that works with foreign policy and external economic relations (Adler-Nissen, 2014, 657).

Throughout the Crimean crisis, the HR has been changed three times. The first HR was Catherine Ashton (2009-2014), followed by Frederica Mogherini (2014-2019), and currently, Josep Borrell Fontelles (2019 -) which shows the lengthy dimension of this crisis (EEAS, 2019). In Ashton’s term some first diplomatic efforts were made with the active participation in the organization of the “Normandy format”, a negotiation platform for Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 6). The last two countries serve as mediators of the European security, however, the HR itself or other Representatives of the EU were absent at these proceedings. This absence of EU institutions was also the case in Mogherini’s term. The only noteworthy process was the elaboration of the ceasefire (Minsk I) developed already in Ashton’s term. Thus, Minsk II established by the Normandy format in February 2015 ensured the active use of EU diplomacy mostly initiated by Germany and France in third states (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 6). In this thesis, the Minsk Agreement and Minsk Agreement II is also known as the Minsk Protocol, is central since it is the only joint agreement that includes all

involved states. This Protocol is to stop the war in the Donbass region of Ukraine signed between representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) on 5 September 2014 in Minsk, Belarus (Ogbonna, 2017, 12; Hofer, 2020, 4). Also, the current HR Borrell Fontelles cannot be characterized by an exceptional drive for action in finding a solution in the Crimean crisis during his seven-month term. Thus, it can be observed that he only refers to the full acceptance of non-recognition policy in reference to the annexation of Crimea and the city Sevastopol (Council of the EU, 2020).

3.5. EU smart sanctions policy

Initially, smart sanctions were implemented due to the ineffectiveness of conventional sanctions (Veebel, Markus, 2015, 131, Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 379 f.). Therefore, smart sanctions differ from traditional sanctions in their main goal. They target and punish political elites more effectively and at the same time, they protect social groups from damage (Groves, 2007, 1, Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 373). There is evidence that compared to other forms of reaction in IR, sanctions are both the least costly and an appropriate option (Groves, 2007, 6). Import bans of, for instance, luxury products, asset freezing, travel restrictions, and arms embargoes of subgroups² in the target state are all examples of smart sanctions that have been applied, even if none of them emphasize a new tool in IR (Leenders, 2014, 10, Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 379 ff.). Thus, in international politics, the use of smart sanctions has been preferred to conventional sanctions such as general economic or financial sanctions (Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 378). Smart sanctions have become the standard reaction to crises driven by the hope that less severe unintended problems occur.

4. Methodology

This bachelor thesis employs the method systematic literature review (SLR) to find an answer to the research question that is set while gathering information about specific topics based on already existing articles (Dacombe, 2016, 149). A SLR is a written review of already existing scientific articles, which deals with a similar research problem. (Dacombe, 2016, 150, Torraco, 2005, 364 f.). In SLR, the current state of research is critically analyzed and, thus, summarized in the conclusion. The main principle in SLR is linked to the principle of a funnel. This means that in a first step, I look for articles, which include, for instance, theories of terms like sanction, and/or diplomacy. Then, in a second step, I specify my search while concentrating on types of

² A detailed description of the subcategories can be found in the appendix.

sanctions or the implementation of sanctions by the EU and afterward I narrow it down by focusing sanctions in a particular region – the implementation of EU’s sanctions or Member States sanctions against Eastern Europe.

I study the following case - the Crimean crisis and the moment which leads to the introduction of EU’s economic sanctions against Russia. The case has been selected because it is a unique example. The case has been one of the first international conflicts since the end of the Cold War, in which two great powers, the United States and Russia, face off in a third country. Moreover, the new pathways and unknown mechanisms of this extreme case are specific, since this case has no comparable predecessors (Gerring, 2004, 341 ff.). The question arises, how often it happens that sanctions take into force in the context of an “annexation” piece of land (Crimea) by using a referendum. The experience to use sanctions within the EU can be classified as seldom. And since the EU cannot relate to a similar situation, they are facing new challenges for the first time in which they need to ensure its power position compared to their fellow partners.

The pressure of the “experienced” implementer of sanctions such as the US makes the EU decision- even more difficult since they might expect a cooperative action schema in this crisis. The EU faces the risk of losing its legitimacy, while limited to deploying their soft power to act alongside actors like the US or the UN.

The search for literature for this thesis I thought to focus only on the period of six years, from 2014 to 2019. However, this time frame was due to the limited number of available and topic-based articles, not possible. I include two articles that are not in this time frame (see appendix), but I expect to examine an enormous amount of relevant information for my analysis. Databases for this thesis are JSTOR and Web of Science. In the preliminary search, the terms “sanctions”, “diplomacy” and “EU’s legitimacy”, were used. Afterward, to narrow down the scope terms like “smart sanctions”, “EU’s sanctions”, “crisis”, and “Eastern Europe” were searched. The operators AND and OR were used in different term combinations. Following Cronin et al. (2008), I imposed inclusion criteria on the articles:

- Articles should include an abstract
- Articles should be written in English
- The presented search terms should be included in the title/abstract

The resulting data set include 13 final chosen scientific articles and analyzed using a codebook that contains 32 codes divided into eight main groups, which can be found in the appendix.

Based on this codebook, the data was uploaded to program *Atlas.ti*, which helped to structure the articles according to codes, and in a further step, also 32 reports (see appendix) for the analysis were established. The reports included the most significant citations from all articles to simply the overview of the materials while analyzing.

5. Key Interests- European Union

During the SLR, the EU's uniqueness as an international player was particularly noticeable even if already expected (Kleistra, van Willigen, 2015, 53, Hofer 2020, 2, Leenders, 2014, 7, Smith, 2013, 653). Indeed, the EU has become more serious over the years according to its diplomatic power, but it is still difficult to classify this actor in the diplomatic sphere. How the EU presents itself internationally in a particular situation depends on several different factors: Which foreign policy challenges are perceived by the EU and its member states as a threat to which it is important to respond with a common European "voice"? What expectations do third countries have of the EU in terms of political, economic, and financial aid? What claim does the EU make for itself to influence the political and economic situation in other countries?

The EU took restrictive measures against Russia in 2014 to increase the cost of Russia's actions that undermine Ukraine's independence and sovereignty to support a peaceful resolution of the crisis (Ogbonna, 2017, 14). The decisions to implement the sanction mechanism and to activate the three stages were made on 6 March 2014 (Council of the EU, 2020). This included diplomatic sanctions (phase 1), measures aimed specifically at certain individuals and legal entities or organizations, e.g. entry bans and the freezing of assets (phase 2), and sectoral economic sanctions (phase 3). The main goals included the creation of a political environment in which peaceful conflict resolution would be possible, a de-escalation of armed conflict, and the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty. Therefore, it is surprising that the EU reacted to the annexation of Crimea with weak sanctions. Probably, because decision-makers in the EU were surprised by the rapid pace of developments in the region. The EU's reaction was therefore limited to signaling disapproval, to Ukraine and Russia, of Russian political decisions vis-à-vis Ukraine (Smith, 2013, 658).

The effectiveness of Western sanctions concerning the escalation of the war in Eastern Ukraine must be assessed separately. The decision to fully activate the sanction mechanism and to impose sectoral economic sanctions may have had an impact on the armed struggle in the Donbas. After September 2014, the chronology of the conflict suggests that the imposition of painful sanctions, which made the threat of more serious measures credible, had a restrictive

effect on Moscow and contained further escalation of the war. Literature suggests that the debate in the West about possible support to the Ukrainian army may also have played a role since it convinced Russia of the need to moderate acts of war without, however, being able to force them to stop completely (Ogbonna, 2017, 5; Dolidze, 2015, 2).

Sanctions have not changed the basic orientation of the Russian-Ukraine policy. This remains focused on maintaining Russian influence through controlled instability. The annexation of the Crimea has become such an important part of the Russian discourse on identity that political leadership cannot undo it without endangering itself (Hofer, 2020, 17f.). The hope that smart sanctions could lead to resistance in the ranks of the political and economic elite has not been fulfilled. The EU failed to access Russian society to give a transparent explanation of implementing sanctions. Based on this EU failure, Russia was able to influence their population by emphasizing the danger of sanctions and of the Western attempt to weaken the state (Ogbonna, 2017, 10). After a year of sanctions, in 2015, their goal was no longer limited to de-escalation but aimed at the full implementation of thirteen military and political provisions which, for instance, include immediate ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine and the restoring of social and economic ties with Kyiv through international mechanisms. However, the achievement of these goals negotiated in Minsk has been blocked due to misunderstandings between Russia and Ukraine. The sanctions have become part of this blockade and offer Moscow no incentive to change its policies. Additionally, the Crimean crisis also has an important strategical significance for the EU. In terms of geostrategic interests, bordering states like Ukraine should be convinced to increase cooperation with the EU (Smith, 2013, 660, Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 16).

However, this crisis gave the EU the opportunity for hard decision-making based on Russia's action in Ukraine (Dolizde, 2015, 14). This moment created favorable conditions for the EU to demonstrate its political status: a confrontation with Russia would demonstrate that the EU has enough power to punish even Russia, one of the most powerful and biggest states. Throughout this action, the EU might undermine its relevance and dominance, especially after a period of accusations of lack of consensus and unity among the MS (Smith, 2013, 654 f., Hellquist, 2016, 1000). Additionally, it enhances cooperation with the US since it shows the EU's solidarity towards one of its most important partners. With this sort of behavior, the EU hopes to positively increase its stature to be able to act as an equal player in the international arena. Moreover, not all MS agree on imposing sanctions because they are differently reliant

on trade with Russia for sectors such as food supplies or energy (Smith, 2013, 669, Veebel, Markus, 2015, 137).

Therefore, it can be determined, sanctions have also been taken that are not directly related to the armed conflict but are intended to exert pressure on those responsible for politics. Thus, it is obvious that a consensus about the EU sanction policy seems to be less stable and more confusing than ever before. The EU must think strategically about how to proceed in this crisis to de-escalate it without losing its reputation as a “civilian power”, in particular, after Trump’s idea of a type of modern isolationism in foreign affairs which has a direct impact on relations between the US and its partners, and on the European Security approach (Hofer, 2002, 3, Leenders, 2014, 15, Dolidze, 2015, 5). The fact that the Trump administration called NATO an “obsolete and expensive” organization should underline that the US might jeopardize the security guarantees that they provide (Freisleben, 2017). The EU needs to evolve into an independent security defender on its values and interests as quickly as possible (Tzogopoulos, 2018, 124).

5.1 Key Interests- Russia

With its counter-sanctions, Russia aimed to maintain its influence over Ukraine. However, those measures did not have the intended effect, i.e. to weaken the target state. The assumption, that more or less all Russian-speaking Ukrainians would naturally support Russia was incorrect. This calculation was partly awakened by certain groups of Ukraine (Ogbonna, 2017,1, Vebbel, Markus, 2015, 132).

An important lever, in this case, is that Russia is concerned about preserving its traditional sphere of influence. Thus, this reaction is mostly based on the feeling of humiliation by Western powers, that has its origin in the 1990s. At that time, Russian willingness to cooperate was not reciprocated by the West. Based on this, Russia’s action is focused on acting against the influences of the EU and NATO. The reason for this is that, contrary to promises, the West developed its security structures towards the East, which could also take place in Ukraine, leading to increased concern in Russia (Hofer, 2020, 19). Thus, from its own perspective, Russia must position itself much more decisively and strongly in military and geopolitical terms to force the West to let Ukraine be Russia’s concern.

Moreover, neighboring Ukraine, which is closely intertwined with Russia, plays a key role in the geopolitical orientation of Russia. Objectives like the already large amount of

networks between both countries on different levels have remained alive since the fall of the Soviet Union. For Russia, failure in this field would mean admitting not being a part of the great powers. This way of thinking can to a certain extent explain the behavior in Crimea (Ogbonna, 2017, 3, Vebbel, Markus, 2015, 138).

In short, Russia's fear of a loss of influence in Ukraine, and consequently its global role. To prevent this development, the West could have addressed concerns much earlier and would have had to be more sensitive to relevant signs to react properly.

5.2 Key Interests- United States

Immediately after the outbreak of the Crimean crisis, the US ended military cooperation with Russia, put an end to discussions about tighter trade relations and, together with the other six leading industrialized nations, stopped the preparations for the planned G-8 summit in Sochi, Russia (Veebel, Markus, 2015, 137, Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 5, Hofer, 2020,7).

From the standpoint of its priorities and interests, the US had acted quite prudently throughout the crisis. The problem is that, due to the willingness to solve the problem using sanctions, like-minded actors expected to see clear signals from the US. However, active involvement of the US can only be seen at the beginning of the crisis. After a certain time, the US largely restricted itself to taking a sort of behind-the-scenes position in which it remained with consolidation responsibilities to the EU (Ogbonna, 2017, 12). The US symbolic policy increases the responsibility of the EU and the pressure to make the right decisions to solve the crisis. Tatia Dolidze goes a step further and emphasizes that since the US does not cooperate economically with Russia as much as it is the case for the EU, it leaves the EU with the responsibility of the complete coordination of the sanction policy (Dolizde, 2015, 10).

Personality also came into play with the US decision to distance itself from the Crimean crisis. The tense relationship and the resulting distrust between Obama and Putin did not provide a good basis for negotiations. As already mentioned, the US had underestimated Russia's willingness to respond to the situation in Ukraine. However, the US did not show any readiness to solve the problem, but rather to withdraw. Here, a wrong signal was sent to the involved actors that the US no longer sees itself as an active actor of this conflict, thus encouraging Russia in its behavior.

5.3 Key Interests – Ukraine

In this conflict, Ukraine is Europe's or the West's linchpin. The civil war between the Russified East and the Ukrainian West is reverberating throughout Europe. This division of Ukraine is visible and serves many misunderstandings concerning Ukraine's main priorities. The visible division makes it difficult for Ukraine to take a clear position in the crisis. Therefore, Ukraine is often referred to as the state caught between two stools. On the one hand, the Western part of Ukraine (where the government is also located) wants to secure international support for Ukraine's sovereignty and strongly supports EU integration. On the other hand, the Eastern part of Ukraine aims to reinforce cooperation with Russia in terms of, for instance, gas negotiations and actively supports a rapprochement to Ukraine (Dolidze, 2015,6; Cross, Karolewski, 2016, 4).

The main cause for these various outlooks of Ukraine's key interests was not established in the Crimean crisis but can be traced back to errors of the government in economic policy under President Yanukovych, which intensified the escalation of the crisis. Mismanagement in favor of Russia's influence leads the state to the brink of a disaster by the end of 2013 (Boogaerts, 2018,78). Thus, the new government under President Poroshenko already had some enormous problems at the beginning of 2014. In some cases, unfortunately, this government has not demonstrated the necessary political will required to act primarily in the interest of the state and society, which can be classified as a lack of professionalism. This inability to cooperate and communicate with civil society encouraged Russia to intervene, hoping to convince Ukraine to work better with their neighbor (Ogbonna, 2017, 14, Boogaerts, 2018, 79).

6. Analysis- EU Diplomacy

For the present analysis, an ideal state of the crisis is assumed, meaning one in which it is possible to use diplomacy. The second part (6.1) will examine the current state of the crisis focusing on the EU smart sanctions policy. Lastly (6.2), both tools will be compared to answer the research question of this thesis. First of all, this analysis emphasizes more the conditions for diplomacy success than diplomacy failure as is illustrated by the total count of 54 against 21. The EU took some diplomatic steps in the Crimean crisis thus, it can be determined that throughout the crisis, the EU aimed to avoid complete alienation of Russia. Despite some conflicting policies toward Russia and Ukraine, the EU created a foreign policy response (Kleistra, van Willigen, 2015, 58). Among other things, meetings as well as telephone conferences took place between the involved actors with the common aim of establishing a ceasefire deal (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 6). To sum up, it can be determined that complete

contact breakdown did not occur. However, success to de-escalate the crisis could not be observed.

Even if negotiations as a diplomacy tool establish the possibility to engage in open communication, some elemental viewpoints, for instance, the sovereignty of Ukraine have to be recognized by each actor to maintain diplomatic contact (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 6, Leenders, 2014, 26). One of the main difficulties in this crisis is the acknowledgment of responsibilities since none of the actors have admitted actively provoking a conflict (Leenders, 2014, 9, Adler-Nissen, 2014, 664). Therefore, the articles emphasize that it seems important to accept Russia as an equal negotiator (Hofer, 2020, 15 ff.). Such recognition from the EU would lead to a rapprochement between the EU and Russia, which might encourage Russia to rethink its strategy in Ukraine. Furthermore, on the international stage, this rapprochement would be interpreted as a sign that Russia is not perceived as a dangerous enemy but as a serious negotiating partner (Hofer, 2020, 21, Ogbonna, 2017, 15). However, the EU has so far failed to provide such signs. A probable reason for this is the close cooperation with its key partners (e.g. the UN, the US, etc.) who would not agree with such a rapprochement.

Due to this EU power dilemma, the analyzed literature suggests to involving all actors, in particular Russia, to resolve the Ukrainian issue because the unilateral solution by the EU has led to nothing in the course of the crisis (Hofer, 2020, 11, Ogbonna, 2017, 12). Nevertheless, the scientist Alexandra Hofer underlines the difficulty of overcoming problems in which every actor needs to consider not only the image of the “Self” but also of the “Other” (Hofer, 2020, 21). Nevertheless, it is not impossible since negotiations aim to achieve a solution based on a common communication channel such as was the case in the US-Iran interaction which led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015) (Hofer, 2020, 21, Smith, 2013, 654).

Therefore, in the future, the diplomatic relations that had been put off due to the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, must thaw (Ogbonna, 2017, 15). In the beginning, the EU approach towards Russia has been to suspend negotiations with Russia on different diplomatic forces such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the Group of Seven (G7) (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 5, Hofer, 2020, 4). Throughout the negotiations process, the EU signaled that the main intention of imposing sanctions was based on the protection of international and EU norms to create a collective action against Russia (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 12). But an essential part of diplomacy had been forgotten: the explanatory and empathy function of the EU. The Western forces had not tried to

understand either the Russian or the Ukrainian position or motivations; rather, they were convinced of the correctness of their own position (Hofer, 2020, 13).

Finally, the EU needs to improve its visibility in the diplomatic field. Their heterogeneous institutional structure, because the main EU negotiator changes according to negotiation areas, makes it almost impossible to focus on a "single face" for Europe (Klesistra, van Willigen, 2015, 59). Therefore, the overall aim of the EU must be to create an institution that would ensure better interaction in the system of external relations or to reform the EEAS. However, the creation of a permanent presidency could undermine this effort since both the Representative and the President would represent the Union externally (Kleistra, van Willigen, 2015, 58). This poses the risk that the image of an institutionally fragmented EU will remain (Adler-Nissen, 2014, 671; Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 7, Smith 2013, 664). To sum up, the EU has to find a way to cope with the fact that it is outside its comfort zone to act successfully in the international diplomatic sphere (Smith, 2013, 671).

Compared to the political and economic costs of military interventions and the resulting casualties and relating those to the cost of sanctions which, according to Groves, are condemned as unethical and ineffective, diplomacy can be called the most rational option (Groves, 2007, 7). Diplomacy has advantages and disadvantages and under some circumstances, this instrument can be ineffective. Below, I will report on what the SLR reveals about how literature tackles diplomacy success and failure.

Table 3 below shows the number of addressed conditions (total: 54) which are separated into advantages and necessary circumstances. It emphasizes that building trust, mentioned 23 times, is the most important advantage according to the analyzed material. Overall, it highlights the fact that diplomacy is mostly used for building trust, and shared opinions serve as the most effective circumstance. Other advantages of diplomacy are the strengthening of the actor's reputation (7 times) and the impression of thoughtful action taken during a crisis (6 times). Last is the benefit of cost reduction which is mentioned three times. Given the findings of this table, three circumstances stand out. Shared strategic narratives (8 times) seem to be the main circumstance. However, the level of effectiveness based on support to stakeholders (5 times) and the need for a consultation mechanism (2 times), are not less relevant factors to the success of diplomacy.

Table 3: Conditions of diplomacy success

Advantages	Counts
Trust building: various rapprochements channels on a bilateral, trilateral or multilateral basis are used to enforce negotiations in crisis, e.g. European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) framework, WTO, SWIFT and later the establishment of agreements	23
Reputation: EU as civilian power using normative, symbolic signs (understudied)	7
Evaluation: chosen steps seem thoughtful due to use of additional time	6
Cost: diplomacy is the least costly compared to other tools	3
Circumstances	
Consultation mechanism: to maintain dialogue and try to understand the other side	2
Shared strategic sense: at least one shared narrative of diplomacy measures	8
Effectiveness: Meets the needs through the support of key stakeholders	5
Total	54

Table 4 serves as a guide for the following argumentation of facts that might, under certain circumstances, lead to a failure in the use of diplomatic tools as found in the literature. It shows that the uncertainty of the EU (11 times) due to a lack of unity is the main disadvantage of smart sanctions, followed by the loss of time (3 times) based on the long procedure of agreement of different actors. These disadvantages can occur under the following two mentioned circumstances. The fact that states position themselves on one side (5 times) might lead to unfruitful negotiations, as well as *domaine réservé* (2 times), i.e. areas in which it is difficult to find an agreement due to one-sided dominance. All in all, a total of 21 references were made in the selected literature concerning the failure of diplomacy.

Table 4: Conditions of diplomacy failure

Disadvantages	Counts
Uncertainty: responsibility of representing, enforcing, monitoring of the measures in place (coordination between EU and MS, EU and its institutions/representatives)	11
Loss or slowing of time for necessary or expected reaction	3
Circumstances	
No consideration of different actors → confirmation of the existence of <i>domaine réservé</i>	2
Uncompromising positioning	5
Total	21

6.1 Analysis – EU smart sanction Policy

In the course of the Ukraine crisis of the potential success of sanctions against political behavior, reference must also be made to the lack of trust between Russia and the West - which has been eroding for years - and to the lack of genuine exchange about the creation of sustainable security architecture in Europe (Ogbonna, 2017, 12). A central fundament would be a common understanding of the political and security status of those states that do not belong to the Russian sphere of influence, NATO, or the EU.

However, the success of sanctions depends mostly on its economic impact. Only if the economic consequences are serious can the sanctions provide sufficient leverage - although this alone does not guarantee their success. Natural persons from the military and politics are affected in their freedom to travel. Little is known about whether freezing their assets also has economic consequences, or at least it is officially denied. The Russian banking sector is significantly restricted in its foreign financing due to the dominance of state banks in comparison to the past. With the oil sector, the sanctions are directed against a major Russian industry, but by restricting the sanctions to certain business areas, the impact is greatly reduced. The greatest economic impact can, therefore, be seen in the banking sector, which also has a financing function that also extends to other economic sectors (Dolizde, 2015, 5 ff., Vebbel, Markus, 2015, 135 f.).

In more depth, it can be observed that smart sanctions had some unintended consequences. Thus they contributed to the consolidation of the authoritarian Russian regime,

appropriately exploited by the propaganda in the Russian state media. The relation between sanctions and the economic crisis 2014/15 has given the Russian population the impression that the sanctions are aimed at worsening their socio-economic situation. Besides, a certain habituation effect has arisen in bilateral economic relations through compensations, the redirection of foreign trade, and, in part, by circumvention on both sides about the sanctions (Smith, 2015, 669). Given the general weakness of the Russian economy, it is therefore questionable whether an end to the sanctions would even result in the rapid restitution of economic relations before 2014. This in turn reduces the already low incentive potential of the sanctions (Ogbonna, 2017, 13, Groves, 2007, 8).

A possible explanation for this result is that in the course of surprising international crises such as the Russian intervention in Crimea in 2014, the pressure to act on foreign policy-makers in Western democracies increases enormously in the short term. Since the decision-makers exclude military means of dealing with conflicts at the same time, they are in a state of self-imposed influence. In this situation, the imposition of sanctions is available as a valve for reducing the pressure. By generating high economic costs, illegal behavior may not be changed but maybe continually punished. The own costs accepted for this also signal a clear distance and serve as a price tag for your values (Ogbonna, 2017, 14, Boogaerts, 2018, 86, Hellquist, 2016, 1000).

Based on these findings, the EU's sanctions against Russia have not been ineffective, at all. With regard to Western efforts to end the Ukraine crisis, they should be seen as a partial success because they served to curb armed conflict in eastern Ukraine and expressed the EU's protest against Russia's illegal policies. Nevertheless, the sanctions, however, do not end the war in Donbas or led to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements (Hofer, 2020, 5). However, the use of sanction demonstrates a blocking instrument for peaceful engagement through negotiations (Oghonna, 2017, 15) It is important to emphasize that in the course of the EU smart sanction policy the articulated goal seems to transform. Therefore, Oghonna (2017) correctly states that depending on the goal of the EU sanctions the policy is successful in terms of symbolism (Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 378). But it is showing clear shortcomings in terms of cohesion since those measures did not coerce Russia surrounding Crimea back to Ukraine. An also if sanctions were meant to punish Russia, it seems that it has is failing due to the ill-conceived formulation of smart sanctions (Oghonna, 2017, 15).

Table 5: Conditions of success of EU smart sanctions

Advantages	Count
Economic pressure	20
Damage: harm only key decision-makers, exclude the wider population	18
Signal power: sending a signal to target, domestic and international audience	19
Reputation: civil actor (i.e. secondary goal)	13
Cost-benefit calculation: less costly than military instruments	6
<i>More pain, more gain – effect</i> : pressure on national legitimacy due to deterioration of the target’s situation and willingness to political violence because of a decrease in loyalty	14
Circumstances	
Clearly defined demands	7
Symbolic power through self-presentation	6
Involvement of organizations or third-parties as a sign of cooperativeness	13
Total	116

Table 5 depicts the advantages of smart sanctions that are documented in the literature and the circumstances under which they can be successful. The information shows that economic pressure, which is mentioned 20 times, is the main benefit of smart sanctions. This is followed by the gain of signaling power (19 times) and the possibility of punishing only specific groups and individuals (18 times). The *more pain, more gain – effect* (14 times), and the symbolic power of smart sanctions (13 times) are also close together. Given the findings of this table, a cost-benefit calculation which is mentioned only 6 times represents the lowest advantage of this tool. Concerning the three circumstances, the support of further partners (13 times) highlights the essential condition, whereas clear formulated demands (7 times) and presentation through self-interpretation (6 times) sit at the bottom. Overall, a total of 116 references were found in the literature concerning the effectiveness of smart sanctions.

Table 6: Conditions of policy failure of EU smart sanctions

Disadvantages	Count
Unintended effect: economic pressure harms mostly population not elite	31
Elite transfer its assets	5
<i>Rally ‘round – the – flag – effect</i> : increase repression in the target state	12
Target state present sanctions and their sender as a threat to national sovereignty → no positive profiling for the sender	9
Building up their capacities, e.g. payment system → decrease in dependence on the sender	7
Preannouncement for freezing assets	2
Circumstances	
Sender has no control over sanction after implementation	12
Requirement: far-reaching political changes	6
Costs for the sender, e.g. countersanctions	13
Total	97

Table 6 underlines the different types of disadvantages of smart sanctions as well as the circumstances under which they can occur. The information was also taken from twelve reports of the thirteen analyzed articles. Firstly, it depicts that unintended effects (31 times) such as direct restrictions on the population due to economic isolation are mentioned significantly more often than all other points. This is followed, with 19 cases less, by a rise in nationalism (12 times) which is also known as the “*rally ‘round – the – flag*” – *effect*. In third place is the risk that the target intentionally misinterprets the sanction regime of the sender (9 times). This is closely followed by the disadvantage that the target might be able to develop the capacity to decrease dependence on the sender (7 times). Last, mentioned 29 times less than the top of the list, is the detriment of preannouncements of the possible implementation of sanctions against the target (2 times). As in table 2, three circumstances, among which the cost of countersanctions (13 times) and the impression of lack of control over the implemented sanctions (12 times), were addressed approximately the same number of times. Far-reaching political changes (6 times) lead also to the classification of policy failure. All in all, a total of

97 citations concerning the negative effects of smart sanctions were extracted from the given literature.

6.2 Comparison

In the following, both the EU sanction policy and EU diplomacy will be analyzed to answer the question of, which reasons led the EU to favor smart sanctions as a foreign policy instruments compared to the alternative, i.e. diplomacy, to achieve its articulated goals.

Table 7: Contrasting strengths of diplomacy and sanctions

	Diplomacy	Counts	Smart sanctions	Counts
Advantages	Trust-building	23	Economic pressure	20
	Reputation	7	Reputation	13
	Evaluation	6	Signal power	19
	Cost	3	Cost	6
			Damage the elite	18
			<i>More pain, more gain-effect</i>	14
Circumstances	Consultation mechanism	2	Active self-presentation	6
	Shared strategic steps	8	Clearly defined demands	7
	Consideration of various interests and support	5	Involvement of partners	13
Total		54		116

Table 7 contrasts the strengths of diplomacy and smart sanctions. It shows that economic pressure, which is mentioned 20 times, is the main benefit of smart sanctions and that trust-building (23 times) is the primary advantage of diplomacy. For smart sanctions, signaling power (19 times), the possibility of punishing specific groups and individuals (18 times), and the *more pain, more gain – effect* (14 times) come respectively in second, third, and fourth place. Reputation improvement through symbolism is mentioned almost twice as much for smart sanctions (13 times) as for diplomacy (7 times). Given the findings in this table, the cost-benefit calculation, which is only mentioned six times for sanctions and three times for diplomacy,

represents the least important advantage. With respect to the same amount of circumstances, the support of partners (13 times for sanctions and five times for diplomacy) outlines an essential condition. Clearly formulated demands (7 times) and active self-presentation (6 times) sit at the bottom of the list for sanctions. Shared strategic steps (8 times) are considered to be more important in diplomacy whereas consultation mechanism (2 times) are less relevant. Overall, the selected literature highlights the positive effects of smart sanctions compared to diplomacy, the former being mentioned 116 times and the latter only 54 times.

Table 8: Contrasting weaknesses of diplomacy and sanctions

	Diplomacy	Counts	Smart sanctions	Counts
Disadvantages	Uncertainty in distribution of roles	11	Unintended effect / Contrary harm	31
	Loss of precious time to act	3	Elite transfer its assets	5
			“Rally – ‘round – the – flag” – effect	12
			Sanctions propagated as a danger	9
			Decrease in dependency	7
			Preannouncement for imposing sanctions	2
Circumstances	<i>domaine réservé</i>	2	no control throughout sanctions	12
	Uncompromising positioning	5	Costs for the sender	13
			Requirement: far-reaching political changes	6
Total		21		97

Table 8 contrasts the weaknesses of both diplomacy and smart sanctions. According to this table, smart sanctions have three times as many mentioned disadvantages as diplomacy. It shows that uncertainty in the distribution of roles in diplomacy (11 times) and unintended effects that might lead to contrary harm in smart sanctions (31 times) are disadvantages that most often occur. Further disadvantages can be ranked in descending order as follows: “*rally – ‘round – the – flag’ – effect* (12 times), sanctions might be propagated as a threat (9 times), a decrease in dependency to the sender (7 times), elite transfer its assets (5 times) and lastly, the sender’s obligation to preannounce the imposition of sanctions (2 times). For diplomacy, only a second weakness, i.e. losing time before acting (3 times), is mentioned. Regarding necessary conditions, three are mentioned under smart sanctions and two under diplomacy. In diplomacy, uncompromising positioning (5 times) of actors is considered to be the main obstacle to cooperation, and the existence of *domaine réservé* (2 times) is regarded as the second one. In the case of smart sanctions, the cost for the sender (13 times) due to countersanctions is the greatest risk. Additionally, loss of control (12 times) and far-reaching political changes required by the sender (6 times) might also lead to policy failure. As already mentioned in table 6, smart sanctions have a significantly higher amount of references than diplomacy. Thus, the failure of smart sanctions (97 times) is addressed almost five times more than diplomacy (21 times).

Based on these results taken from tables 3-8, Proposition 1 and 2 can be confirmed. That means the increased implementation of sanctions has a positive influence on the power position of the EU, as well as diplomacy harms the power advantages of the EU, which explains the rare application. Further approaches will be developed to explain the EU preference for smart sanctions, as illustrated by the significant amount of evidence regarding the use of smart sanctions compared to diplomacy

One possible explanatory approach is that there lacks a stable theoretical framework in this research field due to a lack of available resources, both for research and for the EU. This is what researchers such as Kleistra and van Willigen (2015) or Adler Nissen (2013) conclude (Kleistra; van Willigen, 2015, 53, Adler-Nissen, 2013, 667). EU diplomacy seems to be understudied, because of the complexity and the resulting uncertainty of EU institutions and concerning their responsibilities in diplomacy (Adler-Nissen, 2013, 660). Moreover, the national interests of 28 MS, which change according to the circumstances of each crisis, have to be taken into consideration (Adler-Nissen, 2013, 656). Based on these normative requirements that lead to a lack of unity within the EU and to a lack of solidarity from the

outside, the theory of diplomacy does not enable to examine behavioral schemes (Dolizde, 2015, 9, Smith, 2013, 669, Adler-Nissen, 2013, 658; Kleistra, van Willigen, 2015, 53 f.).

To continue along this line of thought, and to give a first explanation for the preference of smart sanctions despite known ineffectiveness, I found that literature does not make, a clear distinction between these two tools. The case is rather that both smart sanctions and diplomacy are deliberately combined for various reasons. As Leander Leenders (2014) examines, “Whenever sanctions were adopted, they were usually informal and did not have much effect. (...) This is not responsive management, but simply an incoherent practice. It is therefore clear that the sanctions against China and Russia have not been effective – at least in the strict primary sense.” (Leenders, 2014, 26). But what are the conditions which influence the EU to implement this instrument despite known failures? While the literature lacks meaningful evidence due to a research gap in EU diplomacy, it is speculated that the EU caused internal diplomatic instability due to external events such as the migration crisis (Smith, 2013, 656, Lehne, 2018). A reason for this assumption is for instance, that even if the EU establishes its diplomatic institutions, the most relevant example is the EEAS, which fails to underline a sense of need for representation of the EU on the diplomatic stage. MS diplomats have often expressed their concern according to the disadvantages in their career while representing an international organization (Adler-Nissen, 2013, 672 ff.). This line of thought is intended to demonstrate that the EU consciously does not make a difference between these instruments to cover up the fact that EU diplomacy is undergoing a crisis (Smith, 2013, 656). Therefore, this finding would explain the difference of overall counts in Tables 7 and 8 between sanction and diplomacy because first, diplomacy is understudied and as such, it has a small number of references. Second, both instruments flow into one another according to analysis results as smart sanctions are considered to be the most diplomatic form of sanctions. This is why the figures in the tables might be to some extent wrong or biased: they perhaps highlight EU diplomacy while referring to smart sanctions.

A second explanatory approach is that based on the findings, sanctions, especially smart sanctions seem to be preferred due to its goals as an instrument. Adam Groves (2007) correctly refers to Damrosch who identifies sanctions as a tool which “provide(s) a middle range of policy alternatives stronger than diplomatic or rhetorical techniques but less coercive than... military force” (Groves, 2007, 2). Smart sanctions are perceived as the strongest means of achieving EU goals since they are part of the EU’s soft power arsenal but have a faster effect than diplomatic negotiations (Cross, Karolewski, 2017, 5). This statement can be underlined with the figures in

8, which show that diplomacy, with its protracted procedures for rapprochement, risks losing precious time in finding a solution. Smart sanctions are aimed at targeting one specific group whereas, in diplomacy, the bad guy and his followers must first be identified (Veebel, Markus, 2015, 131). Additionally, in diplomacy, the EU with its special position in IR as a diplomatic actor has to convince its partners and third states to participate in the diplomatic conversation. In the sanctions sphere, however, it can undoubtedly count more on the support of its key stakeholders such as the US or the UN than on some of its MS (Kleistra, van Willigen, 2015, 62, Ogbonna, 2017, 12).

A third explanatory approach questions the intended goals mentioned in the research question of this thesis. As section four and tables 3-8 already described, foreign policy tools can pursue various goals simultaneously. However, this thesis raises, the question of the aim of the EU sanction policy in the Crimean crisis (Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 396). As already noted, smart sanctions are a more used instrument compared to diplomacy, but many researchers such as Veebel and Markus (2015) or Ogbonna (2017) refer to the punishment goal of sanctions which the EU did not achieve in the Crimean crisis (Veebel, Markus, 2015, 134, Ogbonna, 2017, 1 ff.). However, since sanctions against Russia are still in force and extended, the assumption arises that the main goal is not to punish Russia to change Russian policy in Ukraine but more to signal EU strength while using sanctions as a symbol for power (Ogbonna, 2017, 1ff., Leenders, 2014, 23, Tostensen, Bull 2002, 390). Critical historical events such as the migration crisis of 2015 and Brexit in 2016 weakened the EU and the implementation of sanctions in the Crimean crisis was an opportunity to regain prestige. Comparing the reputation figures in table 5, it can be seen that both instruments can lead to this advantage, but smart sanctions, due to their clearly defined construction also use symbolic power which strengthens EU reputation more than diplomacy would. To conclude, the researcher Chidiebere C. Ogbonna (2017) also differentiates various EU reaction options and puts forth the point that “However, if the sanctions’ goal is to signal displeasure to Russia, then the EU has made a case (....) “(Ogbonna, 2017, 15).

Last but not least, this section will also discuss the disadvantages of table 8. Thus, smart sanctions have many more mentioned disadvantages than diplomacy. This could be explained by the fact that even if smart sanctions seem to be clearly defined in terms of their target, a huge amount of various unintended effects that partly harm the sender arise in the Crimean crisis (Tostensen, Bull, 2002, 397, Leenders, 2014, 10). Russian countersanctions harm the EU economically too and lead to various domestic dissatisfactions depending on the MS (Dolizde

2015, 7). Another reason why smart sanctions have more described weaknesses than diplomacy can be understood in the course of the EU's reaction to this crisis. Sanctions were used directly at the beginning of the Crimean crisis, which means that the possibility for involved actors of entering into negotiations appears to be limited. This mechanism leads to a dilemma that Ogbonna (2017) puts forward: "the use of sanctions is counterproductive, as it offers a gloomy possibility for peaceful engagement through dialogue. "(Ogbonna, 2017, 15). Based on this quote, the difference between the numbers of disadvantages can be explained by the fact that since smart sanctions were used in the beginning in this conflict, no chance to use diplomacy as an instrument was left. Rather, Western states were more interested in counterproductive such as the expulsion of Russia from the G8 by which they deprived themselves of the opportunity to negotiate with Russia (Leenders, 2014, 25, Veebel, Markus, 2015, 132). Based on this result, it can be explained why only two weaknesses of diplomacy could be shown in table 8.

7. Conclusion

The crisis in Ukraine has been going on for six years. Focusing on the EU, the starting point of this thesis has was the question of why – smart sanctions are applied as an answer for crises, as they are obviously identified as ineffective. Based on this, the main goal of this paper is to understand the EU's intentions in preferring smart sanctions over diplomacy, especially, in light of its political attitude as a soft-power institution.

In this thesis, I put forth the notion that smart sanctions are used not primarily to achieve a policy change in the target state, but that the focus lies more on the secondary goal of sanctions which is self-representation through the implementation of sanctions. Based on the results that were provided, it can be seen that the implementation of sanctions by the EU is connected to the global improvement of its image. Diplomacy also has the ability to achieve this for the sender, however, it is neither as quick nor as effective. The Crimean crisis was used as the examined case because it is an ongoing crisis without clear improvements or de-escalation results. The EU has, however, maintained the implemented sanctions against Russia until now.

There is evidence that sanctions are preferred over diplomacy because this instrument enables the actor to influence the target state's policies while reinforcing its own reputation. Findings suggest that sanctions against Russia are probably still in force because the EU expects that using this tool will reinforce its position (secondary goals) more than diplomatic instruments would.

With regard to the limitations of this study, there is a lack of impartial or unbiased sources of the Crimean crisis. Since this crisis is imbued with biased political opinions, which might have an impact on the thesis, this topic is classified as sensitive. Moreover, the information extracted from the resulting data-set focuses on the imposition of EU sanctions from a power perspective, arising from the conflict between the EU and Russia in connection to the Crimean crisis. Hence, since the time frame of the data used in this study only ranges from 2014 to 2016, it could be said that the scope of the data is limited in breadth. Another limitation arises from the fact that the authors quoted in this study are Russian or Ukrainian. This leads to the assumption that there is a lack of representation, as sources that are not written in English are out of my reach. In sum, there is a clear need for future study in this field.

Based on the limitations above, further research is important because it tells us how sanctions are triggered in IR. Future literature should focus more on circumstances for preferring sanctions over diplomacy, and further research should concentrate on the conditions under which they have an impact. This would support future decision-makers in minimizing the unintended effects of sanctions. The IR system shifts in its ability to react, therefore, it is necessary to find explanations for these fast – paced changes. Thus, there is a need for a revised theoretical framework since additional points must be included. The efficiency and the intended impact of sanctions are not the same. To answer the question of efficiency does not imply the answer of the possible impact of sanctions. Therefore, sanctions should not be analyzed from their benefits, but more from their consequences, such as political backfiring.

This study of the Crimean crisis shows that sanctions are not able to solve ongoing and sensitive conflicts, but are, however, used by a majority of the actors. Thus, the critical examination of this topic has raised more questions than answers in the context of the effectiveness of sanctions. The present research, which mostly examines the failure of sanctions and diplomacy, allows building on its findings to develop a fruitful de-escalation mechanism for future crises.

8. References

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Declaration of Autorship

I declare that the work in this assignment is completely my own work. No parts of this thesis is taken from other papers without giving them credit. All references haven been clearly cited.

Dülmen, 01 July 2020

Place, date

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and strokes, positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature