Evaluating EU Regional Security Actorness: A Case Study of the EU's Response to the Ukraine Crisis

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ABSTRACT

After the EU's failed intervention in the Yugoslav Wars, the EU sought to augment its regional security capabilities through the creation of the CSDP and the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Notably the EU has recently conducted crisis management and conflict resolution operations in Georgia, Libya, and now is active in Ukraine. Despite the increasing number of EU crisis management and conflict resolution operations, there is a gap in the academic literature evaluating EU regional security actorness. Most EU actorness studies have focused on EU actorness in areas other than security such as EU actorness in international institutions and global climate change policy. This article evaluates EU regional security actorness through examining its response to the Ukrainian Crisis, the largest threat to European security in the post-Cold War era. It utilizes Brattberg and Rhinard's analytical framework for evaluating EU actorness to determine EU regional security actorness. The article starts its analysis with a review of security literature, EU actorness, and the EU's security policy. Then through my examination of relevant EU treaties, United Nations resolutions, various European security treaties, internal EU reports on its Russian energy dependency, European Parliamentary resolutions, European Parliamentary debate texts, and several official declarations of the Council of the EU, the Foreign Affairs Council and EU member-states' heads of government, I examine the international *context*, *coherency*, *consistency*, *capabilities* of the EU's response to the Ukrainian Crisis. The analysis of the four aforementioned criterions is used to empirically evaluate the EU's regional security actorness. While the EU's multifaceted response to the Ukrainian Crisis was coherent, consistent, and enhanced by a beneficial international context, the EU lacked the capability to coerce Russia to implement the Minsk Agreement. Thus, the EU cannot be classified as an effective regional security actor because of the failure of its response to attain its goal of coercing Russia to implement the Minsk Agreement. This suggests that if the EU seeks to become an effective regional security actor, especially against a revisionist Russia, then the EU must increase its hard power capabilities.

1. Introduction

The European project was initiated with the intention of creating regional peace and stability after two gruesomely destructive world wars. As the European Community and then the European Union (EU) enlarged, European states' economies, societies, and governments became increasingly interdependent and unified. After the end of the Cold War and in the spirit of Fukuyama's "end of history" argument (Fukuyama, 1992), the EU successfully used the carrot of membership to transform the governments and societies of Eastern and Central European Countries that had previously been under the shroud of the Iron Curtain, with an unprecedented enlargement incorporating ten new member states in 2004. The EU transformed those societies into liberal democracies and market economies that reflected the founding values of the EU. The EU has used its enlargement policy to create regional security through promoting peace, stability, and democratic and economic reform in neighboring states (European Council, 2005). The EU's regional security policy is multidimensional emphasizing military, civilian, and normative dimensions (Freire et al., 2013) and accordingly scholars have classified the EU as a "civilian power"(Stavridis, 2001; Duchene, 1972). Relative to neighboring regions of the Middle East and North Africa, the European Continent was stable and peaceful until the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea. The Russian annexation of Crimea represented the first annexation of another European states territory since World War II (Financial Times, 2014). The Russian annexation and its support for separatists in Southern and Eastern Ukraine represent the greatest threat to European security since the end of the Cold War. Thus, the EU's response to the Ukrainian crisis provides an unprecedentedly valuable case-study with which to empirically evaluate the efficacy of the EU as regional security actor.

In this paper, I apply Brattberg and Rhinard's Four "C"'s analytical framework to evaluate EU actorness in regional security. The framework includes four sets of variables which are context, coherence, consistency, and capability. The international *context* in which the US reduced its military involvement in Europe and Russia's revisionism drove it to annex Crimea and prevent the further integration of Ukraine into the West provided an opportunity for the EU to demonstrate that it was an effective regional security actor. Regarding *coherence*, EU member-states universally shared values that condemned Russia's involvement in Ukraine, preferences that sought to create a tough sanctions regime against Russia to coerce it to implement the Minsk Agreement, and had agreed to internal procedural mechanisms to formulate its response to Russia's actions. Since the first imposition of travel bans in 2014, the EU has *consistently* implemented its strategy to impose economic and diplomatic sanctions on Russia, expanding or extending said sanctions twenty-seven times since March 2014. Despite the previous three variables seemingly demonstrating an increasingly influential EU security actor, the EU fails in capabilities variable. While the EU successfully deployed the instruments available to in pursuit of its goal to coerce Russia to implement the Minsk Agreements, its *capabilities* were ineffective. Consequently, the EU cannot be classified as an effective regional security actor.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Evolution of Security Literature

In examining EU actorness in security it is extremely important to explain the author's conceptualization of security (Zwolski, 2009). Thus, the author would be remiss if he did not briefly explain the recent developments in security studies literature and how the author defines

security. In the post-Cold War context, some scholars have completely redefined the concept of security and thus accordingly have altered their analytical frameworks and variables that seek to evaluate actorness in security. As traditional inter-state wars have decreased in frequency and intensity (Williams, 2013), in the 1980's, Barry Buzan was one of the first to challenge traditional security studies when he broadened the concept of security through creating five sectors of security-military, political, economic, societal, and economic(Buzan, 2016). Schools of contemporary security studies-the Welsh school, the Copenhagen school, and the school of human security-have changed the referent object of security studies away from the state and to focus on humans, societies, and the environment (Linklater, 2005; Axworthy, 2001; Kaldor, 2007; Human Development Report 1994). Thus, having altered the referent object, new threats, such as climate change, migration, and transnational diseases, to the aforementioned referent objects have been examined in contemporary security studies literature (Buzan, 2016; Buzan et al. 1998; Booth, 2005; Posen, 1996; Adamson, 2006). Some scholars however have rejected the broadening of the concept of security in favor of maintaining a military-centric approach to security.

Traditional security scholars reject a broadened concept of security and argue that critical security studies securitizes everything and thus the discipline "loses its utility as an analytical tool" (Yuen, 2001). Reflecting realist assumptions about the anarchic world system, traditional security studies views the state as the primary actor on the international stage and argues that the primary goal of states is survival (Mearsheimer, 2013). "Strategic action is the norm in world politics" (Waltz, 1983) and mutual distrust among states often precludes cooperation among them in an anarchical system (Jervis, 1978). Thus, traditional security scholars adopt a military-oriented approach to security. They study survival and power-enhancing strategies that states

utilize such as deterrence (Sagan, 1996; Lebow et al., 1989; Waltz, 2012; Mearsheimer, 1983) and balancing against threats (Waltz, 1983; Morgenthau, 1978; Mearsheimer, 2014).

The recent souring of great power relations, notably the deterioration of EU-Russia relations due to Russia's halting of oil and natural gas flow through Ukraine in 2006, Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008, and finally Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has increased the study of inter-state power relations (Ross, 2006; Leonard et al, 2007). Consequently, I adopt a more traditional sense of security that examines factors with 'direct bearing on the structure of the nation state system and the sovereignty of its members, with particular emphasis on the use, threat and control of force'(quoted in Tripp, 2013). I return to a traditional definition of security that clearly identifies the state-in this case the EU can be considered a quasi-state-as the referent object, thus omitting factors of variables examined in critical security studies.

2.2. A Review of EU Actorness

Theories of International Relations offer many explanations for states behavior, but given the uniqueness of the EU, existing along a continuum between a state and an international organization, International Relations theory is of little utility when evaluating the role of the EU on the international stage. The EU is not a state, thus Sjodesdt argues that traditional analytical frameworks in International Relations literature cannot accurately evaluate the role of the EU with its *sui generis* character (Sjodest, 1977). The study of EU actorness is intended to clarify the behavior of the EU that cannot be explained by International Relations. The term actorness derives from the conventional reference that states are actors on the world stage. Jupille and Caporaso (2006) developed more structured analytical frameworks to evaluating actorness, instead of a more generic approach seen in Allen and Smith (1991) and Hill (1993). Their four

independent variables were recognition, authority, autonomy, and cohesion (Jupille and

Caporaso, 1998). Meanwhile, Bretherton and Vogler (2006) influentially created a new

analytical framework for evaluating EU actorness that focuses on the variables of *opportunity*,

presence, and *capability*. There is no consensus on the criterion for assessing actorness

(Carbone, 2013). The lack of consensus is surprising given that studies usually vaguely define

the criteria for assessing actorness and often do not usually tailor the criteria of actorness to

match examined dimension of international affairs for example security, international

development, disaster relief etc. (Brattberg and Rhinard, 2012). However, despite the traditional

lack of dimensional specificity with regards to actorness, there has been a recent increase in the

studies on EU actorness in certain dimensions of international affairs. Some authors have begun

creating analytical frameworks for assessing EU actorness in international institutions (Groleener

and Schaik, 2007; Gehring et al., 2013), in climate change (Vogler, 2002; Groen et al., 2013),

and security (Ferreira-Pereira and Martins, 2013; Brattberg and Rhinard, 2012; Freire and Simao,

2013).

Some scholars have argued that there is an indirect variation relationship between EU

actorness and effectiveness (Niemann and Bretherton, 2013). Missiroli argues that the EU's

emphasis on speaking coherently with "one voice" can lead to the lowest common dominator

policies that often are ineffective (Missiroli, 2001). Similarly, Carbone argues that a mutually

exclusive relationship exists between EU actorness and aid effectiveness due to reluctance of

various recipient governments and resistance of greater coordination among member-states

(Carbone, 2013).

2.3. The EU's Security Policy

The EU's *sui generis* character is a contributor to its unconventional approach of addressing security issues through traditionally non-strategic and non-military centered policies, like its Neighborhood Policy-ENP (Freire and Simao, 2013). The EU's European Security Strategy of 2003 argued that "large-scale aggression against any Member State is now improbable" (European Security Strategy, 2003). Evidently, it is reasonable to contend that the EU rejected the prospect of a revisionist Russia posing a security threat to EU member-states or its regional partners engaging in political and economic reform in pursuit of the prospect of EU membership. Kaldor was critically important proponent of human security and drafted the influential Barcelona Report, formally known as "A Human Security Doctrine for Europe", which suggests that European Security Strategy should be based on intervention to protect the individual's right to security. A redefinition of security would alter the criteria to be a regional security actor, especially an effective one. Kaldor argued that an emphasis on human security would increase the EU's influence as a security actor through enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of EU mission (Kaldor, 2007). In a sharp rebuttal to Kaldor's argument that the EU's Security Strategy should be based on "human security" Matlary argues that in order to be a key security actor an actor must possess authority based on international norms and military ability (Matlary, 2008).

Further demonstrating the EU's non-military centric approach to security, the 2008 "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy" even omitted regional conflicts as a key security threat and instead chose to include the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism and Organized Crime, Cyber Security, and Climate Change. The 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia represents a change in the nature of security threats the EU faced in the post-Cold War era, but notwithstanding that fact the EU's preventive measures to a

Russo-Georgian conflict emphasized economic development and democratic reform in Georgia, at the expense of military aid for Georgia. In Russo-Georgia war, the EU's contribution to the Georgian security was limited to a civilian monitoring mission only on the Georgian side of the border that was largely ineffective at monitoring Georgia's territorial sovereignty (Freire et al. 2013). While Sarkozy and Medvedev agreed on a Six-Point Peace deal the status of the contested Georgian sub-autonomous regions-Abkhazia and South Ossetia- is unresolved and the conflict still remains frozen as Russia has recognized the independence of the two break-away provinces. Now, the Ukraine Crisis, marking the first time since World War II that a European country has annexed part of another European country, represents a unique case-study to evaluate EU regional security actorness in the post Russo-Georgian war era.

3.   Four "C"'s Analytical Framework: Ukrainian Crisis Case Study

Brattberg and Rhinard's analytical framework for evaluating EU actorness is the most comprehensive in the realm of security, despite their analytical framework being used specifically for EU actorness in counter-terrorism. They synthesized many of the variables utilized in the EU actorness literature to create four categorical variables-*context*, *coherence*, *capabilities*, and *consistency* with various sub-variables that were examined by scholars in previous actorness research. I opted to use this analytical framework, because unlike other actorness evaluating frameworks, Brattberg and Rhinard's incorporates the capability category of actorness as Sjursen argues that actorness cannot be evaluated without considering capabilities (Sjursen, 1998). For the purposes of this analysis, it is important to note that being a *successful* regional security actor is not equivalent to being an actual regional security actor. The EU indeed displayed its role as a regional security actor in the Ukraine crisis. However, the EU was

an *unsuccessful* regional security actor, given that it failed to achieve its stated goal of coercing

Russia to implement the Minsk II Accords.
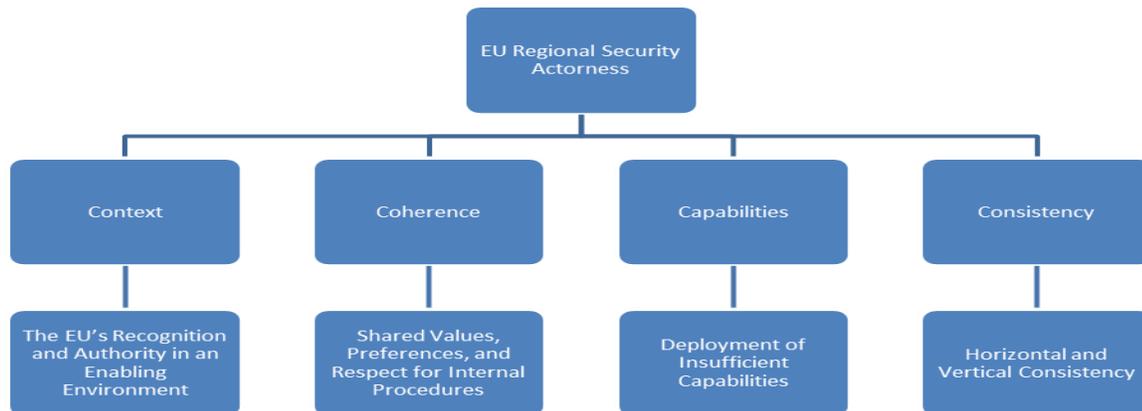
3.1. Context: The EU's Recognition and Authority in an Enabling External Environment

Is the EU a *recognized* legitimate regional security actor? Does it have the *authority* to

become a regional security actor? And do conditions in the international system present an

opportunity for the EU to demonstrate its actorness in regional security? These are all questions

that the context categorical variable seeks to answer. I demonstrate that the EU displays

noteworthy actorness in great power recognition of its role in European security, internal de jure

and de facto authority to be a player in regional security, and serious opportunities to

demonstrate its actorness in the aftermath of the US pivot towards Asia.

The EU had direct, indirect *de jure* and *de facto* recognition and authority to respond to

the Ukraine Crisis. Generally, the EU derives its de jure *authority* to act internationally from the

Treaty on the European Union Title V, Chapter I that explicitly acknowledges that the EU will

play a role in the international scene guided by the principles of "democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms…and respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law" (Treaty on the European Union, 1993). Likewise in 2011 the United Nations General Assembly *recognized* the legitimate participation of the EU in the work of the UN in the competencies granted to it by its member-states.

Furthermore, the EU also has indirect de jure authority to act behalf of its member-states to uphold their treaty obligations. In response to the lingering European anger of the Soviet Union's annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the Organization for Security and Economic Cooperation led the creation of the Helsinki Final Acts. During the Cold War Era, twenty three states, some of which are currently member-states of the EU, signed the 1975 Helsinki Final Acts that upheld the inviolability of territorial sovereignty and pledged non-interference in internal affairs of European States (OSCE, 1975). With the existence of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), the member-states have transferred certain competencies in the area of external affairs to the EU. From the institutional framework for an EU external affairs policy, the EU derives indirect de jure authority to act on behalf of its member-states to uphold their treaty obligations. Pertaining more specifically to the Ukraine Crisis, the United Kingdom is a signatory of the Budapest Memorandum, along with the United States and Russia (Budapest Memorandum, 1994). With its signature of this treaty, the UK pledged to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, if it were ever threatened. Thus, by the same logic, the EU has indirect de jure authority to act on behalf of the UK to uphold the member-states treaty obligations. Unsurprisingly, the UK was one of the strongest proponents of a tough EU response to Russia's

annexation of Crimea (Sjursen et al., 2016). Thus, the EU did indeed possess indirect de jure authority to act on behalf of its member-states to uphold their regional security treaty obligations.

Additionally the EU possessed de facto authority and recognition from internal and external actors to respond to the Ukraine Crisis. In 2011, US President Obama explained that the US would not pullout of the Asia-Pacific Area and highlighted the inextricable link between US security and the geo-political developments in Asia (Obama, 2011). Thus, a greater amount of American manpower and time was devoted to the geopolitical developments in Asia. While NATO remained intact, the US pivot towards Asia forced the Europeans to take responsibility for security on the continent. Obama's outsourcing of the management of the Ukrainian crisis to the EU served as de facto recognition of the EU's authority to act (Economist, 2014). Within the EU, the United Kingdom, one of the strongest military powers in the EU, recognized and granted to the EU the authority to create a unified response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatists in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. David Cameron believed that the UK could best levy its power and influence to punish Russia by creating a collective response to deny Russia "access to European markets, European capital, European knowledge and technical expertise…" (Cameron, 2015). The leaders of EU institutions have also demonstrated their recognition of the EU's authority to act in the Ukraine crisis by repeatedly justifying its response to Russia's invasion through invoking international law's prohibition on territorial conquest (Mogherini, 2017). Through US de facto leadership transfer of European continental security to Europeans, the UK and other powerful member-states explicitly calling on the EU to create a collective response, and the institutional leaders of the EU invoking of international law to justify an EU response to the crisis, the EU certainly possessed *recognition* and *authority* to act in the Ukraine Crisis.

Lastly, opportunity is defined by Bretherton and Vogler as "factors in the external environment which constrain or enable actorness" (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006). Regarding EU actorness, I reject Niemann and Bretherton's argument that there is a "a less favourable external environment[for the EU], with the United States shifting its focus to the Asia Pacific region and emerging powers creating a more polycentric world order"(Niemann and Bretherton, 2013). Instead the international context presents an opportunity for the EU to create its own identity, independent of the US. US President Obama's "pivot towards Asia" indicated that the US would shift its focus-diplomatically, militarily, and economically-from Europe to Asia. The United States, under President Obama, made a clear strategic calculation that security on the European continent was not threatened. While most US allies in Europe continue to rely on the US nuclear umbrella, with the exception of Britain and France, the US made it clear that the Europeans would have to take more responsibility for their security. Despite the warning signs of a resurgent Russia-the 2006 Russia-Ukraine gas-dispute and Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia-the US did not view Russia as a significant threat to European security and consequently, placed greater responsibility on the Europeans for their own security. The "pivot towards Asia" presented an opportunity to Europeans to strengthen, at the supranational level, their own security through developing new mechanisms and tools with which to respond to new threats. While the EU did not initially exploit the US pivot towards Asia as an opportunity to create new strategic tools or further defense integration, largely because of preoccupation with other crises, the EU would ultimately utilize the 2009 Lisbon Treaty's provision that granted the EU the power to impose economic sanctions on states in the Ukraine Crisis.

Despite the US pivot towards Asia presenting a great opportunity for the EU to enhance its actorness in regional security, the EU's energy dependency on Russia constrained the EU's

ability to impose maximally damaging economic sanctions on Russia in response to its involvement in the Ukrainian crisis. In 2013, the EU derived 39% of gas, 33% of crude oil, and 29% of solid fuel from Russian exports (Eurostat, 2017). Despite Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for pro-Russian separatists in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, the EU failed to reduce its dependency on Russia for its energy. In 2014, the EU supplied 42% of its gas needs from Russia, a 3% increase from the previous year (Eurostat, 2017b). Conversely, Russia exports 53% of its gas to the EU (Eurostat, 2017c). If the EU had access to alternate energy suppliers, it could have sent a much more powerful and economically damaging signal to Russia in response to its annexation of Crimea and its military and logistical support for the separatists in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Without a buyer for half of its gas exports, the Russian economy would experience regime threatening macroeconomic spiral that would reduce GDP, government revenues, and living standards for its citizens. Consequently, I argue that Russia would have had to alter its behavior in Ukraine in order to avoid potentially catastrophic macroeconomic damage from EU sanctions on Russian energy imports. Thus, in the absence of a long-term, strategic energy strategy, the EU's ability to modify Russia's behavior in Ukraine through economic sanctions was limited. Overall, despite the EU's energy dependency on Russia that somewhat limited its ability to impose maximally damaging sanctions, the EU without a doubt possessed the de facto and de jure recognition, authority, and opportunity to act in the Ukraine crisis. I have now demonstrated that in an enabling environment, the EU possesses international and domestic authority and recognition to play a role in European security.

3.2.Coherence: The EU's Shared Values, Preferences, and Respect for Internal Procedures

In assessing coherence, I find that the supranational European Parliament (EP) is the only directly elected institution of the EU. Thus, it has unrivaled democratic, input legitimacy compared to other EU institutions like the Commission or the ECJ. With its unparalleled legitimacy, the European Parliament has the power to argue that it speaks directly on the behalf of the citizens of the European Union. In March 2014, the EP issued a resolution concerning the invasion of Ukraine by Russia:

> "the European Parliament firmly condemns Russia's act of aggression in invading Crimea, which is an inseparable part of Ukraine and recognized as such by the Russian Federation and by the international community; calls for the immediate de-escalation of the crisis, with the immediate withdrawal of all military forces present illegally on Ukrainian territory, and urges full respect for international law and existing conventional obligations;"(European Parliament, 2014).
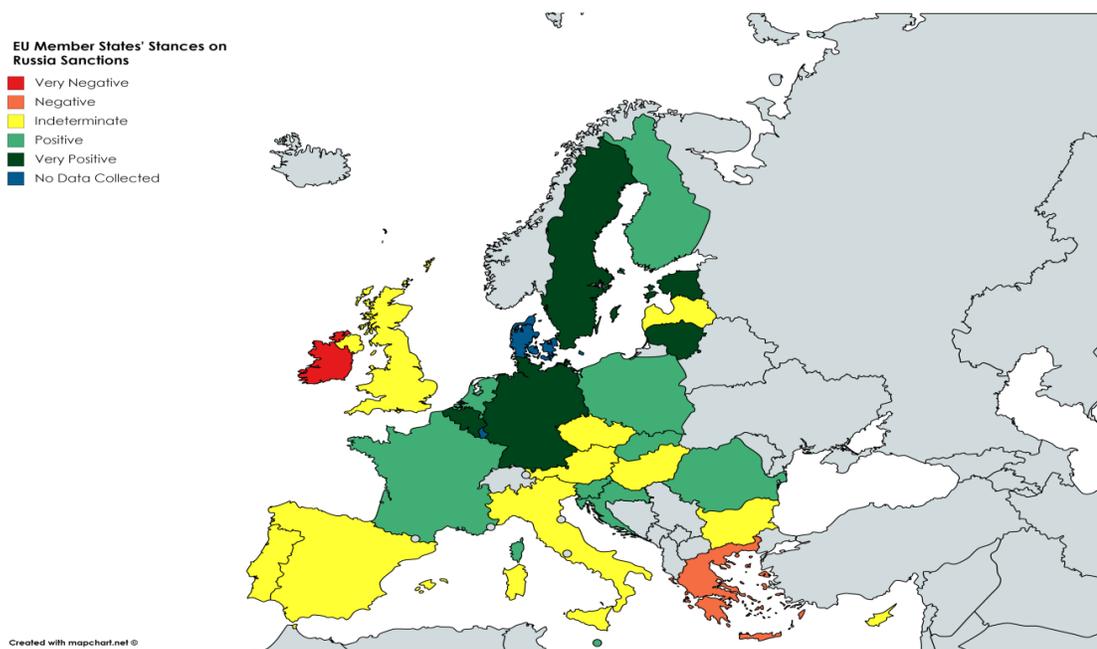
In democratic theory, MEPs are supposed to represent and act on the wishes of the EU citizenry. Consequently, suffice it to say, that the majority of the European citizenry was united in their opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea.

The EU's ENP (European Neighborhood Policy) serves as the framework for the bilateral relationship it has with Ukraine. The EU has demonstrated through this foreign policy instrument that it is committed to democracy, rule of law, and human rights and seeks to transform its neighbors to similarly value those core principles. The commitment to democracy, rule of law, and human rights is universal in EU member-states and despite a small group of Russophiles that have defended Russia's actions in Ukraine, the overwhelming majority of European citizens and member-states are united in their opposition to Russia's illegal annexation

of Crimea. The EP's condemnation of Russia's actions in Ukraine and the ENP demonstrate that the EU populace and the member-states' governments share liberal democratic *values* that Russia so blatantly violated with its territorial conquest and covert military, economic, and political support to the separatists in Ukraine. The shared liberal democratic values shaped the EU's perception of the crisis and guided the EU's response to it.

EU member states have different economic, historical, and geopolitical relations with Russia that have affected their reactions to Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian crisis. Because the decision to impose economic sanctions on Russia was made in the European Council, I have decided to use EP debates as a proxy to determine EU member-states' *preferences* on the sanctions. Instead of analyzing all of the European Parliament debate records, I examine three critical periods when debate records should be most informative with regards to national stances towards the sanctions. The first critical period of debate records, ranging from February 5th, 2014 to March 12, 2014, examines the preceding and immediate aftermath of Russia's annexation of Crimea. The second critical period, from July 15, 2014 to July 17, 2014, focuses on the debate surrounding the EU's imposition of broad financial and sectoral sanctions on Russia. Lastly, the third critical period, from September 14, 2014 to September 15, 2014, analyzes the immediate aftermath of Russian counter-sanctions on the EU to determine if the further reduction of commerce prompted any EU member states to oppose the renewal of sanctions. The data from the EP debates seem to indicate that there were varied views on the sanctions ranging from very negative to very positive. I did not find any ideological association regarding the preferred response to the Russia's actions in Ukraine that corresponded to party affiliation in the EP.

Although the EP has direct legitimacy, the member-states still run the show. The decision to impose the economic sanctions on Russia was taken in the European Council. Despite the seeming lack of consensus from MEP speeches, the members of the European Council demonstrated their common preference to economically punish Russia and thus still managed to impose economic sanctions limiting trade, financial investment, and the transfer of dual-use technology.

EU Member States' Stances on Russia Sanctions

- Very Negative
- Negative
- Indeterminate
- Positive
- Very Positive
- No Data Collected

Created with mapchart.net ©

(Silva, 2018)[1]

Another component of coherence criteria is procedural cohesion. By procedural cohesion, Jupille and Caporaso mean that there is an agreed upon format by which decisions are to be made (Jupille and Caporaso, 1998). The existence and usage of EU treaties dealing with external action demonstrate the existence of procedural cohesion in the EU. The Maastricht Treaty outlines the format through which EU external relations and foreign policy will be

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[1] I describe my methods and explain the findings of this color-coded map in more depth in "Economic Interdependence and Sanctions: A Modification of Kantian Theory?".

developed, while the Lisbon treaty greatly expands the power of the EU institutions to oversee EU external action. CFSP is largely intergovernmental, thus CFSP is controlled by the European Council. The European Council determines the Union's strategic interests, objectives, and guidelines of CFSP (TEU, Article 26). Based off those objectives, the European Council is endowed with the power to define a common approach to achieve those objectives and interests. (TEU, Article 32). The European Council is responsible for decisions that are made on a unanimous basis, with few exceptions. It is also granted the power to make agreements with third-party states or international organizations (TEU, Article 37). Thus, the Lisbon Treaty outlines the procedures by which the EU is to create and implement its CFSP and CSDP. Overall it is extremely noteworthy that despite the different historical and economic relationship EU member-states have with Russia, the EU demonstrated its coherence in its response to the Ukraine Crisis through its shared values, preferences, and usage of internal policy-making procedures.

3.3. Capabilities: Deployment of Insufficient Capabilities

Bretherton and Vogler have a definition of capability that is twofold: "the availability of, and capacity to utilise, policy instruments" (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006). Brattberg and Rhinard adopt Bretherton and Vogler's definition of capability (Brattberg and Rhinard, 2012). As actorness literature has evolved there has been a new emphasis on the capabilities of the EU. Sjursen argues that "actorness cannot be viewed separately from actual capabilities" (quoted in Brattberg and Rhinard, 2012). The Lisbon Treaty grants the European Council the power to reduce or eliminate the economic and financial relations with other states (TFEU, Article 215). The EU had previously sanctioned problematic states on the continent, most notably Serbia during the Yugoslav wars, but the TFEU has a title specifically devoted to "restrictive

measures". In the Yugoslav wars, the powers granted to the European Council to defend European security were exercised through the imposition of economic sanctions (Dover, 2005). However, the TFEU grants the de jure power to the European Council to impose sanctions, despite having been implemented previously.

The EU initially sanctioned Russia diplomatically, but then as the conflict escalated, implemented painful economic sanctions. The 2014 G-8 meeting was supposed to be held in Sochi in June, but the EU relocated the meeting to Brussels. EU members also opposed Russia's accession into OECD and the International Energy Agency. Then, the EU cancelled the EU-Russia summit and reduced diplomatic discourse through cancelling future bilateral summits. In mid-March, the EU responded to Russia's failure to de-escalate the situation in East and Southern Ukraine by imposing some elements of smart sanctions-travel bans and asset freezes-against individuals enmeshed in the annexation of Crimea and the support of pro-Russian separatists in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. 21 officials along with associated persons and entities were sanctioned (Foreign Affairs Council, 2014). By July, the European Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives had broadened economic sanctions to include financial sanctions, an embargo on arms and dual use goods and a limitation on the export of certain energy-related equipment and technology. In the same press release the EU announced there would be a ban on new investment in Crimea and Sevastopol in the following sectors: infrastructure projects in the transport, telecommunications and energy sectors and in relation to the exploitation of oil, gas and minerals. 87 persons and 20 entities had been subject to asset freezes in the EU and the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development had been notified by the European Council to suspend financing new projects in Russia. (Council of the EU, 2014). In March of 2015, the European Council linked the

duration of the sanctions to the implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Since Minsk II the European Council has continued to extend the economic sanctions on Russia, Crimea, and Sevastopol 15 times and has added people to the list of those sanctioned once. It has largely remained a frozen conflict and the prospects for the full implementation of Minsk look bleak.

In addition to the diplomatic and economic sanctions it imposed on Russia, Crimea, and Sevastopol, the EU launched its civilian mission, EU Advisory Mission (EUAM), which sought to offer advice on and support the implementation of Ukrainian civilian security sector reforms. Perceived as a corrupt vestige of the Soviet era, the Ukrainian security sector was believed to have been infiltrated by Russian operatives (Wilson, 2014). From the realist perspective, Novaky argues that because of the EU's inability to hard-balance against Russia, the EU has utilized the EUAM to soft balance against Russia. By making the civilian security sector more accountable and resilient, Russia will be less able to influence and shape it (Novaky, 2015).

The EU also strengthened its bilateral relationship with Ukraine. In June 2014, after the ousting of former President Yanukovych and the election of Poroshenko as President, the EU and Ukraine signed an Association Agreement (AA). The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, which is part of the AA, was implemented January 2016. Since then, both the EU and Ukraine eliminated at least 98% of tariffs and reduced the non-tariff barriers to trade by incorporating WTO rules, such as the prohibition of export restrictions, into the reinvigorated bilateral economic relationship. Over the medium term, Ukrainian GDP is expected to increase by 6% as a result of the AA/DCTFA. Overall, despite the implementation of diplomatic and economic sanctions on Russia, the EU's soft balancing against Russia in Ukraine, and its strengthening of its bilateral relationship with Ukraine, the EU's deployment of all available

capabilities failed to achieve its stated goal of coercing Russia to implement the Minsk Agreements. Thus, the EU does not score highly in the category of capability.

3.4. Consistency: Horizontal and Vertical Consistency

Since the first imposition of travel bans against 21 Russian and Ukrainian citizens "responsible for actions threatening the territorial integrity of Ukraine", the European Council has expanded or extended economic, financial, and individual restrictions 27 times (European Council, 2014). Due to the sanctions being part of the intergovernmental CFSP, the European Council had to vote unanimously in support of expanding or extending the sanctions. As of December 2017, all 28 member states have voted 27 times since March 2014 to maintain and enhance the economic sanctions on Russia, Crimea, and Sevastopol. By unanimous vote in the European Council, the economic sanctions on Russia have been extended since first being imposed in March 2014. Despite some grumbling from some states that have had a historically closer relationship with Russia, there has been horizontal and vertical unity of effort. At the European Council Level, member-states have consistently approved of the extension or expansion of the economic sanctions.

The key EU member-states that had the most weight in foreign policy terms due to their structural power namely-Germany, France, and the United Kingdom-all supported maintaining and enhancing the economic sanctions on Russia, Crimea, and Sevastopol. Those three member-states have the most political clout in the EU as they contain an overwhelming majority of the Union's population, economic prowess, and hard military power. As the United States outsourced crisis management, mainly to Germany, Chancellor Merkel exercised great coalition building skills to create a consensus among even some reluctant EU member-states to impose

economic sanctions. Germany's evangelical commitment to international law aided Merkel in framing the Ukrainian crisis through legalist discourse that assuredly contributed to persuading more hesitant member-states of getting on board with the sanctions (Bulmer and Paterson, 2017). France was extremely influential in the crisis management of the Ukrainian conflict as well. France was one of the four participants of the Normandy Format talks that eventually brokered the Minsk II agreement. True to their "special relationship" with the US, the UK mirrored the US response to Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian crisis and immediately called for a tough stance on Russia, while many of the other EU member-states hesitated. UK Prime Minister Cameron even compared Putin to Hitler when he stated: "We run the risk of repeating the mistakes made in Munich in '38. We cannot know what will happen next," (Cameron, 2015). Overall, there was horizontal consistency among member-states' continued support for the sanctions and vertical consistency between member-states and EU institutions as demonstrated through their collective response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

4. The EU's Efforts to Increase its Hard Power Capabilities

The EU has been reluctant to acknowledge that Russia does not share its view of the liberal international order. As previously mentioned, the EU's European Security Strategies rejected the idea that a revisionist Russia could cause regional instability in the early 2000's. In December of 2008, despite Russia's summer invasion of Georgia and the important role the EU played in mediating the conflict, the EU's "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy" mentioned that EU-Russia relations have deteriorated and more importantly that "the EU expects Russia to honour its commitments in a way that will restore the necessary confidence." (Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy, 2008). The EU's

idealistic hope that Russia would alter its behavior without any change in the EU's strategic thinking or capabilities demonstrates the EU's rejection of power politics.

The EU is largely regarded as a "normative power" that promotes universal principles such as peace, democracy, and human rights, which are all present in the UN charter (Manners, 2002; Manners, 2008). The EU's commitment to the propagation of universal principles is manifested in the various EU treaties. The first goal of EU external action is not to guarantee its security through playing power politics to acquire spheres of influence or containing Russia but instead is to "safeguard its values" (TFEU, 2009). Despite the EU's greater organizational capability with the creation of CFSP and CSDP, the EU lacks hard power capabilities.

Given the strong influence of the realist International Relations theoretical tradition in the formulation of post-Cold War Russian Foreign Policy(Becker, 2015; Karagiannis,2013; Lynch, 2001), the EU, since the Russian annexation of Crimea, has sought to develop hard power capabilities to defend its regional interests against Russian aggression. Most importantly, 25 member-states agreed to participate in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in the area of defense and security policy. By creating a treaty-based framework, PESCO seeks to address security challenges by facilitating further integration and enhancing defense cooperation among the participant states (PESCO, 2018). Joint development of defense capabilities, increasing interoperability by reducing the different number of weapons' systems in Europe, and thus enhancing operational cooperation among member-states all will increase the EU's ability to readily defend its regional and global interests (European Defence Agency, 2018). While PESCO does not shift control of EU member-states' militaries from the nation-state level to the supranational level, it seeks to strengthen its strategic autonomy of the EU to defend its regional and global interests.

Complementing the efforts PESCO to enhance member-state cooperation in defense and security, the European Defense Fund (EDF), launched in 2017, provides grants for EU-defense related collaborative research projects. EDF seeks to reduce costly duplication of EU member-state military capabilities by encouraging joint defense procurement and by annually contributing €500 million to collaborative European defense research and technology development (European Defence, 2018). Joint defense procurement will increase interoperability among EU member-states' militaries and will also enhance the EU's strategic autonomy to act separately from NATO. The Gossra project, for instance, includes eight EU member-states that are jointly researching new complex elements for soldiers such as sensors and digital goggles (European Defence, 2018). PESCO and EDF reflect the growing acknowledgement of the EU's changing attitude about the need to enhance its hard power capabilities, if it is to successfully defend its regional and global interests in an increasing multipolar world.

Conclusion: High Marks in Context, Consistency, and Coherency but not Capabilities

The EU was a consistent, coherent player acting in an international context that provided opportunities for it to demonstrate its actorness. However, it failed in the capabilities category. The threat of economic sanction, the imposition of diplomatic sanctions isolating Russia diplomatically in various forums- a condemnatory UN resolution, expulsion from the G-8-and the eventual imposition of economic sanctions have failed to alter Russia's behavior. Perhaps an argument can be made that the sanctions prevented future Russia annexations of Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine, but the EU's response has failed to achieve its stated goal-to coerce Russia to implement the Minsk Accords. As capabilities cannot be separated from actorness, the EU's response to the Ukrainian crisis-the most grave threat to CFSP and more broadly continental security-demonstrated its still ongoing effort to become an effective regional security

actor. However recent developments demonstrate there might be some hope that the EU is working to expand its hard power capabilities and thus its actorness in regional security.

In assessing the EU's actorness in its dealings with Russia, the importance of hard power capabilities is not to be underestimated. The EU is trying to emerge as a regional and global power and norm setter. However will the current international system dominated by nation-states, operating and judging actorness primarily in terms of capabilities force the EU to strive for traditional aspects of capabilities-a European military, an EU nuclear arsenal? If the absence of "hard power" capabilities caused the EU to fail to be a regional security actor in the Ukraine crisis, would its presence have guaranteed success for the EU? Would the EU's obtainment of "hard power" capabilities have bred more violence? The above questions are all interesting research questions that create platforms for the creation of further insightful International Relations theory.

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